Islamic Humanitarianism and Terrorist Financing: How different types of Islamic Humanitarian
Organizations politicize aid?

By Ibrahim Yahaya Ibrahim

University of Florida

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Introduction

After the 9/11 attacks, the view of Islamic charities polarized between those who considered them to be the non-sword arm of terrorism and those who saw them as typical humanitarian organizations that politicize aid similarly as their Western counterparts. Although each of these views captures a certain reality of Islamic charities, both downplay their great diversity and complexity, and therefore, they fail to adequately capture the way in which this diversity affects the politicization of aid. This paper seeks to unpack the notion of Islamic charities by creating a typology of Islamic humanitarian organizations, and then examines the way in which each type politicizes humanitarian aid. The central question this paper addresses is how different types of Islamic humanitarian organizations embody different pattern of politicizing humanitarian aid?

The central argument of the paper can be summarized as follows: Islamic humanitarian organizations can be categorized into four types according to their scale of intervention and religious pervasiveness. These types include transnational-fundamentalist, transnational-moderate, national-fundamentalist, and national-moderate. Each of these types of Islamic humanitarian organizations has different objectives and therefore politicizes aid in a different manner. Whereas transnational fundamentalist IHOs follow an *umma-centric* politics, transnational-moderate IHOs lean more toward a global civil-society approach. And while national-fundamentalist IHOs use humanitarian aid as a means of campaigning for the adoption of an Islamic way of life, national-moderate IHOs follow a development-centric approach. This paper elaborates ideal types for each of the four categories and applies them to case studies: the Saudi IIRO, the British IRWW, the charitable branch of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood and the Ghanaian ICODEHS.

Islamic Humanitarianism and Jihad Financing

Islamic humanitarianism came as a result of an effort of hybridization of western and modern concept of humanitarianism, which refers generally to "technical delivery of relief in zones of disaster or conflict", with the Islamic traditional charity, which is based on zakat, waqfs and sadaqah. This effort of hybridization followed a long process that started in the late 1960s as a result of the Islamic revivalism (An-nadha al-Islamiyya), yet, it wasn't until the outbreak of Soviet-war that Islamic Humanitarian organizations become salient in the field of humanitarianism (Benthall, 2003b). This period coincided also with the outbreak of global jihadism. Throughout the war, IHOs where used as channels to convey support from the US and Saudi governments to the mujahedeen. From this early days' collaboration to the present, IHOs have, allegedly, served as funnels of jihad financing in many places in the world, including the Balkans, Caucasia, Southeast Asia, Europe, Sudan, and Palestine (Burr and Collins, 2006)

This supposed relationship between IHOs and international jihad remained largely mysterious until after the 9/11 attacks, when efforts to dismantle Al Qaeda brought its sources of financing under intensive scrutiny. The U.S. Treasury Department established a task force called The Foreign Terrorist Asset Tracking Center (FTATC) with the objective of identifying foreign terrorist groups and the institutions that supported them and to intercepting their funding (Burr and Collins 2006). The reporters identified Islamic charities as the main channel through which money flowed to Al Qaeda. According to the *Monograph on Terrorist Financing* presented by the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States, to 9/11 Commission, "…al-Qaida was funded, to the tune of approximately $30 million per year, by diversions of money from Islamic charities and the use of well-placed financial facilitators who gathered money from both witting and unwitting donors, primarily in the Gulf region" (NCTAUS, 2004: 4). The United States government designated 46 Islamic charities as foreign terrorist

organizations, and some authors asserted that avowedly Islamic groups have supported "tens of thousands of terrorist attacks" (Altermann and Von Hippel, 2007). Although the US government has failed to provide legal proof sufficient for the conviction of these Islamic charities in court, it is still posited within media, intelligence and some academic circles that IHOs constitute the major ally of jihadist groups (Ibid). The more recent outbreak of Islamic insurgencies in the Sahel is often correlated with the proliferation of Islamic humanitarian organizations in the region.

While this view seems to be dominant, there is an opposite view that challenges the allegations against Islamic Humanitarian organizations. A group of Saudi scholars, for instance, wrote a book entitled *Letter To The West: A Saudi View,* in which they respond to the post-9/11criticism against Saudi Arabia, its version of Islam and its charitable organizations accused of supporting terrorism. The argument of the Saudi scholars was that the activities of Saudi charities are not different from those of any other charities in the world. They are apolitical organizations that aim at offering help and assistance for the poor, the needy, the homeless and the refugees… which are "exactly the same objective as charities have in the West"(Ben Saud Albishr, 2008: 197-198). The alleged connection to terrorism is only the result of rare cases of infiltration of some Islamic charities by radical elements. They argue that these rare cases "do not at all justify generalization or campaigning against particular charitable institutions [since] penetration does occur even in the most cautious and highly trained intelligence services" (Ibid: 198). Many Western scholars admit the idea of similarity between Western and Islamic charities and warn against the risk of overgeneralization. Benthall (2003) and Shaw-Hamilton (2007) claim that the politicization of aid performed by IHOs is not very different from its Western counterpart (secular as well as Christian).

Each of these views captures a certain reality of Islamic charities. The seeming contradiction between them comes from the fact that either they consider Islamic humanitarianism as a homogeneous unit of similar and likeminded organizations, or even when they acknowledge diversity among IHOs, they fail to identify the characteristics of this diversity and systematically examine the way this diversity impacts the process of their politicization of relief assistance. Sometimes the analysts are careful to recognize that not all Islamic charities are related to terrorist activities. However, the distinction between those which are related and those which are not is blurred by the over-emphasis on the former, and/or even by the temptation to generalize the former over the later (Comras 2004) [1]. This paper aims to fill the gap in the understanding of the politicization of aid by Islamic Humanitarian Organizations.

Islam, just like many other religions, strongly encourages believers to be generous towards those in need. There is a strong tradition of charitable giving that developed across the 15 centuries of Islamic history. Islamic charity, however, did not embody the humanitarian label until 1960-70s, following a general trend of adapting western concepts of modernity to Islamic teachings and principles. The question of terrorist financing goes back to the attacks against American Ambassy in Kenya and Tanzaniya.

This linkage is so taken for granted that it is hardly problematized, implying that either all Islamic charities serve as venues for terrorist financing, or at least, support of terrorism by Islamic charities is the rule rather than the exception.   leading to the fallacy of overgeneralization, and misleading public opinion to believe that all Islamic charities support terrorism. Not all Islamic charities politicize aid in the same manner. The aim of this study is to problematize the alleged relationship between Islamic charities and terrorism

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[1] According to both Comras and Looney, Even if Islamic NGOs do not directly finance terrorism, the very activities of conversion in which they are engaged is supportive to al-Qaeda. Comrad says "Many experts have drawn a link between this conversion effort and the rise in appeal of al Qaeda throughout the Muslim world. The line from Wahhabism to Jihadism is a very thin one, and easily crossed religiously and intellectually" (Comras 2004).

In academia, advocates of this view are careful to not overgeneralize, and caveat their assessment by "the mainstream Islamic Charities", still indicating that Islamic charities' support of terrorism is the rule rather than the exception.

The literature on Humanitarianism focuses on whether Humanitarianism is political or ought to be political. At the one extreme, the World crescent neutrality and apolitical is considered as a quasi-complicity with the aggressor that contributed to the genocide in Rwanda. Whereas since the 9/11, Islamic humanitarian Organizations became the other extreme case of overtly politicized humanitarianism where aid is used to fuel terrorism. Islamic Humanitarian organization have come to symbolize the danger of over-politicization of Islamic hum

Theoretical framework of understanding the politicization of Islamic humanitarian aid

The politicization of Islamic Humanitarianism is a topic situated at the confluence of two sets of literature: that on political humanitarianism in general, and the literature on political Islam. In this section, I will discuss how the politicization of Islamic humanitarianism relates to these sets of literatures. I will eventually show the insufficiency of these literatures to provide an answer to the central question of this paper and how I intend to fill this gap.

The politicization of humanitarian aid is a well-documented topic. Most of the literature concentrates on the debate that opposes the advocates of an ethical, principled and apolitical humanitarianism on the one hand, and the advocates of a political humanitarianism on the other. The former considers poverty, conflicts, famines, refugee flows more as technical problems in need of technical rather than political solutions. They consider the humanitarian organization's involvement in politics as dangerous not only to their foundational principles of neutrality, impartiality and independence but also to their access to victims of suffering (Slim 2001, Duffield, Rieff 2002; Anderson, 1996; De Waal 1997). The latter group of scholars, however, argue that the context of humanitarian action, particularly the way in which assistance is mobilized, the decisions surrounding who should benefit from the aid, as well as the substitution

of governments by NGOs in the provision of welfare services to the population, is necessarily a political context, and humanitarian action in such a context is also inescapably political (Benthall, 2003; Duffield, 2001: 87; Weisss 1999; Cutts 1998).

This debate of political versus apolitical humanitarianism is echoed in the literature regarding Islamic Humanitarian organizations as well. According to one view, Islamic NGOs are apolitical because they do not participate in formal political institutions or lobby state officials or engage in overt protests. They are devoted to development issues and cultural awareness (Wiktorowicz 2000). Moreover, the legal codes governing NGO work throughout the Middle East strictly prohibit transgressions into the political arena. As a result, Islamic NGO volunteers and activists claim that they do not have a political agenda, program, or purpose (Clark, 1995; Wiktorowicz, 2000, 2001; Sullivan, 1995). Instead, their activities are framed in terms of religious obligations of charity and *da'wa* - missionary work - (Ayubi, 1991; Sullivan, 1994). Alternatively, many scholars criticize this interpretation that limits the scope of "the political" to institutions, actors and behavior that are directly engaged in the state or public policy (Wiktorowicz 2000; Singerman 1995). These scholars argue that groups and organizations that are apolitical in their identity can engage in very politically charged activities such as mobilizing, encouraging political participation, distribution of goods and services, and advocacies (Bayat 1997a, 1997b; Singerman 1995; Scott, 1990: 183). Therefore, even though Islamic NGOs are not part of state institutions and do not participate in protests, the nature of their activities places them at the heart of politics.

Second, the analysis of Islamic NGOs' politicization of humanitarian aid goes in line with the debate regarding political Islam, specifically, the debate between essentialists and contingencists in Islamic political theories. On the one hand, scholars who build on essentialist theories such as the clash of civilizations or the *ummatic* transnationalism, approach Islamic

humanitarian organizations from a particularistic point of view. In contrast, those who build on contingencists' theories place Islamic NGOs in the broad context of humanitarian organization.

The essentialist-based analysts approach Islamic humanitarian organizations through the impact of the Islamist ideology over their humanitarian activism. Three major trends can be identified within this school. First, the relationship between terrorism and Islamic charities became a prominent topic especially after the events of 9/11 and following the reports of The National Commission on Terrorist Attack (Burr and Collins, 2006; Levitt 2006; Comras 2005; Ehrenfeld 2003; Looney 2006). In their widely discussed book, *Alms of Jihad,* Burr and Collin (2006) demonstrate that the most important Islamic charities were associated with terrorist activism and that "money from Islamic charities has funded conflicts across the world." Second, Islamic NGOs are considered to participate in the revival of the spirit of *umma* among the Muslim community worldwide using charity (Yaylaci 2007; Rana 2010; Shaw-Hamilton 2007; Kaag 2008; Petersen 2011). Rana (2010: 60) argues that "unlike ordinary forms of taxation or insurance, zakat is supposed to cement the sense of fellow feeling between Muslims and bind together the umma." Third, some scholars consider the development and expansion of Islamic humanitarianism as a conscious reaction of some Muslim elite to the Westernization of Muslim societies by secular and Christian humanitarian organizations (Bentall, 2003, El- Affendi 1990; Baitemann 1990, Bitter, 1994; Wiktorowicz 2000).

On the other side, contingencist scholars downplay the Islamist particularism of IHOs and prefer approaching them from the perspective of mainstream humanitarianism (Benthall and Bellion-Jourdan, 2003; Shaw-Hamilton, 2007; Smith and Filipiak, 2007; Malka 2007). Benthall and Bellion-Jourdan (2003) consider Islamic humanitarian organizations to be similar to Christian and secular organizations. They argue that the political and military use of aid is not a monopoly of Islamic Charities. Christian charities have used humanitarian channels to convey

military supports to the Irish Free State in 1921 as well as to Biafran rebels in Nigeria (Benthall and Bellion-Jourdan 2003: 155). Secular NGOs have also supported the Afghan Mujahedeen during the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. Islamic humanitarian organizations are rather similar to all kinds of humanitarian organizations. Extremist Zionists and Hindus have also been raising funds for inappropriate political ends. They conclude that aid "[has] never existed in a political vacuum (Benthall and Bellion-Jourdan 2003: 154). Shaw-Hamilton suggests that it is wrong to suggest that all Islamic charities are good or effective, just as it would be wrong to suggest that of all secular and Christian charities" (Shaw-Hamilton, 2007: 18).

I argue that none of these approaches is entirely false, yet, neither are they entirely true. They both suffer from the same problem of generalization. While it may be true that some Islamic NGOs politicize aid in a way that supports Islamist military groups, it is also true that many Islamic NGOs operate in the same way as their Christian or even secular counterparts. The seeming contradiction between the two approaches is just the effect of their generalization of Islamic humanitarian organizations. In fact, the approaches describe different types of Islamic Humanitarian organizations. Although they acknowledge the diversity of these organizations, they fail to demonstrate the characteristics of this diversity and how it impacts the politicization of relief assistance. Overall, I argue that the analysis of the politicization of Islamic humanitarian aid suffers from the lack of a global theoretical framework that encapsulates the Islamic charities in all their diversity and complexity. Instead, as the studies displayed above demonstrate, scholars prefer to identify some particular patterns in some Islamic charities that they examine through well-selected case studies. This approach does not allow for generalization and consequently does not give a global and thorough understanding of the matter. In this paper, I unpack the notion of Islamic humanitarian organizations by classifying them into four categories

– based on their religious pervasiveness and scale of intervention – and then examining how these categories politicize humanitarian aid.

Typologies of Islamic Humanitarian Organizations

Intro

<u>Scale of Intervention and Religious Pervasiveness: a two by two table</u>

Islamic Humanitarian Organizations are considered to be "religious NGOs". I define them, paraphrasing the definition of 'religious NGOs" provided by Martens (2002) as *formal organizations whose identity and mission are self-consciously derived from the teachings of Islam and which operate on a nonprofit, independent, voluntary basis to promote and realize collectively articulated ideas about the public good at the national or international level.*

Thus, "Islamic humanitarian organization" is a generic term that encompasses an array of organizations that share some commonalities in terms of the voluntary nature of their activity, the belief in the core values of Islam, the reliance on the same major sources of funds (zakat, waqf and sadaqa)[2], while at the same time, they vary on several other issues such as their scale of intervention, religiosity, sectarian and geographical characteristics, etc.

Many typologies of IHOs can be created using different variables; however, in order to understand the politicization of humanitarian aid, two variables appear particularly determinant: the scale of intervention (whether the organization is National or transnational) and the religious pervasiveness (whether the organization follows a fundamentalist or moderate Islamic ideology).

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[2] Waqf: according to Merriam Webster dictionary, "waqf" is an Islamic endowment of property to be held in trust and used for a charitable or religious purpose. http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/waqf last visit 7/20/13

Sadaqa: Sadaqa comes from the word : sadaqa : to be truthful. The noun is Sidq; Sadaqa is derived from Sidq meaning that the person is giving charity to help the poor and needy confirming his true devotion and service to Allah. http://www.icgc.info/Lectures/SADAQA1.htm

Zakat: the term zakat means that which purifies", or alms-giving. Zakat is the third of the five pillars of Islam. It is an obligatory payment imposed annually upon Muslim who accumulated a certain level of wealth and used to ease economic hardship for others and eliminate inequality (See Ridgeon, 2003: 258).

In fact, despite their self-identification as religious organizations, IHOs are not at the same level of religiosity. Some organizations follow strict religious doctrine, their mission statement contains a powerful ideological message and they engage in activities that have clear religious objectives; whereas some others are only Islamic in name as they do not pursue any Islamic doctrinal objectives.

Also, whereas some IHOs intervene only at the national level, others have a global or transnational reach. National organizations pursue objectives at national level and their activities are circumscribed within the nation-state boundaries, while transnational organizations follow interest at the global level and their activities cross the borders of the nation-states. My argument is that these differences in terms of religious pervasiveness and scale of intervention results in a diversity of objectives and activities which determine the way aid is politicized.

I use these two variables to create a typology of two pairs of Islamic humanitarian organizations that help to explain the politicization of relief assistance. These two types are, on the one hand, transnational-fundamentalist IHOs and transnational-moderate IHOs, and on the other hand, National-fundamentalist IHOs and national-moderate IHOs. I assume that each of these types of organizations differs from the other in terms of mission discourse and objective, each engage in different kinds of activities that tend toward the achievement of these objectives and, therefore, each politicize aid differently.

Table 1: Typology of International Humanitarian Organizations

		Religious Pervasiveness	
		Fundamentalist	Moderates
Scale of Intervention	Transnational	Transnational-Fundamentalist	Transnational-Moderate
	National	National Fundamentalist	National-Moderate

Summarily, Islamic Humanitarian organizations politicize aid as follow:

(1) Transnational-fundamentalist IHO: the transnational scope of these organizations makes the scope of their objective and activities transnational and their religious fundamentalism also makes their objective and activities religiously-oriented. Therefore, Transnational – fundamentalist Islamic humanitarian organizations will more likely use aid as an instrument to achieve Islamic political goals at the transnational level.

(2) Transnational-moderate IHO: the humanitarian action of this type of organization is not motivated by Islamic politics or religion, despite their self-identification as Islamic organizations. Their politicization may be understood in terms of their struggle to concretize the idea of Islamic universalism that may spur from their intervention, improving the image of Islam, transmitting the message of peace, etc.

(3) National-fundamentalist IHO: these are humanitarian organizations that pursue objectives at the national level with high Islamic political content. They are more likely to use humanitarian aid as an instrument of politics, populism and political campaign. Their humanitarianism aims at displaying an alternative form of political, economic and social governance.

(4) National-moderate IHO: the nationally limited scope of these organizations bounds their objective within state boundaries, and the non-religious commitment makes them neutral and professional. Yet their humanitarian action may inadvertently have a political function in term of dissemination of Islamic values, participating in national civil society activities as the representative of Islamic groups.

This categorization of IHO is far from obvious. Organizations do not label themselves in these terms, neither the categorization creates a real and rigid boundary between these types. Indeed, owing to the fact that the religious pervasiveness is not a clear-cut concept, this distinction between IHO is better understood as of a continuum, rather than a discrete categorization. Moreover, NGOs themselves encounter difficulties in defining their position

regarding religion (Berger 2003: 20–22). In sum, the creation of these types stems from a theoretical need to grasp a specific reality concerning these organizations. The method of ideal type appeared particularly useful in constructing the categories.

<u>Defining the variables</u>

The variable that are of interest here are *religious pervasiveness* and *scale of intervention*. In what follows I define these variables and provide indicators that will help measure them.

Religious pervasiveness

The variable "religious pervasiveness" is intended to capture the degree of religiosity of an organization from "fundamentalism"[3] understood here as distinction between a strict adherence to theological doctrine to the detriment of western values versus moderate, meaning less emphasis on religion in favor of western values. How does one measure the religiosity of an organization? What criteria define an organization as fundamentalist or moderate?

In order to measure the religious pervasiveness of IHO, I employ McCleary's five criteria (2009):

(1) The presence of a religious person or clergy member in a leadership role of the organization, such as president or executive director, or on the board of directors (captures decision-making processes);

(2) The quote of religious text displayed prominently on the organization's website, annual report, or as part of the mission and values (material resources);

(3) The support of projects with a faith component, including Quran distribution, Quran classes, mosques planting, religious education, and *da'aw* (missionary actions);

(4) The use of religious terms, names, or a "Statement of Faith" on the organization's website, annual report, or as part of the mission and values (self-identity);

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[3] The term "fundamentalism" has usually a pejorative connotation, but here I use it value-free.

(5) The use of religious criteria in employment and/or volunteering, including the requirement of a statement of faith, description of religious beliefs, or a reference from a religious leader (participants).

Organizations that meet these criteria are likely to have a strong religious commitment and their discourse is likely to hold a doctrinal content that emphasizes the religious nature of their objectives. They may try to achieve this through activities that have a religious content as well. Such organizations can be considered *fundamentalists*. The humanitarian actions of such organizations are likely to be a subterfuge for achieving religious goals. In contrast, organizations that do not consider these criteria as critical for their work may be called *moderate*. Because of their Islamic identity, they may have the presence of a religious clergy in their administrative structure or may quote religious text in their website or their report, but they do not do that prominently enough to emphasize religion as the primary goal for their humanitarian action. Their discourse is clearly directed toward the primacy of humanitarian objectives, the necessity of alleviating suffering and fostering economic development.

Scale of intervention:

The variable "scale of intervention" captures the scope of the organization in terms of whether it intervenes at the global and transnational level or whether it is limited to the local and national level. Borrowing from Huntington (1973), I define the main characteristics of transnational as opposed to national organizations as follow:

(1) Transnational organizations are organizations that "transcend" the idea of a nation-state. An organization is "transnational" rather than "national" if it carries on significant centrally-directed operations in the territory of two or more nation-states.

(2) A transnational organization has its own interests which inhere in its organization and functions, those interests may or may not be closely related to the interests of its constituent national groups;

(3) Transnational organizations focus on the heightened interconnectivity between people all around the world and the loosening of boundaries between countries. Transnationalism has social, political and economic impacts that affect people all around the globe.

(4) The restraints on a transnational organization are largely external, stemming from its need to gain operating authority in different sovereign states.

Islamic humanitarian organizations that operate in more than one nation, trying to convey their message at the global level, and pursue the goal of establishing interconnectivity between people all around the world beyond the limitation of nation-states' territorial boundaries, are called *transnational organizations*. On the contrary, Islamic Humanitarian organizations that are confined within the nation-state's institutional and territorial control, involved in action for the social and economic advancement of their countries may be considered *national organizations*.

Ideal Types

Table 2 summarizes the ideal types of the categories using the two variables – religious pervasiveness and scale of intervention – as defined above.

Table 2: Ideal types of Islamic Humanitarian Organizations

		Religious pervasiveness	
		Fundamentalist	Moderate
		1-They operate as member of global civil society providing all kind of humanitarian service ranged from development projects to relief assistance in more than one country. Their humanitarian aid is prominently directed toward Muslim communities; 2-They are different from International organization in the sense that they are not created by an agreement between states but rather could possibly be created and controlled by national government or group of individuals;	1-They operate as members of the Global civil society providing humanitarian service in term of development projects or relief assistance without distinction between recipients; 2-They are different from International organizations in the sense that they are not created by an agreement between states but rather could possibly be

Scope of Intervention				
	Transnational	3-They are characterized by a strong religious commitment in their administrative structure, they have strong presence of religious figures; they use religious quote in their discourse and activities and reports; 4-They pursue a global objective of reinforcing the interconnectivity between Muslim community all over the world in the perspective of establishing a transnational social or even political governance of Islamic Communities worldwide; 5-In their activities they promote projects with high Islamic components such as distributing Quran, sponsoring proselytizing, the constructing mosques… aiming to Islamize the non-Muslim or to "recycle" the faith of Muslims;	created and controlled by national government or group of individuals; 3-They are abided by the principles and code of conduct of humanitarian action and they are not motivate by a religious commitment and do less - or not all - reference to religion in their discourse; 4-They pursue the objective of alleviating suffering, bridging people across the globe and fostering understanding between Muslims and non-Muslims 5-They sponsor activities of development and relief without engaging in proselytizing	
	National	1-Operate as member of local civil society representing the political trend of Islam. 2-As such they are engaged in providing social welfare services to poor such as Education (both religious and secular), health care service, relief assistance 3-They have a strong religious commitment: in their administrative structure the presence of religious figures accounts for a lot; they use religious quote in their discourse and activities and reports. 4-Their objective is to transform Islamic societies toward the adoption of the Islamic way of life. They present their social welfare service as an alternative approach to development and governance. 5-They engage in projects that have a high religious component such us sponsoring da'awa, distributing Koran, and creating Quranic schools.	1-Operate as member of local civil society providing humanitarian aid to without distinction between recipients 2-They are abided by the principles and code of conduct of humanitarian action and they are not motivate by a religious commitment and do less or not refer to religion in their discourse 3-They pursue the objective of alleviating suffering without political engagement. 4-They sponsor activities of development and relief without engaging in proselytizing	

Islamic Humanitarian Organizations in Practice: Case Studies

In this section, I apply a case study to each of the categories defined above. The case studies are,

respectively, the Saudi IIRO, the British IRWW, the charitable branch of the Egyptian Muslim

Brotherhood and the Ghanaian ICODEHS.

Transnational-Fundamentalist IHO: Case of International Islamic Relief Organization (IIRO)

The International Islamic Relief Organization, Saudi Arabia (IIROSA) is a charity

organization established by the Muslim World League (MWL) in 1979. It is a transnational

organization that intervenes permanently in more than 30 countries; but it has also become

reputed for its presence in the field of the major humanitarian emergencies worldwide. Recently,

its presence has been noticed in relief operations in Niger, Libya, Haiti, and Syria through the

provision of tents clothes, food items and other relief items to the victims.[4] Religion is a

fundamental aspect of the intervention of IIRO. The board of trustees and general assembly of

the organization consists of Muslim dignitaries such the Secretary General of the Muslim World

League who hold the position of chairman. Both the former and current Director General,

respectively, Farid Al-Qurashi and Adnan Khalil Basha, are prominent Muslim scholars with

strong relationship with ruling families and the religious authorities in Saudi Arabia and in the

Gulf region in general. The regular staff of IIRO are all practicing Muslims. According to

Petersen (2011: 121), in IIRO's office "people pray together, dress according to religious

precepts, and the language used among staff is full of Muslim terms and phrases."

Although the organization is officially non-discriminatory in its provision of aid, it has

been accused of prioritizing Muslims as primary beneficiaries of its services. In its own

statement of objectives, IIRO mentions that the organization "pursues its goals and carries out its

functions in accordance with … [a] moderate and responsible Islam Sunni."[5] Furthermore, the

use of Islamic quotes in the organization's web site as well as in its official reports is

overwhelming. For example, most of their reports start with this quote from the Quran: "Praise

be to God, The Cherisher and Sustainer of the Worlds".[6] (Quran, Surate 2). Finally, IIRO

sponsors many projects that have clear religious objectives including the Holy Quran and Da'wa

program. Tellingly, the organization was accused by the American government of supporting Al

Qaeda, though the evidences provided have never been enough for conviction in court (Petersen,

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[4]IIROSA's Official website:
http://www.egatha.org/portal/index.php?option=com_content&view=frontpage&Itemid=21, Last visit on 7/18/13
[5]

[6] http://www.egatha.org/pdf/annualreport/iirosa_annualreport_2829_ar.pdf

2011: 103; Benthall, 2007: 6).[7] In light of the typology defined in the methodological part of this paper, IIRO can be considered a clear prototype of transnational - fundamentalist organizations.

Umma-centric Politicization of Humanitarian Aid

"Today we come face to face with perhaps the greatest evil that stalks the modern world – that of nationalism… The path of the Ummah and that of the Islamic movement is blocked by nation-states. These nation-states are like huge boulders blown across our path by the ill-wind of recent history. All nation-states that today occupy, enslave and exploit the lands peoples and resources of the ummah must of necessity be dismantled… It is quite clear that one ummah must mean one Islamic movement, leading to one global Islamic state under one Imam/Khalifa."
(Kalim Siddiqui in Ghayasuddin 1986: 1, quoted by Hunwick[8] 1997: 28)

One way to analyze the overall humanitarian aid provided by IIRO is to approach it through the *ummatic* conceptualization of the Muslim community worldwide. The umma is an ideological belief that refers to an "identity politics or a politics of communitarianism" (Yaylaci 2007). It is a concept that aims at bringing the Muslim community together in a unified political entity. Contrary to the mainstream transnationalism that is based on an economic and political argument, the *ummatic* transnationalism is based on a religious rationale. It builds on the Islamic conception that all the people who believe in the Islamic faith belong to the same community, referred in the Quran as "*ummatan waahida*" (one unique community). As such, the Islamic community worldwide is supposed to be unified and behave as one body, which "when a part is unwell, it is the whole body that suffers" (Yaylaci 2007). Yet, since a few years after the death of the prophet Mohamed, the existence of the umma as a unified political entity has remained more of a politico-religious vow than a tangible reality. Historically, there exists no concrete example

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[8] Hunwick, 1997, *African Islam and Islam in Africa: Encounter between Sufis and Islamists*.

of such a political unity of Muslim societies worldwide (Hashmi 1993; Qutb, 2002). The contemporary resurgence of the concept of Islamic umma started during the 19th century with the intellectual activist Jamal Al-Dine Al-Afghani (1838-1897) who called for the unification of Muslims under one banner to combat colonialism and restore the system of the Caliphate (Hashmi 1993). Though his call was not operationally successful at that time, the idea of the restoration of the Caliphate to rule over the umma was favorably welcomed by many Islamic scholars and activists among whom are 1) Abou Al ala Maududi (1903-1979) who, in favor of Islamic umma, rejected the idea of "the Islamic Nationalism and Secular Nationalism and any notion of an ethnic or racial based nation" (Hashmi 1993; Dajani 2011); 2) Osama Ben Laden (1957-2011), whose Islamist activism is claimed to be on behalf of the Islamic umma; and 3) less bellicose organizations such as the ICO, The Islamic World League… This is not to say that the contemporary *ummatic* transnationalism is an extremist or even anti-nation-state militancy. Al Qaeda is a radical but also marginal version of the mainstream ideological line. *Ummatic* transnationalism should rather be understood as a sociopolitical and religious movement comparable to Christian universalism.

Today's Islamic humanitarian approach has largely adopted the *ummatic* vision of the Muslim community by considering the suffering of the Muslims everywhere as the burden of the umma and that the umma has the duty and responsibility to address it. Yaylaci (2007) argues that many Islamic humanitarian organizations act as an "imagined state" on behalf of its "imagined community" – the *umma*. In the activity of IIRO, we can see many patterns of this ideology.

According to Petersen (2011: 139), the underlying motivation of the humanitarian engagement of IIRO can be understood as a response to the feeling that the *umma* is threatened from both outside and inside. The threats from inside include poverty and ignorance which fosters immorality and sometimes extremism. From outside, the *umma* is threatened on the one

hand by "an organized invasion" of Christian NGOs, trying to take Muslims away from their religion and on the other hand, by the allegations of terrorism launched by some Western media and governments against individual Muslims and organizations. IIRO's *ummatic* vision of humanitarianism brought its leaders to think that it is the responsibility of the organization to address these challenges of the Islamic community. They consequently, defined three ultimate objectives to pursue in order to overcome the threats: (1) the spiritual education or re-Islamization of the Muslims, (2) the promotion of the economic and social development of the *umma*, and (3) the protection of Muslims against evangelization.

- Curing the umma spiritually

From the Islamic perspective, all the failures and challenges of Muslim societies have one general cause: the disconnection of Muslims from their religion. A project manager in IICO (International Islamic Charity Organization, the Kuwaiti equivalent of IIRO) says: "If the Islamic ideas were being inserted [in everyday practice of Muslims], then society would be more happy, secure, there would be an abundance of wealth – both psychologically and materially" (Peterson 147). There is an idea about the fact that prosperity in Muslim societies is conditioned by a belief in Islam and good practice of its rituals, which both are conditioned by a good knowledge of Islam. The rationale here comes from the belief that if Muslim can get to know their religion and hold on to its teaching and practice, then Allah will ensure prosperity for them here and in the Afterlife. The other part of the argument is related to linkages between ignorance and violence. As Petersen (2011) mentions, IIRO officials perceive Islam as a religion of peace, but ignorance or misunderstanding of Islamic scripts drives some Muslims to engage in violence. For these reasons, IIRO officials emphasize the recycling of Muslims' faith through religious education as part of a comprehensive strategy to combat ignorance, violence and poverty. Islamic education also aims at raising "the consciousness of people about the magnificence of the true Islam" with

the purpose to help them to "preserve their culture and identity" and "boost the[ir] morale spiritually," (Peterson: 153).

- Alleviating poverty

Addressing the spiritual shortcoming of the *umma* is reinforced by curing the symptoms of poverty through the creation of a network of solidarity among Muslims worldwide. The administration of IIRO mentioned in the organization's statement of establishment that it motivates its donors "to assist their needy and suffering brothers in the world in order to help maintain their faith in Islam and relieve them from the suffering". [9] This brotherhood explicitly reveals, beyond the simple act of giving and receiving, the vow of creating a bridge of solidarity between Muslims from different parts of the world. Solidarity is about mutual interdependence among people, stemming from what they have in common. Muslims should engage in the provision of aid to the poor, because they are part of the same religious community, the *umma*, and as such, they are obliged to help one another (Peterson 2011: 146). While, IIRO defines its objective in terms of "alleviating the suffering of distressed and needy people worldwide"[10], most of its activities are directed toward Muslims communities. This is so, because IIRO has discovered that more than 80% of the refugees and victims of wars and disasters are Muslims." (De Waal 2004: 169; Salih 2002)

- Protecting the umma from evangelization and Westernization

Among the reasons that motivated the creation of IIRO – as stated by one of the founders of the organization – was the discovery that "the only organizations helping the starving people were the Western ones. There were no Muslims" (Petersen 2011: 91). For that reason, some Muslim elites decided not only to start something similar from the Muslim side but to compete

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[9] Personal translation from Arabic website of IIRO.
http://www.egatha.org/portal/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1&Itemid=6 last visit 7/20/13
[10] Personal translation from Arabic website of IIRO.
http://www.egatha.org/portal/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1&Itemid=6 last visit 7/20/13

and defy the Western hegemony in the field (Bellion-Jourdan 2000:15; de Cordier 2009 :612). A former staff member in IIRO notes that the expansion of Christian organizations in Africa was what prompted IIRO to engage in aid provision (Petersen 2011: 92). IIRO accuses Western NGOs, especially the Christians NGOs, of taking advantage of the desperate situation of poor Muslim to convert them. Therefore, one of the motivations that lie beneath the Islamic relief organizations was to "refuse to leave the field of humanitarian action to agencies that are 'Western' or considered to be so specifically in situations where the victims are identified as Muslims" (Yaylaci 2007; Benthall 2001). Thus, another way of justifying *da'wa* as a legitimate aid strategy is to frame it in terms of a competition with Christian organizations. "If we build a mosque, suddenly there will be three or four churches surrounding it," says a top manager in IIRO's headquarters, implying that this religious invasion has to be countered in order to protect the identity of Muslims." (Peterson 2011:154). IIRO tackles the influence of Christian NGOs by heavily investing (40% of its budget) in orphanages which is a prominent and strategic field of Christian NGOs (Petersen, 2011).

By assisting individual Muslims, ensuring their right to Islamic education, International Islamic Relief Organization not only ensures the Muslim's self-reliance and a dignified life, but they also contribute to strengthening the Muslim *umma* (Kaag 2008:5).

Transnational moderate IHO: The case of Islamic Relief Worldwide (IRWW)

Islamic Relief Worldwide (IRWW) is a Muslim international relief and development organization founded in the UK in 1984 by Dr. Hani El. Banna, a young Egyptian who had migrated to the UK a few years earlier. Islamic Relief Worldwide aims to alleviate the suffering of the world's poorest people.[11] They are inspired by their Islamic values and envisage a world where communities are empowered, social obligations are fulfilled, and people respond as one to

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[11] Islamic Relief's website, Home page http://www.islamic-relief.com/ last visit 7/20/13

the suffering of others. The organization works in six major sectors: Sustainable Livelihoods, Education, Health and Nutrition, Orphans and Child, Welfare, Water and Sanitation, Emergency Relief & Disaster Preparedness.

IRWW is present in over 25 countries in the world and also intervenes in major humanitarian emergency crises worldwide. The more recent ones were in Haiti in 2010, where the organization provided 1,100 families with accommodation, water, food and medicine, and Japan in March 2011. [12] Islamic Relief provides humanitarian aid regardless of religion, ethnicity or gender. The recruitment of personnel is not conditioned on adherence to Islam but is rather determined by "aptitude and ability," hence the organization employs several non-Muslim staff members (Peterson: 187-188). Its orphan sponsorship program includes Christian children and donors, several recipients of microfinance loans are Hindus, and even Ramadan food packages are distributed to non-Muslims (Peterson 2011: 198). Islamic Relief has never been subject to allegations of 'terrorist' connections. Though the organization is self-identified as Islamic, neither their objective nor their activities display a strong commitment to Islamic religion. On the contrary, the organization defines its approach to humanitarian aid as secular and professional (See Peterson 2011: 167). Moreover, the organization promotes in its discourse and activities a conception of aid as secularized, creating a boundary between aid and Islam. For instance, Peterson (2011: 183) notices that "on its web site the organization calls itself an *International Relief and Development Charity*" trying to shade on its Islamic denomination. According to Smith and Sosin (2001:655), "Islamic Relief claims to be legitimate providers of aid because they are professional, not because they are religious. It is about the services it provides, not the values it possesses". Religion is accepted insofar as it remains personal and does not affect the

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[12] Islamic Relief's website, http://www.islamic-relief.com/Emergencies-And-Appeals/1-89-japan-tsunamiemergency-appeal.aspx, Last visit 7/20/13

goal and effectiveness of the intervention. Peterson (2011: 189) described well the role of religion in the humanitarian action of IRWW when she called it "secular religiosity," meaning a religion relegated to the spheres of personal motivation and underlying values. Religion is acceptable as the source of individual values, underlying principles and motivation, but not as public rituals and collective practices influencing the ways in which aid is provided. (Peterson, 2011: 189) Islam is considered just as an "ethical reference" (Benedetti 2006:855).

The Global Civil Society Approach of Islamic humanitarian aid

The late 20th century was marked by a massive wave of globalization that "expanded the scale and speed of worldwide flows of capital, goods, people, and ideas across national borders" (Pippa Norris, 1999). 'Globalization' is understood as "a process that erodes national boundaries, integrating national economies, cultures, technologies, and governance, producing complex relations of mutual interdependence" (Pippa Norris, 2000: 2). One of the results that came out of this change in the international landscape was the development of the notion of "global governance" which is defined as "the political interaction of transnational actors aimed at solving problems that affect more than one state or region when there is no power of enforcing compliance". The global civil society and the political role of the contemporary humanitarianism are associated with the global governance of societies (Duffield, 2001). Despite the fact that Islamic societies are often isolated from the mainstream trends of the world and labeled as dangerous or backward, they are not alien to this global trend. Through their participation in this contemporary humanitarianism, many transnational IHOs have molded this notion of global governance and re-appropriated it in a way that matches their ideological basis. This is the case of the IHOs that I called cosmopolitan-centric IHOs. Cosmopolitan is used here in a very narrow sense to point to those who identify with a broader identity – such as their continent or with the world as a whole – as opposed to those who identify with ethnic, religious, cultural… character.

While the *ummatic* approach sees the world in terms of two antagonist identities - Islamic versus Western Judeo-Christian identity - the cosmopolitan-centric approach broadens identities beyond national, religious and ideological boundaries to a "world community". It aims to homogenize identities, in contrast to the *ummatic* approach that is based on identity polarization.

Politicization of aid

The most important feature of the Islamic Relief humanitarian action is its focus on the professionalism of its intervention rather than its religious identity or political agenda. Islamic Relief follows the principles of independence, humanity and universality, and its humanitarian discourse is developmental-centric. IRWW actions are not driven by the interest of any specific state and, according to the organization's officials, aid is given to all disadvantaged people across the globe, irrespective of their faith, race, gender or any affiliation. Globally, the humanitarian action of IRWW is similar to the mainstream secular humanitarianism portrayed by such organization as *Medecin Sans Frontiere* (MSF), Care International, and Oxfam. Even more, while these secular organizations have salient political positions on issues related to human suffering, including open critiques of authoritarian government, IRWW does not so openly engage in politics. The organization seems not to link its humanitarian activities with any clear political agenda.

However, in a world dominated by a "single story" of Islam, portraying it as a religion of violence and Islamic NGOs as the non-sword arm of terrorism, the type of humanitarian aid carried out by IRWW exemplifies a modern, open and civilized model of Islamic organization that may serve politically in restoring the global image of Islam.

Furthermore, the adoption of the discourse about the Millennium Development Goals[13] as well as its participation in high level debates over humanitarianism may be seen as evidence of the existence but also the recognition of the "Islamic universalism." Peterson (2011: 202) says, "In Islamic Relief… secular notions of human rights and Millennium Development Goals are merged with Islamic values and principles in a rationale based on conceptions of universalism and cosmopolitanism. It is a rationale based on notions of *Islamic morality* and *rights* – acceptable to individual Muslim donors as well as to secular development aid agencies. Universal Islam can follow and brings some new approaches to problem of poverty, religion, cultures, and civilizations." Also, another value-added of Islamic religion in the work of IRWW is that Islamic humanitarianism is considered as an innovative approach to alleviate suffering. Hani Al Banna says "our presence at numerous international conferences during 2006 reflected the recognition of the added value that Islamic Relief can bring to discussions on humanitarian issues."[14]

National – fundamentalist IHO**:** the case of the charitable wing of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt (Islamic Call Society in Beni Suef: جمعية الدعوة الإسلامية ببني سويف)

The Muslim Brotherhood was formed in 1928 in Usmailiyya, Egypt by Hasan Al Banna (1906-1949). It was a movement that intended to resist the cultural and political domination of Egypt during the colonization. The movement was founded as an educational movement to reform the hearts and minds of Egyptians which had been corrupted and degraded due to "their subordination politically, economically and culturally to the dominant foreigners" (Zubeida 1987: 34). More than eighty years after the creation of the movement, Al-Banna's thinking largely continues to guide the actions of the Egyptian Brotherhood, its sympathizers, and much

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[13] Islamic Relief, Annual Report 2006b, p. 50.
[14] Islamic Relief, Annual Report 2006

of moderate Islamism today. The movement initially combined humanitarian action in terms of the provision of social welfare for the poor and political activism. After the first post-revolutionary elections, the Muslim brothers won both the majority in the parliament and the Presidency and Mohamed Morsi was invested President of Egypt on the 30 June 2012.

The Egyptian Muslim brotherhood is a national movement created and animated by Egyptians.[15] Its activism is limited to the national territory of Egypt. The ideology underlying the activism of the movement is that underdevelopment in Egypt has to do with the abandonment of religion in social life as well as in political governance. As a result, Egypt had fallen into religious, cultural, political, economic, social, legal, and moral decadence and impotence (Mitchell, 1993: 212). The movement claims that Egyptians had to go back to the true religion of Islam and away from the corrupt aspirations and conduct inspired by Western culture. The movement is directed and inspired by religious dignitaries. Though the ideological line of the Muslim Brotherhood is described as moderate (Clark 2004: 14), the Islamic content of their humanitarian action is no subject of doubt. The use of Islamic quotes from the Quran and hadith (tradition of Prophet) in their web site is overwhelming, not to mention their sponsorship to proselytizing activities.

Politicization of aid

Parallel to the *ummatic* vision of the Muslim world, another Islamist movement emerged in the 19th century adopting a theory of Islamic nationalism. This movement was established by the Indian scholar Sayyid Ahmad Khan (1817-1898) who opposed the Al-Afghani's pan-Islamism and denied the authority of the Caliphate over Indian Muslims. Sayyid Ahmad Khan inspired the Islamic nationalist thoughts that developed through the work and activism of such Islamic leaders as Mohamed Iqbal (1877-1938) in Pakistan and Hassan al Banna in Egypt. Islamic

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[15] It's noteworthy to mention that the Muslim Brother movement is plural. The same ideology expanded in many Arab countries. But the one that interest us is the Egyptian movement.

nationalism is a reformist theory that espouses the idea that, on the one hand, Muslim societies should be organized in a form of modern nation-states and, on the other hand, shari'a should be adapted to the modern context and be adopted as a constitution and a system of governance. However, after colonization, most Muslim states fell under the control of secularists who marginalized the Islamist movements and criticized Shari'a as being anachronistic to modern societies. The adepts of Islamic nationalism strive to demonstrate the practicality of shari'a by establishing humanitarian organizations that develop a social welfare system (schools, hospitals, poverty reduction projects…) at the grassroots level that provides better services than those of the state government. The success of these projects is credited to shari'a that is shown as the better alternative to the corrupted and unviable secular system. The quintessential example of these organizations is the Egyptian Muslim brotherhood.

Since its establishment, the movement of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt started with an overlapping discourse of humanitarianism and political Islamism. The constitution of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood has stated its purpose as achieving social justice, providing social security to every citizen, contributing to popular service, resisting ignorance, disease, poverty, and vice and encouraging charity work (Auda: 1993:386). The Muslim Brotherhood started off as a religious social organization, preaching Islam, teaching the illiterate, and setting up hospitals. One Muslim Brotherhood hospital alone treated 51,300 patients in the year of 1947 (Mitchell 1993: 290). As it grew, the humanitarian activities of Muslim Brotherhood increased and diversified. The movement established numerous schools, medical services, and charity services which provided money, food, and clothes for the poor, aged, orphaned and homeless, to name just a few; it also established a bureau of charity and social services that was responsible for these initiatives. These socioeconomic programs were not ends in themselves. The movement emphasizes that a society based on Islamic precepts should "promote social security for citizens,

narrow the socioeconomic gap between classes, undertake welfare spending to assist those in need, encourage economic solidarity among citizens, respect private property, and enforce the requisite that each able-bodied person must be economically productive" (Abed-Kotob, 1995 326-327).

The humanitarian action of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt is purported to demonstrate to people an alternative form of governance better than the actual corrupted secular system of governance. Ideally, through its humanitarian activism, the movement shows a harmonious Islamic society without exploitation or oppression. (Lesch 1992: 183) It then uses it as a quintessential example of what a society should be when it is ruled according to the Islamic law. Humanitarianism is therefore an instrument of political campaigning to gain power. Furthermore, the policy behind the humanitarian action of the Muslim Brotherhood is not only to show an alternative to state institutions but to "represent the foundations of an alternative society" (Clark 2004:16). They stand in direct contrast to secular states that appear to have lost their concern for the poor. By offering successful social welfare services in the name of Islam to their fellow citizens, they represent an ideological and concrete or practical alternative to the present system. They display here the "Islamist vision of a new society and Islamist Identity" (Clark 2004:16).

National – Moderate: Islamic Council for Development and Humanitarian Services (ICODEHS)

The Islamic Council for Development and Humanitarian Services, popularly known as ICODEHS, was founded in Accra in 1991 by Sheikh Mustapha Ibrahim. This Organization has branches all over the country and is a Non−Governmental, development-oriented organization with bias towards human and rural development. The organization defines its objectives in five points: create awareness for the needs and aspirations of the people, generate action towards social change, help organize people to develop programs and projects for the grassroots, help

effect social change through education, facilitate and support the self-help initiatives of rural and local communities by assisting them in resource development. The ICODEHS is a Ghanaian Islamic humanitarian organization created and run by Ghanaians.

Almost all Islamic humanitarian organizations such as ICODEHS have some activities related to Islam such as the construction of mosques and orphanages. However, from their statement of objectives, it is clear that the main goal of the organization is to ensure the development of society. ICODEHS is non-discriminatory in its provision of aid. As one of its major activities, ICODEHS is noted for providing donations in cash and in kind towards the welfare of Muslims and non-Muslims in the country (Samwini, 2003: 142). In a message posted on the website of the organization, the founder and general administration of the organization says, "We would also like to re-emphasize our position on terrorism. African Muslims and their counterparts worldwide ought to bear in mind that irresponsible act of violence that often claim the lives of innocent non-Muslims and even sometimes Muslims alike, is senseless and crazy and only seeks to soil the good image of Islam."[16]

Politicization of aid

Despite some emphasis of some religious activities such as the construction of mosques, the general humanitarian activism of ICODEHS is development-oriented. This aspect appears clear in the message of the Chairman of the organization. As an example, he emphasizes the importance of agriculture and women labor in these terms: "We would also like to add our voice to the current spate of the influx of Arab Gulf investors to Africa's agricultural industry. Indeed, agriculture is not only Africa's competitive edge, but also the backbone of the economies of most countries across the continent. It contributes a greater chunk of their GDPs and employs a greater proportion of their total labor force. We wish to crave the indulgence of our donors to consider

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[16] ICODEHS official web site, http://icodehs.org/

adopting a paradigm shift in giving out charity to Africa in the spirit of teaching Africans how to fish rather than giving them fish all the time." He adds, "The vital role of African women in the production, processing and marketing of agricultural produce on the continent cannot be over emphasized and as such, some micro finance facilities to support them could be a lot more useful for poverty alleviation."[17]

Sheikh Mustapha said the decision to put up the teacher training college, the nursing school and a university was to promote education in the country, especially among the poor and vulnerable in society. Education is crucial to the development of human resources and, by extension, the development of the country. Sheikh Mustapha said the university will be open to the public, irrespective of applicants' religion, gender or tribe.[18] In all of its humanitarian action, ICODEHS does not display any political agenda that the organization pursues behind its provision of aid. Yet, its intervention may have an inadvertent political function. In fact, among all the local Islamic humanitarian organizations in Ghana, ICODEHS is the only one which is a member of the Civil Society Coordinating Council (CivisoC) of SAPRIN-Ghana. [19] Thus, it can be inferred that it represents, in this movement, the voice of the Ghanaian Muslims who represent 20% of the overall population and as such, its participation in the political advocacies engaged by this movement constitute a form of political engagement. Second, the humanitarian activism of ICDOHES exhibits a positive view of Islam. A Senior Ghanaian Minister visiting the Headquarters of the ICODEHS appreciated the "efforts [of the organization] at helping to bring progress to the society and to portray a positive image of Islam.[20]

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[17] ICODEHS official web site, http://icodehs.org/
[18] Daily Graphic - Wed, 09 Apr 2008Daily Graphic Islamic Council to establish university
http://www.modernghana.com/news/162209/1/islamic-council-to-establish-university.html
19 Holger Weiss 19 juin 2008The Expansion of Muslim NGOs CETRI http://www.cetri.be/spip.php?article702
[20] Ghanaweb 5 October 2005 Senior Minister praises Islamic NGO for development activities,
http://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/NewsArchive/artikel.php?ID=91541

Conclusion

Since the publication of the *Monograph on Terrorist Financing* by the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States, Islamic humanitarian organizations have come to symbolize the money funnels of terrorist financing in the world. Allegations in the media, intelligence reports, and even scholarly studies, have continuously linked the spread of Islamic insurgencies in Iraq, Somalia, Yemen, and recently in Mali, and Syria, to the proliferation of Islamic humanitarian organizations, and that despite the shortage of evidences that prove this relationship. Although the accusation are often caveated to index only the "mainstream Islamic charities", or some specific charitable organizations, the risk of falling into the fallacy of overgeneralization is high, given the absence of any comprehensive framework of analysis that determines which organization does or does not serve as venue to financing terrorism. This study has tried to problematize the widely taken-for-granted linkage between Islamic humanitarian organizations and terrorist financing. It challenges the monolithic view of Islamic Humanitarian organization, emphasizing the diversity that characterizes them. It suggest a framework of understanding this diversity and the way it impact the politicization of aid. The typology that I suggest breakdowns the Islamic humanitarian organizations in four categories according to their scale of intervention and religious pervasiveness. The categories that result from this classification include transnational-fundamentalist, transnational-moderate, national-fundamentalist, and national-moderate. Each of these types of Islamic humanitarian organizations has different objectives and therefore politicizes aid in a different manner. Whereas transnational fundamentalist IHOs follow an *umma-centric* politics, transnational-moderate IHOs lean more toward a global civil-society approach. And while national-fundamentalist IHOs uses humanitarian aid as a means of campaigning for the adoption of an Islamic way of life, national-moderate IHOs follow a development-centric approach. The paper elaborates ideal types for each of the four categories and applies them to case studies the Saudi

IIRO, the British IRWW, the charitable branch of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood and the Ghanaian ICODEHS.

This is by no mean an exhaustive typology. Many cases of IHOs may not fit neatly in any of these types. But it is possible to use the same framework to conceptualize others typologies based on different variables such as the geographic distribution of the organizations or their financial and operational capabilities. The argument suffers, also, of other shortcomings: it is for example based on the implicit assumption that Islamic Humanitarian organizations are static, failing to capture the changes that happen to organizations across history. There is, for example, a strong tendency among IHOs to adopt a more moderate stance, particularly after the 9/11, which is not taking into account in this paper. The argument does not, also, take into account the influence of the local environment in which the organizations intervene, downplaying the variations that may exist between organizations that belong to the same category or variations between the national branches of one transnational organization.

The study of Islamic Humanitarian organizations is still at its preliminary stage. In-depth studies of the categories taken individually in the sense of addressing the transformations of these organizations across time, the internal variations and the relationship within and outside these categories will be helpful in advancing our understanding of Islamic humanitarian organizations.

anitarian represent the evil in humanitarianism…. This paper has tried to …

There is a clear sense in the paper that you are responding to American government claims about IHOs as funnels for terrorist dollars. Yet it's not clear by the end of the paper that the initial framing in that fashion actually matters, as you instead have case studies of four IHOs to support your 2x2 grid typology. So it seems that the paper is really about typologies of IHOs. Perhaps the typology can speak to the American government accusations, though that would seem to be better placed in the conclusion of the paper, and not up front. Indeed, the paper ends abruptly with the fourth and final case study, leaving the reader wondering exactly what the aim/scope/thesis was meant to show.

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