# The Role Of Nomenclature And Stereotyping Social Movements In Informing Religio-Societal Relations In Uganda; A Historical Analysis Of Public Description Of The Salaf Movement

**By**

Kasumba Yusuf

PhD scholar, Department of History, Archaeology and Heritage Studies,

Makerere University

Email: yusuf.kasumba@gmail.com

Contact:+256(702959961)

**Abstract**

The history of the Salaf movement in Uganda has been juxtaposed between acceptance and rejection by the general public. One profound feature of this relationship has been the pejorative public labelling of the Salaf to define their beliefs, actions and behavior. Whereas stereotyping the Salaf with tags such as *Bannalukalala* (militants) and *Balulevu* (the bearded) is usually regarded as unpremeditated talk, it has been crucial in shaping the movement's history. I attempt to explore the nature of stereotypes attributed to Salafism, why stereotypical nomenclature is used to describe the movement and whether this depicts societal perception, disapproval, or detestation of Salafi activism. Stereotyping the Salaf could have fomented a unique group identity, bolstered in-group solidarity and tenacity in morphing itself into a formidable movement. Conversely, it could have adversely affected the esteem of some Salaf adherents, leading to backtracking in their activism. I also ignite a debate on the possibility that stereotypes used in public spaces such as markets places, mosques, theatre and the streets, may have influenced State perception and response to Salaf activism. This creates a need to establish a link between academic work, public-talk and the lessons that can be drawn from the confluence of the two worlds. in-group homogeneity out-group homogeneity

**Key Words: Salafism, Extremism, Stereotypes, Tabliq, Islam,**

## Introduction

The paper attempts to interrogate nature of stereotypes that have been ascribed to the Salaf in Uganda as well as the historical, behavioral and attitudinal factors that explain use of stereotypical tags to describe religious movements. Such tagging may neither be an accurate manifestation of how the general public relates with the Salaf nor mirror Salaf belief and practices. However, such stereotyping may be strongly linked with the historical events related to Salaf activism in Uganda. The paper also ventures into a debate on whether such typecasts reflect perfect archetypes for societal perception of the perceived extremism of religious groups such as the Salaf in Uganda. Relatedly, the paper probes into whether nomenclature use is a deliberate depiction of societal disapproval, detestation or phobic sentiments of puritanical views, actions, message and behavior of social movements such as the Salaf.

The extent to which such stereotypical descriptors could have affected the Salaf remains contentious, but this paper attempts to highlight the effect of nomenclatural use on the development of Salafism. This is discussed in four dimensions. The first three-dimension focus on group identity. First, the branding of the

Salaf with stereotypical labels such as *bannalukalala* could have fomented a unique group identity of the Salaf as a novel religious group. Secondly, this form of description could have bolstered Salaf in-group solidarity and tenacity in establishing itself as a formidable group. Thirdly, could the stereotypes have adversely affected the esteem of some of the Salaf adherents, leading to backtracking in their activism? The fourth dimension of the presentation connotes relations between the Salaf and the State as well as the general public. It ignites a debate on the possibility that stereotypes may have influenced the nature of state perception towards and its response to the activities of the Salaf.

**Towards Understanding Salafism In Uganda**

The term Salaf owes its origin from an Arabic phrase *al-Salaf al-salih* (the worthy ancestors, or venerable forefathers), which is attributed to the puritanical practice of early generations of pious Muslims, "who had first-hand experience of the rise of Islam and are regarded as exemplary for the correct way to live for future Muslims," (Roel Meijer, 2007). The Salaf strive to mirror an unadulterated religious practice by emulating the Prophet Muhammad and by adhering to a literalist and textualist interpretation of the Quran and prophetic traditions (hadith). As they are locally referred to, the Tabliq community is part of an Islamic Salafi international that espouses Sunni reformism which pursues the rebuilding of puristic version of Islam through moral re-education, the detestation of innovations in religion (Bida), and the maintaining a lifestyle and practices that mirror prophet Mohammed and his companions in the maiden days of Islam (Haykel B.,2009: 33-57).

Salafi teachings were first experienced in Uganda in the 1960s but occupied a spotlight position in public discourse during the 1980s and 1990s, when a new version of Islamic interpretation which was hitherto unknown to Uganda muslims was introduced here. It is arguable whether Salafi teachings were unknown to many Muslim clerics or had been deliberately untaught by the sheiks for fear of disorienting the way Islam was practiced. Prior to the 1990s, the movement's focus was primarily on religious reformism and adjustment of personal conduct among Ugandan Muslims and remained less focused on politics.

In the 1980s, the activism of the Salaf or the A*batabuliiki* as locally tagged, was championed by Sheikhs; Muhammad Kizito Zziwa, Yunus Kamoga, Haqawat and others. In addition to the need for reforming Islamic practice, the movement owed its justification to the popularized feeling of marginalization of the minorities by the colonial and post-colonial state (Stefan Lindemann, 2010:12). The formation of a reformist group called SPIDIQA (Society for the Propagation of Islam and Denunciation of Innovation and Qadianism) added a new doctrinal and radicalizing element not only to the propagation of Islam but

also to factional power struggles for leadership of the Muslim Community. The group that started its activism at Bwaise later shifted its based to Bilal Islamic Institute Mosque and Nakasero Mosque and elected Sheikh Edris Lutaaya the Mufti of SPIDQA, Sheikh Kizito Zziwa as the Chief Kadhi and Abdul-Malik as Chief Imam, before Yunus Kamoga would finally assume leadership in 1989 after the official launch of the Tabliq movement. The new teachings of the Tabliq mainly attracted the youth, the new converts and elites.

The Most important manifestation of the Salafism in the Muslim community was the arrogant, confrontational and sometimes violent approach to propagation of Islam that was used by the youth who branded themselves the "Salaf". Relative to other Salafist activism elsewhere, as shown by Alshech (2014) and Rabasa (2009:25) the goal of the Muslim youth was, mainly –but not limited to - rid the Muslim society of immorality and non-Islamic practices and to restore a pure and un-corrupted form of Islam-reflected in the practices of Prophet Muhammad the first three generations of Muslims, hence the term as-*Salaf – as- Salih.* Their approach, which at times involved forceful takeover of mosques, demolition of raised graves, ridiculing other muslims and non-Muslims as well as open condemnation of government. This approach was augmented by street preaching, mainly involving a group led by Sheik Kyeswa, using the Bible to propagate Islam. The group tagged themselves "*Abasiramu abalokole"* loosely meaning "the saved Muslims. Generally, Tabliq methodology tended to threaten the peaceful co-existence and tolerance between the Salafist youth and the traditional Muslims or between Muslims and non-Muslims altogether. Prominent among the Salaf activists were sheiks such as Muhammad Yunus Kamoga, Jamil Mukulu, Sulaiman Kakeeto, Zubair Bakari Mayanja, Salman Faaris, Mangash Nsubuga, Swaib Sulait, Mubarak Mugerwa, Idris Lutaaya, Salim Ngobi, Abdallah Kalanzi, Abdallah Wangi, Abdul Hakim Sekimpi, Nuh Kibuuka, Idris Lwazi, Murtadha Bukenya, Mustapha Bahiiga, Shaban Mubajje and others.

The youthful sheiks' propagation revolved around the notion of rectitude. They believed that the practice of Islam had been adulterated from its puristic nature and aimed at ridding Islamic practice of Innovation (Bidaa) and heresy and idolatry (Shirk). The interpretation of Islam that the Salaf movement espoused is rooted in Wahhabism and represented a delayed surfacing of Ibn Taymiyyah legacy (Ismail Faruki 1988). It rejected the post- revelatory tradition in the interpretation of the Quran and Sunna (Prophet Muhammad's traditions) in preference for authentic imprints of the Quran and Sunna. An effort was also made at rectifying the alleged misunderstanding of Tawhid by Muslims of Uganda.(Faaris, 2019) The central teachings of the Salaf also revolved around *Tawhid* and denunciation of other Sufi-related practices such as celebrating Mawlid (commemorating the birth of Muhammad-PBUH), *Tahlil and*

*Tarakain* (rituals related to burial of a Muslim) last funeral rites, using a person as a means to approaching divine presence *(twasassul'*) intercession of prophets, saints and martyrs (*Shafa'a*) and construction of domes or other elevated tombs or graves.

Relatedly, at the centre of Salafi mobilization was blaming the Muslim leadership status quo for being responsible for the miserable plight of Muslims in Uganda, 150 years after the introduction of Islam in Uganda. It appeared therefore, that the reformist agenda of the Salaf was in part to uplift the plight of Muslims. This, and the attempt to dismiss other Muslims as non-believers brought the Salaf in a direct collision course with the old generation of Muslims. They also attacked government, accusing it of not only marginalizing Muslims but also attempting to religionalise politics and politicize religion.

As observed by Wiktorowicz (2006), the Salafi quest for religious purity has been predominantly characterized by internal and external diatribes, theological disagreements and conflicts which have yielded in the emanation of violent and non-violent subgroups throughout the world. This debacle did not spare the Tabliq movement, which, until 1991 did not use the term Salaf to refer to its identity. The apogee of Tabliq activism was the attack on Old Kampala Mosque on 22 March 1991 which resulted in the killing of four Police officers and two Police K9 dogs and led to the arrest and conviction of 413 Salaf sect members including Sheikh Jamil Mukulu to Luzira Maximum Prison (Beevor, 2019). It was during the period of detention, that Jamil Mukulu and others managed to hatch plans of an armed rebellion against the state through radicalizing fellow inmates and through Salaf structures upon his release. This marked the first direct confrontation between the Salaf and the State thus posing National security threat.

I am tempted to agree with Schmid (2011) Ridley (2014:39) and Day (2011: 447) that the formation of the short-lived Uganda Islamic Revolutionary Party (UIRP) by Idris Muwonge in 1993, as well as the Uganda Muslim Salvation Front (UMSF), Uganda Mujahidin Freedom Fighters (UMFF) in the 1990s, the Uganda Muslim Liberation Army (UMLA) and subsequently the ADF added a political and security dimension to Islamic reformism in Uganda. This was exacerbated by the government response, which resulted into civil strife, numerous arrests of real and suspected rebels, legal intricacies, further disharmony within the Muslim community and between sections of the Muslim population and other communities and a prolonged 'war' between the State and sections of the Salaf in Uganda. In here lies part of the explanation for stereotyping the Salafi in Uganda by both the public and the state apparatus.

The state though may not be held totally culpable for its interpretation and approach to religious activism, given the fact the in the last three decades, religion has been used as a popular instrument for mobilization by extremist sub-national actors such the Lord's Resistance Army-LRA, (Allen & Vlassenroot.2010)

Alice Lakwena's Holy Spirit Movement (Allen, 1991:373) and the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) to violently confront the state only using religion as a tool in pursuit of political goals. Such religio-political activism has been regarded by the State to be a considerable threat to national security. (Kabatalya (2014:7) and Mika Vehnämäki *(2002).*

What is inexplicable however, is that, although in recent times an upsurge of religious puritanism in Uganda has been equally manifested in the activism of the numerous Christian revivalist Born Again ministries and cults such as Joseph Kibwetere's Movement for the Restoration of the Ten Commandments of God (Venter, 2005 and Szuppe, 2018) such movements have not been subjected to the magnitude of stereotypes attached to the Salaf.

**Understanding Stereotypes; Definitional Underpinnings;**

A thorough analysis of all ramifications of stereotypes is beyond this scope of this paper. Rather in this work, a simple definitional approach is used to aid in providing an understanding a meaning of stereotypes. However, note need be taken that although various definitions may be useful in providing understanding of stereotypes, such characterization may be less decisive in providing justification for their use in society. Rather, both the definitions and a description of the nature and scope of stereotypes will help augment the importance of their role in framing social movements. A preponderance of scholars offers definitions that point to stereotypes as inherently negative. For instance, according to McCauley et al. (1988:197 and 1980: 195)) *stereotypes refer to generalizations about groups of people that distinguish such groups from others.* Taking this definition into context, stereotypes would therefore be regarded to be akin to what Kenny (1991) refers to as shared meaning systems, by which sub-cultural groups tend to interpret observable behaviors of other social categories, or, as coined Keil (1989), concepts depicting societal representation of a category of persons. This is in line with the definition provided by Ashmore and Del Boca (1981:16) who consider stereotypes to be a set of beliefs about attributes of a social category that is widely shared in a particular society. As rigid attributes, stereotypes are often used to justify prejudice towards particular social groups or even large social movements (Jussim et.al, 1995:8). This partly explains why in the history of Uganda, religious groups such as the Muslim community tend to attribute their tribulations to stereotypes tagged to them, which have been used to justify prejudicial marginalization.

Away from conventional definitions, stereotypes carry with them general characteristics that tend to frame their role in influencing social movements. Such characteristics may partly offer a substantial descriptor or erroneous perceptions largely associated with certain social categories (Martina & Graf, 2014), thus

rendering stereotypes misleading. This is especially so, especially as Ardono et.al (1950) contend, if the prejudice associated stereotypes is intended to create an attitude disliking a social group.

Some scholars in psychology and sociology contend that stereotypes are inherently irrationally mostly resistant to new information irrespective of how a stereotyped group may have changed overtime. (Jussim et.al, (1995). This explains why schemas and typecasts associated with racial or religious differentiations tend to transcend generations. For instance, the global perceptions about the Salaf movement have remained predominantly abhorrent. Even the attempts by scholars such as Quintan Wiktorowicz (2006) and Roel Meijer (2007) to classify the Salaf into purists, moderate politicos and Jihadists, has contributed little in correcting a percept that views all Salaf as militant and violent.

Do stereotypes portray a generally perfect descriptor of social groups? The conventional thinking is that stereotypes not only lack perceptual accuracy but are also generally rigid, illogical in origin, prejudicial and pernicious (Jussim et. al, 1995:6). Instead, as described by LeVine and Campbell (1972**)** stereotypes often appear to be exaggerations of real group differences. For instance, the difference between the Tabliq and non-Salaf mainstream Muslims in Uganda may not be found in matters of principle (such as Tawhid) but in matters of detail (such as identity symbols)**.**

Another important feature of stereotypes is that they are not universally applicable in space and time. There always seems not to be a general perceptual agreement in society towards a particular group or social movement. Ashmore and Longo (1995:82) rightly postulate that it is not unusual to find different perceiver groups harboring contrasting stereotypes of the same target group. This aspect becomes vital in measuring the accuracy of stereotypes attributed to a particular social group such as the Tabliq, and further opens up the veins of intellectual debate on the topic. For instance, to brand the Salaf as extremist remains contentious, even among sections of the Ugandan population that do not subscribe to Salafi views or method.

The final characteristic relates to whether stereotyping is a one-way traffic. The fact is that it is not. Rather, stereotyping is often multi-dimensional, and reciprocal. In all domains in which typecasts thrive, such as gender, racism, ethnicity and religious bigotry, targeted groups often fall prey to using stereotyping as a weapon to fight stereotypes. In some extenuating circumstances, as evidenced by Morey and Yaqin (2011:19) stereotyping may reveal more about the group doing the stereotyping than it does about the group stereotyped. For instance, it is arguable whether all Tabliq Salafi teachings are extremist or moderate compared to those espoused by the non-Salaf Muslims in Uganda. The history of Tabliq

activism truly reveals that reception of its message was in part inhibited by the rigid approach that followers of Islam had adopted for over 100 years of Islam in Uganda, even where Salafism seemed to offer channels of moderation.

Nonetheless, stereotyping social movements often thrives in an environment where generalist attributes are fixed on social groups which in turn become indelible marks in terms of group identity. Such descriptions sequentially make social movements susceptible to exaggeration and manipulation to suit the frames and intent of the particular source describing the movements (Karim, 2002:108-9 and Morey & Yaqin, 2011:35). This begs a question as to whether, the public in Uganda could have had particularistic intentions in tagging the Tabliq by use of nomenclature. As observed by Morey and Yaqin (2011:2) stereotyping of Muslims seems to be a global phenomenon reflected in repeated acts of representation by politicians, the press and media, and even those claiming to speak on their behalf. As an alternative, the targeted groups are compelled to take options from acceptance of such stereotypes, accommodation using such typecasts to their own advantage, or fighting back against stereotyping. This therefore informs the role of public space in framing social movements.

**The Nature And Typology Of Stereotypes Tagged To The Salaf**

Stereotyping the Salaf in Uganda is largely manifest in three broader categories. The most widely applied category has been the use nomenclature to describe the typicality of the Salaf. Stereotyping Salaf through tagging is, in essence, has been used by the public to not only to show the otherness of this social movement but also to express societal disavowal of Tabliq unique behavioral and identity characteristics. The tagging, which was generally repugnant involved a description based on identity symbols of the Tabliq. A term *Balulevu* attributed to the Tabliq, was generally derived from the cardinal identity characteristic of growing long beards, which the Salaf not only consider to be a vital sunna but also a mark that distinguishes the identity of a male Muslim from followers of other faiths. While this tag is used collectively to describe the group, it is not uncommon to hear a bearded male adherent of the Salaf sect referred to as *Kalevu or Ayatollah* ( a similarity reference to the revolutionary spiritual leader in Iran). Islam discourages dragging one's garment out of conceit. For this reason, the Tabliq put great emphasis on trimming trousers and tunics above the level of the ankle. It is from this identity symbol that the public attributed a derogatory tag of *Bamutema Mpale* to describe the Tabliq. No one would consider this to be a complimentary use of nomenclature.

Additionally, public disavowal of the Salafi radical message of Islamic revivalism and strict adherence to sharia, begot the stereotypical tag *Bannalukala* to locally describe the Tabliq as militant Islamic

fundamentalists. This tag though, was not only reflective of Tabliq speech acts, which involved ultra-radical proselytization, but also Salafi behavioral traits such as violent take-over of mosques, disruption of religious gatherings and ceremonies considered un-Islamic and, intolerant behaviourism, courageous challenge to the socio-political status quo and occasional call for Jihad against the "infidels" and the *Mubtadi'un* (locally translated as Abazuuzi).

It is also probable that public use of tagging to stereotype the Tabliq has been, in general, a phobic reaction of those that don't subscribe to the ideas and teachings of Salafism or Islam generally. This line of argument is aligned to the clash of civilizations alluded to by Samuel Huntington (2001) which describes the historical incompatibility of Islam and western Christendom. This clash has been ably delt with by a host of scholars and needs not detain us here. However, the uniqueness of the Salafi message, methodology and approach to social, economic, spiritual, moral and inter-societal relations, could have bred a sense of distaste and phobia towards the Tabliq from among the non-Salaf. This in turn yielded the stereotyping of the Tabliq as an irrational, intolerant, radicalized, extremist, fanatical, argumentative and obstinate group, and - in the worst-case scenario - as potential violent terrorists. As mentioned earlier, many of these attributes are largely inaccurate though not totally unfounded.

The stereotyping of Salaf, has over the years not been circumscribed to only the use of nomenclature. Rather, it has been further extended to attitudinal stereotypes, manifest in other domains such as politics, theatre and dram, music, security, and other areas of societal relations.

In the theatrical and dramatical sphere, attitudinal stereotyping has been largely manifested either overtly, covertly or succinctly. However, in this domain, stereotypes don't seem to exclusively target the Tabliq but have resonated into more of a reflection of societal perception and generalization about the Muslim community. In comical and tragic drama stereotyping Muslims in Uganda has tended to erroneously mirror the assumed simplicity of their life style, "naivety", occupational orientations, social status, greed, and the general plight of Muslims. Whether intentional or otherwise, theatre has for a long time depicted Muslims as either, lowly people, gullible, sly, crafty or heartless characters acting in roles depicting despicable social statuses. For instance, a play titled ***Wokulira*** which was serialized on Radio Uganda in the 1970s by **Wycliffe Kiyingi showed** this through one of the characters, *Muwalimu Twaha* who was always a meek and daft member of the community, barely schooled but always problematic. In the recent times, a Diamonds Ensemble's Play depicts a Muslim as a cook at a primary school. Although the protagonist was acted by a Muslim (Dr. Ashraf Ssemwogerere), to the Muslim community, this was

construed as a deliberate ploy to symbolize the inferiority of Muslims in job placement in society and irked many of them.

Additionally, it took the intervention of Muslim clerics to protest the caricaturizing of a Muslim as a social cheat in a popular serialized TV show ***Embaga ya Hajji Bumaali*** *aka* ***Hajji Bumaali Atasasula boda*** to force the protagonist (Andrew Benon Kibuuka) to change the character to Dube Sempaata. (Senkubuge and Kibuuka, 1998). As Kasule (2018) writes, "In the television play, Haji Bumaali/Dube, cheats, robs, and swindles his way around the city…the episodes feature stereotypes while presenting a range of a remarkable cast of local actors that create distinctive characters." The Muslim community's chagrin about this show was based on the feeling that it stereotyped the *hajjis* as cunning criminals with sadistic and wobbly social behavior in the community. This depiction is also noticeable in a popular CBS radio serialized play, *Banadda Twegande* produced by Martin Oscar Kintu, in which the character, Kamaadi, is notably the most capricious and vicious member of the community.

In the music industry a similar trend is noticeable. In the Track/album, "Mr. money" by Robert Kyagulanyi, *aka* Bobi Wine, a hajji is reflected as a heartless, unschooled, wealthy sex maniac who does not see anything anomalous in denying a girl child chance to pursue her education but considers money as panacea to all needs in life. Similarly, in Elly Wamala's track; **Hammadi**, the Muslim is depicted as not only a destitute, beggar but also one obsessed with racial marriage, selling groundnuts with a sole aim to raise funds to go back home (Yemen) to marry. In the 1990s, Herman Basudde's ***Baasi Dunia*** pulled sharp criticism from the Salaf. In the song, Basudde portrays the Tabliq as a chaotic group aboard the grand omnibus (symbolizing the world), constantly engaged in intra-religious squabbles and he seems to appeal to not only Jesus' intervention but that of prophet Muhammad as well.

In honesty, Basudde was a social critic artiste whose music was voiced to correct social challenges in Uganda. Probably, there could be nothing anomalous in his description of the state of affairs in the Muslim community, which was by then deeply embroiled in religio-political factionalism. However, similar to how Christians in Europe felt about Andres Serrano's Art piece titled "Piss Christ"[1] or how Muslims worldwide felt about the Charlie Hebdo or the Bomb-in-Turban cartoons (Lasse & Zapata-Barrero (2009:303), the Tabliq, perceived this song as not only satirical but also a blasphemy for involving Prophet Muhammad in drama. Worse still, by Basudde singling out the Tabliq as *akabinja ka*

[1] In 1987 Andres Serrano took a photograph of a crucifix immersed in his urine and tagged it "Piss Christ". The photo was exhibited in Virginia in 1989, receiving great condemnation.

*abakozi abasala empale* (Short-trouser Lumpen proletariat) the Salaf construed the song as a direct stereotypical onslaught on the Tabliq.

Similarly, in the comedy industry, stereotyping Muslims is not uncommon. In 1998, presenters in the CBS morning sports-cum-comedy show *(Kaliisoliiso*) hosted by Abbey Mukiibi, Kato Lubwama, and Abu Kawenja, mused about Muslim backwardness in education. This was done by indicating that street news vendors would naturally flash a Luganda Newspaper *(Bukedde)* to a bearded, veiled or capped Muslim as opposed to an English daily such as ***The New Vision*** or ***The Monitor***, owing to the general belief of limited literary prowess of Muslims. Such stereotyping could ignite laughter to the listeners, which would be the intent of the show. However, it also unearths the general derogatory societal perception of a community, whose history is rich with incidents of deprivation by the colonial and post-colonial state.

The recent jokes by comedian Mariachi on Islam and Muslims dress code and eating habits were widely regarded as an onslaught on Islam and faced criticism and threats from leading sheik, notably Nuh Muzaata, subsequently forcing the comedian to officially apologize to the Muslim community[2]

Such stereotypical messages are innumerable and have often pegged actors in the informal sector on a collision course with the Muslim fraternity in general and the Tabliq in particular. However, since stereotypes - irrespective of their inaccuracy – are rooted in social indicators, they provide rich sources in the reconstruction of history. The public, through use on nomenclatural stereotypes not only iconizes how society generally interprets undocumented history, but sometimes acts as a basis upon which history is documented. This poses a challenge to the intelligentsia in two ways. Should the historians ignore societal perceptions about social movements or abnegate their objective responsibility in the search for the truth? Secondly, is it possible that the public can be challenged to embrace sifted historical knowledge produced by historians?

I have already intimated that stereotypes are often linked to prejudice. This though, is not to suggest that they never hold a kernel of truth. As noted by Martina & Graf (2014) and Martina et al (2018: 87) the argument that stereotypes are not always necessarily inaccurate is based on the fact that they are often in agreement with real people characteristics. Yet, borrowing from Henri Tajfel's (1984) categorization, stereotypes serve three overlapping functions, namely; social differentiation, social-causal and social justificatory functions. These categories seem to fit well in the anatomy of Salafism in general and social perception of Tabliq activism in particular. Firstly, in the category of social differentiation, the

[2] .) see. https://bigeye.ug/mariachi-apologises-to-muslims-for-ridiculing-them/(Mariachi's woes with the Muslim community started after he made fun of the Islamic faith and ridiculed their eating habits and dress code 2 Aug 2017

differences between the Tabliq and the non-Salaf have been noticeable in the message, acts and in situations where the Tabliq have shown self-acclaimed religious closeness to the unadulterated truth. The differences have also been noticeable in situations when the group has found itself at a collision course with the state; clearly accentuating the notion of *us and them* (otherness). Secondly, the application of the social-causal function of stereotypes relates to the years 1996-todate, when sections of the Tabliq were involved in subversive acts against the State under the auspices of the UMFF and Allied Democratic Front (ADF). Since the start of the ADF conflict, the Tabliq have been generally stereotyped as a cause of political instability in the country. This was largely but not wholly inaccurate, since the founders of ADF and UMFF were erstwhile leaders of the Tabliq community (Titeca and Fahey, 2016). Thirdly the social justificatory function of stereotypes applies to the Tabliq in light of what the public or the State considers as a basis to justify their perception and behavior toward the Tabliq. This is exemplified in either the public phobic reaction towards Salafi activism or the government speech acts used in securitizing the Salafi problem linking the group to terrorism and violent extremism**.**

**Reciprocity of Salafi Stereotyping**

It is interesting to note though, that the use of nomenclatural stereotypes has not been unidirectional. Rather, reciprocity of stereotyping has been rife in Uganda's history. The Salaf have neither been mere passive victims of societal stigmatization through typecasts nor lacking in motivation to challenge the social framing. As rightly observed by Oakes et.al (1994:18) "stereotypes are not the result of indiscriminate, feud prejudices but are context-dependent statements about intergroup relations that can be influenced by a complex set of intergroup comparisons." The Tabliq have also often not only used stereotyping as a weapon to garner support for their cause, but to also authenticate their beliefs, to frame intergroup relations, legitimize their views or justify their actions against the non-Salaf community. Whereas the main targets of the Tabliq's verbal assault were the Muslims who don't subscribe to the former's teachings, members of other faiths (e.g., Christians and animists) also fell victim to Salafist onslaught.

Borrowing a leaf from the arguments of Hood et al (2005) in a religious setting, stereotypes often occur because interaction with other groups may be regarded as undesirable or even threatening to the social and moral bonds created by the religious in-group. The Tabliq therefore propagated teachings that not only promoted in-group favoritism but also encouraged out-group derogation. In a bid to portray self-rightness and for fear that the commitment of those already included in the Tabliq in-group might be weakened by exposure to alternative views, the Tabliq chose to use stereotyping the non-Salaf as a shield.

As pointed out by Joana and William (2016: 786) religious priming blended with activation of religious concepts can increase inter-religious prejudicial attitudes. During the heydays of Salaf activism in Uganda, this was not uncommon. While Christians were generally stereotyped as infidels (Kafir) always wary of and doggedly opposed to Islam, Tabliq stereotyping of Christian seemed to be part of the grand cross-crescent millennial feud. Using derogatory tags such as *Bamukomba midaali*[3] to refer to Christians or *Khalidu-nari*[4] to refer to the Catholic Cardinal, the Salaf aimed at asserting a sense of their correctness and the otherness of Christians. Equally, the non-Salaf Muslims were blanketly tagged Mudbtadiun, an Arabic term to refer to Muslims whose beliefs and practices are stained with innovations (Bida) that are outside the fold of Islam . By using this blanket inclusion, the Tabliq aimed at convincing their adherents that all Muslims that do not subscribe to their beliefs are guilty of innovation (Bida) and therefore strayed from the path of Islam. This has always been authenticated by frequent citation of khutbat al Haja, which contains a prophetic Hadith condemning all those that succumb to Bida to hellfire in the hereafter.

Since religion is woven around the promise of heavenly rewards for the righteous and grievous punishments for wrong-doers, the Salaf aimed at galvanizing support through vilifying the non-Salaf. Extremist Salaf leaders such as Jamil Mukulu even declared non-Salaf Muslims as infidels (Kafir) swimming in a sea of disbelief (Kufr).[5] Such stereotyping of other Muslims challenges the strength of the belief in the universality of Muslim brotherhood preached in line with the teachings of the Quran as opposed to the actual practice and utterances of the Tabliq leaders. Hereto lies the basis of branding some Tabliq as extremists by the public**.** A similar view is shared by Batson, (2013: 89) who asserts, "in spite of what religions preach about universal brotherhood, the more religious an individual is, the more intolerant he or she is likely to be" (Batson, 2013:88).

Relatedly, using the media (The Shariat, As-Salaam and Yaqeen newsletters) as well as the pulpit, the Tabliq stereotyping of other Muslims was extended through name-calling, based on either the beliefs or religious practice of the latter. This though, was meant to dissuade other Muslims from continued belief and practice of rites and acts that the Salaf considered unacceptable in Islam. For instance, one of the ceremonies abhorred is the commemoration of the birth of Prophet Muhamad (PBUH) commonly known as Mawlid. To the Salaf, this ceremony is considered *bid'a* and emulation of Christian cerebration of Christmas. Condemnation of Mawlid appears to take a central place in Salaf *Manhaj.* Thus, in the initial

[3] *Bamukomba midaali* is a term that loose translates as those who kiss the rosary. This was mainly used in reference to the Catholics in Uganda.
[4] *Khalidu-nari* is a term derived from Arabic, which loosely means dweller(s) of fire hell. Was used to illustrate the degree of disbelief of the Cardinal
[5] See. A recorded sermon on Audio Cassette tape delivered by Sheikh Jamil Mukulu titled, "*Abasiramu abattibwa e Mbarara"*, 1991.

days of Salafism in Uganda, the anti-Mawlid talk dominated Islamic discourse and the contention between the Tabliq and other members of the Muslim Community. In the 1980s and 1990s Salafist methodology in ridding Islamic practice of this ceremony even involved violence, which included disruption (such as demolishing tents) and Sabotage[6]. However, as the mainstream Muslim community remained intransigently at war with the Tabliq and continued to stick to organizing Maulid, the Tabliq abandoned violence and resorted to other means, mainly nomenclature. This included branding all non-Salaf as *Bamutuyaana nkwawa*, a derogatory term referring to the highly physical musical entertainment using tambourine drums *(Mataali)* played at Maulid ceremonies.

For the alleged lack of fearlessness associated with non-Salaf Muslims and for refusal to accept growing the beard, all men with shaven cheeks are tagged "women-of-sorts." By using this stereotype, the Tabliq reasoned that a beard is one of the features in gender identification and distinction. Thus, a man who shaves it is akin to a woman in appearance. A tag *Zainab* (a female name) was then used to refer to the other non-bearded men. This term was first used by Sheikh Jamil Mukulu and soon trended in Tabliq speak. Another central pillar of Salafism is the concept of Tawhid (unity of God) whose antonym is generally referred to as Shirik (polytheism and fetish and divination). In its activism, Salafism strives to uphold Tawhid and fight all forms of Shirik. In addition to Maulid and other forms of Bida' the concept of Shirik is considered a major seen in Islam. Therefore, the Tabliq in Uganda have embarked on a long struggle against Shirik practices and branding some muslims *mushrikeen.*

One of the major ceremonies targeted by the Tabliq continues to be the last funeral rites, locally referred to as *okwabya olumbe*. In the same vein, Muslims who continued to participate in the said rites have been repeatedly stereotyped as *Bashiriku* (polytheists). In doing this, the Tabliq intended to weaken the propensity of Muslims to perform such ceremonies, especially through self-reflective conscience upon one being branded a Mushrik, a term that refers to anyone who believes in or practices Shirik. Other names ascribed to the non-Salaf Muslims include those related to the latter's dress code such as *Bamukweyesa* (those who drag their garments out of conceit) or on the basis of other trivial behavioral traits such as handshake to which the tag *abakunya (danglers)* was given to other Muslims.

In the most extreme circumstances, Tabliq stereotyping of other Muslims has often included attempts to apply the concept of Takfir on other Muslims. Clerics such as Jamil Mukulu, Idris Lwazi, Ismail Kalule, Yunus Kamoga and Muzamil are on record to have delivered sermons calling upon the Salaf to shun all

[6] For instance, in late 1985, The Tabliq attempted to demolish tent (Kidaala) erected for a Grand Maulid at the headquarters of the Uganda Muslim Supreme Council. Brig. Moses Ali, Maj. Amin Onzi and other Leaders condemned this attempt by advising the Tabliq to devoted their energy to developmental issues other than too much research on trivialities.

non-Salaf Muslims in both matters of practice and social relations. For, they were considered stained with impurity (*abanagisifu*). The list of exclusion includes not extending Salaam salutations, not mixing with non-Salaf in prayer, and not eating meat of animals slaughtered by the so-called *mubtadiu.*' This kind of practice augments the selective intolerance hypothesis which holds that prejudice towards groups which supposedly behave inconsistently with religious values is often extended to other adherent groups in particular religions.

From a socio-political perspective, Salaf stereotyping of other Muslims was not only aimed at their self-denomination as the righteous, but also at accentuating the sense of otherness, which was needed to cement Salaf in-group identity and cohesion. On the other hand, stereotyping was also used in the intra-Tabliq schisms that engulfed the movement after 1994 and yielded in the eruption of two distinct Salaf groups. In 1994, one group led by Jamil Mukulu established its headquarters at Container Village (and later Mengo Kisenyi) in Kampala and another led by Sheikh Sulaiman Kakeeto remained at Nakasero Mosque. At the height of intra-Tabliq rifts, the Jamil group was derogatorily tagged *Khawarij* while the group branded their adversaries at Nakasero *abatalafu*. The term Khawarij is drawn from history and linked to the Kharijites, a group of dissenting Muslims that appeared during the leadership crisis also known as period of fitnah) that erupted following the death of prophet Muhammad. *Abatalafu* was linked to an Arabic term talaf which means the damaged or an Urdu term linked with engrossment, assimilation or immersion. The group at Nakasero was accused of being absorbed by the state and earthly gains. This in-group stigmatization points to the postulations supported by Ryan (1995:189) that stereotypes are inaccurate generalizations.

However, the problem here is not just that in-group stigmatization prevailed, but it also resonated into formation of further out-group attitudes within the erstwhile cohesive Tabliq community. The Stereotypical branding amongst Salaf formations was in part aided by the personality cult status that some of the leaders such as Jamil Mukulu, Yunus Kamoga, Idris Lwazi and Sulaiman Kakeeto had by 1994 built, attained or wished to attain. By 1996, such charismatic Salaf leaders had attained certain ascriptions that allowed them to violate ontological stature to reach a degree of unchallengeableness that enabled them to stereotype others, often selectively using evidence from qur'anic teachings. In Alastair (2020:104) and Lane Justin (2009) a similar situation is discussed in reference to charismatic leaders who "through a mixture of self-propagation, as well as additions and embellishments on the part of their followers, these alphas gain certain attributions that cause them to violate their own ontology category and thus become superhuman agents.'

**The Effect**

An experiential observation of the manner in which the Tabliq have been stereotyped and their response to such stereotyping helps to generate compelling arguments that stereotyping may not have solely yielded adverse effects on the movement. In terms of group identity, branding of Salaf with typecasts helped the group in provoking to Salaf to build an exclusive group identity that enabled the members of the movement to proudly view themselves as a social group, distinct from the mainstream Muslim community. Armed with ideals of self-rightness otherness, and a promissory sense of satisfaction with rewards in the hereafter, the verbal onslaught seemed not to deter the Tabliq from perceiving themselves as a group described in the Quran as the best stock of people (Quran. 3: 110) and sought consolation from Qur'anic injunctions that enjoin steadfastness and assure believers of their honour before Allah (Quran 3:111, 3:139 and 5:44) or those that define the perennial prejudice of non-believers (Quran 2: 120). This self-reassurance explains why some elite among the Tabliq proudly accepted the tag "fundamentalists" giving it a positive connotation in relation to those who practice fundamentals of the faith. AS Saggar and Sommerville (2012) postulate, the experience of Islamophobia elsewhere, reveals that Muslim identity bolsters an "important sense of masculinity among young Muslims who construct a 'strong' Muslim identity as a way to resist stereotypes of weakness, compliance and passivity" (Hardy, et al., 2017:53).

Secondly, stereotypical descriptions could have reinforced Salaf in-group cohesion and resolve in navigating the challenges that the movement faced. The public ridicule subjected to the Tabliq as well as the securitization of their activism by the state, broadly prompted them to cement in-group cohesion and strengthen their tenacity. It is not debatable that the message of the Salaf transited from Islamic reformism in the 1980s to a more radical call for Jihad in the 1990s. This not only made more youth vulnerable to radicalization but also engendered strong bonds among the Tabliq. The public and state's misunderstanding and misconceptions about the mission of the Tabliq was partly responsible for this change in stance. On the other hand, a responsive message to stereotypical labelling, no doubt played a crucial role in garnering a validated identity and nurturing of a self-confidence among the Salaf activists. This was further exacerbated by a textualist contextualization of qur'anic teachings related to self-assurance to the oppressed. (Quran 2: 120, 3:111, 3:139 5:44).

The third perspective within which the impact of stereotypes on Salaf movement can be discerned, connotes relations between the Salaf and the State as well as the general public. In this paper. I can only ignite further debate on the possibility that stereotypes may have influenced the nature of state perception

towards and its response to the activities of the Salaf. Following the arrest of 413 Tabliq followers in 1991, the state started construing some elements of the Tabliq as a threat to national security. At this point it cannot be argued with certainty whether this was erroneous. Neither has it been established that the formation of the UMLA, UMFF and later the ADF was a reaction to state persecution of the Tabliq (Kasule, 2017) What is certain though, is that feelings of marginalization and persecution encouraged such anti-systemic forces to build grievance narratives that enabled those groups to recruit membership to wage war against the state.

Finally, this paper prompts further historical inquiry on whether stereotyping could have adversely affected the esteem of some of the Salaf adherents, leading to backtracking in their activism. The historical trajectory of the Salaf movement is rich with examples of some of its leaders and staunch followers either backtracking in the zeal of activism or completely abandoning the group to form splinter groups or even revert to the practices that they once preached against. Such leaders who backtracked include Sheiks; Nuh Muzaata (RIP), Shaban Mubajje, Salman Faris, Zubair Bakari (RIP) Muhammad Kizito Ziwa, and others. Although as individuals, each could have been influenced by peculiar reasons, it can be bluntly stated that the economic, pecuniary, political, security, and the social environments within which Salafism operated in Uganda could have influenced some of the followers to slide off the rail of Salafism. However, the variable of the psychological effect of stereotyping the group greatly impacted on those that seemed to wobble in their zeal and courage. It is also probable that State securitization of Tabliq activism, its infiltration of Tabliq ranks and State use of soft power approaches could have engendered the defusing of some of the hitherto strong adherents of the Tabliq to backdown. This is a debate that cannot be exhausted here. However, it remains plausible to assert, that stereotyping could have ignited some self-reflection amongst some Salaf, who eventually chose to abandon this unique movement in favor of fitting in a larger community.

**Conclusion**

From the foregoing analysis, it appears therefore that the stereotypes ascribed to the Tabliq have remained multifaceted. The Tabliq were neither passive victims of stereotyping by the society nor totally initiators of nomenclatural stereotyping in Uganda. However, the public perception of this movement has been closely linked to the Tabliq modus operandi, their perceptual formations, behavioral traits, and relations with other groups and sub-groups in the larger Ugandan community. It is not necessary to delve into an analysis on the motives for stereotyping communities, for such motives are varied and lack permanence. What is worthy of focus is the role of such stereotyping in fomenting identity within social, constructing

psychological and moral frameworks, seldom strengthening resolve and activism and shaping relations between the stereotyped movements and the larger community. For the Salaf movement in Uganda, nomenclatural stereotyping has been mostly damaging, especially in terms of the movement's relations with the State, which largely has securitized the movement's activism. It can also be concluded that the historical prejudices, suspicions and nomenclatural stereotypes that were tagged to the Muslim community in the past and against the Salaf in the contemporary period have not been eradicated although they appear to be greatly in retreat. As Mendes & Koslov (2013) hypothesize, correction and suppressing stereotypes is awfully taxing, although leaving them to prevail unattended is equally erosive to harmony in society. Finally, since stereotypes - irrespective of their inaccuracy – are rooted in social indicators, they provide rich sources in the reconstruction of history.

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