

PART 2

Politics



Contemporary African Khōjā identity is inextricably bound to both recent eras of globalization: the contemporary and colonial periods. These processes were driven by European powers but also included regional power structures in the western Indian Ocean region such as the sultan and chiefs of the Swahili coast; Asian merchant communities navigated these regional power structures (Nicolini 2009b). Until the late colonial period, the Khōjā communities of Tanganyika and Zanzibar were allowed to retain a bounded Indic ethnoreligious identity, in part due to the racial policies of the colonial state. More than a century and a half as residents in the states of eastern Africa necessarily led to a process of limited acculturation. Precisely because of their status as free traders, they were able to establish religious institutions through constant familial, cultural, linguistic, and mercantile intercourse with their ancestral communities in the subcontinent. This allowed the Khōjā the ability to maintain a relatively apolitical caste identity.

As with the majority of colonized peoples, modernity was thrust on the Khōjā through colonization. If we interpret their history in light of Gillespie's thesis that modernity was a process of grappling with the challenge of nominalism (Gillespie 2009), we can see that the Khōjā response to nominalism was to firmly enthrone God and to create an intellectual fortress of religion outside of which scientific rationalism and capitalism could operate unabated. In the late colonial period, the Khōjā—particularly those who worked closely with the British in Zanzibar—applied constitutional organization and systems planning (House and Warfield 1969) toward the goal of serving the community, and, as they saw it, strengthening an idea of religion that surpassed their ethnoreligious tradition in the service of 'Shiism.' This meant the appropriation of certain municipal functions for the development of communally run public institutions, such as hospitals, schools, and cemeteries. Management and expansion of these bodies necessitated the development of financial, bureaucratic, and managerial expertise that mirrored their mercantile corporations. The institutionalization of communal power through the democratic process around a central religious identity publically signaled the transition of the African Khōjā from *jñāt* to *jamāt*.

Eighteenth-century Saurāṣṭra (Spodek 1975) and Zanzibar (Sheriff 1987; Nicolini 2009b) mirrored forms of social organization in which communities had specific socioeconomic roles in the political ordering and functioning of society, somewhat akin to the Near Eastern 'Circle of Justice' postulate (London 2011). As in the Ottoman world, reciprocal relationships categorized the interactions between groups and the ruler (Aral 2004). The colonial period ushered in a citizenship and rights discourse to which African Asians were

generally indifferent, when defined in nationalist terms. In contrast, the politics of grievance became embedded within black African nationalism in colonial Tanganyika (Sunseri 2007).

The 1964 revolution in Zanzibar and the 1967 launch of Nyerere's *ujamaa* ('socialist') policies, through which all sectors of the economy and land were nationalized, coincided with citizenship requirements in Tanzania that imposed reporting requirements and restricted access to social goods and employment for those residents who did not wish to give up their British protectorate citizenship. The marginalization of Asian communities throughout East Africa (Ghai 1965) led the Tanzanian Khōjā to concentrate their resources on further developing the institutional structures of the *jamāt* in Dar es Salaam to meet the needs of both the refugee Zanzibari community and Khōjā communities migrating from the interior to the capital. The postcolonial period saw an increasing marginalization of Asians in the economic and political life of East Africa, which culminated in the 1972 expulsion of Asians from Uganda by Idi Amin. The precarious political position of Asian Africans meant that the political currents of modern globalization, such as citizenship, had to be mastered in short order.

The idea of citizenship is defined by the relationship of the citizen to the state (Heater 1999) or of the state to the globalized citizen (Sassen 2009). Citizenship invokes languages of social and political rights demanded of the state as well as of the responsibilities of citizens to it. These constructs are being increasingly challenged by the mobility of citizens (Beiner 1994), particularly Muslim migrants to Western Europe and North America (Soysal 1997). Both Heater and Beiner call for a 'world' or 'universal' citizenship based on notions of universal human rights and civics education, respectively, that broadens the hitherto narrow focus of nationalist agendas and moves toward a global political identity that embraces diversity and allows for points of global political convergence, such as the International Court of Justice.

The modern notion of citizenship is the result of the evolution of more than 2,000 years of Western political thought, whereby the evolution from classical poleis to civitates to medieval realms and finally to nation-states created modern ideologies, which finally bound the identities of peoples through civil religion to the structures of political power in the regions in which they resided. The Khōjā had begun to leave the subcontinent before the nationalist project began in earnest in their ancestral home and, by virtue of their position as economic intermediaries, were isolated from the nationalist discourses of Africanism in East Africa. The African Khōjā evolved a primary religious loyalty to and identification with their local *jamāt*, which functioned as a polis, and to the *imāmvāḍō*, which functioned as an agora.

During the postcolonial period, Tanzanian Khōjā who migrated northward into Western Europe and North America became fully deterritorialized and were forced into a process of 'Islamic' identity formation based on differentiation, relativization, and socialization among their minority ethnic neighbors (Robertson 1992). This new translocal culture bore an imagined world (Appadurai 1996) that connected the members of the worldwide Khōjā *jamāt* based on an idealized Near Eastern Shiism through the cultural experience of Africa. As a diasporic community, the African Khōjā leaped from the polis to global citizenship without a firm sense of state nationalism. The use of dual and triple citizenship by many members of the Khōjā community can be understood through Ong's concept of 'flexible citizenship' in an era defined by Soysal as 'postnationalism.' And yet, the state is not politically irrelevant, as people from the Global South do not flow northward quite as freely as do their manufactured goods (Jacobson 2009). The African Khōjā have been able to maintain the economic advantage of caste kin networks through the *jamāt* while reimagining their identity to engage in the discourses of global Shiism. The national is understood in relation to either the local or the global. It is possible that the Khōjā represent a new facet of Muslim global citizenship through the continuing evolution of the *jamāt* as an aggregator of the community's socioeconomic resources directed toward local and global religious aspirations.

The Evolution of Khōjā Political Power: Religious Citizenship

Introduction

How is power constructed among and imposed on the Khōjā of Dar es Salaam and Zanzibar? In the transition from *jñāt* to *jamāt*, how was it reconstructed and why? To what extent did the African experience change the Khōjā who migrated there? What is the political identity of the Khōjā in Tanzania and what is their role as global citizens in shaping international relations? The Khōjā inhabit a political interspace as Asians; they are not fully Tanzanian or fully Indian. And yet, they are an important constituency with their own institutions that bypass and surpass the state. This chapter seeks to examine how Khōjā political organization evolved in Tanzania and, in doing so, how it redefined communal membership from a caste-based system, with power vested in a plutocratic elite, to a democratic community organized around a religious creed—that is, a system of religious citizenship.

Khōjā Membership as Communal Citizenship

It is pertinent to ask at this point why we use the term ‘citizenship,’ as opposed to ‘membership,’ in regard to this religious community. The term ‘citizenship’ is normally a legal concept associated with membership in a nation-state. The use of the neologism ‘religious citizenship’ is apt because there are legal rights associated with being an official member of the Khōjā community, such as the community’s ability to issue birth and death certificates and marriage licenses and to provide legal arbitration in matters of personal law. Additionally, in Dar es Salaam, the official Khōjā membership card provides discounts at community institutions such as pharmacies and, for the destitute, offers social welfare in the form of monthly payments toward rent, utilities, and food. In its most state-like function, the Khōjā community conducts foreign affairs directly with heads of state, bypassing the nation-state apparatus. The most vivid example of this is seen in the actions of the leader of the Āgākhānī Khōjā, Karim al-Husayni:

All this has only accentuated the Imamate's state-like form, given its efforts to standardise Ismaili practices globally as if in a nation-state, claim ambassadorial status for the Imam's representatives in parts of Asia, Africa and even Europe or North America, and lend the Aga Khan the perquisites of a head of state by having him sign protocols of cooperation with kings, presidents and prime ministers. Indeed the community has its own constitution, flag and even, in the case of the Khojas, an anthem. (Devji 2009, xii)

Just as multinational corporations, such as Coke or Nestlé, have used globalization of the national-state system to set up transnational networks facilitating the flow of goods and services through affiliated companies throughout the world, so too the Khōjā have exported their corporate organization worldwide through the local *jamāt* linked by confederation. Khōjā religious citizenship can thus be envisaged as a possible next iteration of communal citizenship and religious organization in the age of globalization.

Conditions of Membership

Who is Khōjā and how is one deemed eligible for membership and the substantial benefits the community provides in Tanzania? When this question is addressed to members of the community, it seems absurd, as, to them, the answer is self-evident: being Khōjā is a clear Asian ethnic identity divisible by Islamic creed. As with most identities, its boundaries can be found by examining both the center and the periphery.

The Center: Ethnicity and Gender

At the center, Khōjā identity functions as caste identity. This identity can be thought of as a shared genetic¹ profile that has emerged from centuries of endogamy.² Among the few thousand Khōjā in Dar es Salaam, caste identity is reinforced through regular or annual attendance of religious observances and performance of distinct rituals at the *imāmvāḍō* and *mēhphūl*. Shared communal experiences, such as attendance at the community's seminary, and familial relations allow mutual recognition among Khōjā members. The Khōjā are

1 Aside from phenotypic characteristics, certain genetic diseases predominate among the Khōjā, such as thalassemia.

2 This endogamy is evolving with periodic introductions of new genetic profiles through intermarriage, usually from other South Asian Shia communities.

also distinguished by physical identity markers, such as the particular form of veil observed by women, the silver carnelian rings worn by men, or the black or green *dōrā*³ ('strings') worn by both genders on the right hand for spiritual protection.

However, the core method by which Khōjā of a particular community in East Africa know one another is through recollection of a 'mental map' of community members and ancestral figures. The mental map of community members is updated by visual interaction with other caste members. If, for instance, a Khōjā from Kampala came to Dar es Salaam and wished to be recognized as Khōjā by members of the community, he or she would need to indicate the names of family members who are known to the local questioner or to trace his or her lineage to familiar Khōjā pioneers of the nineteenth century, like Bhalloo Vali. Once the questioner recognizes the name of the family member and the family member's relationship to the individual being questioned, his or her identity is verified. This ancient system of recognizing *jñāti birādārī* ('caste brethren') allowed immediate transactional trust in long-distance commerce among the Khōjā, for family members serve as additional insurance against delinquent debtor relatives. Over time, this method became regionalized, as relationships with the Khōjā in other regions tapered off, such that a Khōjā of Dar es Salaam might be able to validate a Khōjā from Mombasa but might be unlikely to be able to easily validate or place equal trust in a visiting Khōjā from Ahmedabad. The possibility of subversion is almost nonexistent, as the unique dialects and caste rituals serve to further (in)validate Khōjā identity.

Among the African Khōjā communities, currently membership in a *jamāt* is restricted to Khōjā males. Female membership exists through the closest male relative. The restrictions of both gender and Khōjā ethnicity, as exists in Africa, are being challenged in the Western diaspora in locales such as London⁴ and Toronto, which have tended toward a more multicultural and egalitarian approach to membership and administration. Essentially, the tension of Indic versus Islamic identity is expressed in how the Khōjā self-referentially identify as either Ithnā 'Asharī Khōjā or Ithnā 'Asharī exclusively within a pan-Shia ideology. This is another example of the contemporary tension between the older *jñāti* and *jamāti* identities as organizing principles and the emergent *ummatī*

3 These *dōrā* represent 'Alī and Ḥusayn, respectively. The practice of wearing *dōrā* is common among Asian communities; the colors symbolize membership in a community—for example, red and saffron represent the Svāminārāyaṇ.

4 For example, the organization Mahfil Ali in North Harrow, London, refused to use the term 'Khōjā' in its name or organizing documents or to restrict full membership to only the Khōjā.

ideal. Inter-marriage—particularly with black Africans—is still a contentious issue for the Khōjā, despite there being substantive black Shia communities closely connected with the Khōjā missionary movement.

The Periphery: Inter-marriage and Half-Castes

Khōjā identity is also contested on the periphery. Particularly problematic is the categorization of offspring from inter-marriage. One of the demographic issues of the Dar es Salaam community is the slightly higher female-to-male ratio among those in the marriageable age range, which has necessitated the importation of grooms, primarily from Pakistan.⁵ Although they are generally Shia, these men are not necessarily Khōjā. The Asian racial identity of a child from inter-marriage between a Khōjā and a non-Khōjā Asian allows that child Khōjā membership with few communal reservations. Interracial marriage is another issue entirely.

Common among the nineteenth-century Khōjā of Zanzibar was the practice of interracial marriage, or *liaison*, particularly before Asian women were brought to Zanzibar for permanent residence in the mid- to late nineteenth century. A Khōjā merchant might have had a plural marriage with an Asian Khōjā first wife, an Iranian second wife, an Arab third wife, and an African fourth wife.⁶ This practice was less common among mainland communities, such as Dar es Salaam. Although, theoretically, any outcaste marriage would provoke disdain by the community, marriage to an ‘African’ and the resulting offspring were particularly problematic, principally on the mainland, as the cosmopolitan nature of Zanzibari society allowed for an overarching national identity that transcended strict racial categorizations. The category ‘African’ was a racial distinction but was also, for Asians, a form of defining oneself against the local other. This racism toward the ‘African’ was a composite of inherent Asian attitudes and European colonial categorizations, which placed both the European and the Asian above the African in the colonial racial hierarchy (Sheriff 2001).

The child of an Asian Khōjā father and African mother would derogatorily be referred to as *chotara* (‘half-caste’ in Swahili). The rights of an offspring from a Khōjā-African *liaison* were particularly problematic when it came to inheritance and the privileges of the child from within the Khōjā caste; ‘illegitimacy’ complicated these issues. The first case of half-caste rights brought before a Zanzibar court was *Nasur Jesa v. Hurbayee, widow of Jesa Dhamani* in 1878.

5 This ratio is based on demographic data provided by the Census Committee in 2008.

6 These racial terms are self-referential identities, because the nature of inter-marriage on the archipelago over centuries has blurred strict racial classifications.

Nasur Jesa was the son of Jesa Damani and wished to be given an equal share of the inheritance from his father's estate. The Khōjā wife, Hirbayee, claimed that he was illegitimate and, according to Khōjā caste law, ineligible to receive a share of the inheritance, as Khōjā caste law followed Hindu custom rather than Islamic laws of inheritance. The testimony of Khōjā elders, such as that of Tharia Topan, favored disallowing the inheritance of half-castes. Justice Foster finally ruled in favor of the plaintiff, citing the intent of Damani's will; this ruling set an African precedent, which contravened half-caste disinheritance as practiced by the Khōjā of Bombay (Amiji 1971, 606).

In the twenty-first century, the issue of multiracial members has been settled by African Khōjā custom. In Dar es Salaam, if the father or mother regularly brings the child to the Khōjā caste hall or shrine and if the child has participated from a young age with other Khōjā youth in institutions such as madrassa, he or she is treated as an equal within the Khōjā community. Inter-marriage between Asians and Africans is still rare in Dar es Salaam; inter-caste marriages among Asian communities are far more common. Rather than seeing this trend as positive discrimination against black Africans, we can view it as a result of the insular nature of the Asian subculture in central Dar es Salaam; that is, Asian Africans share a common Afro-Asian language, cultural referents, and a familiarity with Bollywood popular culture, which makes it easier for young Asians to communicate with one another—despite religious and caste differences—than with black African youth of the same age demographic for whom Tanzanian Swahili culture and language predominate.

With the establishment of the Bilal Muslim Mission in 1964 by Saeed Akhtar Rizvi, a new issue arose: the black Shia. Until this point, to be religiously Twelver Shia in eastern, central, and southern Africa was almost synonymous with or connected to the ethnic Khōjā caste. The propagation of Shia Islam, exclusively funded by the Khōjā, was well received by many Africans in the last half of the twentieth century. This so much so that in the twenty-first century, the black Shia of Tanzania outnumber the Khōjā by an estimated ratio of 2:1 (Bilal Muslim Mission of Tanzania 2007). This spurred the creation of an indigenous Swahili form of Shia Islam through the leadership of scholars such as Sheikh Abdillahi Nassir. Within central Dar es Salaam, the Bilal Mission masjid in Kariakoo is separate from the Khōjā masjid in the city center. The Khōjā are comfortable with funding missionary work; however, intermingling at the social level is seen as problematic and has resulted in discrimination against black Shias who venture into the Khōjā *imāmvādō* through accusations of impurity, a lack of commitment to the faith, and poor character. According to a confidential report of the Mombasa *jamāt* in 1987,

Shias of Black Origin are being looked down upon and being insulted for coming to Mosque and Imamvados. They have been made to feel that they are unwelcome, and as a result Students and Maalims are now not prepared to come to our Mosques and Imamvados in order to maintain their self-respect. . . . Complaints are being lodged and propaganda made to the effect that these people are not acquainted with TAHARAT [ritual purity] and as such are making the Mosque Najis [ritually impure]. To what extent are Khojas acquainted with Taharat we know better! (Khoja Shia Ithna-Asheri Jamaat of Mombasa 1987, 1–5)

There are, however, points of convergence between the two communities, particularly during Muharram. Each weekend during the forty days of mourning, the Dar es Salaam *jamāt* organizes bus trips to the Bilal Mission mosques in the area, such as Temeke and Bagamoyo, where Khōjā and African Shias engage in ritual observance and break bread together. These interactions are limited and denote a clear power structure in which the Khōjā are distinct from the African Shia and are engaging with them on their own terms.

Constitutional Organization

In the nineteenth century, the Khōjā caste became more than an ethnic community and voluntary organization. Interaction with the British in India and Zanzibar allowed for a gradual transformation of the Khōjā *jamāt* into a constitutional body. For the Khōjā, the constitution is essential to local polis organization as well as for each international organizational body, such as the Africa Federation. Each constitution lays out rules of membership, bylaws, membership dues, election rules and terms, administrative positions, and so on. So internalized has this form of organization become among the Khōjā that mid- to late nineteenth-century communal religious endowments were bequeathed through trust deeds and corporate wills or probates rather than with the *vakaphnāmũ* ('Islamic writ of endowment'). Figure 2 presents a notice discussing changes to the Khōjā constitution, along with a line-by-line translation.

Contemporary Khōjā identity is based on these institutions and constitutional forms of organization as both immutable and essential to corporate organization. Wherever the Khōjā settle as a community, a *jamāt* is formed to organize the community and build institutions to support it. The normal offices of president, vice-president, secretary, and treasurer are present in all Khōjā constitutions, each with a limited term and carefully bounded powers.

The republican nature of the Khōjā *jamāt* is critical to its identity and, for the caste members, is a means of identifying themselves against their Āgākhānī brethren. As the African Khōjā began to experiment with higher levels of organization, they exported their local and regional republican models of organization back to India, helping to establish such regional organizations as the Kutch Federation and the Council of Gujarat. The consolidation of the original Africa Federation has itself been contentious. Each 'triennial conference' and 'extraordinary conference' of the Federation is beset with conflicts among various communities couched in the language of parliamentary procedure, the main issue being a balance of power.⁷

At the onset of the twenty-first century, the Dar es Salaam Khōjā community is the largest and wealthiest in Africa. Its interests tend to dominate, to the consternation of smaller communities. Because it is organized through a system of proportional representation⁸ (Federation of Khoja Shia Ithna-Asheri Jamaats of Africa 1993–2003), smaller and relatively poorer communities must form alliances and use parliamentary procedures to ensure that their interests are accounted for in final deliberations. Aside from power and wealth, there are other cleavages within the federation, such as language and culture. For instance, there is a distinct separation between the mainland communities and the Francophone islands of the western Indian Ocean. The mainland communities send individuals representing each particular community, whereas the Francophone communities of Madagascar, Mayotte, and Réunion have formed the Conseil Régional des Khojas Shia Ithna-Asheri Jamates de l'Océan Indien, which has a separate council apart from the Anglophone Africa Federation (CROI 2011). The Francophone insistence on the use of Gujarati is a pronounced difference from the Anglophone mainland transition to English in Khōjā affairs. The political complexity and intrigues found within the Federation rival that of any international governmental organization.

Although *jamāt* constitutional parliamentary procedure is modeled after British practice, Khōjā constitutions are a composite of Khōjā organizational history. Two early modern organizational remnants present in all Khōjā constitutions in eastern, central, and southern Africa are the appointed posts of

7 A full fifth of the total Gujarati and English archival correspondence housed in the Africa Federation archives in Dar es Salaam deals with issues related to parliamentary procedure and constitutional matters of the Federation.

8 The Federation's system of proportional representation designates one representative for every one hundred members in each particular *jamāt*.

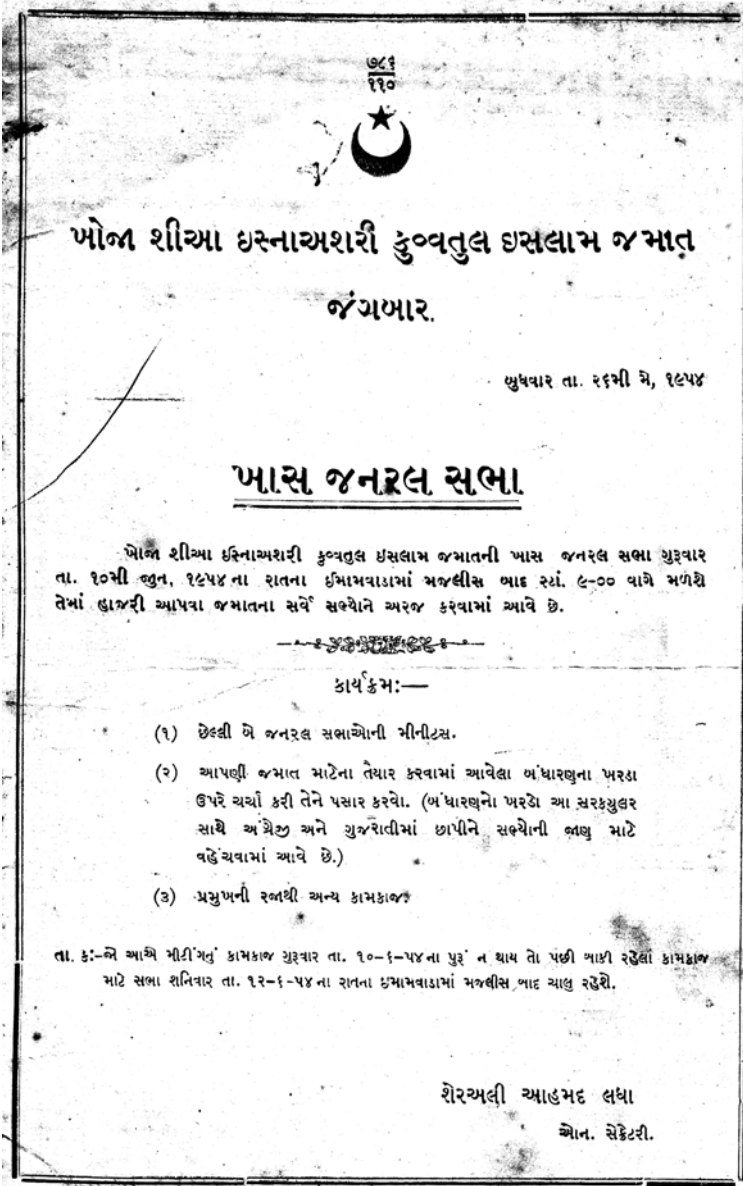


FIGURE 2 (a) A document containing general body minutes/constitutional changes by the Khōjā Kuwwatul Islam jamāt in Zanzibar, 1954.

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Khōjā Shia Ithnā ‘Asharī Kuvvatul Islām Jamāt of Zanzibar

Wednesday 26 May 1954

Special General Body Meeting

The Khōjā Shia Ithnā ‘Asharī Kuvvatul Islām *jamāt* will have a special general body meeting Thursday 10 June 1954 in the *imāmvāḍō* after the *majlīs* at 19.00h in the evening to which the presence of all community members is requested.

Program:

1. Minutes from the previous two general body meetings
2. To discuss and pass the proposed constitution for our *jamāt*.
(The draft constitution attached to this circular has been printed in English and Gujarati to be distributed as notice among the membership.)
3. President’s remaining business

Postscript: If the proposed items are not completed on Thursday 10 June 1954, then remaining business shall be reviewed at the meeting on the evening of Saturday 12 June 1954 in the *imāmvāḍō* after the *majlīs*.

Sherali Ahmed Ladha
Hon. Secretary

FIGURE 2 (b) *Special general body meeting notice.*

mukhī ('chief') and *kamāḍīyā* ('accountant').⁹ The remit of these two posts is largely ceremonial and is limited to the institutions of caste halls, shrines, and mosques. Historically, the chief and accountant had the authority to organize, fund, and maintain the religious rituals of the Khōjā. The larger modern Khōjā welfare state apparatus that emerged in the twentieth century is organized and executed through the elected leadership, to which the chief and accountant ultimately report. The retention of these two positions allows for a historical continuity of the modern Khōjā polis.

Taxation

There are three funding streams for the Dar es Salaam Khōjā: subscriptions, tithing, and personal donations. The first funding stream is the *lavājam* ('yearly subscription'), the smallest share of overall funding. It is levied on each adult male within the community and is a precondition for an individual's voting rights within the community. In 2008, the subscription rate in Dar es Salaam was TZS 100,000 (USD 65) per year, and payment entitles the Khōjā male to voting, custody, finance, management, and leadership rights within the Khōjā community of particular locale (Census Committee—Dar es Salaam 2008). Any major movement of an individual within the communal hierarchy necessitates payment of the subscription. As with taxation, poorer members of the community are given an exemption, after a detailed financial assessment by the welfare/social services subcommittee.

The second funding stream is *khums*, the Shia tradition of one-fifth tithing. The Khōjā observe the nineteenth-century practice of remitting their tithes to an ayatollah deemed to be the *marja'ē taklīd* ('source of emulation'). This fifth can be further divided into two parts, the *sahmē imām* ('portion for the imam') and the *sahmē sadāt* ('portion for the Prophet's descendants'). The current source of emulation for the Dar es Salaam Khōjā is Ayatollah Sistani in Iraq. Each Khōjā community collects the tithe from its members; these funds are pooled by region and presented to the ayatollah yearly. The Khōjā have received a dispensation for the Imam's portion, such that half of the total tithing remains with each community. These funds are then reinvested in community projects such as infrastructure development, education, health-care initiatives, and so on. This funding and allegiance to an ayatollah serves

9 Whereas the Khōjā have adopted a republican form of communal organization, which has limited the remit of the chief and accountant, the Āgākhānī Khōjā have allowed the chief and accountant to retain a degree of spiritual authority in caste affairs.

to enhance and reinforce the Near Eastern element of contemporary Khōjā Islamic identity.

The third and final funding stream is personal donations to the community. The communal nature of Khōjā society encourages private funding of communal projects, from which status is derived. Wealthy members of the community are expected to be patrons of the community and to donate for communal welfare. The ancient Khōjā ritual of *jamaṇ* ('communal feast') is seen as central to communal identity and its funding is viewed as meritorious, particularly during the first ten days of Muharram. Funding community building projects is a means for attaining immortality within the communal consciousness, as the names of benefactors are inscribed on the completed projects and their deeds are recorded for posterity; this information is periodically disseminated throughout the community's periodicals and listservs. Historically, Khōjā donations to the community were made in two areas: communal feasts and building-construction projects. As the Khōjā community is evolving into an efficient polis and as sectors of the Tanzanian economy are developing into service-oriented fields, a shift is needed in personal donations toward investments into human capital.¹⁰ It is challenging for a mercantile caste whose historical conception of communal identity and endowments was expressed in tangible terms to now transition to the intangibility of investing in the intellectual development of the caste and its members.

Social Welfare

In the absence of a functioning modern welfare state in Tanzania and with the help of multinational corporate organizational and bureaucratic skills acquired from European colonization, the Khōjā over time developed all of the institutions needed to replicate the modern welfare state for its members. Some of the institutions developed—such as the Ebrahim Haji Charitable Dispensary—are open to the public but allow their own members reduced or free access to services. Other services, such as subsidized housing, are exclusively intended for the community's economically disadvantaged membership. Within Khōjā caste identity there is the Kacchī concept of *jamātī'āī* ('communal rights'). Because it was the reinvestment of communal funds that built these institutions, community members believe they have a right to use

10 Interview with a Khōjā male professional and a member of the Dar es Salaam Khōjā Higher Education Board in his early sixties, Dar es Salaam, 7 February 2008.

them. One illustrative example of this belief in communal right and of challenges to the social welfare function of the polis is the current housing crisis.

The origins of the housing crisis in Dar es Salaam can be traced to the Arusha Declaration of 1967; the declaration's nationalization of property and of other key sectors of the economy hit the Asian trading class particularly hard. For about three decades after independence, the Khōjā of Dar es Salaam stagnated economically. It shook the confidence of the Khōjā to have lost their wealth and be unable to engage in their caste profession. Unable to conduct licit trade, some Khōjā participated in the burgeoning informal economy, bringing goods from the port of Zanzibar to Dar es Salaam.

During this socialist period, the majority of Khōjā living in central Dar es Salaam lived in Asian-built tenements, which had been nationalized and were administered by NHC. The NHC imposed rent control on these properties, artificially insulating the tenants, who were predominantly Asians, from rising rents in the city over three decades. With the economic collapse of Tanzania in the 1990s and the opening of the nation to global capitalism through policies of economic liberalization during the presidency of Ali Hassan Mwinyi (1985–1995), the class divide among the Khōjā became more pronounced.

The opening of markets was initially beneficial to the Khōjā, as they had maintained their transnational links with other Khōjā communities in the region, such as Dubai. They imported manufactured goods by the container. According to a respondent, “in those times we were able to buy a thing for ten dollars from Dubai and sell in Dar for one hundred dollars.”¹¹ The profit margin was so high and the need for manufactured goods in Tanzania so great that an entire generation of Khōjā boys did not complete higher secondary education and/or university and instead worked at the family business, importing and exporting goods. With the demand satiated, the economy stabilized in the late 1990s, and competition from African merchants meant that an entire generation of Khōjā men without higher-education qualifications or technical skills was unable to compete in the emerging service economy of Dar es Salaam. This ‘container culture’¹² generation of men, and their families, has slipped from the middle to lower class in the span of a decade, and the men and their families are routinely in need of the community's welfare assistance.

The economic challenge for this generation of Khōjā men was compounded by a NHC policy of selling nationalized houses for demolition. In 2008, the rent in a newly constructed building without rent control (USD 1,500)

11 Interview with a Khōjā male merchant in his mid-forties, central Dar es Salaam, 1 August 2008.

12 Ibid.

was approximately ten times the original rent-controlled cost (USD 150), making it almost impossible for poor and lower-middle-income families to live in the city. Notice of only three months or less is given to each family living in the building before the demolition of these houses, and, of course, no viable legal recourse is available. The rapid rate of demolitions in central Dar es Salaam in the late twentieth and early twenty-first century has exacerbated this housing crisis, and impoverished members of the community have turned to the *jamāt* leadership to solve this problem (Abizer 2009; World Federation of Khoja Shia Ithna-Asheri Muslim Communities 2013).

The combined needs of the housing crisis and the container culture generation have put a strain on communal resources. It is estimated that, of the remaining 3,100 Khōjā households living in continental East Africa, 600 are completely dependent on communal welfare funds (Daya 2012). Initiatives to build cheap community housing for those losing their property and programs to update skills, such as vocational training in technology, are slow processes beset by bureaucratic hurdles and lack of will. However, there are other salient social issues that have recently affected the community on which the leadership has taken bold and swift action. The leaders quickly responded to the rise of the HIV-AIDS epidemic in Tanzania in the 1990s by imposing a mandatory HIV-AIDS test on all Khōjā couples before marriage (Daya 1996/1416). The social and economic policies of the *jamāt* are responses to the Khōjā expectation that the community leadership respond to all manner of social, economic, and political change in Dar es Salaam. For many Khōjā, personal identity is intimately tied to the *jamāt*; it allows a ceding of personal responsibility to the polis to enact policies for the preservation and advancement of the individual through the community.

Foreign Policy

The strongest argument for the Khōjā *jamāt* as polis is its ability to conduct direct negotiation with nation-states and to extract concessions for the community. Two examples of this in the late twentieth century, one in Uganda in 1972 and another in Somalia in 1991, demonstrate this acquisition of foreign policy power, generally for the nation-state.

Uganda: 1972 Asian Expulsion

Idi Amin's expulsion order of Asians from Uganda on 7 August 1972 meant that all Asian communities had to find a way to exit the country within ninety days, though there were some Asian families that hid in rural Uganda after the

expulsion date. It was unclear until toward end of that deadline whether the UK government would allow Asians with British protectorate passports and stateless Asians to relocate to the United Kingdom (UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office 1972). In the interim, the Āgākhānī Khōjā took the step to migrate westward to Canada (Valpy 2002), and the Khōjā looked eastward toward Pakistan.

This choice begs the question, why choose Pakistan if the ancestral home of the African Khōjā was located in contemporary India? In the aftermath of partition, the African Khōjā came to view Pakistan as a Muslim homeland for Asians. The escalating violence against Muslims and the rise in Hindu nationalism in Gujarat was perceived to make India inhospitable for Muslim émigrés. Additionally, Pakistan was established by a converted Khōjā, Mohammed Ali Jinnah, and Karachi was home to wealthy Khōjā industrialists such as the Habib Kansara (Habib Bank Ltd.) and Jetha Gokal clans. They would be instrumental in helping émigrés to integrate, by establishing initiatives such as the Panjetani Welfare Society in Karachi (Ramji 1971; “Ravivārē ī. āphrikā vāsīrō nī sabhā” 1971).

Because it was the Ugandan state itself that functioned as the instrument of oppression, the Khōjā used the Africa Federation and transnational caste connections in Pakistan to bypass the postcolonial nation-state and to directly secure immigration waivers and visas for their 3,500 brethren trapped in Uganda (High Commission for Pakistan 1971; Secretariat 1970). The majority of African Khōjā who migrated to Pakistan did so before the 1972 expulsion order; at most, this represented only 300 people. The majority of African Khōjā eventually opted to migrate to Western Europe and North America, as those avenues rapidly opened toward the end of Idi Amin’s deadline. Although Pakistan ended up not being the main destination for the Ugandan Khōjā, its preparation was instrumental in helping the Khōjā federation to develop experience and in giving it an opportunity to negotiate at the nation-state level to achieve its objectives by bringing to bear its weight through local Khōjā communities.

Somalia: Operation Ghadeer

The development of the Khōjā community’s foreign policy interventions has emerged out of necessity in the instability of postcolonial Africa. One example of the coordination of international humanitarian assistance by the Africa Federation—organized by the Khōjā communities of Mombasa, Nairobi, and Dar es Salaam—is Operation Ghadeer, an evacuation of the entire Mogadishu Khōjā community to Kenya and Tanzania between 10 and 15 January 1991 (Rashid and Rashid 1411/1991).

With the deterioration of the Somali political situation, leading to the ouster of Mohamed Siad Barre in January 1991, the Khōjā Africa Federation embarked on a final evacuation of the entire Khōjā community. The Federation had been monitoring the political situation since 1989, when Hashim Okera of Mogadishu visited the Dar es Salaam community to discuss evacuation of unmarried girls and to prepare current passports for all community members for possible exodus. By December 1990, the situation had deteriorated quickly, and those Mogadishu Khōjā members wanting to relocate voluntarily, particularly women and children, were offered free travel to Nairobi by the Supreme Council of the Africa Federation (Daya and Chagani 1411/1991). With the fall of the capital in January 1991 and the evacuation of all major embassies,

a four-man committee comprised of Sajjad M. Rashid, Chairman of Mombasa Jamaat; Ashiqhussein M. Rashid, Chairman of Nairobi Jamaat; Raza A. Mooraj, a former resident of Mogadishu domiciled in Nairobi and Hassan A.M. Jaffer, a Councillor of Africa and the World Federation was formed. (H.A.M. Jaffer 1991, 33)

The committee decided to act by hiring a ship captained by the Khōjā Sajjad Rashid and, with a small contingent, embarked from Mombasa to Mogadishu to evacuate the Khōjā of Somalia. Coordination was needed in order to achieve safe passage and to cross international boundaries. The committee was initially working with the Italian government, but Pakistani naval support was needed for the evacuation of the Italian ambassador from the capital. Captain Rashid recorded in his log that they arrived in Mogadishu on 12 January 1991 at 11:45 a.m. At this point they realized the situation has deteriorated even further since their last communication and sent a seven-man advance party, from the thirteen onboard, to assess the situation of the community on the ground. Matters took a precarious turn when the two lifeboats broke down on shore on the party's arrival, and the committee was forced to negotiate with militants for safe passage of the evacuees onboard the *M/S Ambassador 1*. A total of 1,053 evacuees were finally brought safely to Mombasa, of which 780 were Khōjā (H.W. Dato 1426/2005). Coordination with the Kenyan government provided the evacuees with legal status to reside in the country as refugees coordinated by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, and there was a dispersal of the community as many sought refuge in Dar es Salaam. The leadership of the Khōjā *jamāt* in Dar es Salaam—Alhaj Anverbhai Rajabali Dharamsi, Alhaj Azim Dewji, and Alhaj Ramadhan Bhai Nanji, the chairman of the Africa Federation—eventually arranged Tanzanian citizenship

for the Mogadishu Khōjā who wished to reside in Tanzania (H.W. Dato 1426/2005).

This case also illustrates the interconnected nature of Khōjā religious identity and foreign policy. The federation's navigation of international borders and of national bureaucracy and its appropriation of the foreign policy power of a state were motivated and executed through devout belief in the mission and its divine sanction. This is most clearly recorded in the log of the captain's wife, Tahera Rashid, who recounts that in "the darkest hour of the mission when the seven men were on shore, no boats available, and gunfire heard throughout the night of the first day in Mogadishu," she and six other female volunteers from the community on board held an all-night vigil. She writes,

I remember that Monday night when after all effort—leaving no stone unturned—there were no signs of slightest success, we did not sleep that whole night. We did Amale Ashura in the dark under the open sky. We recited "Amaan Yujibu" several thousand times. We called "Ya Ali" 125,000 times. We besought Allah to have mercy on His suffering humanity; our community, and our seven volunteers. We prayed to forgive our sins if those stood in the way of our success of the rescue mission. We beseeched him to deliver our people for the sake of Masumeen A.S. I feel Allah replied our Duas, for which we shall always be grateful to Him. (Rashid and Rashid 1411/1991, 7)

Conclusion

The African experience was transformative for the Khōjā of eastern, central, and southern Africa. Without realizing it, they had become diasporic without the ability to return to their ancestral home, as was made clear to the Ugandan Asians by Indira Gandhi (Gupte 2012, 5–6) before the expulsion. Particularly for the Zanzibari community, their close work with the colonial administration and the social milieu of the sultanate meant that the Khōjā both adopted modern bureaucracy and ideas of representational government and imbibed the Islamic ethos of the island to the point that, when the caste schism occurred, it forced a reevaluation of caste identity and of the boundaries of inclusion. The indigenization of the Zanzibari community and their later exodus to the mainland and onward to Western Europe and North America transformed the Dar es Salaam community and set the stage for international coordination, based in London, of Khōjā communities worldwide. Their small numbers, shared

experiences, and intimate knowledge of the intricacies of citizenship and the nation-state system have allowed them to achieve what Olson termed ‘the logic of collective action’ (Olson 1971) in negotiating the international system to aid their communities worldwide within the strengthening *ummatī* identity of an elusive pan-Shiism.