

A Study on Islam in Brazil: Shiite Cultural Centers in the Creation of the Dialogue of Coexistence in Social Networks

Authors: Dr. Karina Arroyo¹

Receive: 03/10/2017

Accept: 23/12/2017

Abstract

In this work, the objective is to analyze through an empirical research the function of the social networks used by the Mosques and Cultural Centers shi'as in Brazil for the promotion of peace and coexistence among the different religious groups.

Shiite Muslims in Brazil participate in government political instances in Committees to Combat Religious Intolerance (CCIR) and use social media to convene, disseminate and strengthen the community and the Islamic speech of peace.

Two main examples will also be presented: Imam Hussein Cultural Center (CCIH) and The Shiite Human Rights Observatory (OXDIH), both in the city of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. The discourse and actions developed also support the pretension of educating and informing the Brazilian population about the true mission of Islam to promote peace and peaceful coexistence.

Key Words: Social Networks, Interreligious Speech, Islam in Brazil, Shiite Cultural Centers

1. PhD and Master in the Postgraduate Program in Geography of the State University of Rio de Janeiro; Student a Master's Degree in Islamic Studies from Al-Mustafa Open University, kary_arc@yahoo.com.br

Introduction

Start this topic by presenting an overview of the place of analysis of this subject.

The Brazil, a country discovered in the year 1500 and colonized by the Portuguese in the European continent, with many points of interest related to your history, culture and civilization, composed by three different peoples: Indians, the natives of the land, Portuguese, the colonists and finally, Africans from Angola, Benin and Guinea, brought in compulsorily to slavery for three centuries until the extinction of human trafficking with the Áurea Law, enacted in 1888.

These three people printed on Earth your brazilian culture with emphasis on religion as the main vehicle to join the groups, establishing identity and symbolic borders.

These borders were able to build territories with power, control and influence material and immaterial.

We can say that the culture is able to create territories of belonging and develop within their borders different languages and ways of seeing the world from your body of doctrines and liturgies.

Thus, the plausible conclusion is that over time the groups have spread for Brazilian soil and were gradually differing from their territories.

Religions emerged with thousands of supporters who have, even today, social mobilization and political force. We can mention, among several, Christianity, Pentecostalism, Candomblé, Umbanda and the Islam, notably from the 19 century with the advent of Malês in the context of slavery (imale in Yoruba language means Muslim), term used in Brazil, to designate the Black Muslims could read and write in Arabic.

Were often more literate than their masters, and, in spite of the condition of slaves, were not meek but very flashy.

In the history of Brazil, noteworthy if the so-called revolt of the Malaysia, which occurred in 1835, in Bahia, where were found in greater numbers, although they were found also in Pernambuco, Alagoas and Rio de Janeiro.

Religious freedom at the time of the Portuguese Crown was very restricted what were minority groups suffer persecution, censured and punished.

However, only in 1988 with the promulgation of the Constitution of the Brazilian Republic, latest, in article 5, stipulates be inviolable freedom of conscience and belief, ensuring the free exercise of religious cults and guaranteeing, in the form of law, the protection of places of worship and their liturgies.

In this way it was possible to publicize your religions doctrine, clearing doubts deconstructing prejudices and stigmas that have prevailed for centuries.

The work of the religious and the faithful was long and arduous. In this article we will focus the role of Islam in Brazilian society, showing your educator role, on behalf of right and justice in everyday affairs and political relevance.

In the twentieth century, Brazil began to devote himself to the study and expansion of human rights directly related to religious who have had their rights denied, your place of worship destroyed, your honor and morality questioned.

In this sense, the Islam since the time of Prophet Muhammad (SAAS) has already highlighted the breadth and universal human rights to all individuals who had total access to them from the time they were under the protection of an Islamic Government.

Let's see now, the discussion about Human Rights and how the primordial Islam appropriated this theme to propagate your Din and contribute to the promotion of freedom, religious education and justice in a non-Islamic society.

The Dialogue as Humanitarian Principle

With the contemporary discussion about the relativity of Human Rights, which would lose power to question about the legitimacy of a universal paradigm about those rights, since the culture, quality and essentially human attribute is distinct as many are the groups and its different temporalities and spatialities analyzed.

Concepts and judgments enclosed under a Eurocentric perspective become inappropriate, when you understand such problematic.

Believing, as Max Weber, that man is an animal tied to networks and dealings of significance he himself has, it is considered culture as being this complex network of natural and historical plot, however, she is not an experimental science object looking for laws, but an interpretative science, looking for meaning.

So, to critical analyze, the process of universalization of human rights, it was possible to notice that when your side has developed a multiplication of human rights, with tutelage increasingly specifies the human being, although this plurality in assistance not admire native demands, and the compartmentalization of the groups as homogeneous agents equipped with social interests and possibilities for enjoyment.

From then on, we can contemplate the discussion on screen, addressing the Islam as a judicial body, demographically significant able to erect territories from their cultural practices imposed (BONNEMAISON: 2005).

So if I understand the question raised about the paradox in which the human rights that, although human and universal advocate for minorities and segments inserted into broader categories and generalized, we can treat the Shi'a Islamic community (ithna ashariyah) presente ao redor do globo.

Still, for a more effective, we will take the brazilian Shi'a community as an example through a critical analytical method. According to academic jobs-latest scientific, Islam has grown significantly in Europe as the second largest religion in number of followers (38.112.000) and the third in the United States (2.454.000).

In Latin America the Muslims totaling 1.085.000. Already in Africa, Muslims amount to 315 million for a total population of 778.484.000.

In Oceania, totaling 248.000 for a total population of 29.460.000, but it is in Asia that the Muslim population is much higher with 812 million fans to a total population of 3. 588. 877.000 (BINICHESKI, 2010: 113).

The diversity among Muslims is as big as the ignorance that has him out of Islamic countries.

There is no homogeneity in everyday religious practices. This ethnic, geographical and cultural plurality, even if they add different ways of interpreting law norms and behaviors.

The speech of the primordial rights derive from religious canons is supported, to a large extent, from the establishment of a fundamental dividing line set to Axial period.

It is understandable that it was during this period, between 600 and 800 B.C. which emerge the major denominational religions: Buddhism and Hinduism

(India): Confucianism and Taoism (far East): monotheism (Middle East); rationalism (Europe) and thinkers such as Zoroaster in Persia, Buddha in India, Lao Tzu and Confucius in China, elaborated metaphysical work on the limits of the essentially human, which would later influence on formation of thought about the parameters of the human dignity.

In this regard, it should be recognized that the human rights story has your home in centuries XI and X B.C., when it establishes, under the unified Kingdom of David Israel, as in the Bible, and your capital Jerusalem.

The Kingdom of David contrasted with the other monarchists from the past, when regimes established with merit, for the first time in the political history of mankind, the figure of a monarch who is autoproclaimed not God or legislator, but as a delegate, a delegate from God only and was the literature as a new political organization in which the rulers are also subject to the principles and norms established by a higher authority.

In the same way, if we stick to the case under examination, under the auspices of Islamic precepts and the treaty rights, the Imams of the Ahlul Bayt, Muhammad's descendants, would be representatives or leaders who would get the power of infallibility in the implementation of the laws of divine character and, therefore, the immutable principle.

The imams inaugurate a new political vision as subordinates of God the Almighty, Governors in favor of Justice and therefore, immutable and inviolable human rights of the Holy Quran.

In the West, the characteristics of the Government are themselves than is highly globalized throughout your fluidity and volatility.

New laws are needed and thought each period to give an account of the radical changes that exist in the West.

In Islam, the reform or review for different contexts through Single source, primary and irreplaceable in the Law: the Koran.

Review and adapt requires intellectual effort wise jurisconsults or mujtahid, who always imposes on the reason your total understanding so it's an intellectual exercise science directed to theology, is exerted by wise jurisconsults as continuous reform and life in the resolution of any and all subject terms.

From this, it is understandable that there are reivindicatórios different movements for the achievement of human rights.

For example, in Islam of alawite subdivision, Omran tells us that:

the identity of the Alawites in Brazil builds having the religious word associated with the feeling of belonging to a country, in case the Syria, since originate from the mountains of the Arab country and he ma ntêm strong links.¹

Such extract supports the definition of francophone cultural geography by assigning to the ability to create territories, exceeding the toponímico sentiment with the Earth, with characteristic elements of the landscape (mountains) and materializing in practice religious.

Covers all aspects of life, bringing the idea of full code of conduct, showing elements of faith, aesthetics, agency and control.

This culture characteristic of the given branch of Islam shows a branch from a second branch, analyzing the relations within Islam.

1. Omran, 2015, p. 55.

Therefore, later, you can see that such socio-political divisions led to persecutions which only stopped when they reached surcharges presidential power in the 20th century alone with Hafez Al-Assad, Alawi's first President.

According to Omran:

the religious group was condemned by clerics of the Sunni Islam, as Ibn Taymiyya, who, in a fatwa opened the jihad against the Alawites which provoked, for long, intense persecution and prejudice in relation to the group.¹

In the Shi'a Islam and its aspects, beyond tradition builds one of the sources of Islamic law, there are works written by early Imams as much as Compendium as much as a compilation of critical comments about fundamental rights.

The best known was defined as:

Colocamos em vossas mãos o livro: O Tratado dos direitos pelo quarto Imam dos Ahlul Bait (A.S), o Imam Ali ibnol Hussein ibn Ali ibn abi Taleb “Zainol Abedin” (AS.).

Podemos dizer que esta obra é a mais grandiosa e o mais importante documento escrito sobre os direitos humanos e que representa a grandiosidade da legislação islâmica.²

In modernity other documents have been written seeking the representativeness of their groups and inserting them in the late 20th century, preparing them for

1. Omran, 2015, p. 55.

2. Translate: Put in your hands the book: the treaty rights for the fourth Imam of Ahlul Bait (a.s), Imam Ali ibnol Hussein ibn Ali ibn abi Taleb “Zainol Abedin”.

We can say that this work is the greatest and the most important written document on human rights and representing the grandeur of Islamic law. (Khazraji, 2005, p. 14)

the new demands of a new century coming in the future and establishing autonomous principles and guidelines for the preparation These documents.

The Universal Islamic Declaration of human rights proclaimed by the Islamic Council of Europe, in Paris in 1981, was based on the Qur'an and the Sunnah and was compiled by scholars, jurists and representatives of Muslim schools of thought.

The second fundamental document proclaimed by the Islamic Council to mark the beginning of the 15th century Was Islâmica, the first being the Universal Islamic Declaration proclaimed at the International Conference on the Prophet Muhammad and your message, which took place in London, in the period from 12 to 15 April 1980.

Soon after, the letter of Banjul was approved by the Ministerial Conference of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in Banjul, Gambia, in January 1981, and adopted by the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in Nairobi, Kenya, on 27 of July 1981, showing the emergence of dissenting voices, convinced and against a universal parameter.

Meanwhile, among the first in the drives of 80 and today, we expanded the estimated panorama about Islamic Shi'a aspect through the Pew Research Center Forum on Religion and Public Life:

An overwhelming majority of Muslims are Sunnis, while an estimated 10-13% are Shias. This report estimates that there are between 154 million and 200 million Shia Muslims in the world today.

Between 16 million and 147 million Shias live in Asia, representing about three-quarters of the world's Shia population (note that Iran is included in the Asia-Pacific region).

Meanwhile, nearly a quarter of the world's Shias 6 million to 44 million) live in the Middle East-North Africa.

The Shi'a and their other aspects are among the most persecuted and coerced religious segments around the globe.

According to Shia Rights Watch agency, reliable source for the United Nations in Washington, USA, the updated June 2017 numbers corroborate such statements, showing a small cut in the countries of the Middle East and Asia in incidents anti shi la resulting in deaths: Saudi Arabia (3), Afghanistan (11), Pakistan (62), Iran (11) and Iraq (72). When we talk about the Shi'a community in Brazil, we are talking about a community mostly from a migratory flow sírio-libanês 1890 powders to the South and Southeast of the country and especially in post Lebanese civil war (1975-1980).

Among the Shi'a majority population, the Iranians do not represent a considerable migration, since there is a character of transience in the flow of people between Brazil and Iran that gives a lot more for the purpose of academic cooperation between the Iranian and national universities.

From these informations, in Rio de Janeiro, the Shiite Human Rights Observatory (OXDIH) is created in year 2016/1438, with support the Imam Hussein Cultural Center.

The Observatory is a non-governmental research and non-profit organization formed by a multidisciplinary group.

Emerging as the first independent organization in Brazil dedicated to protecting the rights of the Muslims the Shi'a in Brazil.

The OXDIH achieves its goals through strategic research supported by a targeted advocacy for prevention

and combating intolerance and statistical returns of these discriminatory actions.

The OXDIH then renumbered as an organisation recognised by the Committee of combating religious intolerance do Estado do Rio de Janeiro (CCIR), one of the main committees of social action against discrimination and listed on the page of the Public Ministry of the State of Rio de Janeiro (MPRJ).

Fig. 1: The Shiite Human Rights Observatory (OXDIH)



Source: <http://www.centroimamhussein.com/oxdih>

To achieve these objectives, the Centre investigates violations against Shi'a communities, to raise awareness and combat discrimination by any method. The main proposal is the Mission of “promoting necessary change through academic research and publications, with submission of reports and articles to governmental spheres and international organizations. In addition, the OXDIH continuously monitors the media to ensure knowledge of Shi'a rights violations” (adapted).¹

The creation of these virtual communication channels allowed several groups hounded other religions take contact and count your struggle to spread and perpetuate your culture.

1. See more in: <http://www.centroimamhussein.com/oxdih>

The OXDIH has become a channel of communication to report various types of human rights violations, not only of Muslims.

Jews, candomblecistas, Umbandistas, Protestants joined the Shi'a as support to defend their most basic rights, the equitable principle of respect and coexistence in a plural and multicultural country.

Fig. 2: Religious leaders promoting dialogue for peace in Brazil



Source: <https://www.facebook.com/ObservatorioXiita/>

The Imam Hussein Cultural Center based in Rio de Janeiro in 2015 has entered into a partnership with the University Al Mustafa and created the Iran-Brazil Research Group.

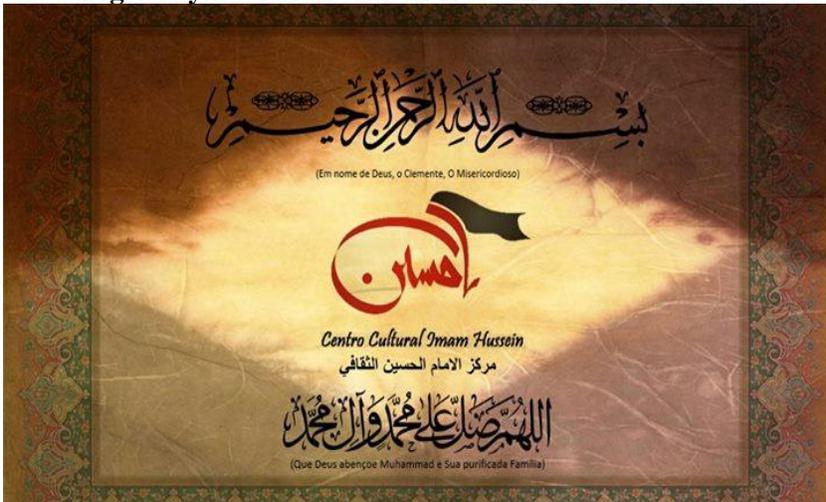
It constitutes a permanent forum of research between the two countries in which Brazilian and Iranian researchers produce intellectual material, events and promote Islamic and scientific knowledge in the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro (UFRJ).

The Group has a virtual academic journal called Litteris and there communicate and publicize the results of the work, the reflections and the promotion of dialogue among researchers.

In addition to science, one of the goals of the group is to promote public knowledge about Islamic historic, cultural and scientific principles.

Therefore, social networks, virtual world allows the intense, constant and uninterrupted promotion of dialogue and knowledge between different peoples and cultures.

Fig. 3: Symbol of the Imam Hussein Cultural Center



Source: www.centroimamhussein.com

For these actions are impregnated with an Islamic spirit, we should note what the theologians writing.

The Ayatullah Fadlullah talks about dialogue as the first important aspect at the time of the prophets and the problems that they faced.

Islam in your primary source encourages this dialogue with the intellectual honesty.

The answer of the Prophet Mohammad (S.A.A.S) when invited to dialogue has always been in accordance with the General Islamic understanding that recognises the action of acquiring knowledge in any field, as an inalienable right of every human being.

With that, the function of religion would, therefore, provide the windows of knowledge with liberate function, confirming the dialogue as a method to arrive at the truth through reasoning and logic operation of protection to freedom.

Dialogue and reasoning are related in the Islam and can be found as inseparable in the activities of Ijtihad as a methodological assumption of Tafseer which alludes to the fraternal sensitivity as a criterion for the rapprochement with the other people.

To reason, communicate and sensitize are aspects inherent in Islamic history with excellent examples of tolerance to adversity.

Imam Jafar Al-Sadeq (702-765 A.C), sixth Imam of the Ahlul Bayt, promote Islamic dialogues on jurisprudential sensitive and controversial topics to the local community, non muslims majority.

His sermons and dialogues were next to the Kaaba in the Holy City of Mecca, Saudi Arabia, main temple of monotheism and symbol material diametrically opposed to established by local society.

Thus, from the dialogue and through him, interfaith spaces with ethnic and religiously diverse in direct contact born.

Muslims represent the eternal and the honored flag of Imam Hussein (a.s) against tyranny and oppression, continuing a revolution that never had your order declared, initiated on the battlefield in 681 .a.C. in Karbala and that reverberates in human relations as a social model to be implemented, in which the attempt to reach agreements, approaches and sharing of noble values, initially, by the Islamic message transmission in several places or routes by which the Shiite community and its leaders travel.

Conclusion

When we talk about Islam and about one of his noblest missions, combat the social evil, reflected, daily, in ignorance and lack, it is necessary a reflection based on the clarification of the principles of the Din for non Muslims, making them meet through dialogue the bases and the methods in which Islam prevents the coercion and violence.

Therefore, the Islamic Centers, Mosques or Shiite husseynias throughout the Brazilian territory, we contextualize this reflection in a concrete analysis, statistical data and factual analysis. Soon, we approach the Shia community in Brazil, specifically in the city of Rio de Janeiro where the Cultural Center Imam Hussein (a.s) develops objective actions to guarantee the fundamental rights of its members and by publicizing the message universal Islamic peace.

From the report by the Pew Research Center Agency, estimated the Shia Islamic panorama says that in today's world's 154.200 million of the Shiites, which corresponds to only 10% to 13% of total Muslims, setting up a religious minority, persecuted and lethal attacks.

It is up to us as victims in high degree of terror and the imputation of harmful stereotypes, develop actions and strategies, always based on dissemination of the Islamic message and your historicity and opening for the democratic dialogue, building the possibility of acting and expending energy to gather the community and the world around that theme, emphasizing our positioning in front of one of the greatest evils of this century: the impossibility of having an identity or even be eliminated by exercising it.

So, like the OXDIH, similar scale projects should be supported by everyone who they say Muslim, aware of your paper and surrounded by sages and priceless

examples in your history, from the middle ages to the present. Peace, for us it is not an intention or a project, it is a goal that requires a method based on Islamic precepts, dialogue and rapprochement with the society that surrounds us.

References

1. Ahmed, Nasr., (2000), **Islam in Global History**, 2 vols, Chicago: Kazi Publications.
2. Arroyo, Karina., (2015), **Todo dia é Ashura Toda Terra é Karbala: A Construção do Território islâmico na cidade de São Paulo**, Dissertação de Mestrado, Universidade do Estado do Rio de Janeiro-UERJ. Rio de Janeiro, RJ.
3. Binicheski, Dilaine., (2010), **Direitos Humanos Internacionais: Cultura Islâmica Frente às Relações de Gênero**, Dissertação de Mestrado, Universidade Regional Integrada do Alto Uruguai e das Missões-URI, Santo Angelo, RS.
4. Bissio, Beatriz., (2008), **Percepções do espaço no medievo islâmico (século XIV), O exemplo de Ibn Khaudun e Ibn Battuta**, Tese (Doutorado em História) Universidade Federal Fluminense, Niterói.
5. Bonnemaïson, Joel., (2010), **Culture and Space: Conceiving a New Geography**, London: LB Tauris e Co, 2005. COMPARATO, Fabio Konder. A afirmação histórica dos direitos humanos. ed. rev. e atual. São Paulo: Saraiva.
6. Geertz, Clifford., (1989), **A Interpretação das Culturas**, Rio de Janeiro: Guanabara.
7. Khazarji, Taleb., (2005), **O Tratado dos Direitos: Por Ali Ibnol Hussein (A.S)**, São Paulo: Arresala.
8. Lefebvre, Henri., (1986), **La production de l'espace**, Paris: Editions Anthropos.

9. Omran, Muna., (2015), **O discurso religioso da preservação identitária nas comunidades muçulmanas alauitas do Brasil**, Revista Espaço and Cultura, n. 37, v. 1, Rio de Janeiro.
10. Nasr, Seyyed Hossein., (2007) **Islam: Religion, History and Civilization**, Harper Collins e-books.
11. Tabatabai, H., (2008), **O Xiismo no Islam**, Trad. Ahmed Abdul Monhem E-Horr Arresala: São Paulo.