Study to Examine the Influence of Contemporary Islamic Ideologies in Kenya:
Mandera, Garissa, Marsabit and Isiolo Counties

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About REINVENT Programme

Reducing Insecurity and Violent Extremism in the Northern and Coastal Regions of Kenya (REINVENT) is a 5-year programme that aims to enhance Kenyan capacity and capability to address inter-communal conflict, weak community-police relations, violence against women and girls (VAWG), violent extremism and election related violence. We support the continued advancement of police reforms to improve the management, oversight and accountability of the police force. Our programme is led by Tetra Tech International Development and delivered in partnership with the Royal United Services Institute for Defense and Security Studies (RUSI) and the Danish Demining Group (DDG). We build on the experience of delivering the Jamii Thabiti Programme (2014-19), also known as the Kenya Improving Community Security Programme (ICS), and expand FCDO support across more counties. We support new areas of work including conflict sensitivity, pastoral livelihoods and combating violent extremism.

The impact of the REINVENT programme will be "improved community safety and security as measured by effect on inclusive and equitable development, investment and service delivery in Kenya." The outcome will be "improved state and non-state actors' collaboration in a mutually accountable and inclusive manner to respond effectively to root causes of violence".

The outputs are:

1.   Accountable and effective police (and other security agencies) addressing community security, violent extremism and election security.
2.   Strengthened agency of women and girls in peace, safety and security.
3.   Intra and inter institutional commitment to address the root causes and drivers of conflict.
4.   Knowledge and evidence generated and utilised to enhance community and institutional learning and adaptation.

Contents

Acronyms and Definition of Key Terms

Acronyms

AMA	Africa Muslim Agency, now called Direct Aid
IRCK	Inter-Religious Council of Kenya
SUPKEM	Supreme Council of Kenyan Muslims
SOHA	Star of Hope of Africa
CIPK	Council of Imam and Preachers of Kenya

Definition of Key Terms

Bid'a	Innovation in religious practices, considered to be a departure from Islamic orthodoxy
Duksi	Traditional Qur'anic school among the Somali
Ilm	Religious knowledge
Madrasa	Formal Islamic education system
Masjid	Mosque
Madhhab	Islamic school of thoughts/jurisprudence
Umma	Community of believers in Islamic faith
Halaqa	Study circle where Islamic knowledge is transmitted and debated
Ulama	Religious scholars
Thanawi	Secondary education level in Islamic schooling system
Ibtidai	Mid-level primary level in Islamic schooling system
I'daadi	Mid-level primary level in Islamic schooling
Da'wa	The call to Islam, Islamic proselytism
Shirk	To associate divinity to any other being aside from God, a major sin
Deen	Faith, Islamic religion
Qibla	The direction Muslims face when they pray

Executive Summary

Radicalization and violent extremism are global phenomena of human security with an impact at all levels of society. Violent Extremism narratives and debates are buttressed within religious ideologies as well as structural factors such as marginalization and individual incentives such as the offer of financial reward.

The purpose of this research was to provide an in-depth understanding of different religious schools of thoughts proclaimed by preachers and other religious agents in the selected counties over the recent years. We are convinced that epistemological inquiry into existing schools of thinking among religious leaders and the mapping of major influencers can help in formulating appropriate programming activities at the local and national level to constrict the space in which VE groups operate.

In the study, we established that Islamic ideologies in northern Kenya are highly diverse and in a constant state of flux. Religious teachings are a product of both regional and international linkages and these areas have produced large numbers of home-grown religious thinkers. Salafism, a religious ideology that aspires to return Muslims to the pristine Islamic orthodoxy of the Prophet and his immediate generation, is prominent in the region though ascription to it differs both between regions and within regions. North Eastern counties appear to be inclined toward greater religious conservatism than Upper Eastern in a general sense. Traditional Sufi orders exist though they are a minority. Shafii jurisprudence is prominently followed. Embryonic Muslim Brotherhood cells appear to be emerging through development-oriented organizations in some of the major towns across both the north-eastern and upper eastern regions. Just like the rest of the country, jihadi groups have tapped into existing structural factors and individual vulnerabilities to recruit and radicalize some sections of local youth.

This study notes that local scholars are influenced by transnational entities and may have trained abroad. This external influence is both a historical and contemporary phenomenon. Scholars are hence heterogeneous in ideological leaning, international linkages, ethnic and clan affiliations, level of learning and support and legitimacy before the general public. A majority of scholars maintain these transnational networks for further learning, networking and may receive some form of external support for their Islamic educational and religious institutions. Some have double postgraduate degrees in religious and secular education, this implies that religious scholars in this part of Kenya indeed have advanced knowledge of contemporary and classical Islamic Studies as well as competent understandings of secular education and came under a broad range of influences both local and transnational.

Support for violent extremist groups among the scholars is relatively uncommon. Factors such as proximity to Somalia, cross border cultural and religious ties, financial incentives for recruitment and the ability of violent jihadi cells to operate and intimidate vocal anti-jihadi groups account for the growth of violent jihadism, rather than it being an outgrowth from local Salafi conservatism. This does not imply that there are no religious scholars from the north who have either joined jihadi groups like Al Shabaab or have been accused of being its recruiters, but they are in the minority.

The study proposed that to engage with local ulama, it is important to identify major religious leaders and associated institutions in each of the counties prior to any engagement. Some of the scholars already deliver regular seminars and workshops for religious cadre and the general public on topical issues. The study notes that religious scholars are highly suspicious of state and non-state agencies asking for their collaboration in matters of countering violent extremism or related security interventions. It is important to use community representatives as entry point to the religious scholars in engagement with them and assure them of their safety and security as well as the importance of their support during such initiatives.

The study concludes that it is important to approach local and regional faith-based organizations, professional religious associations, representatives of national Muslim bodies and prominent independent scholars who enjoy wide acceptance before the public in each of the counties for successful engagement. In north eastern counties, religious advisers to county governments are also key partners to engage with.

Chapter I: Background and Context

The North-Eastern counties of Garissa, Wajir and Mandera and the Upper Eastern Marsabit and Isiolo share close cultural, ethnic, religious, economic and social ties to ethno-linguistic groups in Somalia and Ethiopia. North Eastern region has a lengthy porous border with Somalia. Violent extremist attacks and threats have increased on the Kenya side of the border over the last decade. In this chapter, relying on an extensive desktop review, we examine the geographical locations and the local histories of the target counties, local histories of Islam and the local influence of contemporary Islamic thoughts in East Africa.

The purpose of this research was to provide an in-depth understanding of different religious schools of thoughts proclaimed by preachers and other religious agents in the selected counties over the recent years. We are convinced that epistemological inquiry into existing schools of thinking among religious leaders and the mapping of major influencers can help in formulating appropriate programming activities at the local and national level to constrict the space in which VE groups operate. This report fills in a key gap in inadequacy of contemporary literature that can provide the reader with in-depth understanding of local Islamic histories, key religious institutions and scholars, contemporary debates and competing ideologies.

Contextual background on the geographical locations of the study

The five counties of Garissa, Wajir, Mandera, Marsabit and Isiolo that constitute North Eastern and Upper Eastern regions of Kenya were part of the colonial era Northern Frontier District. They were administered differently from the rest of the colony and the protectorate. Northern Kenya is largely semi-arid with the economic mainstay being pastoralism and livestock trading. Densely settled populations are clustered around major towns such as Mandera, Wajir, Garissa, Isiolo, Marsabit and Moyale. Islam as a lived religious tradition defines everyday life in most parts of the region. The region also witnesses frequent inter-clan and inter-ethnic group violent clashes over grazing land and watering points. Conflict over territorial claims and political competition is also increasingly common, occasioned by the opportunities and resources availed as a result of devolution (Kochore & Carrier , 2014). Attacks within Kenya have become common over the last decade. Often blamed on porous borders with Somalia suspected terror and Ethiopia, these incidents include the use of improvised explosive devices along roads, small arms attacks against law enforcement camps and the destruction of infrastructure such as telecommunications masts. Non-local workers, security agents and national police reservists (NPRs) are all targeted. Meanwhile, recruitment into the ranks and file of al Shabaab is said to be relatively common (Chome, 2016).

Most of the Somali clans found in north eastern region are also found in Ethiopia, Somalia and are among settled urban residents in most major towns in Kenya. Movement across the international borders due to nomadic pastoralism, visits to kin and trade is common. Broadly, while highly segmented, decentralized and complex, Somali clans are divided into five main groups, namely: Darod, Hawiye, Isaaq and Dir and Rahanwayn composed of Digil and Mirifle. Amongst ethnic and religious minorities are the Reer Hamar, Baruni, Barawani, Bantu and outcast groups of Tumal, Yibir and Migdan. The Garre are considered to be belong to the Dir clan family and are found in Somalia and Ethiopia as well as Kenya. The Degodia belong to the Hawiye branch and are also found in Ethiopia (where their traditional 'clan king/wabar' resides, Somalia (Jubbaland, Bay, Gedo) and in Kenya's Wajir county. The Murule also belong to the Hawiye branch and are found scattered in Somalia and Ethiopia (see G.J Abbink, 2009 and V. Luling, 2006, for detailed geographical distribution and complex Somali clan genealogies).

Mandera county has an estimated population of 867,457 as per the 2019 population census (KNBS, 2019). The county measures approximately 25,991 sq. km and is located in the extreme north-east of Kenya, bordering Somalia to the east and Ethiopia to the north. It also borders Wajir County to the south-west (Mandera, 2017). The main clans in Mandera are the Garre, Degodia and Murule. Islam is the main religion in the county and as in Wajir and Garissa counties, it permeates everyday life impacting on every facet of the social, economic, cultural and political lives of its residents. The Christian population largely consists of non-local civil servants, security

personnel, government administrators, private skilled workers and employees of international non-governmental organizations.

Wajir County is located between Mandera and Garissa counties and covers an area of 56,685.9 sq. km. It borders Somalia to the east, Ethiopia to the north, Mandera County to the north-east, Isiolo County to the south West, Marsabit County to the west and Garissa County to the south (Wajir, 2017). Projections from the Kenya 2019 Population and Housing census indicate that the county has a total population of 781,263 (KNBS, 2019). Clans in Wajir include the Ajuuran, Degodia and Ogaden. Both the Ajuran and Ogaden are found in Ethiopia and Kenya. The latter are a majority in the Somali region of Ethiopia (the Ogaden). The religious dynamics as described in Mandera County also applies here.

Garissa County is the headquarters of the former North Eastern Province and current seat of the national government's regional administration. It covers an area of 44,174 sq km. The county borders Somalia to the east, Lamu County to the south, Tana River County to the west, Isiolo County to the north-west and Wajir County to the north. Ogaden sub clans and so called small 'corner tribes' predominate the county. 'Corner tribes' are a common feature in most northern Kenya counties. They are often composed of merchant families who belong to non-local Somali clans or those of Arab descent. Due to their financial muscles, they are often critical in campaign fund raising exercises and are rewarded with contracts and political positions after elections. Other smaller groups include the Orma, Wardey, Munyo and Malakote from neighbouring Tana River county. The 2019 Kenya National Population and Housing census estimates the population in the county at 841,353 (KNBS, 2019) Islam is the main religious tradition in the county. Proximity to the rest of Kenya has meant that there is a significant population of non-Somali Christian residents especially in Garissa town and hence the town has a number of churches and Christian faith-based organizations.

Isiolo County is one of the two counties in the 'Upper Eastern' part of Kenya. Popularly described as the gateway to the northern Kenya, Isiolo County borders Marsabit County to the north, Samburu and Laikipia Counties to the west, Garissa County to the south-east, Wajir County to the north-east, Tana River and Kitui Counties to the south and Meru and Tharaka Nithi Counties to the south-west. The county covers an area of approximately 25,336 sq.km (Isiolo, 2017). Socially, Isiolo is regarded as a cosmopolitan county, home to five major ethnic groups namely Borana, Somali, Turkana, Meru and Samburu. It also hosts small numbers of other Kenyan ethno-linguistic communities. The economic mainstay of the county is pastoralism, but a small number also practices agro-pastoralism. The Somali and Borana communities in Isiolo are largely Muslim (Aguilar, 1998), while the Turkana, Meru and Samburu follow various Christian denominations as well as traditional practices. There is significant Christian population among the Borana especially in Merti sub-county and Isiolo town. Isiolo County's total population as of 2019 was estimated at 268,002 (KNBS, 2019).

Geographically, Marsabit County, located in the extreme north of Kenya, falls within an arid and semi-arid area with a total area of 70,961.2 sq. km. It shares an international boundary with Ethiopia to the north, borders Lake Turkana to the west, Samburu County to the south and Wajir and Isiolo counties to the east (Marsabit, 2017). Its population was estimated at 459,785 people in 2019 according to the Kenya Population and Housing Census (KNBS, 2019). The main ethnic groups in the county are presently the Borana, the Gabra, the Rendille, the Samburu, the Burji and the Turkana as well as smaller groups of Somali clans, including the Degodia, Ajuran, Garre, Sakuye, Dassanetch, Waata, Konso and Sidam. It has been observed that most of these groups have next of kin living in Ethiopia and/or Somalia, except the Samburu, Rendille and the Turkana. Though no reliable data on religious demographics exists, Islam is believed to be the main religion followed by a majority of the residents however there are large population of diverse Christian denominations among the Rendile and Samburu and some sections of the Gabra, Borana and Burji (Tablino, 2004).

History of Islam in Northern Kenya

There exist little if any historical or contemporary writings that document the spread of Islam in northern Kenya. This is more broadly the case across the former north eastern province which has traditionally been Muslim. The existing body of knowledge is largely built around oral histories that trace the westward migration of Somali clans into what is present day Kenya, trade and missionary excursions by Somali merchants and Sufi brotherhood caravans into non-Muslim Cushitic neighbours, migratory movements and the settlement of Hadrami and other Arab traders through Ethiopia into towns in northern Kenya and beyond, the gradual adoption of Somali culture and Islam by Cushitic communities like the Borana in Kenya (Oba, 2017) (Lewis, 1998) (Loimeier & Seesemann , 2012).

Islam is said to have arrived in Somali coastal towns around the 8th Century and was established as a flourishing faith as observed by Arab travellers and geographers. The penetration of Islam among the largely nomadic Somali clans in the interior, though widespread, was superficial and Islam co-existed with a host of pre-Islamic beliefs and practices for centuries (Lewis, 1998) (Lewis, 2003). The spread of Islam among the Somali clans was attributed to Sufi tariqas principally Qadiriya and its offshoots such as Uwaysiya, Salihiya among others.

Salihiya was one of the largest Sufi orders in Somalia and the Somali region of Ethiopia. It was an offshoot from Rashidiya established by Ibrahim ibn Salih ibn 'Abd al-Rahman al-Duwayhi (1813-1874) also known as al Rashid. It is noted that al Rashid's nephew Sayyid Muhammad Salih spread Rashidiya to Sudan and Somalia. In Somalia, the tariqa was known as Salihiya after the founder Sayyid Muhammad Salih. The tariqa spread also to northern Kenya during pre-colonial and colonial era. The tariqa was opposed to the Qaridiya the oldest and the most widespread sufi order founded by Abdulqader Gilani (1077-1166). Salihiya was a fiercely anti-colonial movement in Somalia during early stages of British colonialism (Reese, 1999).

Roving sufi mystics, a distinct class of religious cadre specializing in teaching the Quran, blessing the community and leading in congregational rituals became a regular feature in these pastoral communities across the horn of Africa. They were responsible for spread of Islam among the pastoralist communities in the Horn of Africa. Agriculturally rich river valleys and nascent towns in the interior became nodes of Islamization and knowledge transmission. Notable among these centres of religious knowledge transmission was Bardhere in Somalia's Gedo region. Prior to colonial period, the areas occupied by Somali clans extended from present-day Djibouti, to eastern Ethiopia to Somalia and parts of north-eastern Kenya under pre-colonial Islamic caliphates that governed over their subjects. It is worth noting that Somali clans being highly segmented are fiercely independent of each other and at no time did these sultanates establish a unitary state. They included the Sultanate of Mogadishu, Sultanate of Ajuuran, Warsangeli Sultanate, Sultanate of Ifat, Adal Sultanate, Geledi Sultanate, Marjeerteen Sultanate .[1] The last of the surviving sultanates entered into treaties with incoming colonial powers add and dissolved (Abdullahi, 2017) (Reese, 2008). The rule of Sultan of Zanzibar also extended to some of the coastal Somali cities (Loimeier & Seesemann , 2012). Religious mobilization played a great role in the resistance to colonial rule as epitomized by an uprising led by Sayyid Mahamed Abdille Hassan against the British (Samatar, 1982).

Even before the colonial period, there existed an intricate trade network among the Somali clans, with neighbouring communities and with the outside world through various maritime ports (Manger, 2006). Frequent clashes over pasture, water and territorial controls occurred among the clans and with neighbouring communities often resulting in displacement, absorption and retreats between different groups. On the eve of arrival of the colonial powers, conquest and the enslavement of a section of the Orma in present Jubbaland and the Tana River basin as well as the displacement of Cushitic communities like the Borana occasioned by a mass westward expansion of Somali clans changed the demographics of colonial northern Kenya (Oba, 2017). The British established the Somali line to put a stop to further westward expansion beyond present-day north eastern Kenya. They also established the Northern Frontier Districts (NFD) as a closed and minimally-governed territory with few military and administrative structures to act as a buffer against the expanding Ethiopian empire and Italian Somalia (Oba, 2013).

With colonialism there emerged small settlements that acted as garrison towns and trading centres. These centres attracted migrant hadrami traders, urbanized Somali merchants, religious leaders affiliated with some of the major Horn of Africa Sufi tariqas and local elites (Manger, 2006). Mosques, madrasas and duksis were established. Adherence to Islam among the urbanized residents increased. The local non-Muslim populations were converted to Islam especially in neighbouring Moyale, Isiolo and Marsabit. Similarly, there was the establishment of small Catholic and Anglican communities in Upper Eastern around the same time. So pervasive was conversion to Islam among the Borana-speaking communities of Isiolo that some of the scholars who conducted ethnographic studies of this phenomenon then described two processes concurrently ongoing: that of Islamization and Somalization (adoption of Somali culture) (Baxter, 1966). The Shafi'i school of jurisprudence was the main school of thought then. There was also significant influence from Sheikh Hussein Sufi Tariqa from Ethiopia in the Upper Eastern region of Kenya (Trimingham, 1964) (Trimingham, 1965) (Schlee & Shongolo, 2012).

The colonial government allowed for some form of Kadhi's court's jurisdiction in the NFD. Prior to Independence, referendums sanctioned by the British colonial administration nominally sought to understand the opinions of the residents of NFD on their status upon the independence of Kenya. The overwhelming majority voted to secede to the newly independent Republic of Somalia. Reasons cited were cultural and religious affinity. A significant minority within the other Cushitic kin in Marsabit and Isiolo felt they were better off grouped with rest

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[1]https://courses.lumenlearning.com/suny-hccc-worldcivilization/chapter/the-sultanates-of-somalia/.

of Kenya. These debates were not solved by constitutional conferences prior to Independence and ultimately all these areas were incorporated into the Republic of Kenya. This led to clandestine support for irredentism by the Somalia government. President Jomo Kenyatta and his government declared a state of emergency on 28 December 1963 and a harsh military crackdown on armed irredentists and carried out forced villagization in late 1960s (Whittaker, 2015) (Aguilar, 1998). The government was responsible for undocumented incidences of gross human rights abuses and killings under the so-called campaigns against the shifta (Whittaker, 2015). Mistrust of government institutions and policies increasingly became concretized and so did continued structural marginalization, poverty and neglect of the needs and aspirations of the local population. The colonial era practice of purposeful underdevelopment continued.

From the 1970s, a major shift to Salafism – a mix of the Hanbali school of thought and the ideas/understandings of sheikh Mohamed bin Abdiwahab on Shirk and towheed – occurred. The salafists revitalized Islamic education and established the modern madrasa system, connecting the region's Islamic education graduates to universities in the Muslim world with scholars travelling to the Saudi Arabia, Sudan and Malaysia amongst others. Many graduates of Gulf universities returned and sought to spread the Salafi traditions. Earlier Sufi orders such as the Qaridiya and Salihiya remained active across the Horn of Africa region at this time. An intense rivalry between older Sufi groups that practiced Shafii madhhab (school of thought) and the incoming Salafi inclined religious leadership influenced by Hanbali madhhab was reported in the 1980s. Gradually Salafi scholars won over a large portion of the population, took control of mosques and built several madrasas and Islamic centres across the region.[2] In recent times, the Muslim brotherhood concept and ideology is newly penetrating slowing among the communities of North Eastern counties and Marsabit county particularly Moyale sub-county.

Sub-regional histories of Islam in Northern Kenya[3]

Mandera

Mandera has a long history of Islam. Ulama from the area traditionally travelled to Mogadishu to further their Islamic knowledge especially Islamic sharia, and to study so that they can return to Mandera to spread the word of God. Despite being Muslims, local communities were formally influenced by Borana and Oromo cultures and speak a dialect of the Oromo language. Later scholars came from Somalia and revived the faith among the community [4].

Among these Sufi scholars were Sheikh Yunis and Sheikh Abdulow Issak. Sheikh Issak who arrived in the late 19th century and started a series of Islamic institutions (duqsi) within the region and initiated Islamic gatherings (halaqas) in which religious knowledge was disseminated to the community.[5] Many aspiring scholars thereafter travelled to Bardhere, Somalia, to gain more knowledge especially on jurisprudence. The returning scholars from Bardhere established duqsis and mosques all across the area.[6] A trend in the 1980s and 1990s recalled by the respondents was large number of students travelling to Saudi Arabia and the Middle East for religious scholarships. These students formed the bulk of religious school-teachers and mosque imams and were responsible for the entrenchment of Salafi traditions currently most prominent in Mandera. Some of the notable Salafi scholars included Ahmed Sudan from Mandera and Sheikh Dayow of Elwak.[7]

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[2]Conversations with Mohamed Kuli, Sheikh Girma, in Marsabit town, September 2020
[3] The historical information contained in this subsection were derived from narrations of respondents in Mandera, Marsabit, Isiolo and Garissa.
[4] Sheikh Sharrif Allow, Mohammed Aloso, Kullow Ahmed, Nuria Adan, interviews done in Mandera, September 2020
[5] Sheikh Abdighaffar, interviews done in Mandera, September 2020
[6] Abdi Ahmed, Aw Hamza, interviews done in Mandera, September 2020
[7] Ibren Adan, Mohammed Ahmed, Aw Hamza, Kullow Ahmed interviews done in Mandera, September 2020

Garissa

History of Islam in Garissa is tied to the history of the faith in Somalia. It is mainly occupied by Abudwaq, Auliyahaan, and Abdalla subclans of Ogadeni Somali clan. Ogadeni are found on both sides of the international borders. Mercantile trade brought Arab traders and missionaries to the area They spread the faith to urban coastal settlements and gradually later into the nomadic hinterlands. Islam also reached Garissa from the Ogaden region in Ethiopia.

As the largest city and capital of Northern Kenya, Garissa has played a huge role in spreading Islamic da'wah from the region towards Eastern and central Kenya. Garissa is considered to be the nerve-centre for Islamic da'wa to neighbouring counties. Tablighi Jamaat has played a significant role in preaching of the faith in the county and the region. The county has also benefited from massive investment in religious education and Islamization by Gulf countries since the 1970s and boasts of numerous madrasas, duksis, integrated schools and a scholarly class respected across the country.[8]

Marsabit

Islamization in Marsabit and Moyale was influenced by the Somalis during the colonial periods. A majority of residents were then followers of their own traditional religions and cultures. Rudimentary duksis were established in Somali language. Some early Islamic influences also emanated from Ethiopia. Being an area bordering Ethiopia, migrating Hadrami Arab and Somali traders were among first urban dwellers in towns in the county. Some early scholars also travelled to Bardhere, Somalia, to acquire Islamic knowledge.[9]

In late 1980s and early 1990s the philanthropic initiatives of Sheikh Abdi Nurrow and fellow Arab and Asian businessmen laid the foundations for the spread of Islam in Marsabit town and the surrounding area. Additionally, an Islamic preacher by the name of Mohamed Arab arrived from Saudi Arabia in the 1990s to teach madrasa and became the imam of Jamia mosque in Marsabit. This synergized the effort of Sharif Abdi Nurrow.[10]

Moreover, a local initiative to attract charitable organizations to the county was first spearheaded by Sheikh Edin Golicha around 1980s through proposals developed to attract Muslim organizations that would build health centres, mosques, orphanages, primary schools and scholarships to students. Early Islamic preachers underwent training through duksi and the halaqa system. There were a few students from neighbouring in Ethiopia who got opportunity to study in Saudi Arabia. Some of these students later came to preach and work in Marsabit county. It should be noted that Sufi practices such as the celebration of Prophet Muhammad's birth were common in the early periods of Islamization.[11]

Up to the 1980s, the main Islamic movement and ideology was Shaffism. In 1985, an influx of preachers from Saudi Arabia through the African Muslim Agency brought Salafism into the area. This influx peaked from 1995. Salafism spread through local networks, the construction of mosques and madrasas, and the provision of study scholarships. For instance, Saudi educated Arsi (a predominantly Oromo group from southern Ethiopia) community who were refugees in Marsabit catalyzed spread of the Salafist ideologies because some of them had Saudi exposure. This was coupled with local graduates from foreign universities who were the main proponents of Salafist doctrines and practices.[12]

There was also a significant surge in local preachers and religious elites due to sponsorship and scholarship programs set up by charities. A number of students pursued studies abroad and brought back ideologies, particularly Salafism, inconsistent with existing Sufi doctrine and Shafi'i madhhab. Proponents of Salafism and defenders of Sufi influenced Shafi'i school of jurisprudence clashed over control of mosques, religious interpretations and

[8]Conversations with Hussein Sahal, Abdullahi Sheikh, Abdi Dekow, Ahmed Muhammad, Rahma Ibrahim, Ahmed Diis, Muhammad Dabar, in Garissa, in September 2020
[9]Conversations with Hussein Halakhe, Abdisatar Abdi, in Moyale, September 2020
[10]Conversations with Mohamed Kuli, Sheikh Girma, in Marsabit town, September 2020
[11]Conversations with Mohamed Kuli, Sheikh Girma, Maalim Bilali in Marsabit, September 2020
[12]Conversations with Mohamed Kuli, Sheikh Girma, Hassan Guyo, Abdi Guracha in Marsabit, September 2020

proper way of conducting Islamic rituals in mid 1990s. These clashes were at times violent. Similar clashes were reported in Moyale in the late 1980s and early 1990s. The new ideologies caused discomfort among the conservative Muslims who perceived infiltration of Salafist ideology as a religious coup that would disrupt social order and practices. For instance, Salafists regard then popular practices such as milad u nabi (celebration of Prophet Muhammad's birthday), traditional dua (voluntary supplication after obligatory prayers), qunut (supplication during the last steps of dawn prayers), sadaqa (charitable giving) for the dead, burning of incense, lack of beard in men as haram. [13]

Approximately 70% of Marsabit's population is Muslim, with the remaining 30% made up of Christians. The Marsabit Interfaith Council liaises with different religious leaders and ensures harmonious co-existence between people of different faiths. The communities help each during social functions such as weddings, funerals and fundraiser events without religious bias. In Marsabit town, there are about 40 Madrasas out of which 25 have Sufi inclination while 15 are harbour Salafist ideology. [14]

From the 1980s, there was an increase in the activities of the Tablighi movement which took Islamic teachings and practices to larger audience in remote areas. An innovative trend currently in the region is that madrasas have integrated learning incorporating both religious and secular systems. This has contributed to increased enrolment. Moreover, Muslim parents take religious ilm of their children as mandatory obligation which they strive to achieve. Children often attend madrasas over the weekends or after classes. [15]

Isiolo

The colonial era spread of Islam in Isiolo was attributed to Somali traders. A number of retired soldiers originally from British Somaliland were settled in Isiolo after World War I. They were the first to establish mosques duksi, migrate among nomadic Borana and conduct mass conversion. For instance, it was common during evening hours for Somali preaches to organize gatherings around the fireplace and to recite the Quran. Similarly, poems would be recited during weddings. These Somalis were Sufi. They intermarried with local communities. Some of the Somali scholars included late Sheikh Hussein Hilolwe, the late Hajj Saleh and Hajj Walii. From the 1980s onward, Islamic charitable institutions such as the Islamic Foundation, the Young Muslim Association, AMA and Al Muntada, built mosques, madrasas, rolled out social projects and sponsored dozens of young students to study Islam in Kenya, Sudan, Egypt or Saudi Arabia. This introduced Salafist ideology into the region. Tablighi Jamaat has also enhanced the spread of the religion through their regular gatherings and da'wa in mosques. [16]

Influences of contemporary Islamic thoughts in East Africa on Northern Kenya

From the 1970s onward, there was increasing interest in Saudi Arabia and her Gulf allies in expanding Wahhabi ideology within the Muslim world. Newly discovered oil wealth provided much needed support for this Islamization project. Through proxy transnational charity organizations and global Muslim bodies, Saudi Arabia engaged in the distribution of the Quran and supportive religious literature; large-scale training of emerging religious scholars and students in universities in Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Sudan; support for Kenyan based madrasa complexes; and the establishment of numerous mosques, madrasa complexes and other affiliated social institutions. This Saudi investment in religious resocialization and education were simultaneously carried out across much of the Muslim world. Somalia benefited from this massive investment leading to a gradual but observable shift towards a wahabi oriented ideology (Salih, 2004). A spill-over is visible in north eastern Kenya where large number of religious scholars and institutions fell sway to this wave of religious reformism. The old Sufi traditions gave way to more puritan and conservative religiosity that closely resemble its counterparts within the Gulf countries. To varying degrees, the 1980s hence witnessed a clash between the old traditions and the incoming

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[13] Conversations with Abdi Elema, Fatuma Adan, Sheikh Girma, Hussein Halakhe, in Moyale and Marsabit, September 2020
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[15] Conversations with Mohamed Kuli, Sheikh Girma, in Marsabit town, September 2020
[16] Conversations with Ahmed Sett, Sheikh Okile, Shukria Dima, Abdub Happi, Sheikh Abdikarim Gonosa, Said Duba, in Isiolo, in September 2020

conservative religiosity. The Sufi tariqas accused the Salafists of importing Wahabi doctrines, whilst the new Salafists accused the Sufis of illiteracy, religious innovation and superstition. Gradually the new reformist wave took over dozens of mosques and finally adherents were in charge of numerous madrasa institutions. Religious leaders who are associated with this movement are critical social influencers in northern Kenyan society.

Contemporary Islamist political discourses were also present in the national leadership who were aware and were co-opted by global Muslim activists such as those of the Muslim Brotherhood. Many political and religious elites from northern Kenya had influence and are pivotal members of Muslim national organizations, advocacy groups and opinion shapers (Ndzovu, 2012) (Chome, 2019). There is also an intricate connectivity between Nairobi as the centre of national Muslim politics and activism and the far-flung religious institutions and clergy. The region also has active missionary activities of Tablighi Jamaat, a transnational apolitical Muslim missionary movement originating from the Indian subcontinent (Wario, 2012).

The collapse of the Siad Barre government in 1991, and the subsequent influx of refugees and arms as a result of the civil war in Somalia, had an immense impact on northern Kenya. Islamist ideologies that gained root and flourished in Somalia culminated in the short-lived Islamic Courts Union (ICU) regime. The ICU was founded by Islamist elements drawn from a wide range of ideological viewpoints but with key central figures having experienced violent jihad in Afghanistan. These individuals were also linked to early Al Qaeda leaders and had been exposed to the Tafkiri ideologies of Abdalla Azzam and Al Awlaki, the militant teachings of Sayyid Qutb and other leading radical ideologues of 20th Century (Maruf & Joseph, 2018). Basing its foundations on numerous other jihadist groups, the Harakat al Shabab al Mujahidin emerged in 2002 as a wing of the ICU and in 2006 as an independent force (Maruf & Joseph, 2018). Al Shabaab appealed and attempted to recruit among the northern Kenya Muslim communities with varied success (Anderson & McNight , 2015). It also built its recruitment on meshing narratives around northern Muslim marginalization and neglect by the various Kenyan governments since Independence. The group vowed to rebuild an egalitarian Islamic polity where there would be no discrimination and the rule of law based on God's divine dictates, narratives articulated and circulated widely by other radical preachers such as the late Aboud Rogo and Abubakar Sharrif (Makaburi). Most north Kenyan religious scholars have confronted the violent jihadi narratives, though a few found their way into the fold of the group – even emerging among its top leaders.[17]

Based on this brief review of related literature, this research project identified the need to fill a research gap on intellectual history and contemporary religious ideology influences in northern Kenya, a spectrum that straddles the Kenyan, Ethiopian and Somali borders.

[17] https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/africaandindianocean/somalia/11512503/Dulyadin-Gamadhere-profile-Kenyan-Madrassa-teacher-who-became-an-al-leged-al-Shabaab-terror-mastermind.html
https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/apr/03/al-shabaab-leader-responsible-for-garissa-attack-is-kenyan
https://citizentv.co.ke/news/garissa-al-shabaab-attack-ringleader-identified-311298/

Chapter II: Methodology & Approach

Strategies and design

Recognizing the fact that this research was sensitive and there were risks[18] involved in ensuring that quality responses were obtained, we adopted trust-based methods of data collection by mainstreaming the following strategies.

- We purposely sourced and engaged local researchers namely Mohamed Khalif of north eastern and Halkano Boru of upper eastern. They both have relevant experience and command trust and respect among the communities. This ensured that the respondents could freely interact with the researchers in their local languages without fear and suspicion.

- We designed an open ended and flexible unstructured interview guide that could accommodates respondents' interests in the discussion.

- We ensured that the researchers were adequately trained to handle the tool.

- To strengthened partnerships and built rapport during the study; we encouraged referrals and introductions to other relevant religious leaders in the communities such as those associated with NAMLEF and SUPKEM etc.

- We sensitized our researchers that they must seek consent from the respondents to participate in the interview and that they should uphold decorum at all times.

- We ensured that confidentiality of information is guaranteed and to be used exclusively for this study only.

Research Locations

The research was carried out in the two clusters in northern Kenya as follows:

i. **North Eastern Counties:** Garissa and Mandera were selected. These counties provide different ethnic and linguistic compositions. Mandera borders both Ethiopia and Somalia while Garissa only shares a border with Somalia. Scholars from both counties benefitted from educational scholarship from Gulf countries, Egypt, Sudan or Somalia. The region also contains numerous mosques, madrasas and Islamic educational complexes. There is a presence of advanced Islamic intellectuals and cultures in both counties, with several of their clerics and graduates later moving to other parts of Kenya for work in line with religious responsibilities. Both counties are fairly heterogeneous in their ethnic composition. They are largely occupied by Somali clans.

ii. **Upper Eastern Counties:** Isiolo and Marsabit were selected. Marsabit and Isiolo border different north eastern counties and have similar historical interactions with Somali clans and families who established businesses in their towns and religious centres during the colonial period. Thereafter these groups played pivotal roles in the Islamization of these areas. Marsabit also borders Ethiopia exposing the area to different historical trends in terms of Islamization and religious conversions during the colonial and pre-colonial period. Major towns in both counties have numerous mosques, madrasas and Islamic educational complexes established through Gulf, Egyptian and Sudanese charities and supported thereafter by an assortment of national faith-based agencies and local support. While Somali religious clerics previously played a prominent role in Islamic traditions and the everyday running of religious and Islamic educational institutions, the established Islamic educational complexes produced a large pool of home-grown religious cadre that replaced the old religious elite. This led to an unprecedented investment in religious reformism and influence that goes far beyond the two counties. Both counties are highly heterogeneous in terms of ethnic composition.

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[18] See Annex 4

Identification of respondents/interviewees

The research made use of purposive sampling. In this regard, to choose an appropriate informant, we were guided by the mapping exercise with keen attention given to age, level of religious education, place of religious education and residency in the selected counties, location of their education, depth of historical and religious knowledge, position in religious or social cadre and trajectories of learning and knowledge dissemination in the society. In the research, scholars' histories of knowledge acquisition, their intellectual influences, their positions in the society, institutions they were affiliated with were crucial mapping the spread of religious ideologies in northern Kenya. A minimum of 10 informants drawn from the religious clergy category were engaged in each of the counties of Mandera, Garissa, Marsabit and Isiolo.

In both clusters, interviews were conducted in major towns instead of villages or smaller urban centres which have relatively limited influence in Islamic history and everyday social and religious interactions. In Mandera, Mandera town, El Wak and Rhamu are selected. In Garissa, Garissa town and Mado Gashe are identified for field work. Isiolo town, Merti and Garba Tulla were chosen in Isiolo. Finally, in Marsabit, interviews will be carried out in Marsabit town, Moyale and Sololo.

The research also took cognisance of the interconnectivity of the religious and community leaders and scholars based in in Nairobi but originally from northern Kenya. For religious scholars and institutions in both clusters, Nairobi remains important as a seat of national Muslim religious and educational institutions, headquarters of various endowments and charities and a frequent venue for fund-raising and financial support among local elites residing in Nairobi. It is based on these centre-periphery connections that we included among the interviewees at least one religious scholar originally from each of the counties but residing in Nairobi.

Data collection and Approach

A key informant guide was developed to collect qualitative data. The guide was developed in such a way that it gave room for each interviewee to be part, partner and owner of the process and to adequately cover the objectives of the study.

We undertook an initial mapping of key respondents in the counties of Garissa, Mandera, Isiolo and Marsabit. We allowed for references from identified informants on other prospective qualified religious clerics to interview through a snowballing technique. To do this, we depended on a pool of our networks, referrals, experiences, and existing secondary information so as to generate a list of potential respondents.

35 interviews were conducted in all the four counties. 10 in Isiolo, 7 in Garissa, 9 in Marsabit, and 9 in Mandera.

Data Analysis

We analysed the descriptive qualitative data by coding, cross reading of responses of each informants and identify key issues raised. We thematise the analyse data and wrote this comprehensive report.

In total 35 key informant interviews were conducted. Majority of the respondents requested that the field researchers not to use audio recordings of the interview sessions. Therefore, the field researchers took notes and reconstructed the conversations with the key informants.

The interview questions were divided into four themes. One, biography of the key informants. Two, their understanding of local Islamic history and emerging trends in Islamic reformism. Three, their understanding of contemporary theological and jurisprudential debates on some key select issues. Lastly, their take on future of Islamic intellectual traditions and emerging challenges Islamic scholarship face in their area.

All the 35 interviews were hence compared and analysed through these four themes. First theme provided us with insights on respondents' history of pursuit of religious and secular education, the transnational and national intellectual influences on their journey into Islamic scholarship, organizations they are affiliated with and their influential mentors. This theme helped us infer the nature of ideological influences and inclinations predominant in each of the research counties and the entire northern Kenya.

The second theme discerned how scholars interviewed perceived history of Islam in the region, their under-standing of both local and translocal undercurrent that transformed Islamic traditions over the last decades. The third and four themes provided us with insights into local intellectual debates and the perception of the informants on the future of Islamic intellectual and religious traditions in the coming years.

Limitation

The research team faced a number of unexpected challenges:

1. Reluctance from a number of earlier contacted key informants to take part in the interviews upon scrutiny of the research questions. Some of the leading scholars from Garissa claimed that the questions were very personal and were not convinced on the use of the data especially in the highly securitized environment where religious leaders have been targets of both security agents and militant groups. It is likely that those who refused to participate in the interviews may have convinced some of their colleagues to do the same. This greatly limited number of respondents we engaged with in Garissa.
2. Some withdrew from scheduled interviews due to travel and unspecified reasons and were not prepared to participate in online interviews.
3. Some asked for translation of the research questions into Arabic for ease of answering questions and asked if it is possible for them to self-administer them. A translation was arranged (see Annex 3).
4. A number referred the researchers to others claiming they have less knowledge of Islam despite enjoying popularity among the general public.
5. There were also instances of participants giving highly general information without in-depth explanation. Others skipped some questions altogether.
6. Almost all informants were uncomfortable with voice recordings and a large number of respondents asked for anonymity in research reports and citations.
7. Some felt that the compensation offered for their time was inadequate.
8. The COVID-19 pandemic meant that a number of informants expressed hesitation in meeting face-to-face for long periods and in holding repeated sessions.

Despite the challenges faced we put in appropriate measures to mitigate the effects it may have on the research findings. To address the reluctance by some earlier identified key informants to participate in the interviews in Garissa, we made efforts to obtain adequate information from those who were willing. We hence promptly re-placed those who declined with others willing to participate in the same area. We probed further questions that were either skipped or glossed over by some respondents in subsequent interviews. The researchers mostly took extensive notes and reconstructed conversations whenever respondents were reluctant to have their con-versations recorded. On the compensation being inadequate, we explained to the respondents that we could not offer much more than what we had and emphasised the noble goals the research will shed on themes of research as findings and which will benefit the entire community in future.

Despite the challenges faced, the research team was able to do in-depth interviews with those willing to partic-ipate in the research. The problem of fewer respondents mostly affected Garissa and not Isiolo, Mandera and Isiolo.

Chapter III: Findings[19]

Theme I: Background Information on the Key Informants

Biographies of religious scholars are a reflection of their intellectual journey in pursuit of knowledge and it is through it that one can infer religious ideologies prevalent in an area. It also reveals their intellectual influence in terms of mentorship and scholarship, their current position within their communities and their wider connections to transnational Muslim scholarly traditions. It is because of centrality of their biographies that we set out to trace the contours of life stories of our respondents in northern Kenya.

Individual life histories of learning of respondents are hence central in making of religious authority in any Muslim society. The diverse places of learning, the scholars under which one received tutelage, their prominence in leading local religious centres and teaching education institutions and their position in society are all intractably linked. This inevitably also influence their ideological positions. Below is a summative synopsis of important milestones discernible from life stories of current religious scholars interviewed during this research.

The age of the respondents ranged from 25 to 87 years old in North Eastern and Upper Eastern. The respondents were of both genders. All the respondents had acquired Islamic knowledge with lowest having thanawi (high school diploma) and the most qualified having achieved a doctorate degree in Islamic studies or related social sciences. All respondents, except one, had at least a Kenyan secular primary school certificate. The majority had secondary school certificates and a few had postgraduate level qualifications. This is an indication that contrary to popular perception, many religious scholars in this part of Kenya have both basic secular and advanced Islamic religious education.

Most respondents work or formerly worked as madrasa teachers, Qur'anic school-teachers, prayer leaders, community leaders, representatives of local or national faith based organizations and some as teachers in the secular education system and Islamic universities. Some were administrators or board members of Islamic philanthropic organizations or are affiliated in some way with the county government departments tasked with religious affairs. One works as an employee of a Gulf country embassy.

Most of the respondents were born in the county they currently work and reside in. One religious leader from Marsabit County was born in the Arsi region of Ethiopia. They all attended elementary religious education in the locale they were born in, primarily beginning with a traditional Qur'anic schooling system. Thereafter they pursued Islamic Studies at various madrasas and study circles within and outside the counties of their residence. Those who also pursued secular education attended primary and secondary schools within the counties of their origin. There are also indications that some respondents acquired religious education in Ethiopia or Somalia. All the scholars are married with children. Some of the elderly scholars were in polygamous marriages with larger numbers of children.

Sample biographies:

> ### *Sheikh Mohamed, Marsabit*
>
> *My name of Sheikh Mohamed. I was born in 1972 in Marsabit. I am married with 9 children and reside in Marsabit town. I got early religious education from Madrasa Fatih in Marsabit. Later I proceeded to Nurul Islam in Malindi where he earned diploma in religious studies and later to Kheiratt Islamiyah in Kilifi for degree in Arabic, Hadith and translation.*
>
> ### *Sheikh Hussein Guyo, Isiolo*
>
> *My name is Sheikh Hussein Guyo. I am from Merti, Isiolo county. I attended Merti primary school, then join Merti Muslim boys. After that I joined Shanzu Teachers college in Mombasa for P1- Diploma in Religious studies. Thereafter, I joined International University of Africa for my degree in education (Islamic Religious Education/Arabic). Currently I am undertaking my masters in Islamic studies at Mt Kenya university, Thika.*

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[19] The chapter is based on analysis of conversations done with research respondents in Marsabit, Isiolo, Mandera and Garissa in the month of September 2020. The views expressed herein are hence those of the informants.

General Structure of Islamic Education System in Northern Kenya

Lower Primary (Ibtidai)
6 years

▼

Upper Primary (I'daadi)
3 years

▼

High School (Thanawi)
4 years

▼

University (Jami'ya) 4-6 years depending on course
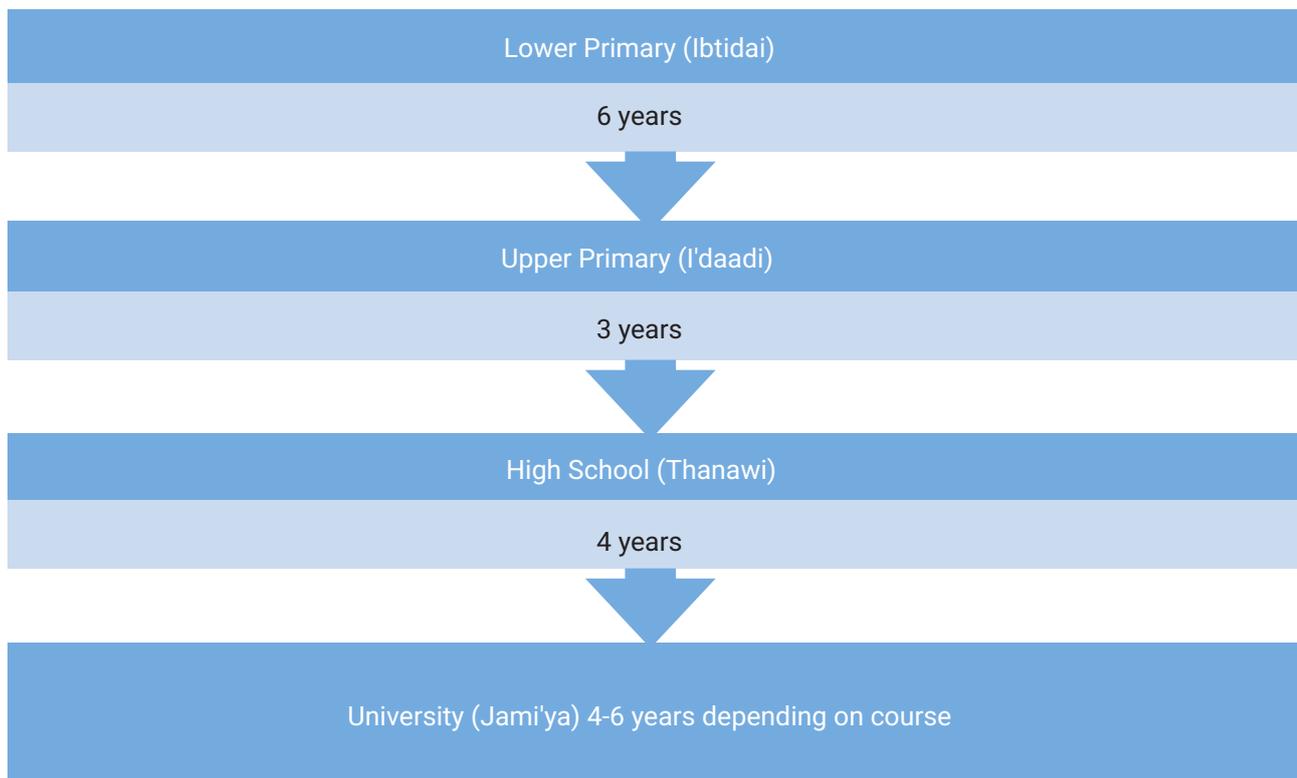
It is important to provide an overview of the structure of the typical madrasa system that most religious scholars in northern Kenya progress through as a foundation of their intellectual growth. Often prior to joining the Ibtidai level, parents enrol their children in traditional Qur'anic memorization schools called dugsi /duksi. Sometime, madrasa and dugsi education schools are concurrently pursued at different times of the day or the week.

It is also a common practice for parents to opt either to enrol their children fully in the madrasa system or allow them to pursue secular education and attend madrasa during the weekend and secular school holidays. A number of religious leaders interviewed acquired secular primary and secondary education certificates in this fashion.

A significant trend that became clear from the interviews is the popularity of halaqa (xalaqa) as a vital forum for Islamic knowledge transmission. A renowned scholar will take a number of students under his tutelage and teach them various themes of Islamic studies during regular mosque teaching circles (darsa) for months or even years. This form of teaching predates the madrasa system, was a primary form of learning during the precolonial period and is still considered a highly esteemed form of knowledge acquisition. A number of respondents attended halaqa, in Kenya and Somalia.

Theme II Biography of Knowledge Acquisition and Influences
Trajectories of Learning: Places and Specializations

Islamic educational institutions where one acquires ilm had significant impact on the nature of Islamic ideologies adopted by students and scholars from northern Kenya. This is especially so for undergraduate and postgraduate degrees.

As earlier indicated, almost all the respondents attended religious educational institutions in their regions of residence. A few of the respondents acquired their educations from Baidoa (Baydhabo) in Somalia or from Arsi in Ethiopia. Some had postgraduate degrees in Islamic Studies or were pursuing the same. For ibtidai and I'daadi levels most attended local madrasas. However, for the thanawi level, some had the option of attending either local institutions or renowned institutions in Kisauni, Kilifi or Malindi in the Coast region. Attending an institution at the coast brought the students into contact with scholars and coastal Muslim intellectual history. Many also refined their Swahili proficiency and oratory skills. Thika College of Islamic Studies (later Umma University)[20], Mustaqbal University[21] (Garissa) and the Islamic University in Uganda (Mbale)[22], were often preferred choices for a Bachelor's degree. Often the pursuit of an undergraduate degree was facilitated by scholarships from these institutions. The budding scholars were by then exposed to broader intellectual traditions and their ideological leanings were moulded further by senior scholars who taught and mentored them at these institutions. There are some religious leaders who advanced their education outside the country, for instance in Sudan at the Jazeera College, the International University of Africa[23], Islamic University in Uganda (IUIU), University of Holy Quran and Islamic Sciences, Omdurman or the University of Omdurman; in Uganda at Kampala International University; in Egypt at Al Azhar University or Al Iqra University; in Saudi Arabia at the Madina University; or in Qatar at the Hamad bin Khalifa University. Religious scholars from Upper Eastern in particular benefited from opportunities at the International University of Africa, Khartoum, in the early 2000s. The university, founded with support from Saudi Arabia and other Gulf countries as well as the Sudanese government, was a preferred destination for sponsored Islamic Studies and has helped train the next generation of ulama across Africa and Asia since its establishment. It appears to have a strong Salafist leaning. The University broadened its scope beyond Islamic Studies and currently offers various natural and human science specializations. It is highly rated in Sudan.

The transnational nature of Islamic education acquisition is an indication of diverse global influence transfused in heterogeneous ideologies prevalent in northern Kenya. Critical in the expansion of Islamic university education and the subsequent training of a large cadre of Kenya Muslim religious leaders is the role of Gulf states such as Kuwait and Saudi Arabia through establishment of institutions of higher learning in Sudan initially and later in Kenya.

Overall, the educational influences among religious scholars in the study area went beyond Islamic studies as a number of them pursued secular studies in Kenyan universities in disciplines such as architecture, education, international relations. Others had double postgraduate degrees in religious and secular education, this implies that religious scholars in this part of Kenya indeed have advanced knowledge of contemporary and classical Islamic Studies as well as competent understandings of secular education and came under a broad range of influences both local and transnational.

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[20] Umma University was established by Kuwaiti backed Africa Muslim Agency (currently called Direct Aid International) first as Thika College of Sharia and Islamic Studies. It is chartered university in Kenya. https://www.umma.ac.ke/
[21] There is lack of information on Mustaqbal University online
[22] https://www.iuiu.ac.ug/ this university was started by then Organization of Islamic Conference (now, Organization of Islamic Cooperation) headquartered in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, 57 member-state entity that brings together large number of Muslim majority countries
[23] https://www.iua.edu.sd/ this university started off as Islamic Africa Centre in 1977 with financial support from Saudi Arabia and other Gulf states and later was called International Islamic University of Africa from 1992 to train young African Salafist ideologies. It later dropped the name Islamic when broadened its disciplinary focus beyond Islamic studies to natural and social sciences. It attracts hundreds of students from sub-Saharan Africa and Asia. Many religious scholars in northern and coastal Kenya are alumni of the university.

Religious Influencers of the Contemporary Scholars

Most respondents were taught by some of the leading luminaries in religious education in northern Kenya. These esteemed scholars had a significant impact on their ambitions to pursue further religious education and eventually in shaping their scholarly careers. While most of the influences were imparted through local madrasa and halaqa circles, it is likely that some of the influencers cited were scholars who taught the respondents during their stints at madrasas in Mombasa, undergraduate education at Umma University or other similar institutions in Uganda, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Qatar and Egypt.

For ease of analysis, those who influenced the intellectual growth and mentored the respondents are listed below. These were either the teachers or mentors of the current crop of scholars from whom the respondents were a representative sample. While some are still alive, others are deceased but still remembered by the respondents, their students, with admiration and respect. The list was compiled from answers of the respondents and demonstrate the richness and complexity of local intellectual history as a product of transnational exchange.

Garissa	Mandera	Marsabit	Isiolo	Outside northern Kenya	International influences
Sh. Abdihafit Haji Yussuf	Sheikh Bashir	Maalim Abdirahman	Sheikh Abduba Ali	Sheikh Siraj Rahman (Mombasa)	Sheikh Ibrahim of Bale, Ethiopia
Sh. Abdullahi Osman (Bulow)	Ahmed Sudan	Maalim Ahmed	Sheikh Mohamed Arsi	Shekh Ahmed Aljazairy (Mombasa)	Prof. Mohamed Al- Amin of International University of Africa
Sh.Abdirahman Wardere	Sheikh Mohamed Alasow	Maalim Gedho	Sheikh Mohamed Hussein	Sheikh Dr. Ibrahim Maalim Amin	Mufti Menk
Sh. Ali Noor Adam	Sheikh Hassan	Maalim Osman	Professor Malik Abdi	Dr. Abdilatif	Zakir Naik
Sheikh Suleiman Hussein	Sheikh Omar Mohamed Faruq	Sheikh Umar Sharrif of Marsabit	Sheikh Abdullahi Golicha	Dr. Alio Mohamed	
Sheikh Omar Abyale	Sheikh Osman Abdi	The late Sheikh Adan Golicha	Hajj Saleh Gulled	Sheikh Rajab Mwanje	
Sheikh Mohamed		Maalim Ali Karisa	Late Sheikh Hussein Hilolwe	Dr. Abdilatif Hasan	
Sheikh Ismail			Sheikh Abdulaziz	Dr. Hasan Ali	
Sheikh Abdirahman			Sheikh Sirajurahman	Prof Sheikh Mohamed Said of Malindi	
Sheikh			Sheikh Mohamednoor Salat	Sheikh Sharif Salim of Kilifi	
Sheikh Ibrahim Isse			Sheikh Ibrahim Kiyo		
Sheikh Ismail Issack					

The list is not exhaustive of the pioneer religious leaders in northern Kenya. It reveals that in the research counties, a significant number of intellectual mentors of the current religious scholars are drawn from within the region while a large number of mentors from outside the region are based at Islamic universities within the country, as well as in Sudan and Ethiopia. It is not surprising that global Islamic scholars on social and broadcast media, such as Mufti Menk and Zakir Naik, are considered to also be influential in the lives of the research respondents.

> *Sheikh Okile, Isiolo*
>
> *I was mentored by Professor Malik Abdi, Sheikh Abdullahi Golicha, Hajj Saleh Gulled and Late Sheikh Hussein Hilolwe of Garba Tulla among many influential scholars*

Current teaching and/or religious leadership positions

Most of the respondents teach in madrasa and are also prayer leaders in their areas of residence. Some are members of local or religious Islamic education organizations or scholarly leagues. A few were also deputy Kadhis. Some worked as teachers in secular institutions or lecturers in Islamic universities such Mustaqbal University, RAF University and Umma University while a number of older respondents are retired from active teaching positions but remained sought after by the community and emerging scholars for their guidance. Aside from teaching, all religious leaders interviewed also listed public speaking and da'wa (proselytism) as active work that they were engaged in. A few regularly feature on ILM TV, an online streaming service and free-to-air Islamic television[24]. In sum, the religious scholars interviewed enjoy broad recognition from local communities and have impacted the trajectories of Islamic knowledge acquisition by hundreds of current students under their guidance or were taught by them in the past. They largely draw their inspirations to teach from a religiously motivated duty to spread their knowledge and the correct faith to deserving others.

Muslim organizations affiliated to or leading in the region/area

Almost all religious leaders interviewed were affiliated to or were members of local, national or international Islamic organizations. These organizations range from educational institutions or charities, welfare groups, scholarly leagues, national religious scholars' bodies or national socio-political entities. For future engagement with religious scholars, the organizations may form entry point for contact.

Below is a summative table of organizations to which the scholars were affiliated to:

Local	Regional	National	International
• Albayan Community Development Organization (Garissa) • Nurul-ummah Organization (Garissa) • Jamiyatul Riaaya • Najeh (Garissa) • Marsabit Interfaith • Isiolo Interfaith • Merti Quran Centre • Al Falah Centre, Isiolo • Garba Tulla Islamic Centre, Isiolo	• Waso Ulama League • Young Muslim Association • North eastern youth for Development	• SUPKEM • CIPK	• Al Haramain • Al Ibrahim • Saudi mission • Islamic heritage • Muslim welfare • Britain – Zakah orphanage centre • Islamic relief Kenya • Africa Muslim Agencies (Kuwait) • Direct Aid • Al Muntada • Islamic Foundation • Islamic Society • SOHA

Merti Quran Centre, Al Falah Islamic Centre, Garba Tulla Islamic Centre in Isiolo and Al Hidaya, Marsabit in upper eastern and others in north eastern region were built through support of international organizations such as Al Haramain, Islamic Foundation, Al Muntada, Africa Muslim Agency among others. These organizations propagated an Islamic ideology that has inclined towards Salafism since 1980s and has hence influenced thousands of students and hundreds of religious scholars. A look at a social media page of the Albayan Community Development Organization in Garissa shows similar global influences. The page favours the use of Arabic. The organization often hosts high level seminars and talks that feature esteemed local and national Somali scholars at Ibn Qayyim Mosque in Garissa.[25]

The Waso Ulama League brings together religious scholars from Isiolo north and south constituencies. Aside from the international Islamic charitable organizations mentioned in connection with the expansion of Islamic education and Salafism, the Star of Hope Association (SOHA) also has interesting transnational connections. It is a Pakistani linked non-profit organization for education and health care. SOHA regularly distributes food aid and medical support to the under privileged in Isiolo. It also supports a mosque and schools and just recently built a funeral parlour.

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[24] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w0JcwlGBxSQ
[25] https://www.facebook.com/albayancommunity/?ref=page_internal
The choice of the name Ibn Qayyim for the Garissa mosque indicates a strong Salafi affiliation. Ibn Taymiyya (full name Taqi ad-Dīn A mad ibn Abd al-Halim ibn Abd al-Salam al-Numayri al- arrānī) who lived between CE 1263-1328) was a leading theologian and jurist of the Hanbali school of thought from who the wahabi movement drew much inspiration from. His student Ibn Qayyim al Jawziyya is equally held in reverence by Salafists across the world.

Africa Muslim Agency, one of the most prominent Kuwaiti charitable organizations, has changed its name to Direct Aid. It should also be noted that following the 1998 Al Qaeda US embassy bombing, five international organizations active in northern Kenya and other parts of country were proscribed for allegedly supporting terrorism. This included Horn of Africa Relief Agencies, Mercy Relief International, Al-Haramain Foundation, Help African People, the International Islamic Relief Organisation (IIRO) and Ibrahim Bin Abdul Aziz Al Ibrahim Foundation.[26]

> ***Hassan Duba, Isiolo***
>
> *Al Haramain, Islamic Foundation and Islamic Society are some of the many international organizations built our mosques, establish orphanage center and during religious celebration, they slaughter animals for the vulnerable people. They paid salaries for madhrasa teachers.*
>
> ***Aw Hamza, Mandera***
>
> *Islamic Foundation, Direct Aid (Africa Muslim Agencies), Al- Muntada, Al- Haramain bu built schools and provided sponsorship to students, established madrasa in every locality in Mandera*

Past Historical Trajectories of Learning

Below is a summary of identified historical approaches to learning that captures both places and spaces of knowledge transmission.

Places where ilm was sought	Means of pursuit of ilm	Methods of ilm pursuit	Religious influence imparted	Implications
Somalia • Mogadishu • Dinsor • Bardera • Bidao (• Kismayu • Zeila • Baidoa Ethiopia • Harar • parts of Ogaden Region Yemen Hijaz – Mecca & Medina Sudan Egypt Malaysia Turkey Pakistan India	xireysi (hireysi), which means travelling long distances to seek knowledge, it used to take a decade or more Tabligh	halaqaat (xalaqat) systems Dugsis Madrasa Mosque darsas	Fiqh (Islamic jurisprudence), Quran, Arabic based on Shafi'i madhhab Sufi tariqas Salafi ideology	Indicates transnational influences were widespread during this historical period as it is in current times It shows there were greater levels of influences and interconnectivity between Muslim scholarly traditions in the Horn of Africa and with Hijaz and Yemen in the past as is now

Initial locations where knowledge was sought remained within esteemed centres of Islamic knowledge such as Bardera (also written as Bardhere or Baardheere) in Somalia and in Harar in Ethiopia. They were by the esteemed centres of Islamic learning during this pre-colonial era. Travel during this time was largely on foot and by animal transport. Halaqa or study circles were popular medium for knowledge transmission. This period was the golden age of Sufi Islam in northern Kenya.

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[26] http://www.ipsnews.net/1998/09/kenya-banning-of-islamic-relief-agencies-alarms-local-ngos/

> **Abdi Dekow, Garissa**
>
> *Students in past used to study the religion through halaqat in the mosques. The scholars used to teach for free without any charges but the students used to gift their teachers with valuables such as domestic animals after completion of their studies. Students would travel all the way from here all the to Mogadishu or Bardera to study the religion.*

During the post-colonial period, with massive investment by gulf countries into religious education and Islamization project, Mecca, Medina, Sudan, Egypt and Malaysia replaced the earlier regional hubs as sought-after centres of learning. Scholarships by Gulf countries played a great role. Returning graduates formed the largest cadre of religious scholars and predominate the intellectual landscape today.

Influence of Islamic religiosity in every day in the society

Generally, Islam remains highly influential in the everyday life of northern Kenya. The level of religious consciousness is remarkably high and is reflected not just in dress, food and consumption cultures, but also in the esteemed positions and influence enjoyed by religious leaders and the high premiums placed on pursuit of ilm but also popularity of contemporary debates on issues such as Islamic banking and other jurisprudential issues. This is due to rising levels of Islamic education and high religious observance. There is a growing move toward Salafist religiosity in general and a general decline in sufi affiliated practices and strong condemnation of practices such as mawlid attributed to previously popular Sufi inclined Islamic religiosity. While this is not a problem, it set a stage for intense polemics between the previous dominant Sufi Islam and currently popular Salafi ideology.

Modern trends such as social media and internet penetration in general is seen by the older respondents to be disruptive of local morals and strong character building as espoused in the past and in present times by their religious teachings. The younger scholars did not express such reservations. Groups such as Tablighi Jamaat and efforts of religious scholars are credited with the mass spread of religious observance and appreciation of Islam as a way of life in the region.

The following are noticeable religious trends in northern Kenya according to the respondents:

Strict adherence to religious teachings, dressing, and consumption cultures;

- Emergence of scholars, both young and old, well learned in Islamic Studies and respected for their knowledge within the region and across the country;
- Intricate connections to global Islamic humanitarian and educational institutions and support of local scholarly institutions by these transnational organizations and increasingly by sustainable homegrown community support;
- Increasing use of technology, internet and social media in preaching such as online streaming TVs and YouTube channels;
- Development and popularity of Islamic education institutions such as madrasas, mosques, duksis, integrated schools;
- Increase of da'wa through mosque gatherings such as those by Tablighi Jamaat;
- Rapid urbanization, settled population tend to invest in religious education and observance;
- Decrease in Sufi inclined practices and bid'a common in the past;
- Employment of many young scholars as kadhis (magistrates who preside over matters of Muslim personal law) especially from Upper Eastern and North Eastern;
- Interfaith coexistence and tolerance between majority Muslims and minority Christian population especially in Isiolo and Marsabit;
- Growing inclination toward religious conservatism characteristic of Salafi ideology in most parts of the population. This is due to years of Salafi proselytism since 1970s. However north east counties appear to be much stricter to adherence to Salafism than much more ethnically and religious heterogeneous Isiolo and Marsabit.

Theme III: Jurisprudence

Contemporary Islamic Schools of Thoughts in Northern Kenya

Shafi'i madhhab[27], historically a prominent Islamic school of thought in the Horn of Africa, remains the most widespread. There are also signs of growing leaning toward Hanbali madhhab among scholars who studied in Saudi Arabia.

> *Sheikh Sagal Gure*
>
> *Traditionally, the most dominant madhhab in the region has been the Shafi madhhab, which has prevailed in the Horn of Africa for centuries. From the 80s and 90s, scholars from the region who had gone to study in Saudi Arabia brought with them some teachings associated with the Hanbali madhhab, which is the dominant madhhab in Saudia Arabia.*

Salafism is now the mainstream religious ideology in most parts of northern Kenya. As observed in the history of Islam section earlier, decades of investment by Islamic philanthropic organizations in religious education and institutions is the main reason behind popularity of Salafism in the region. Salafism as a religious ideology calls for return to puritan and pristine Islam as practiced during the time of Prophet Muhammad, his companions and the pioneer generations of early Muslims.[28] Religious reformism that came as a result of massive investment in Islamic religious and education by Gulf charities since 1970s in northern Kenya entrenched this tradition.

One of the outgrowths of Salafism is its violent representation seen in many militant groups that wish to establish novel Islamic governance polities outside existing state structures in the Middle East, the Horn of Africa, the Sahel, the Lake Chad Basin among jihadi territories. Due to the proximity to Somalia from where Al Shabaab[29] has control over large swathes of territory, northern Kenya – especially areas close to the border – is impacted by the activities of this terrorist organisation. The religious leadership interviewed did not ascribe to Salafi-jihadism or any other form of exclusivist ideologies.

As is the nature of Islamic jurisprudence, scholars in the region recognize fluidity and flexibility of religious interpretation and acceptance of difference on matters of fiqh. However, this difference is seen to be minor as there is overwhelming adherence by most scholars to the Shafi'i madhhab. It should be noted that community leadership is diffused and there is no overall central voice of authority, a pattern highly common in Sunni jurisprudence and communities of believers.

Global Ideological Influences and Local Manifestations

The major global influence in the region are:

- Salafiyah ideology originating from Saudi Arabia, since the 1970s and 1990s. Scholars who studied in Saudi Arabian universities currently run the majority of religious and Islamic education institutions.

- Islah movement carrying the ideology of the Muslim Brotherhood from Egypt. The Muslim Brotherhood first arrived in Somalia in the 1970s. Some of the respondents mention that the movement has presence in north east of the country. There are also similar mentions of Muslim Brotherhood linked organizations in Moyale and Marsabit towns. Efforts to trace these groups did not bear fruits.

- The Sufi ideology which was the dominant ideology in the 19th and early 20th century before emergence of the above two.

- Tablighi Jamaat: a transnational apolitical lay missionary movement originally from the Indian subcontinent. It requires that members travel for missionary excursion for specific number of days or months away their homes. A distinctive feature of this movement is its large conventions in Nairobi and Garba Tulla.

- Shafiism, or Shafi, remains the most prevalent school of Islamic jurisprudence in these regions.

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[27] Shafii school of jurisprudence is one of the main four Sunni madhhabs. It was founded by Muhammad ibn Idris al Shafii (CE 767-820) who also also a student of Malik ibn Anas (CE 711-795) the founder of the Maliki School. The school is followed in Egypt, the Horn of Africa, Swahili coast, South East and Central Asia, Yemen, Hijaz, Sri Lanka and Maldives. The other schools of jurisprudence include Hanafi (predominantly in Turkey, the Balkans, Indian subcontinent, the Levant), Maliki (West Africa, North Africa, Sudan, UAE, parts of Kuwait) and Hanbali (Saudi Arabia, UAE, Bahrain, Qatar, Oman, Yemen, Syria, Iraq).

[28] For further reading on the theme, see Namira Nahouza, Wahabism and the Rise of the New Salafists: Theology, Power and Sunni Islam, New York: IB Taurus, 2018

- Violent jihadism due to proximity to Somalia's al Shabaab controlled territories. These beliefs are slowly gaining grounds, partly due to financial incentives the group uses for recruitment, use of threats and intimidation against locals opposing their agenda.

Regional trends

Upper Eastern (Isiolo and Marsabit)

Currently there are three ideologies that exist in Marsabit: Shaffi'ism, Salafism and the Muslim Brotherhood. There have been moments in the past when proponents of each of these different ideologies have clashed with each other. Particularly in 1991 when tensions between the Shafi'i and Salafist proponents led to hostility. Salafi traditions largely predominate the region.

Salafism is fastest growing in this region because of the influence of gulf charities with the financial capacity to conduct religious outreach, build mosques and madrasas and offer scholarships to students to pursue studies abroad. In Marsabit, different religions co-exist peacefully. Indeed, a family could have heterogeneous religious blend. Social ties and kinship also ensure that there is religious tolerance. In addition, umbrella bodies – such as the Marsabit Interfaith Council and Isiolo Interfaith Council – have enhanced inter-religious cohesiveness.

Just as in other parts of Kenya's Muslim majority regions, violent extremist groups have sought recruits over the last few years. Using sophisticated social media outreach, groups like Al Shabaab and Islamic State use clandestine networks to successfully recruit a number of youths into its fold. These recruits also manipulate interpersonal relations to help recruit further individuals. It should be noted violent jihadism as an ideology is not openly expressed or supported by the religious establishment. The influence of radical pro-jihadi ideologues such as Aboud Rogo and the circulation of violent jihadi propaganda and financial incentives offered to prospective recruits may have played a role in recruitment drives. Vulnerability to recruitment is further heightened by high rates of youth unemployment. A well-known Marsabit cleric, Sheikh Guyo Gorsa has been charged with terrorism-related. The case is yet to be finalized.

> *Sheikh Hussein Halakhe, Moyale, a proponent of Salafism*
>
> *In early 1970 to 1990 there was no well stipulated Islamic knowledge in the area as the vast majority of the population barely understand the Islamic way of life however they are those who follow (Maulidhi) festival like the birth of the prophet etc.*
>
> *During those period people go to Somalia in search for knowledge in a place called Baare dheer where they are purely taught on salat (Safinatul Salat)*
>
> *However, from 1990 to date there was paradigm shift where scholars who went abroad in search of Islamic knowledge came back with clear knowledge and spear ahead speared of the Islamic knowledge with the vast majority in the region and started teaching the youth who in turn became imam in various mosques in the far flung area.*
>
> *A good example of those scholar who went abroad and came back and spread the Ilm is Sheikh Adan Machakos who went to South Arabia and came back to taught several current day Imam in Moyale.*
>
> *Sheikh Umar Sharrif, Marsabit, a proponent of Sufi Islam on Salafism*
>
> *This fanatical orientation of salafis provided enabling environment for radicalization and violent extremism. There are a number of youth both male and female from Marsabit who voluntarily joined terror groups.*

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[29] For further reading on the rise of al Shabaab in Somalia and its connection to global jihadism, refer to Harun Maruf & Dan Joseph, the Secret History of Al Qaeda's Most Powerful Ally, Indiana University Press, 2018 and Stig Jarle Hansen, Al Shabaab in Somalia, the History and Ideology of a Militant Islamist Group, Oxford, New York, Oxford University Press, 2013

> **Sheikh Girma, Marsabit**
>
> *Jihadism is also on rise in Marsabit. A number of youths have been radicalized and joined Al-Shabaab. The conservative Muslims view Salafism as extremes with distinctive dress code, socialization, hair and beard cut etc. However, there is no exclusion to places of worship among different ideologies existing in Marsabit. A Muslim can pray in any mosque.*

Isiolo shares similar trends. Transnational Islamic organizations have invested in the establishment of religious institutions, the training of the majority religious cadre of the day and a subtle shift toward conservative Salafi inclined ideology. As in Marsabit, Isiolo experienced a rise in support for violent jihadism and subsequent recruitment of a number of its youth into violent extremist groups some years back. However, there are no apparent linkages between the preaching of local prominent religious scholars and radicalization and recruitment into jihadi groups.

It is important to note that a number of religious leaders in the region support the efforts of the government and non-state actors in addressing radicalization and countering violent extremism. For instance, many scholars have been instrumental in the writing and implementation of the county action plans. Others are involved in civic awareness campaigns and preaching against violent extremist ideologies.

North Eastern

On matters jurisprudence, the most influential school of thought has historically been Shafi. However, the Salafi ideology is currently the most influential ideology among the students of Islamic studies in the local madrassas. Such influence is evident in the general acceptance of Salafi scholars among the students and the general public. The most recognized Madrassas – Madrasat Al-Najah and Madrasat Al-Salam in Garisssa and similar ones across the region – are mostly managed and taught by Salafi scholars.

Radicalization and violent extremism are also present in the region. Al Shabaab regularly carries out attacks against civilian and security targets.[30] As in Upper Eastern, terrorist groups have recruited heavily from the region. Given its proximity to Somalia and close cross-border cultural ties, it has been possible for the violent jihadi group to radicalize and recruit large number of unemployed youths to their fold.

> **Abdi Dekow, Garissa**
>
> *Shafi'I madh'hab is the only school of jurisprudence active in Garissa*
>
> **Sheikh Sagal Gure, Garissa**
>
> *On matters jurisprudence the most influential school of thought was Shafi over the years. But the wahabi ideology is currently the most influential ideology among the students of Islamic studies in the local madrassas. Such influence is evident in the general acceptance of wahabi scholars among the students and the general public. The most recognized Islamic Madrassas like: Madrasat Al-Najah and Madrasat Al-Salam are mostly controlled and taught by Wahabi scholars.*
>
> **Mohammed Dabar, Garissa**
>
> *There are a few Takfiris, Muslim Brotherhood and numerous Salafists, for us Somalis, Shafii is our madhhab.*

Respondents also cite the presence of some members of the Muslim Brotherhood and takfiris in the region. All the respondents who mentioned these two ideologies were unwilling to substantiate further on the groups.

Madaris (sing. madrasa) in Northern Kenya

Religious education institutions are a conduit for the transmission of Islamic knowledge and the spread of specific religious ideologies. There are traditional madaris where students study Arabic and Islam for a duration of 12 years. Examples in Garissa include Madrasat Al-najah, Madrasat Al-salam, (both for boys only) and Madrasat Khadija bint Khuwailid (for girls only). There are several similar institutions in northern Kenya. This type of madrasa offers their programs either on a full-time basis (Saturday to Wednesday) for students who do not attend secular studies or on Saturdays and Sundays only (for students who attend secular schools on weekdays.

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[30] See data on disaggregated information on terror related incidence in Kenya including the northern regions on https://www.cve-kenya.org/

Integrated schools offer the dual system. They integrate the madrasa system within the government registered secular schools. Students take Arabic and religious studies together with the secular subjects. Dugsis (Duksis) are basically traditional Somali Quran memorization schools. They are often offered in homes and make use of wooden slates for writing.

Madaris are fairly evenly distributed in all towns and villages across the region. Thanawi level madrasas are commonly found in major towns.

Theme IV: Contemporary Debates

Major contemporary theological discourses in northern Kenya

The diversity of theological discourses is of concern to the religious scholars in northern Kenya. A majority of the respondents expressed reservations about delving deeper into theological discourses present in the region. Below are some of the major debates that were raised by respondents.

> **Ahmed Diis, Garissa, on lack of intellectual debate culture in northern Kenya**
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> *There are no particular debates of value among our scholars for the simple reason that are not researchers or interested in reading classical treatise on theology or jurisprudence or Muslim history. There is no a single reputable Islamic library in this region or even the country at large that has Islamic books and books related to Islam. We need deep interpretation and not mere literal reading of religious texts common now in north eastern.*

Radicalization and violent extremism

This is a subject that has caused heated debate due to the emergence of terrorist groups in the region. The group churns out theological arguments to recruit and radicalize youth in the region and have at times targeted religious leaders who oppose their propaganda using counter-narratives. The organisation calls upon Muslims to migrate to territories they control where they say that the migrants will find an ideal Islamic state where they can live under the dictates of Islamic law.

Respondents also expressed strong condemnation of politically instigated violence and link such incidents to groups that instrumentalize religion for political ends. Islam, they argue, does not condone violence but calls for protection and preservation of human life and property. This, they posit, is stated severally in the Quran. Islam is a message of peace and calls for peaceful co-existence. Linking violence with Islam in recent years was argued to be purely political.

Some respondents call for greater public sensitization on religion and violence and argue that as Kenyan Muslims there is no need for violence as they enjoy freedom of worship and legitimate ways to participate in political processes.

> **Aw Hamza, Mandera**
>
> *The only violence the religion advocates for self-defense. when somebody attacks and you fear it might/ may cause body harm, you can defend yourself. Islam don't advocate for violence at all.*
>
> *Sheikh Hussein Halakhe, Moyale,*
>
> *Radicalization especially became area of concern as these aspects is shrouded in the religion hence Islamic scholars ought to take the responsibility of delving into these matters and make people understand these crucial matters. As this will have negative ramification on matters radicalization if not properly disseminated to the public as it may fuel radicalization.*

Violent jihadism appears to be on rise in northern Kenya. The majority of the respondents suggest that the ulama should play a more pivotal role in addressing this challenge as they are well versed in theological issues. Respondents cited intimidation, threats of attacks and coercion by violent extremist operatives for their growing influence in society. In addition, the operatives are said to position themselves as defenders of the locals against state excesses and enforcers of God's laws. They are also alleged to be using financial incentives to lure unemployed youth into their ranks.

> **Sheikh Girma, Marsabit, on the role of preachers to counter jihadism**
>
> *Violent extremism is slowing growing in this region. It is role of preachers to counter jihadism narratives. However, there is challenge of resource constraint. Nevertheless, religious leaders and preachers should work harmoniously with security agencies and other partners who work towards peace and security of the people.*

Religious scholars' distance themselves from engaging in efforts against the spread of jihadi ideologies due to a fear of violent extremist operatives. These scholars also allege that they are subjected to suspicion, arrests and intimidation on unfounded grounds by security agents.

> **Sheikh Mohamed, Marsabit**
>
> *Marsabit county is an emerging space for radicalization. The incidence of Sheikh Guyo Gorsa and the ensued riots and vandalism experienced during his arrest was a good indicator pointing to the level of radical indoctrination among the youths.*
>
> *Some ideologies like Salafism and khalafism provide enabling environment for radicalizations. It is the responsibility of the religious leaders to provide counter narratives on radicalization and violent extremism. The Imams undertake that through summons, participating workshops etc. and working with relevant peace structures at the county and national levels.*
>
> *I am a member of the County Steering committee on CVE and a team member developing Marsabit County Action plan on CVE.*

Islamic banking

It is important to scholars that legitimate forms of Islamic banking and finance are entrenched in the region. Conventional banks offering both interest free and interest based financial products exist side-by-side with Islamic banks. Respondents mentioned that scholars often preach against interest-based transactions.

Social media

Social media influence on youths is a subject that interests a number of scholars. This is seen as a double-edged sword. On the one hand, some scholars utilize social media (such as YouTube) for dissemination of their teachings beyond their immediate locale, but on the other they also decry the negative impact t has caused the youth in terms of providing opportunities to copy foreign norms or procrastinate.

Condemnation of Sufi practices

Sufi practices seem to be of interest to the majority of scholars. Some are concerned with how to eradicate the visiting of graves, mowlid, use of talismanic items, spirit possession and other Sufi associated practices of the past. These practices are associated with Sufi orders that were in the past prominent in northern Kenya. Opposition to these practices emanates from the scholars' understanding that they are sinful deeds. Sufi affiliated scholars however do not share stand with majority Salafi scholars.

> **Rahma Ibrahim, Garissa**
>
> *The main theological debate among Muslims has been about visiting the graves of the dead and its effects on the faith. While some scholars see it as Shirk others have no problem with it.*
>
> *Sheikh Umar Arsi, Marsabit, a proponent of Sufi Islam*
>
> *The wahabism proponents are fanatical in their preaching. They castigate traditional practices such as burning of incense- lubadina, naming ceremonies- gubis, frying of traditional coffee- bunna qalla for prayer, as repugnant to religion.*

Moon sighting, Islamic calendrical controversies

The start and end of the month of the fasting month of Ramadhan as well as eid days is not just a controversial issue among Muslims in northern Kenya. Some favour following the guidance of the government appointed Chief Kadhi on the matter, while a majority of northern Kenyan ulama side with announcements from Saudi Arabia or sightings in Somalia.

Understaffing of Islamic Religious Education Teachers in public schools and non-recognition of Madrasa graduates

Many respondents expressed concern over the state of Islamic Religious Education in the secular school system. There are not enough teachers for the subject and there is a feeling that students from northern Kenya are disadvantaged during national examinations. Few students are willing to enrol in teaching colleges to pursue the relevant training. In addition, the government is yet to recognise and accredit those who pursued Islamic Studies at Islamic universities or madari in Kenya and abroad so they cannot be employed as teachers or civil servants in the county government.

Women

Most respondents expressed idealized Islamic roles and responsibilities for the female in Muslim society. A majority of the respondents expressed strong support for the education of women, their importance in society as taught by core Islamic sources, their pivotal role in education of children and as home makers in the domestic sphere and their rights to pursue education, careers and leadership positions as long as they do not neglect or violate religious duties. This position reiterates the classical Islamic status of women as enshrined in the Sharia. Women's position in the society is hence linked to honour protection, as children's first teachers and instillers of morality in younger generations, and as managers of their husband's property.

Some dissenting voices decried the lowly position enjoyed by women in this patriarchal interpretation of Islam and in local cultures that limit women to the domestic space, in which their movements and freedoms are controlled. These respondents called for more debate on the subject and female empowerment.

> ***Ahmed Diis, Garissa***
>
> *Women are very important in Islam and It is a field I am very passionate about. I feel women have been violated not by Islam but by the Muslims. We need more research about women issues.*
>
> ***Sheikh Said, Isiolo***
>
> *The Qur'an and the practice of the Prophet Muhammad recognized the different functions and mutually supportive roles of men and women, encouraging just and balanced social and family life. In Islam women have freedom to engage in medical careers among other things.*
>
> ***Ahmed Mohammad, Mandera***
>
> *Women's role in the society is to take care of the kids and should avoid participating on political matters.*
>
> ***Abdullahi Sheikh Ali, Mandera***
>
> *The role of women is not a problem in the Muslim societies and it's never a hot issue that needs an attention, their role in all spheres of life is guided in details by the sharia.*
>
> ***Fatuma Adan, Marsabit***
>
> *Pastoral communities in Marsabit practice female circumcision. This practice is embedded within their tradition which they have enjoyed over many generations.*
>
> *It is duties of the religious leader to enlighten believers on the true position of female circumcision and discourage faithful from practicing it.*

Attitudes toward Secularism

Respondents acknowledged that the secular and religious worlds are intertwined and mutually impact on each other. While decrying the adverse impact of modernity on religious life, they felt that religion holds the keys to morality and common good. In relation to the secular and the religious, diverse perspectives were expressed. The majority supported the need for mutual interdependence of both: the primacy of religion in this world and hereafter and the importance of secular knowledge to religious leaders so as to navigate the social world and understand life from a holistic perspective. Some distanced themselves from the artificial divide between the secular and the religious as an import from other cultures, noting that the Prophetic traditions did not make this distinction and that Islam enforces the inseparability of the two in everyday life.

Religious scholars play a pivotal role in elective politics. Almost all governors in northern Kenya have advisers on matters of religion. These figures are often prominent religious scholars. Increasingly religious scholars are also important due to the mediatory role they play in reconciling clan difference, arbitrating inter-ethnic clashes and reaching consensus on appropriate candidates for political posts. Due to the overlap of clan and religious leadership in most counties, religious scholars often double not just as ulamas but also community leaders.

Abdihakim Abdi, Isiolo

Islam play a greater role in politics. In Isiolo, during 2017 election, religious leaders endorsed some candidates based on criteria developed by local religious leadership. During Prophet Muhammad's time, they had Shura. Shura is a consensus meeting to make decision/appoint something. Some religious leaders are advisors to political leaders.

Interfaith relations, tolerance, co-existence with non-Muslims

Respondents expressed strong support for interfaith relations while promoting the universality of their faith. The arguments for amicable co-existence with non-Muslims in the region were largely drawn from Qur'anic sources, Muslim history and Prophetic traditions. They also affirmed that there are good relations with non-Muslims in the region and that problems between Muslims and non-Muslims are few and far between. Those that do exist are attributable to violent extremist groups operating out of Somalia and targeting non-Muslim residents due to security lapses. Respondents also reiterated the classical Islamic position on freedom of religious beliefs, respect and appreciation of other religions and interfaith collaboration as carried out by Prophet Muhammad in his lifetime.

Status of Islamic Education

While acknowledging the importance of Islamic education in enhancing morality and adherence to religious beliefs and practices, many respondents also recognize numerous challenges it faces such as underfunding, understaffing, poor quality education of teachers and competition from the secular education which leads to greater rates of employment. In addition, curriculum lack uniformity and urgently requires reform to make it relevant to local realities.

> *Shukria Dima, Isiolo*
>
> *The status of religious education in Muslim community is disheartening. Youth do not want to study religious education. The status is dwindling. In most schools, Muslim students study Christian Religious Education, this is what we are trying to reverse.*
>
> *Ahmed Diis, Garissa*
>
> *The Islamic schools are dying because of things like underfunding, there are no institutions that run or review their syllabuses, outdated and out of touch syllabus like for example I was taught of the topography of Saudi Arabia. They don't have a syllabus that talks of Kenyan geography. Lack of skilled teachers also kills the Islamic learning.*

Theme V: Going Forward: Emerging Trends and Challenges faced by the Religious Scholars in Northern Kenya

In mapping the influence of diverse religious ideologies in northern Kenya, it is important that we briefly look at how the religious scholars imagine their present state of affairs and the challenges they face. The majority of the respondents' state that the future is promising because of the immense investment in religious education institutions and integrated schools, as well as the high number of women and children in such institutions and the presence of Islamic university campuses and colleges in the region.

A minority call for reforms in Islamic education curriculum to address the emerging needs of the upcoming generations[31], the negative impact of social media on youths, political violence attributed to religious groups, rising Islamophobia, the role of mosques, a preference for secular over religious education, and a rigidity in interpretation of religious knowledge.

Challenges faced by religious scholars in northern Kenya according to the respondents

Religious scholars face numerous challenges, namely:

- A lack of unified religious leadership/authority: numerous organizations compete for influence and resources at local, regional, national and international levels creating a climate of rivalry and contestation;

- A lack of financial support often forces religious scholars to live at the mercy of politicians who take advantage of them for selfish political gains, causing irreparable damage to their reputation;

- Identity crises and the copying of non-Islamic manners among the younger generations despite efforts from the religious scholars to guide them;

- Lack of competence in Arabic language and an inadequate knowledge of Islamic jurisprudence leading to rigidity and a literal interpretation of religion;

- The negative impact of social media on the younger generations that spend considerable amount of time online instead of learning about Islam;

- Lack of accreditation of Islamic religious education certificates makes it hard for religious scholars to find employment in either the private or public sector; hence some are associated with backwardness;

- Violent extremist threats are a major challenge to the safety and security of some vocal ulama who preach against VEOs or their ideologies. Some ulamas have been targeted by security agents on suspicion of radicalization and recruitment of youth into violent extremist groups.

One major challenge cited by respondents is unsustainability of running religious and education institution due to lack of steady revenue stream. This leads to frequent fundraising activities by politicians and businesspeople to address financial problems. These politicians and businesspeople take advantage of financial assistance and use the religious elites to serve their interests. The building of income-generating enterprises in Nairobi and major cities have been one intervention carried out by religious scholars in the north east with some success.

Respondents posit the following may be possible solutions to challenges that they face:

- Collaboration of religious scholars with the politicians, businesspeople and community elders to create religious councils accepted by society, to be responsible for all matters of religion;

- A society driven fund, where all businesspeople direct their Zakat, for supporting the welfare of religious leaders and institutions;

- Civic awareness and more efforts in da'wa;

- Improvements in parenting to address wayward youths and to watch out for signs of radicalization: the scholars often exercise some societal powers to instill public morality and wish they could do more to entrench good values in society;

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[31] Ibren Adan explains the need for reforms in madrasa curriculum in this way, 'we need to bring skilled teachers and institutions that run the Islamic schools and a syllabus that is relevant. We need to create a contextualized curriculum and spread that across the country', interview done in September 2020 in Mandera

- An end to the targeted arrest, prosecution and extra-judicial killing of religious scholars under suspicion of involvement with violent extremist groups and guarantees of support and security for those who openly speak against such groups;

- Mass civic awareness and sensitization campaigns in the form of counter-narratives against violent extremist ideologies by all stakeholders including religious leaders.

What are religious scholars doing or planning to do in this regard?

Though not heterogeneously expressed, a majority of religious scholars mentioned the following as efforts that they are engaging in with regard to the revival of religion in the region:

- The religious leaders infer that they are putting in efforts to spread the religion across the region. This is being done through management of religious education institutions and da'wa outreaches.

- They suggest that there is a need for the creation of a contextualized uniform madrasa curriculum and examination body, accreditation of their certificates by government bodies and their professional and transparent management and modernization. The debate on the madrasa curriculum has also been of concern to the national Muslim leadership for several years. It is not surprising that such concerns are raised. Northern scholars are aware of this national Muslim discourse and hope that a solution will be achieved at the national level.

- Scholars are looking for financial and moral support, as well as sources of funds, for Islamic institutions. Some seek Islamic endowments (waqf) from Nairobi and other cities to run their institutions in northern Kenya.

- Some scholars also use social media and the internet to spread their teachings and address social issues through such platforms.

- They also preach against negative ethnicity, clannism, and what they perceive as moral decadence in the region.

Ulama, like any other social functionaries operating in the rapidly urbanizing but resource-scarce northern regions of Kenya, face societal changes that impact their livelihoods. Proximity to Somalia also predisposes them to dealing with the growing influence of al Shabaab and the threat of violent extremist attacks and intimidation, as well as suspicion from state agencies who at times accuse their members of being sympathisers, recruiters or radicalizers of local youths. The use of social media by younger generations appears to challenge scholars' ability to ensure greater adherence to the morals and values of the Islamic faith.

Conclusion

Islamic ideologies in northern Kenya are highly diverse and in a constant state of flux. Islam practiced in these areas is a product of both regional and international networks, but large numbers of home-grown religious figures have also come from the area. Salafism, a religious ideology that aspires to return Muslims to the pristine Islamic orthodoxy of the Prophet and his immediate generations, is prominent in the region though adherence to it differs between regions and within regions. Other ideological affiliations prevalent in the region include the Tablighi Jamaat. Just like the rest of the country, jihadi groups tap into existing structural factors and individual vulnerabilities to recruit and radicalize local youths. In order to address the growth of jihadism, it is important to incorporate accepted religious scholars and prominent community, women and youth leaders in such campaigns.

Recommendations

Key Points for Engagement with Religious Scholars in Northern Kenya

On ideological diversity:

- For one to understand the ideological diversity of northern Kenya, it is important to study the intellectual history of the region and survey affiliations of its most prominent institutions and their support system. This will form the background to any engagement that wishes to rope in religious scholars as key stakeholders. While it is certain that Salafism is the main ideological foundation of religiosity in northern Kenya, it is not broadly followed in a strict sense in all the counties or even within the same county. North Eastern counties appear to be more inclined toward religious conservatism than Upper Eastern in a general sense. Traditional Sufi orders exist though they are a minority both in upper eastern and north eastern. Shafii jurisprudence is prominently followed. A tiny Muslim Brotherhood cells appear to be emerging through the presence of development-oriented organizations in some of the major towns in the region. Tablighi Jamaat, a transnational apolitical Islamic lay missionary movement, is highly active across the entire region.

- Local scholars are a product of transnational trainings and influences. This is both a historical and contemporary phenomenon. They are hence heterogeneous in ideological leaning, international linkages, ethnic and clan affiliations, level of learning and support and legitimacy before the general public. The majority of scholars maintain these transnational networks for further learning, networking and the management of numerous Islamic educational and religious institutions.

- Support for violent jihadism among the scholars in these regions is negligible. Rather than being an outgrowth of local Salafi conservatism, the growth of jihadism can be explained by the area's proximity to Somalia, cross-border cultural and religious ties, financial incentives for recruitment and the ability of jihadi cells to intimidate vocal anti-jihadi groups. This does not imply that there are no religious scholars from the north who have either joined jihadi groups like al Shabaab or have been accused of being recruiters. However, these individuals are in the minority.

Engagement with scholars:

- It is important to identify prominent religious leaders and associated institutions in each of the counties for any engagement. Some of the scholars already deliver regular seminars and workshops for religious leaders and the general public on topical issues. These platforms can form entry points for engagement.

- Religious scholars are highly suspicious of state and non-state agencies asking for their collaboration in matters of countering violent extremism or related security interventions. It is important to use community representatives to create buy in and assure them of the advantages of their collaboration and their safety and security.

- To address the growing influence of violent jihadi groups like al Shabaab, support for religious scholars is critical as they are best placed to counter violent extremist ideologies. Due to their knowledge of religion, scholars can turn the hearts and minds of the local populace against such groups using their public platforms in mosques, madrasas and community meetings. They can do that through counter narrative production and sanctioning powers that their public positions afford them.

- Should one be interested in interventions that involve religious leaders as key stakeholders, it is important to approach local and regional faith-based organizations, professional religious associations, representatives of national Muslim bodies and prominent independent scholars who enjoy wide acceptance before the public in each of the counties. In north eastern counties, religious advisers to county government are also key partners to engage with.

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Annex 1: Key Informant Interview Guide:

Intellectual History of Islam in Northern Kenya Project

Hello. My name is ....

I am currently conducting research on the history of Islam in northern Kenya for a project that will document this local history in report formats for future references and better understanding of our society which will be shared with you. This research is supported by researchers from Egerton University and the Royal United Services Institute, a think tank. Due to the prominent position religious leaders play in our society, we feel that you are the most appropriate and qualified person to start this discussion with. The questions below are intended to obtain your opinion on the subject areas and whatever information you may provide us with will be kept strictly confidential and will not be shared with anyone other than for the purposes of this survey. You are free to ask any question regarding this survey and not to respond to any question you feel uncomfortable with. The interview will take approximately 1 and a half hours to complete and your participation is entirely voluntary. You shall be provided with a small token to compensate you for your time.

Tick where appropriate [√]

Part A: Socio-Demographic Data

1. Age of the respondent: 1. < 18 years [ ] 2. 18-35 years [ ] 3. 36-60 years [ ]

4. > 61 years [ ]

3. Gender ………………

3. Level of Islamic Education: ……………………

4. Level of Secular Education ……………………

5. What is your Occupational Status? 1. Formal Employment [ ] 2. Informal/Self Employed [ ] 3. Not Employed [ ]

Semi-structured questions:

1.   To start with, kindly share with me your own life history: Where were you born? Where did you study, to what levels and what did you study? Under which religious scholars did you obtain your esteemed knowledge of Islam? Family life? Current teaching and/or religious leadership positions? Muslim organizations affiliated to or leading in the region/area? Any other achievements that you wish to share? What are some of the key things that influenced the trajectory of your life?

2.   Tell me about the history of Islam in this area in particular and the region in general (we shall make it clear to the informant when questions will be administered). Tell me about how Islam spread within and from this region to neighbouring regions. Where and how did scholars and teachers of religion study or go to seek knowledge in the old times? Which religious leaders and movements and charities played critical roles in spread of Islam in modern times? How successful and influential is the faith in people's lives today? Give appropriate examples if possible. What has influenced the religious developments in the area over the years? Are there noticeable religious changes in the area over the years? If, so what are they and how have you experienced it? How

3.   Are there different madhahib (schools of Islamic jurisprudence) or Muslim groups that co-exist in this region? How unified is the Muslim community in matters of jurisprudence and community leadership? What are the global influences? How are madhahib manifested in everyday life, do each own their own religious and educational institutions or co-share with each other if any? Which madhahib or religious interpretations if any are influential in this region? What accounts for such influence and why? How do different doctrinal groups relate with each other and the non-Muslim population or persons? What are the influential local and

national Muslim faith-based organizations and bodies that are active in this region? Tell me briefly the nature and distribution of madaris (sing. madrasa) in the area.

4. Describe to me some of the major theological and contemporary debates that religious scholars including yourself are concerned with and interested in sharing with the umma. How do these debates impact on your sharing of ilm (religious knowledge) with your students and the larger Muslim community in the region? Some of the themes that require your perspectives include the role of women, relations between secular and religion world/politics, interfaith relation, religion and violence, the status of religious education in the world, global trends in Islamic thought. What are your positions on these issues?

5. Describe to me the future of religious reformism and revivalism in the area in the coming years. What are religious scholars doing or planning to do in this regard? What are the challenges religious scholars and umma face in term of adherence to the faith in these uncertain times? How are these challenges manifested in the society today? What are some of the possible solutions to these challenges? Given your position, what specifically do you plan to do and how do you wish these challenges be addressed?

Annex 2: Arabic Translation of Interview Questions
(translated by Hussein Sahal Gurrey)

دراسة حول تأثير الاتجاهات الإسلامية المعاصرة في قاريسا

	جواب	
		سؤال
		البيانات الاجتماعية والديموغرافية عن المستفتى:
		عمر:
		جنس :
		مستوى التعليمي الإسلامي:
		مستوى العلمي المادي:
		وضع المهني الحالي:
1.	Biography.	سيرة شخصية
		في البداية ، يرجى أن تخبرني خيرة حياتك الخاص:
		1. أين ولدت؟
		2. أين درست وإلى أي مستويات ومذا درست؟
		3. تحت أي علماء دين حصلت على معرفتك بالعلوم الإسلامية؟
		4. الحياة الأسررية؟
		5. التدريس الحالي و / أو المناصب الدينية؟
		6. المنظامات الإسلامية التي تنتسب إليها في المنطقة؟
		7. أي إنجازات أخرى ترغب في الحديث عنها؟
		8. ما هي بعض الأشياء الأساسية التي أثرت في مسار حياتك؟
2.	History ofIslam.	تاريخ الإسلام
		تحدث عن انتشار الإسلام داخل منطقة [غاريسا] وإلى المناطق المجاورة.
		كيف درس علماء الدين والمعلمون، و أي ذهبوا الطلب بالعلم قديما؟
		ما هي الحركات وزعماء الدين والجماعيات الخيرية التي لعبت أدوارًا حاسمة في فترة انتشار الإسلام في العصر الحديث؟
		ما مدى نجاح وتأثير الدين في نين حياة السانا اليوم؟ أعط أمثلة مناسبة إن أمكن.
	·	ما الذي أثر على التطورات الدينية في المنطقة عبر السنين؟
		هل هناك تغيرات دينية ملحوظة في المنطقة؟ نعم، فما هي هذه التغيرات؟ وما هي إذا كان الجواب: نعم، على مر السنين؟ إذا كان هذا تغيرات دينية ملحوظة تجربتك معها؟
3.	Jurisprudence.	المذاهب الفقهية
		هل توجد مذاهب فقهية أو أحزاب إسلامية مختلفة تتعايش في هذه المنطقق
		ما مدى توحد المجتمع الإسلامي في أمور الفقه وقيادة المجتمع؟
		ما هي التأثيرات الخارجية على التقليد المذهبي؟
		كيف يتجلى التقليد في المذهب في الحياة اليومية للمجتمع؟
		وهل يمتلك كل مذهب دينى مؤسسات تعليمية خاصة به أو يشترك مع المذاهب الآخرى، إن وجد
		ما هو المذهب الذي له أكبر تأثير في هذه المنطقق، إن وجد؟
		ما الذي يفسر هذا التأثير، ولماذا؟

		ما العلاقة بين الأحزاب الإسلامية المختلفة بعضها ببعض ومع السكان أو الأشخاص غير المسلمين؟
		ما هي المنظمات والهيئات الإسلامية المحلية والوطنية المؤثرة وتربة الفاعلة في هذه المنطقة؟
		تحدث بإيجاز عن طبيعة وانتشار المدارس الإسلامية في المنطقة
4.	Contemporary debates.	المسائل المعاصرة
		صِف بعض ما أهم من المسائل العقدية المعاصرة التي يهتم بها علماء الدين - بمن فيهم أنت - في النقاشات تعليم الأمة.
		كيف تؤثر هذه المناقشات على مشاركتك للمعرفة مع طلابك والمجتمع المسلم الأكبر في المنطقة؟
		هو رأيك في وجهة نظر كركة في القضايا التالية، وما هي مواقفك منها؟ 1 - دور المرأة في المجتمع 2. العلاقة بين العلوم الدينية والعلوم العصرية 3. التعايش بين الأديان. 4- الدين والعنف. 5. مكانة التعليم الديني في العالم ، الاتجاهات العالمية في الفكر الإسلامي.
5.	Future of Islam.	مستقبل الإسلام
		صف مستقبل الإسلام والدين والنهضة في المنطقة في السنوات القادمة.
		اذا ما دفع لعلماء الدين لتحقيق ذلك؟
		ما هي التحديات الموجهة للعلماء الدين والأمة في التمسك بالدين في هذه الأوقات والأعصبة؟
		كيف تتجلى هذه التحديات في المجتمع عموم؟
		ما هي بعض الحلول الممكنة لهذه التحديات؟
		حسب موقعك ، ما الذي تخطط للقيام به تحديدًا، وكيف تتمنى معالجة هذه التحديات؟
6.	Other Issues of importance.	قضايا أخرى ذات أهمية.
		مع انتشار فيروس كورونا في البلاد، وتعطيل جميع التجمعات ، كيف يخطط قادة الدين / العلماء / المعلمون لنشر التعليم الديني [مثلك]؟
		هل تريد إضافة أي معلومات ذات صلة؟

Annex 3: Risk Management and Ethical Considerations

Cognisant of the fact that this assignment was sensitive and there were risks involved in ensuring that quality responses are obtained, we adopted Trust-Based Qualitative Field Methods among other measures to during the study. A summary of risk issues and mitigation applied strategies are shown in the table below.

Concerns	Question	Strategies applied
Trust	How did we overcome historical mistrust between the researcher and the religious leaders and perception of profiling?	Engaged local researchers who were trusted members of the community to get respondent acceptance and ensure the study is relevant, ethical and has the potential to help address other needs. This was done through the co-option of assistants from both the Upper Eastern and North Eastern regions. Project built on history of partnership and track record of using research to inform interventions and services.
Engagement	How did we engage a religious leader that is typically resistant to outsiders/research?	An effective entry strategy and rapport building was applied from the beginning of the research. The strategy included referral/ introduction from another leader or association of Islamic preachers such as NAMLEF, SUPKEM etc. We had already identified a list of respondents from each county.
Confidentiality	How did we the research team collect and assess sensitive information such as openness to violent extremism while ensuring confidentiality and space for honest dialogue?	Guaranteed confidentiality regarding any information given and promises was used it exclusively for the assignment. Pseudonyms were used where appropriate.
Ethical Considerations	How did the research team made sure the respondent fully understood the goals of the study and their involvement?	Seek verbal consent were from the respondents and we grant them right to refuse to participate in the study at any stage. We ensured courtesy and upheld respect during the process of data collection. We obeyed and adhered to Do No Harm policy.
Community Based Participatory Research	How did we ensure that the research covers issue other than violent extremism that are of importance to the religious leaders in the engagement?	We designed open ended participatory key informant interview guide that accommodated respondents' interests in the discussions.
Risk Management	How did we mitigate against the risk of physical harm to the researchers and informants?	We made the objectives of the research was clear to the in formants. We informed local security officials of our presence and nature of the research. We resided in accommodation facilities with adequate security measures in place. We took note of our surroundings and in social interactions with the general public. We agreed that should any of the team members felt a threat to them from suspicious persons, we shall cease field work and leave the study area for safety immediately.