For humanity or for the umma?

Ideologies of aid in four transnational Muslim NGOs

Marie Juul Petersen · University of Copenhagen · 2011

To staff in Islamic Relief, Muslim Aid, International Islamic Relief Organisation and International Islamic Charitable Organisation

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLES

PREFACE

Jonathan Benthall, a pioneer in the study of Muslim aid and a source of great inspiration, once said that studying Islam can sometimes feel like Jerusalem of the intellect. Post 9.11., researchers studying Islam tread a loaded terrain; they are often positioned (or position themselves) as political actors and their research is presented as ideological statements by people from all sides. Reflecting this, I have often been met with one of two reactions when presenting my study: Some people have warned me not to end up as a mouth-piece for extremist Islamists, others have praised me for cleansing the name of Muslim NGOs, cautioning me not to write anything that may damage these organisations politically.

However, while I am of course aware that there exists no neutral position from where to study such politicised subjects as transnational Muslim NGOs, I wish to emphasise that the aim of this thesis has not been to condone or condemn transnational Muslim NGOs but, more modestly, to contribute to nuancing the commonly drawn picture of these organisations. With the present thesis, I hope to have contributed to challenging, or at least softening, some of the dichotomies and simplistic categorisations that often surround transnational Muslim NGOs, showing that these organisations – as any other NGO, for that matter – are not inherently 'good' or 'evil', but complex ideological actors, struggling to provide aid in the ways they judge to be most appropriate, and in so doing, being shaped by and in turn shaping the contexts out of which they have grown.

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INTRODUCTION

In January 2010, the UK-based NGO Islamic Relief set up three camps for victims of the earthquake in Haiti, providing 1,100 families with accommodation, water, food and medicine. And later that year, the Saudi-based NGO International Islamic Relief Organisation offered meals to more than 25,000 poor families in African countries, celebrating the month of Ramadan. These two examples illustrate the fact that transnational Muslim NGOs have become increasingly visible in the field of aid provision. Compared to secular and Christian NGOs, their numbers may still be low: according the Union of International Associations database, there are approx. 16,700 transnational NGOs, and of these, around 400, or 2.4 per cent, are Muslim.[1] Likewise, of the approx. 3,000 NGOs with consultative status at the United Nations, approx. 50, or less than two percent, are Muslim, while more than 180 are Christian. However, numbers are increasing, and every year sees the establishment of new transnational Muslim NGOs. The majority of these NGOs are established in Europe and North America, in particular USA and Great Britain. The Gulf countries have also fostered a large number of organisations, just like recent years have seen the emergence of several Turkish NGOs. Transnational Muslim NGOs work all over the world, many in Asia and the Middle East but also – and increasingly so – in Africa and even Latin America. They get their funding primarily from individuals, but also from governmental aid agencies, intergovernmental organisations, Islamic banks, and businesses.

While recent years have witnessed an increasing academic interest in public expressions of religion, there is still very little research on Muslim NGOs, in particular the transnational ones. Especially since 9.11., much of the existing literature, often stemming from political science and terrorism studies, focuses on transnational Muslim NGOs as political actors, whether analysing them as front organisations for global militant networks such as Al-Qaeda or as supporters of national political parties and resistance groups in Palestine, Sudan, Afghanistan and elsewhere (Yaylaci 2008:2). Another strand of literature emerges from development studies and 'practitioner literature' (such as evaluations, policy papers, and reports) as part of a general interest in so-called faith-based organisations, and focuses on the role of transnational Muslim NGOs in the implementation of development programmes, discussing organisational strengths and weaknesses in relation to different development objectives (Juul Petersen 2011).

[1] Numbers have been drawn from the Union of International Associations database (www.uia.be, last accessed 10. October 2009) and include all transnational NGOs, as it is not technically possible to draw out numbers on NGOs involved only in aid provision. The number of Muslim NGOs is based on a search for NGOs with the words 'Muslim' or 'Islamic' in their name. This means that there are probably NGOs that are not included insofar as their names refer to Islam in other ways or do not refer to Islam at all.

Each in their way, these strands of literature contribute valuably to bringing to the fore a group of organisations which has for long been neglected in literature on NGOs. That said, both approaches do present a range of biases and blind spots, leading to a somewhat simplified understanding of transnational Muslim NGOs and their role in the contemporary aid field. First, the tendency to view Muslim NGOs as either faith-based organisations and as such part of the largely Western 'development system,' or as political actors, part of an 'Islamic resurgence,' fails to grasp the double identity of transnational Muslim NGOs as organisations which are historically rooted in and constantly move in-between the development system and the Islamic resurgence. Secondly, albeit from different angles, both literatures emphasise an instrumentalist understanding of transnational Muslim NGOs, seeing them as tools, either in the effective implementation of development programmes or in certain Islamic groups' quest for political power. These perspectives invite a focus on activities, networks and broader processes of development and national politics, often analysed from a macro or meso level. As such, existing literature tends to overlook issues of organisational identity, rarely asking questions as to how these organisations present and understand themselves, their religion and the aid they provide. Such questions require qualitative, micro-sociological or ethnographic studies of individual Muslim NGOs, providing thick descriptions of the discourses and practices of these organisations.

Objectives

This thesis proposes a different approach to the study of transnational Muslim NGOs than those mentioned above, presenting the first comprehensive account of meaning systems in transnational Muslim NGOs, based on in-depth, empirical case studies of four NGOs. Directing attention towards processes and structures of meaning construction in transnational Muslim NGOs, the thesis explores the ways in which these organisations construct and conceptualise the nexus between Islam and aid, analysing their *ideologies of aid*. Paraphrasing D. Lewis et al. (2003:546), this is first and foremost an attempt to understand how meanings associated with 'aid' and 'Islam' are produced, expressed, contested and reworked by actors in these organisations, and thus to illuminate not only the multiple significances that these terms hold, but also the processes through which they gain significance and the consequences these processes of signification may have. As such, the thesis is highly explorative, aimed at contributing with new empirical knowledge to the study of transnational Muslim NGOs.

More specifically, the analysis turns on the following sets of questions:

- How do contemporary transnational Muslim NGOs present their ideas, work and identity – their ideologies of aid? In these ideologies, how do they understand 'aid' and 'Islam' and how do they express the nexus between the two?

- What are the factors and conditions that have shaped the different kinds of ideologies found among these NGOs?
- How do transnational Muslim NGOs manoeuvre in relation to the broader context of aid provision? Do they see themselves primarily as part of mainstream development traditions or in relation to a global Muslim umma? Or do they seek to navigate in between the two, merging, translating and contributing to the creation of entirely new cultures of aid provision?

The relationship between the organisations' ideologies and actions is not characterised by straight-forward causality; in fact, there is not necessarily any correspondence between the two. Ideologies are guidelines for what people should do, not what they actually do. As such, a focus on ideologies of aid in transnational Muslim NGOs cannot tell us anything about whether these NGOs are effective providers of development aid, or if they have connections to militant Islamic movements. But that does not mean that it is not important to consider ideological representations. The focus on ideologies of aid is important not so much because it says something about how organisations actually provide aid, but because it says something about how they *want to* provide aid or think that one *ought to* provide aid, and as such, it can tell us something about the perceptions, imaginations and interpretations of these organisations.[2] More broadly, a study of organisational ideologies of aid can illuminate aspects of the contemporary politics of aid, analysing struggles over the production of meaning (Benford and Snow 2000:613), and shedding light on issues of legitimacy, alliances and conflicts. Through their ideologies, actors involved in the politics of aid promote certain societal values, norms and principles and reject others, thus contributing to shaping important moral conceptions and categories, and signifying human lives and relations.

Arguments

In answering the research questions outlined above, the thesis presents several propositions and arguments. First, the thesis seeks to decenter Western, secular and Christian interpretations of aid provision (Bornstein and Redfield 2011) by directing attention to the existence of alternative ways of conceptualising aid, thriving at the periphery of or in parallel to the mainstream development system. I argue that the field of contemporary aid provision is best conceptualised in terms of different *cultures of aid*, each of them turning on particular sets of ideas, values, ideologies, and traditions, manifested in concrete actors, structures, practices and discourses, and growing out of particular histories.

[2] It is important to note that this thesis is not an attempt to reject or throw suspicion on the genuine desire that people have to help others. What concern me here are the ideologies that the organisations publicly display and promote; not the individual motivations people have for providing aid.

In the context of the present analysis, in particular two aid cultures merit attention; namely the, largely Western, culture of development aid and the, largely Middle Eastern, culture of Islamic aid, each promoting a different understanding of aid and the role of religion in this. Contrary to much existing literature, I propose that transnational Muslim NGOs should not be understood exclusively in the context of either Western development aid or Islamic aid. Instead, I conceptualise transnational Muslim NGOs as growing out of and (increasingly) shaped by both of these two cultures of aid provision, constructing their organisational identity and ideologies of aid in a dialectic move between the two (Yaylaci 2007).

In this perspective, the thesis argues that the attack on Washington and New York 11. September 2001 and the ensuing 'War on Terror'[3] present a particularly interesting window through which to study transnational Muslim NGOs. As is commonly known, 9.11. and the War on Terror had severe consequences for transnational Muslim NGOs in the form of control, sanctions and decrease in funding. These 'hard' measures to crack down on 'terrorist' NGOs have been coupled with 'softer' counter-terrorism approaches seeking to encourage cooperation with 'moderate' Muslim NGOs (Howell and Lind 2009:47), coinciding with a general interest in 'faith-based organisations' as the new panacea in development aid (Juul Petersen 2011). Thus, transnational Muslim NGOs are now navigating in an environment of increasing regulation and control, but with simultaneous openings for cooperation and funding. In this situation, some NGOs have been relegated to the periphery, characterised as 'fundamentalist' or 'traditional', while others have been hailed as 'moderate' faith-based organisations.

Focusing on the period after 9.11., the thesis explores the ways in which four concrete Muslim NGOs position *themselves* in the contemporary aid field, seeking to go beyond these simplistic categorisations of transnational Muslim NGOs. The thesis presents case studies of two UK-based and two Gulf-based NGOs, often positioned as respectively moderate and fundamentalist. The two Gulf-based organisations are the Saudi-based International Islamic Relief Organisation (in the following IIROSA) and the Kuwait-based International Islamic Charitable Organisation (in the following IICO). The two UK-based organisations are Islamic Relief and Muslim Aid.

I argue that these organisations are not merely carriers of existing cultures, but are made up of individual *actors* who actively interpret the cultures out of which they have grown. Through their ideologies, staff and trustees assign meaning to and interpret relevant ideas, events and conditions in ways that are intended to resonate with donors, partners and other stakeholders, thus garnering

[3] Echoing Howell and Lind (2009:2), I use quotation marks to stress my misgivings with respect to the War on Terror, as a discourse and as an assemblage of counter-terrorism structures introduced after 9.11., as well as to underline the deeply politicised nature of the phrase. To enhance readability, however, I will not use quotation marks from this point onwards.

support and creating organisational legitimacy. As such, *audiences* also play an important role in shaping ideologies, insofar as organisations seek to adapt their ideologies to the audiences they target in order to ensure resonance. Positioning organisations and audiences in relation to the two aid cultures, the thesis argues that the organisations relate to the two cultures in different ways. The two Gulf-based organisations and their audiences are firmly positioned in a Middle Eastern Islamic aid culture, but at the same time, they are beginning to reach out to audiences in the development culture. The two UK-based organisations, on the other hand, have become increasingly embedded in a Western development culture, but seek to maintain strong relations to the culture of Islamic aid.

Against this background, the thesis puts forth the argument that overall, the four organisations present two different kinds of ideologies, resting on different conceptions of aid and Islam, different interpretations of the cultures of Islamic aid and development: One is a *sacralised aid ideology* and the other a *secularised aid ideology*. The two Gulf-based NGOs present a sacralised form of aid, resting on a very visible, all-encompassing organisational religiosity that influences all aspects of aid provision, centering on notions of Islamic solidarity in the umma and echoing core elements in the Islamic aid culture. The two UK-based organisations, on the other hand, provide a largely secularised form of aid, turning on notions of a universalist humanity and based on an almost invisible, compartmentalised religiosity relegated to clearly defined spaces of seasonal activities and personal motivation and without significance for other organisational activities, thus resonating with values in the culture of development aid.

That said, the thesis argues that these processes of respectively sacralisation and secularisation of aid are not straight-forward or unambiguous, but constantly challenged and changing, testifying to the instability and incoherence of ideologies. For organisations such as the transnational Muslim NGOs that seek to attract culturally heterogeneous audiences, such relatively homogeneous ideologies as those outlined above carry with them inherent risks of alienating potential audiences. While the UK-based NGOs may satisfy demands of Western aid agencies by promoting a largely secularised aid ideology, they risk alienating certain individual Muslim donors (and trustees) who expect a more visible, ritualistic organisational religiosity. Likewise, the Gulf-based organisations may please individual Muslim donors in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait with their sacralised aid ideology, but they also risk marginalisation or even exclusion from the field of mainstream development. As such, the organisations have to constantly adjust their ideologies, seeking to bridge often widely differing demands and expectations from their audiences. The thesis argues that these attempts can be conceptualised in terms of two overall strategies: *developmentalising Islamic aid*, and *Islamising development aid*. By developmentalising their Islamic aid, the two Gulf-based NGOs seek to adjust their ideologies to the culture of development aid, thereby hoping

to create resonance with e.g. the UN and Western aid organisations. Likewise, by Islamising their development aid, the two UK-based NGOs hope to create ideologies that simultaneously appeal to conservative Muslim donors and secular aid agencies.

Finally, the thesis argues that these processes of ideological production in contemporary transnational Muslim NGOs may contribute to the formulation of new conceptions and cultures of aid, questioning, or at least re-articulating, the historical secularism of Western development aid on the one hand, and the religious solidarity of Islamic aid on the other. At the same time, and underlying their ideologies of aid, these organisations present new conceptions of Islam, introducing a this-worldly focus on activism and morality, resembling what Mandaville (2007a) has termed post-materialist Muslim politics. As such, the thesis is not only about how religious organisations conceptualise aid provision, but also about how this in turn contributes to shaping their conceptions of organisational religiosity (Jones and Juul Petersen forthcoming; Christiansen 2010).

Structure

The thesis is divided into four parts. Part I, *Studying transnational Muslim NGOs* situates the study of transnational Muslim NGOs in relation to existing literature on faith-based organisations and political Islam, arguing for an alternative approach, inspired by anthropological studies of NGOs as well as recent trends in Islamic studies. This section introduces the concept of ideology as a way to study processes and structures of meaning making in transnational Muslim NGOs. Finally, a number of methodological concerns are discussed, including the selection of cases and the collection of data.

Part II, *Aid cultures and NGO trajectories* first provides the overall contextualisation of transnational Muslim NGOs, presenting the two different aid cultures from which they have emerged. It then zooms in on some of the specific historical events that have contributed to shaping the ways in which Muslim NGOs position themselves in relation to these two cultures of aid. The thesis then moves from the macro level of global cultures and historical events, outlining the context in which the organisations work, to the micro level of the four concrete organisations.

Part III, *'Its' all in Islam'. Ideologies of aid in IIROSA and IICO* and Part IV, *'What's so Islamic about us?' Ideologies of aid in Islamic Relief and Muslim Aid* provide case studies of four transnational Muslim NGOs. The two studies follow the same structure: first, organisations and their audiences are described with the purpose of positioning them in relation to the two aid cultures; second, elements of their ideologies are analysed, including authority, vision, rationale

and strategies, discussing the ways in which organisational actors have transmitted, translated, and appropriated the different cultures of aid in their attempts to construct legitimate ideologies.

Finally, the *Conclusions* draws together some of the key findings of the study, reflecting upon the initial research questions that guided the study, summarising theoretical contributions and discussing future developments in the field of aid provision.

Office in IIROSA headquarters, Saudi Arabia

PART I. STUDYING TRANSNATIONAL MUSLIM NGOs

Introduction

The first part of this thesis seeks to outline an approach to the study of transnational Muslim NGOs. This part is divided into two chapters. Chapter 1, titled *Analysing transnational Muslim NGOs,* first discusses existing literature on transnational Muslim NGOs, arguing that much literature has been somewhat instrumentalist, studying Muslim organisations either as tools in political struggles for the Islamisation of society, or as faith-based organisations, contributing to the implementation of development projects. Inspired by recent anthropological and sociological NGO studies as well as trends in Islamic studies, the chapter then presents an alternative approach, centring on processes of meaning making and signifying. Advocating for the study of transnational Muslim NGOs as a study of the ways in which meanings associated with aid and Islam are expressed, legitimised, contested and reworked, this approach introduces the concept of ideology as one way of grasping these processes of meaning making and legitimacy claims. Finally, the chapter presents an analytical and conceptual framework for the study of ideologies of aid in transnational Muslim NGOs, based on the notions of aid cultures, organisations, audiences and ideological frames.

Chapter 2, *Approaching transnational Muslim NGOs*, focuses more concretely on how to approach the study of transnational Muslim NGOs methodologically. The chapter first discusses case studies as a method for studying meaning making in transnational Muslim NGOs, arguing that this method is particularly apt insofar as such studies, through their thick and detailed descriptions are capable of grasping the often complex processes of meaning making. The chapter then moves on to discuss issues of data collection and production, presenting some of the methodological strengths and concerns that have arisen from the analysis' focus on organisations and representational discourses. Finally, the chapter ends with some considerations as to issues of positioning, discussing the ways in which the simultaneous study of the familiar and the foreign has shaped the analysis.

CHAPTER 1. ANALYSING TRANSNATIONAL MUSLIM NGOs

A review of the literature on transnational Muslim NGOs

Transnational Muslim NGOs have historically received little scholarly attention. However, for a number of reasons (some of which we shall discuss below), recent years have witnessed the emergence of a number of studies focusing on different aspects of these organisations: One strand of literature emerges from terrorism studies and political science and looks at Muslim NGOs as fronts for political, sometimes militant, activism; another grows out of development studies and coins Muslim NGOs as faith-based organisations. In the following, I give a brief overview of this literature, discussing its usefulness in relation to the present analysis. I argue that much of it is based on normative, instrumentalist assumptions, necessitating the introduction of alternative approaches to the study of transnational Muslim NGOs.

Muslim NGOs as fronts for political organisations

Since the 1980s, a number of transnational Muslim NGOs have (rightly or wrongly) been accused of financing or otherwise supporting so-called 'terrorist' networks (Alterman and von Hippel 2007).[4] Suspicions of involvement in militant activism would surge from time to time, in particular in relation to the work of transnational Muslim NGOs in Afghanistan and Bosnia. Here, several NGOs were suspected of funding militant camps, facilitating logistical support to fighters coming from Saudi Arabia and otherwise supporting the mujahedeen. While the US and other governments would initially turn a blind eye to such relations, seeing the mujahedeen as their ally in the fight against the Communists, this changed with the end of the Cold War and the shifting political dynamics. The alleged involvement of a number of Muslim NGOs in the 1993 and 1998 attacks on US territories – first the World Trade Center and then the US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania – only strengthened this attention to Muslim NGOs, leading to increased control, arrests of individuals and bans of certain organisations. The understanding of transnational Muslim NGOs as de facto accomplices in militant Islamic activism was further solidified with the 9.11. attacks on the Twin Towers and Pentagon in 2001. Within a year of the attacks, a number of transnational Muslim NGOs had been designated by the US government, accused of supporting Al-Qaeda,[5] and

[4] The quotation marks around 'terrorist' serve to emphasise my misgivings with this term. While I do not deny the existence of violent Muslim activism explicitly aimed at killing civilians, I contend that, at least analytically, 'terrorist' is the most useful term to describe such activities, insofar as this term is based on a highly politicised understanding of what constitutes legitimate and illegitimate violence against civilians. I do not use quotation marks in the following. In my thesis, I am not concerned with determining whether Muslim NGOs have links to violent activism. There can be little doubt that certain NGOs – or individuals in these NGOs – have been involved in such activities; however, so far no empirical evidence has led us to believe that this includes more than a minor fragment of Muslim NGOs. To date, only one NGO (the Holy Land Foundation) has been convicted for contributing to militant activism (Guinane 2006:11).

[5] Among others, Al Haramain and Benevolence International (both based in Saudi Arabia), the Holy Land Foundation and the Global Relief Foundation (both from USA).

several other governments followed suit, banning transnational Muslim NGOs from working in their territory (Juul Petersen 2011).

These events have prompted a surge of academic and policy-oriented research aimed at mapping and understanding the alleged links between certain Muslim NGOs and militant Islamic groups (Singer 2008:2). One of the most influential books in this regard has been Burr and Collins' (2006) *Alms for Jihad*.[6] Providing a number of examples on the ways in which some of the funds made available to and managed by Muslim NGOs have been channelled to militant Islamic groups and organisations, Burr and Collins seek to give their readers "an appreciation for [the] global extent, ferocity, and determination of the Islamists who are perpetrating crimes against humanity in the name of religion, and the role that certain Islamic charities have played in supporting those Islamists" (2006:xi). Based on what Benthall (2007) calls an association-building approach, the authors build up webs of association, linking Muslim NGOs with various terrorist individuals, organisations and movements through the analysis of meetings and communications, press reports and intelligence websites. While such analyses provide valuable and much needed information on the flows of funding to and from transnational Muslim NGOs, they also present a number of problems.

One problem with this book, as well as with much of the other literature on Muslim NGOs and terrorism, is related to the wide interpretation of the term 'terrorism' and the difficulties the authors have in distinguishing between different Islamic ideologies. As noted by Meijer (2008:527), this leads Burr and Collins to put e.g. the Sudanese Hasan al-Turabi and Tunisian Rachid Ghannushi in the same bag as Osama Bin Laden. In the same vein, the two authors do not distinguish between nationalist resistance groups such as Hamas and Hezbollah, supported or condoned by a large number of people in the Arab world, and transnational movements such as Al-Qaeda, framing their ideology in terms of a much larger conflict between Islam and the West. Finally, the mujahedeen fighting in the Afghan war are described as terrorists, who upon returning to their countries of origin "founded or joined Islamist groups committed to overthrowing the government and establishing an Islamist state" (Burr and Collins 2006:77). This reliance on a broad and uncontextualised understanding of terrorism has several consequences. First, it demonstrates the inability of the authors to take account of their own prejudices, leading to highly biased analyses (Benthall 2007:3). Secondly, it results in inaccurate analyses, insofar as all Muslim NGOs which are or were linked in one way or another to any of the above organisations are "tarred with the brush of terrorism" (Meijer 2008:527). Third, it provides us with little understanding of

[6] Other examples include Ly (2007), Kohlman (2006), M. Levitt (2006), and Napoleoni (2005).

how the implicated actors understand 'terrorism' and what motivates them to engage in aid provision.[7]

Parallel to the literature on Muslim NGOs as fronts for terrorist organisations, another – and much more nuanced – literature has emerged, much of it from the discipline of political science. This literature focuses more broadly on Muslim NGOs as actors within national or local political contexts, exploring their relations with Muslim political parties, groups and movements and exploring topics such as the provision of social welfare services as a tool to gain popular support and ensure relations of trust between these actors and their constituencies (Bellion-Jourdan 2000). While such approaches can contribute to a better understanding of e.g. the successful popular mobilisation of Islamic groups such as the Muslim Brotherhood, Hamas and Hezbollah, they run the risk of reducing Muslim NGOs to the level of instruments in these groups' quest for political power (Yaylaci 2007:4). An example is Alterman and von Hippel's (2007) anthology *Understanding Islamic Charities*, whose title leads one to expect a more broad-based investigation into this group of organisations. Nonetheless, the majority of contributions to the book focus explicitly on the links between Muslim NGOs and national or transnational Islamic groups and movements.

Benthall and Bellion-Jourdan's (2003) pioneer study, *The Charitable Crescent. Politics of Aid in the Muslim World*, presents a much more informative and nuanced treatment of transnational Muslim NGOs, based on thorough historical and sociological analyses (on which large parts of the present thesis' chapter 4 in fact relies). However, in line with Alterman and von Hippel (2007), this book also turns on the explicitly political motivations and implications of the work of these NGOs, overlooking other, equally important, aspects. As noted by Bano (2005:384) in her review of Benthall and Bellion-Jourdan (2003), but equally valid of other analyses: "[I]t is a book that gives no real feeling of what goes on inside the minds and hearts of the people that work within these Islamic charities or the forces that drive these organisations. It does evoke the Islamic charity sector as a living entity, but it fails to bring alive the charities themselves."[8]

In sum, some studies of transnational Muslim NGOs are highly normative, taking for granted the underlying assumptions of the terrorism orthodoxy and working within that paradigm. Others are

[7] Somewhat related to this strand of literature, although approaching the topic of Islam and terrorism from a different angle, is an emerging strand of literature on the implications of recent anti-terror legislation for Muslim and other NGOs. See e.g. Howell and Lind (2009), Shaw-Hamilton (2007), Sidel (2006), Piers (2005) and Macrae and Harmer (2003).

[8] Other examples of literature focusing primarily on Muslim NGOs and their role in formal politics are e.g. Schaeublin (2009), Janine Clark (2008), Bellion-Jourdan (2007), Hamzeh (2007), Soares and Otayek (2007), Solberg (2007), Salih (2002) and Wicktorowicz (2001), most of them writing about national Muslim NGOs.

more balanced in their approach, focusing more broadly on Islamic politics, but, whether implicitly or explicitly, sharing a largely instrumentalist understanding of Muslim NGOs insofar as they tend to approach these organisations primarily as tools in the political struggle for the Islamisation of society rather than attempting to understand what drives these organisations.

Muslim NGOs as faith-based organisations[9]

Somewhat more relevant to the present analysis is the literature on faith-based organisations, emerging in particular from development studies in recent years.[10] Historically, development studies, emerging as an academic field in the 1950s, has been strongly secularist from the beginning.[11] The narratives of modernisation and secularisation that shaped social science for most of the post-war period also shaped development studies. In this perspective, religion was seen as a conservative and traditional force, doomed to withdraw and eventually disappear from public life as part of societal progress towards an increasingly modern society. In Bryan Wilson's formulation "religious institutions, actions and consciousness lose their social significance" as societies modernise (Wilson 1992:49). As such, religion was difficult to reconcile with or relate to development's logic of economic progress and social transformation, and it was regarded either as an irrelevance or an obstacle to development studies and practice. In 2000, the sociologist Kurt Alan ver Beek even declared that religion was 'a development taboo'. He had scanned three of the most prominent development studies journals – World Development, Journal of Development Studies and Journal of Developing Areas – for articles on religion and spirituality in the period from 1982 to 1998, finding few references to the topic in general, and no single article where religion or spirituality was the main theme (ver Beek 2000:37).[12]

However, recent years have witnessed a still stronger interest in religion in development studies, often manifested in a focus on religious, or faith-based, organisations as they are often called (sometimes shortened to FBOs). There are a number of reasons for this 'religious turn' in the study of development. First, the increasing visibility of religion in the public sphere have challenged

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[9] Parts of this section build on Jones and Juul Petersen (forthcoming).

[10] Very recently, the field of humanitarian studies (in itself a new field of inquiry) has seen the emergence of literature on religious organisations. Interestingly, this literature seems to be based on a much more nuanced approach to religion, something which might be explained by the strong links between humanitarianism, ethics and philosophy. See e.g. Barnett and Stein (forthcoming), and Bornstein and Redfield (2011). For a general overview of the study of humanitarianism, see Barnett and T. Weiss (2008) and Minn (2007).

[11] I use the term 'secularisation' to refer to the process of separation of religion from other spheres of life, not to the elimination of religion (Roy 2004:334). Similarly, I use the term 'secular' to refer to cultures, societies, institutions and organisations based on this distinction between religion and other spheres of life. Finally, with 'secularism' I refer to the underlying ideology promoting the separation of religion from other spheres of life.

[12] A similar trend can be witnessed in civil society studies. Closely linked with notions of liberalism, democracy and civic virtues, studies of civil society have historically had difficulties incorporating religion and religious organisations, understood to be inherently conservative and anti-democratic. See e.g. Herbert (2003) for a discussion of this.

narratives of modernisation and secularisation, underlying development studies – as evidenced in the 1979 Iranian revolution; the increasing political power of the Evangelical right in the US; the democratic transitions in Eastern Europe and southern Africa; and last but not least the 9.11. attacks on Washington and New York. Second, and more specifically related to the field of development, there has been an increase in the actual number and visibility of religious organisations involved in development-related activities.[13] Today, some of the largest NGOs are religious (e.g. World Vision with an annual budget of 1.6 billion US dollars); the number of Muslim NGOs seems to be growing rapidly; and in Sub-Saharan African, the World Bank estimates that as much as fifty percent of all health and education services are today provided by religious organisations (James 2009:7). Studies such as the World Bank's *Voices of the Poor* (2000) have further underlined the importance of such religious organisations for the poor, concluding that many people have more trust in religious organisations than in secular NGOs, government or other societal institutions.[14] Third, recent trends in development studies have allowed space for studies of religion. Prompted by a criticism of structural adjustment programmes of the 1980s and 1990s, development studies have shifted away from classical liberal theory, Marxist analysis and economy toward more heterodox approaches (Brett 2009). This 'opening of the development space' (McDuie-Ra and Rees 2010:21) has facilitated the inclusion of religious actors in academic studies of development.

The interest in the role of religion in development has grown out of development organisations, notably the major donors and transnational NGOs, rather than research institutions and universities. This particular trajectory has had a number of consequences, as we shall discuss below. One of the first initiatives was the *Development Dialogue on Values and Ethics*, established in 1998 by James Wolfenson, then president of the World Bank, and George Carey, then Archbishop of Canterbury, as a response to increasing grassroots criticism of the World Bank. The initiative, which was later re-named the *World Faith Development Dialogue*, wanted "a wide-ranging international and national dialogue among faith and development institutions, with the effort to combat world poverty as the central focus" (Marshall 2001:339). In the following years, NGOs and donor agencies in different countries have launched similar initiatives to strengthen cooperation with faith-based organisations. In 2002 the Swiss Agency for Development Corporation organised a conference with the title *Religion and Spirituality: A Development Taboo?*, followed by a series of workshops with NGOs (Holenstein 2005). In 2005 the UK's Department for International Development (DfID) produced a policy brief recognising the

[13] Religious organisations, in the broader sense, are of course no novel invention. Throughout history, organisations such as Catholic hospitals, Islamic foundations, and Buddhist monasteries, among many others, have provided aid to the poor (Juul Petersen 2011). For histories of philanthropy and charity in different world religions, see e.g. Neusner and Chilton (2005) or Ilchman, Katz and Queen (1998).
[14] Likewise, the British Commission for Africa Report recommended that donors channel increasing funding through religious organisations (2005:306).

"growing interest" in the world of development practice and arguing "for a more systematic understanding of the role that faiths play in achieving the Millennium Development Goals" (DfID 2005:14). In Holland, five Dutch NGOs established the Knowledge Forum for Religion and Development Policy in 2007. In Sweden SIDA has hosted a number of workshops on the role of religion in development. And in the USA, governmental funding to Faith-based organisations almost doubled from 10.5 percent of aid in 2001 to 19.9 percent in 2005 (James 2009:5).

Parallel to these practitioner and donor-oriented initiatives, a new strand of research emerged, focusing on religion and development in general, but often with a specific focus on faith-based organisations. One of the first initiatives came from the Dutch Institute of Social Studies, introducing its *Chair in Religion and Development* as early as 1999. But apart from this, many of the new research initiatives grew out of NGOs and donor agencies. In 2005, for instance, DfID launched an 8 million dollar research programme, *Religions and Development*, hosted by Birmingham University (James 2009:5). Another major research programme is *Religion and Global Development*, established in 2006 as part of Georgetown University's Berkley Center for Religion, Peace and World Affairs, and headed by Katherine Marshall, a senior advisor to the World Bank and heavily involved in the World Faiths Development Dialogue. The academic interest in religion and development has resulted in a range of publications, including articles, reports and books. In 2002 the *Journal of Religion in Africa* (vol. 32(1)) published a special issue on religious NGOs, with articles by e.g. Renders (2002) and Weiss (2002), and in 2003, *Development in Practice* published a special issue on religion and development (vol. 46(4)). More recently *Third World Quarterly* has published articles on the subject (Lunn 2009; Parfitt 2009; G. Clarke 2007), as has the *Journal of Development Studies* (G. Clarke 2006), the *Journal for Progress in Development Studies* (Bradley 2009, Tomalin 2006) and *World Development* (Deneulin and Rakodi 2011). A number of books have also been published, some of them focusing on religion and development in general, including Deneulin and Bano's *Religion in Development. Rewriting the Secular Script* (2009); Haynes' *Religion and Development. Conflict or Cooperation?* (2007); and Marshall and van Saanen's *Development and Faith* (2007); while others deal specifically with faith-based organisations, such as G. Clarke and Jenning's *Development, Civil Society and Faith-Based Organizations* (2008).[15]

Much of this literature contributes valuably to the study of religion and development, bringing to the fore organisations that have historically played an important role in the provision of aid, and introducing nuanced analyses of e.g. these organisations and their relations with recipients (Palmer 2011; Bradley 2005), donor perceptions of faith-based organisations (G. Clarke 2006, 2007) and

[15] As this thesis is being finalised, two new books on religion and development are in press; one by M. Clarke, titled *Development and Religion. Theology and Practice* (2011), and the other by ter Haar, *Religion and Development. Ways of Transforming the World* (2011).

media discourses on religion and development (Hovland 2008). However, parts of this new literature suffer from certain weaknesses, limiting its usefulness as an analytical approach. Most of these weaknesses stem from the fact that the interest in faith-based organisations, as the above trajectory demonstrated, has grown out of development NGOs and donor organisations rather than academic environments.

First, much literature on faith-based organisations is written from within the development paradigm, taking development for granted as an ontological and largely uncontested reality. This misses something of the plurality of positions within contemporary development studies. 'Development' is increasingly contested, and development studies an increasingly inter-disciplinary field, reflexive and heterodox in its epistemological orientation and draws from a continuum of social science theory and methods (cf. Corbridge 2007; Lund 2009). As a number of post-development scholars suggest, understanding development as something fixed and defined, and about progress in an objective sense, is to be investigated rather than assumed (see e.g. Escobar 1995, 2006). Development is not as narrow and object as the 'development' of 'religion and development' would seem to suggest. Moreover, it may be useful to think about development as something ideological or religious in its meaning, something we shall return to below.

Second, it is instrumentalist, focusing either explicitly or implicitly on the ways in which faith-based organisations may be useful tools in the implementation of development activities. Are faith-based organisations "effective development partners" (Harb 2008)? Do faith-based organisations have the potential "to help poor people to escape from poverty" (Harper et al. 2008:2)? Do "religious and spiritual resources produce a type of knowledge that is, or could be, relevant to development?" (ter Haar and Ellis 2006:354)? In other words, can faith-based organisations contribute to improving development? The emphasis of most researchers is toward the affirmative, pointing to a number of benefits such as cultural proximity, historical rootedness, popular legitimacy, infrastructure, networks and motivation, giving faith-based organisations an 'added value' over secular NGOs.[16]. Some researchers argue that faith-based organisations can contribute to providing 'alternative visions of development', challenging narrow conceptions of development as economic growth. On the surface, this approach is slightly different from the one outlined above, insofar as it sees religious organisations not as tools to enhance mainstream development approaches, but as a way of challenging these approaches through their attention to 'spiritual insights about the meaning of human life' (Tyndale 2006:27) and 'positive values' (Lunn 2009:948). This understanding builds on an assumption of faith-based organisations as somehow better and more authentic than other kinds of organisations because they link up to people's moral

[16] See e.g. James (2009), Lunn (2009), Kirmani and Khan (2008), Marshall and van Saanen (2007), Ferris (2005), and Marshall and Keough (2004).

and spiritual lives, and as such, offer a better framework for bringing about a more people-centered and sustainable development. However, in effect the religious values praised are values that converge with mainstream development values and principles, and as such, this literature ends up resembling the literature focusing more narrowly on organisational features. In other words, the role of religion in development remains instrumental, not intrinsic (Deneulin and Rakodi 2011:49). It is about the ways in which religion can be instrumentalised for providing good development, often through faith-based organisations; not more fundamentally about the ways in which religion shapes the ways in which development is conceptualised (or how development shapes the ways in which religion is conceptualised, for that matter).

Finally, in much literature, 'faith-based organisation', and by extension 'religion', is taken to be a relatively unproblematic, and largely positive, category. This was particularly obvious at the 2010 conference *Progressive, Paradoxical, Pragmatic: Exploring Religion and Human Development*, organised by the Religions and Development research programme in Birmingham, and presenting state-of-the-art research on religion and development. Overall, the conference presentations concerned with faith-based organisations seemed dominated by meso and macro level typologies and mappings of faith-based organisations[17] as well as comparative studies of faith-based and secular organisations,[18] rather than micro level case studies of individual organisations. Although such studies are indeed necessary in order to establish an overview of the field of faith-based organisations, they also run the risk of simplifying the term 'faith-based organisations'. For one, some studies, in particular the more quantitatively oriented ones, seem to lump together a wide variety of organisations – large and small, volunteer and professional, local and transnational – under the heading 'faith-based organisation'. Second, and more importantly, instead of exploring the different ways in which 'faith, or 'religion', is understood and practiced in these organisations, these approaches are often based on preconceived and relatively static notions of 'religion' (Deneulin and Rakodi 2011:50), assumed to be an unproblematic source of unity and solidarity (Palmer 2011:98). With the exception of Deneulin and Devine (2010) who in their presentation *Religion as a Source of Value: A Look inside the Dynamics of Value Formation and Behaviour* seek to explore how religion is lived and experienced by people themselves in their daily lives, very few researchers seem to ask, 'what does it mean for NGOs to be religious?' thus allowing for more flexible, multifaceted and changing concepts of religion.

This brief review has demonstrated that (the sparse) existing literature on transnational Muslim NGOs is useful insofar as it directs attention to these organisations and their importance for understanding issues of contemporary politics and development. However, it also suffers from a

[17] See e.g. presentations by Odumosu and Chete (2010), Tomalin and Leurs (2010), and Wodon (2010).
[18] See e.g. presentations by M. Clarke and Rae (2010), Ukiwo (2010), Lunn (2010), and Morgan (2010).

range of problems. One strand of literature casts transnational Muslim NGOs as fronts for political, sometimes terrorist, organisations; the other approaches them as faith-based organisations, seeing them as effective tools in the implementation of development projects. As such, both these literatures are characterised by an instrumentalist understanding of transnational Muslim NGOs, working within normative paradigms. Furthermore, they are dominated by macro-sociological analyses, leaving little room for interpretive explorations of these organisations themselves. This does not mean that literatures on faith-based organisations or on Muslim organisations and terrorism are not relevant to this analysis; but rather than providing analytical tools for analysis, they are perhaps equally relevant as objects of study in themselves. Reflecting dominant discourses in the post 9.11. aid field, these literatures tell us something about prevailing views on transnational Muslim NGOs as well as about what kinds of religion are promoted and accepted by mainstream development actors. I will elaborate on this in Part II, discussing the War on Terror and its implications for transnational Muslim NGOs.

An alternative approach to transnational Muslim NGOs

In my analysis of transnational Muslim NGOs, I take a different approach than those outlined above, inspired instead by anthropological and sociological NGO studies, sociology of religion and Islamic studies.[19] As Deneulin and Rakodi (2011:51) point out, the study of religion and development must, primarily, be a study of the meanings that people give to their social practices – about the "interpretative understanding of intersubjective meanings" (Kanbur and Shaffer 2007:185). There is a need for deeper analysis of the ways in which meanings are constructed within NGOs and the ways in which such meanings and power structures are stabilised and fragmented over time (D. Lewis et al. 2003:552). In this perspective, the study of transnational Muslim NGOs should not solely or even primarily be about determining whether or not their religious identity makes them efficient contributors to development or facilitates their connections with terrorist groups, but about exploring their modes of 'self-identification' (Palmer 2011:100), looking at how they define and give meaning to concepts such as 'Islam', 'development' – and 'terrorism', for that matter.

Approaching Muslim NGOs as NGOs, not as FBOs

Rather than viewing Muslim NGOs as a distinct kind of organisations, namely faith-based organisations, requiring particular analytical tools, I approach them as any other NGOs. In other words, I do not have any presumptions about the ways in which religion shapes an organisation, its

[19] Recently, other students of transnational Muslim NGOs, many of them anthropologists, have presented similarly alternative approaches, including Benthall (2011, 2006), Ahmed (2009), Yaylaci (2008, 2007) and Kaag (2007). Furthermore, there is an emerging literature on local and national Muslim NGOs, focusing on the provision of social welfare in the context of the state. See e.g. Jawad (2009), Harmsen (2008), and Clark (2004). See also Raudvere (2002) for an analysis of a Sufi NGO in Turkey.

identity and work, but see the exploration of this as topics for analysis. In the following, I give a presentation of the relevant NGO literature, discussing the ways in which this literature can contribute to the elaboration of a conceptual framework for analyzing Muslim NGOs.

The term NGO or 'non-governmental organisation' was introduced in 1945 by the United Nations Charter, article 71, stating that "[t]he Economic and Social Council may make suitable arrangements for consultation with non-governmental organisations which are concerned with matters within its competence" (UN 1945), and for many years, the term was primarily used in relation to transnational organisations in the UN system. Today, the term is much more broadly used, covering a long range of very different kinds of organisations, including also regional, national and local organisations as well as organisations not connected to the UN (Martens 2002:271). There is no scholarly consensus on a definition of what constitutes an NGO; however, the term has primarily been used in relation to organisations involved in development aid. Reflecting this, much research on NGOs has emerged from development studies. Characterised by an instrumentalist 'means-end' rationality, one strand of NGO research has focused on these organisations as effective tools for the implementation of development projects (D. Lewis and Mosse 2006:3), seeing them as having "distinctive competences such as closeness to the poor, committed leadership and capacity to build access to services for the poor" (D. Lewis 2007:366).[20] Another strand has nurtured hopes of NGOs as important agents of civil society and alternative forms of development, praising them for their tolerance, civic virtues and inherently democratic nature (Mercer 2002; Chandler 2007).[21] As such the earlier NGO literature displayed many of the same problems that are found in the literature on faith-based organisations today. G. Clarke (1998:40), for instance, writes that the failure to theorise the political impact of NGOs has lead to an overly "inadequate, explicitly normative interpretation of NGO ideology," while Tvedt (2002:365) notes that "[t]his story about NGOs is in reality only about the 'good', 'progressive' and 'humanitarian' NGOs, as if they alone constitute the NGO scene." Finally, Stirrat and Henkel (1997:68) claim that many studies of NGOs and development take for granted the underlying assumptions of the new development orthodoxy and work within that paradigm.[22]

In recent years, however, a number of scholars have presented new ways of studying NGOs and development, many of them inspired by anthropology, micro-sociology and organisation studies and approaching NGOs as complex actors, engaging with wider debates about the politics of development. Hilhorst's (2003) discussion of NGO definitions neatly illustrates this turn. She argues that throughout the years, studies of NGOs have introduced various different definitions,

[20] Examples include Chambers (1997), Edwards and Hulme (1992), John Clark (1991); Korten (1987, 1990), and Fowler (1988).
[21] See e.g. Keane (2003), Kaldor (1999), and Salamon et al. (1999).
[22] See Mercer (2002) for a critical review of this kind of NGO literature.

seeking to pin down the essential characteristics of 'real' NGOs.[23] While acknowledging the usefulness of definitions, Hilhorst also notes that the attempt to define and delineate NGOs from other societal organisations and institutions is not a neutral occupation, but a highly normative one. Being an NGO is a moral claim. To be an NGO is to be an organisation that 'does good'; its main asset is a reputation as an organisation doing good, and earning and maintaining this reputation is a major occupation of NGOs (Hilhorst 2003:9). Defining NGOs is more than merely defining; it is about attributing legitimacy to the identity and work of the NGO. As such, Hilhorst claims, the processes of defining NGOs should be seen as part of the objects to be studied. Thus, instead of starting out with a definition of what constitutes a 'real', 'genuine' or 'legitimate' NGO, she considers an NGO to be any organisation that present itself as such, exploring the meanings that organisations confer to this label, asking questions as to who get to define themselves as NGOs, why and how they legitimate themselves as NGOs.

More generally, this new attention to meaning-making has been characterised by a move towards more agency- and actor-oriented studies of NGOs and development, emphasising actors as signifying agents actively engaged in the production of meaning (Benford and Snow 2000:613), capable of making choices and imposing those choices on the world (D. Lewis et al. 2003, Long 1992).[24] Each in different ways, writers such as Mosse (2005), Hilhorst (2003), Bornstein (2003), and D. Lewis (2001b, 2002b) direct attention to the discourses and practices of NGOs, exploring their meaning systems in terms of the actors, institutions, organisations and social relationships through which they are articulated (Mosse 2005:10). Paraphrasing Bebbington (2004:728), they study the actually existing NGOs, not the NGOs that ought to or are presumed to exist. The concern of this work has been to understand how meanings associated with development are produced, contested and reworked by particular actors, and through that, to illuminate the many different significances that this term holds for these actors (D. Lewis et al. 2003:546). In this perspective, NGOs are not viewed merely as carriers of extant ideas and meanings, growing out of structural arrangements, unanticipated events, or existing ideologies (Benford and Snow 2000:613), but as organisations made up of collectivities of interpreting and acting agents. As Hilhorst (2003:5, 214) notes, an actor orientation acknowledges that people operate within the limitations of structural constraints, but emphasises that such constraints operate through people:

> Organizational policies, cultures and accountabilities, just as much as larger processes of law, politics, culture, history and economics that enable or constrain social life, do not work upon people, but through them. They become effective only through the mediation of interpreting actors.

[23] See e.g. Martens (2002), Vakil (1997), Gordenker and T. Weiss (1995), Farrington and Bebbington (1993) and John Clark (1991) for examples of this.
[24] See e.g. Arce and Long (2000), and Long and Long (1992).

While rejecting the stark structuralism of e.g. Escobar (1995), actor-oriented approaches to NGOs do not necessarily consider NGOs to be self-contained and isolated entities, constructed solely by the people within them. Organisations are very much part of broader societal structures and sets of meanings, shaped in a constant, dialectic relationship with these surroundings. Thus, and paraphrasing Melucci (1989), the analysis of NGOs cannot focus exclusively on the agency of the actors themselves, but must include considerations as to the structures enabling and delimiting their discourses and practices.[25]

Here, sociological approaches such as New Institutionalism (Meyer and Scott 1992; DiMaggio and Powell 1991) can be of use, directing attention to the importance of institutional, or normative, environments in determining the shape and contents of organisations. Organisational discourses, practices and structures do not emerge as results of specific task demands or functional needs, but because the environment of which they are a part supports and legitimises these particular discourses, practices and structures. In the words of Finnemore (1996:329): "Organizations exist, proliferate, and have the form they do not because they are efficient but because they are externally legitimated." New Institutionalism argues that the environment in which an organisation is embedded is defined by a certain culture that contains acceptable models, standards of action, goals, and logics of appropriateness. Organisations (and the actors constituting them) will adapt to this culture for different reasons, most importantly resources (Barnett 2005:729) – including not only material resources, but also more intangible ones such as time, support and legitimacy. In other words, organisations are not autonomous, isolated islands, but always shaped by and part of larger cultures and environments.

Summing up, these new ways of studying NGOs direct attention away from instrumentalist approaches measuring the effectiveness of NGOs in implementing development programmes, and normative appraisals of their alternative visions of development, focusing instead on the ways in which these NGOs conceptualise 'development' – how they produce, contest and present meaning, in the process making claims to legitimacy. In the words of Hilhorst (2003:6), this is a call to explore the ways in which NGOs define and understand their situation, choose their goals and make room for manoeuvre to realise them; to try to make sense of people's motivations, ideas and activities by taking into account their past and present surroundings, social networks and histories; and to observe the ways in which they claim to be legitimate NGOs, because this conveys practical knowledge, implicit interpretations and power processes taking place in and around these organisations.

[25] This of course prompts questions as to the relative weight of respectively agency and structure in determining organisational discourses and practices. Echoing D. Lewis et al. (2003:554), I see contexts as created by actors at various 'moments' in time and space, the effects of which might continue as structure. As such, determining the explanatory power of agency versus structure becomes an empirical question.

Processes of Islamisation

Inspired by recent NGO studies, the analysis builds on an actor-oriented understanding of NGOs as complex and ambiguous, shaped in a dialectic relation with their surroundings. But how to understand the role of religion in such organisations? Among contemporary scholars of NGOs we find little of help; with Bornstein (2003) as a notable exception, the majority of them do not pay much attention to religion. For instance, in D. Lewis and Kanji's recent publication *Non-Governmental Organizations and Development* (2009), we find only two references to religion (in the form of 'religious traditions'). Likewise, as has been argued above, neither FBO studies nor terrorism studies present any relevant approaches to conceptualising the role of religion in NGOs, both of them based on an instrumentalist, somewhat simplified understanding of religion as a tool for effective implementation of development or for facilitating relations with militant Islamic groups.[26]

Instead, I turn to Islamic studies. Here, recent years have seen the emergence of a number of anthropological and sociological studies of Islam, presenting concepts and approaches that may be of relevance to the study of transnational Muslim NGOs. In particular Mandaville (2008, 2007a, 2001), Bayat (2007), Roy (2004), Salvatore and Eickelman (2004), and Lincoln (2003) are worth mentioning. While few of these scholars engage specifically with NGOs, they do represent a shift away from a focus on explicitly political forms of collective action to other kinds of Islam. Roy, for instance, argues that the 21st century has seen a shift in interpretations of Islam from 'religion', understood as a coherent corpus of beliefs and dogmas collectively managed by a body of legitimate holders of knowledge, to 'religiosity', understood as self-formulation and self-expression of a personal faith (2004:6). While acknowledging the increasing individualisation of Islam, Mandaville emphasises the importance of forms of Muslim social mobilisation located between the state and the individual (Mandaville 2007:3). Seeking to reconcile the shift towards individualisation with the continued relevance of socially engaged activism among Muslims, he introduces the term 'post-materialist Muslim politics', referring to a kind of collective action that is organised primarily around the promotion of particular values, cultures or ethos rather than economic change or public policy. 'Classic' Islamism as a totalising project seeking to capture state power, he suggests, is increasingly forced to compete with Muslim agendas above and below the state that seek more broadly to open up spaces for the inclusion of religion in public life and greater recognition of Muslim identity claims (Mandaville 2007:4). To illustrate his claims, Mandaville looks at e.g. the Gülen movement and the Egyptian TV star and social entrepreneur Amr Khaled. In their

[26] Within sociology of religion, interest in religious organisations has generally focused primarily on conventional religious organisations such as churches and mosques, and, more recently, on new religious movements with little attention to religious NGOs (Beckford and Demerath 2007; Demerath et al. 1998); however among US sociologists of religion there is a strong tradition for the study of faith-based charity and service provision within the context of the state. See e.g. Wuthnow (2004) and Allahyari (2000).

perspective, being an 'active' or 'good' Muslim is not about membership in a political organisation; it is about engaging in social, cultural, and economic activism, promoting Islamic values in daily life. As Cesari (cf. Mandaville 2001:139) notes: "[A] new form of citizenship is emerging, [one that refers] to concrete and local action rather than voting or involvement with political parties. In other words, the *civil* dimension seems to be more relevant than the *civic* one".

In their analyses of new expressions of Islam, many of the above-mentioned scholars move away from conceptions of Islam as text (Donnan 2002:15), either explicitly or implicitly building on anthropological traditions of scholars such as Geertz (1971) and Asad (1986) in their emphasis on Islam as lived experience and on Muslims negotiating the complex, ambiguous circumstances of their lives through Islam (Mandaville 2001:xii). For Mandaville (2001:55), this is best described as a shift from studying Islam to studying Muslims:

> On my understanding, to speak of a *muslim* (in Arabic, 'one who submits') is simply to speak of a subject-consciousness which considers itself to possess or practice a form of identity which derives from something called Islam, regardless of what form one's consciousness of the latter takes. I choose to emphasise the 'Muslim' then, in order to orient this study towards exploring the self-descriptions of those who consider themselves to be practicing something called Islam.

In this perspective, 'Islam' is not something that can be taken for granted; instead, the construction and signification of 'Islam' becomes part of the subject matter of the analysis, much in the same way as the construction of 'NGOs' and 'development' does. In the words of Mandaville (2007a:20): "This approach tends to resist making claims about the nature and content of Islam and instead primarily concerns itself with the various ways in which people engage and draw upon religious tradition as they construct and contest social orders." Thus, the analysis of transnational Muslim NGOs cannot simply be about identifying the role of Islam in development aid, based on preconceived notions of what Islam 'is', but should be about exploring the construction of 'Islam', asking questions as to how and when Muslim NGOs 'Islamise' things (as well as how and when they do not 'Islamise' things), and what kinds of 'Islam' they construct in the process.

In this, we may turn to the historian of religion Bruce Lincoln (2003). According to him, something becomes religion not primarily by virtue of their specific content but by their claims to transcendent authority and truth.[27] Activities, things, phenomena, people, and ideas are not religious per se but become religious when they are given religious meaning through religious

[27] Lincoln's understanding of religion is a response to Talal Asad's claim that "there cannot be a universal definition of religion, not only because its constituent elements and relationships are historically specific, but because that definition is itself the historical product of discursive processes" (Asad 1993:29). To this Lincoln argues that all language and definitions are historical products of discursive processes; a fact that does not necessarily mean that all attempts at definition are in vain. Definitions should not be seen as definitive attempts to capture the innate and complete essence of things, but merely as provisional attempts to clarify one's thoughts (Lincoln 2003:2). It is in this spirit that the above conceptualisation of religion should be understood.

discourses, practices, communities and institutions. In other words, something becomes religion by being 'religionised' – or 'sacralised', as Woodhead and Heelas (2000), among others, have termed it. Thus, something is Islamic or Muslim when it is constituted as such through discourses and practices that are concerned with matters of Islam (traditions, figures, concepts, rules, stories etc.) and claim a transcendent authority by reference to Allah, the Qur'an and the *sunnah*. As such, virtually anything can be recoded as 'religion' or 'religious' (Lincoln 2003:6). This means that one cannot only look for religion in its conventional hiding places, but must be open to finding it elsewhere as well, tracing what Mandaville (2007a:327) refers to as "the migration of religious discourse and symbolic capital into spaces not formally constituted as 'religious'" – such as NGOs and aid provision.

This focus on practiced Islam and processes of Islamisation also directs our attention to the plurality of meanings associated with contemporary Islam, manifested in the concrete dialogues, debates and divides along political, theological, geographical or individual lines. At the same time, however, there are limits to what can count as Islam. Religions are not detached from power, history and context, but confined and curtailed by this. As such, the fact that anything *can* in principle be religionised does not mean that anything *does* become religionised. In practice, there are very real limitations as to what can be religionised, and consequently what can count as religion. In their constructions of 'Islam', actors build on and are restricted by centuries of Islamic discourses and practices, outlining what is sayable, doable and thinkable within the limits of Islam. Likewise, certain actors have more power to Islamise than others; Schaebler and Stenberg (2004:xvii) talk about 'Islam' as a discursive field of contesting powers. As a result, interpretations of Islam may vary from setting to setting, but there is also, at any given moment in time, a relatively stable core of Islamic discourses that somehow connect most Muslims (Mandaville 2007:17), making the use of terms such as 'Islam' and 'Muslim' meaningful.

To sum up, and following from the above, this analysis is based on an understanding of Muslim NGOs as complex organisations, driven by actors and shaped by their context, engaged in the production, contestation and reworking of meanings associated with development. In these organisations, religion is best conceptualised not as a static or single variable, but as processes of religionisation – as an aspect of meaning construction, parallel to the construction of 'development'. In this perspective, and paraphrasing Deneulin and Rakodi (2011:51), the study of transnational Muslim NGOs becomes a study of the ways in which discourses on Islam and development are constructed in certain ways, embodied in certain social practices, structures and communities, how social and historical processes have led to that particular embodiment, and how these discourses, practices, structures and communities redefine themselves in the light of changing social, economic and political contexts.

Studying ideologies of aid in transnational Muslim NGOs

Based on the literatures on NGOs and Muslims, and responding to their calls for attention to processes of meaning construction, this thesis focuses on the ways in which transnational Muslim NGOs conceptualise what they are doing, imagine what they are trying to accomplish, and understand what constitutes the available sets of acceptable or legitimate discourses and practices (Hammack and Heydemann 2009:8). It does so through an analysis of what I call 'ideologies of aid'.

The term ideology seems particularly appropriate for studying processes of meaning construction in transnational Muslim NGOs (and in NGOs in general for that matter): First, evoking the image of individuals as thinkers, interpreters and doers (Oliver and Johnston 2000:10), the term ideology seems better suited for an actor-oriented study of meaning construction than e.g. the concept of institutional logics (Hammack and Heydemann 2009), carrying connotations of institutions and structures. Second, the notion of ideology directs attention to the fact that meaning systems are always part of larger societal contexts, cultures and histories, whereas other approaches, such as framing (Snow and Benford 1988, Snow and Byrd 2007) may tend towards a more restricted focus on the immediate, organisational context of these systems. Third, unlike e.g. institutional logics, the term ideology aptly captures the inherently normative nature of NGOs. As noted above, a defining characteristic of NGOs is their claim to 'do good' (Hilhorst 2003), and as such, they are highly ideological actors. On a side note, this is also why I prefer the term 'religious' to 'faith-based'. The term faith-based indicates that non-religious NGOs are not faith-based, while I would argue that all NGOs are, to some degree, faith-based insofar as they are ideological, promoting a certain 'faith' over others, whether that faith is human rights, development, secularism or Islam.[28] Finally, and perhaps most importantly, an ideological approach to NGOs emphasises the importance of legitimacy. Unlike other public actors, NGOs are essentially self-mandating (Slim 2002), making questions of legitimacy particularly pertinent. NGOs cannot base their legitimacy on principles of popular sovereignty or legal institutions, but must constantly construct their legitimacy themselves. In this, ideologies are important, serving as vehicles through which claims to legitimacy can be expressed and presented.

Defining ideology

With 'ideology' I do not refer to formal political ideologies such as liberalism or socialism, neither to ideology as class-motivated bourgeoisie deceptions and false consciousness in a Marxist, materialist sense of the word (see e.g. Thompson 1984; 1990). Instead, I understand ideology more

[28] See Benthall (2008c) for a discussion of secular NGOs as religious. For more general discussions of development as a religious belief, see Giri et al. (2004) and Van Ufford and Schoeffeleers (1988). Similarly, ter Haar and Ellis (2006:354) note that the modern idea of development may be seen as "the secular translation of a millenarian belief, once general in Europe, concerning the construction of a perfect world."

broadly, based on a conception of the social as having a hermeneutic, in the sense of interpretive, dimension (Purvis and Hunt 1993:474). More specifically, and building on social movement traditions (e.g. Heberle 1951; Wilson 1973; McAdam, McCarthy and Zald 1996; Snow 2004) and cultural anthropology (e.g. Geertz 1973), I understand ideology as referring to sets of references that frame the way actors understand, categorise and act upon the world; as ensembles of ideas, concepts and categories through which actors organise and give meaning to their observed, experienced and/or recorded 'reality' (Hilhorst 2003:8; Gasper and Apthorpe 1996:2). In this perspective, ideology is not necessarily – as in the Marxist, materialist tradition – the tool of the dominant powers, used to legitimise their domination. Rather, ideologies are tools that are available to all, to be used in the in the signifying work and struggles for fixation of social meaning. Thus, to study ideology is not, as John B. Thompson (1990:56) writes, to study the ways in which meaning (or signification) serves for actors to construct and sustain relations of domination – it is to study the ways in which meaning serves for them to *seek* to construct, sustain and challenge relations of domination.

More specifically, I define ideology as a meaning system or a world view that is formulated and shared by a group of people, with the purpose of guiding and motivating them in their quest for what they perceive to be the common good or the ideal society, as well as promoting and justifying their agenda, garnering support and ensuring legitimacy. Three basic points can be derived from this, further distinguishing ideologies from other types of meaning construction: First, ideologies are *collective* meaning systems, as opposed to e.g. individual feelings, instincts and consciousness. Just as there are no private languages, there are no private ideologies (van Dijk 2006:116). Through processes of collective meaning construction, actors determine the significance of things – events, persons, concepts, feelings, phenomena and actions – in particular ways, promoting certain interpretations and excluding others. Second, ideologies are *systems*, meaning that – unlike e.g. traditions – they are attempts at structuring and organising ideas, concepts and categories in a certain way. In the words of Gerring (1997:980), "[i]deology, at the very least, refers to a set of idea-elements that are bound together, that belong to one another in a non-random fashion." Third, contrary to other kinds of collective meaning systems, ideologies are *normative, persuasive and intentional* (Lincoln 2003), insofar as they are meant to provide members of the ideological group with inspiration, direction and guidelines for action as well as to convince potential supporters of their agendas. In other words, ideology is not only about locating, perceiving, identifying and labelling (Goffman 1974), but also about activating, motivating, and transforming (Snow 2004). In this perspective, there is also a strongly educational element in ideologies. Through ideologies, actors seek to educate their audiences in a particular agenda, encouraging them to take action in a particular way. In the words of Chouliaraki (2010:110), aid ideologies can be seen as a sort of

'moral education', presenting "a series of subtle proposals as to how we should feel and act towards suffering."

In relation to transnational Muslim NGOs, then, ideologies of aid can be understood as meaning systems that center on questions of aid provision (e.g. what is aid, how should aid be provided, to whom, by whom), are formulated and shared by actors involved in the provision of aid (e.g. local charities, NGOs, governments, intergovernmental organisations) with the purpose of guiding and motivating them in their provision of aid, as well as justifying and promoting their agenda in the public, garnering support among potential donors and partners and ensuring their legitimacy in doing so.

In the following, I shall outline the contours of a conceptual framework for how to study organisational ideologies of aid, building on the above and seeking to concretise insights from NGO studies and Islamic studies. But first, an important caveat: To study ideologies of aid in transnational Muslim NGOs is not to study organisational meaning making as such; there is much more to meaning making than ideologies (internal practices of disciplining, gossip, project implementation, to mention only a few things). Instead, a study of ideologies is primarily a study of (re)presentations. In other words, it is not about how these organisations *understand* themselves and the work they do, but how they *(re)present* themselves and their work. Overall, this entails a focus on discourses, in the sense of narratives, texts and rhetorical struggles (Williams 1995:126). It is through discourses that ideologies are consciously presented and communicated to an audience and it is through discourses that ideologies are contested, challenged and eventually changed. As Fairclough notes, "politics partly consists in the disputes and struggles which occur in language and over language" (1989:23). This does not mean that practices and structures are irrelevant to the study of ideologies. In the words of Lincoln (2003:6), practices operationalise the ideology, moving it from the sphere of conscious speech to that of embodied material action, while structures, regulating discourse and practice, sediment the ideology in institutions and organisations, thus securing (or attempting to secure) ideological coherence and continuity. However, insofar as I am primarily interested in intentional representations, I study these practices and structures mainly as they are presented to me through discourses, as 'reported reality' (Nauta 2006:150).

Cultures, organisations and audiences

A study of ideology is first and foremost a study of the ideological framework in itself, exploring the underlying ideas, concepts and categories and their interrelations (Oliver and Johnston 2000:8). But it is also a study of the actors constructing the ideology, and the ways in which they formulate, contest, reject and reproduce the ideology, seeking to establish ideological coherence, motivate people, garner support and ensure legitimacy. And finally, it is a study of the context out of which

the ideology is emerging and through which it has been shaped. Seeking to attend to these different aspects, in the following I outline an approach for how to analyse ideologies of aid in transnational Muslim NGOs, based on the concepts of culture, organisation, audiences and frameworks.

Aid cultures

Starting with the latter, namely the context out of which the ideology has emerged, I argue that ideologies of aid in transnational Muslim NGOs must be studied as part of larger *aid cultures*. Historically, and as can be inferred from the above discussion, the study of NGOs has placed these organisations as part of an 'international development system', overlooking other, perhaps more periphery forms of aid provision. My choice of the term 'aid culture' is an attempt at broadening the perspective, underlining that development is not the only form of aid provision among contemporary NGOs and opening up for attention to different kinds of cultures. As such, I seek to challenge conceptions of development as an uncontested, ontological reality, emphasising the fact that aid provision is actually a site of struggle between different paradigms and ideologies (Tvedt 2002:370). This becomes particularly evident in relation to transnational Muslim NGOs. As we shall see, these NGOs cannot meaningfully be contextualised solely in relation to a Western *culture of development aid*, but must be understood in relation to at least one other aid culture, namely the *culture of Islamic aid*. The division into a, largely Middle Eastern, Islamic aid culture and a, largely Western, development culture is not meant as a repetition of Huntington's clash of civilisations thesis. First, they are not per definition in opposition to each other. And second, these cultures are not generic, but temporary and historically specific, constantly changing and over time merging into new cultures. Instead, and paraphrasing Benthall and Bellion-Jourdan (2003:39), with this focus on alternative aid cultures, I seek to unsettle preconceived ideas of Western development aid as a privileged mode of aid provision to a disempowered non-Western world.[29]

With aid culture, I refer to those larger social structures that outline the overall boundaries for what can be said and done – in other words, what is legitimate – in relation to aid provision. Aid cultures are hegemonic meaning systems that have over time institutionalised into relatively stable structures, practices and sedimented meanings (Berger and Luckmann 1966), producing a climate that is conducive to certain actors and aid ideologies and not to others. Compared to ideologies, cultures are much broader, incorporating a wide range of tendencies, ideologies, structures, traditions, actors, ideas. Despite their heterogeneity, however, there are certain aspects that bind them together, making it meaningful to speak of a culture. A shared language is one such factor, ensuring social integration and functioning as a sort of 'symbolic order'. Paraphrasing Tvedt

[29] I use the term 'the West' geographically to refer to the North American and European countries, but also culturally to refer to those traditions, ideologies and ideas that have grown out of these countries' particular histories. Naturally, I do not consider 'the West' in the cultural sense to be a static and unchanging entity, but to be constantly changing, interacting and merging with other cultures.

(2002:369), this symbolically powerful language may change over time but it always tends to serve as an identity marker for the culture vis-à-vis other cultures. Another, more concrete, factor is the participation in economic exchanges, contributing to the construction of very concrete cultural boundaries. In this perspective, NGOs and their ideologies are part of specific cultures, growing out of and shaped by these.[30] In turn, ideologies may over time turn into cultures. As van Dijk (2006:117) notes, over time ideologies may become so widely accepted that they become part of the obvious beliefs or common sense of an entire community. Such cultures are likely to remain highly normative, although much less directional and specific than ideologies. Two cases in point are the cultures of development and Islamic aid, both highly ideological cultures, which have grown out of respectively ideologies of modernisation and secularisation, and the Islamic resurgence.

In the concrete analysis of transnational Muslim NGOs and their ideologies of aid, I emphasise this dynamic nature and specificity of aid cultures through a historical approach. More specifically, I explore the ways in which these organisations are shaped by the cultures of development and Islamic aid through *historical trajectories*: first sketching the emergence of the two different cultures of aid provision, identifying important actors, practices and structures of each culture and sketching their underlying norms and values, their languages so to speak (chapter 3); and then exploring the ways in which transnational Muslim NGOs have historically related to these two cultures (chapter 4).

Organisations

The relationship between cultures and ideologies is not one of straight-forward reproduction; paraphrasing D. Lewis et al. (2003:552), the ideological interpretations of organisations cannot be reduced to the meanings and power structures in broader society. In their construction of ideologies, organisations do not simply duplicate elements from the cultures out of which they have

[30] My understanding of culture is in large part consistent with Foucault's notion of discursive formation (e.g. Foucault 1970), understood as a large and relatively stable (although flexible) body of knowledge, a framework outlining rules and norms for what can be said and done. See e.g. Escobar (1995) for an analysis of development as a discursive formation. Likewise, my understanding of ideology has some similarities with the underlying understanding of discourse, insofar as they both, as noted by Purvis and Hunt (1993) refer to "the idea that human individuals participate in forms of understanding, comprehension or consciousness of the relations and activities in which they are involved" and further, that this understanding is "borne through language and other systems of signs, it is transmitted between people and institutions, and, perhaps most importantly, *it makes a difference*; that is, the way in which people comprehend and make sense of the social world has consequences for the direction and character of their action and inaction" (Purvis and Hunt 1993:474, emphasis in the original). However, rather than seeing the two as interchangeable, I conceptualise ideology as a particular form of discourse. In this perspective, cultures and discursive formations are made up by a wide range of different kinds of discourse, including e.g. ideologies, traditions, common sense, and histories, each with their specific characteristics. As such, my choice to use the term ideology should not be understood as a rejection of discourse theory in the Foucaultian sense, but rather as a supplement. To make matters more complicated, in the following I do not use the term discourse in a broad, Foucaultian sense, but as referring more specifically to the texts, statements, and narratives produced and expressed by staff in the four NGOs.

grown; they appropriate, interpret, challenge and sometimes reject these elements, in the process constructing new ideologies of aid and contributing to changing existing aid cultures, albeit slowly. In this perspective, NGOs are at once carriers and consumers of existing cultural meanings and producers of new meanings (Tarrow 1992:189), simultaneously contributing to the stabilisation and fragmentation of cultures (D. Lewis et al. 2003:552). As such, the analysis of ideologies must pay attention to the concrete *organisations* constructing them, exploring the particular characteristics that they possess and the concrete local and national contexts in which they operate. Furthermore, and related to this, I suggest a focus on the individual actors making up the organisations: Who are the people formulating, presenting, contesting and reproducing ideologies? What is their professional background? Education? Connections and relations? Based on the assumption that these factors contribute to shaping the ways in which organisations appropriate, interpret, challenge and reject cultural elements, constructing their ideologies of aid, the thesis explores the *biographies* and *networks* of organisational staff (chapters 5 and 7).

Which meanings become dominant in an organisation's ideology is also a question of power and hierarchies (D. Lewis et al. 2003:554). Rather than rational, machine-like structures (Wright 1994), I approach NGOs as heterogeneous, composite and complex, containing a plurality of actors constantly contesting and challenging each other, leaving the organisation in a permanent situation of ideological negotiations and ambiguity (Alvesson 1994). In the words of Hernes (2007), there might be consensus in an organisation, but there is never coherence. This does not mean, however, that some actors are not more powerful than others. Some actors have better access to defining and shaping the meaning systems of the organisation, capable of, albeit temporarily, ensuring a certain degree of ideological stability. Apart from education, professional background and connections, factors such as title, tasks, and geographical location all contribute to determining a person's position in the organisational hierarchy and, by extension, his or her clout in the struggles to construct, contest and confirm the ideology.

Audiences

Organisations do not formulate and present their ideologies to an undefined or abstract other, but address particular *audiences* with the purpose of motivating and encouraging them to support their organisation (Benford and Snow 2000:624).[31] Here, issues of legitimacy are central: if audiences do not consider organisations to be legitimate, they will not support them. As noted above, NGOs do not *have* legitimacy per se; they can only *claim* legitimacy, hoping that their audiences will agree to confer this quality upon them. In their attempts to present legitimate ideologies,

[31] The organisations themselves are also, in some ways, the audience. As Zald (1996:261) notes, there are audiences inside and outside a movement, insofar as an ideology also serves to construct and maintain organisational identity, and mobilise participants. The present analysis, however, centres primarily on the ideology as (re)presentation, leading to a focus on extra-organisational audiences.

organisations seek to make their ideologies resonate or align with these audiences (Wagemakers 2010:21): what do audiences consider to be good, effective, true, appropriate aid? The more an ideology resonates with its audiences, the more legitimate an organisation seems and the more support it will get (Benford and Snow 2000:621). In this, organisations draw on existing cultural repertoires and their symbols, stories, rituals, traditions and ideologies (Benford and Snow 2000; Johnston and Klandermans 1995; Swidler 1986); their choices being shaped and constrained by the particular cultural context in which they – and their audiences – are situated (Williams 1995:126).

At the same time, audiences are not simply audiences, indirectly influencing ideologies through the NGOs' attempts at adjusting to their (perceived) expectations, but actors that can actively influence the organisations in more direct ways. For instance, as we shall see, individual donors may prefer supporting concrete, tangible causes such as orphans or schools, to more intangible activities such as 'capacity-building' or 'empowerment'. Likewise, institutional donors may condition their funding on requirements as to accountability, inclusion or gender equality. Partner organisations may introduce NGOs to new aid conceptions and approaches. And governments may formulate laws and policies, restricting the ways in which NGOs carry out their work. Audiences thus influence the construction of aid ideologies in very real ways, interchangeably forcing, encouraging, pushing or inspiring organisations to change their conceptions of aid.

In this perspective, the audiences exercise a great influence on the ways in which ideologies are shaped, and as such, it becomes important to explore organisational relations with audiences. What kinds of audiences do the NGOs seek to attract? How do they influence constructions of ideologies? And how do they shape conceptions of legitimacy? Obviously, the more audiences the NGO seeks to satisfy, and the more contradictory conceptions they have of what constitutes legitimate aid, the more likely the NGO will experience tensions (Ossewaarde et al. 2008:48). The question is then, which legitimacy matters most (Lister 2003:184), when and why? In the present analysis, ideological audiences are explored through an examination of concrete organisational networks and relations with key audience types, namely donors (individual as well as institutional), government, and partners, seeking to place these in relation to broader aid cultures and discussing the ways in which they may influence the NGOs' construction of ideologies (chapters 5 and 7).

Ideally, one could argue that recipients should be included as part of the audiences, reflecting their influence on the construction of ideologies. Just like NGOs need the support of donors and partners, they also need the acceptance of recipients in order to appear legitimate. A staff member in one of the NGOs I studied told me of a Turkish NGO in which staff had worn skimpy t-shirts and tight jeans helping victims of a hurricane in a religiously conservative area of Bangladesh, making recipients feel uncomfortable. According to her, recipients may not have a choice in emergency

situations; but in the long run, she said, they will prefer a more religiously appropriate organisation. In this perspective, NGOs can be expected to adjust their ideologies to recipients in the same way they adjust their ideologies to donors and partners, opening up for spaces of negotiation (Silk 2004:236). Similarly, it could be argued that recipients should be seen as part of the organisations, at least in theory exerting an influence on the ways in which ideologies are formulated through their interactions with project staff. As such, considerations as to the concrete recipients approached are included in the following analyses of organisational constituents and audiences. That said, however, there can be no doubt that, compared to other types of audience, recipients' possibilities for exercising influence on organisational ideologies are severely limited. They cannot condition their support on material or other kinds of resources; all they can offer the organisations is their accept or rejection of aid, and insofar as there are many more poor people in need of aid than there are organisations, this resource is not worth much. Instead, the present analysis pays more attention to recipients as objects of aid, exploring the ways in which they are interpellated through ideologies, as shall be discussed further below.[32]

The above outlined approach places transnational Muslim NGOs and their aid ideologies in a broader context of aid cultures, arguing that these organisations grow out of and draw on particular cultures in attempts to create resonance with particular audiences. As such, this approach directs attention to the actors and structures creating what we may call 'conditions of possibility' (Dominguez 2008) for the construction of ideologies. It does not, however, provide us with any directions as to how to explore the ideological meaning system itself. In the following, I shall sketch my approach to the analysis of these concrete ideological expressions.

Ideological elements, subjects and frames

Analyses of ideological frameworks have approached the issue in different ways. Perhaps most famously, Wilson (1973) argued for a basic trichotomy of structural elements, consisting in diagnosis, prognosis and rationale. Inspired by Wilson's decomposition of ideological dimensions, I conceptualise the ideological framework in terms of a vision, strategies, and a rationale. First, the *vision* outlines the purpose of the ideology and the problems it seeks to solve: Is the problem economic poverty, spiritual degeneration, inequality, physical suffering, or something else? And, correspondingly, is the purpose of aid to generate income, strengthen faith, restore justice or relieve suffering? Second, the *strategies* explicate how these problems should be solved and the vision achieved, outlining directions for the NGO: Is aid about provision of food and medicine, is it about education and technical advice or about building schools and mosques? And third, the *rationale* provides the underlying reasons for the provision of aid, answering questions as to why

[32] Naturally, this does not mean that recipients do not exercise agency in the ways in which they interact with the organisations. However, this aspect is not the topic of the present thesis. For a discussion of how recipients interact with Muslim NGOs, see Palmer (2011).

aid should be provided: Is it a religious obligation, for instance, or a human duty? To these three basic ideological elements, I add a fourth, namely *authority*, referring to those ideological discourses that seek to legitimate the organisation formulating the ideology. In other words, what gives this particular NGO its power to formulate this ideology (Slim 2002)? With this, I seek to emphasise an understanding of ideologies as formulated by particular actors, presenting not only their visions, rationale and strategies, but also, to some degree presenting and forming themselves through their ideologies. Ideologies are, in this perspective important tools in the definition of what it means to be an NGO, of NGO-ing (Hilhorst 2003).

Cross-cutting these four elements of the ideological framework are considerations as to what we may call the *aid chain* (Silk 2004). Underlying all ideologies of aid is a basic chain of aid provision, outlining who are the rightful givers of aid and who are the rightful recipients. Aid ideologies produce different versions of these subjects, often expressed in the basic, somewhat clinical terms of 'donors' and 'beneficiaries', sometimes more emotionally as 'generous donors' and 'grateful beneficiaries', and other times as 'supporters' and 'clients', or simply 'partners'.[33] Likewise, the aid chain explicates the ideal relations between these subjects, based on underlying theories of gift giving. Is aid a personal gift from an individual donor to an individual recipient, with the NGO serving merely as a facilitator? Or is it an institutional gift from an NGO to groups of recipients, facilitated by the individual donor?

The concrete analysis of these ideological elements and subjects (chapters 6 and 8) takes the form not so much of a word for word analysis focusing on specific narrative structures, metaphors, and discursive devices, but instead presents a focus on substantive themes, patterns and meta-narratives (Wuthnow 2011:12). In this, I have been inspired by the so-called framing approach. Framing is a handle for examining the interpretive processes through which extant meanings are debated and challenged and new ones are articulated and amplified (Snow 2003). The concept of frames refers to "interpretative schemata that offer a language and cognitive tools for making sense of experiences and events in the 'world out there'" (Wiktorowicz 2004:15). Frames are, in the words of Benford and Snow (2000:614), action-oriented sets of belief and meanings that inspire, organise and legitimate the ideas, activities and identity of an organisation, and framing is the construction of these sets of meaning, denoting "an active, processual phenomenon that implies agency and contention at the level of reality construction" (Benford and Snow 2000:614). In this perspective, frames can be usefully conceptualised as constituting the different elements of ideology, and framing as the process through which organisations construct and articulate these ideological elements, thus emphasising a dynamic and processual understanding of ideology.

[33] In this understanding of ideology as producing not only ideas but also subjects, I am loosely inspired by Althusser's (1976) notion of interpellation, referring to the processes by which ideological subjects are produced (see also Fassin 2008; Purvis and Hunt 1993).

To sum up, I approach the analysis of aid ideologies as an analysis of ideological frames, exploring the ways in which vision frames, strategy frames, rationale frames and authority frames are articulated and elaborated, and paying particular attention to the construction of ideological subjects through these framing processes, all with the purpose of analysing how organisations conceptualise aid and Islam and the nexus between them.

Summary

This thesis is a study of ideologies of aid in transnational Muslim NGOs, exploring the ways in which these organisations define and present 'aid' and 'Islam', the factors shaping their ideological conceptions and the ways in which they position themselves in relation to broader contexts of aid provision, as explicated in the three research questions outlined in the introduction: How do transnational Muslim NGOs present their ideologies of aid? What are the factors that have shaped these ideologies? And how do transnational Muslim NGOs manoeuvre in relation to the broader aid field?

This first chapter of the thesis has outlined an analytical approach to the study of these NGOs and their ideologies of aid, providing a set of guidelines for how to answer these research questions. Addressing the question as to which actors and structures shape organisational ideologies (the second research question), chapter 1 has proposed a focus on aid cultures, organisations and audiences, arguing that the transnational Muslim NGOs have grown out of and draw on broader aid cultures in their construction of aid ideologies, attempting to create resonance with particular audiences. More specifically, and addressing the question of how the concrete ideologies are defined and presented (the first research question), the chapter then introduced an understanding of ideological frameworks as structured around a number of elements and subjects, conceptualising the construction of these in terms of framing processes.

Central to this approach is the cultural encounter, or what Long (1989) has called 'the social interfaces' of meanings. Defined as "critical point[s] of intersection between different lifeworlds, social fields or levels of social organisation, where social discontinuities based upon discrepancies in values, interests, knowledges and power, are most likely to be located" (Long 2001:243), social interfaces are real or imaginary meeting points of different discourses, ideologies or cultures (Hilhorst 2003:11), and studies of social interfaces can bring out the dynamics of the interactions taking place at such meeting points, showing how the goals, perceptions, interests and relationships of the involved parties may be reshaped as a result of this interaction (Long 1989:2). In this perspective, rather than building on notions of civilisational clashes, the analysis of the ways in which transnational Muslim NGOs navigate in relation to the two aid cultures is in fact an attempt at abandoning "a binary opposition between Western and non-Western epistemologies

and practices, and instead attempt[ing] to deal with the intricate interplay and joint appropriation and transformation of different bodies of knowledge" (Arce and Long 2000:24).

Overall, then, the chapter has presented an approach for answering not only the two first, but also the third research question: How do transnational Muslim NGOs manoeuvre in relation to the cultures of development and Islamic aid? In the following, I approach the four transnational Muslim NGOs as sites of meetings, merges, and negotiations, exploring their bi-cultural heritage and asking how the two different cultures of aid provision are transmitted, translated, and appropriated by the organisations in their attempts to construct their own ideologies of aid.

CHAPTER 2. APPROACHING TRANSNATIONAL MUSLIM NGOs

Having outlined the theoretical and conceptual framework for the analysis, we can now move on to the objects of the study, namely the transnational Muslim NGOs. Before that, however, a short note on the definition of 'Muslim NGOs' is in place. As noted above, the terms 'Islam' and 'Islamic' are not straight-forward and descriptive, but assume different meanings according to context. This raises the problem of definition: What is a 'Muslim NGO'? Since this analysis' interest in Islam turns on the organisations' Islamisation of (parts of) their ideologies of aid, it seems most logical to focus on organisations that explicitly acknowledge an 'Islamic' or 'Muslim' identity. Thus, the analysis advances an understanding of 'Muslim NGOs' as those NGOs that constitute themselves with reference to Muslim discourses, i.e. NGOs that define themselves as Muslim, either by simply referring to Islam in their name, or by explicitly referring to Islamic authorities, traditions, figures or concepts in their practices, structures and community (see e.g. Benedetti 2006 or Marranci 2008 for similar definitions).[34] At the same time, the meaning conferred to the term 'Muslim NGO' by these organisations themselves is precisely the focus of the analysis.[35]

Case studies of four transnational Muslim NGOs

Based on a historical analysis of the background and trajectories of transnational Muslim NGOs in general (chapters 3 and 4), the analysis takes the form of case studies of four transnational Muslim NGOs: The International Islamic Relief Organisation, the International Islamic Charitable Organisation, Islamic Relief Worldwide and Muslim Aid. Established in 1978, the *International Islamic Relief Organisation* (IIROSA) is one of the oldest transnational Muslim NGOs. The organisation was established as a part of the Muslim World League and has its headquarters in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. Apart from its several offices in Saudi Arabia, the IIROSA has 34 country offices all over the world, with the largest programmes in Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Sudan, Pakistan and Somalia (2004). The organisation has a budget of approx. 46 million dollars (2009). The *International Islamic Charity Organisation* (IICO), with headquarters in Kuwait, was established

[34] Complete reliance on self-definitions is potentially problematic, since there are organisations that do not consider themselves 'Muslim' but which nonetheless display a number of characteristics that would traditionally be considered religious. A case in point is the Aga Khan Foundation. The organisation is headed by a religious leader, and funded by a religiously defined donor constituency, but considers itself non-denominational. Such disproportions between self-definitions and common perceptions of what or who is 'religious' point to the need for external definitions. In the present study, however, Aga Khan is excluded from the group of transnational Muslim NGOs, together with the 32 Red Crescent societies, as they are formally nondenominational (even though they sometimes take an Islamic flavour).

[35] The term 'transnational' refers to the fact that these organisations engage in relations and activities across the borders and spaces of nations. Thus, following Mandaville (2007a:276), I use the term 'international' to refer to interactions between two or more sovereign units in world politics, usually nation-states, while the term 'transnational' refers to a wider range of social formations and transactions which are structured across the borders and spaces of nations, but which do not necessarily entail a primary role for governments, e.g. the activities of the NGOs studied here.

in 1984 by a group of 160 religious leaders, including the legal scholar and Islamic activist Yusef al Qardawi. The IICO has a budget of approx. 30 million dollars (2006), employing 240 people in Kuwaiti headquarters and 85 abroad. The organisation has offices in eight countries and works in a number of other countries through Kuwait Joint Relief Committee, an alliance of aid organisations.[36] Its largest programmes are in Sudan, Jordan, Uganda, Nigeria and Niger. *Islamic Relief Worldwide* (in the following, Islamic Relief) was established in Britain by Egyptian immigrants in 1984. The organisation has a budget of 96 million dollars (2009) and is the largest transnational Muslim NGO in the world. It has fundraising offices, or partners, in 13 countries – including USA, Canada, Britain, France, Sweden, Germany, Switzerland, Belgium, Netherlands, Italy, Turkey, Malaysia, and South Africa – and country offices in 26 countries, with Palestine, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Sudan and Indonesia as the largest programmes (2009). Islamic Relief employs approx. 1,500 staff, 100 of which work in the headquarters in Birmingham while 1.400 work in one of the organisation's country offices or fundraising offices. And finally, *Muslim Aid*, based in the UK, was established by the American convert Yusef Islam (formerly known as Cat Stevens) in 1985. Muslim Aid has 11 country offices, focusing in particular on Pakistan, Indonesia, Somalia, Bangladesh, and India (2005). The organisation has a budget of approx. 73 million dollars (2009), employing around 1,200 employees, of which 80 work in the headquarters in London, while the remaining work in one of the country offices.[37]

Table 2.1. Overview of the four organisations[38]

Name	Origin	Year	Budget	Staff	Major countries
Islamic Relief	Britain	1984	96 million	1,500	Palestine Bangladesh Pakistan Sudan Indonesia
Muslim Aid	Britain	1985	73 million	1,200	Pakistan Indonesia Somalia Bangladesh India
International Islamic Relief Organisation	Saudi Arabia	1979	47 million	2,000	Saudi Arabia Jordan Sudan Pakistan Somalia
International Islamic Charitable Organisation	Kuwait	1984	30 million	325	Sudan Jordan Uganda Nigeria Niger

[36] Kuwait Joint Relief Committee has offices in, among others, Albania, Bosnia, Bangladesh, Croatia, Kosovo and Somalia.
[37] All currencies have been converted into US dollars (April 2011) for the sake of readability and consistency.
[38] The table builds on annual reports as well as information from staff.

There are several reasons for approaching the analysis of contemporary transnational Muslim NGOs through cases studies. Among certain researchers (e.g. Yin 1989) case studies are only found useful insofar as they contribute to science by representing, or rejecting the general, based on a positivist epistemology with strict demands for 'validity' and 'scientific value' (Lind Petersen 2001:39). Flyvbjerg (2001:73), however, argues that this attempt to apply the rules of natural science to social science by striving only for strictly generalisable and representative findings may rest on a misguided understanding of what social science is or should be. Instead, he argues, social science should be about understanding meaning and how it is constructed; about making clear how and why actors believe the world is the way it is (see also Williams 2000:221; Stake 1994:236). And in this perspective, case studies are apt methods, insofar as they, through their interpretive approach, thick descriptions and rich detailed studies generate a nuanced view of the particular cases that are studied, capable of grasping the complex processes of meaning construction (Flyvbjerg 2006:223). As Gluckman has noted: "Clearly one good case can illuminate the working of a social system in a way that a series of morphological statements cannot achieve" (1961:9).

Cases can be divided into different types. Stake (1995), for instance, distinguishes between intrinsic and instrumental cases, while Yin (1989) talks about descriptive, explanatory or exploratory cases. Flyvbjerg (2006) provides a full-fledged typology of cases, categorising them into extreme, maximum variation, critical and paradigmatic cases, and discussing the different strategies for selection of each case type. Overall, he argues, these cases are selected on the basis of different expectations about their content. The extreme case, for instance, is selected in order to obtain information on unusual cases, which can be particularly problematic or particularly good in a more closely defined sense, while maximum variation cases are selected with the view to obtain information about the significance of various circumstances for case process and outcome. Finally, paradigmatic cases are cases that are expected to highlight more general characteristics of the societies in question (Flyvbjerg 2006:230f).

The four organisations in point were first and foremost selected in the expectation that they would be paradigmatic cases of contemporary transnational Muslim NGOs, highlighting general characteristics of such organisations. As such, these NGOs are not selected because they are 'average' or 'representative' for all transnational Muslim NGOs, but because they are expected to contain the most information, the richest narratives, the broadest range of characteristics, serving as emblematic examples of transnational Muslim NGOs. They are, in other words, selected in the anticipation that they provide the possibility to learn the most (Flyvbjerg 2001:78). In this perspective, paradigmatic cases may not provide the foundation for 1:1 generalisations, extending findings related to the four organisations to all transnational Muslim NGOs, nor of statistical generalisations. However, they can generate what Williams (2000:215) calls *moderatum*

generalisations, where aspects of the organisations studied can be seen to be instances of broader trends in the field of transnational Muslim NGOs.

The selection of paradigmatic cases presents some problems, insofar as it is difficult, if not impossible, to determine on beforehand whether a given case has metaphorical and prototypical value. As Flyvbjerg argues, the initial choice of the paradigmatic case may therefore be largely intuitive; however, it must be accounted for in collectively acceptable ways (2006:232). In other words, to find the right paradigmatic cases is a dialectic process of back and forth rather than a straight-forward selection based on predefined criteria. In the case of the present analysis, for instance, this meant that I started out with a much larger number of organisations, a pool of potential cases, which was then gradually reduced to four organisations as my knowledge and understanding of the field increased. In particular, my historical analysis of the field of transnational Muslim organisations (chapter 4), showed that transnational Muslim NGOs have been positioned in different ways after 9.11. and the War on Terror. Two types of transnational Muslim NGOs seem to have emerged: Some NGOs, conceived to be 'moderate', have been integrated into the field of development aid, receiving funding from major development agencies and partnering with Western NGOs, while others have remained at the margins of the development culture, characterised as 'traditional' or even 'fundamentalist'. Among these two types of transnational Muslim NGOs, I then selected four of the oldest, biggest and most well-established ones, based on the assumption that they would best reflect and express developments and struggles of the field.[39]

This focus on two different types of organisations facilitates triangulation and comparison across types when this can reveal extra insights or refine findings (Stake 1994:241). Likewise, the inclusion of two organisations in each case opens up for case-internal comparisons. However, the study should not be seen as a strictly comparative study, systematically comparing organisations on a range of predetermined variables. First, a number of practical obstacles make such straight-forward comparisons between the organisations difficult. For instance, the amount of data collected in relation to the four organisations differs widely, due to different organisational traditions of publicity as well as different levels of access (more about this in the section below on positioning). Secondly, and more fundamentally, comparative studies may not necessarily be the

[39] Arguably, a number of other NGOs could have been interesting to study. For instance, Iranian Shi'ite NGOs, often in the form of semi-governmental foundations, are obvious examples of transnational Muslim NGOs that have remained squarely outside the culture of development aid. Likewise, as home to one of the largest groups of Muslim NGOs in terms of numbers, USA is severely underrepresented in the analysis. Although many North American Muslim NGOs were forced to close down as a consequence of new anti-terror legislation and declining popular support after 9.11., the country still hosts more than 30 active, albeit relatively small, organisations. Finally, recent years have seen the emergence of several international Islamic NGOs in Turkey, including the Deniz Feneri Association and the Human Rights and Liberties Humanitarian Relief Foundation.

most fruitful for studying complex processes of meaning making. As Stake (1994:242) notes, comparability can easily become the opposite of thick interpretative descriptions, because in seeking the basis for comparability the researcher often looses the uniqueness and complexities that predominate and from which we learn the most (cf. Lind Petersen 2001:42). Instead, the present study takes a more explorative approach, open to the possibility that the two cases may at times differ, and at others not. It aims to present two portraits of two different kinds of organisations, providing thick descriptions of the different ways in which these organisations construct their ideologies, and attempting to capture what Flyvbjerg, quoting Nietzsche (2006:237) has referred to as the 'rich ambiguity' of these actors.

Data collection and production

The case studies are based on a corpus of material, reflecting different aspects of organisational ideologies. I have prioritised the collection of material that expresses or illustrates the *(re)presentational discourses* of the four organisations. The analysis is based on two different kinds of ideological representations, including *official, negotiated representations* as expressed in public documents such as websites, annual reports and newsletters, as well as more *unofficial, individualised representations*, as expressed by staff members in interviews and during their presentations of e.g. organisational buildings, activities and project sites. In concrete terms, data has been collected by way of a three-pronged approach, inspired by ethnographic, journalistic and micro-sociological methods: gathering of documents, semi-structured interviews, and so-called presentations, the former expressing official representational discourses and the two latter more individualised representational discourses.

Collecting documents

First, I have collected documents about and by the organisations, including most importantly website information, annual reports, financial statements, policies, brochures, project documents, and photos. For a list of all organisational material, see appendix A. These documents reflect and express official representational discourses; they are negotiated and agreed-upon discourses presented by the organisations rather than by individuals in the organisations. A few documents have an identifiable author, but most do not, presenting instead the organisation as the authoritative author. As such, these documents reflect the official ideology of the organisations, conveying the image the organisations want their audiences to see.[40]

[40] In my analysis, I do not include internal organisational documents such as e-mails, minutes from staff meetings and memos, insofar as I analyse the ways in which organisations present their ideologies, not the role ideologies play internally in organisations as a way of motivating and creating internal coherence.

In the collection of documents, organisational websites came to play a particularly important role. With globalisation and IT technology, NGO ideologies are increasingly expressed and embedded not in particular communities or places, but on the internet. To the geographic, territorial 'there' of traditional ethnography (Gille and Riain 2002:272) has been added a non-territorial 'there'. The websites have several functions in relation to the presentation and promotion of ideologies: Overall, as any other transnational organisation, the four Muslim NGOs use the internet as a window through which to present and exhibit their ideologies to donors, partners, potential new staff members and other audiences. Second, they use it as a library for ideological documents, uploading annual reports, financial statements, policies, and other organisational material. Finally, the design of the websites serve as a way to symbolise organisational identity: the pictures, logos, colours and structure of the sites send signals as to the kind of organisation the NGO wants to be.

Islamic Relief and Muslim Aid's websites are both in English. Islamic Relief maintains an Arabic version (although much more basic than the English version), but Muslim Aid does not. All material on the websites is in English, as well as most other organisational material I was presented with (except for a few pamphlets in Bangla, produced by the country offices in Bangladesh). IICO and IIROSA's websites, on the other hand, are both in Arabic, with English versions. During the course of my study, IIROSA and IICO both re-launched their websites, presenting more up-to-date versions of their English-language sites.[41] Similarly, most of the two organisations' material is in Arabic, with the exception of a few annual reports, newsletters (or parts of newsletters) and pamphlets. Since I do not speak Arabic, I had some of this material translated into English by native Arabic speakers, either in writing or orally. In order to rule out the possibility that the English language and Arabic language material presented fundamentally different ideologies, I made some random checks, but found that there were no substantial differences between the two types of material.[42]

Visiting the organisations

Apart from written material, my case studies also rely on data collected through visits to the four organisations. Ideologies are not only expressed in texts, as deterritorialised and disembodied official representations; but also in and through concrete people and the ways in which they present themselves, their organisation, and their activities. Although the official representations are per definition more coherent and consistent, the individualised representations play an equally

[41] While I do briefly discuss the significance of these changes in chapter 6, I have not carried out a systematic comparison between the old and new sites, due to time constraints. Such a comparison would have been interesting insofar as it could reveal what kinds of information was maintained and what was removed in the process, and, by extension providing insights into changing self-presentations of the two organisations.

[42] However, there is no doubt that more systematic comparisons between Arabic and English versions of the websites could have been fruitful, displaying subtle differences in the ways in which the organisations target respectively English-speaking and Arabic-speaking audiences.

important role in the maintenance and development of ideologies, formulating links between discourse and practice and ensuring the continued relevance of the ideology. Thus, rather than competing kinds of representations, they should be seen as complementary aspects of the same ideology, describing different aspects.

Geographically, my fieldwork included visits to all four headquarters located in respectively Britain, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, and to selected country offices in Bangladesh and Jordan as well as a brief trip to Lebanon. The visits were carried out in 2008 and 2009, each lasting between one and five weeks, altogether a period of approximately four months. Originally, Bangladesh was selected because all four organisations worked there, thus not only easing the practical organisation of my trips but also facilitating comparisons between the organisations. However, when I arrived in December 2009, IIROSA had recently closed down its office in Bangladesh due to pressure from the government.[43] Similarly, I had difficulties getting access to IICO's office (see below). Instead, I base my analysis of IIROSA and IICO's ideologies on interviews and visits carried out in Jordan prior to my trip to Bangladesh.[44] Insofar as the analysis of the four organisations is not intended as a systematic comparison, the fact that some examples are taken from a Bangladeshi context, others from a Jordanian context, is not necessarily analytically problematic. Instead, the purpose of the selected cases is to provide emblematic examples of each of the organisations, illustrating typical ways in which they present and formulate their strategies and activities. In fact, an argument could be made that the choice of two different countries actually strengthened rather than weakened the study, insofar as the Gulf-based organisations generally tend to have a stronger focus on the Middle East, while the UK-based organisations focus very much on Asia.

During my visits to the four NGO headquarters and country offices, I conducted almost 100 interviews, attempting to cover a broad range of different representatives from the organisations and including headquarter staff, country office staff, trustees, management and regular staff as well as male and female staff.[45] All interviews were loosely based on an interview guide organised around a number of themes, including questions on organisational vision, rationale, strategies and authority; conceptions of Islam and aid; organisational and individual relations; organisational

[43] While the organisation used to have an office with 20 staff members, running six orphanages, a number of mosque and tube well construction projects as well as other activities, what was left was a for-profit medical clinic, offering check-ups to Bangladeshi migrant workers going to Saudi Arabia.
[44] This trip was never intended to be the main source of data for the analysis and as such, the data gathered are not as comprehensive as the data from Islamic Relief and Muslim Aid. However, supplemented with the interviews from IICO and IIROSA headquarters as well as written material, I contend that these data are sufficient to provide a reasonably coherent picture of ideological frameworks in the two organisations.
[45] Apart from staff in the four organisations, I have conducted more than 30 interviews with representatives of other national and transnational aid organisations, Muslim as well as non-Muslim, as well as other resource persons, serving as background and context information to the analysis.

history; and personal motivation. Most interviews would last between 60 and 90 minutes, while a few were considerably longer (some up to 3-4 hours) and some much shorter. A few interviews were recorded, but most were not. Instead, I would take notes during and after each interview.[46] Apart from interviews, I would also collect organisational material through what we may call presentations: Staff would present their organisation to me, they would present other staff and, most importantly, they would present organisational project sites. In total, I have visited more than 30 project sites, including orphanages, vocational training centers, microfinance projects, HIV/AIDS campaigns, and dyke construction sites, to mention only a few. Often, I would visit several projects in one day, spending an hour or two at each site, conducting short interviews with staff and recipients and getting a tour of the facilities. For a detailed overview of trips, interviews and presentations, see appendix B.

This particular fieldwork design, including visits to different geographical sites carries some inherent challenges. Although in principle, multi-sited fieldwork can be exactly as in-depth and long as single-sited fieldwork, in practice it will most often be much shorter since the researcher has to visit several different sites in the same time other researchers visit one. In my case, the large number of sites combined with a restricted timeframe meant that I was not able to spend more than a few weeks in each site. This particular design had some consequences for the kinds of data I was able to collect.

First, the short visits of multi-sited fieldwork had implications for my understanding of context. Logically, with shorter visits comes a loss of descriptive details (Nadai and Maeder 2005), not only of the organisational discourses and practices, but also of their immediate context. In other words, with visits to six different countries, my knowledge of each national context is substantially less detailed than if I had only visited one country. Does this lack of contextualisation mean that multi-sited research such as the present study is 'rushed' or indeed 'bad' research? (Nadai and Maeder 2005). Two responses to this can be advanced: One is pragmatic, arguing that it is simply a question of focus. Thus, while a single-site study of the headquarters of one transnational NGO would perhaps be based on a more detailed description of the local or national context, it would most likely lack information on international or transnational aspects such as relations to country offices, project site activities and cooperation with intergovernmental institutions – aspects which the present study includes. Another response would question more fundamentally the notion of 'context', challenging expectations of complete contextualisation. Nadai and Maeder (2005) argue

[46] All notes are available upon request. In the analysis, all interviewees have been anonymised. When relevant, they are presented with function and locality. Certain functions are of course difficult to anonymise, due to their uniqueness; for instance, there is only one IIROSA country director in Jordan, and people with knowledge of the organisations will know who he is. In such cases, I have left out the title when I judged the quote to be the least bit controversial or sensitive. In other instances, I have kept the title. I have not anonymised the organisations, except in what I judged to be controversial or sensitive cases.

that this ideal of contextualisation stems from the classic anthropological fieldwork tradition, focusing on a particular and clearly bounded culture in a single place (ideally an island), and encouraging holistic representations of this entity. In this perspective, the 'context' is a relatively easily defined and delimited thing, and complete contextualisation is a tenable ideal. But contemporary ethnographic research takes place in increasingly complex societies, aiming not to describe society in its entirety, but particular social forms and expressions hereof. This means that 'context' is no longer an empirical reality, but must be constructed by the researcher. This perspective underlines an attention to gaps and lacks and blind angles in any contextualisation, but at the same time opens up for alternative ways of contextualising. In the present analysis, then, transnational Muslim NGOs are contextualised on a number of different levels: Overall, they are seen as part of, and shaped by, global and transnational aid cultures. At the same time, they are situated in relation to particular historical trajectories. And finally, individual NGOs are placed in concrete national and local contexts, exploring their specific organisational constellations and audiences.[47]

Another consequence of the fieldwork design centers more specifically on my interaction with staff in the organisations. Due to the short duration of my visits, I would only interview people once (or, in some cases, twice), and most often on the organisation's own premises (i.e. in an office or a meeting room). Likewise, my visits to project sites would often be relatively short and always accompanied by country office staff. With little time to build up mutual confidence, to observe other than the most visible practices and to explore alternative interpretations, visits of this length and kind generate a certain kind of data, centring on external (re)presentations. Thus, I did not witness any fights or gossip between staff members, nor did I hear much about financial problems or visit any failed projects, just like I did not read internal memos or staff meeting minutes. Instead I was presented with annual reports on glossy paper, I visited what management considered the most successful projects, and I talked to the most competent staff members. I did, in other words, by and large see the organisations as they wanted me to see them. As such, one could argue that I did not get a 'real' picture of the organisations; I did not scrape the surface to find out what was underneath this image I was presented with. Is it really true what they say? Do their strategies work? Are their recipients as happy as they say they are? However, while it is certainly true that this picture shows only a certain part of the organisations, such criticism misses the point of the present study. The purpose of the study has never been to present complete ethnographies of the four organisations in question, covering all aspects of their work and identity (insofar as that is

[47] As such, this approach rejects the argument that NGOs should primarily be seen as reflections of particular national contexts; what some have referred to as 'methodological nationalism'. At the same time, it rejects an understanding of these organisations as part of a 'global civil society', detached from national and local contexts, insisting instead on a contextualisation that takes into consideration both local, national and transnational layers.

even possible). Instead, the analysis focuses on a very specific aspect of these organisations, namely their construction, expression, and presentation of ideologies of aid. In this perspective, it does not matter whether the information I get is 'real' or not – what matters is that this is what the organisational representatives have chosen to present to me, thus to some degree expressing the self-image and (re)presentations of the organisation. In the words of Hilhorst (2003:4), NGOs present different faces to different stakeholders and in different situations, and one face is not more 'real' than the other. My interest lies in what face people present to me, how they present it, and why they choose to present me with precisely this face.

Questions of positioning: Studying the familiar and the foreign

Fieldwork in familiar settings

For me, to study Muslim NGOs was in many ways to study the familiar (Alvesson 2003); in particular when I was studying strongly development-oriented NGOs such as Muslim Aid and Islamic Relief. I am a former NGO employee myself; I have worked in Save the Children, in Danish Red Cross and in the Danish Institute for Human Rights. I know about empowerment, capacity building and rights-based approaches. I have been a project manager and I have taken courses in LogFrame Approaches. I have been to coordination meetings, written tender applications, and I have reported, monitored and evaluated. In short, I know the 'NGO speak' (Tvedt 1998). This familiarity with the field was further strengthened by two things: One, when setting up interviews with staff, my contacts in Muslim Aid and Islamic Relief would often select young development professionals rather than older, more religiously conservative staff. Whether this was part of a conscious strategy to present me with the organisations' most 'development-friendly' face, an attempt to couple me with people they thought would be sympathetic to my project, or simply a coincidence, I do not know. Two, when choosing to study the country offices in Bangladesh over e.g. Pakistan, I (unknowingly at the time) chose two country offices that are, according to many staff members, among the more liberal ones in terms of organisational religiosity. A former staff member of Islamic Relief says: "There is quite some variation in staff opinions depending upon where you visit – there are more religious offices and less religious ones, Bangladesh is one of the less religious ones. Opinions and therefore impressions of the organisation would differ greatly if you went to say Pakistan."

This has a number of methodological ramifications, including – but not restricted to – questions of rapport and analytical distance. First, my identity as a former NGO employee shaped meetings with people in different ways. With many, it would contribute to strengthening rapport, creating a sense of intimacy and bonding. Hey, we are almost colleagues! In some cases, this connection was further strengthened by the fact that we would be of more or less the same age, share almost the same

educational background, and be at roughly the same level in the job hierarchy. The fact that I was 'studying over' rather than 'up' or 'down' (Markowitz 2001) contributed to creating a collegial atmosphere which not only meant that people would feel comfortable using insider jargon and share technical and professional details, knowing that I would understand; it also meant that they would sometimes voice their criticisms of the organisation to me, complaining about low salaries, bossy managers and work overload or voicing alternative visions for the organisation. However, as in any conversation with a colleague from a different organisation, there were limits to this honesty, shaped not only by conceptions of organisational loyalty but also concerns as to the trustworthiness of the colleague.

Second, being familiar to the field not only has consequences for how one is received by actors in this field; it also shapes one's views and understanding of the field. Because I know the field, there may be things I do not see, things I take for granted, things I do not problematise. Speaking the NGO speak is, in other words, not only potentially enabling and facilitating research; it is also potentially delimiting. This situation, common to all researchers studying the familiar, raises the question of how to create analytical distance, allowing for a new look at the field? An obvious strategy is the adoption of an analytical language to describe the field. However, this is particularly tricky for students of NGOs insofar as the language used in the NGOs often overlaps with the analytical language used to study the NGOs. Concepts such as 'civil society', 'faith-based organisation' and 'development' are simultaneously analytical terms and part of NGO practices and discourses. They are, in other words, at once emic and etic, creating what Cunningham (1999) calls a representational conundrum. In order to overcome this, I reject the analytical use of these terms, introducing instead a set of alternative, and hopefully more neutral, terms. For instance, the choice of 'aid culture' over 'development system' is grounded in a desire to introduce a relatively neutral term into a field loaded with normative and ideological terminology. Picking a neutral point from where to describe the field makes it possible to analyse more loaded terms and concepts as part of the normative and ideological struggles of the field. Thus, in this perspective, rather than analytical concepts, terms such as 'civil society', 'faith-based organisation' and 'development' are considered empirical categories to be explored, part of a specific aid culture's ideologies, values and rules rather than generic and universally valid categories.

Studying Muslims and Islam in a post 9.11. era

If studying NGOs was for me to study the familiar, studying Muslims and Islam is in some ways to study the foreign. This was particularly clear in my studies of the two Gulf-based NGOs, IICO and IIROSA. In particular since 9.11., Muslims and Islam have come to be the significant 'Other' in contemporary Western society, in part constituted through what we may call the War on Terror

discourse, resting on a sharp dichotomy between 'Islam' and 'the West'. This highly politicised environment has had different consequences for the present study.

In concrete terms, the War on Terror discourse has framed and shaped many of my interviews. Attempting to study Muslim NGOs as something else than potential fronts for terrorist activity, I would initially seek to place my analysis firmly outside the War on Terror discourse. Before each interview, I would explicitly state that I was interested in the relationship between Islam and aid; not the relationship between Islam and terrorism. However, rather than sidestep or overcome the War on Terror discourse, this statement of course expressed the impossibility of escaping the discourse. The mere fact that I felt it necessary to distance myself and the study from the War on Terror discourse underlined its all-encompassing presence. Responses to my statement further confirmed the importance and inescapability of this discourse. People would often explain their own involvement and the purpose of their organisation in terms of a global struggle to promote 'moderate' interpretations of Islam, combating on the one hand stereotypical Western images of Islam, and on the other, militant and extremist expressions of Islam.

The War on Terror discourse and its underlying dichotomy dividing the world into 'Islam' and 'the West' also shaped some people's perceptions of me. Within this logic, a few people would see me as a 'bad Westerner', an agent or a spy, perhaps even working for the Jews. My nationality would only add to their scepticism, evoking memories of the infamous Cartoon crisis. They would be reluctant to speak, clearly fearing my misrepresentations of their work and religion (Bolognani 2007:282), and only telling me the most basic information. Most people, however, positioned me as the 'Good Westerner' or the 'Good Non-Muslim'; as someone who was dedicated to conveying a true image of Islam and Muslim organisations to the Western public (as opposed to 'bad Westerners' whose research focuses on terrorism and fundamentalism). In their perspective, I was a bridge-builder and potential spokesperson for Muslim NGOs, and many would explicitly thank me for carrying out the study, which they saw as a chance for them to 'get the record straight' and 'tell it like it is' to a Western, non-Muslim audience (Bolognani 2007:288).

While I would try to make sure not to create false expectations as to my ability to and interest in functioning as a mouthpiece of transnational Muslim NGOs, I would not object to being positioned as the 'Good Non-Muslim' or 'Good Westerner'. In fact, I would sometimes actively seek to place myself in this position, distancing myself from what I see as stereotypical or discriminating treatment of Muslims and Islam in the Western media and the public, just like I would question the

tendency within academic studies of Islam to prioritise studies of terrorism, fundamentalism and extremism over other topics.[48]

Accessing transnational Muslim NGOs

Naturally, the different ways in which I was positioned and positioned myself in relation to the four organisations shaped my study in myriad ways, many of which I am probably not even aware of myself. However, in particular one point is important to underline, insofar as it has very concrete consequences for the analysis, and that is the question of access to material. As noted above, the two case studies build on organisational texts as well as interviews with and presentations by staff in organisational headquarters and country offices. But due, at least in part, to my position as respectively a foreigner and a familiar face, my access to material differed widely in the Gulf-based and UK-based organisations.

Influenced by traditions of secrecy, hierarchy and, not least, scepticism towards the West (and, by extension, me), IIROSA and IICO would not share much material with me.[49] This unwillingness was, at least among some people, further strengthened by unfamiliarity on the part of IIROSA and IICO staff with the sociological methods underlying my study (and, not least, my own incapacity to communicate this approach to people), due to different educational traditions. For instance, while management were generally welcoming and willing to participate in interviews, some were somewhat uncomprehending to my requests to speak with regular staff. Likewise, many people did not see the point in lengthy interviews, considering them to be primarily for the communication of facts, prioritising quantitative information over qualitative. Finally, many were weary of sharing information and taking me to visit their project sites without explicit approval from the Secretary General. This was the case with the IICO office in Bangladesh. Despite several attempts at obtaining permission from the organisation's top management, I did not succeed in getting full access to the organisation; I was only allowed two interviews with representatives from IICO, and did not see any of the organisation's activities.

In comparison, I interviewed more than 30 people from Islamic Relief and Muslim Aid in Bangladesh, visiting several of their project sites and activities. In general, Islamic Relief and Muslim Aid were willing to share with me much of their material. Educated in the same research

[48] Interestingly, I never encountered any difficulties being a female researcher in religiously conservative societies such as Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. In Saudi Arabia, some men would prefer not to meet me alone (wherefore I brought my brother), but apart from this, my gender did not seem to be an obstacle. I was once asked to wear a headscarf for a background interview with the head of a missionary organisation in Kuwait – the Revival of the Islamic Heritage Society – but staff in IICO and IIROSA never asked me to do so. For a discussion of Western female researchers in the Middle East, see e.g. Schwedler (2006).

[49] Another factor is the fact that IICO and IIROSA simply do not produce as many public texts as Islamic Relief and Muslim Aid do.

traditions as me, most people would immediately understand the methods I used, setting up interviews with people from different organisational layers, expecting interviews to last at least one hour and organising two and three day trips to project sites. Further contributing to this openness, Muslim Aid and Islamic Relief, being based in Britain, operate in a context in which demands for accountability are legally consolidated, meaning that they are obliged to share organisational information.

All this means that the analysis of Islamic Relief and Muslim Aid builds on much more extensive material than IICO and IIROSA, including not only far more interviews and project visits, but also more written material in the form of website text, reports, PR material, policy papers and project documents, reflecting a fundamental difference between the two kinds of organisations. This in turn may have resulted in more detailed analyses of Islamic Relief and Muslim Aid. A further consequence is that the wealth of available material on Islamic Relief and Muslim Aid allowed for much greater insights into ideological conflicts and negotiations than the more sparse material on IIROSA and IICO. This is not to say that the analysis of IICO and IIROSA is invalid: Insofar as the analysis centers on representational discourses, these issues of transparency and access are not only methodological obstacles; they tell us important things about the ways in which the two Gulf-based organisations relate (or do not relate) to the culture of development aid, as shall be discussed in chapter 6.

Summary

Building on the analytical approach outlined in chapter 1, chapter 2 has outlined the basic method and empirical foundation for studying transnational Muslim NGOs and their ideologies of aid. First, the chapter has presented the paradigmatic case study as a particularly apt method for capturing processes of meaning making in NGOs. The purpose of this approach is not to provide a comprehensive mapping of the field of transnational Muslim NGOs, but to present emblematic examples of different kinds of contemporary transnational Muslim NGOs. Thus, the selected cases are not paradigmatic in the sense of being 'average' or 'representative', but in the sense of containing the most information, the richest narratives, the broadest range of characteristics. Focusing on two Gulf-based and two UK-based, the chapter has argued that these four organisations represent two different trends in the post-9.11. aid field., being positioned (and positioning themselves) in different ways in relation to the cultures of development and Islamic aid.

Furthermore, the chapter has outlined the methods for data collection. Reflecting the focus on ideologies, the analysis is based on representational discourses, including not only official, negotiated discourses, but also more unofficial, individualised discourses. Data has been gathered

by way of a three-pronged approach, including the collection of organisational documents, interviews with staff as well as presentations of activities. This was done through website studies and fieldwork in organisational headquarters and selected country offices. Finally, the chapter included some considerations as to my own positioning, arguing that as a non-Muslim and a former NGO employee, to study transnational Muslim NGOs is to simultaneously study the familiar and the foreign, something which has had consequences for the ways in which I accessed the field.

IICO distribution of food in Darfur

PART II: AID CULTURES AND NGO TRAJECTORIES

Introduction

The foregoing part has introduced an understanding of NGOs as growing out of, and drawing on, aid cultures in their construction of ideologies, in the process sometimes modifying or altering the cultures. This part also presented the argument that transnational Muslim NGOs are best conceived as part of two distinct aid cultures: that of development aid and that of Islamic aid, together presenting the conditions of possibility under which the organisations construct their ideologies. The present part, *Aid Cultures and NGO Trajectories*, will take a closer look at these larger cultures and begin to explore the ways in which transnational Muslim NGOs have historically related to them (and in turn, contributed to shaping them), seeking to provide the foundation for the following case studies of four concrete NGOs.

Chapter 3, *The cultures of development and Islamic aid*, presents the cultures of Islamic aid and development through brief historical overviews and, on this basis, compares the two aid cultures. By directing attention to the existence of different kinds of aid cultures, the chapter seeks to contribute to broadening the notion of aid, challenging conceptions of Western development aid as a hegemonic and uncontested reality. More specifically, this presentation of aid cultures serves first and foremost to outline the historical contexts out of which transnational Muslim NGOs have emerged, situating them within larger histories of aid provision. Second, it provides the foundation for the further analysis of their ideologies of aid, exploring differences between the two cultures with the purpose of facilitating analysis of the ways in which organisational ideologies draw on these cultures. The chapter presents three main arguments: One, that the cultures of Islamic aid and development are fundamentally different in certain ways; two, that these differences have historically been unnoticed insofar as the two aid cultures have, until the emergence of transnational Muslim NGOs, maintained largely parallel, unconnected existences; and three, that they have in each their ways contributed to creating conditions of possibility for the emergence of transnational Muslim NGOs. Against this background, the chapter argues that transnational Muslim NGOs can be seen as sites of cultural encounters, having grown out of these two cultures.

Chapter 4, *Trajectories of transnational Muslim NGOs*, introduces transnational Muslim NGOs to the analysis. The chapter has two objectives: One, to provide more concrete suggestions as to the factors prompting and influencing the emergence of transnational Muslim NGOs, and two, to explore the ways in which the organisations have historically navigated between the cultures of development and Islamic aid, emphasising the importance of transnational and national politics in shaping these trajectories. The chapter seeks to meet these objectives by analysing a set of defining events in the history of transnational Muslim NGOs; namely the famines in Africa in the 1980s; the

conflicts in Afghanistan and Bosnia in the 1980s and 1990s; and finally, the 9.11. attacks in New York and Washington, 2001. Based on this analysis, the chapter presents two main arguments: First, the chapter argues that transnational Muslim NGOs have historically emphasised their allegiance to the Islamic aid culture, relating to the culture of development aid primarily by way of parallel co-existence, competition and conflict. And second, it is argued that this situation has changed after 9.11. and the War on Terror; at once forcing and encouraging transnational Muslim NGOs to relate more directly with the development culture, and to present new repertoires of relations.

CHAPTER 3. THE CULTURES OF DEVELOPMENT AND ISLAMIC AID

A brief history of development aid[50]

This section gives a brief history of the emergence of the culture of development aid, focusing on the factors that are particularly relevant to the present analysis of transnational Muslim NGOs and their ideologies of aid. As such, this should not be taken as an attempt at presenting a comprehensive analysis of the field (for this, see e.g. Rist 2008 or Escobar 1995). This brief history of development aid is presented by way of a focus on three main types of actors – states, intergovernmental organisations and NGOs – and the trends and traits related to their role in development aid. The section argues that the culture of development aid was, in large part, initiated by Western colonial states, institutionalised by intergovernmental organisations and popularised by NGOs. With time, this system of development aid has become a hegemonic aid culture against which all other aid cultures are measured, setting the standards for transnational aid provision. More specifically, the development culture has introduced the NGO as a relevant provider of aid in this system, carving a space for such organisations, and as such, it is crucial to understand in order to grasp the emergence of transnational Muslim NGOs.

The beginnings: A common humanity

Contemporary forms of development aid have their roots in the nineteenth century Europe. The emerging modernisation, manifested in rapid industrialisation, urbanisation and market expansion, prompted parallel sentiments of societal break-down and optimism. On the one hand, these processes of modernisation lead to increased poverty, diseases and inequality, or at least an increasing awareness hereof. On the other hand, technical and scientific inventions encouraged a feeling of optimism that these problems could actually be solved. In the words of Calhoun (2008:76), there was a belief that human action could be mobilised to transform conditions long taken as inevitable. New medicines and vaccinations, for instance, could cure or even prevent formerly deadly diseases such as typhus, yellow fewer and polio (Boli and Thomas 1997:179).

[50] The present analysis includes development and humanitarian aid under the same heading (that of development aid), although they could arguably be considered two distinct approaches to the provision of aid, insofar as they have grown out of slightly different historical trajectories and are based on different conceptions of aid. Whereas humanitarian aid, emerging as a response to war and disasters, tends to emphasise the immediate relief of suffering, development aid focuses on long-term improvements, growing out of colonial concerns with progress and civilisation. For a discussion of the conceptual differences between the two approaches, see Bornstein and Redfield (2007). While I agree that there are substantial differences between development and humanitarian aid, meriting closer attention, I nonetheless argue that for the purpose of the present analysis, it makes sense to approach them as part of the same overall aid culture. First, in practice most aid actors – be they NGOs, governmental aid agencies or intergovernmental organisations – are simultaneously involved in both development and humanitarian aid (de Cordier 2009a:609). Second, these two approaches rest on the same core values, use many of the same discourses and practices, and depend on the same economic structures.

Building on a mixture of Christian and Enlightenment ideas, intellectuals, politicians and members of the clergy started employing a language of 'humanitarianism' to push for public interventions to alleviate suffering and restore society's moral basis, emphasising an obligation to take care not only of members of one's own family, tribe or community, but also distant others (Barnett and Weiss 2008:21). Underlying this concern for the stranger were highly ideological universalist notions of a common humanity, a cosmopolitan rejection of the relevance of national, ethnic or gendered boundaries in determining the limits of rights or responsibilities for the satisfaction of basic human needs (Held 2009:537), coupled with an optimist faith in the abilities of humans to change the world for the better.

Colonialism and wars

While the distant others, the objects of aid provision, were initially understood primarily within a national context, a number of events prompted the transnationalisation of aid. Here, European colonisation of Africa came to play a decisive role. As part of their colonisation efforts, European states established national educational and health care systems, introduced vocational training programmes, and founded village banks all over Africa (Rist 2003:57f), often copying their home country systems and institutions at the expense of those of the local community, and thus introducing the notion of universally valid institutions and systems. In this colonisation of societal structures, states often had the help of non-governmental organisations. For instance, Christian missionary organisations such as the German Moravian Mission (established in 1732), played an important role, combining missionary efforts with educational activities, establishment of hospitals and aid to victims of natural disasters. Likewise, the many philanthropic foundations founded in this period, often by American industrialists with Christian leanings, spent millions on medical research and the development of vaccines with the purpose of aiding the sick in former and current colonies.

Whether governmental or non-governmental, colonialist efforts were presented as a moral, philanthropic obligation to help the under-civilised. At the same time, colonialism introduced notions of progress and civilisation as important elements in the provision of aid: As highly civilised societies, the colonising states had a duty to civilise the uncivilised societies by making them into colonies. Western colonisation was, in other words, seen as a generous undertaking to help 'backwards' societies to progress into civilisation (Rist 2008:43). In this perspective, and building on then prominent theories of social evolutionism, civilisation was conceived as a unilinear process that all societies had to undergo, although not necessarily at the same speed, in order to reach the same goal. Charles Gide, a then leading French economist, put it this way, aptly expressing the intimate relationship between morality, progress and colonisation:

> Colonization is not a question of interest but a question of duty. It is necessary to colonize because there is a moral obligation, for both nations and individuals, to employ the strengths and advantages they have received from Providence for the general good of humanity. It is necessary to colonize because colonization is one of the duties incumbent upon great nations, which they cannot evade without failing in their mission and failing into moral dereliction (Charles Gide 1897, cf. Rist 2008:55).

Thus, growing out of processes of modernisation, the 19th century Europe saw the emerging contours of a new aid culture, often taking the form of provision of emergency relief, educational and health services, or construction of infrastructure. This aid was carried out by colonising states, missionary organisations and humanitarian organisations such as the Red Cross and, later, Save the Children, and targeted at 'distant strangers' outside the nation-state, including victims of wars and the 'uncivilised' poor in colonies, based on notions of neutrality and universalism and aimed at promoting progress and civilisation.

The institutionalisation of the development system

These trends were further strengthened and institutionalised in the wake of the two world wars, formalising in an emerging 'international society' or 'multilateral order' (Held 2009), of which the new aid culture became an integrated part (D. Lewis and Kanji 2009:165). In other words, the new aid culture was not only normatively bound up on notions of universalism, but was also structurally and institutionally based on ideas of the world as one place. Calls for international laws and institutions protecting human dignity as a response to the atrocities of the wars lead to the establishment first of the largely unsuccessful League of Nations in 1919, and later the United Nations (UN) in 1945 (Barnett and Weiss 2008:23).[51] Apart from introducing a range of conventions – most importantly the Universal Human Rights Declaration – the newly established UN also coordinated so-called humanitarian relief to emergencies arising from the war, including hunger, refugee flows and destruction of infrastructure. In 1946, the International Rescue Organisation was established, later changing its name to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, and in 1960 came the World Food Programme (WFP). In 1972, the Office of the UN Disaster Relief Coordinator was established (later UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs).

Parallel to these intergovernmental efforts to attend to the victims of war emerged a growing body of transnational movements and NGOs. After World War I, for instance, the British woman Eglantyne Jebb established Save the Children with the purpose of providing food and clothes to German children, declaring that 'there is no such thing as an enemy child' (Chabbott 1999:229ff).

[51] Arguably, the efforts to build an international order had already begun long before. Prompted by the Swiss businessman Henry Dunant's accounts of the brutality of the Battle of Solferino and the lack of medical attention to the wounded soldiers (Barnett and T. Weiss 2008:3), in 1984 12 Western states formulated ten articles of what was later to become the Geneva conventions, setting the standard for humanitarian treatment of victims of war. These articles came to be the first international laws, and as such, mark the beginning of the international order.

The period after the Second World War witnessed a remarkable explosion in transnational NGOs, in a few years doubling their numbers by more than eight (Boli and Thomas 1997:177). Inspired by the International Red Cross and Save the Children, the British NGO Oxfam was established in 1942 to provide relief to victims of the Greek Civil War, Catholic Relief Services in 1943 and CARE in 1945, originally with the purpose of organising the shipment of US food packages to Europe (Chabbott 1999:233; D. Lewis and Kanji 2009:31). Shortly after the end of the war, Lutheran World Relief, Church World Service, and Caritas were established (Barnett and Weiss 2008:23), testifying to the continued importance of Christian organisations in the provision of aid. In their efforts to aid victims of wars and disasters, organisations often emphasised the concept of neutrality, closely related to universalist notions of a common humanity. According to this logic, taking sides in a conflict would inevitably lead to the exclusion of some people, thus violating the commitment to aid any human being in need. As such, politics came to be seen as a potential moral pollutant of aid (Barnett and Weiss 2008:4). Instead, aid providers were idealised as neutral and impartial, shying away from anything remotely political.

The wars not only resulted in disasters, requiring immediate attention; they also displayed a tremendous economic inequality calling for more long-term assistance to what was not yet called 'the third world' (Barnett and Weiss 2008:23). After World War II, not only Europe but most countries in Africa, Latin America and Asia were in deep financial trouble. A few years after the launch of the Marshall Plan in 1947, President Truman decided to expand the US foreign aid to include economically poor countries in the South; what he called 'underdeveloped areas' (Degnbol-Martinussen and Engberg-Pedersen 1999:29), often synonymous with the former colonies. In his 1949 inaugural address, later known as *Point Four*, he outlined the principles of this new programme of long-term state aid, claiming that

> we must embark on a bold new program for making the benefits of our scientific advances and industrial progress available for the improvement and growth of underdeveloped areas [...] Our main aim should be to help the free peoples of the world, through their own efforts, to produce more food, more clothing, more materials for housing, and more mechanical power to lighten their burdens (cf. Rist 2008:71).

As Barnett and Weiss (2008:23) note, this new concept of 'development aid' became "a novel tool to combat the twin scourges of war and inequality, the new just cause". Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, European governments followed suit, establishing their own programmes and agencies for the distribution of development aid to 'underdeveloped' countries. The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) was established in 1961. In 1964, the British government established the Ministry of Overseas Development, later to become the Department for International Development (DfID). Likewise, the idea quickly gained ground in intergovernmental organisations. The World Bank was originally established in 1945 in order to 'reconstruct' and 'develop' Europe, but soon expanded its activities to include what was now known as the

'underdeveloped' countries or the 'third world' (Barnett and Weiss 2008:24). In 1956, the World Bank founded the International Finance Cooperation, and in 1960, the International Development Association, responsible for lending to the world's poorest countries. In the UN, a series of agencies for the provision of development aid were established, including the *Expanded Programme of Technical Assistance* in 1949, followed in 1958 by the United Nations Special Fund. In 1965 the two institutions merged into the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

Ideologically, this institutionalisation of the aid culture into a system of development assistance in large part relied on dominant economic and political theories of the time, many of them building on modernisation theory and promoting a unilinear, technical conception of development. In this, religion came to be seen as a conservative and traditional force, destined to withdraw and eventually disappear from public life as part of societal progress towards an increasingly modern society; a conception which, as was discussed in chapter 1, continued to shape development studies and practice until recently. In this perspective, religion was difficult to reconcile with or relate to development's logic of economic progress and bureaucratic rationalisation, and was instead regarded as an irrelevance to development work, to be ignored or even actively fought in the concrete development projects (Jones and Juul Petersen forthcoming, ver Beek 2000). This did not mean that the religious, or more correctly Christian, organisations that had until then been heavily involved in the provision of aid were suddenly banned from taking part in the development system, but it did mean that their participation became contingent on their willingness to subscribe to a secular, largely invisible notion of religion.

To briefly sum up, the World Wars and the decades following them saw the increasing institutionalisation of an aid culture into a formal and standardised system of development aid, organised around a number of intergovernmental organisations, most importantly the United Nations, the World Bank and the OECD's Development Assistance Committee. In this system, 'first-world' or 'developed' countries would transfer money to so-called 'third world' or 'developing' countries through aid agencies such as DfID and USAID. Based on notions of aid primarily as facilitation of economic growth, these actors promoted what they considered to be universally valid mechanisms, procedures and practices, assumed to be useful and meaningful everywhere (Boli and Thomas 1997:180).

Transnational development NGOs

Since its establishment, the culture of development aid has been constantly expanding, strengthening its hegemony in the global aid field. Different actors have emerged, shaped by and shaping conceptions of aid in different ways. In this popularisation of development aid, transnational (often Western) NGOs have played an important role. As was described in chapter 1,

the term NGO itself grew out of the development system, introduced by the UN in 1945. While NGOs have taken part in the provision of aid since the birth of the development culture, they often worked parallel to states and intergovernmental organisations, never fully integrated into the aid culture. This changed in the 1980s and 1990s, a period which saw a sharp rise in the number of NGOs. Governmental aid agencies and intergovernmental organisations began channelling aid through NGOs (D. Lewis and Kanji 2009:190; Reimann 2006:49f)[52] and many also started engaging NGOs as providers of information, expertise and policy alternatives (Boli and Thomas 1997:179), establishing formal mechanisms for cooperation with NGOs, including arrangements for coordination, consultation and lobbying, regular meetings and participation during multilateral negotiations (Martens 2006:694); something which in turn led to the increasing professionalisation of NGOs (see e.g. Martens 2005).

There are many reasons for this prominence of NGOs in development aid. Overall, the emergence of NGOs is, like that of other transnational organisations and intergovernmental institutions, of course part of broader processes of globalisation and an increasing awareness of the limitations of the nation-state. More specifically, the increasing popularity of transnational NGOs was shaped by a number of factors. First, by the beginning of the 1980s, the poor performance and corruption of many 'third world' governments had disappointed 'first world' governments, prompting them to turn away from large-scale, government-organised projects and interventions characteristic of the first decades of aid (D. Lewis and Kanji 2009:173). Coupled with an emerging neo-liberalist agenda, this gave way for the so-called structural adjustment programmes, promoting the market rather than the state as the key to economic growth. Among proponents of structural adjustment programmes, there was a growing consensus on the importance of NGOs. As Carroll (1992:177) notes, NGOs were – contrary to governments – seen as effective service deliverers, ensuring rapid (and honest) disbursement and utilisation of project funds. Likewise, a prominent role of NGOs fit well with the privatisation efforts that were an integrated part of structural adjustment policies. Drastic cuts in governmental social services (D. Lewis and Kanji 2009:86) left room for NGOs to take over the provision of social welfare, education, health services, emergency relief and other social services, in line with a neoliberal scepticism of the state.

Further supporting this turn away from state-led models of aid provision, the end of the Cold War and waves of democratisation in Eastern Europe, the Philippines, Chile and South Africa prompted a focus on 'civil society'. Among donors, democracy support became an important element in aid provision and it soon became common sense that in order to be a properly functioning free market

[52] While there are diverging opinions on exact numbers, figures quoted by Van Rooy (1997) indicate that by the mid-1990s, more than one billion dollars was channelled through NGOs. Likewise, UK figures show an increase of almost 400 percent in aid channelled to NGOs from 1983-1984 to 1993-1994 (D. Lewis and Kanji 2009:170).

and democratic nation, a state would need to have a flourishing civil society (Reimann 2006:59; Mercer 2002:7). As Reimann (2006:60) notes, "NGOs were viewed as ideal institutions for the new mix of neoliberal economics and democratic theory promoted by the industrialised nations in the post Cold War world," at once considered to be effective service providers, providing an alternative to the state, and vehicles of democratisation and good governance (see also Hulme and Edwards 1997). In this, donors would often prefer secular NGOs to religious ones, seen to be 'un-democratic' and 'traditional'.

Ironically, not only the rise but also the fall of structural adjustment programmes encouraged an increasingly important role of NGOs. In many countries, privatisation and other neo-liberalist initiatives did not lead to economic growth, or at least only in certain sectors of society, while others experienced an increasing poverty. Among development practitioners and academics, this contributed to a reconceptualisation of development. Inspired by earlier approaches such as basic needs theory, the narrow conception of development as economic growth was slowly replaced by a broader and more inclusive understanding, emphasising the social and cultural (although rarely religious) aspects of development, under the heading of 'human development'. Introduced in a series of UNDP annual reports, the concept of 'human development' broadened notions of development to include not only economic growth, but also life expectancy, education and liberty, in the process reducing economic growth to a means rather than an end in itself (Rist 2008:206). Taking its starting point in the individual and the community rather than the state and the market, this new understanding of aid emphasised local-level and small-scale interventions (Tandon 2000:320). In the implementation of this new kind of aid, NGOs came to be seen as crucial players – not, as the neoliberals would have it, as proponents of privatisation and replacements of the state, but as sources of alternative ideas and approaches to development (D. Lewis and Kanji 2009:39), and as legitimate spokespeople of 'the poor', emphasising the importance of principles such as 'participation', 'sustainability' and 'capacity-building' to the success of 'human development'. This further contributed to the alienation of religious NGOs, considered to be less 'progressive' than secular ones. Instead, organisations such as Médecins sans Frontiers, CARE, Oxfam[53] and, on a national level, the Bangladesh Rehabilitation Assistance Committee, or BRAC, experienced increasing popularity.

This period also saw the increasing popularisation of NGOs outside of a narrow context of governmental and intergovernmental aid agencies. New media contributed to this popularity, facilitating a growing public awareness of global poverty and disasters and providing a platform for

[53] Oxfam was established by Qakers in 1945, but has since then positioned itself as an explicitly non-confessional, secular NGO.

NGOs to express their ideologies (D. Lewis and Kanji 2009:39).[54] As Barnett and Weiss (2008:26) write, the haunting, near biblical-like pictures of the Ethiopian famine, brought by CNN, BBC and other satellite channels in the mid-1980s helped to stir public concern, prompting an urge to 'do something'. Through TV campaigns, charity shops and fundraising events, NGOs would spread the message of the aid culture, building on their relations with individual donors and reaching the public in ways that e.g. governmental aid agencies or intergovernmental organisations were not able to. Many NGOs even assumed a kind of educational role in society, introducing activities such as volunteer programmes and information campaigns.

To sum up on the above, the culture of development aid is a culture of modernity, shaped in particular by Enlightenment and Christian ideas of a common humanity and the duty to assist strangers. More specifically, wars and colonisation of the 20th century contributed to shaping this culture in different ways, led by Western states and building on ideas of civilisation and progress. Following the two World Wars, this emerging culture of aid provision across borders was increasingly institutionalised with the establishment of intergovernmental organisations such as the United Nations and the World Bank as well as governmental aid agencies such as DfID, Danida and USAID. From the 1980s, (certain) NGOs have become increasingly involved as carriers and promoters of this culture, reflected in an increase in numbers and influence and paralleled by changing conceptions of development aid from an emphasis on economic growth to human development, participation and sustainability. NGOs came to be seen as the new panacea of development aid, hailed by governmental aid agencies, media and the public as a 'magic bullet' in development aid (Edwards and Hulme 1995:5).

A brief history of contemporary Islamic aid[55]

Almost parallel to the institutionalisation of development aid, another aid culture took form – what we shall call the Islamic aid culture. Like the culture of development aid, the culture of Islamic aid has roots that go much further back than the 20th century. Islamic traditions of charitable giving (*sadaqa*) have existed since the birth of Islam, just like the obligatory alms tax, *zakat* and the religious endowment, the *waqf* (plural: *awqaf*), have historically been important Islamic institutions of social welfare. This is not the place, however, to enter into a detailed historical

[54] The role of the media in spurring organised aid goes back in time. Barnett (2005:733), for instance, writes that the establishment of the International Red Cross in 1862 and other relief organisations at that time can be seen partly as a result of the emergence of war reporting as a profession, giving the public access to stories and pictures from the increasingly gruesome wars. For discussions of the relationship between aid and media, see e.g. Chouliaraki (2010) and Benthall (1993).

[55] Insofar as the culture of transnational Islamic aid grew out of a primarily Middle Eastern context, the analysis focuses on this geographic area. This does not mean, however, that Muslim countries outside the Arab world did not experience similar trends and developments. In fact, countries such as Indonesia and Malaysia both have strong traditions of Islamic aid. However, these aid cultures have tended to remain largely national, with few links to other countries.

account of these theological institutions and traditions.[56] Instead, we shall concentrate on the contemporary history of Islamic aid, in many ways a fundamentally different culture than that of development aid. Overall, this is a culture that has grown out 'the Islamic resurgence'.[57] More specifically, I argue that this culture has been shaped by three factors, namely the emergence of the Muslim Brotherhood and Jama'at-e Islami, the transnational pan-Islamic movement of the Gulf countries, and finally the migration of Muslims to Europe and North America, each in different ways contributing to shaping conceptions of Islamic aid and the emergence of transnational Muslim NGOs. Particularly relevant to the present analysis, Gulf-based NGOs such as IICO and IIROSA grew out of a pan-Islamic, missionary movement, while UK-based NGOs such as Islamic Relief and Muslim Aid were shaped by migration, both kinds influenced by Muslim Brotherhood ideas of social activism.

The birth of a culture: The Islamic resurgence

Starting in the early 20th century, the Islamic resurgence denotes a global movement of renewed interest in Islam as a relevant identity and model for community, manifested in greater religious piety and Islamic solidarity; in the introduction of Islamically defined organisations and institutions; and in a growing adoption of Islamic culture, dress codes, terminology, and values by Muslims worldwide (Lapidus 2002:823). Overall, the Islamic resurgence was nurtured by two factors. First, the experience of European colonialism. In the face of the challenges posed by the West during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Muslim thinkers in a wide variety of socio-cultural and regional settings turned collectively to religion as a form of anti-colonial liberation discourse, calling for Islamic solidarity based on the notion of the umma (Mandaville 2001:69; Yaylaci 2007:19; Zubaida 2004). As the Islamic thinker Jamal al-Din al-Afghani claimed, only through unity in a common Muslim identity would people under European colonialism find liberation (Mandaville 2007:279). Second, the emergence of secular Arab regimes after World War I served as a catalyst for the resurgence. Based on ideologies of modernisation and progress, these regimes, led by secular elites, sought to model their state in the image of Western states. However, rhetoric did not always match reality, and the post-colonial Arab states were largely unsuccessful in their attempts at securing social welfare for their citizens. Coupled with an often oppressive form of government, the ideology of modernisation came to have a radically different meaning to people in the Middle East than in the West. Against this background, Islamic groups and movements started emerging, presenting alternatives not only to the West, but to their own secular state and ideologies.

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[56] For an in-depth historical analysis of Islamic charity, see Singer (2008) or Bonner, Ener and Singer (2003). For more specific historical analyses of the concept of zakat, see e.g. Bonner (2005) or Benthall (1999).

[57] For literature on the Islamic resurgence, see e.g. Roy (2004), Wiktorowicz (2004), Schulze (2002) or Esposito (1998).

The Muslim Brotherhood: Islam and social welfare activism

By far the most important of these organisations is the Muslim Brotherhood (or *al-ikhwan al-muslimun*), established by the Egyptian school teacher Hassan al-Banna in 1928, few years after Egypt's independence and the collapse of the Ottoman empire (Soage 2008:54; see also Munson 2001; Mitchell 1969). Under the leadership of al-Banna, the Brotherhood sought to merge Islam and modernity, maintaining the usefulness of modern inventions such as technology, science and industry (Mandaville 2007:100), but rejecting Western, colonial models of modernity and insisting instead on interpreting this modernity within an Islamic normative framework, claiming that 'Islam is the solution'.[58] The Brotherhood quickly spread to other Middle Eastern countries, opening up branches in Syria in the beginning of the 1930s, Palestine in 1935 (and later Hamas in 1987), and Jordan in 1942. Later followed Muslim Brotherhood organisations in a number of African countries, including Sudan and Libya in the end 1940s, and Somalia in the 1960s. Parallel to this, North American and European branches started emerging, established by Muslim immigrants (more on this below).

As a teacher, Hassan al-Banna had a strong social awareness, and he saw the provision of aid to the poor as an important responsibility of the Brotherhood and of any Muslim. In his pamphlet *The Message of the Teachings*, he says:

> Be active, energetic, and skilled in public services. You should feel happy when you offer a service to other people. You should feel compelled to visit the sick, assist the needy, support the weak, and give relief to the ill-fated, even if it is with a good and affectionate word. Always rush to do good deeds (Banna 1993)

Thus, in its first years, rather than formal politics, the Muslim Brotherhood focused primarily on social welfare activities, relief and the building of schools and hospitals (Yaylaci 2007:12), presenting an alternative to the largely unsuccessful state. Emerging Brotherhoods in other countries copied the approach. In Jordan, for instance, the Brotherhood established an organisation specifically designated to providing aid to the poor, the Islamic Center Charity Society, which is today one of the largest NGOs in the country, running almost 100 community centers, 40 health clinics, several schools and universities and two hospitals (Sparre and Juul Petersen 2007; J. Clark 2004).

Education became a core activity for the Brotherhood, not only in the sense of teaching and transmitting knowledge, but as a way of moulding individual conduct, entrenching faith, stimulating activism and contributing to the Islamisation of society (Hatina 2006:182). Through education, the Brotherhood hoped to give new generations an Islamic identity, by extension

[58] Banna's ideas and ways of mobilising were not entirely new, but built in large part on those of existing Sufi brotherhoods. Throughout the Arab world, Sufi brotherhoods had for centuries engaged in the running of schools, hospitals and other social welfare institutions for the poor (see e.g. Voll 1992).

strengthening and reforming the Muslim community (Mahmood 2005:58). As such, focus was on the restoration of believers to the fold of righteous Islam; the conversion of non-Muslims became secondary (Hatina 2006:181). In this, moral training played an important part. Banna himself puts it like this:

> A rising nation (*umma*) is in severe need of morality, an exceeding, strong and firm morality together with a high-aspiring, lofty and great soul (*nafs*), because it has to face the demands of the new age which cannot be met except through a distinguished, sincere and strong morality based upon a deep-rooted, firm and profound faith, great sacrifices and deep suffering (cf. Roald 1994:140).

As Mandaville (2007a:59) notes, for Banna and the Brotherhood, education was closely related to the religiously inflected notion of *tarbiya*, implying a holistic sense of human growth and development that accrues through knowledge of religion. This moral training and education emphasises virtues such as patience, sincerity and good intentions, truthfulness, tolerance, forbearance, and hope, discouraging gossip and backbiting, name calling, sexual promiscuity and other forms of misconduct (Roald 1994:142). But it does not seek to attain mere individual spirituality, detached from the world. Education is a tool to purify faith, but just as much a tool to nurture activism (Hatina 2006:179). Religious feelings must generate action; in the words of Banna: "Belief is the basis of action. Sincere intentions are more important than outward actions. However, the Muslim is requested to attain improvement in both spheres: purification of the heart and performance of righteous deeds" (Banna 1993).

Parallel to the Muslim Brotherhood, a number of other organisations emerged, many of them directly connected or closely related to the Brotherhood.[59] In 1941, the party *Jama'at-e Islami* (in Arabic literally 'Islamic Party') was established in Lahore by the journalist and theologian Sayeed Abul A'ala Mawdudi, spreading into several different organisations during the following years. Today, the Pakistani Jama'at-e Islami has sister organisations in Bangladesh, India, Sri Lanka and Kashmir. Mawdudi established Jama'at-e Islami as an advocacy organisation and political party seeking Muslim autonomy and rights in India. Later, he embraced Islamic nationalism, and his new cause would be the Islamisation of Pakistan, founded in 1947. Like the Brotherhood, with whom the Jamaat-e Islami enjoys close ideological and organisational relations, members were well-educated people, unwilling to accept the secularist position of the West and what they saw as Westernised regimes (Esposito and Voll 2001:20). Unlike the Muslim Brotherhood, however, the

[59] Other organisations shared the overall ideology and language of the Islamic movement, but did not relate themselves explicitly to the Muslim Brotherhood. The Lebanese Shi'a organisation Hezbollah, for instance, established in 1982 as a direct response to the Israeli occupation of Lebanon, oriented itself much more towards Iran, which since the 1979 Islamic revolution for many had become the symbol of an ideal Islamic society. And in Turkey, the *Milli Görüs* movement (in English, National Outlook), established in 1969 by right-wing nationalists and supported by prominent Sufi sheikhs, came to be an important actor in the Islamic movement, serving as the ideological and organisational backbone of a range of Islamic parties in the following decades (Solberg 2007:432; see also Yildiz 2003).

activities of the Jamaat were always primarily political, aiming at the establishment of an Islamic state, governed by Islamic law. From the 1940s, however, the Brotherhood's activism was also increasingly coined in political rather than social terms. Under the ideological leadership of Sayeed Qutb, who had been influenced by Mawdudi, the Brotherhood moved away from a focus on social and religious activities to more formal political activism, calling for the establishment of an Islamic state based on shari'a (Mandaville et al. 2009:20), reflecting the increasing dissatisfaction with Nasser's secular nationalism. However, despite their increasing politisation, both movements continued their engagement in social and cultural activism, contributing to strengthening their popularity.

To sum up, the first decades of the Islamic resurgence witnessed a strong interest in issues of social welfare, promoted by the Muslim Brotherhood and organisations affiliated with this movement. This was often manifested in a focus on educational activities, aimed at strengthening morality of the individual Muslim and contributing to a stronger Muslim umma. Growing out of politically oriented movements, the involvement in social welfare provision was not, as in the culture of development aid, seen to be in opposition to political activism but closely related to this.

Transnational pan-Islamism: Da'wa and Islamic economics

The Muslim Brotherhood and the Islamic resurgence gained increasing ground in the 1960s, in particular due to the defeat of the secularist pan-Arab movement, epitomised in the six-day war in 1967, when Egypt, Jordan and Syria, supported by a broad range of Arab countries, suffered a devastating defeat to Israel. Coupled with the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty and the Lebanese civil war, this lead to a sharp decline in popular support for pan-Arabism and socialist Nasserism (Mandaville 2007:142), an ideological vacuum which could be filled by the Islamic movement (Hegghammer 2010:23).

Apart from the Brotherhood, the Gulf countries played an important role in shaping the culture of Islamic aid in the 1960s-1970s. While the Muslim Brotherhood and Jama'at-e Islami's aid was very much shaped by national needs and carried out by local associations, the movement from the Gulf countries was transnational and missionary in its outlook, manifested in organisations such the Muslim World League, the International Islamic Council for Da'wa and Relief (in Arabic, *al-Majlis al-islami al-'alami lil da'wa wa al-ighata*), and the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC). Many of these transnational initiatives emerged from Saudi Arabia, reflecting the country's increasing importance in the Islamic resurgence. Underlying many of these new Saudi initiatives were elements of a pan-Islamic ideology, articulated largely as a counterweight to Nasser's secular

Arab nationalism (Hegghammer 2010:17), as an attempt at compensating for the weak legitimacy of a Wahhabite Islam (Schultze 1990, cf. Benthall and Bellion-Jourdan 2003:71).[60]

One crucial factor in shaping the emerging movement of transnational, missionary aid from the Gulf was the emergence of what came to be known as 'Islamic economics'. The sharp spurt in the price of oil at the time of the Yom Kippur war in 1973 provoked a spectacular increase in the disposable revenue of producer countries, including Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, seemingly altering the balance of economic power between the oil-producing countries of the Islamic world and the industrialised states in the West. Furthermore, the increased revenues also placed large sums of money in the hands of governments, businesses and individuals of the oil-producing countries, boosting efforts to create distinctively Islamic financial institutions, depending on private capital (Pripp 2006:104).[61] At the same time, there was a widespread disillusionment with the capacities of the (secular) state to act morally and effectively, prompting people to look to the private financial sector for solutions (Pripp 2006:134).

Against this background, a number of Islamic financial institutions were established.[62] On one hand, these institutions were part of attempts at providing Islamically viable alternatives to secular economic systems such as socialism and capitalism, deemed by many Muslims to be morally corrupt. On the other hand, they were also, as Pripp (2006:113) notes, shaped by a desire to develop an effective and workable system that would not only be morally preferable, but would also be capable of generating material development in Muslim countries, eliminating what some Muslim scholars referred to as the 'economic backwardness' of Islamic countries (Pripp 2006:114). As such, Islamic economics was presented as an alternative to dominant capitalist theories of economic growth, central to the culture of development aid.

Backed by the ruling house of Saudi Arabia, lead by King Faisal, and financially supported by a number of Saudi business men, the Islamic Development Bank was established in 1973 (Pripp 2006:137); some 14 years after the first regional development bank – the Inter-American Development Bank – was established. Forty states participated, with the vast majority of funding provided by four of the major oil-producing countries, namely Saudi Arabia, Libya, the United Arab

[60] Naturally, Muslim transnationalism was not born with Saudi ideas of pan-Islamic unity, but has arguably existed for centuries. As noted by Mandaville (2011:9), "[t]he centuries-old tendrils of Sufism have spanned multiple continents to link far-flung affiliates of these mystical brotherhoods. In the thirteenth century, the Indian Ocean served as the tableau upon which a rich tapestry of transnational Islamic connectivity – commercial, educational and political – was played out, linking the cost of east Africa to southern Arabia across to the Indian subcontinents and over to the Malay archipelago" (see also Ho 2006).
[61] For a history of the emergence of Islamic banks, see also Maurer 2005.
[62] On a side note, this is also when new governmental aid agencies started emerging in the Middle East, with Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development as the first in 1961, followed by other Arab countries in the 1970s. Abu Dhabi Fund for Arab Economic Development was established in 1971; and the Saudi Fund for Development and the Iraqi Fund for External Development in 1974.

Emirates and Kuwait. While the Islamic Development Bank was specifically charged with directing funds towards poor countries, other, more profit-oriented, banks soon emerged, with Dubai Islamic Bank as the first, established in 1975 (Pripp 2006:137). In 1977, the International Association of Islamic Banks was set up. Parallel to the establishment of private Islamic banks, several governments – including Pakistan, Iran and Sudan – brought in measure to Islamise national economy. Likewise, transnational networks and conferences on Islamic economics were established, with the first International Conference on Islamic Economics being held in Saudi Arabia in 1976, hosted by King Abdul Aziz University.

A key figure in this new movement (and in the Islamic resurgence as such) was the scholar, activist and soon-to-be TV host Yusuf al-Qaradawi, born in Egypt in 1926. He wrote his doctoral thesis on *The Role of Zakat in the Resolution of Legal Alms* (1972), and became a much-used consultant for financial institutions and business men, involved in the establishment of, among others, al-Taqwa Bank (1988), Qatar Islamic International Bank (1991), and Faysal Bank (1994). For Qaradawi and other Islamic economists, the concept of zakat is central to Islamic economics – and to Islamic ideology in general. Zakat is one of the five pillars of Islam, a religious tax obliging people to pay 2.5 percent of their wealth as alms, primarily to the poor and needy.[63] While popular in the first centuries of Islam, in the Ottoman Empire, the zakat system had vanished for many years, leaving the duty to pay zakat upon the individual. But with the resurgence of Islamic economics, zakat was accorded renewed importance by Islamic thinkers as a fiscal mechanism for increasing social justice and public welfare (Singer 2008:201), and this period saw the emergence of governmental and semi-governmental state zakat systems throughout the Muslim world, starting in Saudi Arabia (1951), and later introduced in Malaysia (1955), Libya (1971), Yemen (1975), Jordan (1978), Pakistan (1980), Kuwait (1982), and Sudan (1984).[64] Some years later, the Qatar Islamic Fund for Zakat and Alms, of which Qaradawi is a co-founder and board member, was established. As Pripp notes, zakat represents a key component of the moral economy since it epitomises a number of ideas which help to define that economy: "the notion that the individual holds property as a trustee for God; therefore that property must be used for a higher end, such as the sustenance and support

[63] According to the Qur'an (9:60), zakat should be distributed to one of eight groups of recipients: "Alms are for the poor and the needy, and those employed to adminsiter (the funds); for those whose hearts have been (recently) reconciled (to Truth); for those in bondage and in debt; in the cause of Allah; and for the wayfarer." Naturally, the precise meaning of these categories has been widely discussed throughout the history of Islam. Most importantly for the present analysis is the question of whether zakat should be given to Muslims, or if it can, as the more general alms of sadaqa, be given to non-Muslims as well; a question which, as we shall see, continues to trouble contemporary Islamic scholars and organisations.

[64] In some countries, the payment of zakat is obligatory (e.g. Pakistan), in some obligatory for businesses and voluntary for individuals (e.g. Saudi Arabia and Kuwait), in others entirely voluntary (e.g. Jordan); and in yet others, there are no official zakat systems (e.g. Oman and Morocco). These differences reflect the lack of scholarly consensus on the topic. Whereas some scholars, such as Muhammad Baqir Al-Sadr and M. Umer Chapra, interpret zakat as a voluntary tax that should be administered through the mosques (Pfeifer 1997:158), others, for instance Mawdudi, Syed Naqvi, Sayeed Qutb, and Yusuf al-Qaradawi, place a much stronger emphasis on the compulsory state tax and the public responsibility to pay it (H. Weiss 2002:16).

of those in a less fortunate position than yourself; the idea of mutual social responsibility which ensures the 'integration of the individual into a truly Islamic society'" (Pripp 2006:125). At the same time, and on a more practical note, zakat was a convenient tool for the purification of interest money. The main difference between Islamic economics and conventional capitalist banking systems is the prohibition of *riba* or usury in the Qur'an, which in modern banking language is translated into the prohibition of interest on bank deposit and on any form of investment. Interest was impossible to avoid in a globalised banking sector where cooperation with capitalist banks was inevitable. Instead, the new Islamic finance institutions would convert interests into charitable work (Benthall and Bellion-Jourdan 2003:72), often through the establishment of zakat mechanisms for purification of money. As such, the rise of 'Islamic economics' and Islamic businessmen, or 'religious-minded middle class entrepreneurs' (Roy 2004:96) released large sums of money that had to be distributed to charity (Benthall and Bellion-Jourdan 2003:72), often through NGOs.

Finally, the establishment of transnational organisations played an important role in shaping this particular, Gulf-based, trajectory of Islamic aid in the 1960s and 1970s. Based on notions of a pan-Islamic solidarity (*al-tadamun al-islami*), King Faisal promoted the idea that all Muslims are one people with a responsibility to support each other in times of crisis. The ultimate expression of this pan-Islamic movement was the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC), an intergovernmental organisation working to safeguard and protect the interests of the Muslim world (Mandaville 2007:159). The OIC was established in 1969, with Saudi Arabia as a leading force in the establishment.[65] While the OIC is primarily a forum for foreign policy, the organisation also has financial, cultural and technological institutions, and is involved in activities related to aid provision through e.g. the Islamic Development Bank, mentioned above, and the Islamic Solidarity Fund (1974).

Prior to the establishment of the OIC, several non-governmental organisations were established to promote cooperation, mutual solidarity and religious awareness, while at the same time exporting a Saudi-style Islam (Mandaville 2007:159). In 1962 the Muslim World League (in Arabic, *Rabitat al-alam al-islami*) was established. Religious leaders from 22 different countries were involved in the launch of the organisation, including Jamat-e Islami's Mawdudi and a number of high-rank Brotherhood representatives (Schulze 2000:173),[66] as were official religious and political

[65] Today, the OIC is the second-largest international organisation after the UN with 57 member states. See Pultz (2008) and Khan (2001) for a history of the OIC.
[66] Many Egyptian, Iraqi and Syrian members of the Brotherhood having fled persecution in their own countries in the 1950s and 1960s were offered positions in Muslim World League (Hegghammer 2010:18; Roy 2004:67).

institutions in Saudi Arabia.[67] The purpose of the organisation was to build up a global Islamic public, primarily through mission activities such as publishing, media, education and coordination of preachers and scholars, Arabic language instruction, Qur'an schools, and Islamic centers, propagating conservative Islamic teachings based on Wahhabi Islam to Muslims as well as non-Muslims (Mandaville 2007:285), but also through relief and charity work, (re)construction of mosques, as well as Islamic jurisprudence. Today, the Muslim World League is one of the largest Muslim non-governmental organisations with branches all over the world. Other transnational organisations from this period include the International Islamic Relief Organisation, or IIROSA (in Arabic, *al-Igatha al-islamiyya al-'alamiyya*), established as part of the Muslim World League in 1979, and the International Islamic Charitable Organisation, or IICO (in Arabic, *Hayat al-khairiyya al-islamiyya al-'alamiyya*), founded by Qaradawi in 1984, whom we shall hear much more about further on.[68] Some years later, but part of the same trend, the International Islamic Council for Da'wa and Relief was established in Egypt in 1988 with the purpose of increasing coordination among Muslim organisations.[69] In the beginning, the Muslim World League and other transnational organisations focused primarily on mission, cultural issues, relief efforts, and education, but from the late 1970s, such relatively apolitical issues gave way to a focus on more politically grounded suffering such as war, oppression and discrimination. As Hegghammer (2010:18) notes, in the pan-Islamist world-view, these predicaments were of course two sides of the same coin: "Muslim solidarity therefore came to be used as justification for a range of different types of assistance, from development aid on the one hand to clandestine weapons shipments on the other."

Summing up, the 1960s and 1970s witnessed what we may call a transnational turn in the culture of Islamic aid. While the involvement of the Muslim Brotherhood and Jama'at-e Islami in social welfare activism was primarily taking place within a national context, new organisations from especially Saudi Arabia were promoting Islamic mission, or *da'wa*, Islamic economy and zakat provision on a more transnational scale, in part inspired by pan-Islamic ideologies. Prompted by increasing oil revenues, this period saw the establishment of transnational organisations such as

[67] At its foundation, the Saudi government donated 250,000 dollars to the League. By the 1980s, this had reportedly grown to 13 million (Mandaville et al. 2009:28).
[68] The World Assembly of Muslim Youth (in Arabic, *al-Nadwa al-'alamiyya li al-shabab al-islami*) was also part of this trend, established in Saudi Arabia in 1972.
[69] With more than 100 members, primarily from the Middle East, the International Islamic Council for Da'wa and Relief is today perhaps the most extensive network of Muslim NGOs and governmental institutions involved in da'wa and relief. Members include Jordan Hashemite Charity Organisation, IICO, IIROSA, Muslim World League, World Assembly of Muslim Youth, Federation of Islamic Organisations in Europe, Qatar Charity, Kuwait Zakah House as well as the Ministries of Awqaf in Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Morocco, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates. Particularly active in establishing the council were IICO and the Muslim World League, and by extension IIROSA. The grand mufti of Egypt, Muhammad Sayyid Tantawi, was, until his death in March 2010, president of the International Islamic Council of Da'wa and Relief. See the council's website, http://worlddialogue.net (last accessed 22. April 2011).

the International Islamic Council for Da'wa and Relief, the OIC, the Muslim World League, the International Islamic Relief Organisation (IIROSA), and the International Islamic Charitable Organisation (IICO), all in different ways engaging in the provision of aid to fellow Muslims all over the world.

Migration and Islam in the West

A third, parallel, wave of Islamic aid was prompted by the migration of Muslims from Middle Eastern and Asian countries to Europe and USA, starting in the 1960s. Among the Muslim immigrants were many Muslim Brothers, who so to speak exported the Brotherhood movement to Europe and North America. In the 1950s, the Muslim Brotherhood had come to be seen as a political threat by the secular Egyptian regime under Gamal Abdel Nasser, and several people were imprisoned under harsh conditions. Similar crack-downs happened in Syria, Iraq and Tunisia, leading many Muslim Brothers to flee to Europe (Mandaville 2007:159). By the 1980s, some of these emigrants started establishing more permanent Muslim Brotherhood structures in Europe, adjusted to the new surroundings. In 1982, the Islamic Community in Germany (in German, *Islamische Gemeinschaft in Deutschland*) was established in Germany, and the year after, the Union of Islamic Organisations in France (in French, *Union des Organisations Islamiques de France*) was established in France. In 1989, the Brussels-based umbrella organisation Federation of Islamic Organisations in Europe was established, and in the 1990s, a series of other organisations followed, including the European Institute of Human Sciences (1992) and European Council for Fatwa and Research (1997), both of them established by the Federation (Mandaville et al. 2010:20f). Yusuf al-Qaradawi played (and plays) an important role in many of these organisations; he is the founder and chairman of the European Council for Fatwa and Research, and enjoys close relations with the Federation of Islamic Organisations in Europe.

A somewhat parallel development took place in Jama'at-e Islami. The economic migration waves of the 1950s and 1960s lead to the establishment of large Pakistani and Bangladeshi communities, in particular in Britain (de Cordier 2009a:611). Among these people were some former Jama'at-e Islami activists who quickly established a number of European organisations. One of the first was the UK Islamic Mission, established in 1962 by a small group of people with connections to the East London Mosque. In 1973, the Islamic Foundation in Leicester was established, and in 1979 Da'watul Islam, both of them with close connections to the Jama'at-e Islami environment. The Islamic Foundation, for instance, was founded by Khurshid Ahmad who is a senior figure in Jama'at-e Islami. More recently, the Muslim Council of Britain was founded in 1997. The council is an umbrella organisation and includes more than 400 Muslim organisations. In particular in its first years, it cooperated closely with the British government, but more recently, the council has been criticised for being too conservative and associated with older generations of Deobandi and

Salafi-influenced leaders (Mandaville 2007:295; see also Eade and Garbin 2006), many of them affiliated with Jama'at-e Islami. At the same time as the Muslim Council of Britain, the Muslim Association of Britain was founded, supposedly more closely affiliated with the Muslim Brotherhood. Finally, like the Muslim Brotherhood and Jama'at-e Islami, the Saudi organisations also spread to Europe and North America following Muslim migration. The Muslim World League, for instance, has established offices in a wide range of European and North American cities since the 1970s.[70]

Together with more independent organisations and community associations, some of them organised around the local mosque, all these organisations engage in a variety of Muslim causes and activities, acting as representatives and places of gathering for the migrant Muslim communities. Some focus primarily on da'wa, mosque services and Qur'an lessons, while others engage more broadly in voluntary community services, including youth work, charitable activities and the collection of zakat (de Cordier 2009a:612). The majority focus their activities on the local community, but some also engage in activities abroad. Initially, this was primarily in the form of mosque collection of zakat and money for *qurbani* offerings to be channelled to the region from which the contributors originated.[71] Reflecting generational shifts in the Muslim population, this started changing in the 1980s, when the first professional aid organisations such as Islamic Relief (1984) and Muslim Aid (1985) emerged, copying the organisational form and structure of British NGOs such as Oxfam and Christian Aid. In an interview with de Cordier (2009a:612), a former staff member in a UK-based Muslim NGO describes these changes:

> [I]f the first generation came as textile workers and small shopkeepers, the social make-up is now more complex. Even if the majority of UK Muslims are still part of lower-income categories, there are now also lawyers, real estate agents, marketing managers and entrepreneurs of Muslim background. There is a small but growing Muslim middle class in the UK with more financial means and a more global perspective than their parents.

In short, this third wave of Islamic aid was prompted by migratory movements from the Middle East and Asia to Europe and North America in the 1960s and 1970s. The growth of migrant Muslim communities in countries like Britain lead to the establishment of branches and affiliations of major Muslim organisations, including the Muslim Brotherhood, Jama'et e-Islami and the Muslim World League, many of them involved in youth programmes, local politics, social welfare services and other kinds of community activism. Likewise, these new communities would engage in aid

[70] Although they may not share the same interpretations of Islam, the European activities of the Brotherhood and the Muslim World League have become increasingly intertwined. Many senior members of the Muslim Brotherhood, for instance, served in leadership positions in the Muslim World League (Mandaville et al. 2009:29). Likewise, distinctions between Brotherhood and Jama'at-e Islami affiliated organisations are increasingly blurred (Mandaville et al. 2009:24).

[71] Qurbani is a religious sacrifice, often a cow or a goat, made in relation to *Eid al-adha*, an important religious holiday in Islam, commemorating the willingness of Ibraham (in Christianity, Abraham) to sacrifice his son.

provision, first through relatively informal practices of giving, often through the local mosque, and later through more professional NGOs such as those that are the subject of the present analysis.

Summing up on the above, the culture of contemporary Islamic aid grew first and foremost out of a general Islamic resurgence. More specifically, this culture is shaped by three particular developments: The emergence of the Muslim Brotherhood and the Jama'at-e Islami, the transnational and pan-Islamic missionary movements of the Gulf, and the migration and establishment of Muslim communities in Europe and North America, each shaping conceptions of aid provision in different ways. For the Muslim Brotherhood and Jama'at-e Islami, aid was about moral education, or tarbiya, aimed at building up the individual Muslim and strengthening the Muslim umma, understood primarily in a national context. The organisations from the Gulf, on the other hand, emphasised a more transnational approach, expressed in the provision of relief, missionary activities, networks and conferences on a transnational level. Finally, migrant Muslim organisations in Europe and North America introduced a focus on community activism, informal practices of transnational giving as well as professional NGOs, modelled after Western NGOs.

Dichotomies of aid: Comparing the cultures of development and Islamic aid

The above sections have sketched the histories of two contemporary aid cultures. Against this background, a number of points can be raised, important for the further analysis: One, these cultures are in important respects fundamentally different; two, they have led largely parallel existences; and three, they have provided different conditions of possibility for transnational Muslim NGOs.

Different cultures, different languages

First, the two cultures are fundamentally different in important ways. They have both emerged as responses to and are shaped by processes of modernisation, colonialism and globalisation.[72] But their proponents, or inhabitants, have interpreted these processes in different ways, leading to different cultures. Overall, one could argue that this difference, at least in part, grows out of different positions: Put somewhat simply, the development culture has grown out of an experience

[72] They are both global in the sense that they rely on global, transnational structures, they make use of global means of communication, their main frame of reference is the global rather than the local or the national, and that proponents consider them to be globally valid, generally applicable or meaningful throughout the world (Boli 2005:386). As such, they present what P. Levitt et al. (under review) call 'global values packages' or 'global vocabularies', available and recognisable throughout the world for different actors to draw on. In this perspective, the study arguably also contributes to contemporary discussions of globalisation. Globalisation is not only about how hegemonic discourses such as development and Islam homogenise the local; nor is it about how a (non-Western) local reacts to a (Western) global (with the global often remaining apparently unaffected by the relationship) (Gille and Riain 2002:288). It is also, and perhaps even more so, about the processes by which these global discourses are tamed, localised and made relevant in particular settings such as the Muslim NGOs (Mandaville 2001:35).

of power and hegemony, of colonising, but also out of sentiments of collective guilt and a sense of complicity in the creation of 'distant sufferer', stemming from the same colonial legacy (Chouraliaki 2010:111). The Middle Eastern Islamic aid culture, on the other hand, is shaped by experiences of marginalisation, of being colonised, and of the poor not as a distant sufferer, but as a fellow member of the community. More specifically, I argue that some of these differences can be conceptualised in the form of three sets of dichotomies, shaping the symbolic languages of respectively development and Islamic aid; namely that between universalism and solidarity, between neutrality and justice, and finally between secularism and religion.

Two brief caveats before we proceed: First, as has been noted in chapter 2, aid cultures are not permanent or static entities but fluid and changing historical processes, and as such, any attempt at describing or categorising them must necessarily be historically specific. In that perspective, the present comparisons between the two cultures is not an attempt at drawing up generic ideal types, but merely to outline differences as they appeared by the end of the 1980s, at the time when transnational Muslim NGOs were emerging. To emphasise this, I write in past tense about the two cultures, even though – as we shall see – many of the characteristics that I describe are still valid in today's cultures of development and Islamic aid. Second, with the below dichotomies of cultural values I do not pretend to say anything about how aid is in fact provided within the cultures of Islamic aid and development; instead, the values say something about how aid *should be* provided. In other words, these are the values that actors need to adhere to in order to appear legitimate within a given aid culture. Thus, for instance, when I posit that neutrality is a core value in the culture of development aid, I do not mean to say that development aid is always provided in a neutral manner – something which history has indeed confuted countless times – but simply that actors need to claim adherence to the value of neutrality in order to gain legitimacy within this culture.

One dichotomy of importance for the present analysis is that between *solidarity and universalism*. In the culture of development aid, universalism came to be a central value. Universalism is understood first and foremost in terms of an inclusive, non-discriminatory approach to recipients, based on a cosmopolitan understanding of humanity as one, and constituted in sharp opposition to particularistic, often religious, approaches, perceived to be discriminatory and excluding. Islamic aid, on the other hand, centered on notions of solidarity and brotherhood, binding Muslims together in a global umma. In this perspective, all Muslims are part of the same religious brotherhood, and as such, closely connected, mutually interdependent and obliged to help one another. Echoing classical Islamic ideas about the two ontological spheres of *dar al Islam* and *dar al-gharb* (in English, the house of Islam and the house of war), the limits of solidarity were often understood in terms of the West. Qaradawi, for instance, often identifies a specific Western threat

to Islamic civilisation and way of life – initially the new Arab regimes, perceived to be protégés of Western imperialism (Hatina 2006:182), and later the threat of secularism, in the form of a morally decadent and individualised West (Gräf and Skovgaard-Petersen 2009:5).

Closely related to this is the dichotomy between *neutrality and justice*. In the culture of development aid, neutrality came to be a core value, shaped by Western humanitarian organisations and states' efforts to aid victims of the world wars.[73] Epitomised as one of the seven principles of the Red Cross, the victors of the wars emphasised the neutrality of aid, first and foremost in the sense of being apolitical, thus ensuring a universalist approach to recipients, but also increasingly in the sense of being technical, professional and objective rather than emotional, personal and normative. In the Islamic aid culture, on the other hand, in part grown out of political movements such as the Muslim Brotherhood and Jama'at-e Islami, there was no inbuilt dichotomy between aid and the political, and neutrality did not seem to be an essential value. Instead, actors emphasised the importance of aid as a tool for justice, a way of realising and extending sentiments of solidarity in order to protect fellow Muslims from external threats, whether in the form of dominant colonial powers or oppressive, secular regimes.[74]

Finally, and to some degree underlying the other two dichotomies, is the dichotomy between *the secularist and the religious*. The culture of Islamic aid was based on a notion of religion as all-encompassing and relevant to all spheres of life, including the provision of aid. Religious activities such as zakat collection, da'wa, religious education and construction of mosques played a central role in the provision of aid, just like Islamic scholars, Qur'an schools and mosques were important for the implementation of aid. The culture of development aid, on the other hand, had gradually come to rest on a principally secular understanding of aid, some of the reasons for which have been discussed in chapter 2. This does not mean that there were no religious actors involved in development aid: As we have seen, missionary organisations were historically involved in the provision of aid to colonies, just like Christian NGOs played a part in the establishment of the United Nations, and some the largest NGOs of the 1980s were religious, including World Vision and Catholic Relief Services. But it means that the culture was, to a large degree, based on a secular understanding of 'religion' in terms of a dichotomy between public/private. In this perspective, the public sphere remains, or should remain, largely non-religious, with 'religion' confined to personal beliefs, religious institutions and other clearly defined 'religious' spaces, leading to a preference for explicitly secular NGOs.

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[73] Paraphrasing Ghandour (2004), one might say that it is perhaps easier to be an advocate for neutrality, when one is in a position of hegemonic power.

[74] The understanding of aid as justice also echoes that of Sayeed Qutb. In Qutb's view, Christian charity was a gift that provoked the hatred of the recipient towards the donor, whereas zakat was 'the outstanding social pillar of Islam', which ensured an equal relationship between donor and recipient by enabling individuals' efforts to be steered towards a common goal (cf. Benthall 2003:16).

Parallel aid cultures

The second point to be made from the above historical overview is that these two cultures have, in terms of actors, structures and geography, led largely parallel existences, with rare overlaps or coincidences. For one, the actors inhabiting the two cultures were different. Development aid, on one side, was dominated by organisational types such as transnational NGOs, governmental aid agencies, and intergovernmental organisations. In concrete terms, the culture was inhabited by intergovernmental organisations such as the UN and the World Bank; governmental aid agencies such as USAID and DfID; and NGOs such as CARE, Oxfam, and World Vision (D. Lewis and Kanji 2009). Islamic aid, on the other hand, was dominated by organisational types such as transnational missionary organisations, networks, national political groups and movements, immigrant community associations, ministries of awqaf and zakat and prominent individuals. More concretely, powerful actors in the Islamic aid culture were political movements such as the Muslim Brotherhood and Jama'at-e Islami, including their national branches and affiliated associations, missionary organisations such as the Muslim World League and the World Assembly of Muslim Youth, ministries of awqaf and zakat in Saudi Arabia and other Gulf-based countries, European Muslim organisations such as the Muslim Council of Britain. Finally, and unlike the highly institutionalised culture of development aid, the culture of Islamic aid has nurtured the authority of charismatic personalities such as Hassan al-Banna, Sayyed Qutb, and Yusuf al-Qaradawi.[75]

Furthermore, these actors worked through parallel economic structures. Development aid came to be based on a formalised, and standardised system of economic transactions, while Islamic aid relied on much more informal, personal, systems of transaction.

But perhaps most importantly, the two cultures were geographically different. The culture of Islamic aid has grown out of the Middle East, in particular Egypt and the Gulf countries, as well as Pakistan. The Muslim Brotherhood emerged from Egypt, and has traditionally been strongest in the Middle East, while Jama'at-e Islami emerged from Pakistan and spread to other South Asian countries. The majority of the transnational organisations were established in Saudi Arabia, including the Muslim World League, the OIC and World Assembly of Muslim Youth. Likewise, most of the funding for Islamic aid provision has traditionally come from Saudi Arabia and other Gulf countries. In contrast, the field of development aid has grown out of a Western context and was dominated by Western actors (Donini and Minear 2006; see also Escobar 1995; Rist 2008). Western states controlled most money flows, the vast majority of transnational NGOs were from

[75] Naturally, and as can be inferred from the above, this does not mean that the Islamic aid culture has not fostered any organisations or institutions; it just means that historically, the legitimacy of these organisations and institutions has, in large part, sprung from the individuals leading them, predicated on notions of personal morality, virtues and merits rather than systems and structures.

the West and even intergovernmental organisations such as the UN agencies, World Bank and others were arguably dominated by Western actors, with most contributions coming from Western countries. This is not to imply that there were no non-Western actors in the field of development aid, only that Western actors were dominant, numerically as well as economically. Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, for instance, have had governmental aid agencies since respectively 1961 and 1974, but both preferred to channel their official aid through OIC and the Islamic Development Bank rather than through the UN, the Development Assistance Committee and the OECD (Kroessin 2007). As other Arab Gulf states, they have always treated the latter as 'Western' channels, providing only symbolic support (Hyder 2007:6).[76]

Conditions of possibility for transnational Muslim NGOs

The third point to remember from this chapter has to do with the ways in which these parallel cultures have laid out the general conditions of possibility for the emergence of transnational Muslim NGOs in the 1970s and 1980s. The culture of development aid has institutionalised a transnational system for the provision of aid, over the years growing to become a hegemonic transnational system, dominant in terms of economic transfers as well as language. Equally important, the culture of development aid has introduced the NGO, carving a space for such organisations as relevant organisational forms and providers of aid in this system. Facilitated by broader processes of globalisation, transnational NGOs have, especially since the 1980s, gained increasing visibility and influence, coming to be seen as the most appropriate and effective actors in the provision of aid (whether from the perspective of neoliberalist anti-state ideologies or visions of alternative development and a strengthened civil society).

More specifically, the culture of Islamic aid has coined a connection between Islamisation and social welfare, promoted by organisations such as the Muslim Brotherhood, Jama'at-e Islami and countless local charities. Likewise, the Gulf-countries' pan-Islamic efforts have presented new transnational relations and organisational types, (re)introducing concepts of Islamic finance and mission. Financially, the explosion of oil prices in 1979 meant that huge funds were suddenly available to donors at governmental level, among businesses, and individuals, many of whom channelled large amounts to aid activities, thus contributing to the strengthening of in particular Gulf-based aid organisations (Ghandour 2004:329), such as the IIROSA and IICO which were both established at this time. And finally, the emergence of a Muslim diaspora in the West has contributed to the establishment of new donors and transnational structures of zakat distribution (de Cordier 2008:610). While first generation immigrants preferred giving their zakat personally or to the mosque, often to be distributed to the villages where people originally came from, during the

[76] Underlying these relationships is a somewhat chequered history of relations between the Gulf States and the UN, including over sanctions against some Arab states and the UN Security Council's position on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict (Cotterrell and Harmer 2005:14).

1980s, the changing constellation of immigrant Muslim society led to shifts in the patterns and forms of charity. New generations of immigrants also wanted to pay their zakat, but they wanted to do so to established organisations, encouraging the establishment of Western Muslim NGOs such as Islamic Relief and Muslim Aid.

Against this background, I argue that transnational Muslim NGOs can be conceptualised as sites of cultural encounters – this is where the cultures of development and Islamic aid meet. In the words of Arce and Long (2000:241989), they can be seen as an interface between different aid cultures, as sites for the intricate interplay and joint appropriation of different bodies of knowledge. What this means is precisely what the present thesis is about. The following chapter will take a first step into the exploration of transnational Muslim NGOs as interfaces for the cultures of Islamic aid and development: Sketching their historical trajectories, chapter 4 seeks to explore the emergence of transnational Muslim NGOs as well analyse the ways in which they have traditionally positioned themselves in relation to the two aid cultures.

Table 3.1. The cultures of development and Islamic aid

	Development aid	**Islamic aid**
Language	Universalism Neutrality Secularism	Solidarity Justice Religion
Geography	The West	The Middle East
Organisational types	Transnational NGOs Governmental aid agencies Intergovernmental organisations	Transnational missionary organisations National political groups Immigrant community associations Ministries of awqaf and zakat Prominent individuals
Examples of important actors	UN World Bank USAID DfID Oxfam CARE World Vision	Muslim Brotherhood Jama'at-e Islami Muslim World League International Islamic Council of Da'wa and Relief Saudi Arabian government Yusuf al-Qaradawi

CHAPTER 4. TRAJECTORIES OF TRANSNATIONAL MUSLIM NGOs

Through a historical analysis of the common trajectories of transnational Muslim NGOs, the present chapter seeks to explore some of the concrete political, economic and social factors that have shaped the organisations, as well as to discuss how the organisations have historically related to the two aid cultures out of which they have grown. As such, this is not an analysis of the concrete ideologies of individual NGOs, but an attempt at presenting a more general history of transnational Muslim NGOs before 9.11. The chapter analyses the history of transnational Muslim NGOs through an analysis of four events, serving as the windows through which to explore the ways in which the organisations have historically been positioned in the aid field.

Table 4.1. Important events in the history of transnational Muslim NGOs

Event	Examples of transnational Muslim NGOs established in relation to these events
Famine in the Horn of Africa (1984-1985)	International Islamic Relief Organisation (Saudi Arabia, 1979) Munazzamat al Da'wa Islamiya (Sudan, 1980) Islamic African Relief Agency (Sudan, 1981) Malawi Muslim Agency (Kuwait, 1981)[77] Islamic Relief (UK, 1984) International Islamic Charitable Organisation (Kuwait, 1984) Muslim Aid (UK, 1985)
War in Afghanistan (1979-1989)	Human Concern International (Canada, 1980) Human Relief Agency (Egypt, 1985) Islamic Call Committee (Kuwait, 1986) Mercy Relief International (USA, 1986) Al Haramain (Saudi Arabia, 1988) Benevolence International Foundation (Saudi Arabia, 1988) International Islamic Council for Da'wa and Relief (Egypt, 1988)
War in Bosnia (1992-1995)	Humanity First (UK, 1991) Foundation for Human Rights and Freedoms and Humanitarian Relief (Turkey, 1992) Global Relief Foundation (USA, 1992) Helping Hand for Relief and Development (USA, 1993) Muslim Hands (UK, 1993) Istanbul International Brotherhood and Solidarity Association (Turkey, 1994) Deniz Feneri (Turkey, 1996) Islamic Center for Help to the People of Bosnia-Herzegovina (Iran, n.d.)
9.11. attacks (2001)	Humanitarian Forum (UK, 2004) Friends of Charities Association (Saudi Arabia, 2004) National Council of American Muslim Non-profits (USA, 2005) Charity and Security Network (USA, 2008)

[77] Later renamed African Muslims Agency and now Direct Aid International.

These events are: the famine in the Horn of Africa in the mid-1980s; the war in Afghanistan in the 1980s; the war in Bosnia in the 1990s; and finally the 9.11. attacks on New York and Washington in 2001, all judged to be defining moments in the history of transnational Muslim NGOs insofar as they have contributed in important ways to shaping the perceptions and room for manoeuvre of these NGOs. In turn, these events have with time come to be part of the organisations' symbolic repertoires, part of their internal organisational histories (as shall be further discussed in chapters 5 to 8). [78] The chapter argues that transnational Muslim NGOs have historically positioned themselves as part of an Islamic aid culture, relating to the culture of development aid by way of competition, conflict, or co-existence, but that this situation was drastically changing with 9.11. and the War on Terror.[79]

Competition: Transnational Muslim NGOs in the Horn of Africa

The end of the 1970s and the beginning of the 1980s saw the emergence of some of the first transnational Muslim NGOs. As Yaylaci (2007:14) notes, contemporary forms of Muslim aid mostly originate from a rally to support Muslims in catastrophic situations, basically those in war and natural disasters. One of the first disasters to attract the attention of Muslim organisations was the famine in the Horn of Africa, encouraging the establishment of several NGOs with the purpose of providing food aid, medicine, and other kinds of emergency relief to people in affected countries such as Ethiopia, Sudan, Chad and Somalia. A pioneer transnational Muslim NGOs was IIROSA, established in Jeddah in 1979 by a group of wealthy Saudi men. "We said to each other, listen, people are suffering in Sudan and Ethiopia, we are only 150 km away, we need to help," one of the founders tells me, noting how he collected shoes and clothes and stored it all in his own house. "I remember my children protested, but I explained to them what the purpose was, this is for the good work of Allah, and they understood." A few hundred kilometres away, during a conference of Islamic banks in Kuwait City in 1984, Yusuf al-Qaradawi called for the need to fight poverty, illiteracy and disease among poor Muslims. Under the motto "Pay a dollar, save a Muslim" he challenged the audience to raise a billion dollars for this purpose; a campaign which lead to the foundation of the IICO, established by 160 Islamic scholars, thinkers, businessmen and other prominent people (Benthall and Bellion-Jourdan 2003:41). That same year, Islamic Relief was

[78] Of course, there are many other events of importance in the history of transnational Muslim NGOs; most importantly perhaps the ongoing conflict between Israel and Palestine. With the Islamisation of the Palestinian resistance and the emergence of Hamas in 1987, Palestine became a prime site for the development of local Muslim NGOs (Ghandour 2004:329), many of them supported by transnational Muslim NGOs. Organisations established as a response to the conflicts in Palestine include the Holy Land Foundation (established in USA, 1988), Interpal (UK, 1994), Kinder USA (USA, 2002) and KindHearts (USA, 2002).

[79] This chapter builds in large part on Benthall and Bellion-Jourdan (2003), insofar as this is, so far, the only comprehensive account of the history of transnational Muslim NGOs.

founded in Britain by two medical students of Egyptian origin. As Hani al-Banna, one of the founders, recalls in a recent interview: "It started with the famines and food shortages that affected Ethiopia and Sudan in the mid-1980s. The images of starving people shocked me, like people around the globe, profoundly" (Marshall 2007). Likewise, Muslim Aid, established in Britain in 1985 by representatives from 23 primarily Pakistani and Bangladeshi Muslim community organisations, was also prompted by the famine in Somalia: "Everyone was there [in Africa] but the Muslims. We saw it on TV and we were ashamed," a board member notes in an interview.

Apart from these four major NGOs, the period saw the establishment of several other transnational Muslim NGOs (see the table below for some examples). There are different reasons for this wave of transnational Muslim NGOs at precisely this moment in history. Overall, and as has been described in the foregoing chapter, factors such as the general increase in transnational NGOs at this time, the popularity of pan-Islamic ideals of solidarity, the explosion of oil prices, and the emergence of a Muslim migrant community in the West all contributed to the birth of transnational Muslim NGOs. More specifically, the spread of communication technology also contributed to the emergence of transnational Muslim as well as non-Muslim NGOs at this precise moment in history. Through real-time coverage of emergencies, new media would bring remote events virtually to the door of a Muslim audience, stirring emotions of solidarity and empathy (de Cordier 2009a:612) – a development that was only further strengthened by the emergence of MBC, Al Jazeera and other Arabic satellite channels in the early and mid 1990s (Meyer et al. 2007:297. As a Muslim Aid employee notes in an interview with de Cordier: "Of course, the Ethiopian famine was not the first large-scale disaster to shock international audiences [...] But the way it was covered, and the global nature of the charity events around it, were new" (cf. de Cordier 2009a:612).

As noted by Islamic Relief's founder above, for the Muslim NGOs the media also crudely displayed the fact that Western NGOs were far more active than Muslim ones, despite the fact that many of the victims of the famine were Muslims. The statement of Hani al-Banna isechoed by one of IIROSA's founders almost to the word: "I was watching the catastrophe on TV," one of the founders of IIROSA told me, "and I realised that the only organisations helping the starving people were the Western ones. There were no Muslims." One of de Cordier's interviewees has the same observation: "Since the vast majority of aid initiatives came from Western individuals and institutions, some wanted to do something from the Muslim side" (cf. de Cordier 2009a:612). There was for many people a wish to translate the theoretical and much talked-about Islamic solidarity into a practical Islamic aid (Yaylaci 2007:13; Ghandour 2004:328), demonstrating compassion with the starving Muslims and showing the world that not only Western NGOs were capable of providing effective aid. As such, inherent in the first generations of Muslim NGOs there was also an element of competition and defiance of Western hegemony (Bellion-Jourdan 2000:15).

For some, this was not only a competition in terms of compassion and efficiency. Among certain Muslim NGOs at the time, there was a widespread conception that the majority of Western organisations in Africa worked either covertly or overtly as missionaries, attempting to attract converts to Christianity through relief and social welfare activism (which some of them undoubtedly did). This understanding of Western NGOs as missionaries included also explicitly secular NGOs such as the Médecins sans Frontiers, seen to be promoting Western values that many deemed to be culturally and religiously inappropriate in a Muslim context. Refusing to leave the field of humanitarian action to these NGOs, specifically in situations where recipients were identified as Muslims (Benthall and Bellion-Jourdan 2003:70), some Muslim NGOs took up the challenge by introducing their own missionary projects in Africa. In this perspective, an important objective of Muslim NGOs was not only to provide aid, but to counter the influence of Western, Christian NGOs, protecting Muslim faith and identity. This was the case with many Gulf-based NGOs, reflecting the pan-Islamic missionary efforts of these countries. Thus, a former staff member in IIROSA notes that the expansion of Christian organisations in Africa was what prompted IIROSA to engage in aid provision. Likewise, Yusuf al-Qaradawi, the founder of IICO, was alerted by Christian organisations which, according to him, used poverty and illness to spread the Gospel and attract converts. As a way to counter these Christianisation campaigns, he launched the above-mentioned campaign, explicitly alluding to a conference of missionary organisations in Colorado in 1978 at which Christian missionaries had allegedly announced their intention of investing a billion dollars in an effort to convert as many Muslims as possible (Benthall and Bellion-Jourdan 2003:41).

This understanding of Western organisations as missionary and the need for Muslim organisations to step up in the battle of souls was not restricted to an African context, but was also common in Afghanistan and later in Bosnia.[80] However, taking into consideration the colonial history of Africa, there is reason to believe that the conflict was more pronounced here, building on centuries of Christian missionary activism. Furthermore, unlike Afghanistan and Bosnia, the Muslim population in many African countries is often a minority, strengthening the perception of vulnerability to missionary activities and the need for protection. As Ahmed (2009:426) writes,

[80] In early 1990s, Abdullah Azzam, then director of the Office for Services to the Mujahedeen, clearly expressed this general suspicion of Western organisations in a publication dealing with the health of Afghan refugees: "Who is facing this dramatic situation [in Afghanistan]? It is the missionaries, because wherever poverty, ignorance and illness are to be found, missionaries are there. And so groups of missionaries (*al-mubashirun)* bearing different names have come to settle in Peshawar" (cf. Benthall and Bellion-Jourdan 2003:74). Likewise, in 1997, Ahmed Sonoussi, then head of the Afghan office of the Kuwaiti Islamic Call Committee (in Arabic, *Lajnat al-Da'wa al-Islamiya*), wrote a widely disseminated memo criticising what he called 'the malicious activity of the crusaders' who, through relief work in Afghanistan, were seeking to 'poison the minds of Afghans and gradually convert them to Christianity.' He later admitted that this was a deliberate exaggeration designed to mobilise public opinion in the Muslim world and obtain more funds for his organisation (Ghandour 2003:n.p.).

Western aid organisations are often depicted as deploying aid as a means to convert Muslims to Christianity and to exercise political control over them. Thus, historically, especially East Africa has been considered an important Islamic frontier, the border of the umma (Brenner 1993:15).[81]

In particular Sudan seems to have been battleground for struggles between Muslim and Western organisations, often intertwined with and aggravated by the national political struggles between the (largely Muslim) North and the (non-Muslim) South. Ghandour (2003) has described this situation as a 'humanitarian cold war'. The Muslim front consisted in organisations such as the Libyan World Islamic Call Society (in Arabic, *Ja'miyya al-da'wa al-islamiyya al-'alamiyya*), the Sudanese Organisation of Islamic Call (in Arabic, *Munazzamat da'wa islamiya*, often shortened to MDI) and the Islamic African Relief Agency, Africa Muslims Agency and IICO from Kuwait, the Saudi organisations IIROSA and Muwaffaq Foundation, as well as, to a lesser degree, the British Islamic Relief and Muslim Aid; the Western front included organisations such as CARE, Oxfam, World Vision, Adventist Relief Agency, Médecins sans Frontiers and the Lutheran World Federation.

On the Muslim side, in particular organisations such as MDI and the World Islamic Call Society have been critical of the Western NGOs, accusing them of being conduits for financial and technical support for Christian rebels in the south (de Cordier 2009b:668) as well as forced conversion, secularist propaganda and neo-colonisation. Ghandour (2004:335) notes that in 1995, Muslim NGOs such as the Islamic African Relief Agency had worked alongside national Christian organisations such as the Sudanese Council of Churches and Western organisations like Médecins sans Frontiers and the Irish GOAL in the Wadi al-Bashir camp at Omdurman. Heavily incited by the MDI, however, the population drove out the non-Muslim NGOs, accusing them of mission and conversion. As noted in a 1995 report, written by MDI staff: "The missionaries in Africa have brandished the motto that says 'Give up the religion of Islam, and we will free you from the hunger, poverty, fear and sickness'. Armies of missionaries have crossed Africa with food in their left hands and crosses in their right hands" (cf. Benthall and Bellion-Jourdan 2003:111). In 1997, the World Islamic Call Society launched an initiative called 'Countering the Christianization Efforts', including a seminar on *Christianization and Colonialist Penetration*, which was held in cooperation with Africa International University (Salih 2002). These organisations were supported by people such as the (self-proclaimed) Islamic scholar Hassan Makki, writing for the UK-based Islamic Foundation which is closely connected to the Jama'at-e Islami. In his publication, *The Christian Design* (1989), Makki has studied the impact of missionary activities in Sudan from 1843 to 1986. He argues that missionary humanitarian organisations have historically been agents of

[81] This fear of proselytisation remains present among staff in many Muslim NGOs. In his analysis of three transnational Muslim NGOs in sub-Saharan Africa, Ahmed (2009:427) speaks of a widespread conspiracy theory among Muslim NGOs portraying the aid of Red Cross and Western NGOs as means to convert Muslims to Christianity and exercise political control over them.

Western influence over Sudanese society; a pattern which is now repeated in the form of Western NGOs using aid as a weapon to impose Christianity or Western secularism on the populations of South Sudan (Makki 1989). Other organisations, such as the IIROSA and IICO, did not express their scepticism as publicly as the World Islamic Call Society but shared their basic assumptions about Christian and Western NGOs and agreed on the need to counter their missionary activities with Islamic information and education in the provision of aid to the Sudanese people, for instance through building mosques and Qur'an schools (Pez 2007:4).

Christian and Western NGOs, on the other hand, were highly critical of Muslim NGOs in Sudan, suspecting them of close relations to the government and the militant *janjaweed* (Kirmani and Khan 2008:48; Benthall and Bellion-Jourdan 2003:123). They were sceptical of cooperation and rarely invited them to participate in coordination meetings (Ghandour 2004:336)– and if they did, meetings would often be conducted in a heavily jargoned English without the benefit of translation, thus excluding all but the most competent English speakers (see also Ratcliffe 2007:59). In effect, the NGOs operating in the country were divided into two separate networks, which hardly ever interacted with each other. Thus, in its first years, Operation Lifeline Sudan, a consortium of UN agencies and NGOs established in 1989 to provide humanitarian aid to Sudan, included no Muslim organisations among its member NGOs (Minear 1991:61). Likewise, the NGO Forum created in the early 1990s to coordinate activities of international and local NGOs in Southern Sudan did not invite any transnational Muslim NGOs. In an interview with Bellion-Jourdan, the then director of Islamic African Relief Agency jokingly said that Western NGOs were aiming to create a 'Sudanese Yalta', dividing Sudan into zones of influence like the Allied Forces in 1944 – CARE had the Kordofan region, Oxfam the west, the Adventist Development and Relief Agency had the north and World Vision the south (Benthall and Bellion-Jourdan 2003:121).

While relations between Muslim and Western NGOs were generally bleak, a few organisations stood out, insisting on cooperation and coordination. Here, the Sudanese organisation Islamic African Relief Agency is a case in point. From the inception in 1981, the founder of the organisation, Abdallah Suleyman al-'Awad, sought cooperation with Christian and Western organisations, declaring that he preferred 'field dialogue' over 'intellectual dialogue' between Islam and Christianity and reminding people that Muslims and Christians alike just wanted to help the poor. In concrete terms, this resulted in a range of project partnerships with organisations such as World Vision, the Lutheran World Federation, Oxfam and the Adventist Development and Relief Agency, just like the Islamic African Relief Agency, through its American sister organisation the Islamic American Relief Agency, obtained financial support from USAID.[82]

[82] Relations were, however, abruptly cut when in 1999, the Islamic Africa Relief Agency came under investigation for involvement in the 1993 attacks on the World Trade Center and the 1998 attacks on the US

Summing up, the famines in the Horn of Africa lead to the establishment of a number of new transnational Muslim organisations. Many of these were, at least in part, motivated by the fact that the famine had attracted a wide range of Christian and secular Western NGOs, but few Muslim ones, even though most victims of the famine were Muslims. Wishing to contribute to help these suffering Muslims, while at the same time sending a signal of Muslim solidarity, people especially in Britain and the Gulf countries started mobilising, establishing the first transnational Muslim NGOs. Thus, from the beginning, transnational Muslim NGOs (as well as their Western counterparts) arguably conceived the aid field in terms of a dichotomy between Western and Islamic aid. This dichotomy was further strengthened by the fact that for some organisations, primarily the Gulf-based ones, there was also an element of competition with Christian and secular Western NGOs, perceived to be actively proselytising under the cover of aid provision. Thus, some Muslim NGOs engaged in missionary activities of their own as a way of stemming the influence of Western NGOs. This conflict was particularly pronounced in Sudan where the two groups of organisations openly fought each other, each accusing the other of proselytising.

Conflicts: Transnational Muslim NGO in Afghanistan

Parallel to the involvement in the Horn of Africa, Muslim NGOs increasingly got involved in other areas of the world. Here, especially Afghanistan came to play an important role for Muslim NGOs. Many people saw the 1979 Soviet occupation as an atheist attempt to intimidate a pious Muslim population. This triggered surges of solidarity among Muslims all over the world, and Muslim groups and organisations started collecting funds and in-kind support to send to Afghanistan. Some of the providers of aid to Afghanistan were well-known transnational Muslim organisations, including IIROSA, IICO and Muslim Aid. But the war was also a catalyst in the creation of new Muslim NGOs. Many of the new aid organisations in Afghanistan came from Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and other Gulf countries, incuding the royal Saudi Committee for Support of Afghanistan directed by Prince Salman; the Islamic Call Committee (in Arabic, *Lajnat al-da'wa al-islamiya*), established in 1986 by Kuwait's Society for Social Reform (*Al-Islah*), the social welfare branch of the Muslim Brotherhood; the Benevolence International Foundation and the Al Haramain Islamic Foundation, the two latter founded by Saudis in Karachi in 1988 (Ahmed 2009:431). But Muslim NGOs from other Middle Eastern countries also played an important role in Afghanistan. In 1985 the Egypt-based Arab Doctors Union established the Human Relief Agency (*Lajnat al-igatha al-insaniya*) with the purpose of channelling aid to Afghanistan. Likewise, the umbrella organisation International Islamic Council for Da'wa and Relief, which was established in Egypt at the height of the war in 1988, was active in the provision of aid to Afghanistan. Finally, Muslim migrants in

embassies in Nairobi and Dar es-Salam (Benthall and Bellion-Jourdan 2003:126). In 2004, the organisation was designated by the US Treasury Department.

Europe and North America also established a number of Muslim NGOs, including the Canadian NGO Human Concern International (established in 1980) and the US-based Mercy Relief International (1986), which all opened offices in Pakistan, running hospitals and clinics on the Afghan-Pakistani border and providing other kinds of relief to refugees (Benthall and Bellion-Jourdan 2003:73).

In Afghanistan, relations between Muslim NGOs and Western ones were marked by defiance. While appreciating the support of the US government to the mujahedeen, many Muslim NGOs saw Western NGOs as exponents of atheism and what they considered to be generally inappropriate norms and practices, potentially harmful to Afghan society, just like some were suspected of supporting particular political parties (Benthall and Bellion-Jourdan 2003:74f). As such, many Muslim NGOs preferred to cooperate with other Muslim NGOs rather than enter into partnerships with Western NGOs, and in 1986, the Saudi and Kuwaiti Red Crescent societies, the Islamic African Relief Agency and the Muslim World League established an Islamic Coordination Council (Benthall and Bellion-Jourdan 2003:74). When the Agency Coordinating Body for Afghan Relief (ACBAR) was established two years later with the purpose of strengthening broad coordination among all NGOs working in Afghanistan, most Muslim NGOs abstained from joining, seeing ACBAR as dominated by Western organisations (Christensen 1995:144). Only a few Muslim organisations became members of ACBAR, including the Islamic African Relief Agency and the Aga Khan Foundation (which many other Muslim NGOs did not consider a 'real' Muslim NGO).[83]

For some Muslim NGOs, aid became not just a question of providing relief to suffering Muslims, but of supporting them more directly in their fight against the enemy. In other words, whereas the provision of aid in Africa was sometimes simultaneously relief and da'wa, here it was sometimes relief and jihad. Speaking about Afghanistan, Qaradawi proclaimed in an interview in the journal *Al-Jihad* (cf. Benthall and Bellion-Jourdan 2003:71) that all Muslims were obliged to commit themselves to support the resistance:

> Jihad is *fard 'ain* [an obligation for individuals, as opposed to *fard kefaya*, a communal obligation] for military and medical experts or anyone with a special skill that the *mujahidin* need. They should help the *mujahidin* in the field of their competence and capacity. In general, it is incumbent on all Muslims to provide material and intellectual help in order to live with them in the heart even if they cannot live with them in the body.

While most Muslim NGOs, together with Qaradawi himself, took this to mean non-violent and indirect support through da'wa and relief; others interpreted it as a call to directly support to the armed struggle of the mujahedeen, in particular among Saudi NGOs. They provided the mujahedeen with weapons and equipment, facilitated contacts to volunteers who wanted to join

[83] ACBAR website, www.acbar.org (last accessed 15. April 2011). Later, Islamic Relief – which only started worked in Afghanistan in 1992 – became a member.

the mujahedeen and supported the mujahedeen financially. A case in point is the Saudi Office for Services to the Mujahedeen (*Maktab khidamat li-l-mujahidin*), founded by a militant member of the Muslim Brotherhood (Ghandour 2002:13) and allegedly particularly active in supporting the mujahedeen. According to a now declassified 1996 CIA report, the organisation's Peshawar office funded at least nine training camps (CIA 1996:6), parallel to its involvement in the provision of relief aid, healthcare, food, and education to Afghan refugees (Hegghammer 2010:43). The same CIA report also claims that the IIROSA helped fund six training camps in Afghanistan (1996:5). Likewise, in interviews, former members of the World Assembly of Muslim Youth claim that this organisation provided logistical support for young Saudis wanting to fight in Afghanistan. Also, individual staff members of Muslim NGOs were involved with the mujahedeen. In an interview, a former IIROSA staff member says:

> I don't know if the IIROSA supported the mujahedeen, but in Afghanistan everything was mixed up. It is not my impression that they sent funds directly to other activities, but some of their staff may have been involved in other activities. They recruited people in the hundreds, so surely some of them…

In order to comprehend this involvement in military support by Saudi NGOs, it is necessary to understand the international environment and the atmosphere surrounding the war in Afghanistan. The involvement of the NGOs was to a large degree sanctioned by the USA and the Saudi state, which were also heavily involved in supporting the Afghans (Benthall and Bellion-Jourdan 2003:72). Eager to build alliances in their fight against the Soviet, US and Saudi governments would, indirectly or directly, encourage this support to the mujahedeen, or the 'freedom fighters', as they called them (Hegghammer 2010). In 1980 or 1981, USA requested the Saudi state to match US congressional funding for Afghan resistance, and funding increased in the mid-1980s (Hegghammer 2010:26). The Saudi state provided direct military and logistical support to the mujahedeen. Furthermore, it sent money through the Saudi Red Crescent and the 'Popular Committee for Fundraising', later the Saudi Relief Committee (Hegghammer 2010:25), knowing that Saudi Red Crescent was part of the weapons pipeline, and on at least one occasion, ambulances were used to transport healthy fighters to and from the battlefront. Likewise, the first 'Saudi Afghans' were in fact aid workers from the Saudi Red Crescent and the Relief Committee, contributing to further blurring the lines between humanitarian and military assistance (Hegghammer 2010:27).[84] But with the victory of the mujahedeen in the beginning of the 1990s, the international political climate started changing, resulting, among other things, in the increasing control and repression of Muslim NGOs. Yielding to the injunctions of USA and certain Middle Eastern states, in 1993 Pakistani authorities arrested more than hundred people working in NGOs on the border of Pakistan and Afghanistan (Benthall and Bellion-Jourdan 2003:77). Likewise, after pressure from Egypt and USA, around the same time Saudi Arabia fired the head of the Pakistani

[84] There are no precise figures for the number of Saudi fighters in Afghanistan; Hegghammer (2010:47) suggests between 1,000 and 5,000 people.

branch of the Muslim World League accused of supplying documentation and arms to militants in Afghanistan (CIA report 1996:2).

To sum up, the conflict in Afghanistan was interpreted by many (Muslims as well as non-Muslims) in religious terms as a conflict between Muslims and non-Muslims, leading to a surge of solidarity among Muslims and the emergence of new Muslim NGOs, eager to support fellow Muslims in different ways. For the majority of NGOs, this religious reading of the conflict and the role of NGOs translated into conventional aid provision, including the distribution of food, medicine and water to refugees and other victims of the conflicts. A small group of organisations, however, engaged more directly in the conflicts, arguing that aid was meaningless if not including support to the mujahedeen. Supported by the US and Saudi governments, in particular Saudi NGOs would provide different kinds of support to the fighters parallel to their provision of aid, blurring the boundaries between relief and militant jihad.

Co-existence: Transnational Muslim NGOs in Bosnia

Erupting at a time when the conflict in Afghanistan was drifting into civil war, the 1992-1995 war in Bosnia came to be the new focus of attention for many transnational Muslim NGOs, replacing the Afghan involvement (Benthall and Bellion-Jourdan 2003:129). The beginning of the 1990s thus saw a new wave of Muslim NGOs, directing their efforts at the victims of the Bosnian war. Many of these organisations were of a Western origin, established by immigrant communities, including the British NGO Muslim Hands (1993) and the North American Global Relief Foundation (1992). Similarly, already established organisations such as Muslim Aid, Mercy Relief International, and Islamic Relief experienced great increases in donations in these years, facilitating their expansion. In 1993 Islamic Relief opened up offices in Tuzla and Zenica; in 1994 Mercy Relief International followed. The war in Bosnia also saw the emergence of the first transnational Turkish NGOs, including the Foundation for Human Rights and Freedoms and Humanitarian Relief (in the public known as IHH), established by Milli Görüs representatives in 1995 (Solberg 2007). Likewise, Iranian organisations, such as the Foundation for the Oppressed and the Iranian Islamic Centre for Help to the People of Bosnia-Herzegovina were important actors in the provision of aid to the Bosnian people (Benthall and Bellion-Jourdan 2003:139). As in Afghanistan, the main part of aid, however, came from Gulf-based organisations. According to Burr and Collins (2006), the Saudi King Fahd gave 103 million dollars to Bosnia in the period 1992-1996, some distributed through governmental committees (Benthall and Bellion-Jourdan 2003:72), but much channelled through Muslim NGOs such as IIROSA and Al Haramain. Under the local name of IGASA, the IIROSA embarked on sizeable aid programmes aimed at Bosnian Muslims who had taken refuge in Croatia and Slovenia (Benthall and Bellion-Jourdan 2003:130).

As in Afghanistan, the war in Bosnia also saw the more or less direct involvement of certain Muslim NGOs in the armed struggle. As Hegghammer (2010:33) notes, the 'Bosnian jihad' became the first major pan-Islamic battleground after the Afghan jihad and the new destination of choice for large numbers of Arab volunteer fighters. According to the above-mentioned 1996 CIA report, as many as 13 Muslim organisations operating in Bosnia were somehow involved in the conflict, including the Human Relief Agency and Al-Haramain. Others mention the Islamic Benevolence Foundation and the Office for Services to the Mujahedeen, both allegedly involved in sponsoring volunteer fighters as well as shipping weapons and military equipment into Bosnia, and IIROSA, allegedly involved in the extension of services such as visas and fake ID cards to Arab combatants (Hegghammer 2010:49; Benthall and Bellion-Jourdan 2003:135).

But Bosnia, for many reasons, came to be a different experience than Afghanistan: there was more international control with the area, Bosnian Muslims were more secular and not as attached to the Arab world, and the national and international authorities were no longer as welcoming of Islamic fighters as they had been in Afghanistan. For one, the 1990-1991 Gulf War had put severe constraints on the relationship between the United States, Saudi Arabia and Islamic movements, with the latter denouncing the participation of Muslim countries in the US-led coalition against Saddam Hussein (Benthall and Bellion-Jourdan 2003:76). Secondly, the atrocities in Algeria and Egypt as well as the February 1993 attack on the World Trade Center in New York illustrated with all clarity the threat posed to authorities by the so-called Arab Afghans (Hegghammer 2010:33ff). A few years later, the bombings in Riyadh 1995 and Khobar 1996 prompted the Saudi government to crack down on veterans of the Afghan and Bosnian jihad, and mass arrests and interrogations marked the beginning of a more confrontational phase between the Saudi state and the Islamic movement (Hegghammer 2010:76f), and more generally, between Arab regimes and the Islamic movement.

The involvement of some transnational Muslim NGOs in the 1993 and 1998 attacks on American territories – first the World Trade Center and then the bombings of the US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania – only lead to increased control with these organisations, manifested in a decrease in public funding, arrest of individuals, and bans of certain organisations. Most famously, five transnational Muslim NGOs suspected of involvement in the embassy attacks were banned by the Kenyan government in 1998 – Mercy International, Help African People, Al-Haramain, IIROSA, and the Ibrahim bin Abdul Aziz Ibrahim Foundation, the two former with headquarters in USA and the three latter based in Saudi Arabia (Salih 2002:24).

This situation of increased control and restrictions meant that transnational Muslim NGOs, whether by design or under constraint, came to adopt a sharp demarcation between aid and jihad

(Benthall and Bellion-Jourdan 2003:70). Instead, transnational Muslim NGOs increasingly turned to strategies of neutrality and universalism as a way of ensuring legitimacy. Islamic Relief, for instance, took part in a fundraising campaign organised by the British newspaper *Independent*, stressing that aid was distributed not only to Muslims but also to Serbs and Croats (Yaylaci 2007:31). In this, Western Muslim NGOs such as Islamic Relief had an obvious advantage; as a British NGO, the organisation enjoyed easier access to powerful development NGOs and agencies than e.g. Gulf-based NGOs. In the above-mentioned Independent campaign, for instance, Islamic Relief worked together with Oxfam and Save the Children, well-established NGOs with a good reputation in the development system. In general, however, Muslim NGOs – whether Western or Gulf-based – remained relatively isolated from the culture of development aid, rarely invited to enter into formal partnerships or offered funding agreements by mainstream development NGOs and aid agencies

A new situation: 9.11. and the 'War on Terror'

The fourth event of importance we shall consider here is the 9.11. attacks on New York and Washington and the ensuing War on Terror[85] – perhaps the most defining events for transnational Muslim NGOs, for good and bad setting the boundaries within which these NGOs navigate in the aid field today – and, not least, the framework through which we as researchers understand what they do. Sketching some of the most important developments related to 9.11., this section provides the background for the following chapters' discussion of how four transnational Muslim NGOs have reacted to these events.

Restrictions, control and designations

After it became clear that the attacks on the Twin Towers and Pentagon on September 11, 2001, killing almost 3,000 people, had been carried out by radical Islamic groups, suspicions quickly rose as to the involvement of certain transnational Muslim NGOs in planning and financing the attacks. Within a year of the attacks, a number of transnational Muslim NGOs, including Al Haramain, the Revival of the Islamic Heritage Society, the Global Relief Foundation and Benevolence International Foundation, had been designated by the US government, accused of supporting or being otherwise related to Al-Qaeda. Several other governments followed suit, banning a number of transnational Muslim NGOs working in their territory. In Bosnia, for instance, police raided the offices of Benevolence International Foundation in 2002, finding weapons, military manuals, and photographs of Bin Laden. Later, the Bosnian branches of Global Relief Fund, Al-Furqan, Al Haramain, Al-Masjed al-Aqsa Charity Foundation, and Taibah International were all shut down on

[85] Let me reiterate that the focus of this analysis is not to evaluate whether the measures taken against Muslim NGOs in the USA are fair or not, nor is it to judge whether the NGOs are innocent or not. Instead, the intention is, more modestly, to outline what 9.11. has meant for transnational Muslim NGOs in terms of opportunity structures and obstacles.

the grounds that they were somehow connected with international terrorist networks (Woehrel 2005:4f). The same year, Bangladeshi police arrested seven Al-Haramain staff members in the organisation's Uttara office after their suspected links to terror funding under the garb of providing Islamic education (Kumar 2009:904).[86] And in 2003, the Saudi Arabian government, after pressure from the US, closed down Al Haramain's office in Somalia on the grounds that the organisation was supporting Al-Qaeda. In January 2004, a joint US-Saudi action designated four offices of Al Haramain inside Saudi Arabia (Cotterrell and Harmer 2005:19).

In the following years, governments and intergovernmental organisations introduced a wide range of new policies, instruments and regulations, attempting to prevent and obstruct NGO involvement in terrorist activities. At the level of intergovernmental organisations, in 2001 the Financial Action Task Force, an intergovernmental organisation designed to combat money laundering, added terrorist financing to its scope, and the organisation has since then developed specific policies for non-profit organisations (Shaw-Hamilton 2007:19). Under UN auspices, the Security Council has also passed a number of anti-terror resolutions. Most importantly in relation to NGOs, the UN Security Council Committee 1267 requires member states to "freeze the assets of, prevent the entry into or transit through their territories by, and prevent the direct or indirect supply, sale and transfer of arms and military equipment to any individual or entity associated with Al-Qaeda, Osama bin Laden and/or the Taliban". As of 2010, the Committee has designated 13 Muslim NGOs, suspected of association with Al-Qaeda, bin Laden or the Taliban (see table 4.2). The European Union maintains a similar list of persons, groups and entities related to terrorist activity. As of 2010, one NGO has been included on this list (see table below). Furthermore, the EU has formulated a number of policies referring specifically to NGOs, including the *Framework for a Code of Conduct for Non-Profit organisations* (2005); and the *European Commission Communication on the Prevention of and Fight against Terrorist Financing through Greater Transparency of the Non-Profit Sector* (2006).

Individual states have also taken a number of measures to prevent NGO financing of terrorist activities. In the USA, the State Department maintains lists of *Specially Designated Nationals and Blocked Persons*, *Specially Designated Global Terrorists* and *Foreign Terrorist Organisations*. The Treasury Department oversees and investigates financial transactions of US-based NGOs. If an NGO transfers material support or resources[87] to designated persons or organisations, the Treasury Department has the authority to freeze all assets of the NGO, effectively closing it down. Today, 31

[86] They were later released, supposedly due to pressure from Saudi Arabia.
[87] Defined in United States Code, title 18, §2339A(b) as "currency or monetary instruments or financial securities, financial services, lodging, training, expert advice or assistance, safehouses, false documentation or identification, communications equipment, facilities, weapons, lethal substances, explosives, personnel, transportation, and other physical assets, except medicine or religious materials" (available on http://codes.lp.findlaw.com/uscode/18/I/113B/2339A/notes, last accessed 6. May 2011).

Muslim NGOs are designated by the US State Department for their relations to Al-Qaeda, Hamas, Hezbollah or other supposedly radical Islamic groups (see table below).

Table 4.2. Designated transnational Muslim NGOs[88]

Name	UN	EU	US	Suspected of relations to
Office for Services to the Mujahedeen				x Al-Qaeda
Al Rashid Trust		x		x Al-Qaeda
WAFA Humanitarian Organisation		x		x Al-Qaeda
Rabita Trust		x		x Al-Qaeda
Umma Tameer E-Nau				x Al-Qaeda
Revival of Islamic Heritage Society		x		x Al-Qaeda
Afghan Support Committee				x Al-Qaeda
Al Haramain Islamic Foundation		x		x Al-Qaeda
Aid organisation of the Ulema				x Al-Qaeda
Global Relief Foundation		x		x Al-Qaeda
Benevolence International Foundation		x		x Al-Qaeda
Islamic Call Committee		x		x Al-Qaeda
Al Akhtar Trust		x		x Al-Qaeda
Taibah International				x Al-Qaeda
Al Masjed Al Aqsa Charity Foundation				x Al-Qaeda
Al Furqan		x		x Al-Qaeda
Islamic African Relief Agency				x Al-Qaeda
International Islamic Relief Organisation[89]		x		x Al-Qaeda
Somali International Relief Organisation		x		Al-Qaeda
Holy Land Foundation			x	x Hamas
Al Aqsa Foundation				x Hamas
Comité de Bienfaisance et de Secours aux Pal.				x Hamas
Association de Secours Palestinien				x Hamas
Interpal				x Hamas
Palestinian Association in Austria				x Hamas
Sanibil Relief Agency		x		x Hamas, Al-Qaeda
Al Salah Society				x Hamas
Union of Good				x Hamas
Islamic Resistance Support Organisation				x Hezbollah
Martyrs Foundation				x Hezbollah
Goodwill Charitable Organisation				x Hezbollah
El Ehsan Society				x Pal. Islamic Jihad

In Great Britain, the Asset Freezing Unit under the HM Treasury maintains a consolidated list of designated individuals and entities by the UK, the UN, and the EU. The Charity Commission is responsible for registration and control of all major NGOs. Since 2003, 100 organisations and over 200 individuals have had their assets frozen, totalling over 100 million US dollars (Danckaers 2008:3). Unlike the Treasury Department in the USA, the Commission has a range of different tools at its disposal in case of misuse of funds, including the removal of certain trustees, handing over of NGO management, transfer of assets to other NGOs, and ultimately closing-down of the

[88] The table is based on information from *EU Council Common Position 2009/67/CFS*P; *UN Consolidated List established and maintained by the 1267 Committee with respect to Al-Qaida, Usama bin Laden and the Taliban and other individuals, groups, undertakings and entities associated with them*; and *US Designated Charities and Potential Fundraising Front Organisations for FTOs.*

[89] The designation concerns only the Philippine and Indonesia branches.

NGO – a difference in approaches that Shaw-Hamilton (2007:24) has likened to that between a scalpel and a sledgehammer: "If a finance officer, for example, is found to have misused the charity, the solution is to remove the individual and to ensure that recruitment, financial management, and management procedures are changed. In contrast, freezing the charity's assets causes suffering to beneficiaries and alienates donors."

Governments in other parts of the world, in particular the Middle Eastern countries, accused by many of involvement in terrorism or laxity in acting against terrorists on their territories, have also sought to exert tighter control over the flow of funds in or through their country, resulting in a number of measures to tighten up regulation and oversight of NGO activities (Harmer and Cotterrell 2005:28). This has been particularly acute in Saudi Arabia. In July 2003, for instance, the Saudi Arabian Monetary Agency announced a set of new regulations governing Saudi aid organisations, including requirements to consolidation of funds in a single bank account, licensed by government. Later that year, Saudi charities were banned from transferring funds abroad (Cotterrell and Harmer 2005:19). This was followed in 2004 by the announcement that a National Commission for Relief and Charity Work Abroad would be established, overseeing all NGO activities and public donations, and facilitating greater governmental control over the use of charitable funds (Cotterrell and Harmer 2005:19). All this was due to heavy US pressure but also to the attempted attacks on Prince Sultan's Airbase and increase in the level of jihad activity. This intensified with the East Riyadh bombings in May 2003, killing 35 people and wounding more than 160, and the Muhayya bombing in November 2003, killing 17 and wounding 120, many of them children. As Hegghammer (2010:217) notes, from then onwards, the Saudi state devoted its full resources to combating Islamist militants, and the resources allocated were colossal: "the total security budget in 2003, 2005 and 2006 was estimated at US$8.5, 10 and 12 billion respectively". In March 2007, the Kuwaiti government introduced similar initiatives, at the same time forbidding cash collections in the street or in mosques (Benthall 2007:9).[90]

This increased suspicion of and control with Muslim NGOs has had a wide range of consequences for the organisations. First of all, and perhaps most tangibly, a number of organisations have had to close down following designations from the US or other authorities – even though they have not been convicted in court. For instance, in 2002, the now US-based Benevolence International Foundation was designated for alleged relations to Bin Laden. In court, the judge held that the prosecution had "failed to connect the dots" proving a relationship between Benevolence International Foundation and Bin Laden, and the charges against the organisation were dismissed. However, "by the time the criminal cases were resolved BIF's resources were gone and it was not

[90] In Bangladesh, a *Money Laundering Prevention Act* was launched in 2002, but proved to be very inefficient. Since then, US authorities have pressured to government to implement new laws, and in 2008, a new counter-terrorism law was introduced (Kumar 2009).

able to file another civil action challenging seizure of its assets. As a result, the organisation is shut down permanently" (Guinane 2006:11), with all clarity illustrating the lethal consequences that even unfounded suspicion can have for transnational Muslim NGOs. Furthermore, the increased governmental control of international transfers has meant that relations with institutional and individual donors from abroad have been encumbered, leaving many Muslim organisations in financial straits. In concrete terms, it has become very difficult for the Kuwaiti businessman living in Detroit to send his annual zakat contributions to a Muslim NGO in his home country, just like the NGO based in Saudi Arabia might no longer be able to transfer funds to a local partner organisation in Palestine. As a representative from the World Assembly of Muslim Youth put it in a newspaper interview: "After 9/11, everything shrank when it comes to Islamic work, humanitarian work [...] People are frightened. They stopped giving any money, almost all of the business people [...] We have to go and collect riyal by riyal" (cf. Alterman 2007:74). While there has been no systematic collection of data from Muslim NGOs with a view to explore developments in income since 9.11., there is anecdotal evidence that particularly US-based Muslim and Arab NGOs have been adversely affected by anti-terrorist laws (Baron 2004:313f).

Dialogue, bridge-building and new funding possibilities

The War on Terror not only lead to a focus on supposedly 'extremist' Muslim NGOs, involved in financing terrorist activities; it also encouraged an increasing interest in cooperation with so-called 'moderate' Muslim NGOs, seen as potential bridge builders between Islam and the West (Howell and Lind 2009). In this, the development system came to be an important site for dialogue. Just as NGOs were enlisted in the fight against Communism in the 1960s and 1970s, they increasingly became implicated in the War on Terror (Holenstein 2005). Through so-called soft measures, governmental aid agencies, in particular in Europe, started encouraging cooperation with (certain) Muslim NGO. One example is the so-called Montreaux Initiative, initiated by the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs in 2005 under the title *Towards cooperation with Islamic charities in removing unjustified obstacles*.[91] These soft measures have coincided with a general interest in religious NGOs among governmental and intergovernmental development agencies, as described in chapter 2. Failures in mainstream aid provision, together with a disappointment in 'regular' NGOs, among other things, forced development agencies to look for alternative ways of doing aid – and in this, many turned to religious NGOs, or faith-based organisations as they are often called, seeing them as the new panacea. Building on large constituencies and enjoying trust and credibility in local communities, religious NGOs are expected by development agencies to present what is referred to as an 'added value' to development aid. They are seen to have a great potential as

[91] Since 2005, the initiative has been hosted as part of the Graduate Institute of International Studies, Geneva (http://graduateinstitute.ch/cig/islamic-charities_fr.html, last accessed 20. January 2011).

promoters of development aid, capable of galvanising moral commitment, translating principles of aid into the idioms of faith and mobilising popular support for donor initiatives (Clarke 2007:80).

As part of this trend towards increased cooperation, a number of aid agencies opened up for funding for Muslim NGOs. British DfID is one of the donor agencies that has been most active in this regard. Despite initial scepticism, since 9.11. the agency has been involved in several initiatives with the purpose of strengthening cooperation with Muslim NGOs. Islamic Relief has a framework agreement with DfID and several other Muslim NGOs have received grants from the agency. DfID's Civil Society team holds workshops, one of them in cooperation with the Muslim Council of Britain, targeted specifically at Muslim organisations with the purpose of encouraging them to apply for funding and supporting them in the process. Other initiatives for cooperation with Muslim NGOs includes the DfID-sponsored research programme *Religions and Development* at Birmingham University, with Islamic Relief as the only non-academic partner. Likewise, DfID was involved in the Tony Blair Foundation's seminar series, *Faith and Development*, hosted together with Islamic Relief, World Vision and Oxfam.

This trend towards increased cooperation with Muslim NGOs, however, only includes certain organisations. Growing out of strongly secularist aid traditions, in their cooperation with religious organisations, DfID and other aid agencies came to prefer NGOs whose religiosity was by and large relegated to the private sphere, serving as personal motivation and underlying values, but who were able to use their claim to a religious identity as a tool in the implementation of development activities.[92] As noted by James (2009:5), "[Donors] want to engage with the institutional forms of faith (the religious institution), but remain suspicious about the spiritual dimensions of faith (belief in God)." As such, the secular distinction between 'religion' and 'aid' as fundamentally separate categories was maintained: religion can be a tool in the provision of aid, but it cannot be part of aid. Paraphrasing Zaman (2004:151), we may say that religious organisations are acceptable in the aid field only when they unequivocally recognise the functional differentiation of social spheres, i.e. when they agree to operate within the framework of secularisation.[93] Combining these discourses

[92] In an interview with G. Clarke (2007:84), a representative from a religious NGO says that when going to meetings with DfID, he always felt that he had to leave his faith at the door.

[93] An interesting exception to this is the US. Here, the inclusion of faith-based organisations in development activities is not predicated on a similarly strict secularist distinction between religion and aid. The 2001 *Faith-based and Community Initiatives Act* (or the *Charitable Choice Act*) weakened some of the rules designed to enforce separation between religion and state. Now religious organisations could use religious structures and have religious symbols on display in places where US aid is distributed. As noted by James (2009:7), they were only encouraged, but not required, to make clear to recipients that they did not have to participate in religious activities. This was later reinforced by a 2004 USAID ruling on *Participation by Religious Orders in USAID Programmes*, stating that USAID cannot discriminate against organisations which combine development or humanitarian activity with "inherently religious activity such as worship, religious instruction or proselytization" (cf. James 2009:7). However, in practice, USAID cooperates almost exclusively with Christian faith-based organisations, making this exception irrelevant to the present study.

on faith-based organisations as tools in the effective implementation of secular development with War on Terror discourses on politically moderate and extremist Muslim NGOs, the development culture, led by governmental aid agencies such as DfID, came to perceive a quasi-secular, invisible religiosity as a sign of 'good aid' and 'moderation', while a visible, orthodox religiosity is a sign of 'bad aid', 'fundamentalism' and perhaps even 'extremism'.

Table 4.3. Largest transnational Muslim NGOs[94]

Organisation	Origin	Budget (USD)[95]
Islamic Relief	UK	96 million
Muslim Aid	UK	73 million
Al Haramain	*Saudi Arabia*	*40-50 million*
International Islamic Relief Organisation	Saudi Arabia	47 million
Deniz Feneri Association	Turkey	46 million
Saudi Committee for the Relief of Palestinian People	Saudi Arabia	40 million
Zayed bin Sultan al Nahayan Charitable & Hum. Foundation	Abu Dhabi	31 million
Qatar Charitable Society	Qatar	31 million
International Islamic Charitable Organisation	Kuwait	30 million
Direct Aid/Africa Muslims Agency	Kuwait	25 million[96]
LIFE for Relief and Development	USA	18 million
Holy Land Foundation	*USA*	*13 million*
EMDAD	Iran	12.6 million[97]
Muslim Hands	UK	10.6 million
Comité de Bienfaisance et de Secours aux Palestiniens	France	8 million
Munazzamat al Da'wa al Islamiya (MDI)	Sudan	6 million
Interpal	UK	4.2 million
Helping Hand for Relief and Development	USA	4 million
Human Relief Foundation	UK	3.5 million
Human Appeal International	UK	3.2 million
Islamic African Relief Agency	Sudan	2.5 million
Mercy Relief International	*USA*	*2.5 million*
Human Concern International	Canada	2 million

To sum up, this new focus on faith-based organisations, together with the War on Terror, has brought transnational Muslim NGOs into the mainstream aid field. Historically, these NGOs have been largely invisible in the mainstream aid field, getting funding primarily from individual Muslims, and avoiding European and North American donors. After 9.11., this parallel life is no longer possible – everybody is watching the Muslim NGOs, navigating in an environment of increasing regulation and control, but also with openings for cooperation and funding. This situation has positioned Muslim NGOs in different ways in relation to the development aid field.

Von Hippel (2007:39f) writes that of the 1.7 billion dollar USAID spent on faith-based organisations between 2001 and 2005, 98 percent went to Christian organisations. Only two of the 159 recipient organisations were Jewish and only two were Muslim. In this perspective, and to put it somewhat simply, the US involvement with faith-based organisations is perhaps better understood as part of the War on Terror's hard than soft measures.

94 Organisations marked with italics have been designated and no longer exist. Aga Khan Foundation which has an annual budget of 320 million dollars is not included, since it does not consider itself a Muslim NGO.

95 If not indicated otherwise, numbers are from 2005-2009.

96 1988 numbers.

97 The numbers only refer to the organisation's Lebanon budget.

Some have been pushed to the periphery, isolated from mainstream development actors and labelled as 'extremist', 'traditional' or 'fundamentalist', while others – praised for being 'moderate' – move still closer to the centre, cooperating closely with other actors in the field (Ghandour 2004:330). How they have reacted to this new situation is the topic of the following chapters.

Navigating between cultures

The above has presented us with a brief history of transnational Muslim NGOs, focusing on four defining moments in this history, and emphasising how transnational and national politics contribute to shaping the ways in which the NGOs have navigated in relation to the two aid cultures out of which they have grown. Overall, the analysis has shown how transnational Muslim NGOs are far from isolated entities, predicated on static notions of religion and aid, but part of specific contexts, shaped by and reacting to political, economic and social processes. Against this background, two overall points can be raised: First, transnational Muslim NGOs have historically emphasised their allegiance to the Islamic aid culture, relating to the culture of development aid primarily by way of competition, conflict and parallel co-existence; and second, 9.11. and the War on Terror have introduced a drastically new situation, at once forcing and encouraging transnational Muslim NGOs to relate more directly with the development culture and open up for new repertoires of relations.

In their early years, transnational Muslim NGOs were thoroughly embedded in an Islamic aid culture, relating to the culture of development aid by way of competition, conflict or, at best, parallel co-existence. There are several reasons for this position. As outlined above, during the 1980s and 1990s, relations between Muslim NGOs and Western NGOs and donors were marked by defiance and sometimes outright hostility (Benthall and Bellion-Jourdan 2003:74), blighted by simplistic and stereotypical representations on both sides. In concrete terms, this means that Muslim NGOs have tended to operate in parallel networks away from mainstream development efforts (Ratcliffe 2007:57); they would rarely coordinate with the Western NGOs, and they hardly ever received funding from Western donors (von Hippel 2007:32).

In particular in the Horn of Africa, many Muslim NGOs perceived Western NGOs as crude embodiments of Christian missions and secularist decadence (Ghandour 2004:333), threatening the faith and identity of the Muslim community by their proselytising attempts at converting the poor, whether to Christianity or secularism. At least in part as a way of challenging this alleged dominance of Western organisations, some Muslim NGOs would start engaging in missionary activities themselves, entering into a sort of competition with Christian NGOs. Replicating their missionary techniques in attempts to bolster the faith of Muslims and convert non-Muslims,

Muslim NGOs promoted activities such as the construction of mosques, distribution of religious texts, and establishment of Qur'an schools. This, in turn, strengthened scepticism among secularist Western NGOs, who – while overlooking their own strongly ideological stance – came to view Muslim NGOs as aggressively proselytising organisations and auxiliaries of Islamic states (Ghandour 2004:333).

Involvement in Afghanistan further contributed to worsening the relationship between Muslim NGOs and the Western development culture. As described above, this conflict was interpreted by many (Muslims as well as non-Muslims) in a religious language, pitching a Muslim population against a non-Muslim enemy. This prompted transnational Muslim NGOs to avoid cooperation with Western NGOs, seen to be exponents of atheism and what the Muslim NGOs considered to be inappropriate norms and practices, potentially harmful to Afghan society and culture (Benthall and Bellion-Jourdan 2003:74f). Furthermore, some Muslim NGOs started to indirectly or directly support the mujahedeen, seeing aid as meaningless if not including the actual fighters as well. While the use of aid as a tool to support the mujahedeen was initially supported by Western governments, in particular USA, this support quickly waned with the changing political climate in the beginning of the 1990s. Further strengthened by a string of attacks by militant Islamic groups, including the 1993 attack on the US World Trade Center and the 1998 attacks on US embassies in Tanzania and Kenya, the involvement of some transnational Muslim NGOs with the mujahedeen was increasingly frowned upon by Western actors, often generalising their criticism to include all Muslim NGOs.

In Bosnia, these competitive and conflict-ridden relations were slowly being replaced by attempts at peaceful co-existence. The political situation of increased control and restrictions meant that transnational Muslim NGOs, whether by design or under constraint, came to adopt a sharp demarcation between aid and jihad (Benthall and Bellion-Jourdan 2003:70), shifting from a focus on justice and solidarity to neutrality and universalism as a way of ensuring legitimacy. In this, Western Muslim NGOs such as Islamic Relief had an obvious advantage, and this organisation experienced rapid growth in this period. Some organisations also started cooperating with development NGOs; however, for the main part transnational Muslim NGOs remained at the margins of the development culture, seldom invited to participate in NGO networks or offered funding from governmental aid agencies.

Against this background, the analysis has argued that 9.11. and the ensuing War on Terror has presented a dramatically new situation, blurring the dichotomous relations between transnational Muslim NGOs and the development culture. Under the leadership of the US government (and supported by many Middle Eastern governments), the War on Terror has introduced harsh

restrictions against transnational Muslim NGOs, leading to the marginalisation and ultimately designation of certain NGOs, doomed to be 'extremist' or 'fundamentalist'. At the same time, soft measures of bridge-building and dialogue, coupled with an increasing focus on faith-based organisations, especially among European aid agencies, opened up for cooperation with certain Muslim NGOs. Combining War on Terror discourses with discourses on faith-based organisations, and echoing broader dichotomies between 'good' and 'bad' Muslims (Mamdani 2002), these actors promoted the ideal of the 'moderate' Muslim NGO, creating a link between a certain kind of religiosity and 'good' aid provision.

Thus, transnational Muslim NGOs are now navigating in an environment of increasing regulation and control, but with simultaneous openings for cooperation and funding. In the post-9.11. aid field it is no longer possible for transnational Muslim NGOs to remain entrenched in the Islamic aid culture, relating to the culture of mainstream development through conflict, competition or parallel co-existence. Instead, the situation calls for new repertoires of action: cooperation, integration, or perhaps assimilation? One of the purposes of the following chapters is to explore this situation further, and take a closer look at some of the organisations that have been positioned as either 'moderate' (i.e. adhering to the norms of Western development aid) or 'fundamentalist' and 'traditionalist' (i.e. embedded in a Middle Eastern Islamic aid culture). Exploring the ways in which four concrete Muslim NGOs position *themselves* in the contemporary aid field, the different ways in which they draw on different cultures of aid in their formulation of aid ideologies, I hope to go beyond these simplistic categorisations of transnational Muslim NGOs, challenging or at least softening such dichotomies.

Class room, IIROSA orphanage, Jordan

PART III. 'IT'S ALL IN ISLAM': AID IDEOLOGIES IN IIROSA AND IICO

Introduction

This part, *'It's all in Islam': Aid ideologies in IIROSA and IICO*, is an analysis of the two Gulf-based NGOs, International Islamic Relief Organisation (IIROSA) and the International Islamic Charitable Organisation (IICO), with headquarters in respectively Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. The analysis is structured as follows: Chapter 5 explores the organisations and their audiences. Based on an assumption of the importance of actors in shaping ideologies, the chapter pays particular attention to the individuals making up the organisations. Organisations are not monolithic entities, but made up of real people with each their ideas as to how the organisational ideology should be constructed and interpreted. As noted in chapter 2, however, these actors do not create their ideologies in a vacuum, but directed at particular audiences, seeking to convince them to support, trying to educate them in particular ways, and in doing so, hoping to generate a kind of legitimacy that resonates with these audiences. Apart from serving as an introduction to IIROSA and IICO, this chapter also contributes to tentatively positioning the organisations in relation to the two cultures of aid, presenting the last layer of contextualisation. The chapter argues that historically, the two organisations have been embedded in an Islamic aid culture: their founders were Islamic dignitaries, their funding consisted in zakat contributions, they supported mainly fellow Muslims and they enjoyed strong relations to key Muslim organisations, while in large part avoiding relations with Western development organisations. Since 9.11., however, the situation has changed. Two trends can be detected: One is a reinforcement of relations with actors in the Islamic aid culture, seen e.g. in the institutionalisation of relations with the OIC, the (re-)introduction of waqf as a source of funding, and the strengthened network among Islamic dignitaries and organisations. The other is an opening up towards Western development actors, especially the UN.

In chapter 6, I look into what this particular organisational composition and positioning means to the ways in which the two NGOs present their ideologies of aid. Overall, the analysis explores organisational conceptualisations of aid and Islam and the nexus between the two. More specifically, and as outlined in chapter 2, I approach ideologies as consisting in different elements, or frames – a vision, a rationale, some strategies, and underlying this, a particular kind of authority on which the ideological claims are based. Through these frames, different ideological subjects emerge – the giver and the receiver – outlining conceptions of a basic aid chain. The chapter presents two overall arguments: First, the two organisations formulate an ideology that is predicated on conceptions of aid as *sacralised*, a conception that resonates with common values of the Islamic aid culture. Based on claims to a religious authority, they present a vision of a strengthened umma, centering on a rationale of Islamic solidarity, and implemented through strategies of da'wa and Islamic education. Underlying this is an understanding of the aid chain as a

relation of giving between Muslims. Second, they simultaneously seek to merge this conception of aid with a more development-oriented understanding of aid. Through different repertoires of merging (adoption, pragmatic alignment and integration), they introduce ways of *developmentalising* their Islamic aid, thus opening up to new audiences.

CHAPTER 5. ORGANISATIONS AND AUDIENCES

Moving from the general level of analysis, focusing on global aid cultures and transnational Muslim NGOs, to the more specific, the present analysis of IIROSA and IICO takes its starting point in the concrete actors working in the organisations. As noted in chapter 2, the analysis builds on a fundamentally actor-oriented understanding of organisations. While broader structures, cultures, trends, and events (such as those outlined in Part II) play an important role in shaping organisations and their ideologies, these factors all work *through* actors, not *upon* them, as Hilhorst (2003:214) points out. In this perspective, it becomes particularly important to pay attention to the micro-sociological level of individual actors and actions. Based on a rudimentary network analysis (Dimaggio 1998:17), I shall give an analysis of the organisations and their donors, supporters, and partners, with the purpose of introducing the actors that formulate the ideologies and the audiences they target, situating them in a context, as well as positioning them in relation to the two cultures of Islamic aid and development aid.

Introducing IIROSA and IICO: The pre-9.11. years

By now, IICO and IIROSA should be no strangers to the reader; the above analysis has already mentioned them several times in the history of transnational Muslim NGOs. And with good reason, because they are two of the largest, oldest and most influential NGOs in the history of Islamic aid. In order to better understand their position today, however, let me briefly recap their history, adding a few essential pieces of information on the way. As was noted in chapter 4, both organisations were established as part of the 1960s' and 1970s' pan-Islamic movement in the Gulf countries, in large part financed by the surge in oil prices. IIROSA was established in 1978, when a group of wealthy Saudis started organising shipments of food and clothes to people in the Horn of Africa.[98] One of them was Farid al-Qurashi, a university professor with an American PhD degree, who had close connections in the Muslim World League. He soon managed to establish IIROSA as a formal organisation under the umbrella of the Muslim World League, with the secretary general of the Muslim World League as de facto chairman of the organisation. Today, the IIROSA presents itself as "the League's active wing in carrying out relief, health care, educational, economic and social development projects." A few years later, IICO was established in Kuwait, following the establishment of several other transnational NGOs (including Al Najat Society in 1978 and Direct Aid in 1981). At an Islamic finance conference in 1984, Yusuf al-Qaradawi challenged the audience to "Pay a dollar, and save a Muslim." A number of people backed Qaradawi's campaign, including the late Abdullah al-Mutawa, then president of the Brotherhood-related Society for Social Reform

[98] The organisation was formally founded on the 20th session of the Muslim World League Constituent Council in 1978, and in 1979, a royal decree approved the establishment of IIROSA, allowing it to open branches abroad.

(*Al Islah*), who donated one million dollars to the campaign.[99] The idea was presented to the late Emir Sheikh Jaber al-Ahmad al-Jaber al-Sabah, who issued an Emiri Decree in 1986, formalising the organisation.

IICO and IIROSA quickly became very popular, growing into some of the largest transnational NGOs in respectively Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. People in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia had come to money and wanted a way to channel their zakat.[100] Before, zakat had traditionally been distributed to poor people in the neighbourhood, either personally, through the mosque, through national NGOs such as the Society for Social Reform (established back in 1952) or through the governmental zakat system (in Saudi Arabia through the Department for Zakat and Income Tax, and in Kuwait through Kuwait Zakat House), but increasing welfare meant that there were fewer poor people. At the same time, and as has been noted above, new media brought attention to suffering people in other parts of the word, facilitating the growth of organisations such as IICO and IIROSA. In a recognition of these organisations, governments in both Saudi Arabia and Kuwait introduced laws allowing people to pay their zakat to licensed NGOs such as IICO and IIROSA.[101] Both organisations had several national and international fundraising offices and were regularly involved in large fundraising campaigns and telethons. At its highest, in the late 1990s, IIROSA allegedly had an annual budget of 85 million dollars, according to some staff members. The IICO's budget was considerably smaller (Abdulhadi 1990:7), but the organisation was still considered to be one of the most popular in Kuwait.

Both organisations enjoyed close relations with their government. Since the 1970s, the Saudi as well as the Kuwaiti government had nursed an informal alliance with national Islamic movements, employing a strategy of co-optation of Islamic organisations and persons into governmental bureaucracy while at the same time boosting governmental legitimacy (Ghabra 1997:59f; Alterman 2007:71). In Kuwait, for instance, two IICO chairmen have served as Minister of Awqaf. Likewise, since 1987, the IICO has cooperated closely with the Ministry through Kuwait Joint Relief Committee, an umbrella organisation consisting in the Ministry and 14 NGOs.[102] Finally, the

[99] IICO, al-Alamiya, no. 243.
[100] In 1990, Abdulhadi (1990:7) estimated that as much as 80 percent of IICO funds were zakat contributions. There is nothing that indicates that this should be any different today – or that it should be different in IIROSA, for that matter.
[101] In both Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, businesses are required to pay zakat, while it is voluntary for individuals. Zakat can be paid either to the government or to a licensed NGO. There are no statistics on how many people give to government and how many give to NGOs. A former IIROSA trustee explains: "People tend to give half and half. Any donation given to NGOs can be subtracted from the amount you should pay to the government, as long as the NGO is registered. But people like to give to the government as well, just to show that they support the government."
[102] Kuwait Joint Relief Committee was established in 1987 after the floods in Bangladesh, and has since then worked in a number of 'Arab and Muslim' countries, "responding to the calls of Islamic brotherhood and humanitarian duty" (IICO, al-Alamiya, no. 243). IICO also cooperates with the Ministry of Awqaf and other

organisation receives different kinds of material support and in 1996, it was granted a territory in the south of the Sura region, in an area in which many government buildings are also located. In 2000, the new headquarters were inaugurated by the Minister of Justice and Awqaf and Islamic Affairs, on behalf of the Prince of Kuwait.[103] In Saudi Arabia, relations with government have also been close from the beginning, and the Minister of Defense, Prince Sultan bin Abdul Aziz, together with Mufti Abdel Aziz bin Baz, the highest religious authority in the kingdom, were among the first donors of the organisation. Several government representatives have served on the board and as members of the General Assembly, just like state authorities have exercised great influence on the nomination of the secretary general and other top management positions in the organisation.[104] Abroad, IIROSA funds have been channelled by Saudi embassies (Observatoire de'l Action Humanitaire 2008).[105]

Transnational Muslim organisations also supported IICO and IIROSA. Naturally, especially IIROSA had close relations with the Muslim World League, but IICO also cooperated with the League in "spreading Islamic awareness and virtues all over the world."[106] Likewise, the Organisation of the Islamic Conference, with headquarters in Jeddah, has been an important partner for IIROSA and IICO since their early days. IIROSA has been a member of the OIC Coordination Committee for Joint Islamic Action since 1990, and they both receive regular funding from the OIC's various funds and participate in meetings and conferences.[107] They also became members of a number of networks and coalitions for NGOs, most importantly the International Islamic Council for Da'wa and Relief, of which both organisations are founding members.

Not only institutionally, but also on the level of individual members, both organisations were from the beginning closely connected to influential Muslim organisations and institutions, including the Muslim Brotherhood, the Saudi and Kuwaiti governments, as well as a pan-Islamic movement of transnational organisations. The biography of Yusuf al-Hajji, the first secretary general of the IICO, serves to illustrate this embedding in an Islamic aid culture: He has served as Minister of Awqaf in

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ministries on projects internally in Kuwait, such as the organisation of seminars and conferences about 'moderate Islam,' or social welfare activities within Kuwait (IICO, al-Alamiya no. 243).

[103] IICO, Special Publication, p. 13.

[104] Thus, in 1993, when the original secretary general, Farid al-Qurashi, voiced his scepticism of the government's alliance with the US during the Gulf war, he was replaced by the more government-friendly Adnan Khalil Basha.

[105] These close relations to government may help to explain why IIROSA, despite heavy charges of terrorist connections, was never forced to close down, as was the Haramain Foundation (Observatoire de'l Action Humanitaire 2008). An observer and former volunteer notes: "The Saudi government didn't destroy the IIROSA. This would damage their image. They live on their Islamic image. If they destroyed the organisation, it wouldn't be good for them. Instead, they neutralise it. They put someone in charge, who's supportive of government, they control the money…"

[106] IICO, website, http://www.iico.net/home-page-eng/organisations-eng.htm (last accessed 27. March 2011).

[107] IICO, website, http://www.iico.net/home-page-eng/News-08/apr-08/iico-eng-5.htm (last accessed 27. March 2011); IIROSA Operational Plan, p. 31f.

Kuwait, and worked as Secretary of Education prior to that. Furthermore, Hajji has been Director General of the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (ISESCO), is member of the board of trustees of several Islamic universities, founder of the College of Shariah at Kuwait University, founding president of the Kuwaiti Red Crescent Society, as well as founder, co-founder and chairman of several other NGOs. In 2003, he was awarded the King Faisal Prize. In IIROSA, Farid al-Qurashi, who was also one of the organisation's founders, served as the first secretary general until the mid-1990s. Qurashi was a professor in economics at King Abdul Aziz University. Like Hajji, Qurashi was well-known all over the Gulf, he was well-connected with the Muslim World League and with other key Muslim organisations. In an interview, a former colleague and trustee describes him like this: "Farid was very open-minded, he had a PhD from America. He was a wizard in collecting funds, he could communicate with very high rank officers and government level and got both money and protection." In 1993, Qurashi was replaced by Adnan Khalil Basha, a university professor and public figure who also had good relations to government, the religious authorities and Muslim organisations.

The work of IIROSA and IICO spread from the Horn of Africa and Afghanistan to other, primarily Muslim, parts of the world, often in close cooperation with national authorities. In Jordan, for instance, both organisations report of historically good relations with government. Likewise, letters of appreciation posted on the IIROSA website testify to good relations with provincial governments, ministries, and local education authorities in Indonesia, Afghanistan, Ethiopia, Pakistan and elsewhere.[108] Apart from governmental authorities, the organisations would cooperate with national and local NGOs, almost always Muslim. For instance, in Jordan both IICO and IIROSA have for many years cooperated with the Islamic Center Charity Society, the country's biggest NGO and the charitable wing of the Jordanian Muslim Brotherhood. While IICO would primarily cooperate with local charitable and missionary organisations, often related to the Brotherhood, IIROSA would also nurture relations with more militant political groups. In Afghanistan, the organisation was allegedly involved with the mujahedeen, as has been described in chapter 4. In Bangladesh, the IIROSA set up a national section in the mid-1980s, which came to be closely related to the political party, Jama'at-e Islami and the militant movement, *Lashkar-e Taiba*. And in Kenya, the organisation was suspected of supporting the militant Somali group *al-Itehad*, involved in the bombings of the US embassies in 1998, to mention only a few examples (Observatoire de l'Action Humanitaire 2008).

Relations with actors such as the UN, the World Bank and NGOs such as Oxfam, Médecins sans Frontiers and CARE have historically been few and scattered. Since the mid-1990s, both IICO and

[108] IIROSA, Bulletin no. 33; IIROSA, website, http://www.iirosa.org/english/images/stories/en/1.jpg (last accessed 4. March 2010).

IIROSA have, like many other transnational Muslim NGOs, increasingly sought recognition from the UN: they have had consultative status in the UN since respectively 1995 and 1997, and have had sporadic cooperation with some UN agencies, including e.g. UNICEF, UNHCR, WFP and the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO). However, none of them have succeeded in securing formal partnerships or long-term funding. Likewise, they have not received much funding from other intergovernmental development organisations or Western governmental aid agencies, they have not had any formal cooperation with secular or Christian NGOs, and they have not participated systematically in their networks or coordination fora for aid distribution. In short, they have lived a largely parallel existence to actors in the development aid culture, remaining firmly embedded in an Islamic aid culture.

IIROSA and IICO after 9.11.

With 9.11. this all changed. As has been described above, the War on Terror led to increasing governmental and intergovernmental control, restrictions, and in some cases sanctions of transnational Muslim NGOs, suspected of involvement with militant Muslim movements and groups. While IICO had historically been met with few allegations of cooperation with militant networks and groups, such suspicions had surrounded the IIROSA since its early years. After 9.11., these allegations intensified and in August 2002, the organisation was, together with seven other NGOs, seven international banks, the Sudanese government and a number of individuals, sued by a group of families of the 9.11. victims.[109] In 2006, the Philippines and Indonesia branches of IIROSA were closed by national authorities and designated by the US – and later UN – on the grounds that they were "facilitating fundraising for al Qaida and affiliated terrorist groups."[110] And in 2009, the office in Bangladesh was closed, although no relations with local terrorist groups had been detected. A representative from the NGO Affairs Bureau says: "We got the [designation] list from the UN, and that's why the [Bangladesh Central] Bank was ready to close them down, even though they have had no negative activities in Bangladesh. It's a very sensitive issue."[111] At home, governmental support has also been waning, and control of IIROSA and other NGOs has been increasing. As was described in chapter 4, since 2003 the Saudi government has introduced a range of restrictions on transnational NGOs, including requirements to consolidation of funds in a single

[109] In June 2009, Supreme Court turned down the case on the grounds that Saudi Arabia and its officials are immune from lawsuit for governmental acts outside the United States (Vicini 2009).
[110] The director of the Philippines office, Mohammad Jamal Khalifa, is the brother-in-law of Osama bin Laden and was considered by the US to be a senior Al-Qaeda member, having funded training camps for Afghani combatants and Moro secessionists of Abu Sayyaf, an Islamist group. The regional director in Indonesia, Abdul Al-Hamid Sulaiman Al-Mujil, was suspected to be a member of Al-Qaeda and the Indonesia group Jemaah Islamiyah, and was accused, among other things, of financing the establishment of training facilities for use by Al-Qaida associates (Observatoire de l'Action Humanitaire 2008; Ferguson 2006; US Department of the Treasury 2006).
[111] Testifying to the arbitrariness of anti-terror measures, the IIROSA office was re-opened in October 2010, allegedly by the request of the Bangladeshi government (IIROSA, Bulletin no. 36, p. 4).

bank account, licensed by government, and a ban from transferring funds abroad without prior permission (Cotterrell and Harmer 2005:19). Likewise, when IIROSA branches were designated and sued in the US, the government did not offer any assistance. "The government took a neutral position – it didn't help anybody, it didn't even offer counselling," a former trustee says.[112]

In 2002, Ghaleb Himmat, trustee of the IICO's Geneva branch, was accused of sympathising with militant Islamists (M. Levitt 2006:168), but apart from that, the organisation has not been directly accused of connections with any militant Muslim groups and movements. Still, the IICO has also suffered from the War on Terror and its 'hard measures'. In 2007 the Kuwaiti government introduced a range of initiatives similar to those of Saudi Arabia, restricting international transfers and at the same time forbidding cash collections in the street or in mosques (Benthall 2007:9).[113] Furthermore, in a general climate of suspicion and allegations, funding would decline and popular support wane. While many people in the Gulf countries would sympathise with IICO and even IIROSA, interpreting the anti-terror measures as covert and illegitimate attempts of 'the West' to fight (and eventually exterminate) Islam, they would still refrain from publicly supporting them.[114] Afraid of being associated with 'terrorist' organisations, many people instead preferred to channel their zakat payments through government, other NGOs or privately, leading to substantial budget cuts, closing of offices and cancelling of projects in both organisations.

Almost ten years have passed since 9.11. and both organisations claim to be heading towards pre-9.11. levels in terms of funding. Today, the budget of the IIROSA is approx. 46 million dollars (2009 numbers), while IICO's budget is approx. 30 million (2006 numbers). Approx. 2,000 people work in IIROSA; 1,000 work in one of the organisation's offices in Saudi Arabia and the rest abroad in one of IIROSA's 34 country offices.[115] In IICO, 240 people are employed in Kuwait, and 85

[112] At the same time, however, signals are ambiguous. For instance, although pressured by the US, the Saudi government has yet to establish the promised National Commission for Relief and Charitable Works Abroad, aimed at increasing control with Saudi NGOs. Leaving the lines of reporting and control somewhat vague, the government tries to retain maximum governmental flexibility and, at least on the surface, maintain good relations with the IIROSA and other Muslim NGOs (Alterman 2007).

[113] Generally, however, the Kuwaiti government seems to have been more supportive during the War on Terror. A director of another Kuwaiti NGO says: "The government is very supportive of us and of the IICO. They know that we are not political. Because of US relations, they sometimes have to distance themselves from us, but they always excuse this."

[114] Many people I talked to in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait would interpret the allegations against Muslim NGOs as part of a long history of Western, and particularly US, hypocrisy and imperialism. This is a common perception that has roots far back in history, but in recent years it has been nourished by events such as the invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq and the boycott of the democratically elected Hamas in Palestine. In the eyes of many people, then, 'the West' is not only, or even primarily, about freedom, democracy and human rights, but also about Unmanned Armed Vehicles, or UAVs, killing civilians, waterboarding and unjust court cases. And Osama bin Laden, Al-Qaeda and Taleban are not simply terrorists, but freedom fighters who stand up against this hypocrisy and imperialism.

[115] IIROSA has offices in Azerbaijan, Jordan, Afghanistan, Albania, Indonesia, Uganda, Pakistan, Bulgaria, Bangladesh, Benin, Burkina Faso, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Thailand, Chad, Tanzania, Togo, Comoros, South Africa, Djibouti, Sri Lanka, Senegal, Sudan, Somalia, Kosovo, Kenya, Lebanon, Egypt, Macedonia, Malawi,

abroad in one of the organisation's 8 country offices or through Kuwait Joint Relief Committee.[116] IIROSA's largest programmes today are in Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Sudan, Pakistan and Somalia, and IICO's largest programmes are in Sudan, Jordan, Uganda, Nigeria and Niger. How have these organisations reacted to 9.11.? Overall, I argue that the post-9.11. situation has presented two different trends: One is a continuous embedding in – and perhaps even a stronger integration into – the culture of Islamic aid; another is an opening up towards the culture of development aid.

Strengthening ties to the Islamic aid culture

Overall, both IICO and IIROSA still appear to be firmly embedded in an Islamic aid culture, and perhaps even more so than before. A number of factors testify to this: their boards and general assemblies consists in Muslim dignitaries, regular staff are all practising Muslims, the Islamic funding mechanisms of zakat and make up the vast majority of income, the organisations have firm relations with key Muslim transnational organisations, and recipients are primarily Muslims.

Many of the original founders have continued their involvement in the two organisations as either Trustees or General Assembly members.[117] They are all prominent personalities with 'Islamic' credentials who enjoy strong popularity, authority and legitimacy among Muslims in Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and even the Middle East; they are the Islamic aristocracy, so to speak. Some are former ministers, others are business men and bank owners, and yet others are professors at university (Ghafour and Shamsuddin 2008). "We always say that the least of [the General Assembly members] is a former minister, they are all very prominent and well-known, one is a former president," the IICO director says with pride. Several have been awarded prestigious Islamic awards, such as the Islamic Personality of the Year Award and the King Faisal International Award for Serving Islam, by many people in the Gulf known as 'Islam's Nobel Prize'.[118] They have close personal and professional relations to other major Muslim NGOs (national as well as transnational) – as trustees, directors, presidents, chairmen and founders of organisations such as the Kuwaiti Society for Social Reform, the Saudi World Assembly of Muslim Youth, the International Islamic Council for Da'wa and Relief and the Muslim World League. Many of these

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Mauritania, Nepal, Niger, Nigeria, and Yemen (IIROSA, website, http://www.egatha.org/ga/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=8&Itemid=8, last accessed 22. April 2011). IICO has offices in Bahrain, Benin, Burkina Faso, Jordan, Niger, Nigeria, Sudan and Uganda (IICO, website, http://www.iico.org/AxCMSwebLive/en_our_locations.cms, last accessed 22. April 2011). Apart from these, the organisation works through Kuwait Joint Relief Committee in a number of countries, including Bangladesh.

[116] Whether these numbers include only national staff or also local staff is unclear.

[117] Information about IICO's and IIROSA's General Assembly and trustees has been gathered from IICO magazines, interviews and websites (IIROSA, website, http://www.egatha.org/ga/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=7&Itemid=7, and IICO, website, http://www.iico.org/AxCMSwebLive/en_board_directors.cms (both last accessed 22. April 2011).

[118] The Islamic Personality of the Year Award is part of the Dubai International Holy Qur'an Awards and consists in a prize of approx. 270.000 dollars. The King Faisal Award in Service to Islam consists in a prize of approx. 200,000 dollars (see King Faisal Foundation's website, www.kff.com, last accessed 23. March 2011).

people and organisations are, indirectly or directly, linked to the Muslim Brotherhood, but represent a much broader Islamic movement, finding their supporters in an audience that includes Muslim Brothers as well as independent Muslim activists and 'regular' individuals. The Society for Social Reform and Yusuf al-Qaradawi are obvious examples of this connection, but the Muslim World League, albeit closely connected to Saudi Wahhabism, is also strongly influenced by the Brotherhood, with several prominent Brotherhood members serving in the organisation (Mandaville et al. 2009:29).

In terms of staff, the organisations have not undergone any major changes either. In IIROSA, Adnan Khalil Basha is still the secretary general. In IICO, Yusuf al-Hajji resigned in 2010, leaving the position to Abdullah Maatouq, a man who resembles him in many ways. Maatouq has a Master's Degree from Imam Muhammad Ibn Saud Islamic University, and a doctorate from a Scottish university. He is a former Minister of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs, former Minister of Justice, as well as advisor to the Emiri Diwan. Like the two secretaries general, the majority of senior staff members are well-educated people, many of them with a PhD from a North American or European university. Very few people, if any, has work experience from the UN or any Western aid organisations, but in particular among IIROSA staff, several top managers and assembly members have worked in the Islamic Development Bank for many years, and now work as volunteers, having retired from a well-paid job. The assistant secretary general is a case in point, having worked in the Islamic Development Bank for 14 years and now working as a volunteer in IIROSA. Many are prominent businessmen, often with work experience and education from North America and Europe. The assistant secretary general of IIROSA, for instance, is a professor in economics. He has a PhD from Bloomington, Indianapolis, and runs an insurance company in Jeddah. Likewise, IICO's current director has an MBA in Business Administration, and has previously worked as director of several different investment and industrial corporations in USA. At the same time, they are both well-educated in Islamic Studies; IIROSA's assistant secretary general recently finished a BA in Sharia Studies from a Saudi Arabian university, and IICO's director has a diploma in Islamic Studies.

Among regular staff, many people have a degree in computer science, administration, or Islamic Studies. In Bangladesh, for instance, most staff have been students of Islamic madrasas. Of the (few) women working in the organisations, most have a degree in accounting or teaching. Many staff members have worked in the private sector or in government prior to working in IIROSA and IICO. Very few people have worked in NGOs; however, there does seem to be an exchange of staff between IIROSA and World Assembly of Muslim Youth, e.g. the latter's current secretary general, Mohammad Badah-Dah, is a former supervisor of IIROSA's Health Department and worked in IIROSA for 15 years. Like him, many people have worked in the organisations for several years, and

there does not seem to be a high turnover. This also goes for the director of IIROSA Jordan, a typical staff member. He has a degree in computer science, and worked as a volunteer in a Muslim organisation for orphans in a Jordanian refugee camp, when he heard about IIROSA's work. Now he has worked in IIROSA for 18 years and he has no plans of leaving:

> I started working in the Bakra Camp many years ago as a volunteer in a local orphans organisation. I worked there for three years, then I came here and I have been here for 18 years [...] First, I just wanted a new experience, I wanted to try something new. But then, when I started doing the job, I came to love it. I feel comfortable here, I feel like I am working with honest people. I like when the mothers say nice things to me, I like that people are happy with the work we do, I like to make the orphans smile.

Everybody working in IIROSA and IICO is a practising Muslim, often a conservative one – at headquarter as well as country office levels. People pray together, dress according to religious precepts, and the language used among staff is full of Muslim terms and phrases. Relations between men and women are defined by conservative Muslim ideals, meaning that each gender attends to different functions. Women primarily work in fund-raising, teaching, nursing and other activities deemed suitable for a Muslim woman, while men work in management, project implementation and the like. Some offices also practice gender segregation. In IIROSA's headquarters in Jeddah, for instance, the women's department is in a different part of town, and female staff members, rarely enter the main building but mostly communicate with male staff through e-mail, phone or Yahoo Messenger. In IICO, women also work in a separate department, but recently, a woman was hired to be in charge of the newly established Center for Charitable Studies, working in the main (male) organisation. She says:

> Before, I used to work with the Ministry of Awqaf, I was used to work with men, but here I was the first woman to work, so it was a shock – to me and to the men here. But we are getting used to it [...] The chairman is very shy. At first, he didn't want to work with women, he's very very shy. But now he likes it, we work together, we make fun [...] I will fight to hire more women. Now the manager accepts me, and the chairman, I can deal with him, I can even argue with him now. Every organisation has a ladies committee, but I want women to be a part of everything, not just in one room, dealing with other women. But sure, they need their time.

Thus, in terms of their constituencies, both organisations remain firmly positioned within an Islamic aid culture, with founders and trustees consisting in prominent Muslim dignitaries, and staff made up by conservative, practising Muslims. Against this background, the two organisations have in recent years sought further integration into the Islamic aid culture, attempting to strengthen their position. In particular three factors point towards this trend.

One is the introduction of new, Islamically defined, means of fundraising, aimed at maintaining a strong individual Muslim donor base. As noted above, following 9.11., many people stopped donating to the organisations. Restrictions on international transfers meant that it was difficult for Saudis and Kuwaitis abroad to donate to the organisations and both organisations had to close

their fundraising offices in the US.[119] At home, many people were also weary of donating, in fear of being associated with 'terrorist organisations'. In part prompted by this decline in funding, the two organisations have re-launched the system of waqf as an alternative, and potentially more sustainable, source of income.[120] A waqf is a sort of Islamic endowment, the proceeds of which are used for religious or charitable purposes. Historically, waqf has played an important role in the Middle East as a tool for provision of public goods and social welfare (Kuran 2001:841). The IICO tries to implement what they call 'a modernised version' of waqf, in cooperation with its affiliate investment company Al Safwah International Development Company. As one of the staff members explains to me, "normally, people used to buy a building and use the income for charity. We don't do that, we invest money – we own companies, we have an investment portfolio and so on. So it's not a typical waqf, it's more like an investment company." According to the annual report for 2006, the income from investments was more than 10 million dollars, up from 7 million in 2005. Likewise, in 2010 IIROSA launched six waqf projects (housing and commercial buildings in Mecca) at a cost of more than 125 million dollars, with expected annual returns of approx. 12 million dollars, presumably covering more than one-fourth of the organisation's budget (Ghafour and Shamsuddin 2010). As in IICO, the land was purchased through the help of a number of wealthy philanthropists and businessmen.[121]

Another sign of the turn towards the Islamic aid culture is the fact that IIROSA and IICO have both intensified their involvement in national aid provision. The introduction of restrictions on international transfers has prompted the NGOs to focus on activities within Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. Both organisations have worked domestically for many years (IIROSA since 1998 and IICO since the Gulf War), but since 9.11. domestic activities have taken up a larger proportion of the organisations' total budgets. For IIROSA, then, the Saudi Arabia programme has become the largest of all the organisation's programmes taking up more than 16 percent of the organisation's total budget, including sponsorship of 133,000 orphans, health care activities and assistance in cases of emergencies, such as the 2009 flooding.[122] Likewise, in Kuwait IICO runs an orphan sponsorship programme, it has established a bilingual school, Al Ru'ya School, and is, as noted above, increasingly involved in the organisation of conferences and workshops.

A third strategy has been to strengthen and institutionalise cooperation with the OIC.[123] In 2010, IIROSA and OIC signed a formal cooperation agreement, stipulating that they should "cooperate to

[119] There are, however, still a few prominent donors from abroad. For instance, I was told that the Sultan of Brunei recently donated 11 million dollars to IIROSA.
[120] For literature on the role of waqf in Islamic history, see e.g. Kuran (2001).
[121] IIROSA, Bulletin no. 34, p. 1.
[122] IIROSA, Bulletin no. 35, p. 6f.
[123] IIROSA, Operational Plan, p. 32.

provide aid to the needy."[124] And IICO recently received 11 million dollars from the Fund for a large project for poor women in Uganda, Sudan, Egypt, Jordan, Bahrain, Pakistan and Bangladesh.[125] This can be seen as part of a broader trend towards increased involvement of the OIC in aid provision, and by extension, of developments within the culture of Islamic aid. As was noted in chapter 3, the OIC has historically been engaged in aid provision through e.g. the Islamic Development Bank (1973), and the Islamic Solidarity Fund (1974). However, the aid activities of the organisation have been criticised for a lack of focus and efficiency, something that led to a re-organisation in 2005 when member countries adopted a new plan of action. This included the establishment of an office for the coordination of member states' humanitarian relief efforts, the Islamic Conference Humanitarian Affairs Department, as well as a fund for long-term development programmes, the Islamic Solidarity Fund for Development, with a budget of 3 billion dollars (compared with the Islamic Solidarity Fund's annual budget of 20 million dollars). Furthermore, the OIC introduced a range of initiatives with the purpose of strengthening relations with NGOs in the organisation's member states: In 2007 OIC granted NGOs the possibility to apply for observer status and introduced annual conferences for NGOs (the 2009 conference, titled *What is the role of Islamic NGOs in OIC?*, was held in Libya with the participation of more than 30 Muslim NGOs, including both IICO and IIROSA). And finally, the OIC has increased funding of selected NGOs such as IICO and IIROSA, as noted above.[126]

IICO and IIROSA have also sought to strengthen networks and alliances with key Muslim organisations more generally. An example is the International Islamic Council for Da'wa and Relief, which both IICO and IIROSA have historically played an important role in maintaining.[127] Apart from coordination of relief, in recent years there have been calls for the organisation to become more active in areas such as defence of Muslim NGOs against false accusations, monitoring of Western media in relation to discrimination and defamation of Muslims, and similar causes, reflecting trends in e.g. the OIC and the Muslim World League. At the same time, the council has become increasingly involved in initiatives aimed at promoting dialogue and moderation. In the

[124] IIROSA, Bulletin no. 34, p. 4.
[125] Cooperation extends to other OIC organisations, including the Islamic Development Bank and ISESCO, involving joint educational and health projects, microfinance projects, training of imams, Qur'an memorisation programmes, organisation of conferences and other activities. See e.g. IIROSA, website, http://www.egatha.org/eportal/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=12&Itemid=4 (last accessed 27. March 2011); IICO, website, www.iico.net/home-page-eng/news-10/jan-10/iico-eng.htm (last accessed 4. April 2010); IICO Management Report, p. 13; Altwaijri and Al-Hajji (2006).
[126] The increasing involvement of the Saudi Arabian and Kuwaiti governments in aid provision can be seen as part of this trend. Saudi official aid has increased from 1.5 billion dollars in 2004 to 5 billion in 2008 (Hegghammer 2010). Likewise, recent years have seen an increase in Saudi funding of relief efforts; in 2007, for instance, the country gave 158 million dollars to Bangladesh (compared to the US' 20 million dollars), and in 2010 220 million dollars to Pakistan (surpassing the pledges of all European donors together) (Al-Yahya and Fustier 2011:4).
[127] Today IIROSA is member of the Presiding Committee and head of the General Relief Committee, and the current IICO vice chair, Abdullah Omar Naseef, is the secretary general (IIROSA Operational Plan, p. 29).

same vein, the IICO has launched the initiative *The Culture of a Moderate Umma*, targeting Muslim audiences inside and outside Kuwait. The director explains: "Very early, we saw the misunderstandings of Islam among some groups, so we wanted to promote the moderate way, it's the real way, the best way. We want to confront this twisted understanding of Islam."[128] In 2001, the organisation hosted the symposium *The Culture of a Moderate Umma* for Muslim religious scholars and thinkers in Kuwait, followed by the conference *Tolerance and Moderation are Ways for Life* in 2005. Later, it co-hosted a conference in Italy in cooperation with ISESCO with the purpose "to introduce the culture of the moderate Umma and to train the preachers about this moderate approach in Europe,"[129] as well as two conferences in Singapore "emphasiz[ing] the need to reject violence in all its forms and explained the method of the Prophet in pursuing da'wah work through wisdom, good advice and convincing arguments."[130] IIROSA's recent decision to open up the General Assembly to others than Saudi members can perhaps also be seen as part of this trend, strengthening the organisation's transnational relations with prominent Muslim dignitaries. Thus, in 2010, 20 prominent non-Saudi Muslim personalities were invited to take part in the General Assembly (some of whom, such as founder of the Grameen Bank Muhammad Yunus, are in fact prominent actors on the development scene).[131]

Reaching out to the development culture

Parallel to these efforts to strengthen their position within the culture of Islamic aid, both IIROSA and IICO have taken steps to open up and reach out to actors such as the UN, the WHO, and Western NGOs; or as people in IIROSA and IICO say, the 'international' organisations. Overall, they are actively seeking to reach a broader English-speaking audience through English-language PR material, websites and campaigns. For instance, both organisations have frequently updated and improved their English websites during the last five years, and IICO has recently launched an English language Facebook profile (although so far with only 13 fans). In 2010, IIROSA re-opened its fundraising office in the US.

More specifically, both organisations have introduced a number of initiatives with the purpose of facilitating cooperation and easing suspicion surrounding Muslim NGOs (Ghandour 2004:331). In

[128] The Ministry of Awqaf and Religious Affairs also has a unit especially for this, but the two are independent.
[129] IICO, al-Alamiya no. 243.
[130] IICO, Management Report, p. 4. The organisation also organised several media campaigns, including 'Moderation is light', and the campaign 'Tolerance and Moderation are Ways for Life', under the patronage of Prince Sabah al-Ahmad. At one point, the organisation had plans to launch a satellite channel dedicated to religious moderation, however this did not happen (IICO, Management Report, p. 4).
[131] Other invitees were Robert D. Crane, US scholar, former ambassador, and founding president of the American Muslim Bar Association, and the Indian Sufi scholar Syed Shah Khusro Hussaini, author and assistant professor in Sufism at McGill University (IIROSA, website, http://www.egatha.org/2010en/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=20:iirosa-to-have-panel-of-foreign-dignitaries&catid=6:iirosa-news&Itemid=14, last accessed 27. March 2011).

2004, for instance, the US-based Friends of Charities Association was established by six Saudi NGOs, including the Muslim World League, IIROSA, World Assembly of Muslim Youth, Al-Muntada al-Islami, Makkah al-Mukkarama Charity Foundation and the now defunct Al-Haramain.[132] The initiative was aimed at promoting dialogue between Muslim NGOs, US policy makers, law enforcement officials, opinion leaders, the media and non-profit groups as part of a strategy to confront the 'unfair allegations' against Muslim organisations by "refuting them with facts and figures in a way that does not leave any doubt about the good will of Islamic charities."[133] Since then, IIROSA has launched a new strategy, including specific plans to establish alliances with Western governments, companies, banks and organisations (Ghafour and Shamsuddin 2008). In concrete terms, this has resulted in a partnership agreement with the WHO to cooperate on health programs for endemic diseases in Afghanistan, Jordan, Pakistan, Sudan, Egypt, Morocco, Tunisia and Yemen;[134] a memorandum of understanding with UNICEF to cooperate on projects for children's rights in Saudi Arabia; and the office in Jordan has recently implemented a 500,000 dollar Food Aid Project in the Gaza Strip, in coordination with UNRWA (Saudi Press Agency 2009). And in 2010, IIROSA applied for and was granted membership of the UN's Department for Public Information.

In 2004, the same year as the Friends of Charities Association was established, IICO joined another network; the Humanitarian Forum, established by Islamic Relief's founder, Hani al-Banna in cooperation with Oxfam and British Red Cross. Contrary to the Friends of Charities, the Humanitarian Forum involves not only Muslim NGOs, but also several Western NGOs and governmental aid agencies, such as Oxfam, DfID, and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation.[135] The Forum has organised several workshops and conferences with the aim of "creat[ing] dialogue and understanding between Muslim organisations and their Western and multilateral counterparts."[136] In 2006, a conference was held in Kuwait, organised by the IICO and gathering Kuwaiti and Gulf-based NGOs with the purpose of discussing the problems faced by Muslim NGOs after 9.11. In 2009, a workshop brought together Kuwaiti NGOs, representatives of the Kuwaiti Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour, the British Charity Commission and Islamic Relief in order to discuss possibilities for capacity-building of local NGOs. Following this workshop, the Forum established a national office in Kuwait (the Humanitarian Forum Kuwait), serving as an

[132] Friends of Charities' website, http://www.foca.net/Objectives.shtml (last accessed 27. March 2011).
[133] IIROSA, Bulletin no. 27, p. 3.
[134] IIROSA, Operational Plan, p. 35; Ibrahim 2010a.
[135] Members are British Red Cross, DfID, IICO, Islamic Relief, IHH, Imam Khomeini Relief Foundation, MercyCorps, Muhammadiyah Foundation, National Rural Support Programme, Near East Foundation, Qatar Charitable Organisation, Qatar Red Crescent Society, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, and the World Assembly of Muslim Youth (Humanitarian Forum, website, www.humanitarianforum.org, last accessed 14. February 2010).
[136] Humanitarian Forum, website, http://www.humanitarianforum.org/pages/en/what-we-do.html (last accessed 25. March 2011).

umbrella organisation for 35 Kuwaiti NGOs under the leadership of IICO's secretary general and director.[137]

Despite these efforts, however, so far, none of the two organisations have succeeded in attracting large funding from the UN or other major development agencies. UNESCO has contributed with some funding to the IICO's newly established Center for Charitable Studies, but apart from that the organisation has not received any funding from development agencies. Likewise, for IIROSA cooperation is primarily in the form of IIROSA donations to UN organisations, not the other way around. For instance, IIROSA donated 500,000 dollars to the abovementioned WHO health programs; in 2007, it allocated 265,000 dollars to support UNICEF's Family Security Program; and in 2008 and 2009, it gave two times 1 million dollars contributions to UNRWA's work in Palestine.[138] At national level, the two organisations also remain largely isolated from mainstream development NGOs. In Bangladesh, for instance, ECHO and USAID representatives have not heard about Kuwait Joint Relief Committee (through which IICO works), and other NGOs have not met them at meetings and in networks. Likewise, in Jordan, few UN agencies and Western NGOs have ever heard of either IICO or IIROSA. The same pattern of non-cooperation seems to be found in other countries. In Senegal, for instance, neither IIROSA nor Kuwait Joint Relief Committee is part of CONGAD, the council of Senegalese and transnational NGOs working in Senegal (Renders 2002:64). Likewise, in her analysis of transnational Muslim NGOs in Chad, Kaag (2007:101) writes that "[i]n organized forums, Muslim and Christian NGOs hardly meet each other, let alone collaborate. The NGO forum in Moundou (a large town in southern Chad), for instance, consists of Christian and lay organisations only."

Summary

The above chapter, outlining the organisational constellation and audiences of the two NGOs, has presented a number of points that are important to bear in mind for the further analysis: First, IICO and IIROSA's organisational constellation is – and has historically been – relatively homogenous at all levels, with the vast majority of actors being firmly embedded in an Islamic aid culture rather than the culture of development aid. Founders, board and assembly members are all 'Islamic dignitaries' with strong personal and professional relations to key Islamic organisations and persons. All staff members in the organisations are practising Muslims; many have experience from other Muslim organisations; and few have experience from Western development

[137] IICO, al-Alamiya no. 232; Humanitarian Forum, website, http://www.humanitarianforum.org/pages/en/kuwait-.html (last accessed 22. April 2011).
[138] Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia 2009; IIROSA Operational Plan, p. 34. Following criticism from e.g. Fox News, Chris de Bono, UNICEF's chief of media, had to specify that "UNICEF does not and will not engage with" the designated branches of IIROSA, but will only cooperate with the Saudi headquarters, coordinating relief for children living within Saudi Arabia (UNICEF 2008; Abrams 2008).

organisations. Likewise, the vast majority of donors are Kuwaiti and Saudi Muslims wishing to pay their zakat; partners are primarily other Islamic organisations and institutions such as the OIC, the International Islamic Council for Da'wa and Relief, national Ministries of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs, as well as local Muslim organisations; and recipients are mainly Muslim majority countries or Muslim minorities in non-Muslim countries.

Second, the analysis has shown that 9.11. and the War on Terror have led transnational Muslim NGOs to rethink their position. The analysis pointed to two trends: One has been a tendency towards further integration into the culture of Islamic aid, through the introduction of new, Islamically defined, mechanisms for funding, an increased focus on national activities, and strengthened cooperation with the OIC and other key Muslim organisations. The other has been to open up towards a Western audience. Indicators of this are e.g. the IIROSA's recent partnerships and cooperation with different UN agencies, and the IICO's participation in the Humanitarian Forum, together with major Western development agencies and NGOs. What does this particular organisational constellation and environment mean for the ways in which ideologies are constructed, for the languages that the organisations choose to use? This is the topic for the next chapter in which we shall explore the actual aid ideologies presented by the IICO and IIROSA.

CHAPTER 6. IDEOLOGIES OF AID

Until now, the analysis has presented different levels of contextualisation, outlining the different aid cultures that the organisations have grown out of (chapter 3), discussing their historical trajectories (chapter 4) and finally, presenting the concrete constituencies and audiences making up the immediate context of the organisations (chapter 5), all of which has contributed to positioning the organisations in the contemporary aid field. Against this background, the present chapter will analyse the ideologies that have emerged as a result of this particular context: What kinds of ideologies do IIROSA and IICO present? Which understanding of aid and Islam do they promote? And in this, how do they relate to and draw on the different aid cultures? Answering these questions, the chapter explores different ideological elements, discussing issues of organisational authority, visions, rationales and strategies. The chapter presents two overall arguments: First, IIROSA and IICO present what we may call a *sacralised* form of aid, expressed in the language of the Islamic aid culture. Second, in attempts to reach new audiences, the two organisations *developmentalise* their Islamic aid, seeking to speak the language of the development culture.

Organisational authority

As a first step into the exploration of organisational ideologies, the analysis asks the basic questions: From where do the organisations derive their power to speak? What makes them legitimate authorities in aid provision? Such questions of ideological authority are essential elements in organisational ideologies, serving to further emphasise the fact that ideologies are not free-floating meaning systems but formulated by specific actors wishing not only to promote a particular world view but also to position themselves in a particular way. As noted in chapter 2, the study of NGOs is always a study of NGO-ing: of the ways in which organisations define what it means to be a good, genuine and legitimate NGO (Hilhorst 2003). The analysis argues that the two NGOs frame themselves in two different ways: one frame focuses on Islam as a source of authority, and another, emerging, on professional authority, each of them emphasising different organisational qualities and potentially attracting different audiences.

Islamic authority: 'Because of believing in God…'

The main source of legitimacy for IICO and IIROSA's organisational authority is religion. IICO and IIROSA claim to be legitimate providers of aid, authorities in the aid field, because they are *Islamic* organisations. This is perhaps best expressed by one of the organisations themselves: "[I]t is because of believing in God and in the limitless bestowal of the IICO that its charitable work has

gone up to a high place."[139] Likewise, the names of the two organisations – International Islamic Relief Organisation and International Islamic Charitable Organisation – are basic attempts at signalling religious legitimacy. In other words, the organisations frame themselves as religious authorities, claiming to be legitimate because they follow prescriptions of religious authorities, doctrines and traditions. They seek to legitimise themselves as religious authorities by aligning their authority frames with existing religious beliefs in these societies. In these processes of frame alignment, the organisations idealise and invigorate religious values and ideas common to Kuwaiti and Saudi societies, thus creating resonance in their audiences (Benford and Snow 2000:624).

One strategy for generating religious legitimacy is to emphasise association with existing and recognised religious authorities. In the words of Slim (2002:9), who an organisation knows is a major source of its legitimacy. In this perspective, legitimacy is a precondition for support but it can also be a result of support (from the right people). The frequent references to renowned religious authorities serve to heighten organisational credibility, insofar as the credentials of these personalities reflect back on the organisations. For instance, both IIROSA and IICO underline the religiosity of the organisations' founders, all of them pious Muslims, or, as noted in an IICO publication, "sincere and leading thinkers of the Muslim nation."[140] Likewise, IICO has a section on its website titled 'Testimonials' with quotes from prominent people praising the work of IICO.[141] Of the 17 people quoted, 15 are Islamic sheikhs, all of them praising not only the work of the IICO but also its status as a "solid bastion of Islam," as noted by Sheikh Issa Ben Mohamed Al Khalifa, former Minister and President of the Social Reform Association in Bahrain.[142] In turn, these webs of association tell us something about the kind of Islam that the organisations wish to be associated with. At least three things are worth noting here: First, most of the religious authorities mentioned are formal religious authorities rather than self-taught preachers such as Amr Khaled or Tariq Ramadan. Second, many are associated with government. IICO's list of quotes, for instance, includes four ministers and three emirs. Finally, Muslim Brotherhood representatives play a prominent role, with quotes from e.g. Muhammad Qutb and Yusuf al-Qaradawi. As such, IICO and IIROSA position themselves as part of a broader religious community. This community also includes other Muslim NGOs. When asked about the organisation's relations to e.g. Muslim Aid and Islamic Relief, a staff member in IICO says: "We are like branches of the same tree," thereby echoing the statements of many others.

[139] IICO, Special Publication, p. 15.
[140] IICO, Pioneering in Charity, p. 1.
[141] In its annual reports, IIROSA has also had a somewhat similar section, including references to various authorities. The 2007/2008 Annual Report, for instance, refers to letters of appreciation from e.g. the secretary general of the Muslim World League, the secretary general of OIC and from several princes.
[142] IICO, website, http://www.iico.org/AxCMSwebLive/en_testimonials.cms (last accessed 22. April 2011).

Another strategy for generating legitimacy is to emphasise knowledge (Slim 2002:9). IICO and IIROSA have different ways of displaying their religious knowledge. One strategy is the use of religious symbols. Comprehensible only to the initiated, religious symbols serve as a powerful way of demonstrating knowledge. For instance, the website of IICO is held in green nuances – the colour of Islam – while its logo – also green – contains several references to symbols in Islam. The logo has the shape of a house, perhaps a mosque, with a window the shape of a globe. Together, the globe and the building can also look like a woman with a hijab. In the right side of the logo, at the bottom of the building, there is an outstretched hand, reaching for the globe. The hand is a common symbol in different charity traditions, including Islam, referring at once to the physical acts of begging for and giving alms. But the hand also resembles an angel's wing (in Arabic, *al Janah*), another common symbol in Islam. Hovering over the building is a crescent, perhaps the strongest contemporary symbol of Islam and the Muslim community.[143] Another, more explicit, way of displaying religious knowledge is the frequent reference to religious texts. Hadiths, Qur'an verses and pictures of the Kaba adorn office walls as well as websites, annual reports and PR material, serving to underline the organisations' status as legitimate religious actors, just like staff often recite religious verses in interviews as a way of emphasising a point or illustrating an example. On its website, IICO even offers lengthy theological explanations of zakat practices and rulings, coupled with practical information on how to calculate zakat.[144] Furthermore, the website offers people the possibility to "ask al-Mufti" or "chat with the Mufti" about religious issues,[145] all of which serves to demonstrate that the organisation is knowledgeable of and adhering to Islamic doctrines and principles.

A third strategy serving for IIROSA and IICO to generate legitimacy as religious authorities is the promotion of religious practices and traditions inside and outside the organisations. What they do is "real Islamic philanthropy."[146] On a general level, at least in IICO, the so-called Sharia Board, consisting in three religious scholars, reviews all aid activities and determines whether they are in accordance with Islamic laws. Members of the current Board are Ajeel Jassem al Nashmi, Abdul Aziz Khalifa al Jassar and Mubarak Jazaa al Harbi, all of whom are well-known religious scholars in Kuwait and members of a number of other sharia boards, in particular in financial institutions.[147] More specifically, Islamic holidays such as Ramadan and Eid al-Adha are heavily celebrated, and

[143] The IIROSA's Islamic identity is less pronounced: the colours of the website are not green, but blue, just like the logo contains fewer overtly Islamic symbols. The logo takes the shape of a globe on a background of two red and yellow circles, thus creating two crescents. On the globe, the location of Saudi Arabia is marked with a black spot. Together, the three circles resemble an eye with the globe as the iris and Saudi Arabia as the pupil. The eye, *hamsa*, is a common symbol in Islam, referring to the Hand of Fatima.
[144] IICO, website, http://www.iico.org/AxCMSwebLive/en_give_your_zakat.cms (last accessed 22. April 2011).
[145] IICO, website, http://www.iico.org/AxCMSwebLive/en_fatwa.cms (last accessed 22. April 2011). Since the organisation recently updated its website, this part is still not functioning.
[146] IIROSA, Annual Report 2007/2008, p. 10.
[147] IICO, website, http://www.iico.org/AxCMSwebLive/en_shari_board.cms (last accessed 27. March 2011).

traditional Islamic aid activities such as orphan sponsorship, mosque building and Qur'an lessons are central to the organisations' programmes (something which we shall discuss much more in the following). Likewise, the above-mentioned re-introduction of waqf investments may be interpreted as a way for the two organisations to boost religious legitimacy, reflecting contemporary developments in Islamic finance (see chapter 3). Finally, staff members are encouraged to pray together in the organisations' many prayer rooms, dress according to religious precepts, and comply with conservative gender practices, adhering to conservative Saudi and Kuwaiti ideals of believing and practising Muslims (see e.g. Meyer et al. 2007).

A fourth strategy is more intangible, centering on notions of religious morality. This source of religious authority is not predicated on religious muftis or Qur'an verses, but on feelings and values. Emphasising qualities such as sincerity, trustworthiness and persistence, the organisations display a personalised, emotional rhetoric turning on individual morality. IICO and IIROSA are legitimate organisations because they "care about the feelings of the needy" and give unconditional aid "with no strings attached," as staff members say. The organisations have "taken upon their shoulders"[148] to help the poor; they have "managed to alleviate many problems related to poverty,"[149] sparing "the lives of tens of thousands" and bringing "hope to the poor."[150] As IRIOSA's secretary general says in an interview, praising the organisation for its work in the area of orphan sponsorships, describing these achievements as 'spectacular': "Teams from IIROSA have travelled to remote and unsafe areas looking for orphans who are victims of civil wars, racial and sectarian conflicts and natural disasters in order to salvage them and provide them with all the services they require."[151] In this, the organisations play on common notions of morality, altruism and solidarity, something which we shall discuss further below.

Underlying IICO and IIROSA's claims to a religious legitimacy is a particular understanding of Islam as a relatively conservative and orthodox visible social practice, resonating with the mainstream religious culture in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. But it is also a conception of Islam as distinct from – or at least broader than – merely prayer and rituals. As one IICO staff member puts it: "We have this saying, 'To go and help another human being is better than to stay and pray for years'. So helping is much more than worship. Worship is so important, but helping is even more important, it's much better." In other words, an organisation is more religiously legitimate if it actively engages in the provision of aid than if it encourages people to pray. With this understanding of Islam as an activist, collectively oriented religion, IICO and IIROSA distinguish

[148] IIROSA, ISC Report, p. 16.
[149] IICO, Pioneering in Charity, p. 2.
[150] IIROSA, ISC Report, p. 18.
[151] Saudi Arabia News and Updates, http://www.a1saudiarabia.com/IIROSA-sponsors-225000-orphans-in-KSA-and-abroad (last accessed 23. April 2011).

themselves from the individualistic piety that is found in e.g. the Salafi movement, building on Muslim Brotherhood traditions of a close relation between social activism and Islam, as discussed in chapter 3.

Furthermore, in particular IICO's claims to a religious legitimacy are also based on an understanding of Islam as a religion of moderation. "We have different thoughts than others," a high level staff member tells me. "We think that the best is in the middle. That's a basic rule in Islam. Some things in Islam are very clear – salah, zakat, hajj – but some things need interpretation. And some of these interpretations are extreme and some are not. The best is to be in the middle." The director of IICO explains the concept as follows:

> For instance, to be brave is the middle way between being a coward and being reckless. To be generous is between misery and crazy spending. Islam is the middle way. Its followers should be moderate – but without compromising. To be patient is in between being angry and cold. Islam says the best man is one who can get loved and who can love. A good person, in the eyes of Allah, is someone who is easy to deal with, someone who does not make problems with others.

'Being in the middle', or moderation (in Arabic *wasat*), is an important element in IICO's framing of itself as a religiously legitimate organisation, manifested, among other things, in the organisation's many initiatives to promote "the culture of a moderate umma," as noted above. In this, the organisation is strongly inspired by Yusuf al-Qaradawi. In Qaradawi's own words, Islam is about moderation and balance – about finding the middle way between religious fundamentalism and Western secularism, between socialism and capitalism, between greed and ascetics (Gräf and Skovgaard Petersen 2009). As such, the reference to moderation as an important source of religious legitimacy places IICO as part of a broader Islamic movement, centered around Qaradawi, but including a wide range of actors and initiatives from the Muslim Brotherhood to the Amman Message, launched by Jordan's King Abdullah.

This emphasis on 'moderation' can also, at least in part, be seen as an attempt by IICO to broaden its legitimating environment by referring to a new kind of legitimacy, based on notions of politics and security. As was discussed in chapter 4, following the War on Terror, a new discourse on so-called faith-based organisations has emerged among Western aid agencies, promoting 'moderate' Muslim NGOs as tools for bridge-building and dialogue. In this perspective, moderation is not so much about theology, but about politics, and a 'moderate' Muslim NGO denotes a politically neutral, or ideally liberal, organisation that does not sympathise with Al-Qaeda or other so-called extremist groups and movements. Using the religious concept of moderation, or wasat, the IICO attempts to merge these two kinds of legitimacy, at the same time appealing to a Kuwaiti donor base and reaching out to a new constituency, consisting in Western institutional donors interested in cooperating with 'moderate' Muslim NGOs. In other words, the IICO claims to be a legitimate

organisation because it seeks to "convey the truly peaceful picture of the religion of Islam,"[152] at once saving people from ignorance and extremism. This emphasis on moderation points to an important difference between Muslim and other religious NGOs. For Muslim organisations to be legitimate in the eyes of Western development agencies, they cannot simply be providers of aid, but must simultaneously engage in activities of bridge-building and dialogue, pledging allegiance to 'moderation', and as such making amends for the damage allegedly done by other Muslim NGOs, somehow sharing their guilt and shame.[153]

Professional authority: 'Our activities are transparent'

Parallel to the emphasis on religious legitimacy, IIROSA and IICO increasingly frame their authority in terms of professionalism, based on claims to professional relations, practices and knowledge. In this perspective, the NGOs are legitimate actors not because of their obedience to God or because of their moral values, but because their work is professional, understood in terms of concepts such as 'accountability', 'science', and 'strategic planning'. In their claims to professionalism, both organisations refer explicitly to 'Western' or 'international' organisations as the standard against which to be measured and the ideal towards which the organisation should be striving. The IICO's newly established Center for Charitable Studies, for instance, is modelled after 'Western institutions' rather than Middle Eastern institutions, because, as the website states, "in the Middle East region [...], charitable organisations and charitable activities have no or little scientific basis."[154] The IICO director, who has lived in the US for 30 years, tells me that before establishing the center, he talked to the dean of the business school at Indiana University: "They also have a graduate school for philanthropy," he says. "Likewise in Boston and Maryland. That's where we want to get with our center. We want to use this center to get this new revolution to the Islamic organisations."

For IIROSA, relations with 'the West', and in particular the US, are somewhat tenser, due to the accusations of terrorist connections. In an interview in one of the organisation's bulletins, the secretary general claims that these accusations and the following sanctions against IIROSA are "part of a concerted effort by some in the West to stop all Islamic relief efforts." He says: "We don't support any terrorist group. Our relief activities are transparent. There is no room for suspicion."[155] However, even in IIROSA, the ideal professional organisation is still modelled with reference to international standards of professionalism. In fact, in his refutation of US allegations against the organisation, the secretary general makes use of a discourse of professionalism, referring to ideals

[152] IICO, Pioneering in Charity, p. 7.
[153] These extra-aid activities are not a central part of the analysis, however, insofar as it focuses more specifically on their aid ideologies.
[154] IICO, website, http://www.iico.org/AxCMSwebLive/en_charitable_studies_center.cms (last accessed 27. March 2011).
[155] IIROSA, Bulletin no. 28, p. 2 and 3.

of accountability and transparency in his claims that most of these allegations are based on "unfounded newspaper clippings, news statements and unsubstantiated intelligence reports." Likewise, he makes reference to ideals of neutrality, implying that these allegations are politically motivated, directed by "Zionist groups in the United States" and "for political reasons that have nothing to do with charity work."[156] Presenting the IIROSA's new strategy, the secretary general says in an interview in Arab News: "We would like to have partnership with more UN agencies and international organisations to benefit from their experience. This will give us an opportunity to learn from them. They can also learn from us, and this interaction will help us become more professional in our mission" (Ghafour and Shamsuddin 2010). On their websites, IIROSA and IICO both promote partnerships with various UN agencies (although in the case of IIROSA, many of the partnerships mentioned are long terminated and out-dated), listing the logos of UNESCO, UNHCR and the International Labour Organisation (ILO), just like IIROSA's recent membership of UN's Department for Public Information is front page news in the organisation's bulletin, characterised as a "remarkable achievement".[157] Thus, in the same way as allegiance with established religious authorities served to build up the organisations' own religious authority, allegiance with established authorities in the field of aid provision serves to demonstrate their authority as professional aid providers.

To be a professional authority in the field of aid provision has to do with the kinds of aid provided to the poor. As the director of IICO says:

> [T]he theories for helping the poor have changed. There are several different schools of theories regarding orphans. You can help them by improving their living conditions, giving aid such as clean water and education to the whole community instead of just giving to the individual. And you can educate the mother. These are new concepts. And it's all based on research.

But perhaps more than this, professionalism has to do with practices of 'accountability' and 'transparency' in terms of financial transactions, budgets and donations. Both IIROSA and IICO strongly emphasise their relations with globally recognised auditing and accounting authorities. At the 2008 General Assembly meeting, for instance, the IIROSA appointed the internationally acclaimed company Ernst & Young as IIROSA's official auditors. "The appointment of such a reputable international firm as auditors would strengthen IIROSA's credibility and transparency," said the secretary general (Ghafour and Shamsuddin 2008). Likewise, IICO is, together with the Humanitarian Forum and the UK NGO Regulation Forum, in the process of formulating a unified reporting and accounting system for Kuwaiti NGOs. Both organisations have, at least to some

[156] IIROSA, Bulletin no. 27, p. 3.
[157] IIROSA, Bulletin no. 36, p. 1. On IIROSA's website, there is even a reference to a World Bank conference in Chad where IIROSA was allegedly selected as "the best Islamic Arab charity working in rural development in Chad and one of the best international organisations working in this field" (IIROSA, website, http://www.egatha.org/english/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=12&Itemid=4, last accessed 25. March 2011). When this conference took place, and precisely by whom the IIROSA was selected, is unclear and it has been impossible to find additional information on the conference from other sources.

degree, started making annual reports and budgets publicly available on their websites, sending signals of financial transparency to potential audiences. IIROSA was recently awarded the ISO 9001 certificate, and IICO is also aiming for ISO certification, introducing new procedures for document control, auditing and evaluation. ISO is a global certificate for organisational and business management systems, controlled by the International Standardisation Organisation. As such, the ISO certificate sends a strong signal of adherence to global standards of financial professionalism. Displayed on the front page of IIROSA's website, marked in red and with types as big as those used for the organisation's name, the certificate serves as a symbol of professional authority, sending subtle signs of adherence to common norms and values, much in the same vein as the crescent and the mosque sends signals of a common religiosity.

Claims to a professional authority also rely on management and planning skills. The secretary general of IIROSA, Adnan Khalil Basha, is quoted for saying that IIROSA aspires to be "the first NGO to lay down [a] strategic basis and principles for charity work."[158] In a similar vein, IICO considers itself "one of the advanced charitable and humanitarian organisations which uses developed technical and managerial methods in its different areas of work,"[159] which "doesn't only think about the present" but uses "integrated planning for the future institutional and organized charitable work,"[160] "[w]orking according to well designed plans, and a management system that is characterized by proper organisation, clarity of responsibilities, and great flexibility."[161] The IICO's Center for Charitable Studies recently organised a management training course for 30 directors of Kuwaiti aid organisations, hiring an international management company to teach the directors "to become more qualified" and learn about "how to do meetings, negotiations, dealing with others," as the daily manager tells me. "Most people who work here are not specialised in charity. They need training," she explains: "They were all very impressed, it's a new science for them." Since then, the center has started offering a wide range of courses such as *Strategies for institutional development*, *Administrative innovation*, *Quality management and its application in charitable work*, *Management and implementation of charity projects* and *Media and public relations*, all strongly echoing a Western, or more specifically, US management culture.[162]

All the above examples testify to the fact that for IIROSA and IICO, to be a professional authority in the field of aid provision is about providing aid in professional ways, but also, and perhaps more importantly, it is about demonstrating practices of financial accountability and management, in

[158] IIROSA, Bulletin no. 26, p. 5.
[159] IICO, Special Publication, p. 27.
[160] IICO, Special Publication, p. 15.
[161] IICO, website, http://www.iico.org/AxCMSwebLive/en_mission_vision.cms (last accessed 27. March 2011).
[162] IICO, website, http://www.iico.org/AxCMSwebLive/en_training_programs_conferences.cms (last accessed 19. April 2011).

accordance with Western and international accounting firms and management companies. As such, and rather than an attempt at introducing radically new ways of providing aid, IIROSA and IICO's claims to professional authority can be seen as a way to respond to accusations of terrorist financing, emphasising the political neutrality of the organisations by way of claims to transparency.

Running a health clinic or working in an Islamic organisation?

The two organisations attempt to merge the frames of religious authority and professional authority, combining terms such as 'accountability', 'strategy' and 'transparency' with a strongly religious language. In an annual report, IIROSA writes that the organisation

> will continue with the will of God to provide its services and donations for years to come and will strive to develop and maximize its programs and to improve its performance, based on long-term well-studied strategic plans that it has adopted with a view to institutionalizing its work in order to uplift charity work from all aspects. Praise is to God, Lord of the Worlds![163]

According to the director of IICO, this is not problematic. Talking about what he calls "the revolution in Western charity," he says: "We have our charity culture in Islam, but contemporary development is huge – we want to mix the two. Goodness is goodness, this idea is universal. So there are no problems in mixing the 'non-Islamic' with the Islamic. There are almost no differences, if any."

But in the long run, it is not necessarily unproblematic to merge two different frames like this. One fundamental difference between religious and professional authority turns on dichotomies between persons and systems. Professional authority is predicated on systems, institutions and functions, while religious authority tends to emphasise the personal. An illustrative example of this is the prominent position that the chairman occupies in IICO. As a staff member in IICO Jordan says, praising the now former chairman Yusuf al-Hajji:

> He is trusted. He is 85 years old. There are elections every four years, but people don't want him to resign. They want him to stay. He is very well-known. You know, when people come to donate money, they ask 'where is Mr. Hajji?' and we say, 'he's away', he's at a conference or something, just give us the money, and they say, no I want to meet him, I want to talk to him. It's not like in the West, there you have institutions, systems. Here, it is all about persons. The person is important.

In IIROSA, on the other hand, there seems to be some dissatisfaction with the current secretary general – but precisely because his personality does not live up to these standards. He may be professional and experienced, but he is not trusted. As a former staff member explains to me: "Donations have decreased, people don't trust him. In Islam, donations are about trust, people give to people they trust. He killed the organisation, he squeezed it."

[163] IIROSA, Annual Report, p. 49.

Another potential area of contention is staff. While it may very well be possible to align claims to religious authority with systems for professional accountability and transparency, it is more difficult to combine religious and professional expectations to staff without eventually having to prioritise one over the other. In a professional aid organisation, the ideal staff member is an expert in aid provision, a specialist working to do his or her job as efficiently as possible. In an Islamic organisation, on the other hand, she or (most often) he is a devoted Muslim working to please Allah and advance the religious cause. So far, claims to professionalism have not resulted in the introduction of professional development staff in IICO and IIROSA. As we saw in the above chapter, trustees and staff members are Islamic dignitaries and practising Muslims, displaying business and religious expertise rather than expertise in aid provision. A manager of an IIROSA health clinic in Bangladesh expresses this preference very precisely when he says of the majority of his colleagues: "They work in an Islamic organisation, I run a health clinic." As such, the professional authority of IIROSA and IICO is an authority that is restricted to areas of auditing, reporting and budgeting, while the organisational constituency remains based on a religious legitimacy. How activities are conceived will be the topic of the following sections.

Summing up, this analysis of organisational authority has argued that IIROSA and IICO base their legitimacy on two different sources, framing themselves as simultaneously religious and professional organisations. Each of these legitimating frames emphasise different aspects of the organisations' identity and work. The Islamic authority frame presents a claim to authority based on notions of religious obedience: 'We are legitimate, because we carry out God's will', justifying this with reference to the organisations' adherence to religious doctrines and principles. And the professional authority frame claims organisational legitimacy on the grounds that IIROSA and IICO are 'accountable' and 'transparent', modelled on a Western ideal. As such, they may simultaneously attract and satisfy audiences with different demands and expectations. However, the analysis has also pointed to potential difficulties in merging these two frames, manifested most clearly in a dichotomy between religious and professional staff expertise; something which may in the long run lead to conflicts between the two kinds of authority.

Visions of aid

This section turns on organisational visions, asking questions as to the kinds of problems the organisations seek to solve in their provision of aid and the aims they seek to obtain. According to the framing approach, the success of an organisation is partly dependent on its ability to define some existing problem, or condition, as 'wrong', demanding correction, based on a conception of the ideal situation; what is often referred to as diagnostic framing (Snow and Byrd 2007:124). In other words, how do they define and present the purpose of their existence? What are legitimate visions for an Islamic, professional organisation? And who are these visions legitimate for?

Addressing material and spiritual needs

For IICO and IIROSA, the main problem is poverty and suffering. The IICO is "dedicated to the alleviation of the ramifications of poverty, distress and deprivation of people,"[164] seeking to "remove the suffering of people wherever they are."[165] Likewise, the IIROSA "aims to alleviate the suffering of distressed and needy people worldwide."[166] Drawing on what Chouliaraki (2010) refers to as 'grand emotions', the organisations present poverty as a situation characterised by individual agony, shame and humiliation. Recipients of aid are characterised by their needs and wants: they are 'the poor', 'the needy', 'the deprived', 'the hungry', 'the sick', 'the homeless' and 'the distressed'. As such, the diagnostic frames of IICO and IIROSA echo those of countless other NGOs, whether religious or not.

But poverty is not only about hunger, diseases, and lack of education; it is also about religious ignorance, humiliation and backwardness. In other words, it is about "economic, health, social *and* religious needs."[167] Poverty is, in other words, both spiritual and material and as such, markedly different from secular development conceptions of poverty. This understanding of poverty builds on conceptions of the inseparability of the material and the transcendent, underlying not only the thinking of the Muslim Brotherhood, but most contemporary Islamic movements and groups. At the same time, it has parallels among Christian NGOs. Studying World Vision in Zimbabwe, for instance, Bornstein (2003) finds elements of 'a theology of holism', presenting an understanding of development as simultaneously addressing both spiritual and material needs. She quotes a World Vision director for saying: "Holistic [development] in our sense is that we want to change the situation from the social point of view, economical point of view, and spiritual point of view" (cf. Bornstein 2003:49). Closely related to and corresponding with this multi-facetted conception of poverty is the organisations' vision of a dignified life for the poor. Through the provision of aid, the organisations seek to enable the poor and needy to take care of themselves, so that they will no longer be humiliated and ashamed, but will be able to re-gain their God-given dignity, living "a decent and useful life."[168] This entails not only access to health, education, food and housing, but also religious education and facilities for worshipping (as we shall see in the following sections).

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[164] IICO, Pioneering in Charity, p. 1.
[165] IICO, website, http://www.iico.org/AxCMSwebLive/en_mission_vision.cms (last accessed 23. April 2011).
[166] IIROSA, website, http://www.egatha.org/eportal/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=2&Itemid=2 (last accessed 23. April 2011).
[167] IICO, Pioneering in Charity, p. 5 (emphasis added).
[168] IIROSA, ISC Report, p. 10.

Strengthening the umma

Underlying this explicit vision of a dignified life for the poor is another, more implicit, vision. Based on a notion of poverty as simultaneously individual and collective, IIROSA and IICO introduce the vision of a strengthened umma as a response to problems of spiritual poverty in the Muslim community. The umma is threatened at different levels: from within, by immoral and ignorant Muslims on one side, and religious extremists and fanatics on the other;[169] and from the outside, by "an organized invasion" of Christian NGOs, trying to take Muslims away from their religion,[170] as well as by "baseless allegations" launched against Muslim NGOs by "some people in the West" in particular after 9.11.[171] Responding to these problems, the organisations formulate visions of a strengthened Muslim umma, based on "ties of brotherhood" and "social solidarity."[172] In this society, Muslims are raised in the right faith, nursing a balanced Muslim character and encouraging "observance of Islamic morals, sharia virtues, [and] activation of da'wa."[173] As a project manager in IICO explains:

> If the Islamic ideas were being inserted then society would be more happy, secure, there would be an abundance of wealth – both psychologically and materially. When we spend money for the poor, society will be safer, there will be no crime. There will be more happiness and the economy will be strengthened. So we don't only help the poor, we also help society as such.

By assisting individual Muslims, ensuring their right Islamic education, then, IICO and IIROSA not only ensure their self-reliance and a dignified life, they also contribute to strengthening the Muslim umma (see also Kaag 2008:5). To be a good Muslim is not only about individual piety and dignity, but about rescuing and maintaining the distinctively Islamic character of society. As such, the moral reform of the individual is linked to that of society (Hatina 2006:182), strongly echoing Hassan al-Banna's ideas of Islamic activism, as laid out in chapter 3. Aid provision, in other words, is not only for the poor individual, but for society. The motto of IICO – "[If we stand] together…the needy will never ask again" – expresses this double function of aid: It is about helping the poor to become self-reliant so they do not have to ask again. But at the same time, it is about standing together, uniting ties of brotherhood, to create a better society, a strengthened umma, in which nobody has to ask. Like the conception of poverty as simultaneously spiritual and material, this idea of aid as a tool for strengthening the religious community resonates with certain Christian conceptions of aid. This is what Thaut (2009), in her analysis of Christian NGOs, calls an evangelistic humanitarianism: "they provide relief and development assistance largely with the goal of helping to extend the church, build up the community of Christians globally, and serve the spiritual needs of humanity" (Thaut 2009:342).

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[169] IICO, Pioneering in Charity, p. 7.
[170] Speech by Yusuf al-Qaradawi, IICO Special Publication, p. 15.
[171] IIROSA, Bulletin no. 28, p. 2f.
[172] E.g. IICO, website, http://www.iico.net/home-page-eng/charitable-activites-eng.htm, accessed 27. March 2011.
[173] IIROSA, Annual Report, p. 40.

Helping Muslim brothers and sisters

If a strengthened umma is the vision, then recipients are primarily Muslims (or potential Muslims).[174] As such, IIROSA's and IICO's missionary aid necessarily breaks with mainstream notions of universalism. Recipients are not distant strangers, but citizens of the same Muslim nation, brothers of the same Muslim family. We assist poor people, "regardless of their race or nationality" and "without any racial or ethnic distinction," the IICO claims, copying common declarations of humanitarian universalism almost to the word. But only almost. While the organisation proclaims a racial, ethnic and geographical universalism, it does not mention religion. In other words, the IICO may help people of any race, nationality or ethnicity, provided they are Muslim. As such, recipients are subjectified within an overall framework of the Muslim umma rather than a global humanity.[175] The IIROSA presents a slightly more inclusive approach than IICO, claiming to have provided aid to "all cases of sick people irrespective of religion, caste and creed."[176] At the same time, however, this organisation also displays a strong religious particularism, characterising its target area as "different parts of the Muslim world and Muslim minority communities worldwide."[177] A look at the actual areas in which the organisations work further substantiates this, showing that both work primarily in Muslim majority countries, and with Muslim minorities in non-Muslim countries (see e.g. table 6.1., listing the main recipient countries of IIROSA's aid).

Table 6.1. IIROSA, top ten countries (2003)[178]

Country	Percentage of budget
Saudi Arabia	16.2
Jordan	9.2
Sudan	4.9
Pakistan	4.2
Somalia	2.7
Azerbaijan	2.7
Yemen	2.7
Nigeria	2.6
Afghanistan	2.2
Ethiopia	2.2

[174] Insofar as the vision is framed as a response not only to material, but also spiritual poverty, beneficiaries may not only include the poor, but also well-off people who are in need of spiritual strengthening. For instance, IICO's initiative *Build a school, revive a nation* seeks to build model schools "that attract and educate students from the upper class for high fees and distinguished students from the less-privileged members of Muslim communities for free, especially in Africa and Asia, and instil noble virtues in them" (IICO, al-Alamiya no. 243).

[175] E.g. "impoverished Muslim countries and communities" (IICO, Pioneering in Charity, p. 2) and "keep the Muslims safe and rescue them from hunger" (IICO, Special Publication, p. 5).

[176] IIROSA, Bulletin no. 28, p. 6.

[177] IIROSA, ISC Report, p. 16.

[178] The table is developed on the basis of IIROSA Annual Report 2003/2004.

As noted in chapter 4, it is precisely this particularistic approach that Muslim NGOs (and other religious NGOs, for that matter) have been criticised for by secular, Western NGOs, claiming that they discriminate among recipients, thus violating principles of universalism and neutrality. With the War on Terror, this distinction between universalistic and particularistic approaches has been coupled with a distinction between moderate and extremist or fundamentalist organisations. In other words, a particularistic, missionary religiosity is seen not only as a sign of discrimination, but also as a sign of religious fundamentalism and potentially political extremism. In this perspective, IICO and IIROSA cannot maintain a strictly particularistic approach, if they want to attract an 'international' audience, but have to find a way to align their vision with mainstream principles of development aid. A few people maintain that the organisations do in fact adhere to universalist principles: "We don't differentiate between Muslims and non-Muslims – relief is relief," says a top manager in IIROSA's headquarters. A staff member in IICO's Jordan office echoes this: "Charity is a human idea." Most, however, explain the actual focus on Muslims over non-Muslims with reference to what I, inspired by Bellion-Jourdan (2000:15), will call a *pragmatic particularism* or a *principled universalism*. In principle the organisations will help everybody, but in practice they work primarily among Muslims and therefore help primarily Muslims. A high-level staff member in IIROSA says: "In Jordan, we work mostly with Muslims. The Christians don't ask us for help, they have their own organisations."[179] Likewise, staff in IICO says that because most people in Jordan are Muslim, discrimination is not an issue. Another version of this argument focuses on the fact that the majority of the world's poor are Muslim, justifying special attention to this group of poor people. As an IIROSA representative writes in an article about Islam and social welfare in the organisation's bulletin (on a side note serving as an example of the ways in which the organisation seeks to generate professional authority by demonstrating professional knowledge):

> In fact, the United Nations reports on poverty indicate that more than one quarter of a billion people or 20 percent of the world population are poor [sic] and that 40 percent of them live in the Muslim world while reports from the UNHCR reveal the presence of 10 million refugees all over the world, 71 percent of them from the Muslim world and that 6 million children die annually of starvation.[180]

The above analysis has argued that the two organisations' vision can be divided into two distinct, albeit closely intertwined, parts: that of a dignified individual, and that of a strengthened umma. First, the vision of a dignified individual grows out of a conception of poverty as not only material want and suffering, but also spiritual lack and humiliation. In this perspective, solutions to poverty must be holistic, taking into account the multifaceted nature of poverty. Second, the vision of a strengthened umma responds to problems of a weak umma, closely related to the existence of material and spiritual want at individual level: if individual Muslims are poor, be it materially or

[179] This notion of family and proximity of course also justifies the prioritization of Muslims over others. A staff member in IICO's headquarters says: "In IICO, the relief committee gives help to everybody. In general, to be honest, they help Muslims first, but if there are non-Muslims in the area, they will also help them, and in disasters they help everybody."
[180] IIROSA, Bulletin no. 36, p. 12.

spiritually, the umma is weak. As such, the organisations promote an understanding of poverty as simultaneously individual and collective, and of aid as a tool not only to ensure a dignified life for the individual, but just as importantly to contribute to the strengthening of the umma.

The analysis has argued that this vision of a strengthened umma has consequences for the ways in which recipients are conceptualised. One important consequence is a particularistic focus on fellow Muslims, conflicting with the principles of universalism, which are central to the culture of development aid. Insofar as they are seeking to attract an audience of 'international' development organisations, IIROSA and IICO cannot ignore such potential conflicts, but must address them. Attempting to maintain a focus on fellow Muslims, staff in the organisations introduce what I call a pragmatic particularism, or a principled universalism, arguing that they do in principle support a universalist approach, but they are bound by the context in which they work to focus primarily on Muslims.

Rationales

Underlying conceptions of poverty, a dignified life and a strengthened umma is a rationale that goes beyond the diagnosis of problems and the formulation of visions, answering more fundamental questions as to why the organisations engage in this work, and, just as importantly, why people should support them in doing so. This construction of underlying rationales is what framing theorists refer to as motivational framing (Snow and Benford 1988:202). There is a strong educational element in this; when trying to motivate people to support the organisation and donate money to aid provision, the organisations send subtle messages of moral education, instructing people in how to feel and act towards the suffering (Chouliaraki 2010). As such, motivational framing is primarily directed at individual donors, encouraging them to support the organisation, rather than it is about convincing institutional donors. There is no need to teach institutional donors about the moral value of aid provision, insofar as they – whether it is the OIC's Islamic Solidarity Fund or the UNDP – are established with the purpose of providing aid and supporting others that do so. Instead, it is about convincing them why to support precisely this organisations. One may then, somewhat simplified, say that motivational frames center on questions about why to give aid at all, while authority frames outline reasons for why to give aid to a particular organisation.[181]

[181] An important part of ideological motivation is the motivation of staff. However, insofar as this analysis centers on external representations, focus is on motivational frames directed externally at potential donors rather than internal motivational discourses.

Overall, the organisations explain their involvement in aid provision as 'a religious duty' and 'a moral obligation', referring to Islamic sayings.[182] "There are many verses and traditions in the Qur'an that give us instructions to do charity work. When you give to the poor, you don't just give to the poor, you give to Allah as well," says an IICO staff member in Kuwait. And on the IICO website, one can read that "[a]ccording to Islamic teachings, one of the best deeds in the sight of God is feeding the hungry."[183] To comply with these obligations is not only to be a good Muslim; it is to follow the example of Islam's 'good men', in particular the Prophet Muhammad, who is regarded the perfect man (*al-insan al-kamil*). It is about following the "prophetic guidance"[184] and "noble examples of charitable work in Islamic history,"[185] thus building on, and passing on, religious traditions and practices. The IICO tells us that "[t]he IICO came to life as a result of an outcry Qaradawi made in front of the participants of the Islamic Bank Conference,"[186] prompting 'people with good intentions and will' to respond. Aid, in other words, is the work of good men, practising "Islamic high virtues of generosity, brotherhood, equality among mankind."[187] Three different rationales substantiate these claims to a religious duty. One rationale presents the provision of aid as a relationship of rewards and reciprocity; another as a relationship of solidarity; and a third as a question of rights of the poor, each leading to slightly different conceptions of givers and recipients in the aid chain.

Religious rewards: 'A good deed that lasts for you'

First, the provision of aid is a way to gain religious rewards and a place in Paradise. According to Islamic traditions, when doing good deeds for the sake of Allah, be it prayer, zakat or other good deeds, a Muslim collects religious rewards, known as *thawab* – the opposite of *ithim*, which refers to the negative remarks noted by Allah whenever one commits a sin. When a person dies, Allah considers that person's account of deeds before deciding whether he or she goes to heaven or hell. Among the good deeds that one can carry out for the sake of Allah, doing charity, helping others, paying zakat and sadaqa are considered some of the most important, and consequently, some that results in the most rewards. What the donor gives is not important; what is important is the intention (*niyya*). This is perhaps most clearly expressed in the frequently mentioned saying, "If you save one person it is as if you saved all of humankind." It is not important whether you save one or hundred people, but that you save – in other words, it is not the result of the action, but the action itself (and the underlying intention) that matters.

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[182] See e.g. IICO, Pioneering in Charity, p. 3. This duty to do good is not only religiously explained. Especially IIROSA also uses terms such as a "humanitarian duty" (e.g. ISC Report, p. 4), albeit not as frequently.
[183] IICO, website, http://www.iico.net/home-page-eng/waqf-eng.htm (last accessed 27. March 2011).
[184] IICO, website, http://www.iico.net/home-page-eng/News-08/aug_08/iico-eng-6.htm (last accessed 23. April 2011).
[185] IICO, website, http://www.iico.org/AxCMSwebLive/en_our_story.cms (last accessed 27. March 2011).
[186] IICO, Special Publication, p. 5.
[187] IICO, website, http://www.iico.net/home-page-eng/goals-eng.htm (last accessed 18. May 2011).

In this perspective, the aid chain is a relationship of reciprocity (Mauss 1990 [1923]): the donor gives something to the recipient, but gets something in return. Campaign slogans promise donors "a chance for more rewards from God," "a good deed that lasts for you," and "a one-time donation but a continuous reward for you."[188] Likewise, different projects are presented by reference to common religious sayings. In the presentation of a project for distribution of fridges to poor families, for instance, the PR material urges the donor to "[r]emember that whoever makes it easy for people, God will make it easy for him on the Day of Resurrection."[189] Another obvious example of this is orphan sponsorship, consistently legitimated and motivated by reference to the Prophet Muhammad. "The Prophet Muhammad himself was an orphan and he said that whoever took care of an orphan would be like this with him in heaven," people tell me repeatedly, illustrating the closeness between the sponsor and the prophet by holding together two fingers. "That's why we have this programme".

A consequence of this focus on rewards as the underlying rationale for aid is that the donor comes to plays a central and powerful role in the aid chain. "My intention is to help people get rewards from God," the IICO director says. This priority is echoed in one of IICO's publications: "[T]he IICO seeks to achieve two goals: first to provide a long-lasting source of livelihood for the needy; second, to encourage donors to be generous so that they earn, by the will of Allah, a meritorious and long-lasting reward."[190] Addressed in a language of sentimental gratitude, donors are praised, as in an IIROSA annual report: "Our honourable philanthropists [...] the meticulous relievers and rescuers [...] May God Almighty bless them, their progeny and property!"[191] Likewise, the organisations hail their donors through the award of special memberships, hierarchising donors into 'Platinum members', 'Golden members' and 'Silver members'. At the IICO's 25th anniversary in May 2010, a substantial part of the ceremony was dedicated to the celebration of individual donors.[192] And when Abdul Razzaq al-Sani, lawyer, member of National Assembly, business man and one of IICO's foremost donors, died in December 2009, a lengthy obituary was posted on the

[188] See e.g. IICO's website, http://www.iico.net/home-page-eng/index-eng.htm (last accessed 11. May 2011). Other examples are e.g. "Sadaqa extinguishes God's anger. Making favours prevents bad things from happening" (IICO, Special Publication, p. 29), and "Do not miss the great reward of the sacrifice; God promised a great reward for every single hair of the sacrificed animal" (IICO website, http://www.iico.net/home-page-eng/seasonal-proj-eng.htm, last accessed 27. March 2011).
[189] IICO, website, http://www.iico.net/home-page-eng/seasonal-proj-eng.htm (last accessed 27. March 2011).
[190] IICO, Pioneering in Charity, p. 4.
[191] IIROSA, Annual Report, p. 6.
[192] IICO, website, www.iico.net/home-page-eng/news-10/jan-10/iico-eng-9.htm (last accessed 27. March 2011); IICO, website, http://www.iico.net/home-page-eng/news/iico-party-25-eng.htm (last accessed 27. March 2011).

website, celebrating him as "one of the leading philanthropists who have donated a lot of their money in alleviating the suffering of the poor and needy."[193]

Another consequence is the invisibility of the recipient. If the purpose of aid is to ensure rewards for the donor, the recipient easily becomes irrelevant as anything but an instrument to obtain these rewards.[194] A look through one of IIROSA's bulletins or IICO's magazines testifies to this tendency. The few photos of recipients rarely portray individuals, but show groups of people – desperately reaching out for food, working in the field or standing in front of a newly built school (always in uniforms) – often photographed from a distance, and sometimes even with their backs turned to the camera. Seldom presented by name, profession or even gender, the recipients remain devoid of individualising features (Chouliaraki 2010:110), representing a generalised, impoverished other, or, as Stirrat and Henkel notes, 'the undifferentiated poor' (1997:69). In contrast, pictures show donors at meetings or in ceremonies, always well-dressed, smiling and referred to with name and title, emphasising their importance in the chain of aid.

This tendency is further strengthened by the tradition to confer almost unconditional power to the donor. According to Islamic traditions, the donor decides how money should be spent; as a high-level staff member in IICO says: "It is a religious rule that we should follow the orders of the donor." At times, the willingness to satisfy donor wishes is even stronger than the wish to comply with common religious principles. An IICO staff member in Kuwait says: "Sometimes the donor says: 'I want to build a mosque for my zakat money'. There are eight different ways of paying zakat. But it's not normal to build a mosque for the zakat money. So we have to ask the council, and they can say, in this specific situation, yes it is permitted." Likewise, a top manager of IIROSA states that in order to comply with donors' wishes, the organisation focuses primarily on orphan sponsorship and mosque building, even though health projects may be more needed: "The orphan program is the biggest – people feel sympathy with the orphans, they like to help them. The second largest is the building of mosques, the prophet said that whoever builds a mosque, God will build him a castle. So people like to pay money to that." This almost unconditional power of the donor is not entirely unproblematic. At least one person expressed slight frustration with donors, telling me about the difficulties he had trying to convince them to start funding other kinds of activities:

> It is hard work to convince the donors. They want to see buildings. We would tell them about our training activities, capacity building, vocational training and so on. And they would say, good, that's great, but I want to sponsor a building. They want somewhere they can place a sign

[193] IICO, website, www.iico.net/home-page-eng/news-10/jan-10/iico-eng-8.htm (last accessed 27. March 2011).

[194] In his essay *The Poor* (1908), Georg Simmel writes about charitable giving in a Christian tradition, claiming that the motive for alms resides exclusively in the significance of giving for the giver: "When Jesus told the wealthy young man, 'Give your riches to the poor', what apparently mattered to him were not the poor, but rather the soul of the wealthy man for whose salvation this sacrifice was merely a means or a symbol" (1994 [1908]:153, cf. Bornstein 2003:116).

> and you can't do that on a capacity building project. This is often important to them, because they want to honour deceased family members with a building.

This conflict between donors' wishes to live up to religious obligations and the organisation's wish to provide aid is much more pronounced in Islamic Relief and Muslim Aid and shall be further discussed in chapter 8.

'Solidarity between the sons of the umma'

Another motivational frame – slightly different, but not necessarily contradicting – turns on notions of solidarity. Solidarity is about a mutual interdependence among people, stemming from what they have in common. This community obliges its members to stand together and show solidarity with one another, i.e. to support one another. To let another person down, to turn one's back on a needy person in the community, is to pretend there is no community – it is to break the bond of solidarity. According to this rationale, 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, are obliged to help one another. IICO's website states:

> [Charity] is one of the faith's most effective tools for spreading the values of solidarity and support between the sons of the Ummah. It encourages them to remain united like one body, when one part of it suffers a complaint, all other parts join in, sharing in the sleeplessness and fever.[195]

Using terms such as an 'Islamic society', an 'Islamic brotherhood' and a 'Muslim nation', the two NGOs nurse a strong sense of solidarity (Bayat 2005), emphasising "ties of interdependence, compassion and tender sympathy"[196] between members of this community and pointing out the responsibility of members to take care of one another. The donor gives to a fellow Muslim brother (or sister) in a country far away, because he sees himself and his fellow brother as members of a deep horizontal brotherhood, the umma (Kochuyt 2009:106). An IICO headquarter staff member explains his commitment like this: "A Muslim should help his brothers and sisters. In Islam, it is not allowed to sleep when your neighbour is hungry." By receiving the gift, the recipient likewise aligns him- or herself with the umma (Kochuyt 2009:110). As an IIROSA publication notes, "the Islamic society is a closely knitted society where the well-off helps the poor and the elder cares for the younger,"[197] and furthermore, helping the poor and needy "illustrates the principle of solidarity that Islam encourages and calls for."[198]

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[195] IICO, website, http://www.iico.net/home-page-eng/News-08/aug_08/iico-eng-6.htm (last accessed 23. April 2011).
[196] IIROSA, Magazine.
[197] IIROSA, ISC Report, p. 13. Another example is this: "The IICO, with its desire to implement the message of Islamic brotherhood as referred to in the Prophet's hadith, 'The relationship of the believer with another believer is like (the bricks of) a building, each strengthens the other', has managed to alleviate many problems related to poverty, hunger, illiteracy, ignorance and deprivation in many impoverished Muslim countries and communities" (IICO, Pioneering in Charity, p. 2).
[198] IIROSA, Bulletin no. 34, p. 4.

Chouliaraki (2010) claims that relations between donors and recipients are often based on what we may call 'a logic of complicity': because the donor witnesses the suffering of the recipient, he or she is compliant and therefore obliged to help. This sense of complicity is further strengthened, she argues, by the legacy of the colonial past of the West, evoking a sense of responsibility on the part of the West for the misfortunes of the developing world, and consequently for contributing to redressing these. As such, the relationship between donor and recipient is "anchored on the colonial gaze," Chouliaraki (2010:110) notes; it is an affective regime of collective "guilt, shame and indignation" (2010:111). This explanatory model, however, seems to be of somewhat limited use outside a Western donor context. While Muslim donors from Saudi Arabia and Kuwait are obviously not immune to human sentiments of guilt, they have no memory of a colonising past and as such, their relationship to the recipients is not – to the same degree at least – weighed down by a massive collective guilt. Instead of evoking emotions of guilt and shame, photos and narratives of the suffering poor can hope to stir sentiments of solidarity. Building on notions of a 'Muslim nation' and an 'Islamic society' and interpellating recipients as Muslim subjects, using terms such as 'brothers', 'orphans' or simply 'poor and needy Muslims', the organisations appeal to a common Muslim solidarity, encouraging donors to assist – not out of guilt, but out of fraternity. "I feel responsible for these people, I cannot leave them," says a staff member in IIROSA's Jordan office, quoted above. "It's like a big family." In this, there may be a collective memory of suffering and poverty, building on experiences not many generations away. Many Muslim families, whether in Saudi Arabia, Kuwait or elsewhere in the Middle East, were once poor too, or know people who were.

While the reciprocity rationale may create an invisible recipient, the solidarity rationale creates a personalised recipient. Turning on notions of family and brotherhood, this rationale encourages conceptions of a personal and intimate relationship between recipient and donor (whether understood in terms of the NGO or the individual donor). A former IIROSA staff member tells me about his experiences in Sudan, emphasising this special bond of solidarity and family between Muslims:

> When we went to Sudan, we would wear the same clothes as the Sudanese, we would eat the same food, do the same things – and many people there speak Arabic. So they felt that we were closer to them. We gave aid with no strings attached, we considered ourselves brothers in humanity. I felt that we were much closer to them – because we share the same life habits. Likewise, in Afghanistan, people received us with deep respect and love. They might have received the Christian organisations with respect as well – but not necessarily with love.

According to some staff, their understanding of aid is different from the way many other (non-Muslim/Christian/Western) organisations understand it: "Compared to other organisations, we have a different way of dealing with people," an IIROSA staff member says. In other organisations,

their employees do not care about the work or the beneficiaries: "They don't have the same feeling of family as we have, that the orphans are a part of our family, that it's about humanity, family, about making the orphans feel important. For them, it's routine, it's just a job they need to do, it's about finishing work to get home to your own family," an IROSA staff member says. In this perspective, an aid based on religious solidarity comes to stand in stark contrast to professionalism.[199] According to the rationale of religious solidarity, personal care and compassion are more important qualities than efficiency and professionalism; in fact, professionalism may even be counterproductive to the sense of solidarity between recipient and donor. Thus, when IIROSA and IICO frame themselves as professional organisations, it is a professionalism that does not extend to relations with recipients. An illustrative example of this is an incident an IIROSA top manager tells me about. He had been invited to a coordination meeting with other organisations working with orphans to discuss possibilities for coordination and cooperation:

> Some suggested to make a control mechanism, to make sure that orphans don't get money from two different organisations. But I didn't like this idea, I was the only one who protested. I don't think we should minimise the income of the orphans. This is their only salary, and 20 or 30 dollars is not a lot. Some of them need more, they might have bigger families or different circumstances. You can't give the same to all. I don't think we should give all the same. So we cancelled this coordination. One sponsor for each orphan is not enough, they need more sponsors, at least two. [...] I was the only one who thought this way, but I have worked with orphans for 18 years, and I feel like their father, I feel responsible for them.

While predicated on notions of personalised care and compassion, at the same time, this relationship carries inherent risks of hierarchy and inequality. In the personalised relation of solidarity, the reward is gratitude as much as religious rewards. In an IIROSA magazine, letters from orphan children to their donors are reprinted, lifting recipients out of the mass of 'undifferentiated poor' to deliver a personalised message from the recipient to the donor. In a language of sentimental gratitude, one child writes:

> My dear sponsor. May Allah reward your goodness because you sponsor me and support me, together with Allah, so that I can make my hopes and ambitions come true and be of use to my religion and my community and my family, and I pray that Allah will save you on the Day of Judgement and that you will be saved from the torment of Allah, since you helped me.[200]

Gratitude relies on the social logic of the gift between unequal parties. The gift without reciprocation binds the grateful receiver into a nexus of obligations and duties towards the generous donor; the recipient becomes a perpetual object of the donor's generosity (Chouliaraki 2010:113). As such, the rationale of solidarity may end up creating an equally hierarchical relationship as that of religious rewards – not between a visible donor and an invisible recipient, but between a generous donor and a grateful recipient.

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[199] See e.g. Bornstein 2009 for a discussion of this dilemma in an Indian context. She writes: "To coerce the impulse to give into rational accountability is to obliterate its freedom; to render giving into pure impulse is to reinforce social inequality" (2009:643).
[200] IIROSA, Sponsor an Orphan.

Islamic rights of the poor

There is, however, a third frequently referred-to frame that somehow contrasts these interpretations, to a much larger degree emphasising the perspective of the poor. In this perspective, social assistance should not be considered a gift or a favour from the wealthy person to the poor; and it should not be seen as the poor person's begging. Instead, zakat is a duty imposed by Allah upon the wealthy, and it is a right endowed by Allah to the poor. As noted on IICO's website: "Allah SWT ordained an obligation on the rich to share their wealth for the benefit of the poor, the needy, the widows and other avenues of zakat distribution."[201] A hungry person has the right to receive a share of the meal of the well-fed person and is allowed to use force if he or she is denied this right (Benthall 1999:36). Thus, social assistance is framed as a right the poor can claim rather than a gift he or she must accept from a benevolent donor, whether given in solidarity or with the aim of getting religious rewards. Underlying this frame is an understanding of wealth as a gift or a loan from Allah, rather than a reward. Likewise, poverty is not a punishment from Allah, but a visitation or trial that can come upon everybody. Therefore, the poor must be treated with respect and dignity. As the director of IICO explains:

> Is poverty a punishment for something? No, Islam is not like that at all. Islam doesn't have to do with pessimism, unlogic things. There is always a reason. Poverty is something that exists and you have to get rid of it. To leave your children rich is better than to leave them poor is a saying in Islam. You have to worship and you have to work. To give is better than to take, and the upper hand is better than the lower – but both are good. So it's not bad to be poor.

In this perspective, the donor comes to play a much less dominant role. With the donor out of sight, this leaves room for increased focus on recipients and alternative ways of conceptualising the chain of aid as a relationship based on notions of equality and justice. "We make people feel the importance of their existence," an IIROSA staff member says. "People can contribute to building society, they are special. The poor are not just somebody you can treat like you want to. They deserve respect." This is often explained by reference to Islam: "We take this from a hadith by al Hakim, it says that you can't buy people with your money. You have to deal with them in a respectful way, with good manners and a smile," the IIROSA staff member says. Others mention the Muslim tradition of making sure that the person receiving the money has the upper hand as a symbol of the uniqueness of Muslim organisations: "The recipient should not have the lower hand. We care about these details, this is important to us" says a person in IICO. Interestingly, despite obvious similarities, this discourse of Islamic rights is rarely, if ever, combined with a discourse on universal human rights. Historically, many Muslims have been sceptical of the concept of human rights, in particular, seeing these as neo-colonial attempts at promoting particular Western values. In particular women's rights and reproductive rights have been subject to criticism, seen to be counterproductive to religious values (a criticism that is shared by e.g. the Catholic Church and

[201] IICO, website, http://www.iico.net/home-page-eng/News-08/aug_08/iico-eng-6.htm (last accessed 23. April 2011).

many Pentecostal churches). Thus, although alignment with a human rights discourse would facilitate inclusion into the culture of development aid, this might at the same time jeopardise IIROSA and IICO's relations to other, more conservative, Muslim organisations and individual donors.

Summing up, the above analysis has presented us with the different rationales, or motivational frames, underlying the organisations' strife for a dignified individual and a strengthened umma and outlining the more fundamental principles and reasons for why people should support this work. Overall, a religious obligations to help, motivating people by referring to Islamic doctrines as well as stories and sayings about the Prophet Muhammad and other 'good men' who would engage in aid provision to the poor and needy. More specifically, the analysis has argued that the two organisations present three rationales: One rationale frames the provision of aid as a question of collecting religious rewards, reminding people of the rewards gained in the afterlife when carrying out good deeds such as paying zakat and helping the poor and needy. Another rationale builds on the notion of solidarity, encouraging people to engage in aid provision out of solidarity with fellow Muslims. Against these, a third rationale presents the aid chain as a relationship based on notions of rights and justice. It is the right of the recipient to receive aid, and it is the duty of the donor to provide aid, thereby contributing to a just society in which nobody envies or pities each other.

The three rationales shape conceptions of the aid chain in slightly different ways. One rationale centers on the power and visibility of the donor, relegating the recipient to a position of invisibility, relevant primarily as an instrument for the facilitation of rewards. The rationale of solidarity may bring the recipient out into the light, idealising the personalised relationship between recipient and donor, but still based on hierarchical notions of gratitude and inequality. Contrary to these, the third rationale opens up for more equal relations between donor and recipient.

Interestingly, in organisational rationales there are few signs of merging with typical development rationales – unlike the authority and vision frames, which to differing degrees seek to align themselves with mainstream development frames (through the adoption of a professionalism frame or pragmatic alignment with a universalism frame). Instead, motivational frames are firmly grounded in an Islamic aid culture, testifying to the fact that they are still primarily directed at individual Muslim donors in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, many of whom are conservative, religious people.

Strategies

Having outlined the authority, vision and rationale of the organisations, the following section takes a look at their strategies, exploring the specific remedies or solutions and the general means and

tactics for achieving their vision. In terms of framing this is what is called prognostic frames (Snow and Byrd 2007:126). "Our strategy is to present an Islamic model of integrated modern charitable work," IICO declares on its website. In concrete terms, the two organisations seek to obtain their vision through activities such as 'urgent relief', 'community development', 'social welfare', 'orphan care', 'well construction', and 'educational welfare', but also 'mosque construction', 'Islamic centers', 'Holy Qur'an and da'wa' and 'aid to Muslim minorities', echoing the language of Islamic aid more than that of mainstream development. For both organisations, the orphan sponsorship programme is the largest activity, in IICO followed by health activities, and in IIROSA by mosque and well building. See the tables below for an overview.

Table 6.2. IICO, activities (2006)[202]

Activity	Percent
Orphan sponsorships	22,1
Social care	19,7
Health	15,6
Mosques	14,1
Islamic centers	4,8
Qurbani sacrifice	4,4
Breaking the fast	4,2
Wells	3,2
Development	2,4
Social development	2,3
Sponsored teachers	2,1
Education	1,2
Scholarships	0,7
Other projects	3,3
Total	100

Table 6.3. IIROSA, activities (2007)[203]

Activity	Percent
Social Welfare (orphans)	39,5
Engineering (wells and mosques)	17,5
Urgent relief program	15,0
Community development and seasonal projects	14,7
Health care	5,8
Educational welfare	5,0
Holy Qur'an and da'wa	2,5
Total	100

Rather than engaging in a comprehensive description of these activities, the following section argues that organisational strategies, or prognostic frames, can be conceived in terms of four overall strategies, denoting different repertoires of action. While often overlapping, each of these frames presents different ways of conceptualising the provision of aid: One frame turns on the

[202] The table builds on information from website and IICO's Annual Report 2006.
[203] The table builds on information from IIROSA's Annual Report 2007/2008.

provision of immediate relief; another on mission and worship; a third on education; and a fourth on empowerment.

Aid as relief: 'Food for the hungry'

The primarily strategy of IICO and IIROSA is relief or *igatha* – the straight-forward and immediate provision of goods and services, attending to the urgent needs of the poor. As is stated in an IIROSA report, "[the organisation] strives to provide food for the hungry, medical care for the sick, clothes for the unclothed, helps wipe the tears of the orphans, provides shelter, social and educational care for those who have lost their homes due to wars or natural disasters."[204] Similarly, IICO declares that "IICO emergency relief program offers immediate help for the victims of war, civil conflicts, famines and natural disasters. In case of disasters, IICO provides immediate and sustained relief funding for basic needs, medical aid, and daily living requirements for the victims."[205]

The strategy of relief is shaped by sentiments of spontaneity, immediacy and urgency, rather than long-term planning and sustainability. This idealisation of immediacy is particularly explicit in the organisations' origin myths: "It wasn't planned or structured – no, it was an immediate response to people in need," says one of the founders of IIROSA, referring to the establishment of the IIROSA. "It's just like Bob Geldorf – he never thought of establishing an organisation, he just wanted to help, but it mushroomed from there." The emphasis on immediacy echoes ideologies of traditional humanitarian organisations in the West, pointing to differences between ideologies of development and humanitarianism. As Bornstein and Redfield (2007:4) note, humanitarianism is inherently presentist, focusing on the immediate needs of living humans in distress: "the lives and welfare of those now living fundamentally matter and cannot be consciously sacrificed in the pursuit of other goals."[206]

In terms of concrete activities the popular medical caravans epitomise this aspect, characterised by their temporary, flexible and immediate nature. Popular in both IIROSA and IICO, the caravans consist in a team of (often volunteer) doctors and nurses who travel through a country, organising consultations and carrying out simple surgeries on the way (Kaag 2008:10). Speaking on the occasion of the World Health Day 7. April 2011, IIROSA's secretary general says that IIROSA, with the help of volunteer Saudi specialists, had conducted heart surgeries and catheter operations in "a

[204] IIROSA, Annual Report, p. 8.
[205] IICO, website, http://www.iico.net/home-page-eng/charitable-activites-eng.htm (last accessed 27. March 2011).
[206] There may be an analytical point in this; it might be easier for religious organisations to relate to ideologies of humanitarianism than ideologies of development, insofar as humanitarianism emphasises the emotional, moral, and the individual whereas development is more oriented towards progress, bureaucracy, and technology.

number of Arab and Islamic countries," including Yemen, Egypt, Syria, Morocco, Pakistan and Kazakhstan, benefitting almost 1200 children. He also notes that the organisation has recently organised four campaigns for optical surgeries and eyesight corrections in Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Nigeria and Burkina Faso, operating more than 2,000 people and distributing more than 10,000 glasses.[207]

As was also the case with many of the early humanitarian organisations in the West, religion is consistently framed as an integrated part of relief in IIROSA and IICO. "It's all in Islam," people say when I ask about the relation between aid and religion. Echoing the organisations' multifaceted and holistic understanding of poverty, the prognostic frame of relief is inseparable from Islamic frames. "This project represents Islam!" an article about IIROSA's medical caravans declares. Several examples testify to this fundamental integration of relief and Islam. Staff and organisational material consistently equate activities such as surgeries, food aid and religious care as part of relief. IICO's website, for instance, notes that the most needed services for the poor include not only orphanages and water wells, but also mosques. IIROSA's iftar meals during Ramadan also illustrates this largely unproblematic integration of relief and Islam, serving at once as humanitarian food distribution to many thousand poor families, and as celebration of an important Islamic tradition.[208] Likewise with the frequent combination of well and mosque construction in many of IIROSA's and IICO's projects. Motivated by a wish to facilitate the Islamic tradition of ablution (ritual purification before praying), the organisations often build a well next to a mosque (Kaag 2008:10). At the same time, the well of course serves common aid purposes, offering poor people access to clean water.

Aid as da'wa: 'The best thing to do is to get people to Islam'

A second, and more controversial, way of framing strategies for aid provision turns on education about Islam, or da'wa. Through a wide range of missionary activities, the IICO and IIROSA seek to educate poor and needy Muslims about Islam, raising "the consciousness of people about the magnificence of the true Islam"[209] with the purpose to help them to "preserve their culture and identity"[210] and "boost the morale [...] spiritually,"[211] and by extension strengthening the Muslim

[207] IIROSA, website, http://www.egatha.org/eportal/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=39:iirosa-executes-285-health-projects-in-48-countries-benefiting-more-than-34-million-patients&catid=6:iirosa-news&Itemid=14 (last accessed 23. April 2011).
[208] For instance: "the most needed services for the poor: Water wells, orphanages, mosques, community centers, schools" (IICO, website, http://www.iico.org/home-page-eng/productive-proj-eng.htm, last accessed 27. March 2011). In a similar vein, IIROSA notes in an annual report that the organisation is providing the poor "with comprehensive care including food, medical care, social care, religious care" (IIROSA, Annual Report, p. 18).
[209] IICO, website, http://www.iico.net/al-alamiya/issues-1429/no-218/issue-218/iico-eng.htm (last accessed 27. March 2011).
[210] IICO, al-Alamiya no. 243.

umma. The most concrete and visible examples of this are the numerous mosques that the organisations have built, making up a substantial part of budgets. In Bangladesh alone, IIROSA has built almost 600 mosques, and IICO, under the auspices of Kuwait Joint Relief Committee, around 1.000. Other activities include construction and running of Qur'an schools, training of religious teachers, establishment of Qur'an study circles, distribution of Qur'ans and other religious material as well as launch of radio channels with religious contents.

Unlike the prognostic frame of relief, which is promoted openly by staff and in organisational material, narratives about da'wa are ambiguous and diverging – some people speak openly about these activities, while others try to downplay them – and it is difficult, at least to a Western non-Muslim, to get a complete picture of their extent. Kaag (2008:6) had the same experience. In her analysis of transnational Muslim NGOs in Chad, she writes that most of the NGOs spoke quite openly about their material assistance, but stayed silent about their da'wa activities. This is a sign of the hegemony of mainstream development norms, requiring a sharp distinction between mission and relief. In this perspective, da'wa is not a legitimate activity in itself, but must be justified in order to be accepted. The organisations present a number of reasons for their engagement in da'wa activities, seeking to justify this engagement in different ways.

A common argument is that the organisations simply respond to demands of the poor. Poor people contact the IICO or the IIROSA, asking for assistance in building or re-building a mosque in their village. Another argument focuses on the donors: Donors like to spend their money on mosques, and the organisations have to obey them, complying with religious principles. A third way of justifying da'wa as a legitimate aid strategy is to frame it in terms of a competition with Christian organisations. "If we build a mosque, suddenly there will be three or four churches surrounding it," says one person, a top manager in IIROSA's headquarters, implying that this religious invasion has to be countered in order to protect the identity of Muslims. As noted in chapter 4, this was in fact a particularly strong motivational factor for IICO, which was established with the purpose to "protect Muslims from those who were striving to change their faith and obliterate their identity."[212] The conception of the Christian threat continues to play a role in IICO discourses. At the inauguration of the new IICO headquarters in 2000, Qaradawi held a speech in which he emphasised the necessity for charitable organisations to unite Islamic efforts and gather the Muslims: "especially because the church organisations have allocated more than one billion dollars to take the Muslims away from their religion." Similarly, at a recent workshop for Qur'an recitation, the IICO chairman

[211] IIROSA, website, http://www.egatha.org/eportal/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=14&Itemid=8 (last accessed 27. March 2011).
[212] IICO, al-Alamiya no. 243.

spoke about "evil campaigns against the umma," "organised intellectual and cultural invasion," and "increasingly fierce campaigns."[213]

Finally, and perhaps most common, is the argument that the activities the organisations carry out are in fact not 'real da'wa', based on a distinction between activities aimed at conversion and activities aimed at information and education. This, in turn, is often linked to a distinction between Muslims and non-Muslims – what Roald (1994:54) refers to as 'home missions' or 'domestic missions': "We only inform and educate fellow Muslims; we do not try to convert non-Muslims," people often say. In this, IIROSA and IICO distinguish themselves from other Muslim NGOs such as al Makka al Mukarrama, from Saudi Arabia, and Direct Aid, from Kuwait, both of whom carry out 'real da'wa', i.e. missionary work among non-Muslims (Kaag 2008:11). One person, from the IICO headquarters in Kuwait, explains:

> There are specific organisations that carry out da'wa, there are rules for this. Da'wa should not be aggressive, it should always be peaceful and nice. In our organisation, we don't do da'wa, we just present Islam. It is not about conversion, it's just presentation for those who are interested. We cannot ask the poor who is dying from hunger, 'what is your religion?' But we work mostly in Islamic countries, so most people are Islamic. There are no conditions for our work. In the beginning of the Islamic era, Muslims went to Asia, and many people there converted – not because they were forced to, but by example. People admired the Muslims, they were kind, trustworthy, they never lied. The best way to promote Islam is behaviour, not talk.

Another person, a former IIROSA trustee, says:

> The best thing you can do is to get people to Islam. It's our duty to salvage people of the world. I will not deny that we are influenced by this, but it is not a point of access. We don't use charity as a hook to get people to Islam. We tell them about Islam wherever we can – mostly orally, because many people cannot read. Islam is simple, it's a religion that gives you an immediate relationship with Allah and that's appealing to many people. A lot of people are impressed with this – not just in Africa, but in Europe as well. But da'wa is not a focal point for the IIROSA, it might be for Direct Aid. IIROSA works mostly in Islamic communities, so preaching is not really a problem, it's more about guiding people from their bad habits such as smoking, violence, improving their individual and social habits.

In this perspective, IIROSA and IICO staff do not consider themselves advocates of da'wa, but as Islamic educators, informing fellow Muslims about Islamic values, norms and morality and protecting their cultural identity. "When Qaradawi started the IICO, he said 'We don't want others to become Muslim. Our aim is to make people stay in Islam. We want to improve their social and educational status, we want to strengthen their faith,'" an IICO high-level staff member explains. This way of framing missionary activities is closely related to the third strategy, presenting aid as a matter of (Islamic) education, and covering activities such as the establishment and running of schools, universities and orphanages.

[213] IICO, website, www.iico.net/home-page-eng/news-10/jan-10/iico-eng.htm (last accessed 24. March 2011).

Aid as (Islamic) education: Teaching right and wrong

Historically, the provision of education has been a core activity of both IICO and IIROSA, and in both organisations, the education department was one of the first departments to be established. IICO supports hundreds of schools, institutes and community centers as well as eight universities in Asia and Africa:[214]

> Since education is the cornerstone in the development of poor countries, IICO spares no effort in supporting education and eradicating illiteracy [...] IICO funds schools, institutes, universities, community centers, and mosques. Such institutions play an important role in educating people and eradicating poverty through helping the needy become active agents of their own development. Further more, IICO offers financial support to religious education and Islamic institutions both in Moslem and non-Moslem countries.[215]

Likewise, one of IIROSA's objectives is "[t]o help young pupils overcome the darkness of ignorance, disease and poverty while ensuring a sound moral education for them."[216] In a 2008 interview with Arab News, IIROSA's secretary general stresses that the organisation is "keen to contribute to the spread of education and reduction of illiteracy in Islamic countries and Muslim communities in non-Islamic countries" (Ibrahim 2010b). According to the secretary general, IIROSA has provided education to more than 31,000 students in 23 countries, contributing to financing the establishment and operation of several schools, institutes, colleges and universities.[217] Apart from schools and universities, both organisations run several orphanages and other orphan's programmes, providing education to more than 100.000 children.

On one hand, the education strategy is often contrasted with da'wa: da'wa is about prayer and rituals which may be important – but Islam is more than prayer and rituals, and this 'more' is what the strategy of education can bring: "We teach them how to deal with other people," says the IIROSA country director in Jordan, adding: "For me, it's about showing the children that Islam is not just about praying and going to the mosque, it is about dealing with people in a good way, what

[214] These include the International Islamic University, Islamabad; Islamic University of Malaysia; Islamic University of Uganda; Islamic University of Niger; Regulatory University of Sri Lanka; University of Chittagong, Bangladesh; Iyman University, Yemen; King Faisal University, Chad (IICO, Special Publication, p. 26).

[215] IICO, website, http://www.iico.net/home-page-eng/charitable-activites-eng.htm (last accessed 27. March 2011).

[216] IIROSA, website, http://www.egatha.org/eportal/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=13&Itemid=7 (last accessed 23. April 2011).

[217] In Sudan, for instance, IIROSA has built three educational institutions, providing education for almost 4,000 students. In Kenya, the organisation has established a teacher's college for Islamic education. In Nigeria, the IIROSA established the Umm Al-Qura Institute in 1999, accommodating more than 600 students. In Senegal, IIROSA built the Dar al-Hekma Islamic Education Complex where 450 students go. And in 2009, a school in Djibouti was established, enrolling 150 students. IIROSA has also established several universities. In Thailand, for instance, IIROSA established the Jala Islamic University, where 2,500 students study Arabic, religion, public administration, finance, economy, Islamic banking, Islamic history and other sharia subjects. Likewise, the organisation contributed to the establishment of the King Faisal University in Chad, consisting in four colleges teaching Arabic, Islamic education, computer engineering and economy. And in Pakistan, IIROSA established a women's university with colleges for Islamic studies, Arabic and translation (Ibrahim 2010b).

ever their religion is." On the other hand, this strategy is also different from relief: "It's not just about relief, not just about giving the poor help," the director of IICO says. Instead, it is about educating people in a holistic manner, raising them to become good Muslim citizens in modern society: "We offer them lectures about different things – morals, social life, how to deal with other people, how to build good people. We raise them to be good citizens. If they are good, this will be reflected in society," says a teacher in one of IIROSA's orphanages. IICO's curricula in its so-called model schools also reflect this approach. Through courses in topics such as 'Practical fiqh', 'Faith and belief', and 'Social revival,'[218] the organisation seeks to "help produce efficient and trustworthy cadres and leaders who can participate in various activities in the society, and who can also preserve its great values and maintain its identity."[219] And in IIROSA's orphanages, the children learn about topics such as social skills and good manners, health and hygiene, praying and fasting through lectures, sports and creative activities. Through lifestyle evangelism (Bornstein 2003), staff seeks to "build good people". The IIROSA teacher says: "The most important thing is to teach them what is right and wrong, especially based on Islam. So when they go out into society, they can recognise the right, they know what is good and what is bad. They learn through our example, through role models."

In this perspective, being a good Muslim is not only or even primarily about learning the Qur'an by heart and going to the mosque; it is about being an active citizen and about treating others well. In this focus on 'the right behaviour', the strategy echoes earlier traditions of Islamic education, aimed at inculcating *adab*, or morals, manners and human conduct, among students (Siddiqui 1997:429). It is about becoming 'a righteous man' as Muhammad Qutb put it in his book *Program for Islamic Education* (in Arabic, *Manhaj at-tarbiya al-islamiyya*) (Roald 1994:80), in turn contributing to the construction of a just and well-functioning society, the umma. By building strong leaders and good citizens, the organisations contribute to strengthening the Muslim community. A motto of IICO is "Build a school: Revive a nation."[220] Echoing Hassan al-Banna's ideas of tarbiya as an important tool for building up the Muslim umma, one of IICO's magazines states that "IICO considers education one of the important factors for the development of poor communities through the elimination of illiteracy, the fight against ignorance and backwardness and preservation of the identity of the Islamic Umma."[221]

This focus on life-style evangelism over Qur'an recitation may sometimes contract with donors' expectations. An IIROSA staff member in Jordan explains: "We show the orphans what Islam is like in an indirect manner, through our examples, through the way we do things. In Saudi Arabia,

[218] IICO, Annual Report, p. 10.
[219] IICO, Pioneering in Charity, p. 6.
[220] See e.g. IICO, al-Alamiya no. 218.
[221] IICO, al-Alamiya no. 243.

they do da'wa activities, they teach about the Quran, they give lectures, they explain about Islam. Here, we do it more indirectly." A small anecdote serves to illustrate this. Once a year, staff members in IIROSA's orphanages fill out a file about each child, to be sent to the child's sponsor in Saudi Arabia. Here, staff has to list a wide range of data about the child, including information about their health, educational status, hobbies and religiosity. 'Is the child religious?' is one question, to be answered by one of the following four options: 'Yes, he prays a lot', 'He reads a lot about Islam', 'He is not old enough' and finally 'He does not know a lot about Islam'. Another question refers to the child's abilities to memorise the Qur'an, and if so, which parts of the Qur'an and what Qur'an school he goes to. I ask a teacher in an orphanage in Jordan what consequences it has if a child cannot memorise the Qur'an or does not pray. "Most of the children pray," she says and sends me a sly smile. "Some don't memorise a lot, but they always know a short verse or two, so we write that. Of course we encourage them to learn more, but not everyone can memorise the Quran. It's not for everybody." Instead, the teacher emphasises creativity as an important part of education. "With the kids, it's all about learning through having fun. We do theatre, we go camping, we do all kinds of things. We look on the internet for new ideas. What's important is to keep them updated, to be creative, to have fun," she says, telling me that last year, she made a big tent and invited an old woman to come and tell the children about the old days. "Children love that," she says. "We don't keep them in class all day, it's boring for them."

On a visit to one of IIROSA's orphanages in Jordan, the teacher shows me a classroom, giving an insight into the ways in which IIROSA staff teaches children to become 'righteous men'. The room is small, perhaps 20 m2, and the colourful scenario that the teacher has built from paper, clay, plastic and other material takes up almost all space (see the photo at the beginning of Part III). This is to explain the children about heaven and hell in a way they can understand, she tells me, pointing to two child-size graves in the middle of the room. One grave symbolises hell, it is grey and broken, and on top of it are worms and soil; the other, symbolising heaven, is showered with colourful flowers. On the sides of the graves are two small staircases, one painted red, the other green. On the walls next to the staircases are handmade posters with quotes and drawings, outlining the doors to heaven or hell. The posters next to the red staircase, leading to hell, list the sins of lying, adultery, not wearing hijab, gossip, treating people badly, and praying at the wrong time. The green staircase, leading to heaven, lists the virtues of prayer, sadaqa, jihad, to regret sins, to live a good and balanced life, to forgive people, to fast (not only during Ramadan but once or twice a week), and to be good with one's parents. Some posters quote different Qur'an verses, or *ayas*, to be discussed in class. One tells the story of a group of people in hell, trying to argue for their innocence. They tell God that they are not to blame for what they did, because they just followed the orders from their leader. But this is wrong, the teacher says, of course you have to think for yourself. Another poster lists all the signs of Doomsday, accompanied by quotes from the

Qur'an; yet another illustrates the temptations of drinking and dancing with little drawings. In a corner is an envelope full of little pieces of paper, each with a short handwritten quote: "Remember to pray," "Forgive people for what they do," "Please your parents" and so on. The teacher tells me that the children have to pick a quote each and explain to the others what it means, thereby practising their presentation and argumentation skills.

When framing education as a relevant strategy, IICO and IIROSA staff often focus on bridging Islam and modernity. In IIROSA and IICO schools, for instance, students are taught in mathematics, physics and computer science, along with religious studies. According to the IICO, it is about "striking a balance between Sharia sciences and modern disciplines to train the graduates to respond to the requirements of society."[222] Likewise, staff members underline that their educational material is written by experienced and well-educated professors and has been subject to scientific and linguistic reviews, "in tune with the modern and state-of-the [-art] educational services."[223] In this, the organisations clearly rely on the thinking of Qaradawi. In his perspective, Islamic education and 'rational sciences' (*al-'ulum al-'aqliyya*) are not in opposition to each other; on the contrary, they reinforce and are mutually constitutive of each other. In fact, specialising in the rational sciences benefits the community and is tantamount to fulfilling the imperatives of Islam (Hatina 2006:192). An IICO staff member in Jordan says that Qaradawi is a model for Islamic education: "He read modern economy and Islamic science, what we call fiqh, and that made him able to compare the old and the new, he tries to make a model that combines the two." At the same time, 'Western' concepts, techniques and approaches are often included, explicitly recognised for their 'Westernness' and praised for their modern qualities such as professionalism, efficiency and scientific rigour. Kaag (2008:5) claims that in Chad, Arabic Muslim NGOs seek to provide an antidote to the effects of Western colonialism and contemporary influences through Islamic education. But, at least for the IIROSA and the IICO, the relationship is not that simple – something which the discussion of organisational authority also showed. Breaking with traditional Salafi scepticism of foreign innovations (*bid'a*), but also with Banna's scepticism of Western modernity, they promote a kind of Islamic integrationism (Schulze 2000), advocating for the integration of at least certain elements of Western traditions into the provision of Islamic aid.

Aid as empowerment: 'Give a man an axe'

Recent years have witnessed the emergence of a fourth strategy in IICO and IIROSA. This is the strategy of 'empowerment' (in Arabic *tawkeel* or *tafweedh*), underlying and indirectly assumed in IIROSA,[224] but explicitly pronounced in IICO:

[222] IICO, al-Alamiya no. 243.
[223] IICO, al-Alamiya no. 243.
[224] E.g. talks about "comprehensive development" (IIROSA, Annual Report, p. 34), "comprehensive welfare" (IIROSA, ISC, p. 4), and the "productive family program" (IIROSA, website,

> The IICO gives priority to productive projects that provide job opportunities for people, such as factories, farms, training institutes and other similar projects. In doing so, it empowers people, by the Grace of Allah, to work and earn their livelihood, away from the shame of begging or the humiliation of asking people for help.[225]

The director of the IICO's office in Jordan tells me that he introduced the 'productive projects' in Jordan a few years ago, inspired by the Zakat House in Kuwait which offers poor people small loans with no interest, and the Grameen Bank in Bangladesh, one of the pioneers among microfinance institutions. Today, more than 1.000 people have taken loans with the IICO office in Jordan, and 'productive projects' have spread to other offices in Asia and Africa. In 2005, the IICO headquarters encouraged their country offices to increase their focus on microfinance projects that would help empower people. In 2007, the organisation set up a specialised unit, the Community Development and Productive Projects Unit with the purpose of promoting these projects, and in 2009, the headquarters decided to launch a programme of several million dollars, implementing productive projects in countries such as Uganda and Sudan and supported financially by the Islamic Development Bank. The principles of the IICO's productive projects are the same as in mainstream microfinance projects, except for the fact that no interest is taken: The organisation provides poor families with small loans between 700 and 1.400 USD, which have to be paid back in small instalments starting after three months. Assisted by the IICO or one of its partner organisations, the family then uses this money to establish a grocery store, a carpentry workshop or another income-generating project. More than 96 percent have paid back their loan; a success rate that staff ascribes to the close monitoring of and support to families who take loans: "We follow the families closely, we are active, we make agreements with the families and make them sign a form. After two months, we go and see how they are doing and to make sure they don't just sell their equipment," says the IICO country office director in Jordan. Adding to this is, according to him, a mechanism of social control and solidarity: if a family does not pay, the whole community will not be granted any new loans. The money that is paid back is then used to fund new productive projects.

IICO's concept of empowerment is based on core principles of Islam. "It's all in Islam!" a staff member happily proclaims. "Our gracious religion, Islam, values and promotes hard work and productivity, and it discourages indolence and dependence on others," an IICO brochure states.[226] Various hadiths are used to define, explain and legitimise the concept in Islamic terms; perhaps most famously the story about the Prophet Muhammad and the poor man who came to ask him for

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http://www.egatha.org/eportal/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=4&Itemid=6, last accessed 27. March 2011).

[225] IICO, Pioneering in Charity, p. 4.

[226] IICO, Pioneering in Charity, p. 1.

money, but was told to go and cut wood to sell at the market instead – here told to me by a senior staff member in the IICO:

> We have this saying about the prophet, he is sitting with his companions and a poor man comes to ask for help. The companions want to give him money, but the prophet says no and asks him, do you have anything at home you can sell? The man says no, all I have is a copper cup. Bring it, the prophet says, and the man brings the cup and the prophet asks his companions who wants to buy it. One of them buys it and the prophet asks the poor man to go and buy an axe for the money. When he gets the axe, the prophet says, now go and cut some wood and sell it at the market. The man does what he says and some time later he comes back with enough money to buy back the copper cup and with savings. We use this as a slogan – 'give a man an axe', it's similar to the slogan with the fish.[227]

At the same time, the language of productivity, sustainability and individual self-reliance strongly echoes core values of post-structural adjustment development, envisioning the poor as latent economic players and microfinance as a 'self-help' mechanism through which they can be allowed into the market, supposedly transforming them into dignified and self-reliant actors (Cons and Paprocki 2010:639). "Rather than helping the poor or people in need with something which will not be sustainable, it is better to help them by building their capacities, so that they can be productive and independent"[228] – this is a sentence from one of the IICO's publications, but it might just as well have been taken from a UNDP Human Development Report. IICO staff is aware of and emphasise these similarities, noting with pride that empowerment is an 'international' concept.[229] Thus, unlike the discourse of human rights, the discourse of empowerment is easily aligned with Islamic values. As such, this strategy of developmentalising Islamic aid has the potential to facilitate entrance into the mainstream aid field, serving as a common language or a 'bridging frame' (Benford and Snow 2000:624) through which to communicate with mainstream development actors.

To sum up, the above analysis of ideological strategies has identified four different types of frames, each in different ways reflecting and embodying the ideological authority, visions and rationales. First, relief is conceptualised as a basic strategy for satisfying material needs of the poor through e.g. provision of food, shelter and health care, but is implicitly intertwined with religious practices such as prayer and celebration of religious holidays. The second strategy, that of mission, aims more explicitly at satisfying spiritual needs through e.g. mosque construction, distribution of religious books and training of preachers. The third strategy of education combines efforts at fighting material and spiritual poverty, providing moral, religious and formal education with the aim of building good Muslim personalities, and through them, strengthening the umma.

[227] The story is also mentioned in several publications, e.g.: "The Prophet Muhammad said, and Alzubair the son of Alauam said the story after him, that if you take a rope and go up the mountain and come down with a pack of wood, carrying it on your back, by which you will keep your dignity, is better than asking people for money, who might give it or not" (IICO, Special Publication, p. 6).
[228] IICO, Special Publication, p. 2.
[229] E.g. IICO, Special Publication, p. 5.

Empowerment, the last of the four strategies, builds on the same vision but does so in a less religious language, promoting activities such as income-generation and 'productive families', thus attempting to integrate elements of the development culture into the culture of Islamic aid.

While strategies are clearly coined in the language of the Islamic aid culture, inspired by important Islamic thinkers such as Hassan al-Banna and Qaradawi, this analysis of ideological strategies has displayed at least two examples of the ways in which IIROSA and IICO seek to merge elements from the cultures of development and Islamic aid: One example is from the missionary strategy. Going against core principles of secularism and neutrality, this strategy is particularly difficult to accept for an audience of development actors. Attempting to adjust to the culture of development aid, IIROSA and IICO therefore downplay their missionary strategy, and when mentioning this strategy, they seek to justify it through arguments that are recognisable to the culture of development aid. For instance, using a language of cultural sensitivity and identity, many argue that the aggressively proselytising efforts of Christian organisations have forced them to respond with similar measures, protecting the faith of fellow Muslims. Another example is the introduction of empowerment as a central ideological strategy, at least for IICO. Equating the development buzzword of empowerment with the Islamic concept of tawkeel, the organisation reinterprets both, creating elements of a new ideology in the process.

Conclusion

Chapter 5 introduced the IICO and IIROSA, arguing that they are – and have historically been – firmly embedded in an Islamic aid culture, founded by Islamic dignitaries, run by practising Muslims, targeting Muslims, and funded through Islamic mechanisms of zakat and waqf. In this situation, the two organisations present an aid ideology that does, to a large extent, resonate with a Middle Eastern, relatively conservative Muslim audience. Emphasising claims to Islamic legitimacy, a vision of a dignified Muslim and a strengthened umma, a rationale that turns on notions of a religiously defined solidarity among fellow Muslims, and strategies of da'wa and moral education, this ideology reflects mainstream trends and values in the Islamic aid culture, as described in chapter 3.

Underlying much of this is a conception of aid as fundamentally *sacred*. In this perspective, aid is both practically and theologically intertwined with religion. It is a kind of aid that is, at least in part, religiously legitimated, building on religious rationales, promoting religious strategies and striving for a religiously defined vision. This does not necessarily mean that religion is part of all aspects of the ideology (as we have seen in the above, there are many ways in which the organisations' ideologies in fact resemble those of non-religious organisations), but there is no systematic or principled division; Islam is potentially relevant to all aspects of aid, providing an

important and explicit motivation for action and in mobilising supporters, playing a significant role in identifying beneficiaries and partners, and providing the dominant basis for engagement (G. Clarke 2007:33). This conception of Islam and aid as closely related is not unique to IICO and IIROSA, but reflects common conceptions in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. A few examples serve to illustrate this: In Saudi Arabia, for instance, King Faisal's International Award for Serving Islam is frequently awarded to NGOs and charities, reflecting the extent to which 'serving Islam' and 'providing aid' are seen as mutually constitutive. And in Kuwait, it is the Ministry of Awqaf rather than the Ministry of Social Development, which is engaged in the provision of aid on behalf of the state, serving as the only governmental member of Kuwait Joint Relief Committee.

The understanding of aid as inherently religious is based on a particular understanding of Islam. Islam is framed as an all-encompassing religion, or, to use Lincoln's (2003:59) terms, a maximalist religion, constituting the central domain of organisational community and influencing all organisational discourses, practices and structures. This means that Islam is a source of social action as much as individual piety, echoing ideas of Hassan al-Banna and the Muslim Brotherhood. As people repeatedly say, "helping is better than praying." But it is not social action understood in political terms; instead, it is about education, culture, economy, social welfare, relief. The vision of the strengthened umma is not a vision of a concrete political umma, a rejection of the nation-state in favour of a transnational pan-Islamic political unit. It is a normative, moral vision, positing the umma as a transnational community of values. In this, the organisations are in line with scholars such as Qaradawi, who scorns the Islamic movement for having focused too much on political issues, promoting instead a much broader focus on culture, economy, education, and social welfare as drivers for Islamisation.[230] As such, Qaradawi as well as IICO and IIROSA reflect what we may call a 'cultural turn' of the Islamic movement, representing a shift from formal politics towards a focus on issues of social and cultural practices. In this perspective, the Islamic state is no longer the principal actor in processes of Islamisation, essential to the establishment of a true Islamic society. Instead, individuals, media, and civil society actors (such as the IICO and IIROSA) play an increasingly important role in the Islamisation of society, what some refer to as a shift from Islamisation from above to Islamisation from below (Caeiro and al-Saify 2009:111).

This firm position within an Islamic aid culture, however, does not mean that the organisations entirely reject or ignore the Western culture of development aid. Since 9.11., they have both opened up to development audiences, seeking to attract UN and other 'international' aid agencies. To varying degrees, the two organisations seek to construct ideologies that are simultaneously legitimate to audiences from both the Islamic aid culture and the development culture, merging,

[230] According to Qaradawi, Muslim leaders "have been too busy with politics and have left everything else, until the charitable work invaded them from abroad" (IICO, Special Publication, p. 15).

translating and appropriating elements from the two cultures. Taking into consideration their firm grounding in the Islamic aid culture, we may conceptualise these attempts in terms of a *developmentalisation of Islamic aid*. At least three distinct approaches to this developmentalisation of aid can be identified: Adoption, pragmatic alignment and integration.

First, *adoption*, or what Westby (2002:288) refers to as frame transformation, refers to the uncritical embracing of elements from one frame without noticeable modifications or alterations. IICO's and IIROSA's incorporation of mainstream Western ideals of professionalism may be seen in this light, demonstrating that since 9.11., discourses of professionalism have become the frame of reference for all aid actors. Both organisations display an explicit focus on issues of professionalism, praising Western actors for their transparency and accountability, and rejecting old Islamic traditions of secrecy and anonymity in an attempt to counter allegations of corruption and suspicious connections.

Pragmatic alignment is another approach to the developmentalisation of Islamic aid. This refers to the alignment of two opposing ideological frames but without fully adopting one or the other. Instead, one frame is justified by reference to the other's underlying values. A case in point is the introduction of what I have referred to as a principled universalism or a pragmatic particularism, aimed at aligning IIROSA and IICO's solidarity-driven focus on fellow Muslims with principles of universalism, central to the culture of development aid. Seeking to avoid accusations of discrimination, the organisations argue that they do in principle support a universalist approach, but they focus primarily on Muslims out of pragmatic reasons (e.g. because the majority of people in the countries they work are Muslim, or because the majority of the world's poor are actually Muslims). In a somewhat similar vein, missionary activities, or da'wa, are justified with reference to issues of cultural sensitivity. Attempting to align their ideologies with values of neutrality and non-confessionalism central to the culture of development aid, IIROSA and IICO increasingly coin their da'wa activities in terms of 'home missions' that focus on strengthening the faith, and by extension, identity of Muslims rather than converting non-Muslims.

Finally, a third approach seeks to *integrate* two frames, seen to be ideologically congruent (Westby 2002:288). One frame is not prioritised over the other, as in the approaches of respectively adoption and pragmatic alignment; instead, the two frames are merged into a new frame. The integration of the concept of empowerment into the ideology of in particular IICO testifies to such processes of ideological integration. Emerging as a development buzzword in the 1980s, empowerment has now been translated into an Islamic aid context as tawkeel, justified by reference to Islamic traditions and sayings and adjusted to fit Islamic principles. Originally understood in the sense of delegation of authority, the organisations have re-interpreted tawkeel,

equating it with the concept of empowerment, often in the form of income-generating activities and vocational training. Justified by reference to Islamic sayings and adjusted to fit Islamic principles of *riba*, these activities remain thoroughly Islamised while at the same time serving as tools for individual self-help, almost indistinguishable from mainstream empowerment projects of the development culture. In a similar vein, the concept of moderation, brought into fashion by the War on Terror, has been adopted by the IICO, attempting to integrate it into Islamic aid traditions it by reference to theological traditions of wasatiya.

This portrait of two Gulf-based Muslim NGOs has shown that these organisations are perhaps best understood in broader terms than simply as 'fundamentalist' or 'traditional' Muslim organisations, relegated to the periphery of the mainstream development culture. The ways in which these transnational Muslim NGOs relate to respectively the Islamic aid culture and the culture of development are not conditioned on dichotomies of rejection or accept, but are blurred, ambiguous and shifting. On one hand, for instance, the organisations build on a rationale of solidarity, often implicitly or explicitly referring to a dichotomy between the warm and personal Muslim organisations and the cold and professional Western organisations. On the other hand, they hail the same organisations for their professionalism, copying their structures and using Western accounting companies to ensure organisational 'accountability' and 'transparency'. As such, the above analyses of IIROSA and IICO's aid ideologies have presented us with numerous examples of how the two organisations navigate in between the cultures of development and Islamic aid, drawing on, rejecting, accommodating and merging different cultural repertoires, in the process perhaps contributing to creating new aid cultures.

Microfinance group, Islamic Relief, Bangladesh

PART IV. 'WHAT'S SO ISLAMIC ABOUT US?' IDEOLOGIES OF AID IN ISLAMIC RELIEF AND MUSLIM AID

Introduction

This chapter turns from the two Gulf-based NGOs to two UK-based ones; namely Islamic Relief and Muslim Aid. As was noted in Chapter 4, Muslim Aid and Islamic Relief are perceived to be fundamentally different from IICO and IIROSA: While the latter are seen as 'traditional' and even 'fundamentalist' Muslim NGOs, the former have gained a reputation as 'moderate', something which has led to increased cooperation and funding from development donors, in stark contrast to the designations and sanctions that have hit IICO and, in particular, IIROSA since 9.11. In an attempt to go beyond these dichotomies, the following chapters discuss how the two organisations position themselves in the contemporary aid field, exploring their organisational constellations, their audiences and their ideologies of aid.

In the analysis of Islamic Relief and Muslim Aid, this part follows the same structure as the previous: Chapter 7 gives a presentation of the two organisations, paying particular attention to changes in organisational constellations and audiences since 9.11., situating the organisations in relation to the two aid cultures. This chapter argues that although established in a Western context, Muslim Aid and Islamic Relief have historically related primarily to an Islamic aid culture, established by Muslim dignitaries, getting most of their funding from zakat donations and cooperating primarily with other Muslim organisations. Since 9.11., however, a number of factors have contributed to positioning the two organisations within the development culture: One, increased attention to 'moderate' Muslim organisations from the British government and authorities; two, access to funding from governmental and intergovernmental development agencies; and three, the inclusion of young development professionals as part of organisational staff. So, put simply, whereas IICO and IIROSA are (still) firmly embedded in an Islamic culture, Islamic Relief and Muslim Aid have one leg in each culture. This double cultural identity is reflected in organisational ideologies, which are (to a much higher degree that IIROSA and IICO's) characterised by conflicts and negotiations.

Against this background, chapter 8 presents an analysis of Muslim Aid and Islamic Relief's ideologies and the ways in which they seek to legitimise them, exploring their claims to authority as well as their visions, rationale, and strategies. The chapter puts forth two arguments: First, and overall, the two organisations present a conception of aid as *secularised*, building on a distinction between aid and Islam that resonates with principles of mainstream development aid. Based on claims to a professional authority, Islamic Relief and Muslim Aid present a vision of sustainable livelihoods, centering on notions of universalism and a common humanity, and implemented

through secular development strategies of e.g. vocational training and disaster management. Second, the two organisations present different ways of *Islamising development aid* in attempts at reaching out not only to certain individual donors, but also to governmental aid agencies, expecting an 'added value' from Muslim NGOs. Through different approaches (ambiguity, subversive alignment and integration), they seek to merge the cultures of Islamic aid and development, satisfying demands from different audiences.

CHAPTER 7: ORGANISATIONS AND AUDIENCES

The present chapter begins with a brief introduction to the two organisations, seeking to situate the two organisations in relation to the broader history of transnational Muslim NGOs, sketching their emergence and early years as Muslim NGOs firmly embedded in an Islamic aid culture. The chapter then discusses the changes that have occurred since 9.11., in different ways contributing to positioning Islamic Relief and Muslim Aid within the culture of development aid (while maintaining strong links to the culture of Islamic aid).

Introducing Muslim Aid and Islamic Relief: The pre-9.11. years

Islamic Relief was founded in Britain by two medical students in 1983. One of them was Hani al-Banna, a young Egyptian man who had migrated to Britain a few years before. A pathologist by training, al-Banna attended a medical conference in Sudan. Witnessing the hunger in the country, he returned home with the idea to establish a Muslim NGO – just like many others around that time, as we saw in chapter 4. In 1984, al-Banna gathered a group of people, most of them Egyptians (and many of them living in Egypt), asking them to be the organisation's trustees, while he himself assumed the role of director (and later chairman). Like al-Banna, all trustees were well-educated men, many of them with degrees from North American and European universities, in disciplines such as engineering, medicine, and business administration. Many had personal or professional relations to key Muslim organisations in Europe and the Middle East, including e.g. the World Assembly of Muslim Youth, the Federation of Islamic Organisations in Europe, and the Egyptian Human Relief Agency, closely related to the Muslim Brotherhood, just like some individuals were also directly involved with the Muslim Brotherhood.[231]

The year after Islamic Relief was founded, in 1985, Muslim Aid was founded by the British convert and prominent folk singer, Yusuf Islam (formerly known as Cat Stevens), together with representatives from 23 British Muslim community organisations. The majority of the founders (and later trustees) were first generation immigrants from Bangladesh or Pakistan. Like in Islamic Relief, many of them were prominent businessmen, founders of Islamic schools and community organisations, and otherwise well-known Islamic dignitaries, but unlike Islamic Relief's trustees, they lived in Britain (Benthall and Bellion-Jourdan 2003:80). And while Islamic Relief's trustees displayed connections to the Muslim Brotherhood, trustees of Muslim Aid related primarily to the Jama'at-e Islami movement and its social justice agenda. Thus, many of the founders and trustees had or have positions in different British Muslim organisations which are, to differing degrees,

[231] This is not something that Islamic Relief publicly announces; however several former and current staff members confirm the relation.

inspired by the Jama'at-e Islami (G. Clarke 2010:517). For instance, one of the founders of Muslim Aid is allegedly a former activist in Jama'at-e Islami in Bangladesh and co-founder of the British Dawat-ul Islam, an organisation that provides Islamic education, strongly influenced by the Jama'at (Eade and Garbin 2006:188). Likewise, several Muslim Aid trustees have enjoyed close connections to the Muslim Council of Britain and the Islamic Foundation in Leicester, both of which have also been broadly inspired by Jama'at-e Islami (Birt 2005:99; Mandaville 2009:497). Several members of Muslim Aid's board have served as secretary general of the Muslim Council of Britain, just like the director of the Islamic Foundation currently serves as vice chairman of Muslim Aid's board.

Historically, staff constellation in the two organisations has to a large degree reflected that of founders and trustees, with the majority being Arab and South Asian immigrant males, and all practising Muslims. The educational backgrounds of the first generations of staff were, like those of the founders and trustees, in engineering, medicine, and accounting, rather than in development studies, and many had professional experience from government or the private business sector. Many staff members had relations to other Muslim organisations. In Bangladesh, for instance, some people, especially in Muslim Aid, had sympathies for the Jama'at-e Islami – and this "to the extent that many people thought they were a national organisation, not an international one," as a person outside the organisation puts it, referring to the central position of Jama'at-e Islami in Bangladeshi politics.[232]

Like in IIROSA and IICO, the vast majority of Muslim Aid and Islamic Relief's funds have historically come from individual Muslim donors. Muslim Aid got the vast majority of funding from British donors, while Islamic Relief would also get funds from donors in the countries in which the organisation had established fundraising offices. In Britain, most donors have been Muslims from Pakistan, India and Bangladesh, reflecting the general composition of Muslims in the UK. Both organisations would generate most of their funding during Ramadan and the two Eid celebrations. Many people would pay their zakat to Islamic Relief and Muslim Aid; others would give donations in the form of waqf or sadaqa. In a 2000 annual review, Muslim Aid declared: "We are able to act as a channel for the faithful, who wish to perform their religious duty to the poor and give to charity"[233] – a rhetoric which, as we shall see, was to drastically change in the following years. A Muslim Aid staff member in Britain notes: "Until some years ago the organisation perceived itself as the administrator of other people's zakat. They would collect money, find local partners and distribute the money as grants through them." Often, people would prefer their money to go to

[232] Jama'at-e Islami has been part of Bangladeshi parliament since 1986, when the party won 10 seats. From 2001 to 2006, Jama'at-e Islami was part of government in a four party alliance with, among others, Bangladesh Nationalist Party, holding two ministries.
[233] Muslim Aid, Annual Review 2000, p. 4.

their country or even village of origin, encouraging a focus on Muslim countries. An Islamic Relief staff member says: "[B]roadly speaking I think priority countries have always been those that feature strongly in the media and those with whom their donors are likely to have some affinity. Therefore, Pakistan and Palestine/Gaza have always featured strongly."

As such, both Muslim Aid and Islamic Relief were, in their early years, firmly embedded in an Islamic aid culture, founded by Muslim dignitaries, run by practising Muslims and funded by individual Muslims, primarily through zakat and sadaqa. They did not have much cooperation with non-Muslim NGOs, nor did they receive any funding from British or intergovernmental aid agencies.

Islamic Relief and Muslim Aid after 9.11.

Since the mid-1980s, Muslim Aid and Islamic Relief have grown tremendously in terms of staff, activities, funding and visibility. Muslim Aid's headquarters in London now employ around 80 people, and 1100 in the 11 country offices, administering a total budget of more than 70 million dollars. Islamic Relief's headquarters in Birmingham, UK, employ around 100 people and the 26 country offices 1,400 people. Activities have expanded drastically; Islamic Relief works in 26 countries and Muslim Aid in 15, including several non-Muslim countries (e.g. Haiti, Japan and Guatemala). The organisation's total budget is more than 96 million dollars.[234] Much of this growth has happened after 9.11.: Islamic Relief has four-doubled its budget since 2003, while Muslim Aid has almost ten-doubled its budget (see tables below). A number of factors are important for understanding the changes that the two organisations have undergone in the last ten years: First, Muslim NGOs and individuals have gained a new position in British society and with British authorities; second, they have gotten access to new sources of funding; and third, they have incorporated new types of staff.

Table 7.1. Islamic Relief, growth (2003-2009)[235]

Year	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Income	25.411.116	35.929.257	70.253.341	61.363.769	66.157.629	78.770.545	96.040.167

Table 7.2. Muslim Aid, growth (2003-2009)[236]

Year	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Income	7.437.334	7.944.063	16.282.495	15.265.921	33.571.207	40.131.033	72.741.993

[234] This excludes funds raised and spent locally by fundraising offices. As such, the total budget of all Islamic Relief offices is substantially bigger.
[235] Information from Annual Reports 2003-2009, total incoming resources in dollars.
[236] Information from Annual Reviews 2003-2009, total incoming resources in dollars.

'In these times, people want to be seen to be involving Islam'

Overall, Muslim Aid and Islamic Relief (like most other Muslim organisations) have historically enjoyed good relations with the British authorities, although in the first many years there was not much contact. Britain has a history of transparent and simple charity legislation and policies as compared to those of many other countries (de Cordier 2009a:611). Coupled with governmental ideologies of multiculturalism, this has encouraged the establishment of many Muslim organisations. According to the Charity Commission, there are more than 1,300 Muslim organisations (including mosques and Islamic centres) in Britain. Of these, approx. 50 are transnational NGOs involved in aid provision (Kroessin 2009:5).

After 9.11., the relationship between British authorities and Muslim organisations intensified. As was mentioned in chapter 4, British authorities took a decidedly different road than e.g. US and Middle Eastern governments in the treatment of Muslim NGOs in the War on Terror. While the latter emphasised strict control and sanctions of NGOs, the former put in place a much more supportive and cooperative NGO regulation regime (Benthall 2008a:93). Likewise, the British government, in particular through the Charity Commission and DfID, has been active in promoting what was in chapter 4 referred to as soft measures, encouraging dialogue with Muslim organisations. In this context, in particular Islamic Relief, but also Muslim Aid, have come to be ideal partners. Unlike e.g. Interpal and the Green Crescent, two other UK-based NGOs, neither Muslim Aid nor Islamic Relief were subject to allegations of 'terrorist' connections, but were widely considered to be 'moderate faith-based organisations' and as such, useful in dialogue initiatives, aimed at reaching out to Muslim constituencies.[237] As a staff member of Islamic Relief notes with some amusement: "Because it's Muslim, Islamic Relief enjoys greater access to funding. It's included everywhere, people listen, they have access to the government. In these times, people want to be seen to be involving Islam."

Islamic Relief and Muslim Aid have both received consistent financial support from DfID (more on this below), they are often invited to participate in governmental committees and advisory councils,

[237] In March 2010, the Sunday Telegraph and the Daily Telegraph published two articles stating that Muslim Aid had in 2005 funded several organisations that were "allegedly linked to terrorist groups", one of them (Al Ihsan Charitable Society) an organisation that had been designated by the UK government (Charity Commission 2010:2). These accusations lead to the instigation of a Charitable Commission investigation of Muslim Aid. The month long investigation found that Muslim Aid had, prior to the UK government's designation of Al Ihsan Charitable Society in 2005, funded the organisation through its Qurbani programme (approx. 4,000 dollars in 2002 and 5,000 dollars in 2003) and had set aside funds for a dentist chair (approx. 21,500 dollars) but had not transferred this money, since Al Ihsan Charitable Society had in the meantime been designated by the government. The Charity Commission concluded that "[w]ithin the scope of this investigation the Commission found no evidence of irregular or improper use of the Charity's funds or any evidence that the Charity had illegally funded any proscribed or designated entities" (Charity Commission 2010:4).

and their work frequently receives public praise from governmental authorities.[238] At an iftar dinner organised by Islamic Relief in August 2010, for instance, Deputy Prime Minister Nick Clegg commented: "I come here full of admiration for what Islamic Relief does. What you are doing is an example to us all. You are responding with moral and organisational leadership which I think, frankly, has been lacking from the international community as a whole" (cf. Khan forthcoming:9). Likewise, for Muslim Aid's 25th anniversary, Gordon Brown, then Prime Minister, praised Muslim Aid for its "valuable work" and "significant contribution to the Millennium Development Goals".[239] And at a reception hosted by Muslim Aid at the House of Parliament, the MP Martin Horwood, Co-Chairman of the Liberal Democrat Committee on Foreign Affairs, International Development and Defence, said: "Many congratulations to Muslim Aid on their 25th anniversary. This fantastic organisation has led the way in the development world in terms of building links within communities and promoting tolerance."[240] The close relation between the two organisations and the British royal family is other anecdotal evidence of the privileged position of Muslim Aid and Islamic Relief in British society. Islamic Relief was the first Muslim organisation that Prince Charles visited after 9.11. (BBC News 2001). Likewise, in a recent brochure published on the occasion of Muslim Aid's 25th anniversary, a message from the prince is included, stating, among other things: "If I may say so, our country is incredibly fortunate to be able to count on organisations like Muslim Aid who bring not only help, but hope to those most in need."[241]

As part of this development, Islamic personalities such as the trustees of the two organisations have become increasingly involved in British society, occupying prominent positions as British and Western Muslim dignitaries.[242] The most obvious example is Hani al-Banna, founder of Islamic Relief. Increasingly involved in a wide range of interfaith initiatives after 9.11., Al-Banna came to be widely known as a voice of dialogue and moderation. In 2003, he was awarded the *Order of the British Empire* for "outstanding contribution to worldwide humanitarian work",[243] just like he has been awarded the *Ibn Khaldun Award for Excellence in Promoting Understanding between*

[238] But there is a limit to state cooperation. One of the founders and trustees of Muslim Aid says that the organisation is not and will not be a part of the government's anti-radicalisation programme: "People should be helped regardless of everything, there shouldn't be a hidden agenda – like there is with this new government initiative. Proper Muslim organisations will not apply for this money."
[239] Muslim Aid, website, http://www.muslimaid.org/index.php/media-centre/25th-anniversary/427-messageprime-minister (last accessed 25. March 2011).
[240] Muslim Aid, website, http://www.muslimaid.org/index.php/media-centre/press-releases/601-british-mps-pay-tributes-to-muslim-aid (last accessed 28. April 2011).
[241] Muslim Aid, Souvenir Brochure, p. 2.
[242] Despite these developments, a former staff member notes that trustees in both Islamic Relief and Muslim Aid are still heavily involved in what he refers to as post-colonial politics. "It's Egyptian politics, Pakistani politics that's reflected in the organisations, not British politics [...] It's not about whether you are a Tori or Labour, it's about the particular types of South East Asian politics," he says.
[243] Islamic Relief, website, http://www.islamic-relief.com/NewsRoom/6-2-121-president-of-islamic-relief-awarded-obe.aspx (last accessed 25. March 2011).

Global Cultures and Faiths, and the Muslim Power 100's *Lifetime Achievement Award*.[244] Likewise, Muslim Aid's current chair, Iqbal Sacranie, presents an example of this new position of Muslim dignitaries. Born in Malawi, Sacranie came to Britain as a teenager in 1969. He has a degree in accounting and is the managing director of the family business. Sacranie was the founding secretary general of the Muslim Council of Britain, and is now chair of a number of Muslim centers, mosque committees and organisations, just like he is involved in several interfaith activities. Back in 1999, he was awarded the *Order of the British Empire* "in recognition of his efforts in the community, including his work for race relations, charity and in a former advisory role to the Home Office," and in 2005, he received the *Queen's Birthday Honours*, a knighthood for "services to the Muslim community, to charities and to community relations" (BBC News 2005). In 2002, the Guardian newspaper named him *The most influential Muslim in the UK* and in 2005, he was ranked at number 10 on a magazine list of the *100 Most Powerful Men in Britain*.[245]

The new donor darlings: Entering the development system

Parallel to this increasing attention from British authorities, Muslim Aid and Islamic Relief have also become the object of attention of governmental and intergovernmental development agencies, and both organisations have in the last decade experienced a veritable explosion in institutional funding. Thus, Islamic Relief's institutional funding has grown from close to zero before 9.11. to almost 25 percent in 2009 (Khan forthcoming:1). And in Muslim Aid, institutional funding today makes up as much as 75 percent of the total budget.[246] Some of this money comes from Middle Eastern and Islamic donors; many of them the same organisations which also support IIROSA and IICO.[247] In 2009, for instance, 10 million of Islamic Relief's 100 million dollar budget came from Middle Eastern donors, with the largest donor being Sheikh Abdullah Al Nouri Charity, from Kuwait, with a donation of 4.7 million dollars.[248] More recently, Islamic Relief received a five million dollar donation from the Islamic Development Bank after the Haiti earthquake in 2010.

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[244] Power 100s are lists of the most influential men and women in different sectors in the world, including e.g. arts power, legal power, women's power and, as mentioned above, Muslim power. See www.power100.co.uk for more information.

[245] Information from Wikipedia, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iqbal_Sacranie, last accessed 26. April 2011.

[246] Until recently, Muslim Aid has not distinguished between individual and institutional donors in its financial reports, but in the 2009 Annual Review, it is noted that "GBP 33,879,190 of the income in 2009 [GBP 44,010,039] was from institutional funding in the UK and Field Offices" (Muslim Aid, Annual Review 2009, p. 26).

[247] Interestingly, while donations from organisations and institutions in the Middle East are increasing, donations from individuals in the Middle East have been decreasing steadily – from approx. 6.8 million dollars in 2007 to 4.5 million in 2008 and 2.8 million in 2009 (Islamic Relief, Annual Report 2009, p. 44). This may have to do with the emergence of new Muslim NGOs, many of them in the Gulf countries and in Turkey, presenting individual donors with other options closer to home.

[248] Other large donors are OPEC Fund for International Disasters (approx. 1.1 million dollars), IICO (800.000 dollars), and Arab Medical Union (800.000 dollars). Donations show a close connection to Kuwaiti organisations, including also the Kuwait Zakat House, Al Rahma Society, and Kuwait Ministry of Awqaf, as well as to Qatari organisations, including e.g. Qatar Charity, Qatar Red Crescent, and Reach out to Asia (Islamic Relief, Annual Report 2009).

The year before, Muslim Aid had been selected as partner in an Islamic Development Bank microfinance project, receiving a three million dollar grant. In February 2011, Muslim Aid (as the first European NGO) signed a memorandum with both the Islamic Development Bank and the Organisation of the Islamic Conference, with the purpose of establishing "strategic partnership[s] that will enable implementation of long-term sustainable development programmes, helping to accelerate economic growth and social progress in the most vulnerable communities."[249]

But, unlike IIROSA and IICO, a large portion of funding actually comes from Western development donors, reflecting trends in the culture of development aid of a burgeoning interest in so-called faith-based organisations, as described in chapter 4. As a staff member of Islamic Relief in Bangladesh notes: "Because it's Muslim, Islamic Relief enjoys greater access to funding. It's included everywhere, people listen, they have access to the government. In these times, people want to be seen to be involving Islam." One of Islamic Relief's first institutional donors was DfID, offering Islamic Relief a 42,000 dollar grant for relief work after flooding in Bangladesh in 1998. In 2001, cooperation intensified with funding for projects in Pakistan, Mali and Afghanistan, worth more than four million dollars. In 2006, a three year Partnership Programme Arrangement was agreed upon, securing Islamic Relief approx. four million dollar funding for the period 2008 to 2011.[250] Other major donors are the European Commission for Humanitarian Operations (ECHO), UNDP, and UNHCR. Entering the development donor scene a few years later than Islamic Relief, Muslim Aid got its first grant from Oxfam after the tsunami in 2005, financing a two million dollar housing project in Indonesia. The project received a lot of attention, opening up for funding from ECHO, the World Bank, DfID, UNDP, the Asian Development Bank and others. In 2007, Muslim Aid was awarded its first mini-grant of 50,000 dollar from DfID for a 3-year development awareness project in Britain (James 2009:9), and the organisation is currently negotiating for a Partnership Programme Arrangement. Other large institutional donors include the World Bank, ECHO, and the Asian Development Bank.

Since 2009, individual country directors have started actively approaching donors on their own, something which has resulted in many country offices now getting the major part of their budget from Western donor agencies. In Bangladesh, for instance, the current country director of Islamic Relief has actively worked to attract institutional funding, which means that two-thirds of the office's budget (or 13.3 million dollars) now comes from institutional donors such as ECHO, the WFP, UNICEF, UNDP, and the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA), while only 6.7 million dollars comes from individual donors, channelled through the UK headquarters. Likewise,

[249] Muslim Aid, website, http://www.muslimaid.org/index.php/about-us/partners (last accessed 1. May 2011). This perhaps also testifies to the trends towards more development-oriented aid in the Islamic Development Bank and the Organisation of the Islamic Conference.
[250] Islamic Relief, PPA Self-Assessment Review.

in 2007, Muslim Aid's office in Bangladesh secured a 100.000 dollar grant from Canadian CIDA to provide assistance to victims of a big flooding. In November that same year, cyclone Sidr hit the country, "and this was when we got our first partnership with ECHO," a top manager recalls, referring to a 450,000 dollar grant from ECHO for distribution of food, provision of filtered water, and construction of latrines. He adds with some pride: "Next year, we got six contracts with them." According to the country director at the time, Muslim Aid's office in Bangladesh gets 7 million dollars from institutional donors and only 200.000 from individual donors.

Parallel to their cooperation with governmental and intergovernmental development agencies, the two organisations are increasingly taking part in mainstream development aid networks: Like IICO and IIROSA, they have consultative status at the UN, but apart from that they are also members of a wide range of other networks, including BOND (the UK membership body for NGOs), the Red Cross/Red Crescent Code of Conduct, the Sphere Standards and the Humanitarian Accountability Partnership. Furthermore, Islamic Relief is (the only Muslim) member of Disasters Emergency Committee (Palmer 2011), while Muslim Aid's application is currently being considered. Interestingly, none of the organisations are member of Islamic networks such as the International Islamic Council for Da'wa and Relief. Islamic Relief's founder, Hani al-Banna, together with the British Red Cross and Oxfam, has established the Humanitarian Forum as an alternative network "which aims to build and strengthen partnerships in the worldwide humanitarian sector,"[251] including non-Muslim as well as Muslim organisations, as described in the previous chapter. Both organisations are also active in networks such as the Jubilee Debt Campaign and the Make Poverty History Campaign. In a similar vein, they both emphasise their cooperation with secular NGOs such as Oxfam, Global Medic, and WaterWise. Finally, cooperation with Christian organisations also plays a key role, and Muslim Aid and Islamic Relief actively promote each their inter-faith partnership. The most famous is without doubt the partnership between Muslim Aid and the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR), growing out of cooperation between the two organisations in Sri Lanka in 2006, and in 2007 extended into a formal partnership.[252] Around the same time, Islamic Relief entered into a similar partnership with Christian Aid, following the earthquake in Pakistan in 2005. Embodying principles of dialogue and bridge-building, these partnerships are very popular with government. At the signing of the partnership agreement between Muslim Aid and UMCOR, Stephen Timms, then treasury Minister, officiated, something which, according to G. Clarke (2010:11), reflects the British government's support for "an innovative cross-national and trans-faith partnership." Another sign of the British government's interest was the fact that Gordon Brown, then Prime Minister, mentioned the partnership in a

[251] Islamic Relief, Annual Report 2006, p. 13.
[252] For a full account of the partnership, see G. Clarke (2010).

speech to the UN Inter-Faith Conference in November 2008 as an example of "the potential of faith" (G. Clarke 2010:n.52).[253]

This preference for secular and Christian partners is particularly explicit in Bangladesh, perhaps reflecting historical accusations of cooperation with Jama'at-e Islami. Neither Islamic Relief nor Muslim Aid has anything to do with IICO, IIROSA or other transnational Muslim NGOs working in the country. Instead, they are part of the INGO Forum, together with Action Aid, Oxfam, CARE, Christian Aid, and other transnational NGOs, among whom they enjoy increasing popularity. A staff member from Muslim Aid tells me a story that neatly illustrates the changes in this relationship.

> I once participated in this workshop with all these NGOs. This was in 2006, I think. I sat down in a corner, and then, when the people from Islamic Relief came, they sat down next to me. The space next to me on the other side was empty and this lady from ActionAid came, and she didn't want to sit next to me. I think she thought that it was like the Islamic corner or something like that. I felt very bad. We never thought like that. And now, when I go to the coordination meetings, everyone wants to sit next to me. So you can say that things have changed.

On national and local levels, Islamic Relief and Muslim Aid also seem to prefer to work with Christian and secular development organisations; for instance, Muslim Aid's largest partner organisation is Lutheran Aid for Medicine. Other major partners are BRAC, Pakakhep, and the Medicine Bank, which are all non-Muslim organisations. Likewise, Islamic Relief cooperates with Latter Day Saint's Church and Thengamara Mohila Sabuj Sangha, also non-Muslim, while Muslim partners, such as Paribar-O-Shishu Kallayan Kendra, are used primarily for implementation of seasonal activities such as Qurbani and Ramadan iftars. Unlike IIROSA and IICO, none of the two organisations have much cooperation with mosques or Qur'an schools; in fact, Islamic Relief only recently started considering the inclusion of imams in a project (more about this in chapter 8). Instead, they cooperate mainly with local government representatives, school officials and other non-religious community representatives. At national level, they do not cooperate with the Ministry of Religious Affairs, but the NGO Affairs Bureau, the Ministry of Food and Disaster, and the governmental microfinance fund, reflecting priorities of the mainstream development community.

[253] At some point, there were even talks about possible cooperation between Muslim Aid and World Jewish Relief. Likewise, Islamic Relief considered a partnership with World Vision. However, none of these two possibilities materialised, each in their way thereby testifying to the limits of bridge-building and religious tolerance: As regards World Jewish Relief, many individual Muslim donors (as well as trustees and conservative religious staff members) would not appreciate this, interpreting it as a betrayal of the Palestinian cause. As regards World Vision, on the other hand, young development professionals among staff would have difficulties cooperating with an explicitly missionary organisation. As one of them says: "Of all the religious organisations, they are some of the ones that are most different from us because they evangelise."

'A more diversified donor base'

Despite steep increases in institutional funding, much funding still comes from individual donors. Muslim Aid has 30-40,000 regular individual donors (G. Clarke 2010). There are no numbers for Islamic Relief's donor base, but taking into consideration that the organisation has several fundraising offices, it is estimated to be substantially higher. The majority of these individual donors are immigrant Muslims from South Asia and the Middle East; Islamic Relief, for instance, gets 49.5 percent of donations from Pakistani British, 16.5 percent from Indians, 8.5 percent from Bangladeshi, 8.5 percent from Arab British, 5.5 percent from White British and the remaining 11.5 percent from other ethnic and national groups, including Uganda, Somalia and Turkey (Khan forthcoming:4). There are no detailed statistics on the composition of Muslim Aid's donors, but it can be expected to reflect Islamic Relief's, albeit perhaps with a larger percentage of Pakistani and Bangladeshi donors.

Recent years have, however, seen a number of changes in the constellation of individual donors. First, a new type of Muslim donor is emerging on the scene, consisting in young, well-educated second or third generation immigrants who cultivate their religious identity and are active in their religious community. For them, donating to e.g. Muslim Aid or Islamic Relief is a way of reasserting their religious identity and supporting their community. But contrary to older, more conservative donors, they are not satisfied with Qurbani sacrifices and Ramadan food packages: they expect Muslim NGOs to be modern, professional organisations, on a par with secular organisations such as Oxfam and CARE, but, through their religiosity, contributing to strengthening Muslim community and modern Islam. As part of the attempts to attract these new donors, Muslim Aid and Islamic Relief have introduced new kinds of fundraising, including events such as the *Allah Made me Funny* stand-up show, Ramadan volunteer possibilities, spoken word poetry, and walkathons, echoing trends among secular NGOs but adding a distinctive religious flavour. As a former Islamic Relief staff member says:

> The younger ones are more inclined to give to things such as HIV and Darfur and these things. The old ones give for religious reasons, they want their money to go to the country they come from, preferably even the village they come from. But the new generations want something in return for their support, bungy-jumping, dinners and so on.

Second, both organisations work actively to broaden the donor base to include non-Muslims.[254] Islamic Relief's 2006 annual report, for instance, speaks of "attracting people of all communities, backgrounds and cultures,"[255] just like Muslim Aid expresses wishes for "a more diversified donor base."[256] Iqbal Sacranie, speaking at Muslim Aid's 25th anniversary, talked about "the generosity of

[254] Khan (forthcoming) found that two percent of Islamic Relief's donors are non-Muslims (although noting that this number may be higher in relation to public collections or appeals for emergency relief).
[255] Islamic Relief, Annual Report 2006, p. 14.
[256] Muslim Aid, Strategic Framework 2007-2010, p. 12.

the British people,"[257] and in 2008, the Sunset Walk, organised in cooperation with Oxfam, was framed as an explicit attempt at getting to each other's constituencies. To sum up, then, the individual donor base of the two organisations seems to be gradually changing, including not only non-Muslims but also young Muslims with other expectations than older, conservative donors.

New generations of staff

All these developments have been paralleled by changes internally in the two organisations.[258] While the boards of trustees is by and large unchanged, and many first generation staff members have remained in the organisation, in recent years, both Islamic Relief and Muslim Aid have increasingly incorporated a new generation of staff. First of all, and contrary to the older generation, many of the new staff members have relevant development education and experience. Some have a degree in development studies, others in e.g. journalism, nutrition, politics, or sociology. Many people, in particular among country office staff, have previously worked in national, non-Muslim, NGOs such as BRAC, just like several move on to work in transnational development NGOs such as CARE, Oxfam or Save the Children. They work in Islamic Relief and Muslim Aid, because they want to work in a development NGO, not because they want to work in a religious organisation. An example of this type of staff member is Junaed who worked in Islamic Relief in Bangladesh when I visited the organisation. He was one of the first to take a degree in Development Studies in Bangladesh; later he completed an MPhil in Development and Social Change at an Australian university. Junaed is a devoted development practitioner and tells me that he insisted on having 'development practitioner' put down under 'occupation' in his passport. Today, he works in Save the Children. Interestingly, there are also examples of older staff members who have undergone a process of 'developmentalisation'. The country director of Islamic Relief in Bangladesh, for instance, is originally a medical doctor, and has previously worked in IIROSA as well as the Brotherhood-related Human Relief Agency, but recently finished an MA in development studies at a university in Bangladesh, thus personifying the move from Islamic aid to a development-oriented professionalism.

Second, the organisations actively seek to dissociate themselves from any association with political parties and organisations, encouraging a culture of political neutrality among staff. These processes of de-politisation have been particularly pronounced in Muslim Aid's office in Bangladesh. In January 2006, a large restructuring process replaced several people who were supposedly politically biased, and in 2008, the previous country director was replaced with an

[257] Muslim Aid, website, http://www.muslimaid.org/index.php/media-centre/25th-anniversary/launch-speech/409-speech-sir-iqbal-sacranie (last accessed 26. April 2011).
[258] In both organisations, volunteers seem to play an increasingly important role, organising fundraising events and promoting the organisation in other ways. There is no doubt that their involvement and conceptions of the organisation's aid ideology merit further investigation; however, for lack of space, the present analysis will not deal with this particular group of staff.

expatriate to ensure political neutrality. Today, politics is strictly forbidden in the country office – to the degree that people are not even allowed to speak about politics during lunch. One person says, "I can honestly say that Muslim Aid is very careful. [The director] has stated this very clearly. The government has suspected us for having connections, and some people still think so. But it's decreasing."[259] Likewise, in Islamic Relief, there have been rumours that some staff members would support the Jama'at-e Islami, privileging Jama'at organisations when selecting partner organisations. The country director says that this is now a thing of the past; according to him, there might be a few people who support them, but there are also people who support Awami League.

Third, both organisations have started employing more women and more non-Muslims. Today, approximately half of staff is female; with the majority working at either headquarter level or at project level, and fewer working at country office level. In Islamic Relief headquarters, the first non-Muslims were employed in 2005 or 2006, and at the time of my visit in 2008, there are approx. ten non-Muslims.[260] In Muslim Aid's headquarters, non-Muslims have been employed since 2007, and today, a couple of people are non-Muslims (for a short while there were even two non-Muslims in the management team). In country offices, the picture is more diverse. In Islamic Relief Bangladesh, there are some Hindu staff, but no Christians. "We would like to, but they haven't applied. And you can invite people, but you can't force them," says a staff member. In Muslim Aid, the pattern is similar. In Bangladesh, some staff members are Hindu, but like Islamic Relief, there are no Christians. "They have their own organisations," people repeatedly tell me.

These changes have resulted in very heterogeneous organisations. Several people speak of a divide between two different kinds of staff, the 'development professionals' and the 'religious conservatives'; a divide which is often (although not always) coincidental with a divide between top and bottom, old and young, and which seems to be more pronounced at country office levels than at headquarter levels. The religious conservatives, primarily older people, are in top management and board positions, as well as in the administration and fundraising departments. The young development professionals are in project departments and in country offices. As one person notes, "you primarily find the development expertise at the bottom, and less at the top." Many development professionals do not work for long in the organisations. As one person said during an interview in Bangladesh, considering whether to share with me some of his more critical views on the organisation: "When are you going to publish this? In one year? Well, then there's no problem, then I probably won't be here anymore." And he was right – a few months after, he wrote me and

[259] Interestingly, at least one person expresses scepticism as to whether the organisation will manage to separate itself from the Jama'at. In his view, managers do not care – and do not have to care – about the criticism from government now that they have institutional funding from Western donors.
[260] In an e-mail correspondence with a staff member in May 2011, I was told that the number of non-Muslims has increased significantly the last year.

said that he had gotten a job in CARE. Disappointed with the lack of professionalism, people apply for positions elsewhere, often in secular development NGOs. The religious conservatives, on the other hand, tend to stay. One person says with a smile: "You can be sure that those who have been here for more than 15 years are not professional development people." For management, there is no incentive to keep the young development professionals, as long as new ones keep coming. They need the development professionals to implement strategies of secular development aid, maintaining an external image of a professional development organisation. Internally, however, they have little interest in keeping the development professionals for long, insofar as this would facilitate their influence in the organisation. In other words, the employment of professional development staff ensures the kind of activities and strategies that donors want, but because these staff members do not stay for long and because they have no power in the organisations, they cannot influence internal processes and structures, thus leaving intact a conservative religious core.

Summary

The above analysis, outlining the organisational constellation and audiences of Islamic Relief and Muslim Aid, has presented a number of points that are important to bear in mind for the following analysis: First, the two organisations are rapidly changing, moving from a firm position within a largely Islamic aid culture to immersion in the development culture. This is a trend that is of course somewhat inherent in the organisations, insofar as they are established in Britain and not Saudi Arabia or Kuwait, but it is also a trend that has been thoroughly encouraged after 9.11. Whereas IICO and IIROSA positioned themselves firmly within an Islamic aid culture, although reaching out to the development culture, Islamic Relief and Muslim Aid are today grounded simultaneously in an Islamic aid culture *and* in a Western development aid culture. A number of factors have contributed to these changes, in particular increasing support from British authorities; possibilities for funding from development aid agencies; changes in individual donor base; and finally, the introduction of new generations of staff, including women, non-Muslims and development professionals.

Second, these changes mean that Islamic Relief and Muslim Aid, in comparison with IIROSA and IICO, have become highly heterogeneous organisations. They are heterogeneous in terms of donors, insofar as they rely simultaneously on secular development agencies, Islamic aid organisations, and individual Muslim donors (and different kinds of individual Muslim donors). But they are also heterogeneous in terms of their organisational constellation, divided into different generations of staff – the older religious conservatives and the young development professionals. In the next chapter, we shall take a closer look at how these heterogeneous organisational constellations and their equally heterogeneous audiences have shaped aid ideologies in Islamic Relief and Muslim Aid. Obviously, the more heterogeneous audiences an NGO seeks to

satisfy, and the more contradictory demands they have, the more likely the NGO will experience tensions between different kinds of legitimacy (Ossewaarde et al. 2008:48). What kinds of ideologies do the organisations present and promote? How do they try to accommodate the wishes and expectations from fundamentally different actors, making their ideological frames resonate with the values and ideas of the audiences?

CHAPTER 8. IDEOLOGIES OF AID

In the following chapter, I present an analysis of the ideological meaning systems formulated by Islamic Relief and Muslim Aid, exploring the ways in which the two organisations seek to create legitimacy, balancing between two different cultures. Similar to the foregoing analysis of the two Gulf-based NGOs, the present analysis is organised around four core ideological elements: authority, vision, rationale and strategies. Beginning with an analysis of ideological authority, the chapter turns on issues of organisational identity, exploring what these organisations consider to be legitimate NGOs. The second section of the chapter turns on organisational visions, discussing how ideologies frame problems of poverty and their solutions. In the third section, the underlying rationale is outlined, centering on questions of motivation and chains of giving. Finally, the fourth section outlines the ideological strategies, analysing the ways in which the organisations frame their plans to achieve the vision.

Organisational authority

I shall first deal with the issue of organisational authority, exploring the ways in which the two organisations frame themselves as legitimate actors and authorities in the provision of aid. In other words, how do the organisations frame themselves as legitimate providers of aid, as genuine NGOs? I argue that Islamic Relief and Muslim Aid's claims to authority, like those of IIROSA and IICO, turn on two sources, namely religion and professionalism. But unlike IIROSA and IICO, Muslim Aid and Islamic Relief prioritise claims to a professional authority over claims to a religious authority, reflecting the two organisations' wishes to satisfy expectations of new donors such as Western development aid agencies and young Muslim donors. Because of the highly heterogeneous staff constellation, however, this priority is constantly contested, leading to internal conflicts in the two organisations.

Professional authority: Mainstream development NGOs

Unlike IIROSA and IICO, Muslim Aid and Islamic Relief do not consider themselves primarily 'Islamic' organisations: On its website, Islamic Relief calls itself "an international relief and development charity"[261] while Muslim Aid uses the almost identical terms "an international relief and development agency,"[262] both emphasising their professional identity rather than their Islamic identity. Some people in Islamic Relief even jokingly suggest changing the name of the organisation, taking 'Islamic' out of 'relief'. "What's so Islamic about us?" a young man says. Underlining this focus on professional aid provision, the organisational mottos do not refer to

[261] Islamic Relief, website, http://www.islamic-relief.com/whoweare/Default.aspx?depID=2 (last accessed 27. March 2011).
[262] Muslim Aid, Strategic Framework 2007-2010, p. 4.

Islam, but to the task of providing relief and development aid. Islamic Relief is "[d]edicated to alleviating the suffering of the world's poorest people" while Muslim Aid is "serving humanity." In other words, Islamic Relief and Muslim Aid claim to be legitimate providers of aid because they are professional, not because they are religious. It is about the services they provide, not the values they possess (Smith and Sosin 2001:655).

Like IICO and IIROSA, Muslim Aid and Islamic Relief frame their claims to professionalism almost entirely in the language of the development culture, implicitly presenting professionalism as a condition for integration into this culture. Framing themselves as professional aid authorities, Muslim Aid and Islamic Relief emphasise professional knowledge in the form of technology, science and research. As stated by Islamic Relief in one of its research papers: "Development work is becoming increasingly 'evidence based.'"[263] This scientific, research-based approach underlies all the organisations' activities. "When we choose the field offices, we look at the level of poverty," a Muslim Aid staff member explains. "Then we look at the main causes for poverty in this specific context, we look into what are the needs and then finally we look at the available resources. And then we design our programme on the basis of all this." Countries of operation are systematically presented with 'Facts and Stats' on poverty, health and sanitation, education and other figures. Annual Reports are ripe with statistics and graphs, just like individual projects are coined in a scientific language, describing problems in terms of numbers and percentages, often quoted from the UNDP Human Development Index or other UN sources: "Around 80% of all sickness and disease in the world is caused by inadequate water or sanitation, according to the WHO," Islamic Relief states in an annual report.[264] A recent speech by Muslim Aid's chairman presents another typical example of this reliance on numbers and science (what Malkki (1996:390) has referred to as 'clinical humanitarianism'): "22,000 children under five die every day due to lack of basic healthcare; a further 218 million children are child labourers; and only 62% complete primary education in Africa alone. Muslim Aid is determined to help eradicate this alarming problem."[265]

Being a professional organisation also means adhering to professional practices of planning and management. While IICO and IIROSA somewhat naïvely talk about being the first NGOs to lay down a strategic basis for charitable work, Muslim Aid and Islamic Relief use terms such as 'financial management' and 'performance measurement' with frequency and great ease. By

[263] Islamic Relief Policy Stance on Poverty, p. 2. Islamic Relief even has an entire department dedicated to research and policy-making, and both organisations cooperate frequently with British universities. Islamic Relief was part of the DfID-funded *Religions and Development Research Programme*, Birmingham University, and a member of the steering committee for the research programme *Religion and AIDS in Africa*, at the African Studies Center in the Netherlands (PPA Self-Assessment Review, p. 10).
[264] Islamic Relief, Annual Report 2006, p. 10.
[265] Muslim Aid, website, http://www.muslimaid.org/index.php/media-centre/press-releases/573-muslim-aid-raises-over-p300000-for-needy-children (last accessed 28. April 2011).

uploading their *Strategic Frameworks*, *Manuals on Accountability and Monitoring* and *Evaluation Tools* to their websites, they display and demonstrate their fluency in the language of professional development. Likewise, their decision-making procedures and structures are presented to the public in pedagogical 'organisational charts' on websites and in annual reports. Staff practices are standardised and systematised into policies and guidelines, just like projects are designed on the basis of *Logical Framework Analysis*, and implemented according to the *Project Cycle Management* tools. Activities are subject to external and internal control in the form of monitoring, audits, supervision and evaluations, aimed at ensuring 'accountability and transparency', 'measuring success' and documenting 'impact' and 'evidence of change'.[266] Both organisations have signed the Humanitarian Accountability Partnership, thus committing themselves to meeting "the highest standards of accountability and quality management;"[267] Muslim Aid was recently certified by the Investors in People, "a flexible and easy to use standard which helps organisations transform their business performance," as the company notes on its website;[268] and in July 2010, Islamic Relief was awarded second place in the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales (ICAEW) *Charities Online Financial Report and Accounts Award*.

In the claim to professional authority, strategies of association play an important role. For one, the organisations associate themselves with Britain. Islamic Relief is "a British-based international aid agency,"[269] while Muslim Aid is "a UK-based international relief and development agency".[270] In this, there are, at least on the surface, some similarities with IIROSA and IICO which both emphasise their national identity. But whereas IICO and IIROSA present a national identity bound up on taking care of fellow citizens and praising the authorities, for Islamic Relief and Muslim Aid, being British is a way of signalling accountability. In a development frame of reference, Britain – and 'the West' – equals strict systems of control and monitoring. Being British is not about taking care of British citizens or praising the Queen, but about being subject to systems of control and monitoring, and by default, about being accountable. Authority is also strengthened by association with other actors, perceived to be recognised authorities of professionalism. On their websites, both organisations have posted the logos of the UN, the Red Cross/Red Crescent, the Disasters Emergency Coalition, BOND, and the Make Poverty History, signalling their affiliation with these organisations and institutions. These are all some of the strongest 'brands' in the international development community, and their logos serve as codes for accountability and reliability, showing that Islamic Relief and Muslim Aid are able to speak the language of the professional development

[266] E.g. Islamic Relief, Annual Report 2008, p. 4, and Islamic Relief, Annual Report 2006, p. 2.
[267] Humanitarian Accountability Partnership, website, www.hapinternational.org (last accessed 25. March 2011).
[268] Investors in People, website, www.investorsinpeople.co.uk (last accessed 21. September 2010).
[269] Islamic Relief, Annual Report 2008, p. 72.
[270] Muslim Aid, website, http://www.muslimaid.org/index.php/about-us (last accessed 27. March 2011).

culture. Likewise, in annual reports and interviews, Western development NGOs and aid agencies are highlighted over the many Middle Eastern organisations that also support the organisations.[271] Through these partnerships, the organisations can, in their own words, "connect ourselves with mainstream agencies"[272] and thus confirm their own status "as a mainstream development agency working towards international standards."[273] Apart from strengthening professional authority, this also testifies to organisational allegiance to a particular community. When Islamic Relief was awarded the ICAEW Award, as mentioned above, the PR statement on the organisation's website read: "ahead of organisations such as Oxfam, ActionAid, World Vision, Christian Aid, NSPCC and the Prince's Trust, among others."[274] In other words, the competition for organisational legitimacy is not a competition with IICO, IIROSA and other Muslim NGOs, but a competition with Oxfam, ActionAid and other development NGOs. These are the organisations that Islamic Relief and Muslim Aid consider themselves comparable to.[275] Thus, whereas IIROSA and IICO's partnerships and allegiances had the character of a transnational Muslim community, a global umma, Islamic Relief and Muslim Aid present themselves as part of a "global humanitarian community."[276]

Just like association with certain development organisations and institutions strengthen claims to professional authority, so does dissociation from certain Muslim NGOs and movements. Epitomising this change in allegiances, Muslim Aid changed its logo in 2003: pre-2003, the organisation's logo was a globe with a flag wavering over it, with the organisation's name written in Arabic on the flag, signalling allegiance to an Arab, Islamic aid community. Today, the logo is a drop of water, underscored by a green crescent, sending signs of a more international orientation. Similarly, previously the organisation's annual reviews would often mention cooperation with various Islamic organisations, while today's reviews downplay such connections.[277] While many trustees as well as some staff members are still connected to e.g. the Muslim Brotherhood and

[271] For instance, in an article published in the British NGO newsletter ONTRAC, Islamic Relief describes its donor base as follows: "The organisation receives donations from multilateral and bilateral institutions and individual donors. It has entered into partnerships and cooperation agreements with Christian FBOs, such as CAFOD, as well as secular organisations. Likewise, IR's individual donors include both Muslims and non-Muslims" (Abuarqab 2010:7).
[272] Muslim Aid, Financial Statement 2008, p. 7.
[273] Muslim Aid, Financial Statement 2007, p. 8
[274] First place was awarded to the British Red Cross Society (Islamic Relief, website, www.islamic-relief.com/NewsRoom/4-300-islamic-relief-is-runner-up-in-charity-finance-award.aspx, last accessed 25. March 2011).
[275] Demonstrating similarly subtle signs of allegiance, Muslim Aid's Code of Conduct Policy states that: "This document has benefited from the policies, suggestions or thinking of International Federation of the Red Cross, International Organisation for Migration, Mission Aviation Fellowship Europe, Médecins Sans Frontières Holland, Norwegian Refugee Council, PLAN International, Save the Children Sweden, World Food Program, The United Nations, and a variety of expert individuals from the NGO community such as People in Aid (Muslim Aid, Code of Conduct Policy, p. 1).
[276] Islamic Relief, Annual Report 2006, p. 2. Likewise, Muslim Aid wants to be "a key global player" (Muslim Aid, Strategic Framework 2007-2010, p. 9) and "achieve international recognition" (Strategic Framework 2007-2010, p. 13).
[277] Compare e.g. Muslim Aid's Annual Reviews 1999 and 2000 with the latest one from 2009.

Jama'at-e Islami, these connections are never publicly promoted. Likewise, the fact that the organisations rely on Islamic institutions and personalities for religious guidance and advice is not, as in IIROSA and IICO, displayed on the front page of their websites.[278] These organisations and individuals do not have credibility as professional development authorities, and association with them will not enhance the authority of Islamic Relief and Muslim Aid. On the contrary, the organisations actively seek to dissociate themselves from association with certain Muslim organisations. Particularly interesting for the present analysis, Gulf-based NGOs such as IIROSA and IICO are often subject to such strategies of dissociation. Some people simply claim not to know the organisations. Others cast organisations such as IICO and IIROSA as 'traditional' and 'unprofessional'. A staff member bluntly states: "They are perhaps not the most sophisticated, they don't use LogFrame and all these things." Another person elaborates a bit more on the distinction:

> The way I see it, there are two different kinds of Islamic organisations – the traditional and the modern. The modern accept the Western system and they give it an Islamic flavour, an Islamic spirit. By Western I mean internal management systems [...] The traditional organisations depend only on personal accountability. It's about you as a spiritual person, about whether you are trustworthy or not. It's not about the system, it's about the person.

A person who used to work in the IIROSA but now works in one of the UK-based NGOs tells me that he left the organisation precisely because of this: "There was a clash between the way I needed to work as a professional and the way they worked. Their set-up is not professional." According to some people, this lack of professionalism has to do with the role of religion in the organisations: "The [Gulf-based NGOs] are led by religious people – not development professionals. They are good people, but they don't know," says one person, echoing the statements of many others. In this perspective, religion becomes the antithesis of professionalism – or at least a particular kind (or role) of religion.[279]

This distinction points towards what is perhaps the most important difference between, on the one hand, IICO and IIROSA's conceptions of professionalism and, on the other, Muslim Aid and Islamic Relief's. For IIROSA and IICO, professionalism is largely a question of demonstrating financial accountability, responding to allegations of terrorist financing, but for Islamic Relief and

[278] Muslim Aid uses the vice-chairman of the Islamic Foundation in Leicester and the mufti Barakat Ullah, while Islamic Relief gets advise from the European Council of Fatwa and Research and Al Azhar University (Khan forthcoming:12). On a side note, their choice of religious authorities also emphasises allegiances with broader Islamic movements, as hinted at in the previous sections. The Islamic Foundation is part of a Jama'at-e Islami-inspired British movement, while the European Council of Fatwa and Research is closely affiliated with the European Muslim Brotherhood.

[279] Interestingly, when the two organisations do engage with other Muslim NGOs, it is often with the explicit goal of professionalising them. For instance, Islamic Relief was a founding member of Muslim Charities Forum, established in 2007, together with Human Appeal International, Human Relief Foundation, and Muslim Hands, with the purpose to improve the contributions of UK-based Muslim NGOs to international development through exchange of experiences, ideas and information, networking with governments and other international development actors. A year before, the Muslim Council of Britain launched its Charitable Foundation Project, funded by Muslim Aid, and aimed at building capacity in Muslim organisations in Britain.

Muslim Aid it is also about relying on professional staff. Unlike in IIROSA and IICO, then, the ideal staff member is not the dedicated volunteer, but the specialised expert. A manager in Islamic Relief's headquarters says: "If you want to be professional, and work with sustainable development, it is necessary to have paid staff." Recruitment is determined not by religious virtues or expertise, but by 'aptitude and ability'[280] and staff is described as 'experienced' and 'professional,' presenting "a wealth of knowledge and expertise,"[281] which is constantly improved through 'training,' 'upgrading of workforce'[282] and 'staff development.'[283] The below excerpt from a recent job announcement for a position as Communication Manager in Islamic Relief's US fundraising office clearly illustrates this emphasis on development expertise and specialisation, making it indistinguishable from job announcements from other mainstream development NGOs such as Oxfam and Save the Children:

> *Qualifications:*
> Three plus years of related work experience.
> Bachelor's degree in English, Journalism, Communications, Public Relations or related field.
> Strong Command of AP Style.
> Competent in editorial principles and techniques of communicating information.
> Strong editing, summary writing, and proofreading skills.
> Fluent in the English language, including grammar, structure, punctuation and spelling.
> Ability to work on highly technical material with strong attention to detail.
> Posses strong organizational and excellent interpersonal skills.
> Proficient with Microsoft Office Suite
> Able to work independently with minimal supervision, as well as in a team environment.
> Must have a strong sense of ownership over projects and tasks, be able to identify new opportunities, and have the initiative to pursue them.
> Knowledge of Adobe InDesign, Adobe Photoshop and layout experience a plus.
> Ability to travel to Field Offices overseas to conduct interviews and compose original piece of work a plus.
> Must be eligible to work in the United States.[284]

As such, religion plays no role in the employment of staff. There are no requirements as to religious affiliation, no formal religious dress code, and people are not obliged to pray together. Illustrative of this position, Muslim Aid Bangladesh' staff manual does not mention Islam, religion or faith except when reminding staff to be respectful of other people's religion.[285] Instead, the manual explicitly states that discrimination on the grounds of religion is not tolerated:

> It is [Muslim Aid Bangladesh] policy to treat job applicants and employees in the same way regardless of their sex, race colour, religion and or ethnic origin. Any employee who act in such a manner as to discriminate against or harass any other employee or individual with whom the employee is dealing in the course of his/her employment will be considered to have committed an act of gross misconduct.[286]

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[280] Islamic Relief, Annual Report 2006, p. 18.
[281] Islamic Relief, Strategic Framework 2007-2010, p. 2.
[282] Muslim Aid, Strategic Framework 2007-2010, p. 10.
[283] Muslim Aid, Financial Statement 2007, p. 2.
[284] Islamic Relief USA, website, http://www.islamicreliefusa.org/about-us/career-opportunities/job-openings (last accessed 25. March 2011).
[285] Muslim Aid Bangladesh, Staff Manual, p. 14.
[286] Muslim Aid Bangladesh, Staff Manual, p. 13.

This does not mean that religion has to be private, however. Inspired by traditions of multiculturalism, Muslim Aid and Islamic Relief both present themselves as organisations in which there is room, but not pressure, to cultivate one's religiosity. It is about creating a "relaxed, Islamic environment", as one top manager formulates it. Both organisations have prayer rooms, but it is constantly underlined that there is never a pressure to use them: "Some pray, and others don't," says the manager of one of Islamic Relief's projects in Bangladesh. Likewise, then country director of Muslim Aid in Bangladesh tells me that he rarely prays with staff: "Previously, the environment was more assertive – you *should* pray – but I think I have modified the atmosphere. I rarely pray with the staff myself, I follow a different timetable. So I think there's much less pressure now, much less attempts at forcing people."

Islamic authority: 'The humanitarian spirit of Islam'

This emphasis on professional authority, and the inherent dichotomy between (some kinds of) religion and professionalism, does not mean that Islamic Relief and Muslim Aid do not consider Islam an important part of their organisational identity and make claims to religious authority: They both make use of hadiths and religious symbols,[287] they provide traditional Muslim aid activities such as orphan sponsorship, Qurbani and iftar meals; they offer donors the possibility to pay their zakat, they inform donors about Islamic practices, concepts and traditions,[288] and they engage in other religious activities with the purpose of signalling religious authority. [289] On the surface, some of these strategies for claiming religious authority are similar to those of IIROSA and IICO. But underlying them are two very different notions of religion. Whereas IICO and IIROSA promote a relatively formal or orthodox religiosity, predicated on visible collective practices and rituals, the religious authority of Islamic Relief and Muslim Aid is based on conceptions of religion that fit better with professional ideals of aid organisations. Here, two conceptions of religion seem to dominate organisational ideologies: that of a secular religiosity, relegated to the spheres of personal motivation and underlying values, and that of an instrumentalised religiosity.

Religious authority is first and foremost understood in terms of a sharp distinction between religion and aid, echoing secular principles of the development culture. In this perspective, 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. One woman explains to me that she likes to work in an organisation "that actually tries to transform the values

[287] The logo of Islamic Relief presents a globe flanked by two minarets, while that of Muslim Aid displays a drop of water and a crescent, held in green colours.
[288] On Muslim Aid's website, for instance, there is a page called 'Islamic knowledge' listing a glossary of Islamic terms, including e.g. Ramadan, Mufti and Zakat. Muslim Aid, website, http://www.muslimaid.org/index.php/media-centre/islamic-knowledge (last accessed 26. April 2011).
[289] Muslim Aid, for instance, offers Islamic wills, in cooperation with the firm 1st Ethical (Muslim Aid, website, http://www.muslimaid.org/index.php/what-we-do/islamic-wills, last accessed 25. April 2011).

of Islam into action," but in her description of organisational activities, she does not make any room for religion. This conception of religion as almost invisible is reflected in the frequent use of airy terms such as "Islamic flavour," "Islamic charitable values"[290] and "the humanitarian teachings of Islam,"[291] denoting an interpretation of Islam as an 'ethical reference' (Benedetti 2006:855), rather than an orthodox, visible religiosity. As Muslim Aid Pakistan notes in its description of the organisation's logo: "The drop of water that is at the centre of logo symbolizes life, underscored by the green crescent to emphasize the fact that we are driven by the humanitarian *sprit of Islam*."[292]

Another dominant conception of religion in Muslim Aid and Islamic Relief ideologies is that of religion as an instrument. In this perspective, the two organisations frame themselves as legitimate religious authorities because their religion is perceived to be a useful instrument in the provision of aid. Religion is framed in terms of an instrumentalist 'added value'. As such, an organisation is religiously legitimate if – and only if – it can provide an added value on the basis of this religiosity. "I would say that our mission is to provide innovative ways of alleviating poverty through Islamic values," says a young development professional at Muslim Aid headquarters. "We bring something different to the development field." This conception of religious legitimacy resonates well with development donor demands, expecting an 'added value' of so-called faith-based organisations – it is not enough to simply copy secular NGOs. In this perspective, Islamic Relief and Muslim Aid have to underline their Muslim identity and the role of Islam in their activities, presenting an added value and distinguishing themselves from non-religious NGOs by promoting those religious aspects that are acceptable – and preferably even useful – to the donors.

Building on this idea of the added value of faith-based organisations, the two organisations also see themselves as having a particular responsibility and ability to building bridges between Islam and the West: "Islamic Relief is in a unique position as an aid agency founded in the West but based on Islamic humanitarian principles," Islamic Relief claims. "This gives us an important role as a bridge between cultures, communities and civilisations."[293] More specifically, it is about ensuring greater cooperation and mutual understanding between Muslim NGOs and actors in the development system, "integrating Muslim aid agencies into the international field of humanitarian relief and development."[294] Likewise, Muslim Aid states that the organisation can "play a positive role in community development and building inter-faith relations, especially in the development sector."[295] This resonates with donors' expectations. In Islamic Relief's Partnership Programme

[290] Islamic Relief, Annual Report 2008, p. 5.
[291] Muslim Aid, Strategic Framework 2007-2010, p. 4.
[292] Muslim Aid Pakistan, website (emphasis added), http://www.muslimaid.org.pk/aboutus.html (last accessed 11. May 2011).
[293] Islamic Relief, Annual Report 2006, p. 2.
[294] Islamic Relief, Annual Report 2006, p. 13.
[295] Muslim Aid, Souvenir Brochure, p. 2.

Agreement with DfID, for instance, the objectives are not only child poverty in East Africa, but also development awareness projects among Muslims in the UK. In a similar vein, inter-faith partnerships such as those between Islamic Relief and Christian Aid or Muslim Aid and UMCOR, are repeatedly praised by development aid agencies. Similar trends were seen in IICO and IIROSA, expressed in their engagement in various initiatives for the promotion of 'moderation'. This points to the unique expectations that Muslim NGOs, post-9.11., are subject to, compared to other organisations (whether secular or religious). As was noted in the discussion of IIROSA and IICO's claims to moderation, in order to be legitimate, Muslim NGOs cannot simply be providers of aid, but must engage in activities outside the provision of aid, contributing to building bridges between 'Islam' and 'the West', through these activities contributing to paying off the debt of collective guilt surrounding Muslim NGOs.

'In faith-based organisations, you will never get 100 percent professionalism'

Alongside these official claims to a secularised or instrumentalised religious authority, inferior to professional authority, some segments in Islamic Relief and Muslim Aid seek to promote a religious authority that is much more conservative and formal. This way of framing religious authority clashes not only with the conceptions of religious authority outlined above, but also, and perhaps more importantly, with claims to professional authority. In essence, this is a conflict that stems from the highly heterogeneous staff constellation. In the analysis of IIROSA and IICO, we saw that attempts to merge claims to religious and professional authority were largely successful, something which can, at least in part, be ascribed to the fact that conceptions of professional authority in these two organisations is limited to questions of financial accountability, while staff remain subject to criteria of religious authority. In Islamic Relief and Muslim Aid, on the other hand, processes of professionalization have included the employment of young development professionals alongside older and more religiously conservative staff and trustees. The young development professionals (who in parenthesis made up most of my informants) claim that trustees and parts of management are eager to promote an image of the organisation as 'professional' to institutional donors, but at the same time they want to maintain a certain level of religiosity internally in the organisation, satisfying their own and certain individual donors' demands for a more formal religious legitimacy. And this conflicts with young staff members' expectations of working in a professional development organisation. As one person says with regret: "In faith-based organisations, to be honest, you will never get 100 percent professionalism."

The struggle between religious and professional development authority plays out in different ways. I have identified at least three strategies through which conservative religious staff seek to subvert the official ideology of development professionalism, making space for conservative religious practices. One strategy is to prevent non-Muslim staff members from influence. Since mid-2000s,

both Islamic Relief and Muslim Aid have employed several non-Muslim staff members, emphasising their status as 'equal opportunities employers'.[296] But many people wonder whether they are being used to promote an image of organisational diversity and pluralism. A former staff member claims: "They are driven by a need to be *seen* as diverse and moderate rather than a wish to actually *be* diverse and moderate." In reality, some staff argue, there are few career opportunities for non-Muslims. For instance, there are no non-Muslims in the boards or among top managers. One woman says that she finds it 'very difficult' to be a non-Muslim in a Muslim organisation, and because of this, she does not see a future for herself in the organisation (in fact, she moved on to a different organisation shortly after I interviewed her). [297]

Another strategy is to exercise subtle pressure on Muslim staff in order to encourage them to comply with conservative Islamic practices. This is particularly pronounced in relation to gender practices. Reflecting norms of professionalism in mainstream development aid, Islamic Relief and Muslim Aid officially promote gender equality. However, several staff members point out that in many respects, the organisations are still dominated by conservative Islamic gender ideals. Compared to other transnational NGOs, Islamic Relief and Muslim Aid have remarkably lower numbers of women employed. In CARE's office in Bangladesh, for instance, more than 30 percent of staff are women,[298] while in Islamic Relief and Muslim Aid country offices, the percentage is lower than 10.[299] No trustees are women, and very few management positions are occupied by women. Instead, women are employed in bottom- and mid-level positions such as secretaries, teachers, assistants and project coordinators. Some staff report of informal and indirect pressure for women to comply with religious requirements and cover their heads. A person from one of the headquarters says that she has experienced periodic 'massive pressure' on female staff members to wear hijab. Others report of more explicit demands for a 'modest dress code'. In one of the country offices, female staff members tell me that they have been specifically asked to cover: "We are not fundamentalist, we are moderate here. So there should not be any rules for women. There are no special rules for the boys," a woman says. "We have said that to the management several times. But they say that it's the dress code." In another country office, a young man tells me about an episode in which a visiting trustee from the UK asked the receptionist to put on a headscarf. "As a professional, this is something I cannot tolerate," he says. "When this happened, we felt bad, we were reminded that this is a faith-based organisation." Staff members claim that these practices challenge the organisations' image as professional development NGOs. "We perform gender

[296] All Islamic Relief's job advertisements, for instance, note that Islamic Relief is an "equal opportunities employer" (see also Islamic Relief, Annual Report 2006, p. 18).
[297] In 2009, when I visited Muslim Aid headquarters, two members of the management team were non-Muslims, but they have since left the organisation.
[298] According to a CARE staff member, 91 out of 264 are women (e-mail communication, 16. December 2009).
[299] The number is higher if including staff in the field.

equality training, but we don't follow this ourselves," says one person. She feels that this creates a barrier in relations to other, secular NGOs, stigmatising the organisation: "Other organisations look at us. There might also be women from the other organisations that cover, but they do it because they have decided to do so on their own, not because they were told to do so by their organisation." "Donors should start enquiring about this," her colleague says. "Perhaps that would help."

A third, and more radical, strategy is to simply fire or push out the people who do not allow space for or encourage conservative religious practices. The fate of Muslim Aid's previous director testifies to this: Eager to move the organisation in a more professional direction, he trained old staff and hired new staff, including several women and non-Muslims. But soon trustees started expressing their scepticism with these changes, seeing them as contradictory to conservative Islamic doctrines and practices. When I interviewed the director in 2008, he knew there were problems with the board, saying that he may have implemented changes too fast: "Internally in the organisation, there has been some reluctance. All the trustees are Muslim and they are male. And they are first generation immigrants. They share the goals that I have, but perhaps they don't agree with the strategy." Half a year later, he left the organisation – officially to establish his own organisation, unofficially because the board pressured him to leave. A top manager from another organisation says flat out that he was fired: "There was a struggle between the hardliners and the moderates. And I don't know whether it's the good or the bad that are left." Staff members in the organisation express the same worry: "He tried to make the organisation come out from its religious mind-set, he tried to make it secondary," says a young development professional in Bangladesh. "But now again we are confused. When [he] left, we all started thinking 'wow, again we might be …'"[300]

This analysis of organisational legitimacy has argued that Islamic Relief and Muslim Aid frame their organisational legitimacy primarily in terms of a professional authority, centering on notions such as science and research, management, accountability, and staff expertise, and echoing conventional conceptions of professionalism in any Western development NGO. In this perspective, Muslim Aid and Islamic Relief see themselves as much closer to non-religious or Christian NGO such as Oxfam, Save the Children or Christian Aid than to IIROSA and IICO. Thus, whereas IIROSA and IICO defined themselves, for good and bad, in opposition to 'the West' and 'Western organisations', seeing themselves as part of a community of Muslim organisations,

[300] A staff member in Islamic Relief thinks that Hani al-Banna withdrew from Islamic Relief precisely because of this conflict: "My personal opinion is that he wanted to take the organisation in a particular direction, making it more a mainstream development organisation […] However, he came up against other senior staff and trustees who were more conservative and he became frustrated and left. There was talk that he would return after a year or two, but that was over two years ago now."

Muslim Aid and Islamic Relief, define themselves in opposition to Gulf-based and other Muslim organisations, creating a dichotomy between professional and unprofessional, modern and traditional, but also between secular and religious Muslim NGOs, or – in the War on Terror terminology – between moderate and fundamentalist NGOs.

Alongside these claims to a professional authority, both organisations make claims to a religious authority. Based on conceptions of religion as a matter of personal motivation and underlying organisational values, or in terms of an instrumentalist 'added value', contributing to dialogue and enhanced development efforts, this is a religious authority that is compatible with, and inferior to, ideals of professionalism. Reflecting the highly heterogeneous staff constellation, however, there are elements in the organisation that challenge these priorities, making claims to a more formal, conservative religiosity through subversive strategies such as ignoring staff, subtly pressuring them, or simply firing them. These different conceptions of organisational authority and NGO identity translate into ideological conflicts, influencing other aspects of organisational ideologies, as we shall see in the following.

Visions of aid

It is against this background of ideological tensions over organisational identity and authority that the two organisations' ideologies should be understood. The following section turns on the problems the organisations seek to solve and the corresponding visions they try to fulfil; what is in framing terminology called diagnostic framing (Snow and Byrd 2007:124). In IIROSA and IICO, we found a two-sided vision of a dignified life and a strengthened umma, responding to conceptions of poverty as simultaneously material and spiritual, individual and collective, and resulting in a focus primarily on fellow Muslims. In Islamic Relief and Muslim Aid, we can only identify one vision, responding to conceptions of poverty as multi-dimensional but not spiritual (or at least not spiritual in the same way as in IIROSA and IICO), and presenting a 'sustainable livelihood' for the individual human being as the goal of aid provision. Insofar as the vision is not spiritual, recipients are not conceived in terms of religion, but as part of a common humanity.

A sustainable and self-reliant livelihood

Islamic Relief and Muslim Aid both present their work as a response to problems of poverty and suffering. Overall, the two organisations conceptualise poverty as a question of individual vulnerability and lack of capabilities: "Many people are stuck in a poverty trap because they do not have the resources to develop their skills and work their way out of destitution,"[301] Islamic Relief notes in its strategy. Similarly, Muslim Aid conceives of poverty in terms of lack of access to basic

[301] Islamic Relief, Strategy 2007-2009, p. 19.

necessities and the skills necessary to generate an income.[302] In 2008, Islamic Relief's research and policy department developed a *Policy Stance on Poverty*, giving a more detailed idea of how the organisation conceives questions of poverty, arguably also reflecting attitudes of Muslim Aid. The paper starts by asking: "What exactly do we mean [by poverty]? Do we want to lessen the suffering of the poor, or radically reduce poverty in society? What type of poverty do we wish to alleviate?"[303] It then goes on to discuss different conceptions of and approaches to poverty, including a monetary approach, a capability approach and a rights-based approach. Against this background, the paper presents a definition of poverty as

> a multidimensional phenomenon, best understood in terms of capability deprivation, encompassing not only material deprivation (measured by income or consumption) but also other forms of deprivation, such as unemployment, ill health, lack of education, vulnerability, powerlessness, and social exclusion.[304]

This multi-dimensional understanding of poverty reflects mainstream development approaches found in organisations such as UNDP and Oxfam. But it also differs little from an Islamic understanding, the paper argues, outlining 'the Islamic perspective':[305]

> There are essentially five groups of activities and things which make up the human needs in Islam. These are: (a) Religion, (b) Physical self, (c) Intellect or Knowledge, (d) Offspring & Family, and (e) Wealth [...] necessities therefore should include the ability to perform the five pillars of Islam (Belief, Prayer, Fasting, Zakat and Pilgrimage) and calling to the way of God; protection of life (we might include here access to health services); securing food, clothing and shelter, education, the right to earn a living, to set up a family, etc.[306]

The paper goes to great lengths to align the Islamic perspective on poverty with the mainstream development culture, arguing that "the above Islamic perspective sits comfortably within the broader consensus of opinion about poverty as a multi-dimensional issue; as it is based on human needs that cannot be reflected in monetary terms alone." [307] "In particular," the paper notes, "in as far as operational measurement is concerned; the last four types of basic activities and things that make up basic human needs in Islam are similar to the indicators in the Human Development Indices, which stress the importance of income, education, and health."[308] What is more problematic, is the first type of human need – that of religion, understood as the "ability to know about and practice one's religion." The paper states somewhat ambiguously that this is "not commonly part of the development and relief 'package', and Islamic Relief's willingness to consider religious deprivation and its measurement warrant discussion."[309] It is difficult to align conceptions of poverty as (at least partly) spiritual with secular development conceptions of poverty. The

[302] Muslim Aid, website, http://www.muslimaid.org/index.php/what-we-do (last accessed 14. May 2011).
[303] Islamic Relief, Policy Stance: Definitions on Poverty, point 1.0.
[304] Islamic Relief, Policy Stance: Definitions on Poverty, point 2.8.
[305] Islamic Relief, Policy Stance: Definitions on Poverty, point 3.0.
[306] Islamic Relief, Policy Stance: Definitions on Poverty, point 3.0.
[307] Islamic Relief, Policy Stance: Definitions on Poverty, point 3.1.
[308] Islamic Relief, Policy Stance: Definitions on Poverty, point 3.1.
[309] Islamic Relief, Policy Stance: Definitions on Poverty, point 4.1.

Millennium Development Goals do not mention anything about the religious needs for mosques or Qur'an education. Instead, religion is discussed as part of poverty in the form of lack of religious freedom and discrimination against religious people; topics that do not challenge development principles of neutrality and non-confessionalism.[310] In this perspective, a multi-dimensional notion of poverty does not, as in IIROSA and IICO, refer to the equal importance of spiritual and material needs; instead, it is about including considerations as to rights and capabilities rather than relying on a strict monetary understanding of poverty. As noted in another Islamic Relief publication, *Charitable giving in Islam*:

> The Prophet (PBUH) believed that if charity were to remain restricted only to material goods, many people, especially the poor, would be excluded. However, Islam advocates a broader approach to charity, which moves beyond the material dimension, is more inclusive and helps avoid the creation of divisions based on wealth and status in society. [311]

The solutions to the problems of poverty are formulated in the language of mainstream development rather than Islamic aid. Muslim Aid states: "Our vision is the alleviation of poverty, education for all, and the provision of basic amenities for those in need; in order to create a world where charity and compassion produce justice, self reliance and human development,"[312] continuing:

> Our mission: Muslim Aid, a premier British Muslim relief and development agency, guided by the teachings of Islam, endeavours to tackle poverty and its causes by developing innovative and sustainable solutions that enable individuals and their communities to live with dignity and by supporting initiatives that promote economic and social justice.[313]

Islamic Relief presents its vision as: "[a] caring world where the basic requirements of people in need are fulfilled," and follows with the mission:

> Exemplifying our Islamic values, we will mobilise resources, build partnerships, and develop local capacity, as we work to: Enable communities to mitigate the effect of disasters, prepare for their occurrence and respond by providing relief, protection and recovery; Promote integrated development and environmental custodianship with a focus on sustainable livelihoods; Support the marginalised and vulnerable to voice their needs and address root causes of poverty.[314]

Through a terminology of improvement and progress, echoing that of mainstream development, the organisations formulate their goals of 'future success' for the poor as a question of 'self-reliance' and 'sustainable livelihoods'.[315] Reflecting broader notions of poverty, it is about helping the poor

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[310] See e.g. point 3.1.
[311] Islamic Relief, Charitable giving in Islam, p. 4.
[312] Muslim Aid, website, http://www.muslimaid.org/index.php/about-us (last accessed 25. April 2011).
[313] Muslim Aid, website, http://www.muslimaid.org/index.php/about-us (last accessed 25. April 2011).
[314] Islamic Relief, website, http://www.islamic-relief.com/Whoweare/Default.aspx?depID=2 (last accessed 28. April 2011).
[315] E.g. "give communities a real chance of future success" (Muslim Aid, website, http://www.muslimaid.org/index.php/what-we-do/healthcare-a-nutrition, last accessed 27. March 2011), and "creating successful communities" (Muslim Aid, website, http://www.muslimaid.org/index.php/what-we-do/economic-empowerment, last accessed 27. March 2011).

to "realise their full potential"[316] and establish "sustainable, self-reliant lives,"[317] "independent of outside aid,"[318] creating "a sustainable, brighter future for themselves and their communities."[319] Self-help is the solution to poverty (Hattori 2003:162). In other words, the gift the beneficiaries receive is the gift of self-realisation (Stirrat and Henkel 1997:73). In this perspective, aid is about creating capacities and generating income for the individual poor; it is not about empowering the individual Muslim in order to strengthen the umma, as in IICO and IIROSA. Thus, whereas IICO and IIROSA's conception of aid is based on a religiously defined vision, resonating with general principles of Islamic aid, the aid of Islamic Relief and Muslim turns on a secular vision, echoing mainstream development ideals and leaving only little room for religion. Put somewhat simply, one may say that while IICO and IIROSA work to promote an Islamic culture – the umma – Islamic Relief and Muslim Aid work to promote a development culture.

Aid for humanity

Because the vision is not spiritual, aid can be given to all. According to both Islamic Relief and Muslim Aid, the provision of aid is not restricted to Muslims, but extended to "disadvantaged people across the globe, irrespective of their faith, colour and race,"[320] something which is repeated numerous times on websites, in annual reports, brochures and in interviews. Recipients are no longer understood in terms of fellow Muslim brothers and sisters in a global Muslim umma, but as part of a global humanity. While earlier annual reviews and reports of Islamic Relief and, especially, Muslim Aid, talked of "the Muslim Ummah," "the message of Muslim brotherhood" and "projects to improve the quality of education and skills for young Muslims,"[321] both organisations now explicitly emphasise their work with non-Muslims, distancing themselves from other Muslim organisations seen to be discriminatory and proselytising. "We are keen to raise awareness that we work with non-Muslims,"[322] Islamic Relief states in its latest strategy, while Muslim Aid quotes a recipient for saying that "[a]t first we thought that Muslim Aid would not give us anything because we were Hindu but we were wrong – Muslim Aid helps everybody."[323]

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[316] Islamic Relief, Annual Report 2008, p. 50.
[317] Islamic Relief, website, http://www.islamic-relief.com/whatwedo/8-LK-136-orphan-sponsorship.aspx (last accessed 27. March 2011).
[318] Muslim Aid, Strategic Framework 2007-2010, p. 17.
[319] Muslim Aid, website, http://www.muslimaid.org/index.php/what-we-do/education (last accessed 27. March 2011).
[320] Muslim Aid, Financial Statement 2008, p. 11. Islamic Relief has a similar formulation: "regardless of race, colour, political affiliation, gender or belief" (Islamic Relief, Annual Report 2008, p. 4). Notably, this universalism does not include sexual orientation. G. Clarke (2010:n.24) notes that Muslim Aid's Annual Review 2006 included a commitment to tackling poverty "regardless of religion, ethnicity, nationality, disability, sexual orientation, gender or age." According to an interviewee, this reference to sexual orientation troubled some trustees and was not likely to appear in future publications, something which has proven correct. Likewise, Islamic Relief's HIV/AIDS material does not include references to homosexuality.
[321] All examples from Muslim Aid, Annual Review 1999.
[322] Islamic Relief, Strategy 2007-2009, p. 21.
[323] Muslim Aid, Annual Review 2008, p. 4.

Emphasising notions of "people from across the globe" and "the whole of humanity,"[324] the two organisations echo mainstream aid discourses on universalism, reflecting a rationale predicated on notions of a shared humanity rather than religious solidarity. We help each other because we are all human – not because we are Muslims. Or, in the words of a staff member in Bangladesh: "We care about humanity, we don't care about their faith." Another staff member, also in Bangladesh, tells me: "We tell people that we have come to work for them, whether they are Muslim, Hindu, Christian, it doesn't matter to us. The important thing is that you are a human being." A headquarter staff member tells me about Muslim Aid's orphan sponsorship program, aptly termed the Rainbow Family, carrying connotations of diversity and cosmopolitanism: "The families can be all kinds – that's why we call it the Rainbow Family. They can be black, white, Muslim, Christian, Hindu." A photo on one of Muslim Aid's brochures hammers home the point, showing a black child wearing a big cross in his necklace and holding a Muslim Aid package (Yaylaci 2007:31). Likewise, in Muslim Aid's microfinance project in Bangladesh, staff continuously emphasise that 10 percent of the women are Hindu, reflecting the general composition of the population. Islamic Relief's orphan's sponsorship programme includes Christian children and donors; several recipients of microfinance loans are Hindus; even Ramadan food packages are distributed to non-Muslims. Also, in recent years, both organisations have increasingly been promoting activities in non-Muslim countries. After the earthquake in Haiti in January 2010, for instance, Islamic Relief set up camps for victims of the earthquake, providing 1,100 families with accommodation, water, food and medicine. Likewise, after the earthquake in Japan in March 2011, both organisations launched emergency appeals for victims of the disaster, urging their donors to contribute. A month after the earthquake, the "Japan tsunami earthquake appeal" was still front page news on Islamic Relief's website.[325]

This universalist approach is legitimated by reference to Islamic principles: "If you look at it from the side of Islam, most instructions from the Prophet Muhammad and the Holy Qur'an are about motivating people to help others, to support and help especially the poor," says the country director in Islamic Relief's Bangladesh office. "And they don't mention what kinds of poor – they don't say what gender, what race, what religion." Likewise, listing its organisational values of neutrality, impartiality and inclusiveness, an Islamic Relief annual report declares that "[t]hese values align with Islamic values."[326] However, despite these attempts at legitimating universalism by reference to Islam, the focus on non-Muslims as well as Muslims does conflict with some donors' (and staff members') expectations of religious authenticity. Following orthodox Islamic traditions, many donors expect at least zakat donations to be used exclusively for Muslims. In his analysis of Islamic

[324] Muslim Aid, Financial Statement 2008, p. 11
[325] Islamic Relief, website, http://www.islamic-relief.com/Emergencies-And-Appeals/1-89-japan-tsunami-emergency-appeal.aspx (last accessed 28. April 2011).
[326] Islamic Relief, Annual Report 2006, p. 20.

Relief's individual donors, Khan (forthcoming) finds that almost two-fifths of donors, or 37.5 percent, strongly believed that at least zakat donations should be restricted to Muslims.[327] He quotes one donor, allegedly echoing statements of many others: "I do not support other charities because I want my donations to go towards helping Muslims" (Khan forthcoming:6).

Like IICO and IIROSA would align their focus on Muslims with mainstream demands for universalism by way of pragmatic arguments, claiming that the majority of the world's poor are Muslim, so Islamic Relief and Muslim Aid try to align their universalist focus on Muslim and non-Muslim poor with individual donor expectations of religious solidarity with fellow Muslims. A common strategy is *ambivalence*. When directly asked about whether the organisation uses zakat donations for non-Muslims, most staff members say that they are not sure of this, referring to management for clarification. In one of the organisations, a high level staff member writes to me, somewhat vaguely responding to my question: "[T]here has been some debate about this issue among Muslim scholars, and as I mentioned in one of my emails to you that Zakat has 8 categories and it varies from one to another. Therefore, you will not find a Yes or No answer from any party." A high level staff member from the other organisation says:

> We support both Muslims and non-Muslims, we interpret the verses in the Qur'an like that. But practically, we work primarily in Muslim areas and zakat is only 3-4 million out of our 40 million budget, so we can tell people that their zakat money goes to Muslims if that's what they want.

Even in official documents, this ambiguity is maintained. In Islamic Relief's 2009 Annual Report, for instance, it says: "Islamic Relief Worldwide applies the Zakat in accordance with the legislative usage as specified in the Qur'an. Thus, it is primarily applied to humanitarian programmes that benefit poor and needy beneficiaries with basic needs."[328] Such statements illustrate how the organisations attempt, if only temporarily, to merge mainstream development's demands for universalist inclusion with (some) Muslim donors' demands for religiously defined particularism.

Another way of satisfying donor expectations of a focus on fellow Muslim is to maintain a strong emphasis on Muslim majority countries, mirroring the approach of IIROSA and IICO. As was noted in chapter 7, Islamic Relief and Muslim Aid have historically focused on countries such as Pakistan, Palestine and Bangladesh; a focus that has been maintained throughout the years, parallel to the inclusion of other countries (see the table below for an overview of Islamic Relief and Muslim Aid's top ten countries in respectively 2009 and 2005).

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[327] This number may be higher among donors from the Middle East. In an interview with Khan, a regional fundraiser notes that "most of the donors I deal with believe that *zakat* donations are restricted to Muslims, in fact if we used *zakat* donations to assist non-Muslims then they would cease giving to the organisation altogether" (Khan forthcoming:6, emphasis in the original).
[328] Islamic Relief, Annual Report 2009, p. 58.

This priority is in turn justified to secular development donors such as DfID by reference to pragmatic arguments, similar to those heard in IICO and IIROSA. As Muslim Aid states on its FAQ section on the website, answering the question **"**Do you only help Muslim countries?": "Although we work in countries with a large Muslim population, these are countries that that are affected by conflict and natural disasters. We strive to work where the need is greatest."[329] An Islamic Relief staff member agrees: "[A] lot of the countries in which there is poverty are in fact Muslim," she says.

Table 8.1. Islamic Relief, top ten countries (2009)[330]

Country	Percentage
Palestine	23.6
Bangladesh	7.7
Pakistan	8.5
Sudan	5.4
Indonesia	3.0
Kenya	2.5
Somalia	2.0
Chad	1.6
Mali	1.5
Ethiopia	1.3

Table 8.2. Muslim Aid, top ten countries (2005)[331]

Country	Percentage
Pakistan	20.6
Indonesia	12.3
Somalia	10.3
Bangladesh	7.1
India	5.4
Sudan	5.1
Sri Lanka	4.2
UK	4.0
Kashmir	3.7
Palestine	3.3

[329] Muslim Aid, website, http://www.muslimaid.org/index.php/about-us/faqs (last accessed 2. May 2011). Compared with Oxfam, Islamic Relief and Muslim Aid do in fact share a focus on countries such as Kenya, Pakistan, Palestine, Bangladesh, Indonesia and Sri Lanka. In 2010, for instance, Oxfam's ten largest programmes were in Kenya, Congo, Haiti, Zimbabwe, Pakistan, Palestine, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Sri Lanka and the Philippines (e-mail correspondence with Oxfam's UK office, 2. August 2010).

[330] Information from Islamic Relief, Annual Report 2009, p. 71. The percentage refers to the percentage of total expenditure. Naturally, focus varies from year to year, depending on disasters, wars and other emergencies. However, there seems to be some stability insofar as the programmes in Palestine and Pakistan have been among the largest for several years. In 2006, for instance, the five largest programmes were in respectively Pakistan, Palestine, Sudan, Indonesia and Bangladesh (Annual Report 2006, p. 46). In 2007, the five largest programmes were in Indonesia, Sudan, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka, with Palestine as no. six (Annual Report 2007, p. 63). In 2008, they were in Palestine, Bangladesh, Sudan, Pakistan and Indonesia (Annual Report 2008, p. 68-71).

[331] Muslim Aid, Annual Review 2005 (later reviews do not include such overviews).

A somewhat more sophisticated argument that can at once satisfy these expectations as well as individual donor demands for a focus on fellow Muslims is what we may call the *religious proximity argument* (Palmer 2011; Benthall 2008b; Benedetti 2006). According to this line of thought, a common religion (much like a common culture) creates a symbolic sense of community among beneficiaries, NGOs, and other actors in the aid process, which in turn brings about 'added value' through e.g. ease of access and provision of more culturally appropriate services (Palmer 2011:97). In the sense that this approach builds on an understanding of religion as a source of community, it resonates with IICO and IIROSA's conceptions of the umma, with the important difference that in Islamic Relief and Muslim Aid, the umma comes to be an instrument, not a goal in itself. In this perspective, Muslim NGOs are better suited to work in Muslim areas because they know the culture and the religion; therefore it makes sense for Islamic Relief and Muslim Aid to work primarily in Muslim countries. Adhering to this logic, an Islamic Relief staff member says: "We have an understanding of the culture and religion that gives us an advantage." Another staff member notes: "I think in the future [the organisation] will also focus increasingly on Afghanistan, Iraq and Yemen where perhaps it can claim to have 'privileged access' and therefore be able to receive greater institutional donor funds." Thus, in this perspective, the religious proximity argument serves at once to satisfy individual donor demands for a focus on countries in which they have affiliations, and institutional donor demands of added value and enhanced development efforts.

Summing up, the above section has presented us with the problems and visions around which Islamic Relief and Muslim Aid's aid ideologies center. Reflecting some of the conflicts and ideological negotiations outlined in the discussion of organisational identity and authority, the analysis has drawn the contours of a largely secularised vision of aid provision, turning on notions of sustainable livelihoods and self-reliance, but constantly adjusted to include religion in different ways. Against this background, a number of points are important to mention: First, the vision is a response to conceptions of poverty as non-spiritual. While Islamic Relief and Muslim Aid promote a 'multi-dimensional' conception of poverty, in contrast to purely 'monetary' or material conceptions of poverty, they reject the inclusion of religious or spiritual needs on a par with material needs (as was seen in IICO and IIROSA). Instead, they seek to include considerations to religion in the form of a focus on religious freedom and discrimination of religious minorities, easy to align with mainstream discourses of human rights.

Second, when poverty is not defined in spiritual terms, aid can be distributed to all. While IICO and IIROSA's vision turned on notions of spiritual poverty and the umma, manifested in a focus on fellow Muslims, the vision of Islamic Relief and Muslim Aid calls for the inclusion of poor people, regardless of their religion. This universalist approach, however, clashes with certain donor (and

staff) expectations of zakat as an exclusive Muslim tax as well as with institutional donor expectations of an 'added value' of faith-based organisations. In order to satisfy these differing expectations, Islamic Relief and Muslim Aid use strategies of ambivalence and pragmatic arguments. Most successful, however, is the argument of religious proximity, relying on conceptions of religion as a coherent and homogeneous community between donors, recipients and NGOs, facilitating ease of access and culturally appropriate services.

Rationales

The vision of sustainable livelihoods is based on a particular rationale, presenting different 'vocabularies of motive' (Snow and Byrd 2007) for engaging in the realisation of this vision. In IICO and IIROSA, the underlying rationale for engaging in the provision of aid was explicitly religious, turning on notions of Islamic duty, rewards and solidarity. In Islamic Relief and Muslim Aid, on the other hand, 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.

Islamic morality and the Millennium Development Goals

Like IICO and IIROSA, both Muslim Aid and Islamic Relief emphasise the religious duty to help as an important element in their organisational rationale. Providing aid is, as an Islamic Relief publication puts it, an "Islamic duty of care"[332] and a "moral duty of Muslims to continuously and fervently work for a more just and humane society."[333] In an annual report Muslim Aid notes that "Islam, under the institution of Zakah, makes it a duty on its adherents to work towards the removal of poverty."[334] And elsewhere: "Muslim Aid works to alleviate human suffering as part of Islamic duty to all mankind."[335] "It's a faith responsibility," says a Muslim Aid trustee. "It's not just a job." The two organisations also refer to the religious rewards gained by supporting the provision of aid. Through quotes and sayings from the hadith and the Qur'an, donors are motivated to support the organisations. Many of the references are the same as those used by IIROSA and IICO, although the presentation may be slightly different. As Muslim Aid writes in an announcement encouraging people to volunteer in the organisation: "Join the Muslim Aid Family and help serve your brothers and sisters across the world this Ramadan. Not only is it a fantastic opportunity to meet new people, get some great experience on your CV but it is during this time that good deeds are most rewarded."[336]

[332] Islamic Relief Strategy 2007-2009, p. 21.
[333] Islamic Relief, Translating Faith into Development, p. 4
[334] Muslim Aid, Financial Statement 2008, p. 11.
[335] Muslim Aid, Code of Conduct Policy, p. 2.
[336] Muslim Aid, website, http://www.muslimaid.org/ramadan/volunteer (last accessed 27. March 2011).

However, Islamic Relief and Muslim Aid also present substantial differences from IICO and IIROSA. In their perspective, the duty to provide aid may be Islamic, but it is not uniquely so; the values of trust and solidarity are not particular to Islam or even to religion, but simply "common values which underpin a healthy society,"[337] as a Muslim Aid publication notes. These common values are expressed in, for instance, the UN Millennium Development Goals, which make up a core element in both organisations' motivational framing. Printed on the back of each of Islamic Relief's Partnership magazines and posted on the walls in the most remote of Muslim Aid's field offices, the Millennium Development Goals seem to have taken the place that the quotes from the Qur'an and hadith occupy in IICO and IIROSA. "Our work with the world's poorest is guided by the Millennium Development Goals,"[338] Islamic Relief declares in one of its annual reports. Similarly, Islamic Relief's UK office writes that the organisation commits itself "to harnessing our outputs and outcomes to achieve the Millennium Development Goals."[339] And Muslim Aid's chairman writes in the organisation's 25th Anniversary Souvenir Brochure, outlining the focus areas of the organisation:

> We are now focused on capacity building, disaster mitigation, microfinance for development and helping local communities achieve the underperformed targets in the UN Millennium Development Goals, especially in educating the girl child, women health and maternity and poverty eradication.[340]

This emphasis on the moral duty to aid others is closely connected to notions of rights. As fellow human beings, the poor have a right to receive aid: "We work from the perspective that the Prophet taught – that the poor have a right to this help. You are not really helping them, they are entitled to this assistance," says Muslim Aid's country director in Bangladesh. Combining religious references to poor people's right to zakat with a mainstream discourse on human rights, both organisations quote the Qur'an: "'And those in whose wealth there is a recognised right for the beggar who asks and for the unlucky who has lost his property and wealth.'"[341] Muslim Aid then declares: "Islam teaches the equality of all humanity and actively promotes individual rights such as the right to life and freedom, the right to justice, the right to freedom of thought and religion and the right to education [...] Muslim Aid believes that all humans have the right to development."[342] The right to aid may be outlined in the Qur'an, but it is not a right that is unique to Muslims. In other words, the right to aid is conditioned not so much on religious reciprocity and solidarity, but on a common humanity, echoing mainstream human rights discourses. Unlike IIROSA and IICO, Muslim Aid

[337] Muslim Aid, Strategic Framework 2007-2010, p. 17.
[338] Islamic Relief, Annual Report 2006b, p. 50.
[339] Islamic Relief UK, website, http://www.islamic-relief.org.uk/AboutUs.aspx (last accessed 1. May 2011).
[340] Muslim Aid, Souvenir Brochure, p. 2.
[341] Muslim Aid, Strategic Framework 2007-2010, p. 16. See also Islamic Relief, website, http://www.islamic-relief.com/Whoweare/Default.aspx?depID=2 (last accessed 28. April 2011).
[342] Muslim Aid, Strategic Framework 2007-2010, p. 15f.

and Islamic Relief do not consider the human rights discourse to be problematic, using it instead as a way to align development discourses with discourses of Islam.

Guaranteeing the rights of the poor

IICO and IIROSA's rationale, building on notions of solidarity, encouraged conceptions of the relationship between giver and recipient as a personal and intimate relationship, expressed in terms of brotherhood and family, and resonating with the prominent position of individual donors. Muslim Aid and Islamic Relief's more abstract rationale, based on notions of a common humanity and the rights of the poor and aimed not only at individual donors but also, and increasingly so, at development agencies, has other consequences for the ways in which the aid chain is conceptualised.[343] In particular three aspects are worth mentioning: the agency of recipients, the prominence of the NGO, and the invisibility of individual donors.

First, the notion of aid as predicated on a contractual relationship of rights and duties encourages a conception of recipients as proactive agents rather than grateful beneficiaries. In both Islamic Relief and Muslim Aid, recipients are portrayed as individuals who are capable and willing to change their life. For instance, Islamic Relief's 2009 Annual Report front page shows a picture of a woman harvesting fruit, smiling to the camera. The text reads: "Ismeta Hutinovic tending her crop of fruit trees in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Ismeta and her husband took out an interest-free loan from Islamic Relief to start up a fruit-growing business."[344] Through a 'people-centered', 'inclusive' and 'beneficiary-led, approach,'[345] "involv[ing] communities in their own development,"[346] recipients are interpellated as active agents of change, entering into partnerships on equal terms with the NGOs in order "to identify their needs and collectively find ways of overcoming their problems."[347] Unlike IICO and IIROSA, Muslim Aid and Islamic Relief do not see their role as one of 'rescuing', 'liberating' and 'saving' the poor, but instead as one of 'enabling', 'assisting', and 'mobilising' them.[348]

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343 Interestingly, it seems that in the case of Palestine, a more emotional, solidarity-based rhetoric is often used. Muslim Aid, for instance, writes that "When our team entered Gaza on May 19th 2009 [...] the humanitarian crisis, although very real, was masked by the determination and courage of the people of Gaza to overcome the recent conflict and ongoing siege. Our projects, both new and ongoing, were progressing well and were a testament to the fact that our brothers and sisters could rebuild their lives if given the opportunity. Through their smiles and warm welcomes, it was obvious that your compassion, your commitment and your duas had been received and had made all the difference, alhamdulillah" (Muslim Aid, website, http://www.muslimaid.org/index.php/what-we-do/disaster-and-emergency/eye-witness-gaza, last accessed 28. April 2011).

344 Islamic Relief, Annual Report 2009, p. 1.

345 E.g. Muslim Aid, Strategic Framework 2007-2010, p. 16.

346 Muslim Aid, Strategic Framework 2007-2010, p. 17.

347 Islamic Relief, Annual Report 2008, p. 44.

348 E.g. "ensure that individuals can have access to basic necessities and the skills necessary to generate an income so that they are not permanently dependent on aid agencies for food and shelter" (Muslim Aid, website, last accessed 7. October 2010).

At the same time, however, there is a clear limit to the agency of recipients. They are never entirely autonomous, capable of changing their fate themselves, but have to be assisted by the NGOs, facilitating their change. Case stories printed in annual reports and on websites all describe this process, following roughly the same pattern of change from misery and suffering to relief, through organisational intervention. On its website, Muslim Aid posts a story about Anis: "'I couldn't see clearly and my eyes used to tear a lot if I read for too long. Now I can see much better than before,' said Anis, who was diagnosed with long-sightedness at Muslim Aid Sri Lanka's eye camp and prescribed glasses by the doctor."[349] Almost resembling a religious conversion, the meeting with Islamic Relief and Muslim Aid is described as a turning point, leaving recipients empowered and capable of changing their own lives – but also grateful and somehow obliged to pay back this gift of self-realisation, as in Islamic Relief's story about Piyara: "Piyara is so happy with the help she has received that she is now committed to spreading the message of disaster preparedness to other communities."[350]

Interestingly, recipients' gratitude is not directed at the individual donor, as in IICO and IIROSA. When aid is a moral duty rather than an act of solidarity, there is no sense in praising the giver. This is reflected first and foremost in the fact that donors are not mentioned very often – neither in interviews nor in PR material – compared to IICO and IIROSA where discourses are often, implicitly or explicitly, directed at 'the generous donors'. Secondly, donors are not praised, but addressed in much more pragmatic terms, through an instructive and sometimes slightly lecturing language. "What will YOU sacrifice this Eid?"[351] Muslim Aid asks its donors, using a straight-forward approach far from IICO and IIROSA's admiration and reverence towards its 'generous donors'. And further, addressing its orphan sponsors: "Your sponsorship is *not* a substitute for a loving caring family."[352] Similarly, Islamic Relief UK encourages donors to support the organisation with the somewhat patronising: "Just help one."[353] Unlike in IIROSA and IICO, for Islamic Relief and Muslim Aid individual donors are not the ultimate givers of aid, but merely 'supporters' and 'facilitators' of the aid that the organisations have chosen to give. They are not treated as masters to be served by the organisations, but as students who can learn from the organisations. In a brochure promoting donations through waqf, Islamic Relief presents a number of short stories about fictional donors, neatly illustrating this educational function. All stories provide examples of people who, after having been educated by Islamic Relief, decide to support the organisation. One story

349 Muslim Aid, website, http://www.muslimaid.org/index.php/what-we-do/education/spectacle-distribution-in-sri-lanka (last accessed 27. March 2011).
350 Islamic Relief, Annual Report 2008, p. 47.
351 See one of Muslim Aid's fundraising videos here: http://wn.com/Islamic_Relief_Qurbani_Appeal_What_Will_You_Sacrifice (last accessed 27. March 2011).
352 Muslim Aid's Rainbow Family website (emphasis added), http://www.rainbowfamily.org.uk, last accessed 27. March 2011.
353 Islamic Relief UK, website, http://www.islamic-relief.org.uk/index.aspx (last accessed 2. May 2011).

tells about Abdullah who, after hearing about the work of Islamic Relief through a friend, "decided that participating in the Waqf Future Fund would be more beneficial for him [than buying a car] in the long term."[354] Another example of this educational function is Muslim Aid's orphan sponsorship programme. As one donor says, after having visited his sponsor child: "The visit has given me an insight into the life of Bosnian children after the war as well as a real feel for the people of Bosnia. I will Insha'Allah try my best to inform and educate other brothers, family and friends."[355]

Instead, gratitude is directed at Islamic Relief and Muslim Aid, and, more abstractly, to "the message of disaster preparedness" (or, if you may, the message of development more generally). When aid is a question of rights, the NGO becomes important as the guarantor that this right is upheld. Thus, the aid chain is not so much a direct and personal relation between donor and recipient, with the NGO serving as facilitator (as we saw in IIROSA and IICO) as it is an institutional relation between NGO and recipient, with the donor serving as the facilitator. Islamic Relief's Accountability Framework, with the title *Enabling Poor People to Shape their Future*, aptly expresses this relationship, emphasising the organisation's accountability towards recipients rather than towards donors: "In order to create [a] quality relationship with our beneficiaries and to be responsible for the burden given to us by donors, we must start by increasing our accountability to them."[356]

This rationale resonates well with (and is encouraged by) institutional donor expectations. They do not have the same explicit demands or expectations of gratitude, and their institutionalised, de-personalised support gives the NGOs a possibility to maintain an illusion of independence and sovereignty (all the while they are of course becoming subject to a wide range of other demands and expectations). According to staff, the increase in institutional funding has enabled the organisation to work more freely. A person from Islamic Relief's headquarters says: "In 1999, less than five percent of our funds came from institutional donors and the majority from private donors. This restricted us, as donors push the work in a certain direction. Now, 30 percent are from institutional donor, which allows us to do more development-oriented, demanding work." His colleague says: "Our support from institutional donors such as DfID, UN and others paid for the

354 Islamic Relief, Waqf Brochure, p. 6.
355 Muslim Aid, Annual Review 2007, p. 13. This educational function of Muslim NGOs is also expressed in Islamic Relief's partnership with DfID. One of the goals of the agreement is to raise "awareness and commitment to international development" among "young people and the Muslim-based communities within the UK" (Islamic Relief, PPA Self-Assessment Review, p. 4). This is done through e.g. the organisations' Development Education Unit which works to "deliver the message of development education to the students of today" (Islamic Relief UK, website, http://www.islamic-relief.org.uk/developmenteducation.aspx, last accessed 11. May 2011). Muslim Aid has been involved in similar projects; its first DfID grant, for instance, was for a development awareness project in Britain.
356 Islamic Relief, Accountability Framework, p. 5.

activities that the individual donors wouldn't pay for." As such, the individual donor is increasingly marginalised and scorned as the one who ties down the NGO, preventing it from engaging in professional development activities, while the institutional donor is idealised as facilitator of the NGO's (albeit illusory) position as independent from donor demands. At the same time, however, segments in both organisations are sceptical of these changes in the aid chain, preferring aid provision to remain a direct relation between recipient and donor. A staff member from Muslim Aid explains: "They [the religious conservatives] see sending grants as the best way to fight poverty. In their view, our duty is to get the money to the people in need as soon as possible. There are religious arguments for this. You cannot keep the money for the poor for long." We shall discuss this further in the section on strategies below.

The above analysis of organisational rationales in Muslim Aid and Islamic Relief presents a rationale that is based on a loosely defined Islamic morality, coining the provision of aid as a question of duties and rights. These duties and rights, however, are not restricted to Muslims, but are best understood in terms of a common humanitarian duty, expressed as clearly in the Millennium Development Goals as in the Qur'an. Like IIROSA and IICO's rationale of solidarity had consequences for the ways in which the chain of aid was conceived, so does this rationale of Islamic morality and rights. Three points are worth noticing in this respect: One, recipients are interpellated as (relatively) active agents; two, they are grateful not to donors, but to the NGO, leaving donors in a position of invisibility and humility, far from the revered position they had in IICO and IIROSA; and three, this means that the NGO is promoted to a position of importance, as the guarantor of poor people's rights.

Strategies

Now, how is the vision and the underlying rationale manifested in concrete strategies? In order to reach their vision of 'sustainable livelihoods' for the poor, Islamic Relief and Muslim Aid engage in a wide range of concrete activities, clustered under headings such as 'emergency relief', 'health and nutrition', 'orphan sponsorships', 'water and sanitation', 'shelter', 'sustainable livelihoods', 'economic empowerment', 'Feed the Needy' and 'seasonal projects', the two latter covering activities such as Qurbani sacrifices and Ramadan food packages. See the tables below for an overview of activities and budgets.

I argue that these activities can be organised under four different headings, presenting four different strategies that each expresses slightly different ways of merging Islam and mainstream development aid: Long-term development, Islamic traditions, and Islamic development, each representing different ways of merging aid and religion. These strategies should be understood in

general terms, as tendencies and repertoires of action rather than in the sense of concrete organisational activities.

Table 8.3. Islamic Relief, overview of activities (2009)[357]

Activity	Percentage
Emergency relief	32.4
Orphans	24.2
Health and nutrition	12.0
Qurbani	7.4
Sustainable livelihoods	7.1
Education and vocational training	6.4
Water and sanitation	5.0
Feed the Needy (Ramadan)	3.8
Advocacy projects	1.6
Total	100

Table 8.4. Muslim Aid, overview of activities (2009)[358]

Activities	Percentage
Health care	36.3
Emergency relief	34.7
Economic empowerment	9.7
Shelter and infrastructure	5.6
Qurbani/Ramadan	3.9
Water and sanitation	1.9
Education	1.7
Rainbow family (orphans)	1.2
Capacity building	0.6
Other costs	4.5
Total	100

Aid as long-term development: Empowering the poor

In order to solve problems of poverty, Islamic Relief and Muslim Aid introduce the strategy of what we may call 'long-term development', reflecting their vision of 'sustainable livelihoods' and echoing the mainstream vocabulary in the development culture. This is the dominant strategy in the two organisations, encompassing and shaping almost all activities. In defining this strategy, the organisations rely on a now common dichotomy between on the one hand 'development', and on the other, 'charity' and 'hand-outs'. 'Development' as a strategy is about long-term, sustainable activities, empowering poor individuals to change their lives, while charity and hand-outs are short-term, providing immediate relief but not contributing to any real change in the lives of the poor. In the publication *Translating Faith into Development*, Islamic Relief notes that

> the focus of Muslim charities' activities has generally been quite paternalistic and centred in particular on providing relief and basic services - there has been only limited involvement in longer-term development projects that focus on empowering the poor. Involvement in advocacy

[357] Islamic Relief, Annual Report 2009, p. 61.
[358] Muslim Aid, Financial Statement 2009, p. 12.

> campaigns that address the root causes of poverty has been almost entirely absent. This contrasts with the activities of western secular and non-Muslim faith based organisations.[359]

Both organisations often emphasise their own progress from a focus on short-term emergency relief and traditional Islamic charity to long-term development activities, reflecting an increase in expenses for activities such as 'education and vocational training' and 'sustainable livelihoods' (even though they do in fact still spend a much larger part of their budget on relief activities). One person says: "Now, we are starting to explore other ways of combating poverty." As noted in an Islamic Relief annual report:

> When Islamic Relief was initially set up we responded to natural and man-made disasters. As the scope and scale of our activities increased, we began to address the long-term requirements of people in need and started tackling the underlying causes of poverty by promoting sustainable development.[360]

Muslim Aid describes its organisational history in similar terms:

> Muslim Aid was founded in 1985 when leading British Muslim organisations joined together to respond to endemic humanitarian crises in Africa [...] As the charity grew, the scope of its work expanded. Whilst continuing to fulfil its commitment to emergency relief work Muslim Aid also began to implement longterm development programmes. Today, Muslim Aid is tackling the root causes of poverty through education and skills training, economic empowerment, orphan care, women development, water, healthcare and shelter and construction programmes.[361]

This hierarchisation of strategies is not uncommon among NGOs. Especially since the 1990s, the mainstream aid field has seen an increasing obsession with 'sustainable development', reflecting an almost paradigmatic shift in conceptions of aid (Benthall 2008a:88). For many NGOs, aid has changed from being about the provision of immediate relief to the suffering, handing out food and building shelters, to a focus on 'sustainability,' 'participation' and 'capacity building', aimed at 'empowering' people to become self-reliant and productive, active agents of their own development (Stirrat and Henkel 1997:73).[362] In this process, the provision of immediate relief came to be seen as somewhat misguided and even suspect, placing the poor as passive recipients of charity, locked in positions of dependency. At the same time, this paradigmatic shift represents an increased emphasis on issues of planning, management and organisation – in short, the professionalisation of aid – coined in opposition to the immediacy and spontaneity of charity and relief.

With the increasing popularity of the discourse of sustainable development, it has come to encompass a broad range of activities. On Islamic Relief's website, for instance, activities such as 'sustainable livelihoods', 'education', 'health and nutrition', 'orphans and child welfare', 'water and sanitation' and 'emergency relief and disaster preparedness' are all listed under the heading

[359] Islamic Relief, Translating Faith into Development, p. 6
[360] Islamic Relief, Annual Report 2006, p. 20.
[361] Muslim Aid, Souvenir Brochure, p. 4f.
[362] Muslim Aid even uses the term 'customers' (see e.g. Muslim Aid, Annual Review 2007, p. 2), carrying strong connotations of business relations.

'Development.'[363] Muslim Aid distinguishes between relief and development, but maintains that the overall approach is development-oriented, integrating relief efforts into an overall development strategy to tackle "the root causes of poverty."[364] Downplaying the random, short-term and immediate character of emergency relief, the organisations insert such activities in a long-term, planned-for framework under the heading of 'disaster preparedness programmes' and 'disaster management schemes', aimed at "empower[ing] communities to deal proactively with emergency situations."[365]

The strategy of sustainable development leaves little room for religion. Islamic Relief and Muslim Aid both claim that "Islamic values [...] are embedded and integrated into our programmes,"[366] but in concrete terms, religion is almost invisible in most activities. This is particularly emphasised among country office staff, where people rarely mentioned religion: "We have no intention to use Islam in our work. We feel no need to tell people about Islam," says a manager of one of Muslim Aid's projects in Bangladesh, adding with a smile: "And honestly, how much information do we have about Islam?" Another person, from Islamic Relief's headquarters, says: "These are all standard programmes, there are no specific Islamic elements in this." There is no mention of mosques, Qur'an schools, or religious tapes – neither when staff members talk about activities, nor in annual reports or at project sites. At one of Islamic Relief's project sites in Bangladesh, we meet with a group of women, the 'beneficiaries' of the project. In the middle of their weekly meeting with the 'village motivator', all the women are gathered in the village center – a square of maybe 50 m2, surrounded by mud huts and palm trees. Here, they learn about topics such as 'group dynamics', 'income generation activities', and 'disaster preparedness', all of them (stereo)typical activities of mainstream aid. "This way, we try to develop their capacity, so they can join the development mainstream," one staff member explains to me. I ask the women if they talked about Islam at their weekly meetings and they all laugh and shake their heads. "We talk more about practical things," a woman says. A staff member adds: "Our main objective is to provide an input to beneficiaries – what they are doing in relation to Allah, to their God, that's their own business, that's not really our business."

In fact, religious activities and development activities are, at least to a certain degree, seen as opposites, and the activities of visibly religious organisations such as IICO and IIROSA are considered as 'old-fashioned charity' and 'hand-outs'. "The classical Muslim way of doing charity is about building a mosque, digging a well, distributing food," one person explains. "This is fine, it is

[363] Islamic Relief, website, http://www.islamic-relief.com/whatwedo/Default.aspx?depID=3 (last accessed 25. April 2011).
[364] Muslim Aid, Souvenir Brochure, p. 5.
[365] Islamic Relief, Annual Report 2008, p. 6. See also Muslim Aid Souvenir Brochure, p. 8.
[366] Islamic Relief, Strategic Framework 2007-2010, p. 21.

helpful. But in Islamic Relief, we have decided not to build mosques. We find that funds can be used to something more important such as reducing poverty, building capacity." "When we work, we don't go to the Qur'an to see what to do. We work from a development perspective," says a project manager in Muslim Aid, responsible for a health project in Bangladesh. Islam is irrelevant to the installation of water pumps in the villages; to the training of young, unemployed electricians in the slums; and to the running of health clinics in refugee camps. In fact, it might even be an obstacle to long-term sustainability. As a person from Islamic Relief's office in Jordan says: "The IICO and the IIROSA, I don't know much about them, but I would assume that they are traditional. They spend a lot of money slaughtering sheep for Qurbani and the next day, it's all gone. It doesn't last. They need to think more strategically, they need strategic support." Or as another staff member puts it: "The Middle Eastern NGOs are very narrow-minded in their approach. Its only relief, only about Qurbani, distribution of food, those kinds of things. We do that as well, of course, but only as a small part of our programme. Our main focus is development."

This secularisation of activities is closely related to the increase in institutional funding from development aid agencies such as DfID and ECHO. As a staff member puts it: "In the day-to-day programmes, there is no influence by Islamic principles. There's more of an echo of Western principles and donor wishes." This process of secularisation concurrent with increased funding from development agencies has been noted by other researchers. Thus, Ebaugh et al. (2006:2269) as well as Smith and Sosin (2001:654) both find a negative correlation between religiosity and institutional funding, concluding that activities are fundamentally altered in a secular direction when NGOs get institutional funding. Or as Green et al. (2010) put it, in contexts of externally driven development agendas, faith-based organisations are not fundamentally different from other, secular, NGOs. Reflecting this process of homogenisation, a staff member in Muslim Aid Bangladesh says, comparing activities in his organisation with those of secular NGOs: "[T]he donor funding is the same, the reporting mechanisms are the same, the places we work are the same, the way we implement projects is the same. So how could there be any differences?"

Aid as Islamic tradition: Ramadan meals and Qurbani slaughters

Parallel to this secularised development strategy, in part shaped by and directed at institutional donors, we find another strategy, much more explicitly religious. This strategy may not be as dominant as the development strategy, but it is older and can be traced back to the early years of the organisations. At least on the surface this strategy is coined in terms quite different from the development strategy – here, aid is not about 'vocational training' or 'health clinics', but about 'Qurbani sacrifices', 'Ramadan meals', and 'orphan sponsorships'. It is, in other words, about activities that are defined by and growing out of Islamic traditions of charity. Apart from paying zakat and giving sadaqa, there are a number of specific traditions related to charitable giving in

Islam. Some of them are part of annual holidays, such as serving *iftar* meals and paying *zakat al fitr* to the poor during Ramadan, slaughtering goats and cows for Qurbani and giving a part to the poor; others relate to life events, such as *akeekah*, the slaughtering of animals on the seventh day after a child's birth and giving parts to the poor; and yet others are thematic, such as supporting orphans because the Prophet Muhammed himself was an orphan. Through different activities, Islamic Relief and Muslim Aid seek to uphold some of these traditions; during Ramadan, for instance, they distribute food packages, and for Qurbani, they slaughter cows and distribute the meat. These activities make up a relatively large share of budgets – Islamic Relief spends 10 percent on Qurbani and Ramadan, for instance, while Muslim Aid spends four percent. Likewise, they both have large orphan's programmes; in Islamic Relief, this programme accounts for as much as 24 percent of the budget.

Different aspects shape this strategy. First, and most obviously, the religious activities are a way for the organisations to facilitate individual donors' wish to uphold religious rituals and traditions, and through these, to be a good Muslim, honour God, and collect religious rewards. A staff member from Muslim Aid's office in Bangladesh says: "Muslims donate to charity. They donate when they have a child, if they cannot fast during Ramadan, and so on. So these sorts of religious funds keep coming." This function becomes particularly important in a context such as the British where Muslims are a minority. As one person says, it is not really possible to slaughter a goat in your backyard in Birmingham in order to celebrate the birth of your son. Secondly, these religious traditions do not only serve to facilitate religious rewards for individual donors, they also function as a way to establish and maintain bonds between immigrants and their country of origin (P. Levitt et al. under review:5). Many Muslims in Britain still have relatives in their country of origin, they go on vacation there, and some find their husband or wife there. Giving to Muslim Aid or Islamic Relief can be a way for donors to support their country of origin. As a staff member in Muslim Aid's office in Bangladesh explains to me:

> The Muslims in UK they know about the people in their villages, they are in the back of their minds, so they want to send them something. It's a spiritual thing, a mental thing. It's not development, it's a divine feeling. One person from here, one person from there – they are thinking about each other. Family bonds are very strong here.

Some staff members, in particular among trustees and older staff, consider these religious activities to be the authentic and original activities of the organisation and the individual donors to be the core sources of funding. They are sceptical of the more recent development-oriented strategies and the institutional funding, fearing that this will lead the organisation to forget its responsibilities as a Muslim organisation and alienation of individual donors. In their perspective, individual donors come to be equated with religiously defined aid, institutional with secular aid. Others – in particular the young, country office staff – are more critical of the Qurbani sacrifices and the Ramadan meals. While accepting their historical and religious legacy in the organisations, many

are uncomfortable with the potential challenges to mainstream development that these activities present, threatening the reputation of the organisations among institutional donors as 'moderate' development-oriented NGOs.

In order to overcome the schism between mainstream development ideals and religious wishes of donors (and certain staff and trustees), there is a constant attempt on the part of the organisations to adjust the religious activities to development strategies through ideological negotiations. One way of doing this is to compartmentalise these activities as 'special', 'not normal', and 'seasonal', restricted to specific times of the year. In publications, these activities are often relegated to the last pages. In Muslim Aid's Souvenir Brochure, for instance, the section on *Seasonal programmes* is placed at the far end, after the sections on *Partners* and *Your contributions*.[367] Thus, rather than seeing these religious activities as an integrated part of aid provision (as IICO and IIROSA do), Islamic Relief and Muslim Aid present a compartmentalised and isolated religiosity, relegated to the sphere of religious holidays. A different way of adjusting seasonal activities to mainstream development is to align them through slight reformulations and reinventions. An example is the annual celebration of Qurbani. Each year, both Islamic Relief and Muslim Aid slaughter thousands of cows and goats and distribute the meat to the poor. In 2009, Islamic Relief slaughtered 360 cows in Bangladesh alone, distributing the meat in packages of 1-2 kg to more than 20.000 families. But rather than legitimising these 'seasonal' activities by reference to religious traditions, they are often explained in terms of development principles, coined as regular food distribution or combined with vocational training and economic empowerment projects. In a similar vein, and aligning Islamic traditions with principles of universalism, both Islamic Relief and Muslim Aid attempt to include non-Muslims, at least in their Ramadan activities: "The Qurbani distribution is only for Muslims, other religions don't like it. The Hindus don't eat cow meat, you know [...] For Ramadan, it's different. Our food package includes 13 kg of rice, flour, sugar, many basic things. So it's for everyone, other religions are interested in this as well," the person responsible for Islamic Relief's seasonal activities in Bangladesh explains to me.

Another example is the orphan sponsorship program, a highly popular activity with both organisations. As noted above, care of orphans is an old Islamic tradition. The prophet Muhammad was an orphan, and it is said that he who supports an orphan will be close to Muhammad in heaven. "The orphans are very special in our religion," says one staff member from Muslim Aid's headquarters. Islamic Relief supports 27.000 orphan children in 23 different countries, 6.000 of these in Pakistan which is the biggest program. In Bangladesh, the organisation supports more than 450 orphans. Muslim Aid supports more than 1,400 children, around 100 of them in Bangladesh. The organisations offer the children financial support, education, and health check-

[367] Muslim Aid, Souvenir Brochure, p. 25.

ups until they are 18 years old (girls in some cases until they get married). Staff members often note that in itself the orphan sponsorship programme cannot be characterised as 'sustainable development': "In my opinion, the sponsorship programme does not contribute to development in the sense of teaching people to fish. It just gives people a fish," says a top manager from Islamic Relief's headquarters, continuing: "I'm not saying that we should abandon the sponsorship program, it plays an important religious role and it's important for the donors, but we need to complement it with other programmes, such as microfinance."

Instead of cancelling the programme, upsetting thousands of donors, the organisation tries to combine it with education and vocational training for the children, teaching them about human rights, HIV/AIDS, gender equality and other mainstream development topics, thus satisfying both religious and institutional donors. In Bangladesh, I visited one group of adolescent orphans and their teachers, two young women. The teachers meet with the young people five times a month, sometimes in their homes, sometimes in the local resource center, or in the schools. Listing their main activities, one of the teachers says: "We teach them about life skills, reproductive health, HIV/AIDS, sexually transmitted diseases, adolescent life, sexual behaviour, general health, social behaviour, early marriage – if you marry early, your life will be ruined, you know." On the day of my visit, the teachers have organised an event on the occasion of the international HIV/AIDS day, inviting local politicians and public figures to speak. A small booklet has been produced by Islamic Relief for the event, listing scientific facts about the disease as well as giving advice on how to avoid the disease, get treatment and treat people who are infected. "This is a donor requirement, it's part of government curricula," the project manager tells me. Based on the booklet, the speakers talked about the importance of staying with one partner, and if that is not possible, to use condoms. All the adolescents sit on wooden benches, listening to the speeches. There is no gender segregation, and many of the girls are unveiled. After the speeches, all participants form a procession, walking to the city center while shouting slogans such as "Access for everyone to human rights" and "Support the international HIV/AIDS day." Compared with IIROSA's orphan education, described above, this kind of education is thoroughly embedded in a development culture.

Islamic development: 'Translating faith into development'

Now, the analysis of Islamic Relief and Muslim Aid has presented us with two kinds of strategies: One – the most dominant, in terms of discourses, if not in terms of funding – is a secular strategy reflecting mainstream development discourses and activities, and building on a secularised notion of religion. The other, perhaps less dominant but older, strategy turns on 'seasonal' activities, legitimated in and defined by religious traditions, albeit increasingly adjusted to development ideals. There is, however, a group of activities that cannot easily be placed under the rubric of either 'secular development' or 'seasonal activities'. Instead, these activities – including e.g. Islamic

microfinance projects and disaster preparedness training in mosques – can be seen as expressions of a third strategy, seeking to Islamise development, presenting concepts of development, universalism and human rights as truly Islamic. This strategy builds on the idea of the added value of Muslim organisation, echoing an instrumentalist religious authority and arguments about religious proximity, as laid out above: religion is useful, because it can improve the concrete implementation of mainstream development activities.

Staff members tell me how religion can be a helpful tool in countries such as Bangladesh and Somalia, facilitating communication of development principles to a pious population: "We tell them, in Islam, education is important," a top manager in Muslim Aid's headquarters says. "If you don't send your children to school, you are not fulfilling your religious duties." Another person, likewise a top manager, but in Islamic Relief's headquarters, says: "The effect is much stronger if Islamic Relief says the prophet Muhammad encouraged breast feeding than if someone says that professor so and so encourages it." Likewise, many people note that religious organisations are more aware of beneficiaries' religious demands and traditions, winning over people and gaining access. One person from the headquarters tells about the work of Islamic Relief in Pakistan:

> South East Asians are more conservative than Africans. So when we work there, we respect for instance gender separation and we have to make sure that only women teach women. We worked in South Pakistan, which is very very conservative, and we first worked with the male community organisation and it took two years before we were allowed to work with the women. I don't think other organisations would have been allowed.

Finally, religious structures and leaders can be used to further development projects and ideas. In Muslim Aid, for instance, there are plans to implement a non-formal education programme in Somalia together with UNICEF, and the person responsible for this project tells me that he has suggested that the education be based in local mosques: "There's no education infrastructure there. So we said, why don't we use the mosques for education? They are only used five times a day for prayer, the rest of the time they are empty. The prophet himself used the mosque as a school."

One of Islamic Relief's first attempts to integrate religion into its development activities was a project implemented in Bangladesh in 1996. Bringing together 40 imams from rural areas, the purpose of the project was to teach these religious leaders about development issues and encourage them to talk about this in their Friday sermons. The training lasted for a week, and the first two days were spent arguing, the project manager (who now works in the headquarters) tells me: "But in the end, we agreed on almost everything – except for the issues related to family planning. So we said, let's leave that and focus on the other things." The group decided to focus on children's rights and drafted ten sermons, based on UNICEF's educational material, Facts for Life for Religious Leaders. Of the 40 people participating, 35 accepted to be 'social mobilisers', using these texts in

their Friday sermons. The current country director of Islamic Relief in Bangladesh is considering a similar idea – training imams in disaster preparedness: "Because you know, the mosques are the first places people go to when there's a disaster, and the mosque is the first charity to help people," he explains. "So maybe if we trained the people, we could improve and enhance their capacities to tackle this situation. And working with the mosques, you get access to all locations." Despite the obvious focus on a particular religious group, he maintains that this would not be a 'religious activity' but an activity that would benefit 'the whole community.' This comment displays the inherent tensions in the strategy of Islamised development, on the one hand promoting the strengths of a religious identity and on the other hand claiming to be based on universalist principles.

Another example of the strategy of Islamic development is the microfinance loans that both Islamic Relief and Muslim Aid offer, reinventing Islamic principles and integrating them into a mainstream development project. These activities are frequently promoted by staff and in PR material as 'Islamic', and as such, as something that distinguishes the organisations from others. Today, most international NGOs run some form of microfinance activities, and in this perspective, there is not necessarily anything particularly 'Islamic' about Islamic Relief and Muslim Aid's microfinance projects. Muslim Aid and Islamic Relief's microfinance projects are organised the same way that most other microfinance projects are, and at first sight, it is difficult to find any signs that they should be particularly Islamic. Muslim Aid's training material on cattle rearing talks about beef fattening, cow weight tables, and vaccinations, and in Islamic Relief's community group meetings, the women discuss fertilisers, insects, and harvest times. Nobody mentions anything about Islamic principles and practices. The only visible signs of a religious identity I find in Muslim Aid on the back of the pink booklet in which the women write down their weekly instalments. Here, a number of principles are listed, echoing the Grameen Bank's 16 decisions but slightly reformulating them and integrating religious sayings. Quoting the Qur'an, one principle reads "We will obey our religious beliefs and rules and encourage other people to practice their own religion," another "We will send our children to school and madrasa" and a third "We will grow garden vegetables in the land of our home."[368] But for the two organisations, the particular Islamicness of their microfinance projects lies elsewhere. Staff members frequently point out that unlike other organisations, their microfinance projects have an almost 100 per cent pay-back rate; repayment rates being the main indicator for success in microfinance projects (Cons and Paprocki 2010). And this success is ascribed to a specific Islamic approach. For Islamic Relief, the particular Islamicness of their microfinance activities lies in the fact that the organisation gives loans in-kind, based on Islamic economic principles: "We don't charge interests, we don't give them cash, Instead we talk to them about what they would like to do, give them training and then we buy them a cow or what

[368] Muslim Aid, Microfinance Booklet.

ever they want. This way, they don't spend the money on other things. This is the Islamic way," says a manager of one of the projects in Bangladesh. For Muslim Aid, what makes the organisation's activities Islamic is also the fact that there are no interests on the loans, in Islam considered haram. As one person in Muslim Aid's country office explains: "This is the home of micro finance, but I think you'll find that our projects are a bit different. We only charge a minimum of service charges. Some organisations charge more than 15 percent in interests, for them it's more like a business. For us, it's only about covering costs". In both cases, Islam is what makes the Muslim organisations' microfinance more successful, fair and sincere. Thus, based on Islamic economic principles, the microfinance programme has a distinct religious character (at least on the surface), but is at the same time in line with mainstream development ideals of sustainability and capacity-building, and as such serves as a perfect example of the added value that religious NGOs can bring to development aid.

Summing up, the above section has outlined three strategies identified in the discourses of Islamic Relief and Muslim Aid, reflecting and relying on different conceptions of the nexus between Islam and aid. One strategy, the most dominant one, is coined in terms of long-term development efforts, focusing on sustainability and participation, and coined in opposition to relief and traditional charity (and as such, in opposition to e.g. Gulf-based NGOs). This strategy is almost entirely secular, responding to secular visions of sustainable livelihoods, and resonating with institutional donor demands for sharp distinctions between religion and aid. Parallel to this, we find the strategy of seasonal activities, or Islamic traditions, turning on religiously defined activities such as Ramadan and Qurbani, aimed at satisfying individual donor expectations of Islamic aid. In attempts to align this strategy with secular conceptions of development, the organisations try to compartmentalise activities, sharply delineating them from other activities, or they seek to integrate them into mainstream development by slightly reformulating them, adjusting them to secular visions of sustainable livelihoods. In a similar vein, the third strategy – Islamic development – merges elements from the Islamic aid culture with that of development, presenting a strategy that can at once satisfy individual donor expectations of an authentic Islamic aid and institutional donor expectations of an added value of faith-based organisations, relying on notions of religious proximity.

Conclusion

Chapter 7 showed that, unlike IIROSA and IICO, Islamic Relief and Muslim Aid are strongly heterogeneous organisations: Not only are their audiences heterogeneous, including individual Muslim donors (in itself a diverse group of people) as well as mainstream development agencies and NGOs such as DfID, ECHO and Oxfam; their organisational constellation is also highly heterogeneous, roughly divided into religious conservatives (among trustees, management and

older staff members) and development professionals (among the young staff members and in country offices). This heterogeneity is reflected in organisational ideologies, characterised by continuous conflicts and negotiations.

Overall, Islamic Relief and Muslim Aid both try to promote an aid that resonates with the values of the development aid culture, more specifically those of institutional donors such as DfID, and ECHO, framing themselves as highly professional organisations, based on a vision of sustainable livelihoods for the poor, a universalist approach to recipients, and a strategy of long-term development – in other words, a largely *secularised aid*, contrasted with IIROSA and IICO's sacralised aid. As such, the two organisations have, at least on the surface, accommodated their ideology to the culture of development aid without major modifications: It is an ideology that may have religious roots but whose strategies are not designed to fulfil a religious vision or assist a religiously defined target group, whose donors are not religiously defined and whose staff is chosen for professional rather than religious qualifications (Thaut 2009:333, G. Clarke 2008:32).

In this, religion cannot be an all-encompassing element, as in IIROSA and IICO, as it would violate fundamental principles of a distinction between aid and religion. Instead, religion is confined to specific and well-defined functions and spaces, acceptable primarily in the form of underlying values and 'ethical references' (Benedetti 2006:855), inspiring and motivating people rather than shaping organisational activities and structures in concrete and visible ways. In this perspective, Islam is primarily about individual, or perhaps inter-personal, spirituality, thus resembling what Lincoln (2003) has called a 'minimalist religiosity'. This type of religiosity is particularly pronounced among the young development professionals in the two organisations. Paraphrasing Nagel and Staeheli (2009:101), for these staff members, religion remains intensely personal and private, even as it shapes the way they view the world and their motivations for working in an NGO. Disillusioned with their parents' version of Islam which they see as an introverted and culturally tainted 'village Islam,' they search for a more universalist Islam, more compatible with modernity and the lives they lead in Britain (P. Lewis 2007). This is "a worldly religion that talks about inner peace and spiritual well-being and rejects religious observance in which rite is an end in itself" (Tammam and Haenni 2003, cf. Mandaville 2007:329).

Although dominant in organisational discourses, this ideological interpretation (or certain parts of it) is constantly challenged by some trustees and older staff members. Promoting an aid ideology in which values of the Islamic aid culture count at least as much as those of the development culture, they seek to present an aid ideology that resonates with their own religiosity as well as that of conservative Muslim donors. For them, Islam is a collectively oriented social practice, visibly manifested in social activism through rituals, traditions and dogma (and as such, in many ways

similar to the religiosity of many people in IIROSA and IICO). They want an aid ideology in which the religious character remains distinct, and the organisation maintains a clear religious orientation as the primary motivation for its work, with closer ties to religious authorities and donors, more religious staff and an explicitly religious working culture, as well as a religiously influenced approach to identifying and working with beneficiaries (Thaut 2009:337, G. Clarke 2008:32).

At the same time, development agencies such as DfID do not simply want to support yet another secularised NGO. They expect Islamic Relief and Muslim Aid to present an 'added value' as faith-based organisations, distinguishing themselves from non-religious NGOs and promoting the strengths and unique qualities of being a Muslim organisation. They expect Muslim NGOs to be able to facilitate access and improved communication with recipients, using their religious identity as a tool to enhance development efforts without ever compromising development principles of neutrality, universalism and non-confessionalism.

Juggling with these different expectations, Islamic Relief and Muslim Aid present attempts at merging the cultures of development and Islamic aid by *Islamising development aid* in different ways. Compared to IIROSA and IICO, and somewhat simplifying, one may say that this is an ideology which builds primarily on the culture of development aid, while integrating elements from the Islamic aid culture, whereas IICO and IIROSA's ideology of developmentalised Islamic aid builds on the culture of Islamic aid, integrating elements from development aid. In IIROSA and IICO, the two cultures were merged through strategies of adoption, pragmatic alignment and integration. Islamic Relief and Muslim Aid present their own ways of merging cultural frames, although in some respects mirroring those of IICO and IIROSA.

Perhaps the most controversial approach to merging elements of development and Islamic aid is the approach I have referred to as *subversive* merging. This is an approach that seeks to maintain one type of frame unofficially while promoting another officially. An example of subversive merging is found internally in both organisations where trustees and older staff attempt to maintain conservative religious practices. Although the board has encouraged the increasing secularisation of aid activities as a way of attracting institutional funding, trustees still expect a certain level of religiosity among their staff members. This is particularly evident in relation to issues of gender practices. Despite official adherence to mainstream development ideals of gender equality, the organisations employ fewer women than men, women are rarely employed in top management positions and they are often subject to indirect or direct pressure to comply with religious rules such as covering.

Another approach is *ambiguity*. As noted above, a constructive ambiguity about core terms (Hammack and Heydemann 2009:22) can conceal ideological differences (Dahl 2001:20; cf. Mosse 2005:36). This approach has proven particularly useful in relation to issues of zakat where individual donor expectations of zakat as an exclusively Muslim mechanism of redistribution clash with institutional development donor demands for universalism. Avoiding any definitive or categorical statements, Islamic Relief and Muslim Aid maintain a constructive ambiguity, opening up for different interpretations. This approach is closely related to that of pragmatic alignment (described in chapter 6). In IIROSA and IICO, pragmatic alignment served as a way for the organisations to align their religious solidarity with development principles of universalism. In Muslim Aid and Islamic Relief, it also works the other way around to align the organisation's universalist approach with donors' expectations of a religious solidarity.

Finally, Islamic Relief and Muslim Aid rely on *integration* as an approach to merging different cultural frames. Like IIROSA and IICO integrated aspects of the development culture into the culture of Islamic aid, Muslim Aid and Islamic Relief integrate elements of Islamic aid into the culture of development aid. Examples of this approach abound, as can be inferred from the above. One example is the inclusion of imams in disaster management training, using religious structures to promote the message of development. Another example is the microfinance programmes that both organisations run. Based on Islamic economic principles, the microfinance programme has a distinct religious character, but is at the same time in line with mainstream development ideals of empowerment and self-reliance, and as such serves as a perfect example of the added value that Muslim NGOs are expected to bring to development aid.

While the analysis of IIROSA and IICO demonstrated that these organisations cannot not simply be understood as 'fundamentalist' or 'traditional' Muslim organisations, flat out rejecting the culture of development aid, this analysis has in turn showed that Islamic Relief and Muslim Aid must be understood more broadly than as 'moderate' faith-based organisations, firmly embedded in the culture of development aid. Instead, they are highly complex and hybrid organisations, constantly balancing multiple expectations of widely differing audiences. A former Islamic Relief staff member says, somewhat frustrated, that he thinks all these expectations of Islamic Relief are sometimes unfair: "[A]fter all it is simply a humanitarian aid organisation." But the point is precisely this: in the contemporary aid field, transnational Muslim NGOs can never simply be humanitarian aid organisations; they have to simultaneously be secular development NGOs, faith-based organisations and Islamic charities.

CONCLUSIONS

Studying transnational Muslim NGOs

Inspired by the increasing number and visibility of transnational Muslim NGOs in the field of aid provision, this thesis has provided an analysis of four transnational Muslim NGOs – Islamic Relief, Muslim Aid, the International Islamic Relief Organisation and the International Islamic Charitable Organisation – exploring what I have called their *ideologies of aid*. Through empirical case studies of these four organisations, the thesis has presented the first comprehensive account of ideological meaning systems in transnational Muslim NGOs. Asking questions as to how transnational Muslim NGOs present themselves, their aid and their religion, this study has explored the ways in which meanings associated with aid and Islam are produced, expressed, contested and reworked in certain ways, how historical processes have led to those particular meaning constructions, and how they are redefined in the light of changing social, economic and political contexts (Deneulin and Rakodi 2011:51). More specifically, the analysis was guided by a number of research questions:

- How do contemporary transnational Muslim NGOs present their ideologies of aid? In these ideologies, how do they define 'aid', 'Islam' and the nexus between the two?
- What are the factors and conditions that have shaped the different kinds of ideologies found among these NGOs?
- How do transnational Muslim NGOs manoeuvre in relation to major cultures of aid provision? Do they see themselves primarily as part of mainstream development traditions or in relation to a global Muslim umma? Or do they navigate in between the two, merging, translating and contributing to the creation of entirely new cultures of aid provision?

Answering these questions, the thesis has contributed to rethinking conventional approaches to the study of transnational Muslim NGOs. As was discussed in chapter 1, transnational Muslim NGOs have traditionally been studied as political actors or as faith-based organisations, often with a view to determine their positive or negative contributions to respectively politics and aid. While both of these literatures have contributed to bringing to the fore a kind of organisation that is often overlooked, they also present a number of weaknesses insofar as they are characterised by an instrumentalist, and often normative, understanding of transnational Muslim NGOs, exploring their potential as tools for the implementation of development projects or in a political struggle for the Islamisation of society. Without neglecting this instrumentalist role of certain organisations, the present thesis has sought to nuance the picture of transnational Muslim NGOs by broadening the scope of the analysis, based on explorative and empirical case studies.

For one, this study has approached transnational Muslim NGOs first and foremost as NGOs engaged in aid provision rather than as tools in political struggles for the Islamisation of society. As such, I have sought to challenge not only conventional analyses of transnational Muslim NGOs, but also broader tendencies to view all things Muslim or Islamic through the lenses of the political. We must, in the words of Alberto Melucci (1989), put aside old habits of viewing social processes through the lenses of the political, reducing the social to matters of the political. Such an approach may open up for the identification of discourses and practices which may seem invisible, irrelevant or simply uninteresting in terms of formal political power but which may nonetheless play an important role at other levels of society, in particular in relation to the production and reproduction of social norms, values and morality. In other words, these 'social' expressions of Islam are not interesting only or even primarily because of their potential influence on the formal political system, but because they might influence and change what is outside the formal political system – civil societies, behaviour, attitudes, cultural symbols, and value systems (Bayat 2005:898). With this analysis, I hope to have contributed to conceptualising and thinking about public Islam such that its significance exists in something other (or at least something more) than an interest in influencing the formal political system (Mandaville 2008) – in shaping conceptions and cultures of aid, for instance.

Second, I have approached transnational Muslim NGOs as NGOs rather than as faith-based organisations, seeking to challenge some of the conceptions underlying contemporary studies of faith-based organisations. As has been discussed above, much literature on faith-based organisations is based on preconceived and rather static notions of 'religion' as well as 'aid'. Very little research seems to open itself up to the question of what it means to be religious for these NGOs. Against this, the present analysis has conceptualised religion not as a static or single variable, but as processes of religionisation, as an aspect of meaning construction, on a par with constructions of 'aid'. Instead of discussing pros and cons of the integration of faith-based organisations in development, this approach has opened up for broader explorations of the ways in which religion and aid are signified and practiced in these organisations, and thereby allowing for more flexible, multifaceted and subjective conceptions of the nexus between aid and religion (Jones and Juul Petersen forthcoming). To grasp these processes and systems of meaning construction, I have introduced the concept of ideology, defined as a meaning system or a world view that is formulated and shared by a group of people, with the purpose of guiding and motivating them in their quest for what they perceive to be the common good or the ideal society, as well as promoting and justifying their agenda, garnering support and ensuring legitimacy (Snow and Benford 1988:198; Williams 1995:125). As such, the thesis focused on the ways in which transnational Muslim NGOs conceptualise what they are doing and why they are doing it, imagine what they are

trying to accomplish, and understand what constitutes the available sets of acceptable or legitimate discourses on aid and Islam (Hammack and Heydemann 2009:8).

More specifically, the analysis put forward a number of conclusions. In the following, I shall sum up on some of the most pertinent ones, discussing a) the different factors shaping the trajectories and ideologies of transnational Muslim NGOs; b) the different types of aid ideologies presented by the four organisations studied; and c) the ways in which the organisations merge aspects from different aid cultures in their ideologies. Finally, I shall briefly discuss the ways in which the aid ideologies of these organisations may point to the emergence of new aid cultures.

Cultures of aid: Development and Islamic aid

Much literature has conceptualised the field of aid provision in terms of a largely Western system of development aid, at the expense of other, more periphery forms of aid provision, thus downplaying the fact that aid provision is a site of struggle between different aid paradigms (Tvedt 2002:370). Seeking to decenter such mainstream conceptions of aid provision, chapter 3 of the thesis put forth the argument that transnational Muslim NGOs and their ideologies are best contextualised as part of two different *aid cultures*; namely a, largely Western, culture of development aid, and a, largely Middle Eastern, culture of Islamic aid, shaped by different historical trajectories: The development culture has grown out of an experience of power and hegemony, of colonising, but also out of sentiments of collective guilt and a sense of complicity in the creation of 'distant sufferer', stemming from the same colonial legacy (Chouraliaki 2010:111). The Middle Eastern Islamic aid culture, on the other hand, is shaped by experiences of marginalisation, of being colonised, and of the poor not as a distant sufferer, but as a fellow member of the (religious) community. Against this background, the development culture, promoted by actors such as the United Nations, the World Bank, Western governmental aid agencies and transnational NGOs, emphasises concepts such as universalism and neutrality, assuming a strictly secularised conception of religion. The Islamic aid culture, promoted by the Muslim Brotherhood, the Muslim World League, Islamic personalities and local charity associations, emphasises notions of solidarity and justice, closely intertwined with a visible, pervasive religiosity.

Again, I should emphasise that this division into an Islamic aid culture and a (largely) Western aid culture was not meant as a repetition of Huntington's clash of civilisations thesis. First, they are not per definition or inherently in opposition to each other. And second, these cultures are not generic but temporary and historically specific, constantly changing and over time merging into new cultures. In this perspective, and echoing Arce and Long (2000:24), the analysis of the ways in which transnational Muslim NGOs navigate in relation to these two cultures should be understood

as an attempt at abandoning "a binary opposition between Western and non-Western epistemologies and practices, and instead attempt[ing] to deal with the intricate interplay and joint appropriation and transformation of different bodies of knowledge."

The historical trajectories of the organisations, outlined in chapter 4, testified to this constant interplay between the two cultures of aid, in different ways and with differing intensity shaping the organisations and the ways in which they conceptualise aid. Overall, the thesis argued that transnational Muslim NGOs can be seen as expressions of two parallel phenomena: the surge of transnational development NGOs and the increase in transnational Muslim organisations as part of the Islamic resurgence in the 1980s. Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, however, transnational Muslim NGOs positioned themselves as part of an Islamic aid culture rather than a culture of development aid, focusing their aid on fellow Muslim recipients. Getting most of their funding from Muslim individuals, businesses and sometimes governments in the Middle East, they did not need European or North American donors; they cooperated little with UN and other international institutions; and they did not participate in transnational networks for NGO cooperation. Even Muslim NGOs in the West focused primarily, if not entirely, on fellow Muslim donors and recipients, serving mainly as vehicles for the distribution of zakat from immigrants to poor people in their villages of origin. As such, transnational Muslim NGOs lived largely parallel lives to those of actors in the culture of development aid, primarily relating to these actors by way of competition, conflict or at best parallel co-existence.

The thesis has argued that this parallel existence came to an end with 9.11. and the War on Terror, at once forcing and encouraging transnational Muslim NGOs to relate explicitly to the culture of development aid, thus transforming them into sites of cultural meetings. Within a year of the attacks, several transnational Muslim NGOs were closed down or banned from working, suspected of cooperating with Al-Qaeda or other militant networks. Later, governments and inter-governmental organisations introduced a range of new laws, policies and regulations, aimed at preventing and obstructing NGO involvement in terrorist activities. These 'hard' measures to crack down on 'terrorist' NGOs have been coupled with 'softer' approaches seeking to encourage cooperation with Muslim NGOs in order to prevent radicalisation (Howell and Lind 2009:47) and to strengthen relations with potential bridge builders. This focus on Muslim NGOs has coincided with a general interest in faith-based NGOs among development aid agencies and NGOs, considering the religious identity of organisations an instrument and an added value in the effective implementation of development aid. Thus, transnational Muslim NGOs are now navigating in an environment of increasing regulation and control, but with simultaneous openings for cooperation and funding. In other words, in the post-9.11. aid field it is no longer possible for transnational Muslim NGOs to remain entrenched in the Islamic aid culture, relating to the culture

of mainstream development through conflict, competition or parallel co-existence. Instead, the situation calls for new repertoires of action: cooperation, integration, or perhaps assimilation?

Against this background, transnational Muslim NGOs came to be positioned in different ways: Some were hailed as 'moderate' (i.e. adhering to the norms of Western development aid), while others came to be seen as 'fundamentalist' and 'traditional' (i.e. embedded in a Middle Eastern Islamic aid culture). Exploring the ways in which four concrete Muslim NGOs position *themselves* in the contemporary aid field, the different ways in which they draw on different cultures of aid in their formulation of aid ideologies, the thesis has sought to go beyond these simplistic categorisations of transnational Muslim NGOs, challenging or at least softening such dichotomies. More specifically, the thesis identified two different types of NGOs; namely the UK-based and the Gulf-based NGOs, arguing that they constitute what Flyvbjerg (2006) calls paradigmatic cases (see chapter 2). Through studies of these two types of transnational Muslim NGOs, chapters 5 to 8 provided in-depth analyses of the ways in which the post-9.11. situation has contributed to shaping their organisational ideologies. For this, case studies were considered to be apt methods, insofar as they, through their interpretive approach, thick descriptions and rich detailed studies, generate a nuanced view of the particular cases that are studied, capable of grasping the complex processes of meaning construction (Flyvbjerg 2006:223).

Organisations, audiences and legitimacy

Organisations are not uncritically echoing the cultures out of which they have grown, but actively transmit, translate, and appropriate these cultures in their attempts to construct their own ideologies of aid. Subscribing to an actor-oriented approach, I have presented a view of NGOs not merely as carriers of extant ideas and meanings, growing out of structural arrangements, unanticipated events, or existing ideologies (Benford and Snow 2000:613), but as organisations made up of collectivities of interpreting and acting actors. As Hilhorst (2003:5, 214) notes, structural constraints do not operate *upon* people but *through* them. The concern of my work has been to understand how these actors produce, contest and rework meanings associated with aid and Islam, and through that, to illuminate the different significances that the terms hold for these actors (D. Lewis et al. 2003:546). In this perspective, the thesis argued, the analysis of ideologies must explore organisational staff constellations, asking: Who are the people formulating, contesting and reproducing ideologies?

While rejecting the stark structuralism of e.g. Escobar (1995), this actor-oriented approach does not consider NGOs to be self-contained and isolated entities. As has been argued above, ideologies serve to justify actions, garner support and motivate people – they are, in other words, directed at an audience. To understand the ways in which these audiences influence ideologies, the thesis has

emphasised the importance of legitimacy, arguing that this is what gives an organisation its ideological credibility. The more legitimate an organisation seems, the more plausible and resonant its ideology will appear (Benford and Snow 2000:621) – and the more likely it is to justify actions, garner support and motivate people. In this thesis, I have argued that organisations (and the actors constituting them) will adapt their ideologies to the audiences they target in order to ensure legitimacy. By referring to existing cultural values, the NGOs make claims to a sort of legitimacy that resonates with the audiences they want to attract. As such, the analysis must also ask: Who are the audiences of the organisational ideologies?

Chapter 5 explored these questions in relation to the two Gulf-based organisations. The chapter argued that IICO and IIROSA are relatively homogeneous organisations which have historically been firmly anchored in a largely Middle Eastern Islamic aid culture: Founders and trustees are Islamic dignitaries and well-connected personalities in the Gulf and all staff members are practising Muslims, motivated by a wish to work in a religious organisation. Likewise, the audiences targeted by the two organisations have been embedded in the same Islamic aid culture: Donors are zakat-paying Kuwaiti and Saudi Muslims, and partners are organisations such as the Muslim World League, the Organisation of Islamic Conference and the International Islamic Council for Da'wa and Relief, all of them directly or indirectly related to the Muslim Brotherhood. Following 9.11. and the War on Terror, IICO and especially IIROSA were subject to increasing suspicions, restrictions and sanctions, giving them a shattered reputation as 'terrorist' organisations, something which in turn resulted in sharp decreases in donations. All this prompted the two organisations to rethink their position in relation to the two aid cultures, resulting in two developments: One has been to strengthen cooperation with Middle Eastern Muslim audiences, through e.g. the introduction of new Islamic funding mechanisms, cooperation with other Muslim NGOs, and strengthening of relations with the OIC. The other has been to open up towards a Western audience, something which can be seen in e.g. the IIROSA's recent partnership with WHO and different UN agencies, the integration of 'international' trustees in IIROSA, and in IICO's participation in the Humanitarian Forum.

In chapter 7, organisational constellations and audiences of the two UK-based Muslim NGOs were analysed. This analysis demonstrated that Islamic Relief and Muslim Aid are not homogenous organisations to the same degree as IICO and IIROSA are, with actors being simultaneously grounded in an Islamic aid culture *and* in a Western development aid culture. This is a development which has been intensified since 9.11. Founders and trustees are Muslim personalities, often with strong links to the Muslim Brotherhood, Jama'at-e Islami and European Muslim organisations, and many older staff members are religious conservatives with little or no development expertise, working in the organisation to satisfy religious rather than professional

development aspirations. In recent years, however, the organisation has hired new staff members, including several young people, non-Muslims and women. Most of them are firmly grounded in a professional development culture, well-educated in development-related disciplines and with years of experience in other development NGOs. Parallel to these internal changes, the organisation has moved from a focus on individual British Muslims as their main donors to include a wide range of institutional donors such as DfID and ECHO, reflecting the post-9.11. interest in so-called moderate faith-based organisations. Likewise, both organisations have become increasingly involved with major Western NGOs, epitomised in partnerships with Christian NGOs such as Christian Aid and UMCOR as well as the establishment of networks such as the above-mentioned Humanitarian Forum.

Sacralised or secularised aid?

Against this background, the thesis has explored the ideologies presented by the four organisations, analysing their claims to legitimacy through an examination of four ideological elements, namely authority, visions, rationale and strategies, and discussing how organisational staff and audiences shape the ways in which different aid cultures are appropriated in these ideologies. Overall, I argued that these ideologies can be divided into two different kinds, turning on two different conceptualisations of the nexus between Islam and aid: One ideology, presented by the two Gulf-based NGOs, rests on an understanding of Islam and aid as closely intertwined and inseparable – a *sacralised* aid – while the other, presented by the two UK-based NGOs, understands Islam and aid as two separate categories – a *secularised* aid. This conceptualisation, illustrating characteristics of transnational Muslim NGOs by way of a dichotomy between sacralised and secularised aid, is of course merely an analytical abstraction. In reality, the four NGOs I have studied are not as easily categorised, and as such, the dichotomy I have presented here should perhaps be seen as an illustration of different *ways* of conceptualising aid and Islam rather than different *kinds* of Muslim NGOs, making room for the possibility that organisations find new ways of conceptualising aid – something which they, as the analysis has also demonstrated, constantly do (and which shall be discussed further below).

The *sacralised aid ideology*, as found in IIROSA and IICO, builds on a conception of Islam and aid as indivisible. Underlying this ideology of sacralised aid is an understanding of Islam as an all-encompassing, or, to use Lincoln's (2003:59) terms, a maximalist religion, manifested in all aspects of life, and potentially relevant to all aspects of aid (in practice, this does not necessarily mean that Islam is part of all aspects of aid, but it means that there is no systematic or principled division between aid and Islam). This ideology is often coined in an emotional, moral language, with claims to a religious authority that turns on notions of morality and compliance with religious doctrines. Arguing that aid is Islam and Islam is aid, this ideology formulates a vision of aid as simultaneously

contributing to satisfying individual Muslim needs and strengthening the umma, with strategies responding to a conception of poverty as both spiritual and material. Based on an ideological rationale of Islamic solidarity among members of the umma, the ideology obliges Muslims to take care of people in need, idealising intimate and personal bonds of brotherhood between giver and receiver, and prioritising fellow Muslims over non-Muslims.

The *secularised aid ideology*, found in Islamic Relief and Muslim Aid, promotes a conception of aid and Islam as two distinct categories, reflecting secular principles of mainstream development aid. Contrary to the all-encompassing Islam that underlies the sacralised aid ideology, this ideology rests on a conception of Islam as compartmentalised and primarily relegated to the sphere of values and individual motivation; what Lincoln (2003:59) refers to as a minimalist religion. Often expressed in a technocratic, bureaucratic jargon, this ideology relies on a strongly professional authority, emphasising notions of accountability, expertise and neutrality. Aid is about responding to material poverty, not about spiritually strengthening the Muslim umma, and as such, there is no need for strategies to be religiously defined. Poverty is best fought through economic development projects, not through Islamic education. In this, religion may serve as an underlying rationale, an 'ethical reference' (Benedetti 2006:855), but the obligation to provide aid is not uniquely Muslim. It is a human duty, based on the Millennium Development Goals and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as much as on the Qur'an. Contrary to the religious solidarity underlying the sacralised aid ideology, this abstract notion of humanity leads to a universalist understanding of recipients as fellow human beings rather than fellow Muslim brothers and sisters.

Developmentalising Islamic aid and Islamising development aid

As hinted at above, this dichotomy between sacralised and secularised aid does not fully capture the ways in which the four transnational Muslim NGOs conceptualise aid and Islam, leaving the reader with the impression that IICO and IIROSA with their sacralised aid ideology are embedded in a Middle Eastern Islamic aid culture, while Islamic Relief and Muslim Aid, promoting a secularised aid ideology, are completely integrated into a Western culture of development aid. However, as the analysis has shown, things are in effect much more complicated. IIROSA and IICO may be firmly embedded in an Islamic aid culture, but they are simultaneously trying to approach the UN and other 'international' donors. Likewise, Islamic Relief and Muslim Aid might be the new darlings of Western development donors such as DfID and ECHO, but they also have to attend to individual Muslim donor, staff and trustees' demands for an authentic Islamic aid as well as development donors' expectations of an added value of faith-based organisations. Thus, all four organisations are – albeit to differing degrees – positioned in between two aid cultures, trying to satisfy expectations of different audiences. Merging, translating and appropriating elements from the two aid cultures, they seek to construct ideologies that are simultaneously legitimate to these

widely different audiences. The thesis has argued that these (sometimes successful, sometimes unsuccessful) attempts can be conceptualised in terms of two overall repertoires: *developmentalising Islamic aid*, and *Islamising development aid*.

Speaking from within the culture of Islamic aid, IIROSA and IICO seek to *developmentalise* their aid ideologies, thereby hoping to create resonance with e.g. the UN and Western aid organisations. At least three distinct approaches can be identified: Adoption, pragmatic alignment and integration. *Adoption* attempts at fully adopting elements from the culture of development aid without noticeably modifying or altering these. This is the strategy that IIROSA and IICO use in relation to professionalism, taking over ideals of accountability, transparency and neutrality, in the process rejecting not only Islamic traditions of donor anonymity, but also conceptions of aid as a tool in political struggles for justice. Another approach tries to *pragmatically align* two opposing ideological frames without fully adopting one or the other, but by justifying one frame by reference to the other's underlying values. This is used in relation to the conflict between the organisations' solidarity-driven focus on fellow Muslims and mainstream principles of universalism, central to the culture of development aid. Here, the organisations claim that they do in principle support a universalist approach, but they focus primarily on Muslims out of pragmatic reasons. Finally, a third approach seeks to *integrate* elements from the culture of development aid, seen to be ideologically congruent with the organisations' own ideology (Westby 2002:288). The introduction of tawkeel as an Islamic form of empowerment is one example of how IIROSA and, especially, IICO have developmentalised an Islamic concept.

Islamic Relief and Muslim Aid, on the other hand, speak primarily from within the culture of development aid, seeking to *Islamise* their development aid in order to meet not only demands for an authentic religiosity among trustees, older staff and individual Muslim donor, but also development aid agencies' demands for an added value. Juggling with these different expectations, Islamic Relief and Muslim Aid present at least three different approaches: subversive merging, ambiguity and instrumentalisation. *Subversive* merging refers to attempts to maintain one type of frame unofficially while promoting another officially. An example of this approach is found internally in both organisations where trustees and older staff attempt to maintain conservative religious practices e.g. by subtly pressuring female staff to cover, while promoting gender equality externally. Another approach is *ambiguity*. This approach has proven particularly useful in relation to issues of zakat where individual donor expectations of zakat as an exclusively Muslim mechanism of redistribution clash with development aid agencies' demands for universalism. Avoiding any definitive or categorical statements, Islamic Relief and Muslim Aid maintain a constructive ambiguity, opening up for different interpretations. Finally, and most importantly, Islamic Relief and Muslim Aid, like IICO and IIROSA, rely on *integration* as an approach to

merging different cultural frames. Taking elements from the culture of Islamic aid and using them to promote the culture of development aid, the two organisations seek to satisfy institutional development donors' requests for an added value of Muslim NGOs, as is done e.g. in microfinance projects and the inclusion of imams in disaster management training.

The emergence of new aid cultures?

One of the research questions was: do the transnational Muslim NGOs see themselves primarily as part of mainstream development traditions or in relation to a global Muslim umma? The thesis has shown that it is not a question of picking either one or the other, but that organisations can simultaneously, and with differing degrees of intensity, incorporate and reject elements from different cultures, constructing and adjusting their own aid ideologies. In this process, they break down the boundaries between the cultures of development and Islamic aid, contributing to the creation of new cultures of aid. Through their ideological negotiations and repertoires of appropriation, the four organisations have drawn the contours of such new cultures. By rejecting certain cultural elements and emphasising others, they have told us something about what kinds of aid are seen as legitimate today, and by extension, what contemporary aid cultures look like.

Returning to the dichotomies of aid outlined in chapter 3, we may take a first step into describing these emerging aid cultures. I have argued that, pre-9.11., the cultures of development and Islamic aid could be conceived in terms of dichotomies between universalism and solidarity, neutrality and justice, and secularism and religion, often played out within an overall dichotomy between the West and the Middle East. With these dichotomies in mind, a number of points can be put forth, giving some indications as to the characteristics of the post-9.11. aid field. Overall, the cultures of development and Islamic aid no longer seem predicated on a sharp geographical distinction between the West and the Middle East. This is of course a process that began already with the establishment of Western Muslim NGOs such as Islamic Relief and Muslim Aid, but recent years have witnessed further blurring of these boundaries; most notably with the inclusion of young, British-born Muslim and non-Muslim staff as well as Western donors in these two organisations, but also with IICO and IIROSA's increasing internationalisation of their boards of trustees and cooperation partners. More specifically, the contemporary aid field is characterised by three trends: First, the prominence of professionalism as a core source of legitimacy; second, the instrumentalisation of religion; and third, the introduction of the notion of religious proximity. Each in their way, these trends point to new characteristics – and potential problems – of the contemporary aid field, testifying to the ever-changing and contested nature of the field.

First, the analysis has drawn the contours of an aid field in which the paradigm of professionalism is increasingly dominant. Especially since 9.11., conceptions of aid as justice are no longer

legitimate for Muslim NGOs, and political neutrality has become an obligatory and indispensable condition for legitimacy. Making claims to a professional authority, the transnational Muslim NGOs studied here all unanimously emphasise their allegiance to principles of accountability and transparency as the only legitimate way to respond to allegations of terrorist financing. In other words, to be an NGO in today's aid field is to be a professional NGO, primarily understood in terms of financial professionalism. At the same time, some NGOs increasingly adhere to broader notions of professionalism, including not only financial systems, but also the professionalisation of staff and activities, as a response to expectations from governmental and intergovernmental aid agencies. While the professionalisation of financial systems may be easily aligned with claims to religious authority, such broader processes of professionalisation are not entirely unproblematic for the organisations, challenging core aspects of organisational identity. In the context of aid provision, professionalism is bound up on notions of institutionalisation and expertise, while religious authority turns on notions of personal care and morality. Thus, as was seen in Muslim Aid and Islamic Relief, professionalisation of staff and activities inevitably leads to a perceived loss of religious authenticity and distinctiveness. Barnett (2005:733) aptly describes this dilemma, when he says that religious organisations which increasingly drift toward rational principles as a way of defending their legitimacy might not only have difficulty competing with commercial firms but may also undermine their moral authority: "The presumed difference between the Wal-Marts and the World Vision is that the former does not have moral authority while the latter does." In this, the trajectories of Muslim NGOs echo not only those of contemporary Christian NGOs, but also those of secular NGOs in the 1980s and 1990s, perhaps pointing to more deep-seated contradictions between NGOs, predicated on a moral authority, and the institutionalised aid system, predicated on a professional authority.

Second, the analysis has demonstrated how the aid field is no longer predicated on a strict dichotomy between the secular and the religious, distinguishing instead between different, and more or less acceptable, kinds of religiosity. Since 9.11., the contemporary development culture has increasingly opened up towards so-called faith-based organisations. However, this opening only includes certain organisations. Development aid agencies want a religiosity that complies with secular development principles, i.e. either a personalised moral religiosity, relegated to the sphere of individual motivations, or an instrumentalised religiosity, used as a tool to enhance development efforts. In other words, it is a religiosity that is compatible, but fundamentally subsidiary, to development aid. In practice, then, the dichotomy between religious and secular is replaced with a dichotomy between confessional and non-confessional aid. Today's NGOs can be religious, and they may even use this religiosity as a tool to meet the material needs of recipients, but they cannot use it to meet their religious needs. However, this may be exactly what recipients expect from religious organisations. Judging from Palmer's (2011) analysis of Islamic Relief's work among

Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh, there are indications that the kind of Islam promoted by this organisation, avoiding overtly or explicitly religious activities such as mosque building or Qur'an classes, may very well resonate with development aid agencies' expectations of a non-confessional, non-discriminatory aid, but not with expectations of individual Muslim recipients. According to Palmer (2011:103), religious leaders in the refugee camp claimed that their religious needs were not being met by Islamic Relief, referring to the lack of key religious facilities, including graveyards, madrasas, and mosques. She quotes a Rohingya refugee for saying: "We want Islamic Relief to establish a mosque inside the camp as we think they are Muslim and they should understand our needs. We can live without food but we can't live without our religion…" (cf. Palmer 2011:103). Thus, from the perspective of (some) recipients, a missionary religiosity such as that found in IIROSA and IICO may in fact be preferred over the non-confessional religiosity of Islamic Relief and Muslim Aid.

Third, the introduction of the argument of religious proximity points to the emergence of a position in between that of solidarity and universalism. As has been described, this argument posits that a common religion (much like a common culture) creates a symbolic sense of community among recipients and NGOs, which in turn brings about 'added value' through e.g. ease of access and provision of more appropriate services (Palmer 2011:97). Nursing ideas of 'cultural rights', 'cultural authenticity' and 'cultural relativism', this position echoes recent development ideas of cultural sensitivity, respect and understanding, inspired by trends in anthropology and multiculturalism (G. Clarke 2008, Palmer 2011). In this perspective, NGOs can, if only temporarily, maintain claims to religious solidarity without violating development principles of universalism. However, there are at least two fundamental problems with the religious proximity approach: First, underlying the argument is an understanding of religion as a source of community and solidarity (Palmer 2011:98), a coherent language that all adherents speak and understand. But, as has been demonstrated with all clarity in the above, religion is as much a source of conflict and division as of community. Second, albeit related, the religious proximity argument prioritises the religious identity of recipients and NGO staff over the myriad of other possible identities, such as class, nationality, political stance or gender. In the words of de Kadt (2009:784): "Taking religion seriously is one matter, but it becomes seriously problematic when it is promoted as the only identity that counts, disregarding the many other components of identity that should be salient in different situations, thereby truncating a broader sense of self."

The success of these new trends is predicated on at least two factors: One is the continuing interest in faith-based organisations among development aid agencies. The culture of development aid has a history of infatuation with buzzwords (Cornwall 2007), 'faith-based organisations' being only the latest of many. Will the interest in transnational Muslim NGOs fade, as the interest in NGOs

arguably has, once development aid agencies realise that they are not the 'magic bullet' of development? Adding to this risk of re-marginalisation is a continuous scepticism of the inclusion of religion in development among staff in many aid agencies. When interviewing staff at DfID, for instance, G. Clarke (2007) noted significant concerns about the erosion of the agency's historical secularism. Similarly, the history of the World Faiths Development Dialogue reflects a weariness of religious organisations among World Bank staff. According to Katherine Marshall (2005:4), the launch of the initiative was met with "widely varying and fundamental objections" among staff and board members, a scepticism that has never completely ceded.

The other factor is the emergence of new donors in the Islamic aid culture. As was hinted at above, the OIC is increasingly engaged in aid provision and cooperation with NGOs, opening up for the possibility that transnational Muslim NGOs may turn towards this organisation for resources and cooperation, minimising their need for acceptance by e.g. the UN, DfID and Western NGOs. Likewise, the Saudi and Kuwaiti governments have in recent years been increasing their contributions to aid provision. For instance, Saudi Arabia has started contributing more heavily to UN agencies, in 2008 donating 500 million dollars to the World Food Program (Al-Yahya and Fustier 2011:4). And in 2010, Kuwait Fund for Economic Development, in cooperation with the Islamic Development Bank and UNDP, hosted a donor conference for East Sudan with the participation of 40 countries and 70 intergovernmental organisations and NGOS (including both IICO and IIROSA). Depending on the direction in which the aid ideologies of these new donors will take, this may mean that Muslim NGOs will have greater room for manoeuvre in defining the role of Islam in their work and identity in the future.

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APPENDIX A. ORGANISATIONAL MATERIAL[369]

A1. ORGANISATIONAL MATERIAL, IIROSA

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Brochures

Pioneering in Charity, n.d.

Charitable Studies Center Reality and Ambition, n.d.

Firm International Regional and Local Relations, n.d.

Our Waqf Projects Give Life (English), n.d.

Your Zakat Gives Life (English), n.d.

A3. ORGANISATIONAL MATERIAL, ISLAMIC RELIEF

Websites

http://www.islamic-relief.com (English and Arabic).

http://www.islamic-relief.org.uk (English).

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Information Booklet on HIV/AIDS, Child Welfare Program, Islamic Relief Bangladesh, n.d.

Text book, Integrated Community Action Programme, Islamic Relief Bangladesh, n.d.

Brochures

Waqf Brochure, n.d.

A4. ORGANISATIONAL MATERIAL, MUSLIM AID

Websites

http://www.muslimaid.org (English).

http://www.muslimaidbd.org (English).

http://www.muslimaid.org.pk (English).

Annual reports and strategies

Trustees' report and financial statements 2009, available at http://www.muslimaid.org/images/stories/pdfs/financial_summary_2009 (last accessed 3. May 2011). Referred to as Financial statements 2009.

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Annual Review 1999. http://www.muslimaid.org/images/stories/pdfs/annualreview1999.pdf (last accessed 3. May 2011).

Research and policy papers

Bullying and Harassment Policy, 2007.

Capability and Conduct Policy, 2008.

Code of Conduct Policy, 2008.
Disciplinary Procedure Policy, 2007.
Equal Opportunities & Diversity Policy, 2007.
Grievance Policy, 2008.
Health and Safety Policy, 2007.
Maternity Leave Policy & Procedures, 2007.
Policy Statement on the Recruitment of Ex-offenders, 2008.
Staff Manual, Muslim Aid Bangladesh, n.d.
Training and Development Policy, 2008.
Volunteer Policy, 2007.

Internal memos

Measures to Combat Fraud and Corruption, Memo, Muslim Aid Bangladesh, 2009.
Procedures for Reporting Allegations of Fraud and Corruption, Memo, Muslim Aid Bangladesh, 2009.
Preventing Fraud and Corruption in Muslim Aid Bangladesh Field Office Projects. A Guide for Staff, n.d.

Project material

Application form, Fael Khair microfinance programme, Muslim Aid Bangladesh, 2009.
Booklet for instalments, Fael Khair microfinance programme, Muslim Aid Bangladesh, 2009
Booklet for cattle rearing and vegetable growth, Muslim Aid Bangladesh, n.d.

Brochures

25th Anniversary Souvenir, 2010. http://www.muslimaid.org/images/stories/pdfs/MA_25_Booklet_A4L_Aug10_FINAL_LOWRES.pdf (last accessed 3. May 2011). Referred to as Souvenir Brochure.
Love Water, Love Life, n.d. http://www.muslimaid.org/images/stories/pdfs/waterleaflet.pdf (last accessed 3. May 2011).
Working together. UMCOR/Muslim Aid Partnership Brochure, n.d.

APPENDIX B. FIELD TRIPS, INTERVIEWS AND PROJECT VISITS

B1. FIELD TRIPS

Birmingham and London, Britain, 3 weeks, May 2008 (Islamic Relief and Muslim Aid headquarters)
Kuwait City, Kuwait, 10 days, June 2008 (IICO headquarters)
Amman, Jordan, 5 days, April 2009 (IICO, IIROSA and Islamic Relief country offices)
Beirut, Lebanon, 8 days, April 2009 (Muslim Aid's country office and an Islamic Relief partner organization)
Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, 10 days, October 2009 (IIROSA headquarters)
Dhaka, Bangladesh, one month, November-December 2009 (IIROSA, IICO/KJRC, Muslim Aid and Islamic Relief country offices).

Furthermore, data collected during a two month trip to Jordan (March-May 2007) for an independent research project on Jordanian Muslim charities serves has been included in the analysis.

B2. INTERVIEWS

Islamic Relief
13 interviews, Islamic Relief headquarters, Birmingham, Britain, May 2008
18 interviews, Islamic Relief country office, Dhaka, Bangladesh, November-December 2009
1 interview, POSKK, Islamic Relief partner organisation, Tangail, Bangladesh, November 2009
1 interview, Islamic Relief country office, Amman, Jordan, April 2009
3 interviews, Islamic Welfare Association, Islamic Relief partner organisation, Saida, Lebanon, April 2009

Muslim Aid
8 interviews, Muslim Aid headquarters, London, Britain, May 2008
15 interviews, Muslim Aid country office, Dhaka, Bangladesh, December 2009
1 interview, Muslim Aid country office, Beirut, Lebanon, April 2009

IIROSA
11 interviews, IIROSA headquarters, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, October 2009
1 interview, IIROSA country office, Dhaka, Bangladesh, December 2009
2 interviews, IIROSA country office, Amman, Jordan, April 2009

IICO
6 interviews, IICO headquarters, Kuwait City, Kuwait, June 2008
2 interviews, IICO/KJRC country office, Dhaka, Bangladesh, December 2009
4 interviews, IICO country office, Amman, Jordan, April 2007 and April 2009
1 interview, Islamic Center Charity Society office, IICO partner organisation, Zarqa, Jordan, April 2009
4 interviews, Islamic Center Charity Society office, IICO partner organisation, Amman, Jordan, April 2007

Interviews with other Muslim NGOs
1 interview, Aga Khan Foundation, London, Britain, May 2008
9 interviews, Muslim Hands headquarters, Nottingham, Britain, May 2008
1 interview, Muslim Hands country office, Dhaka, Bangladesh, December 2009
1 interview, Direct Aid headquarters, Kuwait City, Kuwait, June 2008
1 interview, Revival of the Islamic Heritage Society headquarters, Kuwait City, Kuwait, June 2008
1 interview, Islam Presentation Committee, Kuwait City, Kuwait, June 2008
1 interview, Women's Committee, Society for Social Reform, Kuwait City, Kuwait, June 2008
1 interview, World Assembly of Muslim Youth, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, October 2009
1 interview, Al Rahma Center, Saida, Lebanon, April 2009

Interviews with non-Muslim NGOs
2 interviews, Christian Aid, Dhaka, Bangladesh, December 2009
1 interview, CARE, Dhaka, Bangladesh, December 2009
1 interview, Save the Children Denmark, Dhaka, Bangladesh, December 2009

Interviews with donors
3 interviews, DfID, Glasgow, Britain, May 2008
1 interview, Kuwait Zakat House, Kuwait City, Kuwait, June 2008
3 interviews, Organisation of Islamic Conference, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, October 2009
1 interview, Islamic Development Bank, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, October 2009
1 interview, ECHO, Dhaka, Bangladesh, December 2009
1 interview, USAID, Dhaka, Bangladesh, December 2009
1 interview, Fael Khair Program, Islamic Development Bank, Dhaka, Bangladesh, December 2009
1 interview, NGO Affairs Bureau, Dhaka, Bangladesh, December 2009

B3. PROJECT VISITS

Islamic Relief
Hospital, Tripoli, Lebanon, April 2009
Center for vocational training, Saida, Lebanon, April 2009
Qurbani celebration, Tangail, Bangladesh, November 2009
Vocational center, Dhaka, Bangladesh, November 2009
Vocational center, Dhaka, Bangladesh, November 2009
Islamic Relief Rangpur area office, Rangpur, Bangladesh, December 2009
Health and Education for the Ultra-Poor (HELP-Up), project office, Rangpur, Bangladesh, December 2009
Community group meetings, HELP-UP, Rangpur, Bangladesh, December 2009
Goat-herd training, HELP-UP, Rangpur, Bangladesh, December 2009
Community Action Project (CAP) and Integrated Community Action Project (ICAP), branch office, Rangpur, Bangladesh, December 2009
Community group, CAP, Rangpur, Bangladesh, December 2009
Community groups, ICAP, Rangpur, Bangladesh, December 2009
HIV/AIDS training, ICAP, Rangpur, Bangladesh, December 2009
Tailor training, ICAP, Rangpur, Bangladesh, December 2009
Adolescent Reproductive Healthcare, Child Welfare Program, Rangpur, Bangladesh, December 2009

Muslim Aid
Women's Development Project, Dhaka, Bangladesh, December 2009
Institute of Technology, Dhaka, Bangladesh, December 2009
School, Dhaka, Bangladesh, December 2009
Shelter and Sanitation Project, Sakhtira, Bangladesh, December 2009 (several locations)
Cash for Work, Satkhira, Bangladesh, December 2009
Climate Change Event, National Press Club, Dhaka, Bangladesh, December 2009
Fael Khair Microfinance Project, Kalaroa office, Satkhira, Bangladesh, December 2009
Fael Khair Microfinance Project, Tala office, Satkhira, Bangladesh, December 2009
Emergency and Early Recovery Project, Satkhira, Bangladesh, December 2009

IIROSA
Orphanage, IIROSA, Amman, Jordan, April 2009
Medical clinic, Dhaka, Bangladesh, December 2009

IICO
Islamic Center Charity Society community center, Amman, Jordan, April 2007
Islamic Center Charity Society community center, Zarqa, Jordan, April 2009
Productive projects, Zarqa, Jordan, April 2009

SUMMARY

This is a thesis about transnational Muslim NGOs and their ideologies of aid after 9.11. Through micro-sociological case studies, the thesis seeks to explore the ways in which meanings associated with 'aid' and 'Islam' are produced, expressed, contested and reworked by these organisations, to illuminate not only the multiple significances that these terms hold, but also the processes through which they gain significance and the consequences these processes of signification may have.

Part I, *Studying transnational Muslim NGOs* situates the study of transnational Muslim NGOs in relation to existing literature on faith-based organisations and political Islam, arguing for an alternative approach, inspired by anthropological studies of NGOs and recent trends in Islamic studies. This section introduces the concept of ideology as a way to study processes and structures of meaning making in transnational Muslim NGOs. Part II, *Aid cultures and NGO trajectories* first provides the overall contextualisation of transnational Muslim NGOs, presenting the two different aid cultures from which they have emerged: a largely Western culture of development aid and a largely Middle Eastern culture of Islamic aid. It then zooms in on some of the specific historical events that have contributed to shaping the ways in which Muslim NGOs position themselves in relation to these two cultures of aid. In Part III, *'Its' all in Islam'. Ideologies of aid in IIROSA and IICO* and *Part IV. 'What's so Islamic about us?' Ideologies of aid in Islamic Relief and Muslim Aid*, the thesis presents case studies of two UK-based and two Gulf-based NGOs, first exploring organisational constellations and audiences with the purpose of positioning them in relation to the two aid cultures; second, analysing elements of their ideologies discussing the ways in which organisational actors have transmitted, translated, and appropriated the different cultures of aid in their attempts to construct legitimate ideologies.

The thesis puts forth the argument that the four organisations present two different kinds of ideologies, resting on different conceptions of the nexus between aid and Islam: One is a *sacralised aid ideology* and the other a *secularised aid ideology*. The thesis argues that these processes of sacralisation and secularisation of aid are not straight-forward or unambiguous, but constantly challenged and changing. Seeking to bridge widely differing expectations from their audiences, the organisations have to adjust their ideologies. These attempts can be conceptualised in terms of two strategies: *developmentalising Islamic aid*, and *Islamising development aid*. By developmentalising their Islamic aid, the two Gulf-based NGOs seek to adjust their ideologies to the culture of development aid, hoping to create resonance with e.g. the UN and Western aid organisations. And by Islamising their development aid, the two UK-based NGOs hope to create ideologies that simultaneously satisfy conservative Muslim donors' expectations of an authentic Islamic aid and secular aid agencies' expectations of an 'added value' of faith-based organisations.

RESUME

Dette er en afhandling om transnationale muslimske NGOer og deres bistandsideologier efter 11. september. Gennem mikro-sociologiske case-studier af fire NGOer undersøges det, hvordan aktører i disse organisationer producerer, udtrykker, udfordrer og omformulerer betydningen af 'bistand' og 'islam.' Herigennem belyses ikke bare de mange forskellige betydninger, disse termer har, men også de processer, hvorigennem de får betydning, og de konsekvenser disse betydningsprocesser har.

Del I, *At studere transnationale muslimske NGOer*, diskuterer eksisterende litteratur om trosbaserede organisationer og politisk islam og argumenterer for en alternativ tilgang, inspireret af antropologiske NGO-studier og islamforskning. Begrebet ideologi introduceres her som en måde at studere processer og strukturer for meningsdannelse i transnationale muslimske NGOer. Del II, *Bistandskulturer og NGO-historier*, præsenterer først de to bistandskulturer, som transnationale muslimske NGOer er vokset ud af: en, primært vestlig, udviklingskultur og en, primært mellemøstlig, islamisk bistandskultur. Dernæst fokuseres på nogen af de historiske begivenheder, der har bidraget til at positionere de muslimske NGOer i forhold til de to bistandskulturer. I del III, *'Det er alt sammen i islam.' Bistandsideologier i IIROSA og IICO,* og del IV, *'Hvad er så islamisk ved os?' Bistandsideologier i Islamic Relief og Muslim Aid*, præsenteres case-studier af to NGOer baseret i Golf-landene og to i England. Først udforskes organisationernes medarbejderkonstellationer og publikum i forhold til de to bistandskulturer. Dernæst analyseres organisationernes ideologier med fokus på de måder, hvorpå organisationerne har indoptaget og omfortolket elementer fra de to bistandskulturer i deres forsøg på at skabe legitime ideologier.

Afhandlingen argumenterer for, at de fire organisationer præsenterer to forskellige slags ideologier, der hver bygger på forskellige forståelser af forholdet mellem bistand og islam: en sakraliseret bistandsideologi og en sekulariseret bistandsideologi. Afhandlingen viser endvidere, at disse sakraliserings- og sekulariseringsprocesser ikke er entydige og ligetil, men konstant udfordret og i forandring. I deres forsøg på at tilfredsstille ofte vidt forskellige forventninger fra deres publikum må organisationerne konstant tilpasse deres ideologier. Der argumenteres for, at disse forsøg på tilpasning kan beskrives i form af to strategier: en *udviklingsgørelse* af islamisk bistand og en *islamisering* af udviklingsbistand. Ved at udviklingsgøre deres islamiske bistand søger de Golf-baserede NGOer at tilpasse deres bistandsideologier til f.eks. FN og vestlige bistandsorganisationer. Og ved at islamisere deres udviklingsbistand forsøger de UK-baserede NGOer at skabe ideologier, der kan appellere til konservative muslimske donorers forestillinger om autentisk islamisk bistand såvel som til sekulære udviklingsorganisationers krav om trosbaserede organisationers 'added value.'