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2018

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Patel, Aaisha Dadi (2018) Masculinity in Muslim media: a case study of radio Islam, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, <https://hdl.handle.net/10539/25706>

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Masculinity in Muslim media: A case study of Radio Islam

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A dissertation submitted in full fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts by Research in Media Studies

Department of Media Studies, Faculty of Humanities, University of the Witwatersrand

February 2018

I, Aaisha Dadi Patel (student number: 677511), am a student registered for Master of Arts by Research (Media Studies) in the years 2016-2018. I hereby declare the following:

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Signature: Date: 30 May 2018

In loving memory of my Dadima

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In the name of God, the Most Gracious and Most Merciful

Writing this dissertation was a challenge I could never have prepared myself for. It was an emotional rollercoaster, it was a revelation of so much, and it was a reminder that no matter how busy you are with something, the world keeps on turning all around you. I have learnt a lot, and I have grown so much.

There are a number of people I must thank for their role along my way through it.

To my supervisor, Prof Nicky Falkof – you have been so supportive of me since my honours year. Thank you for your patience, for pushing me, for chasing me down on Twitter, and for your brilliant guidance and feedback. I know I wasn't always the easiest student to have but thank you for sticking it out with me! You always encourage me to think about things differently, sometimes in ways I never would have thought of. Thank you for taking on this project with me, and motivating me at some of my lowest points.

To all of the other academics in the Wits Media Studies department, thank you for your input and encouragement throughout the course of this dissertation. A special thank you to Dr Dina Ligaga and Prof Glenda Daniels, who always encouraged me and reminded me that as women of colour, we have no choice but to push on.

Thank you to Mrs Merle Govind for always greeting me with a smile and a chat and for giving me an ear whenever I needed it, despite always having so much to do. You are such an asset to the department and we don't thank you enough. Thank you to my departmental colleagues and friends Viraj Suparsad, Vidhya Sana, and Prinola Govenden, for letting me into your PhD club and always giving me support in everything that I did.

A note of appreciation must go to Dinesh Balliah – thank you for your feedback on my proposal which helped me to shape what this project would eventually become.

A big thank you must go to my Daily Vox family. Thank you especially to Faranaaz Parker for helping me to hone my writing skills and encouraging me to always think broadly. Thank you Benazir Cassim for the help with copy editing.

A special thank you to my mentor Khadija Patel. Thank you for believing in me from the start, for encouraging me to write, for always pushing me (especially when I was lazy) and for reminding me to always do things with my whole heart. Thank you for being the accessible role model that young women in our community need. And thank you for also loaning me your own family, who sometimes stressed more about my work than I did.

Thank you to Prof Alan Mabin and to Nasira Bhikha-Vallee, for the opportunities you gave me access to in the course of this journey to keep me stimulated, and for the encouragement you constantly provide me.

Thank you to all of my amazing friends, whose words of encouragement and whose own fantastic achievements always spurred me on. I am especially blessed to be surrounded by a powerful network of strong, fierce, passionate young women who are chasing their dreams

and absolutely killing it. A special thank you to my dear friend Imaan Moosa for the help with transcribing.

Thank you to my grandparents, my aunties and uncles, and my cousins (especially Sadiya and Zainab) for always checking in on me and reassuring me that I was in their prayers.

Thank you to my baby sisters Aneesa, Yumna, Basheera, and Maimuna, for being the funniest bunch of girls in the world, for dealing with me when I was moody, for forgiving me when I skipped out on sister outings and board games because I had work to do, and for always being there to help me with everything from filing to chores. Thank you for calming me down when I needed it, for reminding me to do my work when I got lazy, and for being the best sisters I could ask for. I love you girls so much. I am so proud to be your big sister, and I cannot wait to see the amazing things that you will do.

Thank you to the University of the Witwatersrand's Postgraduate Merit Award scheme, York University's MCRI, and the National Research Foundation, for funding which ensured I could undertake and complete this research.

To Radio Islam: thank you for the important work that you do in the community. Your role carries with it huge responsibility, and I hope that this dissertation serves as a reminder of that.

And finally, thank you to my parents. 'Thank you' seems inadequate given everything you have done for me and continue to do for me. You have never said no to anything I wanted to do, and you have always encouraged me. To my mother especially – mummy, you never stopped dreaming of what your girls could do and I hope that I could accomplish even half of what you have. There is no one who understands the constraints of the patriarchal background we come from like you do, the same one that held you back from going to school, and I can never thank you enough for encouraging my sisters and I to challenge that very patriarchy, no matter what. Thank you to you and dad for always spoiling me, and for always reminding me that everything good comes only because Allah wills for it to. I love you.

Aaisha Dadi Patel

February 2018

What
massacre
happens to my son
between
him
living within my skin
drinking my cells
my water
my organs
and
his soft psyche turning cruel.
Does he not remember
he
is half woman.

- '*from*', Nayyirah Waheed

ABSTRACT

This project examines the ways in which Radio Islam, a South African community radio station, constructs masculinity in the South African Indian Muslim community. This community is its largest audience. The radio station is strongly influenced by the ideologies and rulings of the Jamiatul Ulama, an ideological body whose teachings stem from Indo-Pak interpretations of Islam and with whom much of the South African Indian Muslim community align themselves. The conflation of this culture and religion in this context results in patriarchal and misogynistic teachings being repeated by this body without much questioning, resulting in the common upliftment of men and confinement of women in the community to certain roles and spaces only. Through the examination and discourse analysis of broadcasted content on Radio Islam in three categories that have many gendered dynamics to them - hijab, marriage, and Ramadan - this study aims to unpack the way in which masculinity is constructed, and the extents to which these constructions then facilitate the entrenchment of patriarchy in the broader South African Muslim community.

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Glossary

Athaan: the call to one of the five daily prayer, in this case at sunset

Awrah: a part of a person's being which has to be concealed, by Islamic law

Eid: Islamic holy day of celebration

Fiqh: Islamic jurisprudence

Fitna: chaos and disorder

Hadith: records of prophetic tradition, including sayings and accounts of the prophet and his companions

Haya': modesty

Ibaadah: worship through prayer and supplication to God

Iftaar: the time at sunset when a fast is broken and a meal is eaten

Kurta: a robe that is traditional men's clothing

Maghrib: the sunset prayer, at which time a fasting person also breaks their fast

Mahram: members of the opposite gender (besides one's spouse) whom one is forbidden to marry

Masjid: Arabic word for mosque (plural: *masaajid*)

Moulana: a term of respect ascribed to learned men who have completed extensive Islamic studies

Nikah: an Islamic marriage ceremony

Qiyamat: the end of the world

Quran: Islam's holy book, akin to the Bible in Christianity, the primary text which is used to guide Muslims in their daily lives

Rakaats: units of prayer within *salaah*

Ramadan: a month in the Islamic calendar when Muslims fast and observe additional prayers

Salaah: the name given to the five daily prayers compulsory for Muslims to perform

Sehri: pre-dawn meal during Ramadan

Sharia: Islamic law, as outlined in the Quran

Sunnah: examples from the life of the Prophet Muhammed (peace be upon him)

Taraweeh: the additional *salaah* during Ramadan

Zina: any kind of sexual relationship outside of the constraints of a heteronormative marriage