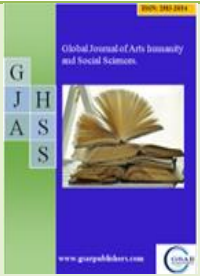
	<b>Global Journal of Arts Humanity and Social Sciences</b>				
	ISSN: 2583-2034				
	Abbreviated key title: Glob.J.Arts.Humanit.Soc.Sci				
	Frequency: Monthly				
	Published By GSAR Publishers				
Journal Homepage Link: <a href="https://gsarpublishers.com/journal-gjahss-home/">https://gsarpublishers.com/journal-gjahss-home/</a>					
Volume - 5	Issue - 8	August 2025	Total pages 646-651	DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.16940069	

## SHAYKH YUSUF AL-MAQASSARI AND THE EARLY MODERN INDIAN OCEAN

By

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### Article History

Received: 15- 08- 2025

Accepted: 23- 08- 2025

Published: 25- 08- 2025

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### Abstract

Shaykh Yusuf al-Maqassari (1626–1699), a prominent scholar from South Sulawesi, Indonesia, has become a significant research subject for Indonesian and South African scholars. He is renowned as the founding father of Islam at the Cape of Good Hope. He was exiled to the Cape in 1693 where he died in 1699. His role as a cleric who actively resisted the VOC (Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie) led to his exile across various regions, ultimately establishing him as a key figure in places like Ceylon and Cape Town. Beyond his resistance efforts, Yusuf al-Maqassari was instrumental in transmitting religious ideas and fostering intellectual connections between the Middle East, the Malay World and South Africa in the 17th century. Yusuf al-Maqassari's life offers a compelling lens through which to examine intellectual history in the 17th-century Muslim world. While scholars have extensively documented the contributions of Muslim thinkers, studies have primarily concentrated on the Near East, regarded as the centre of the Muslim world. In contrast, the Malay World has often been marginalised as a peripheral region, and its role in producing significant Islamic intellectual works has been largely overlooked. This article addresses this critical gap by offering an account of the intellectual biography of Yusuf al-Maqassari. It explores the interconnected factors of the Indian Ocean network in the seventeenth century that profoundly shaped his thought and highlights the Malay World's contribution to intellectual history.

**Keywords:** Yusuf al-Maqassari, Islam, The Malay World, Indian Ocean, Ulama.

### Introduction

On December 5, 2013, South Africa mourned the passing of Nelson Mandela, one of the 20th century's most iconic leaders. Mandela dedicated his life to the struggle against apartheid, a brutal system of racial segregation that marginalised the Black majority in South Africa. His decades-long fight for justice, which included 27 years of imprisonment, culminated in his historic election as South Africa's first Black president in 1994. Mandela's vision of equality and freedom inspired global movements for human rights and democracy.

Mandela's journey of resistance resonates deeply with the legacy of Shaykh Yusuf al-Maqassari, a 17th-century scholar, spiritual leader, and anti-colonial figure from South Sulawesi, Indonesia. Exiled to the Cape by the Dutch East India Company (VOC), Shaykh Yusuf became a pivotal figure in South African history.

Arriving in Cape Town in 1694, he not only spread Islam through the Naqshbandi Sufi Order but also offered spiritual guidance and leadership to enslaved people, political exiles, and other marginalised communities. Shaykh Yusuf fostered solidarity through his teachings and provided a foundation for identity and resistance among the oppressed.

As Dangor (1997) notes, spreading Islam among South Africa's oppressed communities offered a vital source of hope and empowerment. Shaykh Yusuf's contributions transcended religious practice; they nurtured a new collective consciousness, enabling enslaved and displaced individuals to resist the dehumanising forces of colonialism. His enduring legacy in South Africa reflects the transnational nature of resistance and spiritual solidarity, bridging histories between Southeast Asia and Africa.



Shaykh Yusuf's influence continues to be recognised internationally. In 1995, Indonesia honoured him as a National Hero for his contributions to resistance against colonialism. In 1997, President Suharto's visit to Shaykh Yusuf's tomb in Cape Town reaffirmed his symbolic role in connecting Indonesia and South Africa. Subsequent visits by Indonesian leaders further underscore his transnational significance and the enduring relevance of his legacy.

This article explores the life and legacy of Shaykh Yusuf al-Maqassari, examining how his resistance, spirituality, and teachings shaped identity and solidarity among marginalised communities. His story is a powerful example of the intersection between faith, resistance, and transnational histories, offering lessons relevant to contemporary struggles for justice and freedom.

### Biography of Shaykh Yusuf al-Maqassari

Shaykh Yusuf al-Maqassari, also known as Shaykh Yusuf Taj al-Khalwati al-Maqassari (1626-1699), was a prominent scholar from Makassar, a significant port city in eastern Indonesia. His full name was Muhammad Yusuf ibn 'Abd Allah Abu al-Mahasin al-Taj al-Khalwati al-Maqassari (Azra, 2004, p. 87). Makassar's strategic location connected the Malay Peninsula and Sumatra to New Guinea, with its Strait serving as an alvia vital route for traders travelling as far as the Philippines and the South China Sea (Knaap & Sutherland, 2004, p. 3).

Shaykh Yusuf was born on July 3, 1626, to Aminah, the daughter of Dampang Ko'mara. Although his father's identity remains uncertain, Aminah later married Sultan Alauddin (r. 1593-1639), ruler of the Sultanate of Gowa (Jappie, 2018, pp. 31-32). Gowa, an Islamic sultanate in South Sulawesi, rose to prominence in the mid-16th century, becoming an influential trading power. Sultan Alauddin's embrace of Islam in 1605 marked the kingdom's formal Islamisation, followed by territorial expansion between 1608 and 1611, which solidified Gowa's dominance in South Sulawesi (Ricklefs, 2001, p. 57; Hamid, 1994, p. 10). By Shaykh Yusuf's birth, Gowa was an Islamic and economic hub in eastern Indonesia.

Shaykh Yusuf began his Islamic education in Sulawesi under the guidance of local scholar Daeng ri Tasammang. Later, he studied fiqh, tawhid, and tasawwuf with Sayyid Ba 'Alwi ibn 'Abd Allah al-'Allamah al-Tahir in Bontoala and Jalal al-Din al-Aydid in Cikoang (Azra, 2004, p. 88). The presence of Islamic teachers and Sufi scholars played a crucial role in the region's Islamisation and education. Makassar's position as an international trading entrepôt attracted merchants, sailors, and clerics from across the globe. By the early 16th century, Muslim communities and rulers were documented as far as Maluku (Cortese, 1944, p. 212). Records from Nicholas Gervaise (1662-1729) also note the activities of the Khalwatiyah Sufi order in Makassar by 1688, underscoring the region's deep-rooted Islamic traditions (Laffan, 2015, pp. 22-23).

In 1644, Shaykh Yusuf left Gowa to further his education. Sources differ slightly on the timeline: Abu Hamid states he departed on September 22, 1644, travelling through Banten and Aceh before reaching Makkah (Hamid, 1994, pp. 89-90), while Basang notes

his departure on October 20, 1644, at the age of 18 (Basang, 1981, p. 105). Both Banten and Aceh were prominent centres of Islamic learning, with Sufi orders such as Qadariyah, Naqshbandiyah, and Khalwatiyah flourishing in Banten (Tjandrasmita et al., 2009, p. 119). Aceh, a bastion of tasawwuf teachings since the 16th century, combined religious, economic, and military power. Shaykh Yusuf reportedly sought to study under Nur al-Din al-Raniri in Aceh, though the scholar had left before his arrival (Hadi, 2004, p. 148; Laffan, 2015, p. 21; Azra, 2004, p. 89).

From Aceh, Shaykh Yusuf continued to India, studying under Umar ibn 'Abd Allah Ba Shayban, a student of al-Raniri. He then travelled to Yemen, where he studied in Zabid under Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Baqi al-Naqshbandi, Sayyid 'Ali al-Zabidi, and Muhammad ibn al-Wajih al-Sa'di al-Yamani (Azra, 2004, p. 89). His journey culminated in the Haramayn (Makkah and Medina), where he studied under prominent scholars such as Ahmad al-Qushashi, Ibrahim al-Kurani, and Hasan al-Ajami. During this period, he crossed paths with Abd al-Rauf al-Sinkili, who shared the same teachers (Azra, 2004, pp. 90-91).

Shaykh Yusuf's works reflect a significant influence from the doctrine of Wahdat al-Wujud (Unity of Being), pioneered by Ibn Arabi (1165-1240). His exposure to scholars like Muhammad 'Abd al-Baqi al-Mizjaji and the writings of Muhammad ibn Fadlullah al-Burhanpuri, particularly Tuhfat al-Mursalah ila Ruh al-Nabi, shaped his spiritual philosophy (Rafudeen, 2023, p. 2). Additionally, Shaykh Yusuf's teacher, Ibrahim al-Kurani, played a pivotal role in transmitting Sufi-inspired doctrines to Southeast Asia, responding to the enthusiasm of Malay-Muslim scholars (Laffan, 2015, p. 20). In Damascus, Shaykh Yusuf joined the Khalwatiyah Sufi order under Ayyub al-Khalwati, a close associate of Ahmad al-Qushashi (Azra, 2004, p. 92; Laffan, 2015, p. 22).

Upon completing his studies, Shaykh Yusuf returned to Indonesia in 1667, settling in Banten. Sultan Ageng Tirtayasa (r. 1651-1682) appointed him Shaykh al-Islam, the highest Islamic authority at the court (Rafudeen, 2023, p. 2). His arrival in Banten strengthened ties with Sultan Ageng, reportedly to unite resistance efforts against the Dutch East India Company (VOC) (Hamid, 1994, p. 95). VOC records refer to him as "Che Issoff," "Sjeech Josef," and the "Makassarese-Bantenese high priest" (Jappie, 2018, p. 41), reflecting their surveillance of his activities. Shaykh Yusuf actively supported Sultan Ageng's struggle against the VOC, continuing the resistance even after Sultan Ageng's capture in 1683 (Jappie, 2018, p. 43).

Shaykh Yusuf al-Maqassari's legacy endures as both a scholar and a symbol of resistance. His intellectual contributions remain influential, particularly in tasawwuf and his role in spreading Sufi teachings in Southeast Asia. His life reflects a fusion of spiritual devotion, transregional scholarship, and political resistance, solidifying his place as a key figure in the history of Islam in Indonesia and beyond.

## Culture of Travel

Scholars studying Shaykh Yusuf al-Maqassari often focus on his political and intellectual journey. However, few place him within the broader context of the early modern changes in the Indian Ocean. His ability to travel without significant obstacles and his decision to assist the Sultanate of Banten rather than the Sultanate of Gowa upon returning from the Haramayn remain points of intrigue. Moreover, his successful adaptation as a political exile in Ceylon and South Africa raises further questions. To fully understand his political and intellectual career, it is essential to place Shaykh Yusuf within the context of the early modern Indian Ocean. Viewing him solely within local or national frameworks does not fully illuminate his significance.

The early modern period marked a shift from "local" to "global" orientations, with interconnections between regions erasing rigid ethnic and political boundaries. As Sanjay Subrahmanyam notes, this was a time of "a new sense of the limits of the inhabited world," driven by travel and geographic redefinition (Subrahmanyam, 1997, p. 737). This expansion of travel cultures was not solely a European phenomenon but was part of a broader, interconnected world. Alongside exploration, the early modern period also saw changing relationships between settled agricultural societies and nomadic groups, with the rise of global trade altering societal structures, urbanisation, and demographics (Subrahmanyam, 1997, p. 738). Shaykh Yusuf al-Maqassari grew within this context of expanded travel cultures and the transformative effects of global trade in the Indian Ocean. Born in Makassar, a key node in the Indian Ocean's trade network, he was immersed in the cosmopolitanism and travel culture that flourished in Eastern Indonesia during this time.

Travel culture was a defining characteristic of early modern Indian Ocean societies, facilitating human movement beyond ethnic and political barriers and fostering cosmopolitan connections. This culture also spurred the development of travel literature, such as the *seyahatname*. A notable example of a scholar influenced by this culture is Nur al-Din al-Raniri, whom Shaykh Yusuf admired. Born in Gujarat in the late 16th century, al-Raniri's career as Shaykh al-Islam in Aceh is a testament to the power of travel culture. His arrival in Aceh in 1637 was part of a mission to challenge the Wahdatul Wujud doctrine (Hadi, 2004, p. 154). His acceptance in Aceh was facilitated by his intellectual abilities and the strong connections between Gujarat and Aceh, established through trade long before his arrival (Alam & Subrahmanyam, 2005, p. 211). Likewise, Shaykh Yusuf's rise to prominence in the Sultanate of Banten in the late 17th century was aided by similar networks of travel and exchange.

Shaykh Yusuf's travels to Banten, Aceh, India, and the Middle East exemplify the ease with which people in the Indian Ocean world could move between regions. The Bugis-Makassar network, in particular, reinforced the culture of travel, enabling Shaykh Yusuf to study and secure an influential position in Banten. Infrastructure, including well-developed ports and transportation networks, further supported his travels, facilitating movement

across the region. For example, the conflict between Gowa and the VOC in 1669 prompted many Makassar people to migrate to Banten (Laffan, 2015, p. 22). Shaykh Yusuf led a contingent of 5,000 soldiers, including Makassar, Bugis, and Malay warriors, in resistance against the VOC in West Java (Hamid, 1994, p. 102). The European colonial powers, notably the VOC, significantly reshaped travel culture by stimulating migration, trade, and war.

The development of ship technology, utilising the monsoon winds, further facilitated travel along the Indian Ocean's maritime routes. This enabled pilgrims, scholars, traders, and others, including Shaykh Yusuf, to journey from South Sulawesi to the Haramayn via Banten, Aceh, India, and Yemen. These movements helped to forge vibrant social and cultural interactions across the Indian Ocean.

One notable outcome of these interactions was the spread of *tasawwuf* (Sufism) in Southeast Asia. Sufi scholars travelled along the Indian Ocean trade routes, contributing to the spread of Islamic mysticism. Shaykh Yusuf himself was instrumental in this movement, especially after his exile to Ceylon by the VOC. In Ceylon, he wrote influential works on *tasawwuf*, such as *Al-Nafahatul Al-Saylaniyyah fil Minhatal Rahmaniyyah* (The wind of Ceylon as a gift of Allah Almighty Rahman), where he reflects on his spiritual journey and the advice he gave to his followers (Al-Maqassari, 2023, p. 23). The exchange of ideas across the Indian Ocean was critical in transmitting Sufi teachings.

Shaykh Yusuf's connections with other Sufi scholars, including those from the Middle East and South Asia, further demonstrate the strength of the travel culture in the Indian Ocean world. Through his interactions with prominent figures such as Shaykh Ibrahim al-Kurani, a disciple of Ahmad Qushashi, Shaykh Yusuf entered various Sufi orders, including Qadiriyyah, Naqshbandiyyah, and Shattariyyah (Rafudeen, 2023, p. 2). His works, such as *Tajul Asrar fi Tahqiq Masyrabil Arifin* (The Secret Crown in the Discovery of the Oasis of the Wise), reflect the influence of these Sufi teachings, underscoring the role of travel in shaping his spiritual and intellectual development (Rafudeen, 2023, p. 90).

Thus, the culture of travel in the early modern Indian Ocean was a driving force behind the intellectual, religious, and political movements of figures like Shaykh Yusuf al-Maqassari. His ability to navigate and adapt across different cultural and political contexts was facilitated by the interconnected world of the Indian Ocean, where travel, trade, and intellectual exchange flourished. This global network allowed for the dissemination of ideas, the spread of Sufism, and the creation of enduring scholarly and spiritual legacies.

## Global Trade and the Political and Intellectual Legacy of Shaykh Yusuf al-Maqassari

The political and intellectual trajectory of Shaykh Yusuf al-Maqassari is deeply intertwined with the dynamic flows of global trade, particularly in the Indian Ocean region. This interconnectedness facilitated the movement of capital, people, ships, commodities, ideas, and religious teachings, which shaped

the worldviews of scholars like Shaykh Yusuf. Understanding his journey requires us to recognise the profound transformations brought about by the rise of global trade in the early modern period.

Islam began to spread in Southeast Asia long before the 13th century. However, during the early modern era, Islam's influence in Indonesia significantly expanded in connection with the intensification of global trade. Shaykh Yusuf al-Maqassari, born in 1626 in South Sulawesi, was part of this transformative period. By 1605, the Sultanate of Gowa in Sulawesi had embraced Islam (Hamid, 1994, p. 10), marking a pivotal moment in the region's religious and political history. This era, characterised by the growth of global trade across the Indian and Pacific Oceans, played a crucial role in the spread of Islam throughout Southeast Asia. The Indian Ocean, in particular, acted as a conduit for the movement of ships, traders, scholars, and pilgrims, thereby linking Southeast Asia with the Middle East. The exchanges in this maritime region facilitated the expansion of Islam alongside various political, social, and cultural shifts.

Global trade during the early modern period significantly impacted the relationship between agricultural, urban, and nomadic communities. It also prompted changes in agrarian practices, demographic shifts, urbanisation, and settlement patterns. The arrival of European traders in the Indian Ocean added new complexities to these dynamics, especially with the increased demand for spices and bullion. Traders became central figures in this period, contributing not only to the economy but also to the social and cultural transformations of the time (Subrahmanyam, 2015, p. 10). The arrival of European traders, particularly the Portuguese and later the Dutch, challenged existing power structures and provoked tensions with Muslim traders, leading to conflicts and negotiations that would shape the region's cultural landscape.

Shaykh Yusuf al-Maqassari emerged as a key figure in two regions crucial to global trade flows: South Sulawesi and Banten. After his studies in the Middle East, he settled in Banten, where he became the Shaykh al-Islam. Banten, located on the north coast of Java, had been an important urban centre since the 11th and 12th centuries. The region's craft industries, including textile production, pottery, and gold jewellery, showcased its connections to China and other Southeast Asian parts (Wibisono, 1997, p. 10). Pepper, a highly sought-after commodity, was one of Banten's key trade products, further enhancing its strategic significance. With the fall of Malacca to the Portuguese in 1511, Banten became an essential hub for Muslim traders, offering an alternative to Portuguese-controlled ports.

Banten's role as an international trade centre became more pronounced with the influx of European traders. Dutch records indicate that the markets of Banten were filled with traders from various parts of the world, including Portugal, Arabia, China, and India, as well as Southeast Asian traders from regions such as Ternate, Bugis, and Makassar (Wibisono, 1997, p. 11; Ekadjati, 1997, p. 20). Banten's strategic location allowed it to flourish as an

international port, attracting Muslim traders who sought to bypass Portuguese-controlled trade routes. This environment provided fertile ground for the development of Islam, with Sultan Ageng Tirtayasa of Banten playing a crucial role in supporting the faith's spread.

Shaykh Yusuf's association with Banten was not just intellectual but also political. His link with Sultan Ageng Tirtayasa, the ruler of Banten, deepened after Shaykh Yusuf's return from the Middle East. Sultan Ageng Tirtayasa, with his strong political and economic influence, was deeply involved in international trade. Banten's prosperity, bolstered by its position within the global trade network, enabled it to support the growth of Islam and fostered Shaykh Yusuf's role as a religious leader. During heightened political tension, Shaykh Yusuf's presence in Banten underscored his opposition to the growing influence of the Dutch East India Company (VOC).

The VOC's expansion in the 16th and 17th centuries significantly altered the political and economic landscape of the Indian Ocean—European traders, seeking to control lucrative spice trade routes, allied with local rulers to monopolise trade. After the Portuguese conquest of Malacca in 1511, many Muslim traders moved to Banten to avoid Portuguese dominance. The Dutch, who followed the Portuguese in attempting to control the region's trade, encountered resistance from local rulers such as Sultan Ageng Tirtayasa of Banten. In 1655, Banten refused to renew its trade agreement with the VOC, sparking military conflict between the two powers (Tjandrasasmita, 1997, p. 36). Similarly, the VOC's attempts to monopolise trade in South Sulawesi led to disputes with the Sultanate of Gowa.

Shaykh Yusuf, aware of the VOC's growing influence in the region, strongly opposed their expansionist agenda. His resistance to the VOC culminated in his exile to various VOC-controlled colonies, such as Batavia, Ceylon, and Cape Town, where he was placed among other political exiles. Despite the challenges of exile, Shaykh Yusuf's intellectual and religious influence continued to thrive as he contributed to the growth of Islam in these colonial settings.

The VOC's establishment of fortified colonial cities in key trade centres, including Batavia, Ceylon, and Cape Town, highlighted the global trade network's significance. These cities were administrative hubs and served as sites for political exiles, including those who opposed the VOC's colonial ambitions. The global trade network, characterised by the movement of goods, labour, and people, brought together diverse populations in these colonial cities. Exiled political figures, labourers, and slaves interacted in these spaces, creating a complex and multicultural society.

The demand for labour in VOC-controlled colonies, such as Cape Town, led to the importation of slaves from Africa and South Asia. These slaves, along with exiled political figures like Shaykh Yusuf, formed part of the diverse, marginalised communities in these colonial spaces. The VOC's need for labour to sustain its economic



activities, particularly in agriculture, reinforced the dynamics of slavery and forced migration in the Indian Ocean world.

Cape Town, in particular, became a focal point of the VOC's trade empire. It served as a critical stopover for ships travelling between Europe and the East Indies, and its agricultural production, including grain and wine, became increasingly important in the 17th century. The arrival of slaves from Southeast Asia, South Asia, and Africa helped fuel the colony's growth and further integrated it into the global trade network (Worden, 2012, p. 12).

In conclusion, the early modern period, marked by the intensification of global trade, profoundly impacted the political, social, and cultural dynamics of the Indian Ocean world. Shaykh Yusuf al-Maqassari's life and intellectual legacy exemplify how religious and political resistance intersected with the rise of global trade. His journey reflects the complexities of a world shaped by colonial ambitions, the spread of Islam, and the transformative power of global commerce.

### Conclusion: Towards Comprehensive Understanding of Shaykh Yusuf's Transoceanic Life

Shaykh Yusuf al-Maqassari was a scholar, Sufi and colonial resistance fighter. He was a figure whose life cannot be reduced to a single historical theme. His biography demands a comprehensive study exploring his interactions within the broader Indian Ocean region. Traditional approaches often limit the study of Shaykh Yusuf to intellectual history, primarily focusing on his scholarly works, particularly those related to tasawwuf (Sufism). While this approach offers valuable insights into his intellectual contributions, it fails to account for the social, cultural, and political context in which he lived. On the other hand, the overemphasis on his role as an anti-colonial figure risks oversimplifying the complexities of his experiences. This perspective tends to frame his life in binary terms, such as "coloniser" versus "colonised" or even "Islam" versus "the West," which obscures the richer, multicultural dimensions of his life.

This article presents a nuanced view of Shaykh Yusuf, placing him in the early modern Indian Ocean world. Rather than merely being a Sufi or anti-colonial figure, Shaykh Yusuf emerges as a scholar who engaged with this region's vibrant and interconnected cultures. His life and work reflect the dynamic interactions that defined the early modern period, characterised by global trade, cultural exchanges, and the cross-pollination of ideas. The article argues that the period in which Shaykh Yusuf lived—often referred to as the "early modern" period—is typically viewed through a Eurocentric lens, with emphasis on European "discovery" events like those by Vasco da Gama, Columbus, and Magellan. However, it is crucial to recognise that scholars in the Indian Ocean region, including Shaykh Yusuf, also contributed to the emergence of this "early modern" era, shaped by the forces of travel and trade.

One of the key features of the early modern period is travel culture. This era was marked by the habit of crossing political, cultural, and geographic boundaries. The Indian Ocean region, in particular, was

a hub for such movement, with traders playing a central role in facilitating travel between East Africa, the Red Sea, Gujarat, the Bay of Bengal, and Maluku. Yet, it was not only traders who were affected by this culture of travel. Scholars, motivated to seek knowledge and establish intellectual connections, also travelled extensively. Shaykh Yusuf embodied this scholarly travel culture, moving fluidly between South Sulawesi, Banten, Aceh, Yemen, and the Hijaz. His ability to navigate these spaces highlights the prominence of travel in acquiring knowledge during the early modern period. This culture of travel was made possible by robust infrastructure, such as well-established ports and shipping routes, which facilitated the movement of goods, people and ideas.

The second defining characteristic of the early modern period emphasised in this article is the flow of global trade. The interconnectedness of the Indian Ocean, from the Mediterranean world to the South China Sea, played a critical role in shaping Shaykh Yusuf's experiences. The emergence of international ports—from South Sulawesi and Banten to the Yemeni region—greatly influenced his worldview and intellectual outlook. These ports were not just trade hubs; they were sites of cultural and intellectual exchange that shaped the lives of scholars like Shaykh Yusuf. The rise of European trading companies further complicated the global trade dynamics, introducing new power struggles between European colonial powers and Muslim rulers. Aligned with Muslim rulers, Shaykh Yusuf was deeply engaged in the geopolitical shifts brought about by European colonial expansion.

While Shaykh Yusuf's resistance to European colonialism is well-documented, it is also essential to acknowledge the impact of these global trade networks on the development of European colonies in the Indian Ocean region. In the case of Shaykh Yusuf, these colonies—particularly the Cape of Good Hope—became essential sites for disseminating new ideas in a multicultural context. Shaykh Yusuf's teachings, especially his Sufi philosophy, resonated with marginalised communities in these colonial spaces, offering them spiritual solace and an alternative worldview. His teachings provided a way for these communities to envision a "new world" beyond the harsh realities of colonial life.

Thus, this article argues that a fuller understanding of Shaykh Yusuf al-Maqassari's life requires situating him within the broader context of the early modern Indian Ocean. Acknowledging this era's multicultural and interconnected nature gives us a more comprehensive perspective on his intellectual, spiritual, and political contributions. His life story transcends the narrow confines of anti-colonial resistance or intellectual history and instead highlights the rich, global interactions that defined his era. In doing so, Shaykh Yusuf's legacy can be better appreciated as part of the larger narrative of early modern history in the Indian Ocean world.

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