Dawoodi Bohra implementation of meaning making methods for successful establishment in Western societies
Abstract

The purpose of this phenomenologically inspired study is to ascertain which successful meaning making methods have been implemented by Dawoodi Bohra congregations established in Western societies. The aim is to find out how this group function without confrontation to achieve their goal of worshiping in their own purpose built mosques. The central research question is which successful meaning making methods have been implemented by Dawoodi Bohra congregations established in Western societies. A sub-question is what specific roll education has played in this process?

For my theoretical foundation I have used Park’s theory of meaning making and Giorgi’s phenomenological analysis approach. My research has been based on discourse analysis and identifying patterns of recurring key elements in various research papers covering the subject of integration and acculturation of members of Muslim congregations born in western societies. My research material consist of previous research from Mandviwala concerning adolescent girls, Eade’s, creating homes in London, and Ahmed’s Manchester Muslims. My intension is to reinterpret their research material using Giorgi’s phenomenological analysis. Dawoodi Bohras’ generally achieve their goals even when reestablished and living in western cultures. Their meaning making philosophy usually works to their advantage as their solution to problems are not confrontational or antisocial. They are generally low keyed discrete solutions that do not evoke hostility in their new western societies.

Keywords: Dawoodi Bohra, meaning making, global meaning, coping methods, education.
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Chapter 1 Introduction

1. Introduction

I have chosen to research Dawoodi Bohra (Daudi Bohra) a Muslim group which is a sub-section of Shia Islam. There are up to a million Dawoodi Bohra community adherents worldwide. The majority of adherents reside in India and Pakistan (mostly in Karachi). There are also significant diaspora population in Europe, North America, Far East and East Africa. My research material consist of previous research from Mandviwala concerning adolescent girls, Eade’s, creating homes in London, and Ahmed’s Manchester Muslims. Their material has already been interpreted but my intension is to reinterpret them from Crystal Park’s theories about global meaning, situational meaning, personal meaning making and Giorgi’s phenomenological analysis.

Being only one million, spread around the world, the Dawoodi Bohra are a tight knit community that are happy to do business with outsiders but generally keep themselves to themselves. As my Swedish son is the first non-Muslim to marry into the Dawoodi Bohras in Sweden, I have had the unique opportunity to come into contact with this interesting group of people. They have been open and honest and always made my family feel welcome. For this reason I felt it would be suitable to find out more about them from an academic point of view. This proved more difficult than I anticipated as very little has been written about them.

One of the prime reasons for the Dawoodi Bohras comfort with and ready use of modern technology and ideology is probably their business outlook and mercantile orientation. A small businessperson must be adaptable to new circumstances, open to new ideas, flexible and forward thinking enough to stay ahead of the masses. One must be able to buy in any language but sell in the language of the customer. The Dawoodi Bohra have always needed to understand and work within the confines of the larger mainstream culture as that are a community that makes its living by selling products to members of other communities. Irrespective of if they live in London, or Hyderabad, Dawoodi Bohras have adapted to local circumstances, learnt new languages, new cultures and new ways of doing business. They are described as intellectual bricoleurs by Blank as they continue their handiwork with whatever tools at their disposal (Blank, 2001: 206).

1.1. Purpose and Aim

The purpose of this phenomenologically inspired study is to ascertain which successful meaning making methods have been implemented by Dawoodi Bohra congregations established in western societies. The aim is to find out how this group functions without confrontation to achieve their goal of worshiping in their own purpose built mosques.

1.2. Research Questions

- The central research question is which successful meaning making methods have been implemented by Dawoodi Bohra congregations established in western societies?
- A sub-question is what specific roll education has played in this process?
1.3. Previous Research

In order to ascertain previous research concerning Dawoodi Bohra I identified key words in English including: meaning making, coping methods, Dawoodi Bohra, integration and education. The following are the main computer data bases that I searched, Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ), World Wide Science Organisation, and Google Scholar. The facilities at Högskolan Väst library were used extensively while carrying out my research.

The key word “Dawoodi Bohra” created 265 hits for the time period 2000 to 2015, but most of the hits were concerned with medical research. This resulted in the purchase of the following book by Blank, J. (2001) *Mullahs on the Mainframe: Islam and Modernity among the Dawdi Bohras*, by an American anthropologist. Blank’s previous research is presented in his book, and the book provides a useful backdrop for my research but he was primarily studying the Dawoodi Bohra in India and Pakistan. He does indicate the need for more research and highlights the difficulties involved with research into relatively closed groups. As to the question of if the topic should be studied I would maintain that the Dawoodi Bohra members I have come into contact with express coping methods that could be beneficial for other groups in society that are entertaining ideas of successful acculturation. Pin pointing their methods and spreading their experiences could help other groups avoid the paramount dangers associated with unsuccessful acculturation.

Traditionally the Dawoodi Bohras have shunned political, religious, or sectarian agitation, both as an article of faith and as a practical necessity for survival, but sometimes sectarian violence does not avoid them. Dawoodi Bohras have sometimes been targeted specifically because of their unabashedly Muslim personal appearance, white topi (hat), kurta (white cotton shirt), and optional sherwani (long white overcoat) (Blank, 2001: 268 - 272). Dawoodi Bohras resent being drawn into other peoples’ battles and Sunni Muslims sometimes accuse them of cowardice for their apolitical quietism. They meet this accusation by pointing out that other Muslims are so militant, so fanatical, so violent and look to the Quran for all answers in life (ibid: 279-280).

Also chosen from this search result “Dawoodi Bohra” was John Eade’s (2015) paper called *Creating Religious Homes in London: Sacralising Space in a Deeply Globalised City*. Eade highlights the important part played by religious institutions in London which demonstrates the impact of global migration and increasing religious diversity. The Dawoodi Bohra plan to build a Mosque in London was the only one of the three conflicts in Eade’s paper to achieve its goal.

John Eade (2015) has written a paper called Creating Religious Homes in London: Sacralising Space in a Deeply Globalised City. He highlights the important part played by religious institutions in London which demonstrates the impact of global migration and increasing religious diversity. However established religious institutions have responded imaginatively to increasing competition in a crowded religious marketplace but this has sometimes led to aggressive exclusion of outsiders (Eade, 2015: 1). Eade explores the problems of sharing public space between religious and secular groups where boundaries are drawn between insiders and outsiders. Eade compares three disputes involving different ethnic and religious groups: the Dawoodi Bohras, the Universal Church of the Kingdom of God and Walthamstow ‘black majority’ congregations – and their secular opponents (ibid: 6).
Urban competition over scarce property and land has sometimes bought secular and religious groups into conflict according to Eade. The processes of secularisation and sacralisation can cause social friction or harmonize. The three conflicts under scrutiny involved religious leaders, representatives of secular interest groups, local politicians and planners. Despite being local issues each conflict escalated to involve politicians and planners at metropolitan and central government levels, members of national elites and transnational networks (ibid: 19).

The Dawoodi Bohra plan to build a Mosque was the only one of the three conflicts to achieve its goal. The Walthamstow project failed because the concept of sharing space between religious and secular groups was fraught with difficulties. A declining mainstream congregation collaborated with a new global migration church to build a religious center. However the independent occupation of premises was far more attractive to the parties involved than sharing. A key difference between the Dawoodi Bohra and Universal Church of the Kingdom of God case appears to have been the choice of location for the place of worship. The Dawoodi Bohra chose a peripheral industrial site while the Universal Church of the Kingdom of God bought a cinema on the High Street in the middle of town.

A search for key words “coping methods and Dawoodi Bohra” resulted in 100 hits for the period 2000 to 2015. I chose the small-scale qualitative study conducted by Tasneem Mandviwala, (2015) “Navigating the “Known:” The Socio-Cultural-Development of American Muslim Adolescent Girls”, as it explores the experiences of two second-generation Muslim American adolescent girls. An attempt was made by Mandviwala to uncover how the girls experienced negotiating the space between their two main socio-cultural groups they are members of, namely American and Muslim. This paper examines interviews from two case studies and explores the bifurcated experiences of second-generation Muslim American adolescent girls. They are in formative education settings, particularly middle and high school, in a post-9/11 America. It looks into how these experiences might have shaped their development as individuals. An ecological framework is used to examine what particular vulnerabilities Muslim American girls face with regard to peers and parents and which, if any, coping mechanisms are activated or developed when dealing with these risks. Mandviwala argues that Muslim American girls face socio-cultural risks unique to their social positioning not only as girls, Americans, and racial minorities, but also as Muslims, the latter element being a new phenomenon in the chronosystem of the U.S. This is part of Bronfenbrenner’s ecological systems theory that includes the events that transpire in a person’s life. The girls face the same challenges all adolescent minority American girls face, but with the added politically charged element of being a Muslim. The following overarching themes emerged from the interviews, highlighting a general pattern of social interaction and development: notions of difference, speaking about this difference, appearance, judgment, and not caring/ignoring this judgment. These elements collude in somewhat cyclical ways that eventually lead to a life stage outcome for the girls that includes finding stable support systems in like peers and discovering emergent cross-sectional identities (Mandviwala, 2015, 2).

A search for key words “acculturation and Dawoodi Bohra” resulted in 13 hits for the period 2000 to 2015. This resulted in me choosing a research paper written by Fiaz
Ahmed (2014) *Manchester Muslims: The developing role of mosques, imams and committees with particular reference to Barelwi Sunnis and UKIM*. He uses ethnographic data from the Pakistani Muslim community in Manchester. Ahmed argues that the role of mosques, Imams and mosque committees has taken place in an environment of conflict in which Pakistani Muslims have struggled to construct a Muslim identity. His research offers a modern comprehensive explanation to the history of the Muslim communities now established in Britain and the various problems they have to contend with. Ahmed uses ethnographic data from the Pakistani Muslim community in Manchester. Ahmed argues that the role of mosques, Imams and mosque committees has taken place in an environment of conflict in which Pakistani Muslims have struggled to construct a Muslim identity. In part, the British Pakistani Muslim community has established and maintained a religious identity through the negotiation of faith practice in schools, halal meals and the construction of purpose built mosques. These phenomena reflect the growing confidence of a British Muslim identity which must be understood in the context of debates surrounding “multiculturalism”, “integration”, “exclusion” and “recognition” of identity. In addition to understanding the development of religious identity in Manchester, he also examines the radicalisation of a certain section of the Muslim youth and government responses to this perceived threat. He examines the ways in which Manchester Muslims, engage with state political institutions and how they perceive “secularism” (Ahmed, 2014: 4).

1.4. Literature Review

My literature review is concerned primarily with one book as this is the only literature concerning only the Dawoodi Bohra I have deemed relevant. The other researchers only concern themselves superficially with the Dawoodi Bohra group as one religious group amongst several others. The basis for most of the information contained in Blank’s book, *Mullahs on the Mainframe: Islam and Modernity among the Daudi Bohras*, concerns his study with participant observation during eighteen months of fieldwork, primarily in Mumbai (Blank, 2001: 7). Being there personally for such a long time, increases the operational reliability of his research. The focus of his study is a description of how tradition is not only maintained but resurrected and renewed. According to Blank this was done by securing the support of a critical mass of followers who have been able to establish enough of a societal norm to gain compliance from the rest of the group. The dawat uses both carrots and sticks, employing a full range of modern ideas and techniques to keep its followers in the fold (Blank, 2001: 3). Blank also suggests that his book provides the basis for theoretical academic discussions. The Daudi Bohra case study can add to intellectual debate on much wider social concerns such as ethnic conflict and cultural preservation. One example being that, throughout their history, Daudi Bora’s has shunned sectarian violence (Blank, 2001: 5).

The quantitative part of his research has been conducted in order to create a statistical framework for his anecdotal observations. The paradigmatic information was provided by orthodox sources. He obtained questionnaire responses from Bohras living in four geographically disparate locations; these were Mumbai, Nagpur, Karachi and Calcutta. Choosing different cities was an active attempt to measure the dawat’s success in maintaining a unified code of orthodoxy among Bohras far removed from their headquarters in Mumbai.
and Gujarat. The universe for this survey was 169 households containing a total of 1,068 individuals (Blank, 2001: 9). The questionnaire was distributed with the cooperation of the dawat but if they were sent by post or distributed in the schools is not mentioned. The survey results solely supplement and quantify Blanks ethnographic observations and he makes no claim of systematic, statistically determinative data collection (Blank, 2001: 8).

To ensure that those answering his questionnaire were actually members of the Daudi Bohra community the chosen participating families were those with children in dawat madrasas (schools), attended by the devotional elite of the group. Blank points out that although they represent only one segment of the Bohra community they are a vitally important critical mass of the orthodox practitioners. Their strict adherence to dawat teachings is crucial in establishing norms throughout the wider community. By choosing four separate locations for participants he increased the reliability of the results as a close alignment of responses from all four sites was a notable result from the survey (Blank 2001: 9).

Of the 121 households that responded to the question about values, 109 stated that values were stronger today than in previous generations. In regard to the question about the use of modern technology and education, the 109 answered that these elements had strengthened rather than weakened them. Seven reported values weaker or no different today. 121 of 169 households responded to Blank’s (2001) questionnaire which indicates a high level of reliability. Blank also reports that five gave ambiguous responses and the rest did not answer or provided illegible responses. Some replies were from siblings within the same family who provided duplicate answers. The fact that Blank reports this adds to the validity of his findings (Blank, 2001: 310). However as the Daudi Bohra community has never before been engaged by outside scholars, it will be difficult to independently validate Blank’s finding (Blank, 2001: 287).

It took Blank over a year to get permission to carry out his research but even then there is no official endorsement of his conclusions (Blank, 2001: 7). He also suggests that further study would be required to determine the extent to which less privileged segments of Bohra society subscribe to the values of the elite stratum that provided the statistical basis of his survey (Blank, 2001: 6). Blank was for the duration of his fieldwork, given full freedom to attend all community rituals, and frequent private access to many important figures in the royal family and the clerical hierarchy (ibis: 7).

The validity of Blank’s work is increased by the fact that he refers to previous research in this field (Blank, 2001, 261). However he states that the most remarkable fact about printed material on the Bohras is that nearly all ethnographic references published anywhere in the past hundred years, ultimately revert back to a single source (Blank, 2001: 306). Primary-source documents about Daudi Bohras are almost entirely off-limits, and nonpartisan secondary sources are almost nonexistent due to the dawat’s strict control (Blank, 2001: 301). All this does not undermine Blank’s work but adds to its value as he opens a window of opportunity to study the Daudi Bohras. He is probably reluctant to present any facts that are to derogatory to the group as any blatant criticism may well make them close ranks even more to future research.
1.5. Limitations of Previous Research

Very little previous research has been done on the religious group Daudi Bohra, apart from medical research. The Daudi Bohras take their religious guidance from a single centralized clergy with a strictly hierarchical organization. Central control extends well beyond the realm of theology to encompass all aspects of a believer’s life. It is the strictness and effectiveness of this dawat (Daudi Bohra religious leaders) control that has prevented any previous ethnographer from making a study of the denomination. Although members of the group appear in numerous research papers for a variety of reasons, no previous research has been aimed specifically at the group as a whole concerning their successful Westernisation.

While religion and meaning in life may seem obviously linked, surprisingly few studies have specifically documented these links, and most of the research has examined bivariate relations of fairly simple measures of both religion and sense of purpose. Results of these studies indicate that religiousness is related to a sense of meaning in life (Tomer & Eliason, 2000). My research, using Giorgi’s phenomenological analysis and Crystal Parks theories about global meaning, situational meaning and personal meaning making, will be a unique contribution to understanding the Daudi Bohras’ acculturation process and the implication education has on this.
Chapter 2 Theory

2.0 Introduction

In this chapter I shall be presenting Crystal Park’s theories about global meaning, situational meaning and meaning making and Giorgi’s phenomenological analysis approach. Park’s theories describe how people use religion to create meaning in their lives. Giorgi’s analysis is a tool to describe the results of this analysis and he recommends that his analysis should be carried out in four phases. Giorgi’s analysis is well suited for the development of new descriptions and concepts.

2.1 Meaning Making Methods

Worldwide, about 85% of people report having some form of religious belief, with only 15% describing themselves as atheist, agnostic, or nonreligious (Zuckerman, 2005). There is agreement amongst religious scientist that religiousness has many different dimensions. These include: denominational affiliation, beliefs, behaviours such as prayer or meditation, social involvement, and service attendance (Fetzer/NIA, 1999). Zinnbauer and Pargament (2005) proposed a general working definition of religiousness as a search for significance in ways related to the sacred. This definition suggests the close link between religiousness and meaning (Zinnbauer, 2005: 36). The theories about global meaning, situational meaning and meaning making are based on several theories from a variety of authors but for the sake of simplicity Crystal Park (Park, 2005: 297) will be referred to when describing the present overall theory.

According to Park (2005), in order to adjust to stressful events, feelings and thoughts are subconsciously influenced by an individual’s meaning making procedure. A healthy individual interprets their experiences with relation to justice, personal vulnerability and benevolence through the global beliefs which they regard as important to enable them to reach their goals. According to Crystal Park’s theory of meaning making, the term global meaning refers to meaning in life and how it influences the individuals understanding of the present, the past and the future (Park, 2005). Park refers to Baumeister who states that religion is an extremely potent source of values for individuals as well as for entire cultures, supplying a framework for determining what is right and good and to be pursued and what is wrong and bad and to be avoided (Baumeister, 1991).

Religions are in an unusually esteemed position to be able to determine or establish these criteria of right and wrong and good and bad; they may, in fact, be the most powerful source of values in many cultures (Baumeister, 1991). Religion is accessible in that it is widely promoted and comes in many forms, so that people can usually find a way of being religious or spiritual that suits them from an individual choice (Hood et al, 2005). Religions provide opportunities for transcending their own concerns or experience and connecting with something greater.

Finally, according to Park (2005), religions make bold and authoritative claims regarding their ability to provide a sense of significance. All of these characteristics lead to the unmatched ability of religion to serve as the source of global meaning systems (Hood et al., 2009). Religion can provide individuals with comprehensive and integrated frameworks of
meaning that are able to explain many worldly events, experiences, and situations in highly satisfactory ways (Spilka et al., 2003). Religious meaning systems provide ways to understand mundane, day-to-day occurrences as well as extraordinary ones (Park, 2005).

2.1.1 Global Meaning

Global meaning influences individuals’ interpretations of both ordinary encounters and highly stressful events. In the course of everyday life, global meaning informs individuals’ understanding of themselves and their lives and directs their personal projects and, through them, their general sense of well-being and life satisfaction (Park, 2005). She then goes on to divide global meaning into three aspects: global beliefs, global goals, and subjective feelings of meaningfulness (ibid: 297). These positive feelings are desirable but it is however not essential to achieve the global goals but together with others, struggle towards to the common goal. It is the participating in the struggle guided by common beliefs that is important (Park, 2005: 298). The goals are divided into lower and higher hierarchies which the individual strives to fulfil in order to reach the higher level. Achievement goals could consist of relationships, work, the attainment of knowledge and wealth. Both global meaning and situational meaning involve the individuals’ construction of ways to understand the world and the events that affects them as individuals. When individuals encounter potentially stressful or traumatic events, they assign a meaning to them. Appraised meanings are compared with global meaning, and stress or trauma is experienced when appraised meanings “shatter” or violate aspects of one’s global meaning system.

Park (2005) refers to Hood and colleagues (Hood, Hill, & Williamson 2005) who identified four criteria by which religion is uniquely capable of providing global meaning: comprehensiveness, accessibility, transcendence, and direct claims. Hood et al claims that comprehensiveness refers to the vast scope of issues which religion can subsume, which include beliefs about the world. This could cover human nature, social and natural environment, or the afterlife. There could also be contingencies and expectations that offer rewards for righteousness and punishment for doing evil. Goals can be offered for benevolence, altruism, and supremacy or actions like compassion, charity, violence. Emotions like love and joy can be channelled into peaceful activities (Hood, Hill, & Spilka, 2009; Silberman, 2005, as cited in Park 2010: 258).

2.1.2 Situational Meaning

Situational meaning refers to meaning in the occurrence of a potentially stressful event and describes several processes and outcomes that could develop as a result of this (Park, 2010: 258). When individuals encounter potentially stressful or traumatic events, they assign a meaning to them, called appraised meanings or situational meaning. Compared with global meaning, stress or trauma is experienced when appraised meanings “shatter” or violate aspects of one’s global meaning system (Janoff-Bulman, 1992). Determining that an appraised event violates one’s global meaning can lead to a loss of a sense of control or that the word is comprehensible, creating distress. The meaning making model posits that the level of distress experienced is predicated on the extent of discrepancy between one’s global beliefs
and goals and one’s appraised situational meaning of the event (Park & Folkman, 1997; Park, 2008). Distress, in turn, initiates a search for restoration of coherence among aspects of global meaning and the appraised meaning assigned to the event (Park, Edmondson, & Mills, 2010).

2.1.3 Meaning Making

Attempts to restore global meaning following its disruption or violation are termed, meaning making (Park, 2010). Meaning making involves coming to see or understand a situation in a different way and reconsidering one’s beliefs and goals in order to regain consistency among them (Davis et al., 2000). The meaning making procedure which is included in religious belonging affects the interaction between an individual belief system and social interaction with others. Life meaning is influenced by religiosity however the degree relies on specific belief systems and the individuals’ opportunity to supplement beliefs with religious community and secular activities (Park, 2010).

Research suggests that negative events are easier to bear when understood within a benevolent religious framework, and attributions of death, illness, and other major losses to the will of God or to a loving God are generally linked with better outcomes (Pargament, 1997). Periods of extreme stress and subsequent difficulties in making meaning from them sometimes lead to religious conversion, that is, radical religious transformation (Spilka et al., 2003). According to Park (2010) discrepancy between global and situational meaning produces distress and drives efforts to restore congruency through meaning making. Meaning making can involve changing one’s appraised meaning of the stressor to make it less aversive or minimize its impact, or changing one’s global beliefs and goals to accommodate this new and unwelcome experience. These meaning making efforts often have a religious aspect. For example, in dealing with highly stressful circumstances, religious reappraisals of stressful event or reconfiguring of one’s global meaning system is common (Park, 2010).

2.2. Giorgi’s Phenomenological Analysis Theory

For my theoretical foundation I shall use Giorgi's phenomenological analysis approach. This is best suited for the development of new descriptions and concepts. The purpose of Giorgi’s phenomenological psychology research is “to capture as closely as possible the way in which the phenomenon is experienced” (Giorgi & Giorgi, 2003b: 27). In Giorgi’s work, phenomenology is used to look for the psychological meanings that constitute the phenomenon in the participants’ life world. The idea is to study how individuals live, that is how they behave and experience situations (Giorgi, 1985). The process of research in phenomenological psychology starts with the description of a situation as experienced in daily life (Giorgi, 1985). The idea is to explicate multiple ways of interpreting events for each person and show how these interpretations constitute reality (Giorgi, 1986). In trying to obtain these descriptions, a researcher sets aside any prior thoughts or judgment about the phenomenon under study. By keeping an open mind and concentrating on the descriptions of the participants, without forcing the meaning of the descriptive units into pre-defined categories, I shall avoid certain reductionist tendencies. My aim is to develop knowledge about Dawoodi Bohras Muslims living in western societies at the same as refraining from
expressing my own assumptions pertaining to the phenomenon in question. Giorgi recommends that the analysis carried out in four phases, to get an overall impression, identify sentence-forming units, abstracting the contents of individual sense-forming units, and summarize the meaning of this content (Malterud, 1998: 91). The general idea is to explicate multiple ways of interpreting events for each person and show how these interpretations constitute reality (Giorgi, 1986).

2.3 Theoretical Working Model

The part of Parks meaning making theory I shall be primarily concerned with is the global meaning making. This is because global meaning informs individuals’ understanding of themselves and their lives and directs their personal projects and, through them, their general sense of well-being and life satisfaction. The research material I have examined does not include life changing or traumatic stressful events that could lead to a situational meaning that has violated aspects of an individual’s global meaning system. However one paper being examined does require some degree of meaning making due to the stressful events the individuals experienced. Giorgi's phenomenological analysis approach is suitable for the development of new descriptions and concepts. It will be used to capture the way in which the phenomenon is experienced by using templates to identify sentence-forming units.

Figure 1. Global Meaning Circle

Figure 1 is a simplified version of Park’s (2010) diagram drawn by me; showing how an individual’s global meaning includes a sense of life as purposeful, but can be changed by stressful events. The global meaning is based on a person’s beliefs about control, justice and the afterlife. They may have goals and values which act as guidelines for achieving goals. Stressful events may lead to a reappraised evaluation of the individual’s global meaning or a
situational meaning caused by threats, loss or challenges. This distress can lead to a benevolent religious reappraisal or a reappraisal of God’s powers called religious meaning making. This stress-related growth can cause changes in global meaning called meaning making.
Chapter 3 Method

3.0. Introduction

One of the main reasons I have conducted a qualitative study is that the study is exploratory and that not much has been written about the topic or population being studied. This chapter explains the method used for collecting my research data and how discourse analysis has been implemented. The reasons for using a social-constructionist approach will be explained and an explanation of contextualisation is offered. As I shall be using template analysis the reason I have chosen this method will be explained and an initial template will be introduced.

3.1. Method of Data Collection

My research will be based on discourse analysis and identify patterns of recurring key elements in various research papers covering the subject of integration and acculturation of members of Muslim congregations born in western societies. By using discourse analysis it will allow me ways of referring to and constructing knowledge about particular topics of practice and conduct associated with the Dawoodi Bohra congregations now established in Western societies (Wijsen 2013: 9).

A social-constructionist approach will enable me to analyse the various situations in which religious meaning or significance is constructed, attributed or challenged. As Dawoodi Bohra Muslims belong to a religious group and community that has spread on a transnational scale I shall be exploring whether differences can be discerned with how they affiliate within their group and how they interact with society in general. As group discursively tends to construct systems that infer that the main purpose of the group is to maintain the group, personal involvement with it may differ across various geographical areas and social cultural contexts (Wijsen 2013: 21).

The identification of discourses is part of the analysis to show how statements work together to form relatively coherent sets of meaning including regularity of use and coherence involved in discourse. This will be achieved by pointing out recurrent key distinctions like individual feelings and institutional doctrines, religious and non-religious. The study of themes like integration and acculturation will focus on how authors of the text draw on already existing discourses and genres to create a text (Taira, 2013: 31).

3.2. Contextualisation

Malterud (1988) suggests that with regards to the concept development analyse level, we develop new concepts by systematically summarising the patterns we read out of our material. The analysis consists of developing and naming categories that provide a meaningful division of the material in relation to the issues that are raised by the problem being examined. The new terms will cover the essence of the disclosure. Results consist of new concepts and terminology. Development of theoretical models is the most ambitious qualitative analysis level where the intention is to develop knowledge that can provide a new understanding of how something fits together (Malterud, 1988).

Contextualisation is a process of putting language items into a meaningful and
real context rather than being treated as isolated items of language for language manipulation practice only. I will use de-contextualisation, a process by which certain parts of a text are temporarily cut out of the material and studied more closely together with other elements of the material relating to the same phenomenon. However during re-contextualisation it is essential to ensure that the conclusions one has drawn from the de-contextualized material, are still consistent with the context they were taken from. Re-contextualisation is therefore important measure to prevent reductionism and maintain the connection to the field and informants reality. I will validate the parts in relation to the whole (Malterud, 1998). Since the meaning of texts and signs depend on their context, re-contextualisation implies a change of meaning, and often of the communicative purpose as well.

3.3 Template Analysis

According to King (1998) template analysis is a technique for thematically organising and analysing qualitative data. One of the strengths of template analysis is that it encourages you to be explicit about the analytical decisions you make and to ground them in the texts you are analysing. The data involved are usually interview transcripts, but may be any kind of textual data, including focus groups, diary entries, and text from electronic interviews or open ended question responses on a written questionnaire. The essence of template analysis is that the researcher produces a list of codes representing themes identified in their textual data. The template is organised in a way which represents the relationship between themes, as defined by the researcher, involving a hierarchical structure. King suggests that there are a wide array of data collection and analysis methods available to those undertaking qualitative research in psychology and introductory texts on the subject usually start off with some explanation of the way in which epistemological assumptions guide and shape a researcher’s choices in terms of both data collection and data analysis (King).

In template analysis it is according to King (1998) common to identify some themes in advance, usually referred to as ‘a priori’ themes. Usually this is because a research project has started with the assumption that certain aspects of the phenomena under investigation should be focused on. The main benefit of using a priori themes is that they can help to accelerate the initial coding phase of analysis, which is normally very time-consuming. However it is crucial to recognise a priori themes as tentative, equally subject to redefinition or removal as any other theme. King (2012) suggests that writers of qualitative methods compile an ‘audit trail’ of their analytical process. This is a documentary record of the steps I undertook and the decisions I made in moving from the raw transcripts to my final interpretation of the data.

According to King (2012) themes’ are features of participants’ accounts characterising particular perceptions and experiences that the researcher sees as relevant to the research question. ‘Coding’ is the process of identifying themes in accounts and attaching labels (codes) to index them. Researchers will generally choose to define features as themes where they recur several times in the data set, within and/or across transcripts. This is not, however, a hard and fast rule. My themes were factors concerning meaning making methods. I had arranged a summary network of themes and sub-themes and coded them according to positive or negative scale. I had a list of words that conformed to a supportive behavioural
pattern and a list of what I considered unsupportive. Using this code I could manually pick out from the research text words that could then be categorized and themes identified.

![Figure 2. Templates for Text Analysis](image)

I shall be using template analysis which sorts text into predetermined categories derived from existing theories. This type of analysis involves some risk for the reproduction of already known knowledge, but provides a good starting point for the development of new descriptors (Malterud, 1998: 90). I have chosen this method as I consider the area I am researching to be relatively new and the need for new descriptors may prove necessary.

3.4 Validity Control

Qualitative research requires reflexivity on the part of the researcher. As a researcher, I needed to reflect on the nature of my involvement in the research process and the way this shapes its outcomes. Reflexivity is required throughout the research process, for instance, in trying to be aware of how my own assumptions about the phenomenon under investigation might influence the way I formulate my research question, and the issues I highlight in my results. Comments from independent readers and respondents have helped me to reflect on and question the assumptions I may have made. Keeping an audit trail has forced me to be explicit about the decisions I have made and I have reflected upon how they led me on a course towards my findings and conclusions.

According to Creswell (2009: 191) bias is clarified by presenting the researchers relation towards the study and presenting information that contradicts the results. I am neither a Muslim nor a Daudi Bohra, but due to family circumstances I am now related to several Daudi Bohra’s. This means that I have to be aware of my relationship and I am at risk of not presenting negative information that might arise during my research. However I do consider myself as an insider as the Daudi Bohra’s I have known for several years are open and
objective about their religion. I have travelled with them to Bangladesh and participated in a three day Daudi Bohra wedding ceremony. I have visited the Northolt mosque in London.
Chapter 4 Result

4. Introduction

My research material consist of previous research from Mandviwala concerning adolescent girls, Eade’s, creating homes in London, and Ahmed’s Manchester Muslims. Their material has already been interpreted but my intension is to reinterpret them from Crystal Park’s theories about global meaning, situational meaning and meaning making and Giorgi’s phenomenological analysis approach.

Muslim Definition

According to Josephson a Muslim is anyone who believes in and practices the “five pillars” of Islam and there are an estimated 1.5 billion people currently identifying themselves as Muslims. One of Islam’s great strengths is its ability to absorb and maintain local culture and Muslims are found living in almost every country around the world (Josephson, 2004: 113). However Josephson claims that American Muslims born to immigrant parents often suffer from tremendous cultural stress as immigrant parents usually impose values and forms of discipline from their country of origin. This often results in family conflicts as in many circumstances the parents values conflict with American values and forms of discipline. Josephson (2004) points to the fact there is also an enormous disparity between the current Muslim understanding of mental illnesses and the religious texts and past practices of Muslims. Despite the modern stigma to mental illness the Koran speaks about numerous psychological phenomena, including anger, obsessive thinking, panic and phobias. The Prophet Muhammad offered a variety of advice on how to deal with these problems (Josephson, 2004: 114).

Exposure to Western Concepts

According to Josephson (2004) many Muslims have lost the guidance their religious tradition offered them when exposed to Western conceptions of mental illness as the Freudian school of psychoanalysis has a negative view of religion. Western-trained psychiatrist often expressed the view that religion was a hindrance to mental health treatment which resulted in some Muslims blaming mental illness on witches or curses from God (Josephson, 2004: 115). Josephson (2004) states that Muslims do not believe that human beings carry a burden of original sin but after committing a sin, are encouraged to turn in repentance to God to seek His mercy. The concept of repentance and mercy may provide relief to patients suffering from feelings of guilt related to obsessive-compulsive disorders, severe depression, or mild psychosis. According to Josephson suicidal thinking is uncommon in the Muslim mind, and the worldwide suicide rate is extremely low in Muslim communities (Josephson, 2004: 116). Islam offers a desperate person help in overcoming hopeless feelings through a cognitive approach based on the Koranic assertion that God is closer to a human being than his “jugular vein” (Koran 50:16) and you are not alone. They believe that affliction is sent to test a human being and increase their level of faith with each hardship leading to a higher level of faith. Closeness to God is the final goal of the Muslim (Josephson, 2004: 117).
Josephson (2004) claims that substance abuse is less prevalent among Muslims than other members of society and by encouraging resumption of Islamic practices it may help recovering substance abusers. The motivation to stay sober may be strengthened by religious counselling from the local imam along with the five daily prayers and Friday congregational prayer (Josephson, 2004: 118). The Muslim community is a communally oriented society with the Koran and the prophetic teachings emphasizing a collective call to the people which all helps to maintain and encourage a healthy meaning making state of mind (Josephson, 2004: 121).

4.1. American Muslim Adolescent Girls

The small-scale qualitative study conducted by Mandviwala, (2015) “Navigating the “Known:” The Socio-Cultural Development of American Muslim Adolescent Girls”, explores the experiences of two second-generation Muslim American adolescent girls. An attempt is made to uncover how they experienced negotiating the space between their two main socio-cultural groups they are members of, namely American and Muslims. The two girls Shireen and Zahra were “forced to forge new social identities that did not quite conform to either society’s expectations” (Mandviwala, 2015: 84). The research focused only on the adolescent period as this is considered the time frame in a young adult’s life when self-identification, group-identification, appearance, and social acceptance are especially important. The girls under consideration will be those who wear and do not wear a hijab (Mandviwala, 2015: 84). Mandviwala explains that American Muslim adolescent development can be more easily understood as “a complex interaction of multiple life factors and meaning-making, including personal coping mechanisms, perceived supports, and subsequent emergent identities” (Mandviwala, 2015: 84). She continues by predicting that “Muslim Americans will have to learn to maneuver within their Eastern lives, their Western lives, and whatever remains in between as the struggle for acceptance is equally strong in all three areas” (ibid: 84). The word “vulnerability” is used with respect to these adolescent girls. Primarily the challenges of subtle or blatant prejudice, micro-aggressions, or distancing on the part of non-American peers are of great concern. Secondly, within-group challenges that stem from friction between different traditions and generations are referred too (Mandviwala, 2015: 85).

Emerging Themes

The five overarching themes that emerged after the in depth interviews with the girls were: notions of difference, the act of speaking about these differences, appearance, judgment, and not caring or ignoring (Mandviwala, 2015: 87). Difference generally has two facets in the girl’s experiences. For Zahra, who follows Shi’a Dawoodi Bohra Islam, differences were either positive or negative depending on the context. The positive differences she describes as “cool” and they gave her opportunities to learn or make connections on her own during the process of learning. The negative differences or “weird” experiences were often the result of awkwardness and abnormalities and were the most common situations described by Shireen, who follows Sunni Maliki Islam. Although Shirren’s negative experiences regarding difference seem to outweigh those of Zahra’s, the latter still does experience them especially
when she confronts ignorance. Assumptions were often made that Islam is a homogenous religion rather than an overarching ideology that houses multiple traditions and beliefs (Mandviwala, 2015: 88). Zahra regards most of her experiences as positive which make her the controlling agent as she absorbs and analyses information. Difference becomes negative when both girls view it in the external social arena as they risk becoming labelled as weird and they have to develop coping mechanisms to deal with these situations (Mandviwala, 2015: 89).

Assumed Identities

As both girls risk having their identities assumed and misrepresented they attempt to avoid being considered too different. They develop a reactive coping mechanism of explanation to allay confusion on the part of their non-Muslim peers in an attempt to maintain their religious identities. This does not reduce their otherness or improve their status of “weird”. Shireen is aware of the fact that she needs to explain to non-Muslims but at the same time she does not want to overstep the bounds of what and how to explain so she damages her social relationships. Zahra experiences her coping mechanism of explaining often leads her into a position of teaching and even taking over the teacher’s role. Both girls recount instances in which non-Muslims peers verbally impose assumptions – and therefore identities – onto them. The result of all this need to explain and teach is that the girls find it easier to be in the company of people from their own religion because you do not have to explain everything to them (Mandviwala, 2015: 90).

Risks with Appearance Differences

Appearance does create a risk factor for the girls that they have to cope with as their headdress does make them different. Zahra wears a scarf and seems to have a generally positive view of her scarf and her subsequent physical appearance and identity. She notes non-Muslims often use words like “cute” or “pretty” when commenting on the female members’ attire. Not unlike many other adolescent girls, Muslim or otherwise, Shireen’s experiences with appearance are not quite as self-affirming. She uses words like “dirty looks” and “staring” from “mean” people. Zahra gave a classmate that had made a derogatory remark to her “a look” as a reactive coping strategy. Shireen concludes that strangers respond to her mother’s hijab in aggressive or antagonistic ways because they are either unfamiliar with the garb or they associate her with terrorism. Zahra’s experiences at school and while out with her hijab donning mother are more positive than Shireen’s (Mandviwala, 2015: 91).

Zahra attends a school with students from a variety of cultural and ethnic backgrounds which she experiences as positive as one can learn from them and diversity leads to less surprise at physical difference. This offers a potential tool for coping against the risk of everyone striving for the same appearance as this is impossible due to the fact that everyone is not and never will be the same. Zahra seems to feel quite free of negative judgment for her appearance and religion while Shireen experiences non-Muslim’s judgments as a risk factor in a very pronounced way. Shireen attends a school that is more homogene in the student body and feels that she sticks out. She concludes that you are judged on what you wear and what religion you are, which defines her peer-friend relationships quite dramatically. Together with
her Muslim friends she practices the collective effort of not caring and is careful about discussing religion. This is a direct protective coping mechanism to deal with potential unwanted attention (Mandviwala, 2015: 92).

Support Systems

Both girls have found support systems which give them a major protective factor against socio-psychological risks. Zahra finds comfort and a sense of community in the shared experience of wearing a head scarf with her Dawoodi Bohra friend, Lamiya, in front of non-Muslims. Shireen finds it easier to have Muslim friends because they will not be judgmental, or will she have to explain everything to them. These shared experiences with other Muslims free the individuals’ cognitive space for activities other than reactive coping (Mandviwala, 2015: 93).

Zahra and Shireen are completely functional within their school environments and get along with Muslims and non-Muslims alike. They only truly trust and confide in like Muslim peers although they realise that not all non-Muslims hold prejudices or assumptions about Muslims. If Zahra is dramatically more positive about the risk factors of difference and appearance because she has attended a middle school with pronounced student diversity or if her character is more optimistic, is hard to say. Nothing conclusive about being a Dawoodi Bohra is mentioned in the paper either, but the encouragement of exposure to diversity in middle school is highlighted. By facilitating events in which students interact with different peers, schools could potentially improve the entire quality of life for girls from adolescence and through to adulthood. By reducing the peer attention, or de-dramatizing different clothing, of a homogenous aesthetic norm, children naturally accept the oddness as being the norm with the inevitable connection to self-worth and identity that grows out of it (Mandviwala, 2015: 94).

4.2. Creating Homes in London

The success of the Dawoodi Bohra in getting their mosque built in London showed how alliances across local and national levels can be harnessed to support a tightly knit network of Bohra communities around the world where power was concentrated in the hands of the Syedna and his inner circle (Eade, 2015: 20).

During the mid-1990s a controversy developed surrounding mosque development in the West London borough of Ealing. Global migration had resulted in the settlement of large Sunni Muslim communities in the area. A very small sect of Shia Muslims- Dawoodi Bohra, applied to build a mosque, Jamaat Khana and twenty two houses in an industrial estate. Despite initial agitation against the Dawoodi Bohra plan the Northolt center opened with considerable fanfare. Protest had come from a local Member of Parliament and commercial and residential pressure groups. Despite the local hostility dignitaries including the Prince of Wales and the Archbishop of Canterbury have visited the mosque and praised the Dawoodi Bohra contribution to Britain’s cultural diversity and economic vitality (Eade, 2015: 7). Since these high profile visits the sect have kept a very low profile and are highly exclusive (Eade, 2015: 8).
4.3. Manchester Muslims

Even after more than half a century of residing in Britain many Muslims still feel the need to pursue both segregationist and integrationist trajectories. With the arrival of their wives and children Muslims were forced to interact more widely, through schools, local authorities, and health care establishments. Despite this segregation has continued even though British Muslims have expanded their integrationist activities. Many in the Muslim community had begun to recognize that Britain was becoming, or had become for better or worse, their permanent place of residence, their home (Ahmed, 2014: 40). In recent decades, there is some evidence that affluent members of the Muslim community are moving out of the inner city areas to the suburbs. The development of mosques in more affluent areas may be an indication that some Muslims are attempting to integrate into more affluent parts of British society. Another speculation about the future is that some Muslims will shed their culturally ethnic characteristics, but retain their religious characteristics but links with their country of origin would weaken (Ahmed, 2014: 42).

Dawoodi Bohra Divergence

Dawoodi Bohra observances of universal Islamic holidays do not correspond exactly with those of other groups. According to Blank, “this divergence of calendars further serves to emphasize the Bohras’ unique identity and prevent assimilation to the mainstream of Islam” (Blank, 2001: 82). This results in the Dawoodi Bohras’ having already completed their observance of unifying rituals like fasting during Ramadan, performing hajj (annual Islamic pilgrimage to Mecca) or commemorating Ashura (a solemn day of mourning the martyrdom of Hussein in 680 AD) before the other worldwide groups of Muslims (Blank, 2001: 82).

Political Affiliations

Culturally ethnic and biradari (patriarchal brotherhood) based norms are being challenged by the second generation of British Muslims through their understanding of Islamic values as some Muslims ‘shed’ some of their culturally ethnic characteristics whilst retaining Islamic characteristics (Ahmed, 2014: 43). Some Muslims felt they had more in common with the indigenous white culture of Britain but accepted the collective label ‘black’ as long as it provided the necessary funding from the local authority for the community projects. Some Muslims had managed to secure a strong footing within local authorities by attachment to the local Labour Party but this positive influence was lost as local Labour politicians lost power. The Muslim communities of Britain were under represented at the national government level (Ahmed, 2014: 45). Ahmed continues to explain that the British establishment refused to take the religious concerns of Muslims seriously during the 1990s and often used double standards. The government were aware of Muslim discrimination and their apparent disadvantages but did little to deal with inequality. Legislation to combat religious discrimination lacked a clear definition (Ahmed, 2014: 54).
Radicalisation

Ahmed claims that, “these double standards displayed by the government in many ways acted as a catalyst for the radicalisation of a section of the Muslim communities” (Ahmed, 2014: 56). However militancy and the politics of violence were not on the agenda for the Muslims dealing with British domestic issues. Overwhelming evidence shows that the path that Muslims wanted to follow was a non-confrontational and non-violent path. Confrontational politics are the result of the policies adopted by the British state and its refusal to recognise the existence of a specifically British Muslim identity according to Ahmed. He points out that colonialism has finished and these British Muslims are an integral part of Britain that should not only be tolerated but welcomed as migrants are in the United States. In Britain minorities are still being made aware of their foreign status even when there are, third generation Muslims in Britain (ibid: 56).

Migrant Muslims

Migrant Muslims have accepted their fate as British Muslims and the fact that Britain is now their permanent home. They have begun to engage with ecological ideas in the construction of mosques which reflects the education and financial development of British Muslims. Manchester, an industrial town in northern England, has already got its first eco-friendly mosque. The Dawoodi Bora Markaz al-Najmi mosque in Levenshulme was opened in July 2008 and is intended to send a message to the community that they should care for the environment, think about using resources wisely and not be wasteful (Ahmed, 2014: 159).

Value of Mosques

According to Ahmed some British Muslims view their mosque as a place for prostration, a quite contemplative environment away from the hustle and bustle of the material world, while others view their mosque as an all-encompassing place. He highlights the fact that the mosque not only provides a religious and spiritual environment but also provides socio-economic and political support for the Muslims in Britain (Ahmed, 2014: 201). There are over fifteen hundred mosques in Britain and each one employs at least two imams. Behind each mosque is a group of voluntary committee workers that have built these institutions from scratch with their hard earned money in order to retain their religious identity. Ahmed recommends that in order to create a harmonious society that is at peace with itself the imbalance between religious and the secular domains must be rectified (Ahmed, 2014: 63).

The most cosmopolitan mosques according to Ahmed’s research are the student mosques or those located near to the universities. Here students from all nationalities and all schools of thought come together to pray under the same roof, brought together by religion and the use of the English language. For many students it is the first time away from home and they feel vulnerable and in need of a group to belong to. Most students attending the collage mosques are less interested in searching for differences but are in fact looking for similarities between them (Ahmed, 2014: 185). Most research has shown according to Ahmed, that the younger generation of British Muslims communicate with each other in
English and over fifty percent of British Muslims are born in Britain (Ahmed, 2014: 59).

Markaz al Najmi Eco-Mosque

The Dawoodi Bora Markaz al Najmi mosque uses reclaimed pink stone from a quarry in Jaipur in India and partly uses renewable energy created by the solar panels on the roof. Sophisticated sprinkler type taps use less water to perform ablution than conventional ones. Under-floor heating systems are used as an energy saving measure. Although these steps may be considered mundane by Swedish standards, to be incorporated into a run-down northern industrial city, they are unique. The Dawoodi Bohra mosque committee had endeavoured to put forward a positive example to the Muslim congregation that will come to pray in the mosque and brighten up the city skyline for all to appreciate (Ahmed, 2014: 159).

Jonah Blank writes in his book (2001) Mullahs on the Mainframe: Islam and Modernity among the Daudi Bohras, that when guardians of tradition set up a dichotomy between group identity and modern identity, it is generally group identity that will lose out. Fortunately the dawat do not insist that being a good Bohra means living in exactly the same way one’s grandfather and great-grandfather lived. If one had to shuts one’s eyes to an exciting and rapidly changing world there would be fewer good Bohras with every passing year. The Dawoodi clergy has skillfully avoided this pitfall through its ability to break down the false dichotomy between modernity and tradition and let members of the community revel in both. The Dawoodi clergy approach permits Dawoodi Bohras to enjoy the benefits of modern life while solidifying an identity that is both thoroughly Islamic and yet uniquely Bohra. Blank’s research shows that traditional values amongst the Dawoodi Bohra are stronger today than in previous generations and concludes that this a result of allowing modern educational and technological methods to be used by members (Blank, 2001: 286).

This modern approach is clearly expressed in the building of an eco-friendly mosque. The Dawoodi Bohras are a mercantile community with a powerful work ethic and a marked avoidance of spendthrift ostentation, not unlike the sixteenth-century European Calvinists (Blank, 2001: 259). Instead of opting for the cheapest solution or a glamorous and pretentious eye saw, they have built a state of the art low energy building which has the least negative effect on the environment as possible. Ironically Dawoodi Bohras have always avoided the more traditionally polluting occupations but concentrated on the mercantile trade not customarily filled by Hindus (Blank, 2001: 47). The eco-mosque then serves the function of not only a place of worship but as an example of steps that can be taken to protect the environment without necessarily offering too much comfort or inconvenience. These environmental concepts may then spread within the congregation if they are seen to work and be cost effective.

4.5. Schooling for Muslim Children

A Muslim child living in Britain has to attend the normal school, as all other children do during the day time, but Muslim children have the extra burden of up to several hours that they have to endure in the evening classes at their mosque. They are expected to do their homework during the time in-between which leaves very little time over for socializing or
being with their family. A suggestion put forward by Ahmed is that state schools should teach Quranic or Arabic language within the school curriculum as this would relieve a lot of the pressure that Muslim children face as a consequence of the lack of provision within the school system (Ahmed, 2014: 200).

The Teaching of the Arab Language in State Schools

At the present time most of the effort from mosques is concentrated on providing facilities for children for basic learning of the Quran. If the state schools did this the mosques would have resources over to provide alternative courses in Islamic Studies that could be provided for those children who wished to build a strong Islamic knowledge base, even non-Muslim members of the British society. Numerous well qualified imams are unable to communicate their knowledge because they are tied up teaching children the Arabic alphabet. These imams are well versed in Islamic knowledge but are not trained to teach younger children (Ahmed, 2014: 200). Many Muslim parents that send their children to Islamic schools do so because they want their children to gain Islamic knowledge but they do not necessarily want them to become imams in mosques. If state schools took on the responsibility for Quranic and Arabic lessons using qualified staff, children would have more time for socializing. Imams would be able to concentrate on subjects more suitable for their experience.

Independent Muslim Schools

The origin of independent private Islamic schools in Britain were often created because Muslim communities were unhappy with the culture of education and the type of education provided in state schools for their children. Ahmed’s research shows that Muslim parents felt that there was a certain indoctrination taking place in state schools that was fundamentally against their religion. A number of Muslim parents decided to confront the state schools to say they wished to withdraw their children from the morning assemblies or that in place of religious assemblies something else more secular should be provided. Other parents felt that the only way to safeguard their children was to create their own separate Islamic schools and single sex schools. Some Muslim parents felt that the state schools were not doing enough to discipline their children that were out of control. By placing their children in Islamic schools they would safeguard them from the effects of the corrupting dominant culture, especially Muslim girls that would be safer in a single sex school (Ahmed, 2014: 265).

As global meaning can be divided into order and motivation, having young Dawoodi Bohra children taught the relevant doctrines and practices of the group helps indoctrinates them at an impressionable age. Their beliefs about the world, themselves and relationships between one’s self and the world are firmly established. Motivation to strive towards the Dawoodi Bohra goals and support for the organisation is impregnated by the Imams. However separate Muslim schools did not necessarily equip students to function in a modern mercantile community. English and science are regarded as important subjects by Dawoodi Bohra parents and consider it essential for their children to gain a degree. As the children grow older and mix with non-Muslims they are unaware that their meaning system is controlling their individual actions, feelings and thoughts. The situational meaning stress situations are coped with by the security and support they feel through their Dawoodi Bohra
affiliation. Childhood indoctrination is not in itself enough to maintain this meaning making system and regular support from the religious community and secular activities are necessary.

Movements for Educational Reform.

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries several movements of educational reform appeared in various parts of the Muslim world. All attempted to reconcile Islamic ideology with modern thought and reinterpret traditional concepts in the light of Western science. The traditional educational structure of maktab and madrasa (elementary schools) did not equip students to function in a modern mercantile community. English and science gained importance. The Dawoodi Bohras had little choice but to keep up with social transformation and nowadays it is considered essential for a male to qualify for a degree even if he ultimately is going to enter the family business. Traditionalists have clung passionately to a heritage that has served the community well for centuries while Western educated modernists point out the rapid social advancement that non-Muslim groups have made (Blank, 2001: 210).

According to Blank, several Indian studies have suggested that schooling influences a student’s outlook at least as powerfully as societal context or family background (Blank, 2001: 209). The younger students attending Dawoodi Bohra schools are taught how to dress, eat, speak, pray, and comport themselves like Bohras. By the time they reach puberty the goal is that their identities have been shaped largely in accordance with the values of the dawat (clerical hierarchy). Irrespective of whatever other influences the children may be exposed to at home or in the street, at school they will be taught to internalize all the doctrines and practices deemed normative by the clergy. Incidentally Blank’s research shows that the way one eats is considered as one of the basic elements of orthopraxy, ranking it fourth out of ten. The schools teach Bohra dining etiquette at child-sized thals (a large communal plate). Dining customs are particularly important, as almost every religious or social observance in the Dawoodi Bohra community is marked by a lavish feast (Blank, 2001: 213). According to my sources when no food is offered attendances fall markedly.

Engaging Imams

For Muslim teenagers Ahmed suggests that imams need to engage with youth to give them a sense of identity and belonging to a strong Islamic heritage. British Muslim youth alienation is seen as one of the key reasons why they easily swayed towards radical and extremist rhetoric. Like all youths they need to feel pride in themselves, in this case pride in their Muslim identity and this can only be achieved through providing strong role models. One alternative is to boost their self-esteem by referring to their Islamic past and reminding them of historical events, for example of when the West went East, specifically to Muslim lands for knowledge (Ahmed, 2014: 262). Imams in the community should not be teaching Quran and hadith in isolation but prepare the Muslim youths to be citizens in a democracy with a sense of social justice and membership in a community (Ahmed, 2014: 260).
4.6. Imported Imams Training

Ahmed’s research advocates the inclusion of some content in the imam training curriculum that would teach the students about the British culture which should include the nuances and subtleties of polite conversation. Imam training courses must contain the cultural elements of the country that they intend to work in, especially relating to contemporary society and not just history. They are usually trained in matters that were discussed many centuries ago and are no longer relevant (Ahmed, 2014: 267). By not having a good grasp of the English language a foreign imam will find it almost impossible to get out of the mosque and into the community amongst the youth they are there to guide. By not being able to go out into colleges and universities the foreign imam will be blind to the issues facing British Muslims. An imam born and educated in Britain is more aware and more in tune with the thinking of the youth and can connect with them in a more meaningful way (Ahmed, 2014: 268).

Ahmed comes to the conclusion that the lack of English means that the imams are unable to have a meaningful dialogue with the host community and not able to take part in interfaith dialogue. It is difficult for Ahmed to see how changes to the training structure and syllabus can take place while the authority still lies with the imams from South Asia. Things will only improve when the imams born and trained in Britain gain the respect and authority that comes with enabling change to take place (Ahmed, 2014: 269). Another question that arises with the issue of foreign non English speaking imam’s is the power relationship between imams and the mosque committee members. Admittedly the religious matters are usually referred back to the imams but imams in turn are at the mercy of the mosque committees for their immigration and translation needs. This gives the committees power over the imam and they can decide whether they want to keep the imam at the mosque or have them deported. Ahmed suggests that overhanging threats could play a significant part in the independence of the imams in their decision making, for better or worse (ibid: 270).

British Born Imams

A dilemma facing the British Muslims is that despite the apparent advantages of having British born and trained imams there is a risk that those who gain their Islamic education from British universities do not have the same in-depth knowledge as the darul ulooms “house of knowledge” (an Islamic seminary or educational institution) trained imams (Ahmed, 2014: 271). Part of the problem according to Ahmed’s research, is that British Muslim youth have specific requirements that the current batch of imported imams from abroad cannot solve. They should ideally communicate at a level where British Muslim youths comprehend what is being told otherwise the whole purpose of engaging with the youths is futile. There is a problem of disconnection between the imams, parents and the younger generation as the inter-generational disconnection means that parents and imams are often not able to deal with problems the younger generation is experiencing. There is a lack of authoritative imams who are fluent in English and a great need for bilingual imams that can provide a smooth transition of religious values from the older generation to the younger generation. However the financial plight of the mosques makes it difficult to attract highly educated individuals to mosques and imported imams must reign in their fundamentalist rhetoric. The lack of English and
knowledge concerning British culture is a serious drawback of importing imams from abroad as one of the key roles of the imams is to act as an agent of the authorities to curb extremism amongst Muslims (Ahmed, 2014: 260-261).

Dawoodi Bohra Religious Leaders

In the intensely centralized community of the Dawoodi Bohras trends flow from the top down rather than from the bottom up. The personal outlook of the apex cleric can determine the entire spiritual orientation of the denomination according to Blank. The course of assimilation, modernization and Islamization within the Dawoodi Bohra community is intimately linked to the priorities of the religious leaders. Their fascination with modern ideas and Western customs have opened up the community to outside influences and exposed them to a wide variety of changes (Blank, 2001: 185). The Islamization program was the product of internal rather than external motivation, including the growth of beards and mandated code of personal appearance. The Bohra male dress code leaves virtually no room for individual variation and suggests a type of uniform. The primary designator of rank is the pagri, a turban whose use is strictly limited to graduates of the Jamea tus-Saifiya and other respected clerics. However over half of the expatriate Dawoodi Bohras dress directly non-traditionally and 83% had a personal appearance that would be deemed a grave breach of orthopraxy in India (Blank, 2001: 191).

There is no clear division between the clerical hierarchy and the family of the da’i (Syedna) and all of the top clerics are brothers and sons of Syedna (Dawoodi Bohra leader). There are two titles awarded by Syedna: mullah and shaikh. Any man authorized to lead namaz (prayer, offered five times a day) is given the title of mullah. This title is automatically given to male graduates of the Jamea tus-Saifiya and teachers in Bohra schools. The higher title of shaikh can be awarded by Syedna after ten years of meritorious clerical services at the Syedna’s discretion. Central dawat policy is set by the clerics in Badri Mahal (downtown Mumbai), often Surtis (aristocratic class) with close ties to Syedna’s immediate family. Policy is then implemented by a network of amils (Dawoodi Bohra cleric) with similar roles to bishops. In places with relatively small Bohra populations a single amil may have jurisdiction over an entire nation. An amil’s primary task is to serve as prayer leader at the local masjid (mosque), and to appoint a surrogate namaz imam when he is out of town (Blank, 2001: 137). Most Dawoodi Bohras consider themselves lucky merely to catch sight of Syedna, but to meet him face-to-face, to have an actual conversation with him, and to receive du’a (blessing) at his own hand would be considered a once-in-a-lifetime event.

The Dawoodi Bohra Education System

The Jamea tus-Saifiya in Surat is the apex of the Bohra educational system and produces the majority of the clerics who serve in the dawat (Dawoodi Bohra mission). This theological seminary, founded in 1814, now offers a full range of both Western and Islamic subjects at university level with a curriculum geared toward students planning a career in the dawat. English has been compulsory for all Jamea students since 1965. By providing a first-rate modern education, free for both sexes, the Dawoodi Bohra dawat has avoided the brain drain and insured that the brightest minds of the faith remain grounded in Islamic values throughout
their intellectually formative years. The dawat’s open attitude toward all types of modern learning has enabled it to co-op most aspects Western culture while excluding only those elements directly in conflict with religious values (Blank, 2001: 217).

The student body of the Surat Jamea consists of around 600 men and 300 women from the elite of Bohra youth throughout the world, including students from Britain and the United States. The expectation is that Jamea graduates will repay this free education by entering clerical service and help to educate the next Dawoodi Bohra generation. All of the Jamea’s instructors are required to be fully versed in both traditional and modern subjects and there is no conflict between science and faith. It is stressed that science is merely the sum total of observation and common sense. Blank notes the school philosophy concerning English. “Acquiring mastery over the English language is essential for a student of religious knowledge to keep himself abreast of all learning so as to compete and achieve this distinction in all fields”. The Jamea does allow students to censored TV but runs its own in-house audio news service, preparing a daily summary of world events of special note to the Bohra community (Blank, 2001: 219).

After graduation almost all students are offered jobs somewhere within the dawat network, but it is the dawat that decides which path any candidate will follow. Some graduates feel the pressure to return home and help run the family company (Blank, 2001: 226). Those that get posted in Britain or Sweden are inevitably well equipped to fulfill their role as Imam’s, having been well educated in English and the local cultural idiosyncrasies. Naturally any new job in a foreign country entails some stress and requires situational meaning. Being well versed in their Dawoodi Bohra religion and educated to western university level their global meaning helps enhance their stability, optimistic bias, and feelings of personal relevance. They are the experts leading a religious congregation towards a global goal.
Chapter 5 Analysis

5.1. Giorgi’s Phenomenological Analysis of Adolescent Girls

The first sentence or theme to be identified was “vulnerability” a word used with respect to these adolescent girls. This is an example of part 2 of Giorgi’s analysis. The girls experienced being sometimes exposed to subtle or blatant prejudice, micro-aggressions, or distancing on the part of their non-American peers, part 3 of Giorgi’s analysis. Part four of Giorgi’s analysis resulted in a summary of the girl’s coping strategies. Both girls have found support systems which give them a major protective factor against socio-psychological risks. Zahra finds comfort and a sense of community in the shared experience of wearing a head scarf with her Dawoodi Bohra friend, Lamiya, in front of non-Muslims. Shireen finds it easier to have Muslim friends because they will not be judgmental, or will she have to explain everything to them. These shared experiences with other Muslims free the individuals’ cognitive space for activities other than reactive coping.

Figure 3. Templates for Adolescent Girls Analysis

Nothing conclusive about being a Dawoodi Bohra is mentioned in this paper, but the long term advantages for children of exposure to diversity in middle school is highlighted. By facilitating events in which students interact with different peers, schools could potentially improve the entire quality of life for girls from adolescence and through to adulthood. By reducing the peer attention, or de-dramatizing different clothing, of a homogenous aesthetic norm, children naturally accept the oddness as being the norm with the inevitable connection to self-worth and identity that grows out of it (Mandviwala, 2015: 87).
5.1.1. Analysis of Meaning Making for Adolescent Girls

According to Crystal Park’s theory of meaning making, in order to adjust to stressful events of feeling different and being questioned about their religion, the girl’s thoughts are subconsciously influenced by their individual’s meaning making procedure. As healthy individuals they have interpreted their experiences with relation to justice, personal vulnerability and benevolence through the global beliefs which they regard as important to enable them to reach their goals. Both global meaning and situational meaning involve the girl’s construction of ways to understand the world and the events that affects them as individuals. Figure 3 shows the word vulnerability which describes how the girls sometimes feel. The meaning making procedure which is included in religious belonging affects the interaction between the girl’s belief system and social interaction with others but as figure 3 shows, one solution is to learn from the differences. Life meaning is influenced by religiosity however the degree relies on specific belief systems and the individuals’ opportunity to supplement beliefs with religious community and secular activities. The Dawoodi Bohra girl has chosen the more positive view according to figure 3, by being tolerant and understanding of bad behavior. Her shared experiences with other group members strengthen their relationship.

The negative experiences the girls mention has led to a coping mechanism which entails striving to be only together with other Muslims or in Zahra’s case, other Dawoodi Bohras. This in turn leads to a strengthening of the bands binding the group together but risks isolating them from the rest of society. Members may tend to only have necessary contact with non-members if forced to because of school or work commitments. The positive experiences may lead to a greater understanding and de-dramatization of being different. According to Park, the situational meaning refers to meaning in the occurrence of a potentially stressful event and describes several processes and outcomes that could develop as a result of this (Park, 2010: 258). However, although having unpleasant experiences, they were not life changing. When individuals encounter potentially stressful or traumatic events, they assign a meaning to them, called appraised meanings or situational meaning.

Jonah Blank writes in his book (2001) Mullahs on the Mainframe: Islam and Modernity among the Daudi Bohras, that the Dawoodi Bohras do not see modern Western education as being antithetical to Islam at all. They have come to the conclusion that a person must be thoroughly grounded in every form of knowledge in order to function in a wider society. They do however try to ensure that their younger members have an Islamic basis to build upon. According to Park, global meaning informs individuals’ understanding of themselves and their lives and directs their personal projects and, through them, their general sense of well-being and life satisfaction (Park, 2010: 297). Together with others, the girls struggle towards a common goal. It is the participating in the struggle guided by common beliefs that is important. Both global meaning and situational meaning involve the individuals’ construction of ways to understand the world and the events that affects them as individuals.

An education system that stressed only Islamic subjects would drive many of the brightest students to convent schools or private secular institutions. In order to avoid the brain
The experiences of Zahra, the young Dawoodi Bohra student in an American school, seem to confirm the logic of the dawat as she is content with her mixed school form and happy in her religion. Parks theory suggest that although the girls were exposed to an individual situational meaning resulting in a stressful situation, the interaction between their belief systems and social interaction with others was resolved with the aid of meaning making.

5.2. Giorgi’s Phenomenological Analysis of Homes in London

The first sentence or theme to be identified was “acceptance” a word used to describe the reaction of the local community with respect to the Northolt center. This is an example of part 2 of Giorgi’s analysis. It has an inward-looking character and become an inconspicuous Islamic enclave surrounded by conventional British looking terraced houses. These practically hide the mosque as the houses form a shielded gateway which leads into a square dominated by the mosque. It has a low profile location on an industrial estate far from any main roads, unlike the Regents Park mosque in central London (Eade, 2015: 8). Outsiders are tolerated if they are considered useful or provide local validation. According to Eade invitations have been made to a wide range of people who are considered to have useful connections in order to promote the image of a homogeneous Dawoodi Bohra community which corresponds to part 3 of Giorgi’s analysis. Part four of Giorgi’s analysis resulted in The Northolt mosque emerging through the combination of strong internal control and alliances with powerful political forces outsider the sect. The negative opposition to the mosque was based on the concept that its development would harm the economic prospects of local residents by eroding the industrial base of Northolt and damage race relations. These concerns all turned out to be unfounded (Eade, 2015, 9).

Figure 4. Template for Northolt mosque development
5.2.1. Analysis of Meaning Making for Homes in London

According to Crystal Park’s theory of meaning making, the term global meaning refers to meaning in life and how it influences the individuals understanding of the present, the past and the future (Park, 2005: 297). Park then goes on to divide global meaning into three aspects: global beliefs, global goals, and subjective feelings of meaningfulness. These positive feelings are desirable but it is however not essential to achieve the global goals but together with others, struggle towards to the common goal. It is the participating in the struggle guided by common beliefs that is important (ibid). Figure 4 expresses how this theory can be put into practice as the Dawoodi Bohra group in London work together to achieve their goal through internal control and alliances with powerful outsiders. The goals are divided into lower and higher hierarchies which the individual strives to fulfil in order to reach the higher level. Achievement goals could consist of relationships, work, the attainment of knowledge and wealth, all of which are required to get the Northolt mosque built. Figure 4 shows how the homogenous committed Dawoodi Bohra community uses the meaning making procedure, which is included in religious belonging and affects the interaction between an individual belief system and social interaction with others to succeed when other groups fail (Park, 2005: 297).

According to Ahmed the third generation younger Muslims living in Britain expect that their Britishness will involve acceptance of their Islamic identity by the mainstream and are unlikely to accept a subservient relationship. However he warns that this confidence and assertiveness from young Muslims with an Islamic identity will be problematic for the dominant mainstream British society (Ahmed, 2014: 58). According to Park’s theory, when individuals encounter potentially stressful or traumatic events, they assign a meaning to them, called appraised meanings or situational meaning. Compared with global meaning, stress or trauma is experienced when appraised meanings “shatter” or violate aspects of one’s global meaning system (Janoff-Bulman, 1992). Unfortunately the sensitivity and re-evaluation needed to strengthen pluralism has not been forthcoming from mainstream British society. It has instead reacted by forming policies and laws that have been seen as a direct infringement on the liberties of the British Muslims (Ahmed, 2014: 59). Ahmed concludes that the marginalisation and exclusion of Muslim religious discourse from mainstream British society is a crucial factor in the growth in extremist movements.

According to Park, this could lead to attempts to restore global meaning following its disruption or violation, a process called meaning making. Meaning making involves coming to see or understand a situation in a different way and reconsidering one’s beliefs and goals in order to regain consistency among them (Davis et al., 2000). Even social scientists have persistently neglected the development of a genuine religious identity in the form of British Muslims and ignored the work of the mosques and imams in Britain (ibid: 63). Figure 4 is used to highlight the risk involved with marginalizing any group in society where exclusion can inevitably lead to extremism and discrimination.

The Dawoodi Bohra illustrated the restricted choice and heavy commitment involved in travelling long distances to community gatherings. They relied on the gathered community tradition which Nonconformist congregations had developed in Britain during the
nineteenth century. The Northolt center became part of an international network which had developed over many centuries through the Dawoodi Bohra involvement in trade and commerce. This far-flung community is tightly organized around its religious leader based in Mumbai. Approximately half of the 6,000 Dawoodi Bohra living in Britain lives in London (Eade, 2015: 7). The sect’s dispersal around the world has threatened the tight, hierarchical leadership structure. They have responded by regularly visiting centers outside of India. They encourage devotees to attend major celebrations in Mumbai and insist on the regular payment of tithes and the tradition of endogamous marriages (Eade, 2015: 8).

Any time the Syedna (the Dawoodi Bohra al-mullah) makes one of his frequent public appearances, hordes of followers come by train, car, plane, and bus just to be near him. The vast mass of the Bohra population has nothing material to gain by displays of deep piety, and nothing to lose by just staying home. No attendance is taken, no summonses issued, no points are tallied or prizes awarded to the person who shed the most copious tears at Ashura. According to Blanks research the outward displays of piety by members of the mainstream Dawoodi Bohra community most commonly reflect a genuine inner belief, which corresponds to Park’s theory of global meaning. This belief that is exhibited is then solidified by these examples of loyalty and orthopraxy leads to orthodoxy. Although this path has been carefully laid out by the dawat, the journey is one most Dawoodi Bohras undertake quite willingly (Blank, 2001: 257).

The planning and financing of this mosque in London is an expression of the global beliefs being expressed by the Dawoodi Bohra. In order to act as host for their leader and encourage visits to London, the congregation has expressed a subjective feeling of meaningfulness according to Park’s theory. To overcome their individual situational meaning they have overcome the political hostility of London to achieve their goal which in the long term will strengthen their religious community and increase their chances of reaching their global goals. The mosque enclave serves to give each Dawoodi Bohra individual stability and coherence which results in new experiences that are fitted into their already existing global beliefs.

5.3. Giorgi’s Phenomenological Analysis of Marginalising British Muslims

The first sentence or theme to be identified in Giorgi’s analysis in figure 5 was “marginalised” a word used to describe the separation of Muslim communities from the rest of the population. A positive Muslim reaction would be confidence and assertiveness. A negative result of Giorgi’s analysis in phase two was exclusion and subservience of the Muslim community as a result of the double standards from the community at large. This could lead to phase three expressing extremism, inequality and discrimination. However Giorgi’s analysis of Manchester Muslims resulted in phase four leading to pluralism, sensitivity and a harmonious society.

5.3.1 Analysis of Meaning Making of Marginalising British Muslims

Marginalising the British Muslim communities involves a risk to Muslims feeling of global meaning making as shown in figure 5. If this were to happen then according to Park’s theory
of meaning making, subjective feelings of meaningfulness would be negative. When individuals encounter potentially stressful or traumatic events, they assign a meaning to them, called appraised meanings or situational meaning. The positive feelings from being part of a group are desirable but not essential. According to Park, isolation from society in general could lead to Muslims struggling towards the common goal of justice and recognition. Stress or trauma is experienced when appraised meanings “shatter” or violate aspects of one’s global meaning system (Janoff-Bulman, 1992), which could be a result of being excluded from society. Distress, in turn, initiates a search for restoration of coherence among aspects of global meaning and the appraised meaning assigned to the event (Park, Edmondson, & Mills, 2010).

![Figure 5. Templates for Risk Analysis of Marginalising British Muslims](image.png)

5.4. Giorgi’s Phenomenological Analysis of Dawoodi Bora Eco-Mosque

The first sentence or theme to be identified was “eco-friendly” an expression used to describe the reaction of the local community with respect to the Dawoodi Bora Eco-Mosque and the concept behind the choice of building material and type of construction. This is an example of part 2 of Giorgi’s analysis. Choosing this type of construction lead to help developing a homogeneous Dawoodi Bohra community, which corresponds to part 3 of Giorgi’s analysis. Part four of Giorgi’s analysis resulted in the eco-Mosque emerging through the combination of strong internal control and thought provoking renewable energy and a lower environmental impact than conventional construction. Figure five indicates that Giorgi’s analysis also shows the negative effects of the eco-mosque, namely the fact that is different from the neighboring buildings and more expensive to build.
5.4.1. Analysis of Meaning Making for the Dawoodi Bora Eco-Mosque

The building of this modern ecological mosque by the Dawoodi Bohra is an example of a religious group working together to achieve their global goals. According to Park (2005) they express a subjective feeling of meaningfulness and as they are making an environmental statement they express a desire to move towards a global goal with as less negative impact as possible. The term global meaning refers to meaning in life and how it influences the individuals understanding of the present, the past and the future (Park, 2005: 297). Even if they don’t save the planet, according to Park’s theory it is the struggle that is important and their optimistic behavior is showing a possible solution to a global problem. Figure 6 shows the advantages of an environmentally friendly mosque built by a harmonious group expressing their common concern for the future of the planet. They are also supplementing their individual religious beliefs by building a religious community with a place to worship in which because it is making an environmental statement, has a positive interaction with society as a whole. The meaning making procedure which is included in religious belonging affects the interaction between an individual belief system and social interaction with others. Life meaning is influenced by religiosity however the degree relies on specific belief systems and the individuals’ opportunity to supplement beliefs with religious community and secular activities (Park, 2005: 183-184).

5.5. Giorgi’s Phenomenological Analysis of Schooling for Muslim Children

The first sentence or theme to be identified in Giorgi’s analysis in the following figure 7 suggest, “State schools taking over Quranic and Arabic lessons”. In Giorgi’s work, phenomenology is used to look for the psychological meanings that constitute the
phenomenon in the participants’ life world. A problem of stressed children is highlighted and then solutions are offered. The idea is to explicate multiple ways of interpreting events for each person and show how these interpretations constitute reality (Giorgi, 1986). The Imams are teaching children they are ill-equipped to deal with and the children have little time to play and socialize. Phase three of Giorgi’s theory is to explicate multiple ways of interpreting events for each person and show how these interpretations constitute reality (Giorgi, 1986). If state schools take on the responsibility of educating the Muslim children in these subjects in school time, they will have more free time for socializing. The Imams can spend more time doing the work they are better qualified for.

Figure 7. Templates Suggesting Advantages of State School Curriculum Including Quranic and Arabic

5.5.1 Analysis of Meaning Making of Schooling for Muslim Children

According to Crystal Park’s theory of meaning making, achievement goals could consist of relationships, work, the attainment of knowledge and wealth. The following figure 8 offers reasons for having Islamic schools where relevant knowledge can be attained. A single sex option would help avoid the risk of corruption and more discipline could be enforced. The meaning making procedure which is included in religious belonging affects the interaction between an individual belief system and social interaction with others so there would presumably more tolerance towards higher workloads and greater discipline as the pupils and staff struggle towards the common goal. Park suggests that in the course of everyday life, global meaning informs individuals’ understanding of themselves and their lives and directs their personal projects and, through them, their general sense of well-being and life satisfaction.
Figure 8. Templates for Reasons for having Islamic Schools

5.6. Giorgi’s Phenomenological Analysis of Imported Imams

Giorgi recommends that the analysis is carried out in four phases, the first being to get an overall impression and identify sentence-forming units. In the following figure 9 the question of imported imams is analysed. Phase two is to abstract the contents of individual sense-forming units, and summarize the meaning of this content. The imported imams are generally considered to have a more fundamental religious training which gives them a higher status. They are however dependent on the mosque management and have little independence and are generally not fluent in the local language or familiar with local traditions. Giorgi’s analysis offers varies ways of interpreting a problem and show how these interpretations can constitute reality. Reality in this case is that a choice has to be made according to figure 9, for each mosque to decides if they want to import an imam or a locally educated one that understands the local congregation and their problems.
5.6.1. Analysis of Meaning Making for Imported Imams

Crystal Park’s theory of meaning making suggest the meaning making procedure which is included in religious belonging affects the interaction between an individual belief system and social interaction with others. Life meaning is influenced by religiosity however the degree relies on specific belief systems and the individuals’ opportunity to supplement beliefs with religious community and secular activities (Park, 2005: 183-184). Figure 9 suggests that imported imams have a better religious education and higher status than locally taught imams that presumably have a better understanding of the local language and customs. If as Park suggest, a healthy individual interprets their experiences with relation to justice, personal vulnerability and benevolence through the global beliefs which they regard as important to enable them to reach their goals, then a well-educated imam would be regarded as essential.

5.7. Analysis Reflection

The two analysis methods I have used, Crystal Park’s theory of meaning making and Giorgi's phenomenological analysis approach, have helped to arrive at a satisfactory conclusion. That is that Dawoodi Bohras’ generally achieve their goals even when reestablished and living in western cultures. Their meaning making philosophy usually works to their advantage as their solution to problems are not confrontational or antisocial. They are generally low keyed discrete solutions that do not evoke hostility in their new western societies.
5.8. Conclusion

My central research question was which successful meaning making methods have been implemented by Dawoodi Bohra congregations established in western societies? This was followed by a sub-question, what specific role education has played in this process?

Despite feeling vulnerably and different the young Dawoodi Bohra girl in an American school, found comfort in learning about peoples differences and ignored bad behavior from her peers. Instead of only trusting and confiding in other Muslims, she learnt to tolerate and understand other minority groups. Both global meaning and situational meaning were involved in the girl’s construction of ways to understand the world and the events that affects her as an individual. Parks theory suggest that although the girl was exposed to an individual situational meaning resulting as a result of a stressful situation, the interaction between her belief systems and social interaction with others was resolved with the aid of meaning making.

Two mosque building projects were analysed, the first being a controversial project in London and the other, the first eco-friendly mosque in Britain. Both projects were built by committed, homogeneous, gathered Dawoodi Bohra communities exhibiting internal control and the use of powerful outsiders to achieve their goals. The planning and financing of this mosque in London is an expression of the global beliefs being expressed by the Dawoodi Bohra. The Dawoodi Bohra community uses the meaning making procedure, which is included in religious belonging and affects the interaction between individual belief system and social interaction with others to succeed when other groups fail. According to Park the Dawoodi Bohra’s expressed a subjective feeling of meaningfulness and as they made an environmental statement expressing a desire to move towards a global goal with as less negative impact as possible by building an eco-friendly mosque.

Other issues analysed are the advantages of state schools taking over Quranic and Arabic lessons or separate Islamic schools. Finally the advantages and disadvantages of imported imams is analysed from a meaning making perspective. Other Muslim groups seem to regard all these issues as problems but the Dawoodi Bohra often found working solutions or compromises that do not encourage marginalisation and exclusion. As each of the academic papers analysed suggest, Dawoodi Bohras’ generally achieve their goals even when reestablished and living in western cultures. Their meaning making philosophy works to their advantage when establishing new Dawoodi Bohra communities in Western Societies.

The role of education has been important for the Dawoodi Bohra’s in the process of successful establishment in Western Societies. The Dawoodi Bohra religious leaders are aware that an education system that stressed only Islamic subjects would drive many of the brightest students to convent schools or private secular institutions. In order to avoid the brain drain the dawat have adopted an open attitude toward all types of modern learning. Park’s theories confirm that the meaning making procedure which is included in their religious belonging affects the interaction between these individual’s belief system and social interaction with others. As a result of their adapted meaning making strategy they are more tolerant towards higher workloads and greater discipline in schools. Irrespective of if they attend a communal school or Muslim school the Dawoodi Bohra pupils generally struggle towards to the common goal of higher academic achievement.
I have used Giorgi’s Phenomenological Analysis has to identify key words or sentences like: vulnerability, acceptance, marginalised, eco-friendly, or sentences like: “State schools taking over Quranic and Arabic lessons”, or “the question of imported imams”. As my intention was to develop new descriptions and concept and at the same time capture as closely as possible the way in which the phenomenon is experienced, Giorgi’s theory proved adequate. I used phenomenology to look for the psychological meanings that constitute the phenomenon in the Dawoodi Bohra life world pertaining to their successful meaning making methods that they have implemented when establishing congregations in western societies. I have been able to study how Dawoodi Bohra individuals live, behave and experience situations in their community or in school. I have been able to explicate multiple ways of interpreting events for Dawoodi Bohra congregations or sometimes individuals and show how these interpretations constitute reality.

Giorgi’s Phenomenological Analysis has helped me come to various conclusions like shared experiences with other Muslims free the individuals’ cognitive space for activities other than reactive coping. If state schools take on the responsibility of educating the Muslim children in Arabic in school time, the children will have more free time for socializing and the imams can spend more time doing the work they are better qualified for. Another conclusion that became apparent with the aid of Giorgi’s theory was that homogeneous Dawoodi Bohra communities often succeed in projects like building eco-friendly mosques and religious complexes, where others fail.
Chapter 6 Discussion

6.1. Empirical Reflection

As far as I can ascertain academic papers concerning the Muslim group Dawoodi Bohras have never before been analysed using Crystal Park’s theory of meaning making Giorgi’s phenomenological analysis. Prior to Blank (2001) the religious leaders of the Dawoodi Bohra have prevented any previous ethnographer from making a study of the denomination. Although members of the group appear in numerous research papers for a variety of reasons, no previous research has been aimed specifically at the group as a whole, especially concerning their successful Westernisation.

The research carried out Fiaz Ahmed (2014) concerning the developing role of mosques in the Manchester area of England proved very useful. It analysed and explained the many problems that have to be overcome by Muslim communities now established in the area. A comprehensive explanation to the history of Muslim Westernisation by Ahmed helped clarify that Daudi Bohra communities are often non-confrontational and come up with original solutions that enhance successful establishment in Western societies. His work in no way singled out the Daudi Bohra but recurring themes could be found in his research including the value of education and mastering of the host countries language.

6.2. Theory Reflection

For my theoretical foundation I have used Giorgi’s phenomenological analysis approach. This I found best suited for the development of new descriptions and concepts. As there seems to be very little previous research on the subject I considered this theory the most suitable as the purpose of Giorgi’s phenomenological psychology research is describe as well as possible the way in which the phenomenon is experienced. Phenomenology has been used to look for the psychological meanings that constitute the phenomenon in the participants’ life world. The idea is to study how individuals live, how they behave and experience situations.

I have used Crystal Park’s theory of meaning making. The term global meaning refers to meaning in life and how it influences the individuals understanding of the present, the past and the future. The theory then goes on to divide global meaning into three aspects: global beliefs, global goals, and subjective feelings of meaningfulness. These positive feelings are desirable but it is however not essential to achieve the global goals but together with others, struggle towards to the common goal. It is the participating in the struggle guided by common beliefs that is important. The meaning making procedure is highly visible amongst the Dawoodi Bohra I have come into contact with. It is included in religious belonging and affects the interaction between an individual belief system and social interaction with others. Life meaning is influenced by religiosity however the degree relies on specific belief systems and the individuals’ opportunity to supplement beliefs with religious community and secular activities. All of these goals are actively sought after as the building of mosques expresses.
6.3. Method Reflection

My research has been based on discourse analysis and identifying patterns of recurring key elements in various research papers covering the subject of integration of members of Muslim congregations born in Western societies. Having used discourse analysis it has allowed me ways of referring to and constructing knowledge about particular topics of practice and conduct associated with the Dawoodi Bohra congregations now established in western societies.

A social-constructionist approach has enabled me to analyse the various situations in which religious meaning or significance is constructed, attributed or challenged. As Dawoodi Bohra Muslims belong to a religious group and community that has spread on a transnational scale I shall be exploring whether differences can be discerned with how they affiliate within their group and how they interact with society in general. The identification of discourses has been part of the analysis in order to show how statements work together to form relatively coherent sets of meaning including regularity of use and coherence involved in discourse. This has been achieved by pointing out recurrent key distinctions like individual feelings and institutional doctrines, religious and non-religious.

I will have used de-contextualisation, a process by which certain parts of a text are temporarily cut out of the material and studied more closely together with other elements of the material relating to the same phenomenon. Re-contextualisation has been an important measure to prevent reductionism and maintain the connection to the field and informants reality. I have validated the parts in relation to the whole text. Template analysis has been used to sort text into predetermined categories derived from existing theories.
References


