



*International Journal of Humanity Studies*  
<http://e-journal.usd.ac.id/index.php/IJHS>  
Sanata Dharma University, Yogyakarta, Indonesia

## PERCEPTION OF ISLAMIC CULTURAL POLICY IN BURUNDI

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<https://doi.org/10.24071/ijhs.v5i2.4522>

received 9 April 2022; accepted 23 May 2022

### **Abstract**

The purpose of this paper was to examine the perception of Islamic religious cultural policy in Burundi. The research focused on the perception of culture-shaping policies based on Islam by Burundians. The discussion of the views of informants was based on Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas' approach to Islam and secularism. Primary data were collected from 40 university Christian students through questionnaires. The subjects included undergraduates and postgraduates studying in the Department of Languages and Social Sciences at *Ecole Normale Supérieure*. Secondary data were obtained from books, policy documents, and internet resources. It was found out that Christians in Burundi do not desire the Islamic cultural policy that is applied in Islamic States due mostly to its relation to radicalism and terrorism and the rejection of Christianity as a divinely revealed religion. Additionally, it was found out that some habits and practices among Muslims such as marrying many women, growing beard, and the secret bathing of the bodies of dead Muslims generate a negative perception of Islam. However, some values and arts that are practiced among Burundi Muslims such as women veiling, fashion, cookery, knitting, and embroidery are highly appreciated.

Keywords: cultural policy, Islamic cultural policy

### **Introduction**

As reflected through the 2018 constitution of the Republic, Burundi has innovated governance and public administration by introducing the concept of God in the constitution. As stated in the preamble, Burundians are responsible before God. In addition, following this new constitution, the President and Vice-President of the Republic and all the members of the government have to swear oath in the name of God by the constitutional court (Art. 107, 126, 138, 162). Moreover, like the earlier constitution versions, the Republic of Burundi recognizes equality of religions, races, ethnic groups, languages, and gender categories (Art.13). Following the enactment of this constitution, the members of the government organize thanksgiving crusades (Présidence, 1 Janvier 2022).

In a similar vein, the members of the ruling party meet once a month (last Thursday of the month) to worship and praise God (Nkurunziza, 2022). This indicates that the government system is a secularism that is greatly influenced by Christianity and layers of Western civilization originating from the Belgian

colonization. While the Muslims are included in the governance, their cultural system is submerged by Christianity and especially Catholicism which involves the majority of the people (more than 60%). This, however, goes contrary to the colonial administration that marginalized Muslims by undermining the influence of their language (Swahili) in schools and official settings, abolishing some of their habits and subsequently Christianizing them. During the colonial era, Muslims were excluded from performing their Islamic rituals or liturgy in Christian dominant quarters (Gakumba, 1987, p.15). With the new constitution and derived secular government, it is expedient to investigate the perception of Islamic cultural policy in Burundi. Through this evaluation, democratic governance and its interfaith dimensions in Burundi are grasped and all their implications to the administration of public affairs.

### ***Islamic Cultural Policy***

In “Secular Cultural Policy in Islamic countries: Desirability and Feasibility” (2015), Abbas Mehregan defines cultural policy as “a set of policies through which values, norms, beliefs, and traditions, in political, social, economic, legal, educational, and gender spheres are shaped and changed” (2). From this definition, Islamic cultural policy suggests any culture-making policy that is based on or grounded in Islam. In the context of religion, J. Ahearne views cultural policy as a form of sociocultural transmission system through which identity is defined, maintained, and reshaped; habits and values are inculcated; and the past and future of the society are represented (154). This means that this paper does not study cultural policy as a type of public policy that is related to art and culture, but, in the sense of Aysegul Guchan (2014) as a religion-related cultural policy. In other words, as Oliver Bennett maintains, religious cultural policy means “forms of cultural action” that are linked with a particular religious system and that shape attitudes and patterns of behavior of people in a particular society (2009). This means that Islamic cultural policy is different from any secularism that José Casanova refers to as a form of political system that constructs or symbolizes human experiences and traditions in a way void of any religious or church regulation (57). Even though Casanova makes a distinction between religious cultural system and secularization, Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas links secularism to the Western civilization and ipso facto to Christianity.

Secularism in this way as admitted by Bangstad (2009) is a form of civil religion that is used by political leaders to manage the public affairs of the country (189). According to Naquib Al-Attas, Islam does not have anything to do with secularism (25). Contrary to other religions especially Christianity that is viewed “as a part of culture, of tradition; as a system of beliefs and practices and attitudes and values and aspirations that are created out of history and the confrontation of man and nature, and that evolve and undergo a process of development” [...], Islam is a revealed religion which keeps its inherent political and social dimensions that Christianity lost due to its “misapplication of Greek philosophy in Western theology and metaphysics” (22). In addition, due to its divine revelation, Islam has a Revealed Law (*shariah*) that is “expressed in the teachings, sayings and model actions” (i.e., *Sunnah*) (28). Furthermore, Al-Attas refuses to refer to “the social, political, and economic dimensions of Islam” as socialism in Islam. He advocates that these sociocultural aspects of Islam evidence the integrating

nature of Islam rather than a form of secularism permeating it (44). This view is to some extent sustained by McLennan (2015, p.126). He considers secular governments to conceal to ironical by claiming public affairs administration void of layers of religiosity. Actually, as supported by Jahanbegloo (2009, p.317), totally secularized society does not exist, for any government is imbedded in the sociocultural tradition of the society whereby the religiosity is *sine qua non*.

Islamic cultural policy in this paper is then apprehended from this approach by Al-Attas as a sociocultural and political framing based on Islam. This culture making policy implies bringing Islamic religious values as a whole including wisdom, judicial system, arts, folklore, and aesthetics to Public policy, administration, and governance. Jahanbegloo refers to this as “the spiritualizing of public space” and contends that it is essential to harness human rights and humanism in the society by setting up a conducive Islamic jurisprudence capable of a modern Islamic society having nothing to do with Islamic state. For Ahearne (2014), this form of cultural policy differs from the mainstream cultural policy that is centered on the arts and creative economy. It is rather an “informal cultural policy” that deals with “strategic endeavors” by the government to shape national cultures, that is “sets of norms and symbolic matrices” (320). In the same spirit, Scullion and García (2005) make a distinction between cultural policy based on political economy and cultural studies on the one hand and cultural policy based on humanities and arts. For them, the former is formal cultural policy in the sense of Ahearne as it deals with the “study and management of cultural provision” (115) whereas the latter dealing with “aesthetics, taste, art and culture, policy and citizenship” is informal cultural policy (116).

This second approach to cultural policy can easily be grounded in a religious system. Thus Oliver Bennett points to the existence of catholic cultural policy (2009). He admits that the Roman Catholic Church uses the deliberations of Vatican II whereby the Pope and Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith use their theological and cultural authority to delineate and promote Christian consciousness that has to characterize Catholics (155). In a similar vein, Vital da Cunha argues for the existence of Pentecostal cultural policy in Brazil by pointing out the development of a Pentecostal culture in urban peripheries whereby changes made by the church in various social aspects affect the national culture that has hitherto been influenced by Catholicism (2018, p.1). As far as Islamic cultural policy is concerned, Pirouzfard and Absalan (2013) view it as Islamic cultural policy as government legislation that is grounded in Islamic culture or simply a form of policymaking that is anchored upon Islamic principles in such a way that “everything must be Islamic” and [...] “everything [...] should be based on divine regulations” (6). This paper looks with the views of Christians about programs, laws, or political practices that are grounded in the Islamic culture and worldview. In other words, in Islamic cultural policy, Islam plays an agent role in the promotion of cultural policy whereby the Islamic consciousness is envisioned.

### ***Islam in Burundi***

This research on the perception of the role of Islam in public affairs and administration among Burundians is of a paramount importance in the study of Political Islam in Burundi. The life of the Muslims and the expansion of Islam in Burundi has been dictated by social regulations which had for times marginalized

and discriminated Muslims. Earlier in the history of Burundi, records of Islam are traced back to the early 1880s. Apart from traditionalism or animist religious practice, Islam is the first religion to be introduced in Burundi in 1830 (Butoyi, p.54). The early Muslims were slavers from Zanzibar, the present Tanzania (Gakumba, p.5). The second wave of Muslims dated back to the 1890s. These were mainly Asians who came for trade under the auspices of the German colonisation. Others were auxiliaries helping in the colonial administration of Burundi. They included Indians, Pakistanis and Arabs, Mulattoes from East Africa, Swahili or Black Muslims from Tanzania. Religiously, the history of Burundi has been characterized by intolerance. During the German colonisation (1896-1916) and Belgian colonisation (1916-1962) as well, even though early Muslims in Burundi did not do proselytization to convert Burundians to Islam, they were despised by the European missionaries and Catholic Church (Gakumba, p.8).

Thus, in addition to preventing them from circulating among non-Muslims especially autochtones, Muslims were heavily taxed by the colonial administration, they were socio-culturally repressed in many ways, and their Koranic school was decreased by legislations which favoured colonial schools and missionary schools. In this vein, the economic legislation no 20/94 of 1<sup>st</sup> April 1921 excluded Muslims from doing business in Burundi by requiring them documents like European Language Proficiency Certificate, Primary School Certificate, and certificate proving their skills in accounting (Gakumba, p.15). This was a stumbling block to the Muslim community who were mostly speaking Swahili, Arabic and other Asian languages.

Likewise, the majority of Muslims had not completed primary schools and were not trained in business management. Moreover, the legislation no 19/93 of 29 March 1921, was also another oppression to the Muslim community of Burundi. Following this law Muslim's plots of land were expropriated by the government. They were dispossessed of their urban land in the capital Bujumbura and were displaced to farther places or peripheral zones like Rumonge in Bururi Province or Muzinda in Bubanza Province. This colonial policy aimed to prevent Muslims from converting people and influencing them in the decolonisation of Burundi. The limitation of Islamic influences in Burundi was also characterized by the law no 56 of 12 December 1924 and the Decree of 17 July 1931 which abolished polygamy, a practice that was favoured among Muslims. The Catholic Church also contributed in weakening Islamisation in Burundi. All the Muslim pupils in missionary primary schools were constrained to convert to Catholic Church after the fourth grade (Gakumba, p. 32). Subsequently, many Muslim children were then forced to convert to Catholicism since Secular Schools were very few. To further this anti-Islamist policy, the local Catholic church referred to the few secular state schools which did not proselyte Muslim children as atheist and prevented Catholic believers from sending their children to them. Thus Muslims parents had two options, that is, to send their children to the very few secular state schools and Protestant schools or to send them abroad. The Muslim community was referred to by the government and Catholic church as the Swahili to negatively connote them to liars.

Despite oppression of early Muslims in Burundi, Islam did some progress in the early 1900s (Gakumba, p.48). Mosques were built in many places among

others in Rumonge (1902), in Nyanza-lac (1921), in Bujumbura (1928), in Muzinda (1934), in Kayanza (1937), and in Rukago (1950). These Islamic worship places spread Muslim faith and Quranic teachings among Burundians. These early Islamic institutions relied on Tanzania, Libya, Qatar, Kuwait, Egypt and Saudi Arabia for qualified teachers. Thus after the Quranic teachings, Burundians had to further their studies in the aforementioned countries. Islamic strife to education climaxed with the creation of the first Junior High School in Buyenzi quarter in 1946 (Gakumba, p.53). Muslims' efforts to cope with this oppressing history are galvanised through their sociocultural organizations and fellowships. The main association is COMIBU which stands for Islamic Community of Burundi. It was founded in 1983 and was agreed by the government order No 560/19/83 of 13 April 1983 (Gakumba, p.58). In addition to strengthening Islam by consolidating all Muslims, its intent is the triumphant dissemination of Islam through Burundi and the claim of Muslim rights locally and internationally. In its objectives, COMIBU has to couple to the propagation of Islam the building of infrastructures such as mosques and schools in all provinces. To train Muslims morally and intellectually, COMIBU built schools for primary, secondary, and higher education focussing on religion, technical skills, sciences, and humanities. COMIBU like other Islamic movements in Burundi draws from the past of Burundi which has strongly limited the diffusion of Islam through public regulations and other practices. That is why as defined in its objectives, all its structures envision to expand Islam (Butoyi, p.91). Thus, having been the other among Christians, it becomes fascinating to do research on how Islamic cultural policy is perceived among the majority non-Muslims in Burundi. In what follows, the research methodology, literature review, objectives, and research questions, are described before the presentation of analysis and conclusion.

## **Method**

The mixed method (qualitative and quantitative method) is central to this research. Firstly, the analysis of data is based on an explanatory survey method that is achieved through quantitatively collected data. The research instrument that is used is questionnaire. The obtained data were analyzed using the statistic descriptive analysis. Secondly, the quantitative analysis is coupled with the qualitative analysis to account for the views and feelings of the informants about the Islamic cultural policy in Burundi. The research subjects used are Christian students studying at the Burundi Higher Institute of Education (*Ecole Normale Supérieure du Burundi*). All the subjects live in the municipality of Bujumbura. The parameters of gender, age, and religious background are taken into account. 40 subjects in total were used. The convenience sampling method was used. After collection, the data were classified, interpreted, and analyzed through the lenses of Al-Attas' approach to Islam. The theories of religion as foundation of ethics and morality and knowledge as the essential feature of the nature of man and humanity are used. In the application of the theories, five sets of questions were used. The first one deals with the personal parameters of respondents. This includes the religion or religious denomination, gender, age, and education level of the respondents. Second, the respondents were asked about the significance of religion and Islam in public affairs management and policy. Thirdly, the respondents were asked about Islamic education as a core point in Islamic cultural

policy. Fourthly, the respondents were asked about their perception towards cultural practices including elements of material culture, customary culture, and folklore. Finally, they were asked about the establishment and promotion of Islamic cultural policy in Burundi. Answers to these questions were rated through tables. Then they were discussed based on the aforementioned theoretical framework.

From various theoretical approaches, many authors have studied the role of religion in public policy and management, among others Mark O'Neill (2011), Oliver Bennett (2009), Marrion Maddox (2011), Tobias Harding (2015), Jane Woddis (2010). In the furtherance of this point, many studies have been conducted on the issue of Islam and cultural policy. These include Karim Tartoussieh (2009), Nedret Kuran-Burc Burçoğlu (2011), Karim Tartoussieh (2011), Aysegul guchan (2014). The first sets of works on religion and public policy discussed religion in general or many religions excluding Islam and their interrelations to public policy and management. Some of them apprehended cultural policy as a broad term to mean the politics of the cultural system of nation. Others focus on the economic approach to cultural policy tackling therefore the issues of cultural heritage, urban regeneration, cultural education, Intellectual property, cultural tourism, cultural mapping, and cultural and creative industry. The existing literature on Islam and cultural policy deal with how the Islamic sociocultural universe informs the Muslim world and their policies. To the best of my knowledge no research has been done on the Islam and public policy in Burundi and more specifically on the attitudes of Muslims towards cultural policy. This study differs from the aforementioned writings by the fact that it focuses on the Burundi Muslim minority and examines their relations to public policy and the sociocultural system in which it is grounded.

This paper aims at:

1. Investigating how Burundi Non-Muslims perceive the role of religion in Public policy and administration
2. Examining how Islamic cultural policy is perceived by Non-Muslims in Burundi

To achieve these objectives, the research attempts to answer the following questions:

1. How do Non-Muslims perceive the role of religion and specifically Islam in public administration and policy?
2. How do Non-Muslims view the Islamic cultural policy and rationale behind it?

### **Findings and Discussion**

The personal parameters of the respondents (table 1) reveal that they were all Christians including Catholics (62%) and Protestants (37.5%). They were mainly men, that is 90% over 10%. Actually, in the university *Ecole Normale Supérieure*, the number of women is still very inferior to that of men. Even though the majority of the informants were undergraduates (87.5%), they were all informed about Christian and Islamic religions. They were students majoring in English, Kirundi-Swahili, History, and French Education. Their age varied between 20 and 30. As some of them witnessed, many of them had responsibilities in their churches.

Table 1. Display of personal parameters of respondents

Description		Number of respondents	% of respondents
Gender	Male	36	90
	Female	4	10
Religion	Catholic	25	62,5
	Protestant	15	37,5
Education level	undergraduate students	35	87,5
	postgraduate students	5	12,5
Age	20-25	23	57,5
	26-30	17	42,5

The frequency distribution of answers to the questions about the perception of religion and Islam in administration and public policy reveals that 47.5% of the respondents strongly agree or agree to the idea that religious politicians fit in public affairs administration and governance. This demonstrates that the elected government actors including the executive power, the legislative power, and the judicial power. This reaction is backed up by the religious background of the respondents. Actually, according to Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas Christianity does not involve significant social and political dimensions due to its historical development (22). In its teaching, Christianity advocates the separation of the religious and temporal powers. Consequently, any government which does not separate the Church and the State is viewed as a theocracy.

While the participants' views about the significance of religious politicians reveals a low rate, there is a high percentage with regard to religion and public administration. Thus, the frequency of those who strongly agree and agree is 80%. This is an indication of a high belief that front line and non-elected bureaucrats or administrators can be religious without impinging on the secular character of the government that is promoted by Christianity and its denominations. Even though religion may impact on the discretion of the local administrators, it cannot affect the democratic character of the government. This view is grounded in Christianity and the European secularism that is linked with it. This goes, according to Al-Attas, contrary to the Islamized world.

In fact, Islam supports a world that is "disenchanted or deprived" of "magical, mythological, animistic, national, and cultural tradition" rather than those that are ingrained political power and authority of God and His Prophet and of those who follow His Prophet (183). This divine inspired government is shunned by Non- Muslims. In the research, only 7.5% agreed or strongly agreed to the question "Burundi should implement only the laws of the *Sharia*". The negative answers (92.5%) highlights the bad perception of Islam among the research population. Among the reasons given by the respondents is that Islam lacks intolerance spirit and does not recognize the truth preached by other religions; Islam discriminates women by condoning polygamy; Islam marginalizes Christians by calling them infidels (*Kafir*). The other question in the rubric was about Islam and its democratic import and good governance. The respondents were asked whether it was democracy if government officers were all religious. Upon this question, 67.5% of the participants agreed or strongly agreed. This rate insinuates that the respondents do not make a mutually exclusive relationship between religion and democracy. Religiosity does not hinder good

governance. The answers of the informants on the role of religion and Islam in public affairs management and policy show that apart from the central government and elected government that should not be religious, other government members' involvement in public affairs would not hamper good governance in Burundi. But due to their religious background the respondents refuted any Sharia-based government. The rate frequency is displayed in the table below.

Table 2. Perception of religion and Islam in administration and public policy

Aspects of politics	Perception	Number of respondents	% of respondents
religious politicians	Agree	2	5
	Disagree	7	17,5
	strongly agree	17	42,5
	strongly disagree	14	35
religious administrator	Agree	14	35
	Disagree	3	7,5
	strongly agree	18	45
	strongly disagree	5	12,5
Sharia legal system	Agree	0	0
	Disagree	12	30
	strongly agree	3	7,5
	strongly disagree	25	62,5
Islamic governance	Agree	15	37,5
	Disagree	7	17,5
	strongly agree	12	30
	strongly disagree	6	15

To measure the desirability of Islamic cultural policy among Christians, questions about education were used. The connection between education and Islamic cultural policy is justified by Al-Attas' view of Islam. Actually, the Islamic universe revolves around knowledge or education. The Holy Qur'an is knowledge that includes "ethical, axiological, aesthetical and logical norms" that are immutable and that transcend time and space (46). This centrality of knowledge to the core values of Islam reveals that any Islamic Cultural policy must promote education policy. To the question about Islamic education policy, the respondents were asked whether the Islamic values should be included in the school curriculum in Burundi. Only 7.5% approved the idea. This low share proves the non-desirability of Islamic cultural policy among Burundi Christians.

The respondents view in teaching Islamic values in Burundi Schools a kind of Islamization that would uproot the Christian cultural traits that have been introduced and cemented by the Western tradition since the colonialization. The reality on the field is that the subject of religion in primary and secondary school is optional and minimized in terms of credit and weighted average. Except for Islamic-based schools wherein the learners can partake in the religion course, in other schools, the pupils and students choose between Protestantism and Catholicism. Muslim children who cannot choose between the two religious systems go outside to wait until the course period ends. This is a kind of marginalization on the side of the Muslim children. Muslim believers are,

however, allowed to perform their worship rites. In many schools they are given rooms for daily and weekly prayers. Thus, the respondents were asked about this aspect of Islamic cultural policy. The findings of the research show that 65% of the participants support Islamic worship in schools. This positive share among respondents pinpoints their belief in religious tolerance and liberty of religious expression. In addition, the frequency distribution reveals the respondents' decline of proselytization. Actually, they admit that the learners who are already Muslims should be allowed to meet for their prayer meetings. Moreover, they agree that religious infrastructural facilities should be given to them. In contrast they refuse to make the curriculum more multicultural by introducing Islam as a subject in the curriculum. The frequency distribution to Islamic cultural policy and education is displayed in the following table:

Table 3. Islam and Education policy

Islam and Education	Perception	Number of respondents	% of respondents
Values in curriculum	Agree	2	5
	Disagree	18	45
	strongly agree	1	2,5
	strongly disagree	19	47,5
Worship in schools	Agree	16	40
	Disagree	8	20
	strongly agree	10	25
	strongly disagree	6	15

The respondents were also asked about Islamic cultural policy by focusing on some aspects of culture. Six questions were mentioned in the questionnaire. The questions include elements of Islamic material, customary, and verbal culture. The focused elements and practice of culture include veiling for ladies, polygyny, long beard among men, knitting-embroidery, funeral rites, and worship ritual. About the desirability of these cultural practices, the frequency distribution of answers to the questions show that the vast majority of respondents strongly agreed or agreed to knitting and embroidery (97.5%). This points to the success of this handicraft practice among Muslim women in Burundi. The second element in share rate is veiling among Muslim women. The share percentage among the respondents is 70%. These two elements point to the image of the Muslim woman among Burundi Christians. Apart from the religious belief which 'tarnishes her', she is viewed as entrepreneur and beautiful. This representation is shared by both female and male respondents. The following practice in rate frequency is the way Muslims devote to prayers. The share percentage is 60%. It shows that the worship adoration ways of Muslims do not disturb Christians. The following cultural areas that were object of analysis were the long beard practice and funeral rites. These were rated at 30%. The majority of respondents did not agree with the funeral rites and body attire of Muslims. This is associated with the respondents' religious affiliations and background. Actually, while some Churches mostly, Protestants boost veiling and long skirts for ladies, they discourage long beard or any long hairy style.

Some people use beard to pejoratively refer to Muslims. The long beard exaggerates the stereotypes that Muslims are womanizers and polygamous. The Funeral performance on the bodies of dead people complicates the negative image

of the Muslim man who is viewed as vigorous male and a bull for mating. Through it, the Muslims are viewed as the fetish, witch, and dark man to fear. This negative signification of the Muslim has been exaggerated by the fact that the government has separated the cemetery into two parts, that is, one for Christians and another one for Muslims. Finally, in the questionnaire items, a question was asked about the respondents' desirability about Islamic policy in the perspective of marriage. Only 5%, that is, 2 persons of the responded agree to the spousal practice of Muslims. This is linked with the Christian doctrines that condemns polygamy and stresses monogamy. The answers prove the belief distance that exists between Christianity and Islam religion. The Islamic cultural policy is explained by Al-Attas as patterning to the divine Revelation to the Holy Prophet and Great Teacher Ahmad (Muhammad) who first interpreted the Sacred Law and delineated the model actions (*Sunnah*) to be followed by all Muslims (30). On the other hand, as Al-Attas admits, the core foundational pillars of the Christian cultural policy, especially the Catholicism, are the Nicea, Constantinople and Chalcedon creeds, Roman laws, and Graeco-Roman philosophy. These main pillars have dictated Christian cosmology, arts, and sciences (29).

Thus, while in the Christian universe and world view of Burundi Christians a long beard and polygamous man are condemned and associated with uncleanness and a primitive character, Burundi Muslims view them as honor (*heshima*). This different view on the same cultural products corroborates Oliver Bennett's idea in "The Manufacture of Hope: Religion, Eschatology and the Culture of Optimism (2011)" that religion has the capacity to endow human beings with a sense of meaning and purpose (7). The differentiated feelings of the informants show that religions have enculturated the spirits of Burundians and ipso facto manufactured in them a signification system that is pertinent to the cultural policy embedded in their religious universes. Moreover, it is realized that the image of the Muslim woman is more positive than that of the man. The veiling for instance is bequeathed to the veiling of the Catholic nurses and that of the born again Pentecostal Christians in some churches. While the woman is perceived as the meek, persevering, aesthetic and entrepreneur character; the man is viewed as being passionate, lustful, fetishist and dirty in nature. The results are displayed in the following table:

Table 4. Perception of elements of Islamic cultural practices

Elements of culture	Perception	Number of respondents	% of respondents
Knitting and embroidery	Agree	26	65
	Disagree	0	0
	strongly agree	13	32,5
	strongly disagree	1	2,5
Marriage institution	Agree	0	0
	Disagree	13	32,5
	strongly agree	2	5
	strongly disagree	25	62,5
Veiling ( <i>Jilbab</i> )	Agree	17	42,5
	Disagree	7	17,5
	strongly agree	11	27,5

men attire (long beard)	strongly disagree	5	12,5
	Agree	9	22,5
	Disagree	18	45
	strongly agree	3	7,5
funeral rites	strongly disagree	10	25
	Agree	10	25
	Disagree	12	30
	strongly agree	2	5
Worship rituals	strongly disagree	16	40
	Agree	20	50
	Disagree	8	20
	strongly agree	5	12,5
	strongly disagree	7	17,5

Finally, questions were asked about what the respondents think of Islam and use of it as pillar to government affairs and administration in Burundi. The first question asked whether Islamic cultural heritage should be protected by the Burundi government. The second question was whether Islamic values and world view were democratic and should ipso facto be promoted in Burundi. The distribution of frequency reveals that only 45% agree for the protection of Islamic cultural heritage in Burundi. The low rate proves the negative perception of the *Shariah* and *Sunnah* upon which all genuine Islamic practice and virtues are based (Al-Attas 94). There was fear among the informants that the protection of the Islamic cultural heritage by the government would bring about the establishment of Islamic State in Burundi. Since in the understanding of many Burundi Christians, Islamic state is connected with terrorism and violence like that of the *Boko Haram* in Nigeria, *El-Shabaab* in Somalia, and *Al-Qaïda* in Afghanistan, and the *Hezbollah* in Lebanon; many people (25%) strongly disagree and more others disagreed (27.5%) on it. For the issue of promoting Islamic values, 57.5% of respondents agreed. Their views are influenced by the new cultural policy to develop a creative economy that valorize the cultural products and arts produced in Burundi. This shows that even though some habits of Muslim men such as growing a long beard and marrying more than one wife are mostly despised by the Burundi Christians, the practices of Moslem ladies such as knitting, culinary arts, and fashion are accredited. This explains why some cultural entrepreneurship models commonly developed among Muslim communities such as knitting, embroidery, culinary arts, and food ways have been adopted by non-Muslims. In the capital of Bujumbura, there many shops, houses, and restaurants wherein Non-Muslim women use Moslem models of knitting, handicraft, and culinary aesthetics in their creative industry. On the country as witnessed by the informants, some men who cannot control their sexual drives convert to Islam so that they marry many women. Others, to avoid complying with the civil policy demanding Burundi men to marry and get registered with one wife, they run to Islam so that they can keep the additional wives. This evidences why some of the respondents associated Muslim men with dark and fraudulent ways. The perceptions of the respondents are demonstrated through the following table:

Table 5. Establishment and promotion of Islamic values in Burundi

Policy	Perception	Number of respondents	% of respondents
Islamic cultural heritage Protection	Agree	13	32,5
	Disagree	11	27,5
	strongly agree	5	12,5
	strongly disagree	10	25
Promotion of Islamic Values	Agree	23	57,5
	Disagree	15	37,5
	strongly agree	0	0
	strongly disagree	2	5

The respondents were asked to justify their rejection of the establishment of *Shariah* and *Sunnah* in Burundi public policy and administration. 6 respondents, that is 15%, did not give any reasons. They maintained that they strongly disagree on the Islamic cultural policy. This ensures a kind of radicalism that they avoided to disclose on the questionnaire sheet. This is because many of the respondents who abstained had confessed to belong to Christian youth movements such as scout and Schoenstatt and biblical fellowships. The informants (34 or 85%) who explained why they did not support the islamisation of Burundi or simply the enactment of the Islamic cultural policy give 7 reasons, namely false doctrine which does not promote the Holy Bible and Jesus Christ (61.7%); polygamy and poor family care (38.2%); strange worship that consume time, disturb neighborhood and that is Satan-oriented (17.6%); radicalism and eschatology that support homicide (61.7%); practices which marginalize women (11.7%); the use of Arabic language in worship rituals and ipso facto sounds strange to neighborhood (14%); and lack of patriotism for men (41%) who act against local cultural values (grounded in Christianity) by growing beard, wearing robes, marrying many women, *Janazah* or funeral rites especially washing the body of a dead Muslim whereby Muslims seclude themselves by keeping the corpse away from other people. The distribution of the frequency rates, shows that the first reason behind the rejection of Islamic cultural policy by Christians in Burundi is their religious beliefs that are not in accord with the Bible and the mediator to Salvation Jesus Christ. This perception is coupled with the view of Islam that goes with radicalism and criminal acts towards Non-Muslims or *Kafir*. The other significant reason behind the negative perception is the cultural values held among Muslims that are uncommon among Christians among others growing long beard and secluded bath of the bodies of Muslim people.

### Conclusion

Based on their background that is rooted in a secular cultural policy linked with Christianity, Burundi Christians perceive Islamic cultural policy as form of radicalism and terrorism that is coupled with a rejection of the Bible and the Character of Jesus-Christ. The Islamic cultural policy is not democratic and denies the principles of good governance because it supports the killing of Non-Muslims through youth leagues and radical organizations. Moreover, due to habits observed among Muslims such as growing long beard, secretly washing dead bodies, using foreign language for communication, Burundi Christians view Islam

as a counter discourse to the national cultural heritage. Furthermore, the practice of polygamy that is not condemned by Islamic ethics marginalizes women and children by refusing them equal care. This is contrary to any democratic governance, for it does not recognize the inalienable rights of women and children.

In the furtherance of research on Islamic cultural policy in Burundi, scholars should add to these findings by conducting a study on the minority Muslim group that live in Burundi. This would provide new findings from the perspectives of Muslims. In addition, religious cultural policy should be integrated in the broader area of cultural policy by involving arts and cultural contents in the context of Islam in Burundi.

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