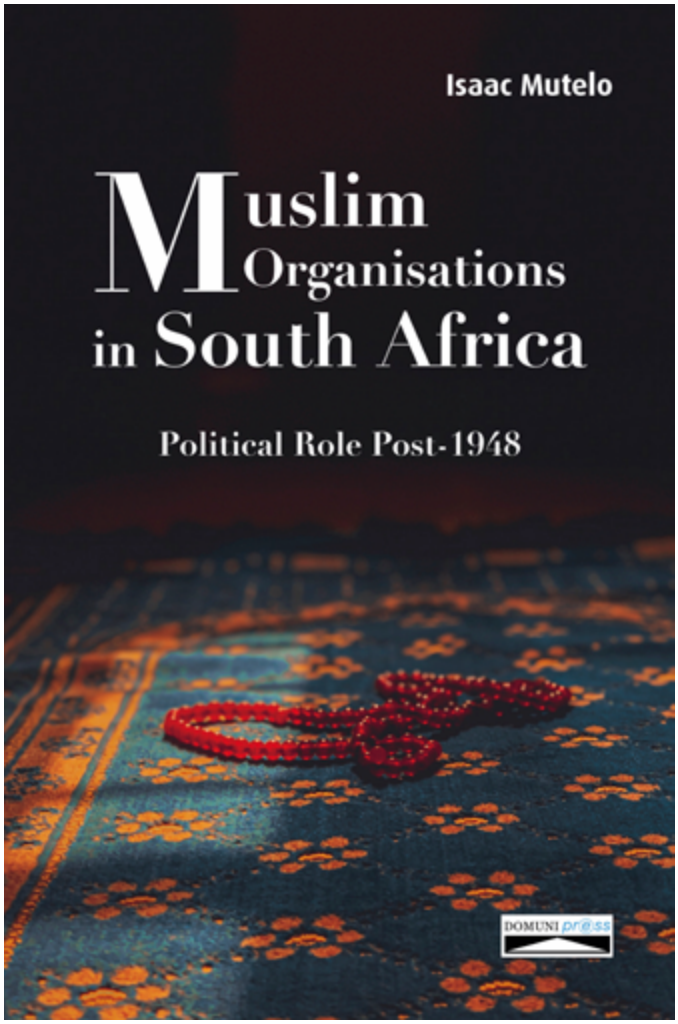
[Book Review] Isaac Mutelo, *Muslim Organisations in South Africa. Political Role Post-1948.*

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The insightful foreword of *Muslim Organisations in South Africa: Political Involvement Post 1995,* Sheik Mohammed Ntshangase from the University of Limpopo, highlights the book's significant contribution to understanding the impactful roles played by Muslim organisations and individuals in South Africa since 1948. He notes, "The book is a major contribution in uncovering laudable works that Muslim organisations and individuals in South Africa have done post-1948. Unlike many who ignorantly slander Islam, Isaac Mutelo stands out by thoroughly seeking knowledge and understanding."

Despite constituting only 2% of South Africa's total population, the Muslim community has made substantial contributions to various political spheres, particularly in promoting religious freedom, fostering reconciliation, and spearheading humanitarian and social welfare initiatives. The book highlights the varied political engagement of Muslim organisations; some adopt a "watchdog" approach, actively engaging with the government. The political landscape for Muslims in South Africa has evolved, particularly in the 1990s, with the formation of several Muslim political parties, including Al-Jama-ah, the Islamic Party, the African Muslim Party, the African Moral Party, and the Sizwe Ummah Nation. Additionally, many Muslims have aligned themselves with broader political movements, such as the ANC and the PAC, while social movements like People Against Gangsterism and Drugs and the Muslim Youth Movement of South Africa have emerged to address community issues. Notably, humanitarian efforts are exemplified by the Gift of the Givers Foundation, recognised as the largest Muslim NGO in the country.



Mutelo, I. 2023. Muslim Organisations in South Africa: Political Role Post-1948. Toulouse: Domuni Press.

The book also pays tribute to individuals who have held prominent political positions, including Dullar Omar, Kader Asmal, Aziz Pahad, and Hassan Solomons, who have served in various government ministries as members of parliament. It recounts the contributions of key figures in the struggle for democracy, such as Ahmed Kathrada, and more recent political stalwarts like Ebrahim Patel, Naledi Pandor, and the late Jessie Duarte.

A significant aspect of the book is its historical context regarding Islamic immigration to South Africa, detailing three phases. In the mid-17th century, Dutch colonizers brought Muslims as slaves and political exiles from Malay, Java, and Bengal to settle in the Cape. The mid-19th century saw British colonisers bringing Indian Muslims as indentured laborers to Natal. The end of the 19th century and the early 20th century witnessed a wave of Indian traders and merchants settling in Natal, followed by an influx of Muslim immigrants from Africa and Asia, along with conversions within South African communities in the early 20th century.

The book raises essential questions concerning the political engagement of Muslim organisations. It probes whether there is a singular approach to politics that can be defined as "Muslim politics," suggesting that there is no one-size-fits-all answer, as Muslims are actively involved in various political parties, including the ANC, EFF, and PAC. It also questions whether Muslim organisations should primarily advocate for Muslim-specific issues such as identity, security, and values, or whether their focus should extend to universal issues, including justice, poverty, and development. Furthermore, it explores what occurs when Muslim organisations and individuals hold differing political views.

Thus, *Muslim Organisations in South Africa: Political Involvement Post 1995* offers a comprehensive examination of the political dynamics within the Muslim community in South Africa, highlighting both historical context and contemporary issues. Isaac Mutelo's thorough exploration invites readers to reflect on the complex balance between religious identity and broader societal responsibilities.

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