Universiteit Leiden

MUSLIM NGOS IN THE CONTEXT OF THE UNITED KINGDOM`S "WAR ON TERROR"

A Case Study on four UK-based Muslim NGOs and the Impact of Counter-terrorism

Legislation

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May, 2015

Master Thesis

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of Counter-terrorism Legislation

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Word count (inlcuding footnotes and bibliography): 25932 words.

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"The terrorist threat is real, yet Islamic charities are not guilty by default."[1]

Introduction

On May 8, 2015 the Conservatives won the general election in England and Wales, gaining 326 seats to form a majority administration and are therefore able to govern without the need for a coalition or formal agreement with other parties.[2] David Cameron´s second reappointment as Prime Minister also influences the counterterrorism policies of the UK. In his first meeting with the new National Security Council on May 13, 2015, Cameron revealed his plans for a new Counter-Extremism Bill, which will include the empowering of the Charity Commission to root out charities that misappropriate funds towards extremism and terrorism. Additionally the Bill contains further immigration restrictions on extremists.[3] Since the efforts for a new counter-terrorism Bill are not new on the agenda of the Conservatives, the Liberal Democrats had previously blocked their proposals three times during the period of their coalition from 2010-2015.[4] As reason for the blocking the Liberal Democrats expressed concerns that the UK counter-terrorism legislation is illiberal and does not tackle the problem it is designed to solve.[5] This unease with the UK´s counter-terrorism legislation is also felt by civil rights organizations like Human Rights Watch or the umbrella organization for the voluntary sector in England the National Council for Voluntary Organizations (NCVO). Both Human Rights Watch and the NCVO published studies in 2007 that critique the UK´s counter-terrorism strategy. While Human Rights Watch focuses on the harmful impact these legislations have on human rights

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[1] Ralf Mohammed Kroessin. "Islamic Charities and the 'War on Terror': dispelling the Myths," *Humanitarian Practice Network* 38 (2007): 27.
[2] "Election Results: Conservatives win Majority," BBC News, accessed June 2, 2015, http://www.bbc.com/news/election-2015-32633099.
[3] "Counter-Extremism Bill: National Security Council Meeting," UK Parliament, accessed June 2, 2015, https://www.gov.uk/government/news/counter-extremism-bill-national-security-council-meeting.
[4] "UK Anti-Extremism Bill is Cameron Priority in New Program," Bloomberg Business, accessed June 2, 2015. http://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2015-05-12/u-k-anti-extremism-bill-will-be-in-queen-s-speech-cameron-says.
[5] Ibid.

and how they undermine the rule of law and damage communities, NCVO examines the counter-terrorism legislations impact on the charity sector.[6]

Concerns about the impact of the counter-terrorism legislation on Muslim communities in the UK are rising. The NCVO already state in its 2007 study that the "juxtaposition of Islam with terrorism by politicians and the media… has cast a shadow of suspicion over Muslim communities in the UK."[7] This atmosphere also worries UK-based Muslim NGOs. The Muslim Charities Forum expressed their unease with this statement:

> There are a disproportionate number of Muslim Charities facing inquiries, and this combined with the Charity Commission's own admission that Islamist extremism is the "most deadly" problem, prejudice seems inevitable. The Charity Commission is partially responsible for cementing the public perception that Muslim charities are problematic and it needs to do more to alleviate fears in the sector and public at large, seeing as it plays an instrumental role in the public perception of Muslim Charities.[8]

Being under surveillance by politicians and media, Muslim Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in the UK have the ability to raise huge annual budgets ranging from 5 million to 82 million pounds and are important actors inside the humanitarian aid field. Although the UK government took on more soft measures in their "War on Terror" against Muslim NGOs, there was still an overreaction against these organizations.[9] Leading to a sharp dichotomy between "Islam" and "the West," the "War on Terror" discourse has negatively impacted Muslim NGOs, invoking chilling effects against everything that is termed "Islamic."

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[6] "Hearts and Minds; Putting Human Rights at the Center of United Kingdom Counterterrorism Policy," Human Rights Watch, accessed June 9, 2015, http://www.hrw.org/legacy/backgrounder/eca/uk0607/uk0607web.pdf. Nolan Quigley and Belinda Pratten, "Security and Civil Society; The Impact of Counter-terrorism Measures on Civil Society Organisations," *NCVO* (2007), accessed June 9, 2015, http://socialwelfare.bl.uk/subject-areas/government-issues/social-policy/ncvo/137971security_and_civil_society_a_report_from_ncvo.pdf.
[7] Quigley and Pratten, "Security and Civil Society," 12.
[8] "Response to the Consultation on Draft Protection of Charities Bill, 2014," Muslim Charities Forum, accessed 19 May, 2015. http://data.parliament.uk/writtenevidence/committeeevidence.svc/evidencedocument/draft-protection-of-charities-bill-committee/draft-protection-of-charities-bill/written/16722.html.
[9] Jonathan Benthall, "The Overreaction against Islamic Charities," *ISIM 20* (2007): 6-7.

Against this background I will offer a case study of four UK-based Muslim NGOs, analyze how they interact and position themselves vis á vis the UK government and Charity Commission legislation and policy. In this perspective I show that these organizations, like any other organization, are complex ideologically-based actors, with their own organizational culture, struggling to provide aid in the way they judge to be the most appropriate, and in doing so, being shaped by and in turn shaping the context out of which they have grown. I attempt to understand how meaning associated with "Islam" and "aid" are produced, expressed, contested and reworked by actors in these organizations. Studying the ideologies of the four UK-based Muslim NGOs is first and foremost a study of (re) presentations. Focusing on discourse in the sense of narratives, texts and rhetorical struggles, this is mainly about how these organizations (re)present themselves and their work rather than about how they conceptualize themselves.[10] Analyzing the question how counter-terrorism legislation impacts the work of UK-based Muslim NGOs, I will conceptualize their contribution to the mainstream development aid and analyze how they maneuver in relation to the wider context of aid. In answering this research question, I attempt to nuance the commonly drawn picture of these organizations in presenting how they negotiate between the British governments and Charity Commissions counter-terrorism strategies, the wider humanitarian aid field and the existing fear and suspicion towards everything termed "Muslim" or "Islamic". In will frame this analysis within the context of the UK´s "War on Terror".

To structure my argument this thesis is divided into four chapters. The first chapter provides an overview on the existing literature of Muslim NGOs discussing theories of NGOs and defining how religion, Islam and ideology are used in this thesis. Faith-Based Organizations. Furthermore I will introduce the basic concepts of Islamic aid culture relevant to the organizations discussed here and look at the dichotomies between a more mainstream development aid culture and the Islamic aid culture. The second chapter focuses on the counter-

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[10] Ibid.

terrorism legislation in the UK in general and especially on the UK government's and Charity Commission´s counter-terrorism strategies. Chapter three focuses on the case study of their organizational culture examining their ideology of aid; how they operate, meaning with which organizations are they fostering partnership; how do thy formulate their visions; objectives; implement their strategies and how do they perceive aid. The fourth chapter focuses on the actual impact of the UK´s counter-terrorism strategy CONTEST and PREVENT on the abovementioned Muslim NGOs as well as on the limitations and possibilities of Muslim NGOs operating in the international humanitarian aid field. Finally the conclusion draws together some of the key findings, reflecting on the research question and providing an outlook on the further role of Muslim NGOs as actors within the humanitarian aid field. Having outlined my research question and the structure of this thesis I will now proceed to introduce the methodology of thesis as well as the terminology.

Methodology

The methodology of this thesis primarily consists of a critical discourse analysis studying how social power, dominance, and inequality are reproduced and shaped by laws, text and talk in the social and political context surrounding Muslim NGOs in the UK. Taking on a members-groups approach, I will examine the language used in discourse on counter-terrorism legislation and the provision of aid as well as analyzing the members of Muslim NGOs, the UK government and the Charity Commission. By taking on a members-groups approach I mean that language users engage in discourse as members of social groups, organizations or institutions and that groups thus may act "by" their members.[11] In doing so I attempt to bridge the micro and macro level.[12]

Focusing on UK-based Muslim NGOs working within an international environment whose main operational arena is overseas and their headquarters are in the UK, this case study

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[11] Teun A. Van Dijk, "Critical Discourse Analysis," in *Handbook of Discourse Analysis*, ed. D. Tannen, D. Schiffrin and H. Hamilton, (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001), 354.
[12] Ibid. 352-371.

is based on predefined criteria. These criteria include that the abovementioned organizations are primarily or largely committed to relief and development aid. Additionally these organizations are constituted with a board of directors/ trustees and registered under British charity law. Starting out with a pool of potential cases, I gradually reduced to four organizations on which I will base this thesis. Turning to Muslim NGOs in the UK and encountered difficulties with counter-terrorism measures, I examine two organizations that the Charity Commission has investigated, Interpal and Muslim Aid, and two organizations that were not subject to inquiry but nevertheless encountered difficulties with counter-terrorism measures, Islamic Relief Worldwide and Muslim Hands. Furthermore the search for case studies has invariably been influenced by preexisting knowledge on Muslim NGOs as well as on the political system in the UK. Moreover the search was influenced by my language skills. Since my skills in Arabic are basic I turned to case studies that offered material in English. Because of these circumstances I decided to turn to UK-based Muslim NGOs in this thesis. In this thesis I will mainly focus on charitable relief and development organizations since these organizations are working in conflict areas abroad and therefore have to negotiate and are concerned with the UK government´s and the Charities Commission´s counter-terrorism strategies. Working within this realm, Islamic Relief, Muslim Aid, Interpal and Muslim Hands are walking a tightrope, balancing, on the one hand, their own ideologies of aid and their religious identity and, on the other hand, the professionalization of the humanitarian aid field and the counter-terrorism legislation strategies. This thesis is predominantly based on qualitative data, including a review of available literature, website information, project documents, annual reports, financial statements, brochures, policy papers and newspaper articles.[13] These documents reflect official representational discourse presented by the organization rather than by individuals in

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[13] Although I present the key findings of my thesis here, I faced some difficulties, which limit the scope of this thesis and are open to further research. I was not able to collect data from interviews with the organizations and different parties involved.

the organizations. Since there was not the opportunity for studying internal organizational documents such as e-mails, or documents from staff meetings, these documents reflect how these organizations want to be received by the public.

Terminology

That the term "Faith-Based Organizations" is not unproblematic or even simple reveals the amount of recent literature on this topic and the difficulties authors have defining the term. Giving the impression that Faith Based Organizations (FBOs) are homogeneous, these studies sometimes undermine the heterogeneity of these organizations and the ways in which their faith identity plays in their work. Furthermore, this heterogeneity does not only stem from different world faiths but can also be seen in each faith as well.[14] Rick James warns that any generalization invites criticism for over-simplification and by treating "FBOs as distinct he identifies the danger of underplaying the universal 'human' element. FBOs as well as secular organisations are all staffed with human beings and therefore experience many of the same organisational issues and challenges. It is clearly impossible to separate the significance of non-religious values or religious values in individual people, let alone organisations."[15]

In view of the fact that faith is highly personal, it is important to develop a more nuanced understanding of what religion and faith means to these four Muslim NGOs and what role faith identity plays in these organizations. Finding a clear definition of what faith-based means instead of the catchall term FBO also helps to clarify what faith means to an FBO. Therefore a catchall term confuses and does not pay attention to how a particular FBO wants to be present itself and be represented by their staff and partners. Ignoring the differences between FBOs also neglects the role donors and political decision-making plays when supporting and funding an organization. Although donors were reluctant in funding FBOs in the past they are now more open to these kinds of organizations, nevertheless there is a broad

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[14] Rick James, "What is Distinctive about FBOs? – How European FBOs define and operationalize their faith," *International NGO Training and Research Centre*, Praxis Paper 22 (2009), 4.
[15] Ibid. 5

spectrum of FBO ranging from organizations where faith plays a subsidiary role to organizations, which also engage in political and social action as well as in proselytizing.

Elizabeth Ferris acknowledges that there is no generally accepted definition of faith-based organizations, nevertheless different authors define the term as a "… broad one reflecting the difficulties in developing a definition which draws a connection between different faith traditions and a multitude of organizational expressions."[16] Since the literature is not clear on a general definition of a FBO, in this thesis I will refer to what Ferris defines as: "…organizations affiliated with a specific faith tradition, but even then there are major differences between organizations in terms of their relationship with established religious structures, the degree to which considerations of faith are reflected in their work, the scale of their operations, their ways of working and their understanding of the political and social context in which they operate."[17] This definition of FBOs captures the wide field of diverse FBOs, which are often seen as a monolithic whole in the literature, but like Ferris argues, the gap between FBOs is sometimes wider than that between any given FBO and its secular counterpart.[18]

In this thesis, I will however refer to Muslim NGOs as FBOs, incorporating the aforementioned definition by Ferris, which views FBOs as organizations affiliated with a specific faith tradition. Like Bruno De Cordier, I understand Muslim NGOs to mean that they were founded on the initiative of Muslims, mobilizing most of their support among Muslims, and whose action is to a certain degree inspired and legitimated by the Islamic religion.[19]

Differences between FBOs give rise to problems of interpretation. Therefore a typology of FBOs can help to conceptualize Muslim NGOs. In chapter one I dive deeper into the conceptualizing of Muslim NGOs and introduce a typology I find helpful to differentiate

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[16] Elizabeth Ferris. "Faith and Humanitarianism: It´s Complicated," *Journal of Refugee Studies 24*, no. 3 (2011), 607.
[17] Ibid.
[18] Ibid. 606-625.
[19] Bruno De Cordier, "Faith-based Aid, Globalisation and the Humanitarian Frontline: An Analysis of Western-based Muslim Aid Organisations," *Disasters 33,* no. 4 (2009) 609.

different types of FBOs. However, before I turn to the literature review and provide an overview on the existing literature relevant for this thesis as well as further conceptions significant to ground the case study of the four Muslim NGOs.

Chapter 1

Literature Review

Aiming to analyze NGOs in the context of the "War on Terror" in the UK, it is relevant to examine the field of NGO-studies, humanitarianism and development aid culture. Before analyzing the organizational culture of the four Muslim NGOs I examine in this thesis the vocabulary these organizations engage with needs to be clarified. Therefore this chapter will mainly focus on a literature review of both the field of NGO-studies and humanitarianism in general and, the study and development of Muslim NGOs and an Islamic aid culture in particular.

NGO-Studies, Humanitarianism and Development Aid Culture

The term "NGO" grew out of the development system and was introduced by the United Nations (UN) in 1945.[20] In the 1970s and 1980s, mostly American and European NGOs became more prominent in the development culture, which was evident in the rising numbers of newly founded NGOs. Despite the growing number of NGOs, there has been an extended practice of charity long before the term "NGO" emerged. This prominence however can be seen as a part of a broader process of globalization and an increasing awareness of the limitation of nation states. Peterson defines this culture of development aid as a "culture of modernity, shaped in particular by Enlightenment and Christian ideas of a common humanity and the duty to assist strangers."[21]

The growing number of NGOs notably since the 1980s brings not only positive but also negative consequences with it. Although NGOs proclaim to do "good", they cannot per se be perceived as something "good". The dangers and negative consequences of humanitarian aid have been subject to many studies during the last 30 years. One of the most prominent approaches stems from Mary Anderson´s 1999 book *Do no Harm – How Aid Can Support*

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[20] Marie Juul Petersen, *For Humanity or for the Umma? - Ideologies of Aid in four Transnational Muslim NGOs*, (Copenhagen: University of Copenhagen, 2011), 80.
[21] Ibid. 72.

Peace – or War.[22] Nevertheless, recently the subject of NGO-studies changed to more organizational and institutional questions such as accountability and evaluation of potential negative consequences for both the recipients of aid as well as NGOs themselves. Moreover, the ability of NGOs to meet their long-term goals and to function as political actors and incubators of an alternative development are debated.[23]

The field of NGO-studies is housed within political science, sociology and development studies and more recently in anthropology, too. While political science mainly focuses on how NGOs influence public policy and business policy and how they contribute to an emergence of global civil society, sociology examines the power asymmetries and social movements.[24] Moreover scholars of international relations have begun to "examine the impact of NGO coalitions and networks on international politics and their role in the formation of an international civil society."[25] Since this literature often stemming from political sciences is critiqued because of its simple categories and generalizations, anthropologists rather focus on how discourses about NGOs create knowledge; define sets of appropriate practices and how reductionist views of NGOs as fixed and generalizable entities can be avoided.[26] In contrast, the study of "religious NGOs" is relatively new. Julia Berger published the first analysis of this type of organization in 2003, defining them "as formal organizations whose identity and mission are self-consciously derived from the teachings of one or more religious or spiritual traditions and which operates on a nonprofit, independent, voluntary basis to promote and realize collectively articulated ideas about the public good at

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[22] Mary B. Anderson, *Do no harm – How Aid can support Peace-or War,* (Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1999).
[23] Nicola Banks, and others, "NGOs, States, and Donors Revisited: Still too close for Comfort?," *World Development* 66 (2015): 707-718. Gerhard Clarke, "Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and Politics in the Developing World," *Political Studies* 46, no. 1 (1998): 36-52. William F. Fischer, "Doing Good? The Politics and Antipolitics of NGO Practices," *Annual Review Anthropology* 26 (1997): 439-464.
[24] Erica Johnson, and Aseem Prakash, "NGO Research Program: A collective Action Perspective," *Policy Sciences* 40, no. 3 (2007): 221-240.
[25] Fischer, "Doing Good? The Politics and Antipolitics of NGO Practices," 440.
[26] Ibid. 441.

the national or international level."[27] These organizations form a unique hybrid of religious beliefs and socio-political activism while operating in the same legal and political frameworks of secular civil society.[28]

Given the fact that this thesis focuses on humanitarian aid and development organizations, it is vital to focus on the concept of humanitarianism. Moreover looking at the dichotomies of aid in chapter two, it has to be clear what is meant by development aid culture. Defining humanitarianism is problematic, and there are different approaches to study the meaning and practice of humanitarianism from a historical perspective. Definitions of humanitarianism that largely rest on the independent, neutral and impartial provision of aid, drawing on the boundaries of humanitarianism so that there is no hint of politics or power romanticize humanitarianism´s history and deny that meaning and practices of humanitarianism are historically fluid as the world it operates in.[29] The ideal humanitarian act, however, is perceived as an altruistic, motivated desire to protect lives and provide relief adhering to the principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence and do more good than harm.[30] Since the criteria used to define humanitarianism are not clearly defined, it is little surprise that there is a debate on what qualifies as a humanitarian organization.[31]

To understand what is referred to when using the term "development aid culture" in this thesis, I provide a brief overview on the periods of humanitarianism out of which the development aid culture emerged. Forms of humanitarianism occurred in the early 19th century. The foundation of two main institutions, the International Committee of the Red Cross in 1864 and the emergence of the humanitarian law mark this first period of humanitarianism.[32] As a consequence of the flagrant inhumanity during World War II, the

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[27] Julia Berger, "Religious Non-Governmental Organizations: An Exploratory Analysis," accessed May 4, 2015. http://www.global.ucsb.edu/orfaleacenter/luce/luce08/documents/Harvard%20Summary%20paper.pdf, 1.
[28] Ibid. 4.
[29] Michael Barnett, and Thomas G. Weiss, *Humanitarianism in Question – Politics, Power, Ethics,* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press 2008),10.
[30] Ibid. 11.
[31] Ibid. 14.
[32] Ibid., 21.

idea of human dignity led to a new period marking the establishment of the UN, the Declaration of Human Rights, the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, and the Geneva Conventions, all normative humanitarian pillars. Likewise during this period, there was an emergence of mainly Christian humanitarian organizations such as Lutheran World Relief, Church World Service, and Caritas International. After the First World War humanitarian action was also directed outside of Europe reflecting colonial expansion.[33] This period however is subject to critical analysis of humanitarian aid. Barnett and Weiss argue. "Although humanitarianism was often invoked as an alibi for interest-based interventions, in many cases it came to oppose colonial sentiments and actions."[34] It was in the period of decolonization when humanitarian organizations first focused on what was then called "third world" or "global South." Newly established organizations like Caritas International, Church World Service, and Lutheran World Relief, which were established, as a response to the suffering in Europe, turned international.[35] It was after the end of the Cold War that the number of newly founded NGOs increased. A growing importance of civil society and neo-liberalist agenda supported the turn around from state-led aid provision to the foundation of NGOs and other types of humanitarian organizations.[36]

It was after the attacks on September 11, 2001 that the perception of humanitarian aid changed again and which is the most relevant perception of humanitarian aid relevant to the scope of this thesis. Remarkably in the United States, counterterrorism and humanitarianism became "crime-fighting partners," meaning that humanitarian organizations became part of campaigns to convince the public of the goodness of the invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq in the name of stability and freedom.[37] Ironically it was the same US government under the

[33] Eleanor Davey and others, "A History of the Humanitarian System – Western origins and foundations," HGP Working Paper (2013), accessed June 15, 2015, http://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/8439.pdf, 5.
[34] Barnett and Weiss, *Humanitarianism in Question*, 22.
[35] Ibid. 23.
[36] Petersen, *For Humanity or for the Umma?*, 80.
[37] Barnett, and Weiss, *Humanitarianism in Question*, 25.

administration of George W. Bush that implemented hard measures against Muslim NGOs, accusing them of founding terrorism and spreading extremist views.

Before engaging further into the dichotomies of development aid culture and Islamic aid, I will briefly discuss the debate on how Muslim NGOs are best explored and analyzed and how I myself will approach these organizations in my thesis. This is important since there is an ongoing debate on how to define and conceptualize Muslim NGOs. Academics discuss whether it is more appropriate to approach them as faith-based organizations rather then like any other secular NGO. Furthermore it is debated if the term faith-based organization is applicable to every NGO since they are ideological actors based on their own "faith" like human rights etc.

Conceptualizing Muslim NGOs

Posing the question on how Muslim NGOs can be conceptualized, I refer to the ongoing academic debate on Faith-Based Organizations. Clarifying the term "FBO", and further explanation of this debate is necessary when studying how Muslim NGOs define and position themselves.

Given the relatively expansive literature on religious and legal concepts of philanthropy and almsgiving in Islam, the organizational level of Muslim charities as well as transnational Muslim NGOs have historically received little scholarly attention. This changed after 9/11 when some politicians and journalists concluded that certain Muslim charities and NGOs were financing terrorist activities by using humanitarian programs.[38] Meanwhile much of the literature focusing on transnational Muslim NGOs stems from political science and terrorism studies, which identify Muslim NGOs as political actors and analyze them as supporters of militant networks, national political parties and resistance groups mainly in

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[38] Jonathan Benhall, and Jerome Bellion-Jourdan, *The Charitable Crescent – Politics of Aid in the Muslim World* (New York: I.B. Tauris&Co Ltd, 2003), 1.

Palestine, Sudan, Afghanistan and elsewhere.[39] A third strand of literature is growing out of law and international relations studies, focusing on the legal implications of anti-terror legislation for Muslim NGOs and NGOs in general. Neglecting the influence of religion, development studies only began to focus on studying FBOs in the last ten years.[40] This change in development studies stems from a number of reasons: First, the increasing visibility of religion in the public sphere challenges narratives of modernization and secularization. Here the Iranian Revolution in 1979 was only one event that challenged the international development community´s attitude towards religion.[41] Second, there has been an increase in the actual number of FBOs. The World Bank´s study *Voices of the Poor* (2000) underlines the importance of such religious organizations especially for the poor. It concluded that people have more trust in FBOs than in secular NGOs.[42] The third event is an internal shift in development studies from modernization theory to more heterodox approaches leading to an opening of the humanitarian space to the inclusion of religious actors in academic studies.[43] Séverine Deulin and Carole Rakodi invoke that this internal shift requires a reassessment of two fundamental assumptions in development studies, namely: "that the significance of religion will decline as societies modernize, and that the political space can and should be strictly separated from the religious space."[44]

Michael Barnett and Janice Gross Stein point out another reason for the interest in religious-based action in humanitarianism. They argue that humanitarianism underwent three waves of globalization. In the first wave, the spread of Western aid agencies to nearly all parts

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[39] Petersen, *For Humanity or for the Umma?,* 11.
[40] Recent studies on FBOs include: Gerard Clarke, "Faith Matters: Faith-based Organisations, Civil Society and International Development," *Journal of International Development* 18 (2006):835-848. Bruno De Cordier, "Faith-based Aid, Globalisation and the Humanitarian Frontline: An Analysis of Western-based Muslim Aid Organisations," *Disasters 33*, no. 4 (2009): 608-628. Severine Deneulin and Carole Rakodi, "Revisiting Religion: Development Studies Thirty Years On", *World Development 39*, no. 1 (2010): 45-54. Elizabeth Ferris. "Faith and Humanitarianism: It´s Complicated," *Journal of Refugee Studies 24*, no. 3 (2011): 606-625. Michael Barnett, and Janice Gross Stein, *Sacred Aid – Faith and Humanitarianism*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012).
[41] Deneulin and Rakodi, "Revisiting Religion," 46.
[42] Petersen, *For Humanity or for the Umma?,* 24.
[43] Ibid.
[44] Deneulin, and Rakodi, "Revisiting Religion," 46.

of the world led to new kinds of cross-cultural encounter. The second wave was characterized by an explosion of agencies predominantly from America and Europe working in conflict zones in the global South; endeavor to identify common vocabularies and standards. This wave was dominated by secular agencies such as the Red Cross Movement. However, in the third wave there was a growth in both transnational religious activism and humanitarian agencies from outside Europe. During this period, the relationship between donor governments and faith-based organizations were strengthened, leading to a rise in official assistance headed to religious organizations.[45] It is within this third wave of globalization categorized by Barnett and Gross Stein that Muslim NGOs became more visible in the humanitarian aid field.

The 1998 *Development Dialogue on Values and Ethics* by the World Bank or more recently the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) partnership note *On Faith Based Organizations, Local Faith Communities and Faith Leaders* in 2014 are example for practitioner and donor-oriented initiatives. This particular literature reveals some weak spots compared to the studies published by universities and research institutions. Marie Petersen critiques three major points of the literature that stems from the fact that the interest in faith-based organizations has grown out of development NGOs and donor organizations rather than academic environment.[46] First, she criticizes that when writing from within the development paradigm, it takes development for granted as an ontological and uncontested reality. Furthermore, she states that it would be useful to consider development as something ideological or religious in its meaning.[47] Second, focusing explicitly or implicitly on the ways in which FBOs can be practical tools in the implementation of development activities, this strand of literature tends to be instrumentalist. "It is about the ways in which religion can be instrumentalized for providing good development, often through faith-based organizations;

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[45] Barnett and Stein, *Sacred Aid – Faith and Humanitarianism*, 8-7.
[46] Petersen, *For Humanity or for the Umma?*, 26.
[47] Ibid.

not more fundamentally about the ways in which religion shapes the ways in which development is conceptualized."[48] The third point Petersen makes here is that much literature on faith-based organizations is apt to take "religion" as a relatively unproblematic and largely positive category. Here she sees the risk of simplifying the term "Faith-Based Organizations."[49] In conclusion all of the abovementioned strands of literature on Muslim NGOs in terrorist studies and political science, law, and international relations studies as well as the literature on faith-based organizations in development studies are characterized by an instrumentalist understanding of transnational Muslim NGOs. Although this literature fails to provide an analytical tool for understanding, they might be relevant as objects to study in themselves since they reflect a dominant discourse in the post September, 11, 2001 aid field. This discourse however reflects the kind of religion that is promoted and accepted by mainstream development actors; it also it also reveals their prevailing views on Muslim NGOs.[50] Furthermore Petersen states that this new focus on FBOs, together with the "War on Terror" brought Muslim NGOs into the mainstream aid field. By doing so she states that Muslim NGOs now "…have to navigate in an environment of increasing regulation and control, but with simultaneous openings for cooperation and funding."[51] Introducing a new kind of Muslim aid that is easily compatible with mainstream aid holds particularly true for UK-based Muslim NGOs like Islamic Relief or Muslim Aid which I will highlight in chapter three.[52]

When discussing FBOs or NGOs influenced by a certain faith, it is debatable whether it is more appropriate to use the term "religious" instead of faith-based. The argument goes that the term faith-based indicates that non-religious NGOs are not faith-based. Taken that the defining characteristic of NGOs is their claim to "do good" they are highly ideological actors

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[48] Petersen, For Humanity or for the Umma?, 27.
[49] Ibid.
[50] Ibid. 28.
[51] Marie Juul Petersen, "Trajectories of transnational Muslim NGOs," *Development in Practice 22*, no.5-6 (2012), 774.
[52] Ibid.

and therewith they are to some degree faith based. In promoting a certain "faith" over others, regardless if that faith is human rights, development, secularism or Islam.[53] Looking at all humanitarian actors as variants of faith-based organizations and not differentiate between secular and faith-based organizations is a significant approach when discussing Muslim NGOs.[54] Andera Paras and Janice Gross Stein come to the conclusion that "(the) boundaries between secular and religious organizations are fuzzy rather than sharp. Humanitarian space and human rights embody the sacred for both secular and religious humanitarians and are sanctified by both. Constructions of the sacred influence how organizations understand the nature of humanitarian action and their own identities as humanitarian actors."[55] Recently Barnett and Gross Stein published a collection of articles focusing on this topic. Analyzing whether religious humanitarian are better prepared than secular humanitarian to navigate the boundaries between the sacred and the profane, the authors discuss the importance of faith in humanitarian aid.[56] Furthermore Paras and Gross Stein argue that the degree to which religious identity contributes to the success and legitimacy of humanitarian organizations is overestimated.[57] That religious organizations are better prepared to negotiate with the political and the profane within the sacred space of humanitarian principles is due to the circumstance that they live in several worlds in which they must negotiate the sacred and the profane on a daily basis.[58] "More so than any other large humanitarian organization, Islamic Relief lives in multiple worlds. Partly through circumstances and partly through design, it brings the sensibilities of both the sacred and the profane to the construction of humanitarian space."[59]

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[53] Petersen, *For Humanity or for the Umma?,* 35.
[54] When discussing faith-based and secular organizations it is vital to take a closer look at the concept of " Humanitarian space" which represents humanitarianism´s central values. The humanitarian principles of neutrality, impartiality, independence, and universality constitute and bound humanitarian space. For deeper analysis of the concept see: Andera Paras and Janice Gross Stein, "Bridging the Sacred and the Profane in Humanitarian Life," in *Sacred Aid – Faith and Humanitarianism,* ed. Michael Barnett, and Janice Gross Stein (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 213.
[55] Paras and Gross Stein, "Bridging the Sacred and the Profane in Humanitarian Life," 211.
[56] Barnett and Gross Stein, *Sacred Aid – Faith and Humanitarianism.*
[57] Paras and Gross Stein, "Bridging the Sacred and the Profane in Humanitarian Life," 211.
[58] Ibid. 229.
[59] Paras and Gross Stein, "Bridging the Sacred and the Profane in Humanitarian Life," 222.

That these issues are not only discussed by academics but also on a practical level are found in a statement by Dr. Hany El Banna, co-founder of Islamic Relief and the Muslim Charities Forum.[60] Dr. El Banna prefers the concept of "value-based organization" instead of FBOs.[61]

Nevertheless it is helpful to work with a FBO typology in order to differentiated between different kind of FBOs and to analyze how important faith is in their organizational culture, motivation for action or when working with partners and beneficiaries. Gerald Clark provides a FBO typology that distinguishes between a passive, active, persuasive or exclusive FBO.[62] In a Passive FBO, based on his typology, faith is subsidiary to broader humanitarian principles as a motivation for action, mobilizing staff and supporters. Moreover it plays a secondary role in identifying, helping or working with beneficiaries or partners. For the active type on the opposite, faith provides an important and explicit motivation for action. It plays a direct role in identifying and in the everyday work of an organization. The persuasive and exclusive types of a FBO aim to bring new converts to the faith and engage in social and political actions.[63] In which type an organization fits depends on how it chooses to operationalize its faith in different areas such as motivation of staff; mission; choice of staff, partners and beneficiaries; organizational culture and funding. In chapter three I will examine these different areas of four Muslim NGOs in the UK and analyze in which of these types they fit.

Concentrating on how Muslim NGOs understand the role of religion and how and when they "Islamize" terms and use a specific ideological foundation of aid, it is vital to conceptualize these terms and discuss how they are employed in this thesis. In what follows, I

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[60] Dr. Hany El-Banna is the founder of Islamic Relief and the founder and president of the Humanitarian Forum, which seeks to foster partnership and close cooperation between humanitarian and charitable organizations from Muslim and Western countries. Furthermore he is the founder and chairman of the Muslim Charity Forum.
[61] Jonathan Benthall, "Cultural Proximity and the Conjuncture of Islam with Modern Humanitarianism," in *Sacred Aid – Faith and Humanitarianism,* ed. Michael Barnett, and Janice Gross Stein (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 83-84.
[62] Gerald Clark, "*Faith-based organizations and International Development: An overview,"* in Development, Civil Society and Faith-based Organizations*,* edited by Gerard Clarke and Michael Jennings, (Hampshire, New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2008), 32-33.
[63] Ibid.

will introduce particular concepts of religion, Islam and ideology in order to build my case study on the four Muslim NGOs on these concepts.

Defining Religion, Islam and Ideology

Talal Asad´s *Genealogies of Religion* is one of the best-known concepts of religion. Thus, in this thesis I will neither refer to Clifford Geertz´s view on religion as a "cultural system" nor to Talal Asad`s critique of Geert´s view. Rather, I will turn to Bruce Lincoln´s conception of religion, which is a response to Talal Asad´s *Genealogies of Religion*. Agreeing with Asad that in a definition of religion both discourse and practice must be included, but Lincoln takes it one step further and includes the domain of institutions and community. All these four domains, which are; discourse, practice, institutions and community are according to him "… necessary parts of anything that can properly be called a 'religion'."[64] Furthermore he states that each macro-entity called "religion" has internal varieties and sub visions, which undergo their own historic process of development and change.[65] Therefore things, people, ideas etc. are not religious per se but become so by giving them religious meaning through religious discourse, practices, communities or institutions. Hence something becomes religion by being "religionized" – or "sacralized."[66]

Taken into consideration that religious meaning one gives to things, ideas, people or organizations is shaped by discourse, practices, and institutions, I seek to avoid the essentialism that is easily produced by speaking about "Islam" as a single system. Moreover I argue along the same line of thinking as Asad, that there cannot be anything like a universally accepted account on a living tradition such as "Islam". Furthermore writing about a tradition always is from a certain narrative relation. This means that I am writing form my personal historical, political and sociological background and that there cannot be a thing like a neutral

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[64] Bruce Lincoln, *Holy Terrors – Thinking about Religion after September 11,* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003),7.
[65] Ibid. 8.
[66] Petersen, *For Humanity or for the Umma?,* 33-34.

position. As Asad states in his essay "The Idea of an Anthropology of Islam," "Any representation of tradition is contestable. What shape that contestation takes, if it occurs, will be determined not only by powers and knowledge's each side deploys, but by the collective life they aspire to – or to whose survival they are quite indifferent. Moral neutrality, here as always, is no guarantee of political innocence."[67]

Throughout my thesis I will use the term Muslim NGOs in lieu of Islamic NGOs. In doing so, I refer to Peter Mandaville´s understanding of studying Muslims instead of Islam:

> 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 posses or practice a form of identity which derives from something called Islam, regardless of what form one´s consciousness of the latter takes. I chose to emphasize 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.[68]

Meaning that Islam does not refer to a specific set of beliefs or practices, but rather that it functions as an abstraction through which meaning and discourse can be organized.[69] In doing so, I correspond with Petersen when she states that she is treating "Islam not merely as one example of the more general category religion, but rather as a discursive construct which operates as an important bearer of social meaning within particular communities." [70] Like Petersen, I understand that the analysis of transnational Muslim NGOs cannot merely be about identifying the role of Islam in development aid based on predetermined notions of Islam, but rather about the conception of "Islam"; asking to how and when the

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[67] Talal Asad, "The Idea of an Anthropology of Islam," *Qui Parle* 17, no. 2 (2009), 1-30.
[68] Peter Mandaville, *Transnational Muslim Politics – Reimagining the Umma*, (London: Routledge, 2001), 54-55.
[69] Mandaville, *Transnational Muslim Politics*, 55.
[70] Mandaville, *Transnational Muslim Politics*, 57.

abovementioned Muslim NGOs "Islamize" things, and what kinds of "Islam" they construct in their activities.[71]

In what follows, I outline how I define ideology in this thesis. By "ideology," I neither refer to political aspects nor to class-motivated bourgeoisie deceptions. Instead, like Petersen I understand ideology—like discourse—as an aspect of social life "… the idea that human individuals participate in forms of understanding, comprehension or consciousness of the relations and activities in which they are involved; a conception of the social that has a hermeneutic dimension, but which is not reducible to hermeneutics."[72] When focusing on Muslim NGOs ideologies of aid " …can be understood as meaning systems that center on questions of aid provision …, are formulated and shared by actors involved in the provision of aid … 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."[73]

Before delving into the case study of the four UK-based Muslim NGOs, it is necessary to provide a brief overview of the history of Islamic aid culture and the most important concepts and traditions of charitable giving in Islam. This short introduction of these practices of charitable giving helps in understanding how the abovementioned organizations deal with perceptions of aid in their daily work. Moreover, it engages discussion on how certain Muslim NGOs integrate certain concepts, traditions, and values heralded in both Islam and Islamic aid culture into their vision and mission statements.

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[71] Petersen, *For Humanity or for the Umma?,* 33.
[72] Trevor Purvis and Alan Hunt, "Discourse, Ideology, Discourse, Ideology, Discourse, Ideology," *The British Journal of Sociology* 44, no. 3 (1993), 474.
[73] Petersen, *For Humanity or for the Umma?,* 37.

Brief History of Islamic Aid Culture: Zakat and Sadaqa

In what follows I refer to Petersen´s term of "Islamic aid culture," which focuses on those organizations in the Middle East, although there are countries like Indonesia and Malaysia that experienced similar trends and have a long history of Islamic aid.[74] Islamic aid culture is closely connected to social welfare and social movements. Long before the institutionalization of Muslim NGOs, there had been a tradition of institutionalizing aid in form of religious endowments *(waqf)*. Below I will give a short introduction into the development and history of the Islamic aid culture and its most important theological concepts and traditions of charitable giving, which are still important today and are applied by Muslim NGOs.[75]

Theological concepts and traditions of charitable giving are embedded in Islam and have a long legal tradition. However this thesis does not provide a detailed historical overview of these concepts; instead, it focuses on the most important ones – namely *zakat* (the obligatory alms tax) and *ṣadaqa* (volunteer almsgiving) – which until recently have influenced the Islamic aid culture. Since charitable giving has a long history in the Islamic tradition it is bound to the life of Muhammad. Numerous concepts of this tradition as well as their implementation are found in the Qur'an and the *Hadith*-literature. "The prophets own behavior was perceived as exemplary in the matter of almsgiving and his generous and selfless behavior was a model to be emulated."[76]

Zakat and *sadaqa* are two important concepts of charitable giving and can be seen as the first social security systems.[77] Additionally to these concepts, which are still implemented by the here discussed Muslim NGOs there is another Islamic tradition of charitable giving important to the work of these organizations. Although it is too broad to discuss each of these concepts in detail, I will nevertheless list them here. Besides the distribution of food parcels

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[74] Petersen, *For Humanity or for the Umma?,* 72.

[75] For detailed history of Islamic aid culture see: Amy Singer, *Charity in Islamic Societies*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

[76] *Encyclopedia of Islam*, ed. Nanji Azim (Leiden: Brill Reference, 2001), s.v. "Almsgiving".

[77] Jonathan, Benthall, "Financial Worship – The Quranic Injunction to Almsgiving," *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 5, no. 1 (1999), 36.

during Ramadan, the abovementioned Muslim NGOs also distribute meat to people in need on the *Eid al Adha*. This tradition to sacrifice an animal on at the end of the *hijra* is called *qurabani* anchored in the *Qur´an* for example in Surah 108. 2 "So turn in prayer towards your Lord and sacrifice (animals)." Similar important to the charitable giving of food is the caring for orphans, which all four Muslim NGOs adhere too. Caring for orphans is deeply embedded in charitable concepts in Islam and there is a rich literature in the *Qur´an* and *hadith*-literature.

Zakat

Zakat, as the obligatory alms tax that should be donated by each Muslim, is the third of the five pillars of Islam. Besides the religious meaning it also has a social one since it attempts to distribute wealth righteously in society. This alms tax is meant to control social stability and solidarity.[78] "Under the ideal scheme which wide observance of *zakāt* would make possible, the rich do not become poor, but the poor cease to be poor."[79] Currently there are only a few countries in which *zakat* is still obligatory, such as Pakistan and Sudan, for example. Other countries like Jordan and the Palestinian territories have their own department for religious affairs and *zakat* committees that regulate its donation and distribution. In Morocco and Oman, however, the donation of *zakat* is a private matter.[80] A special model of *zakat* is *zakat al fitr,* which is a special alms tax donated during the feast breaking at the end of Ramadan. Today it is widespread and an important and inseparably part of social Muslim culture as well as individual Muslim Identity.[81]

Debated is the question whether *zakat* should only be distributed to needy Muslims or if the theological concept should also include its distribution to non-Muslim recipients of aid. Currently the interpretation is dominated by liberal Muslim jurists saying that the concept

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[78] Barbara Lethem, "Introduction: Arab Philanthropy in Transition", in *From Charity to Social Change – Trends in Arab Philanthropy,* ed. Ibrahim Barbara Lethem and Dina H. Sherif, (New York: The American University of Cairo Press, 2008), 4.
[79] Benthall, "Financial Worship," 35.
[80] Ibid. 29.
[81] Singer, *Charity in Islamic Societies*, 62.

embraces both Muslim and non-Muslim recipients of aid. Islamic Relief states on its website: "*Zakat* is not just a fundamental pillar of Islam – it is also a revolutionary concept with the potential to ease the suffering of millions around the world."[82] In a 1999 article Jonathan Benthall contends that while Islamic Relief also includes non-Muslim recipients in their projects, Muslim Aid sticks to a more conservative interpretation of the concept and adjusts its projects to Muslims only.[83] Islamic Relief states, "To be eligible to receive *zakat*, the recipient must be a poor Muslim. A poor person is someone whose property in excess of his basic requirements does not reach the value of the *nisab* threshold."[84] This statement stands in contrast to the organizations aim to provide aid to people regardless of their race political affiliation, gender or belief.[85] Muslim Aid on the other hand refers to the categories mentioned in the Qur´an but mainly people who are poor and suffering are eligible to receive *zakat* money.[86] In their mission statement the organization however claims that it is serving humanity.[87] Based on the fact that Benthal´s article was published more than 15 years ago, it appears that these organizations underwent a change in their ideology of aid. Petersen states in her 2011 published study: "Recipients are no longer understood in terms of fellow Muslim brothers and sisters in a global Muslim *ummah*, but as part of global humanity."[88] I will take up this change in the perception of aid and recipients of aid in chapter three.

Sadaqa

Ṣadaqa refers to volunteer alms giving, and like *zakat*, it is mentioned in the Qur´an yet the two terms are not clearly differentiated.[89] In a particular passage from the Qur'an ṣadaqa is mentioned in connection to the life of Muhammad: "O you who have believed, when you

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[82] "What we do", Islamic Relief, accessed May 4, 2015. http://www.islamic-relief.org.uk/about-us/what-we-do/zakat/.
[83] Benthall, "Financial Worship," 31-32.
[84] "Recipients of zakat," Islamic Relief, accessed May 4, 2015. http://www.irwaqf.co.uk/zakat/recipients-of-zakat/.
[85] "About us," Islamic Relief, accessed May 4, 2015.http://www.irwaqf.co.uk/about-us/.
[86] "Religious dues – Zakat," Muslim Aid, accessed May 4, 2015. https://www.muslimaid.org/zakat-charity/.
[87] "About us," Muslim Aid, accessed May 4, 2015. https://www.muslimaid.org/about-us/.
[88] Petersen, *For Humanity or for the Umma?,* 197.
[89] *Encyclopedia of Islam,* ed. *T*.H., Weir and A., Zysow (Leiden: Brill Reference, 1995), s.v. "ṣadaka".

[wish to] privately consult the Messenger, present before your consultation a charity. That is better for you and purer. But if you find not [the means] - then indeed, Allah is Forgiving and Merciful. (Q 58:12)" Examining the *hadith*-literature, this concept is broad including not only material donations but also non-material ones. Thus it can also include a smile given to a stranger or person in need or the passing on of knowledge.[90]

The concept of *ṣadaqa* plays a relevant role when it comes to the work of Muslim NGOs since this concept, unlike the concept of *zakat*, does not underline strict regulations in donating. Here however the room for different projects is wider and can also include cultural and ecological projects.[91]

Having outlined the history of Islamic concepts of almsgiving and charity I will now turn to the Muslim NGOs themselves. By focusing on the dichotomies between a development aid culture predominantly developed in Europe and America and an Islamic aid culture, I examine how UK-based Muslim NGOs balance and negotiate between these two different cultures of aid.

Dichotomies of Aid? – Muslim NGOs as Part of Development Aid Culture and Islamic Aid Culture

Both the culture of development aid and Islamic aid laid out general conditions of possibilities for the emergence of transnational Muslim NGOs in the 1970s and 1980s. On the one hand, the transnational system for the provision of aid was institutionalized by the culture of development aid and became dominant in terms of economic transfer as well as language. On the other hand, Islamic aid culture budged a connection between Islamization and social welfare. Muslim diaspora groups in Europe and North America contributed to the establishment of new donors and transnational structures of *zakat* distribution.[92] Against this background Petersen argues that Muslin NGOs can be seen "… as sites of cultural encounters

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[90] Barbara Ibrahim Lethem, *From Charity to Social Change – Trends in Arab Philanthropy* (New York: The American University of Cairo Press, 2008), 5.
[91] Ibid.
[92] Petersen, *For Humanity or for the Umma?,* 87-88.

– this is where the cultures of development aid and Islamic aid meet. … 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."[93] Furthermore both cultures of aid cannot be seen as stable concepts for they change due to political, economic and social contexts. Having emerged as responses to and being shaped by processes of modernization, colonialization, and globalization, these cultures underwent multiple changes throughout time. Although both cultures experienced the same processes their promoter interpreted these in different ways, leading to different aid cultures.[94] Four events had a large influence on Muslim NGOs, including Muslim NGOs diaspora organizations based in Europe and Muslim NGOs in the Middle East. These events were: the famine in the Horn of Africa in the 1980s, the war in Afghanistan in the 1980s, the war in Bosnia in the 1990s and the 9/11 attacks on New York and Washington in 2001.[95] It was especially in the Afghan and Bosnian wars that Muslim NGOs were suspected of involvement in and funding of militant activism and the *mujahedeen*. Seeing the *mujahedeen* as ally in the fight against the Communists, the US government turned a blind eye to such relations.[96] This however changed after the Cold War and the involvement of Muslim NGOs in the 1993 and 1998 attacks on the World Trade Center and the US embassy in Kenya.[97] These suspicions were further intensified after the September 11th attacks.

Focusing on the differences or dichotomies between these two aid cultures, Petersen identifies three significant dichotomies: First, the dichotomy between solidarity and universalism. While universalism came to be a central value in development aid, solidarity and brotherhood are central to Islamic aid, binding Muslims together in a community. Second, there is a dichotomy between neutrality as a core value of development aid, shaped by

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[93] Ibid.
[94] Ibid. 83.
[95] Petersen, *For Humanity or for the Umma?,* 90.
[96] Petersen, "Islamizing Aid: Transnational Muslim NGOs after 9.11," *Voluntas* 23 (2012), 134.
[97] Ibid.

Western humanitarian organizations and justice growing out of political movements in the Islamic aid culture. Finally Petersen describes the dichotomy between secularist and the religious meaning that the culture of Islamic aid is based on a notion of religion as all encompassing including the provision of aid, whereas the culture of development aid rests on a principally secular understanding of aid.[98]

Acting within both cultures of aid, UK-based Muslim NGOs can be designed as cultural bridge builders. Growing out of a Muslim diaspora in Europe and America, the afore-mentioned Muslim NGOs are facing the difficulty of dealing with both cultures of aid. Their self-identification as a religious organization is a necessary strategy in their daily work when negotiating with the dominantly secular humanitarian aid field. Recently these strategies and the ability to negotiate with day to day politics, especially in the field of counter-terrorism legislation, is even more important to Muslim NGOs than to any other NGO working in the humanitarian aid field.

The politics and notably the counter-terrorism legislation that Muslim NGOs in the UK have to deal with will be outlined in the following chapter. The framework I outlined above helps to understand the case studies I will analyze in chapter three. Nevertheless, before I can turn to examine these cases it also needs the political and legal framework in which counter-terrorism legislation in the UK is created and how and when it influences Muslim NGOs. Therefore the next chapter outlines the most important counter-terrorism legislations and strategies as well as the entities involved in this process.

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[98] Petersen, *For Humanity or for the Umma?,* 85.

Chapter 2

Counter-terrorism legislation in the UK

Currently counter-terrorism legislation is highly debated in politics, media, civil society and academia.[99] In the last ten years, the UK government`s counter-terrorism legislation was subject of several studies claiming that it is not only a threat to human rights but also harms Muslim communities across the UK. The Forum against Islamophobia and Racism (FAIR) conducted a survey in 2004 *"Counter-Terrorism Powers: Reconciling Security and Liberty in an Open Society,"* examining the concerns of British Muslims related to the counter-terrorism measures.[100] In another study, they state, "Victimization of Muslims under the antiterrorism legislation has lead to increased incidences of Islamophobia and racism against Muslims."[101] Human Rights Watch published a report in 2010 *Putting Human Rights at the Center of United Kingdom Counterterrorism Policy,* accusing the government that the counter-terrorism laws do have a harmful impact on human rights, undermining the rule of the law and damaging the relations and trust to British Muslims.[102] Both the targeting of Muslim communities throughout the UK and the atmosphere of fear and suspicion against everything rendered "Muslim" and "Islam" has also led to a change in the British citizen´s attitude towards diversity. After the 7 July 2005 bombings in London, this debate was further fueled

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[99] Recently the Humanitarian Policy Group published several reports: Victoria Mecalfe-Hough and Tom Keating, "UK Humanitarian Aid in the Age of Counter-Terrorism: Perception's and Reality," *Overseas Development Institute (*2015) accessed June 14, 2015, http://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/9479.pdf. Sara Pantuliano and others, "Counter-Terrorism and Humanitarian Action – Tensions, Impact and Ways forward," *Overseas Development Institute*, (2011) accessed June 14, 2015, http://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/7347.pdf. Jessica, Burniske and others, "Counter-Terrorism laws and regulations – What aid agencies need to know," *Overseas Development Institute* (2014) accessed June 14, 2015, http://www.odihpn.org/hpn-resources/network-papers/counter-terrorism-laws-what-aid-agencies-need-to-know.

[100] "Counter-Terrorism Powers: Reconciling Security and Liberty in an Open Society," Forum against Islamophobia and Racism (FAIR), accessed May 5, 2015, http://www.fairuk.org/docs/A%20Muslim%20Response%20%20CounterTerrorism%20Powers%20Government%20Discussion%20Paper%202004.pdf.

[101] "A Submission to the Home Affairs Committee´s Inquiry into Terrorism and Social Cohesion," FAIR, accessed May 5, 2015. http://www.fairuk.org/docs/FAIR%20Response%20to%20Home%20Affairs%20Committee%202004.pdf.

[102] "Putting Human Rights at the Center of United Kingdom Counterterrorism Policy," Human Rights Watch, accessed May 5, 2015, https://www.hrw.org/legacy/backgrounder/eca/uk0607/uk0607web.pdf.

by the news that that the perpetrators were British citizens.[103] Furthermore classifying Muslims as a distinct community, counter-terrorism laws reinforce the feeling of separation on the one hand, while on the other hand, they distinguish between British and Muslim loyalties causing the feeling that one has to be either the one or the other.[104]

After the attacks on the Paris office of French satirical magazine *Charlie Hebdo* in January 2015, and the attacks in Copenhagen on the 16th of February stimulated a public debate on counter-terrorism legislation and security not only in the UK but also in other European countries like Germany and France.[105] These wide-ranging changes in regulatory and legal context i.e. counter-terrorism legislation have an impact on non-governmental public action and on the work of organizations working in international development and humanitarian aid in general and Muslim Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in particular. To make things even more complicated, UK-based Muslim NGOs do not only have to deal with UK counter-terrorism legislation. Organizations like Islamic Relief or Muslim Hands also have to stick to European Union legislation and United Nations Regulations on counter-terrorism.[106]

The Humanitarian Practice Network published a working Paper in 2014 on *"Counter-terrorism Laws and Regulations – What Aid Agencies Need to Know,"* concluding that

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[103] Guibernau Montserrat, *The Identity of Nations,* (Malden, MA: Polity Press 2007).
[104] Stephen Vertigans, "British Muslims and the UK Government´s "War on Terror" within: Evidence of a Clash of Civilizations or emergent De-Civilizing Process?," *The British Journal of Sociology* 61, no. 1 (2010), 26-44.
[105] 16 people were killed in attacks on the satirical magazine Charlie Hebdo and a kosher grocery store in the period from 7. January until 9. January 2015 in Paris. See: "Paris terror attacks fast facts", CNN accessed May 2, 2015. http://edition.cnn.com/2015/01/21/europe/2015-paris-terror-attacks-fast-facts/.
One person has been killed and three police officers injured after armed men opened fire on a cafe in Copenhagen where a debate on Islam and free speech was being held. See: "One dead and three injured in Copenhagen attack," The Guardian accessed May 2, 2015. http://www.theguardian.com/worl d/2015/feb/14 /copenhagen-blasphemy-lars-vilks-prophet-muhammad-krudttonden-cafe.
[106] "UN Security Council Resolution 1373," UN, accessed May 2, 2015. http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N01/557/43/PDF/N0155743.pdf?OpenElement, (accessed March 10,2015).
EU Council Framework Decision on combating terrorism defines participation in the activities of a terrorist group to include "supplying information or material resources, or…funding its activities in any way, with knowledge of the fact that such participation will contribute to the criminal activities of the terrorist group". The UK has expanded this so that not only "knowledge" that the support will contribute to terrorist activity, but also "having reasonable cause to suspect" that this is the case, is enough to attract criminal responsibility. See: Kate Mackintosh, and Ingrid Macdonald, "Counter-Terrorism and Humanitarian Action," *Humanitarian Exchange Magazin* 58 (2013).

counter-terrorism legislation affects all humanitarian organizations.[107] Kate Mackintosh and Ingrid Macdonald are concerned that humanitarian organizations are influences by counter-terrorism legislation on three levels, namely: structural level, operational level and internal level.[108] The main concerns they currently face are: access to funding that had become more limited; the administrative burden has increased, and the fear of exposure to possible sanctions under counter-terrorism measures had influences on the programming priorities.[109] In their recent published working paper, Victoria, Mecalfe-Hough and Tom Keating interviewed British international NGOs. The interviewed NGOs highlight their concerns that some aspects of the UK counter-terrorism legislation are too vague and open to wide interpretation.[110] Dr. Hani El Banna, co-founder of Islamic Relief has observed, "I think counter-terrorism legislation is preventing us from having access to the neediest people" [111]

Hereafter I discuss the current UK government´s[112] counter-terrorism strategy in general and then focus on the main legal acts, orders and measures that directly influence the work of the charity sector. I will take a closer look at the draft "Protection for Charities against Terrorist Abuse," which is being discussed since November 2014 in the Parliament. Since these legislations impact not only Muslim NGOs but also the whole charity sector, this chapter will outline the discourse on counter-terrorism legislation and humanitarian aid in the UK.

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[107] Further research on this topic: Sara, Pantuliano and others, "Counter-Terrorism and Humanitarian Action – Tensions, Impact and Ways forward," *Overseas Development Institute*, (2011).

[108] Kate Mackintosh and Ingrid Macdonald, "Counter-Terrorism and Humanitarian Action," *Humanitarian Exchange Magazin* 58 (2013), accessed June 14, 2015, http://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/7347.pdf.

[109] Mecalfe-Hough and Keating, "UK Humanitarian Aid in the Age of Counter-Terrorism," 5.

[110] Ibid.

[111] Parliament UK, "Draft Protection of Charities Bill," accessed May 2, 2015. http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/jt201415/jtselect/jtcharity/108/108.pdf.

[112] In this thesis I will refer to England and Wales when I discuss the British government because there are divergences in the legislations of Scotland and Northern Ireland.

UKʹs "War on Terror" and the Charity Sector

Especially British non-governmental organizations (NGOs) working in international development and humanitarian aid are affected by counter-terrorism legislation and policies that negatively impacting their work.[113] Current conflict zones with a high risk of affiliation with terrorism like Syria, the Gaza Strip, Iraq and Somalia pose enormous difficulties to emergency relief operations.[114] Challenges relating to the security of staff, physical access, logistics and the compliance to different counter-terrorism legislations make the work in the field even harder for humanitarian organizations. Therefore counter-terrorism legislation poses a challenge to the charity sector when organizations are obliged on the one hand to deliver aid to the needy and therefore have to get access to them, but on the other hand are restricted to talk and negotiate with terrorist affiliated groups.[115] Humanitarian organizations −no matter if they are faith-based or secular−are facing a dilemma in these aforementioned high risk conflict zones because civilians most in need are located in these territories. Although the real threat posed by terrorism should not be downscaled, the measures undertaken by the UK government are likely to have the opposite effect. Instead of robust action to counter terrorism these measures tend to undermine "... rather than protecting the interests of charities and their ability to provide aid to those who need it most and distracting attention from the particular risks that leave some organisations vulnerable to abuse by terrorists."[116]

Although all UK-based NGOs working in the development and humanitarian aid sector are confronted with these issues and monitored by the government and the Charity Commission, according to reports Muslim NGOs are under closer scrutiny than secular or

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[113] Mecalfe-Hough and Keating, "UK Humanitarian Aid in the Age of Counter-Terrorism," 1.
[114] Ibid.
[115] Ibid.
[116] Quigley and Pratten, "Security and Civil Society," 7.

other faith-based NGOs.[117] Examining the counter-terrorism of both, the UK government and the Charity Commission provides an insight into different perceptions and the realities growing out of these legislations for the Muslim NGOs relevant for this thesis.

The main actors focusing on the UK government´s counter-terrorism strategy are: the Department for International Development (DFID), HM Treasury and the Home Office. Terrorism-specific legislation has a longer history in the UK than in other European countries and dates back to 1974 when the political situation in Northern Ireland and the terrorist attacks of the Irish Republican Army (IRA) was troubling the UK.[118] After the al-Qaeda attacks on 11 September 2001, the Terrorism Act (2000) was modified and expanded by the Anti-Terrorism, Crime and Security Act (ATCSA) 2001.[119] Currently the most important regulations and laws concerning the activity of the charity sector are besides the aforementioned: the Prevention of Terrorism Act 2005, the Terrorism Act 2006, the Counter Terrorism Act 2008, the Terrorist Asset Freezing Act 2010 and the Terrorism Prevention and Investigation Measures Act 2011.[120] Especially the ATCSA is being criticized by for restricting civil liberties and human rights.[121] Moreover it is described as "the most draconian legislation (the UK) Parliament has passed in peacetime in over a century." [122]

Challenging the work of humanitarian organizations, these measures and legislations contributed to uncertainty within the charity sector. Working in high-risk conflict zones the counter-terrorism legislation worries organizations working there making, it nearly impossible

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[117] Adam Belaon, "Muslim Charities a suspected Sector," *Claystone* (2014), accessed June 2, 2015, http://www.claystone.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/MuslimCharities_SuspectSector_Claystone.pdf.
[118] Mecalfe-Hough and Keating, "UK Humanitarian Aid in the Age of Counter-Terrorism," 6.
[119] Kate Mackintosh and Patrick Duplat, "Study of the Impact of Donor Counter Terrorism Measures on Principle Humanitrian Action," accessed May 4, 2015. https://docs.unocha.org/sites/dms/Documents/CT_Study_Full_Report.pdf, 39.
[120] Mecalfe-Hough and Keating, "UK Humanitarian Aid in the Age of Counter-Terrorism," 6.
[121] "Counter-Terrorism Powers," FAIR.
[122] Mark Elliot, "United Kingdom: The "War on Terror," the U.K.-Style – The detention and deportation of suspected terrorists," *ICON* 8, no. 1 (2010), 131-145.

to negotiate with actors in the field without trespassing counter-terrorism legislations.[123] Especially the engagement with proscribed individual or groups is the main concern of many organizations. David Anderson, the UK Independent Reviewer of Terrorism Legislation, highlights this issue in his 2014 report:

It has been suggested to me… that there are criminal offences under UK anti-terrorism legislation, which are also capable of impeding the legitimate activities of international NGOs in conflict areas. Among those which may need particular consideration in this respect are:

a)TA (Terrorism Act) 2000 section 12: see in particular sections 12(2)(b) and 12(3), which criminalize the arranging and addressing of meetings to "further the activities" of proscribed organizations.;

b)TA (Terrorism Act) 2000 section 14-18, which create general offences relating to the provision of funds or other property to individuals who use them for the purpose of terrorism.[124]

On the one hand, Anderson recommends the adoption of statutory provisions similar to those in Australia and New Zealand, which do accept exemptions for engaging with proscribed groups.[125] On the other hand, he suggests, "that a dialogue be initiated between international NGOs and policy makers, including in the Home Office and Treasury, with a view to exploring how the objectives of anti-terrorism law can be met without unnecessarily prejudicing the ability of NGOs to deliver humanitarian aid, capacity-

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[123] "The Terrorism Acts in 2013 – Independent Review," David Anderson accessed May 4, 2015.https://terrorismlegislationreviewer.independent.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/Independent-Review-of-Terrorism-Report-2014-print2.pdf.
[124] Ibid.
[125] "Fourth report on the operation of the Terrorist Asset-Freezing ETC. Act 2010," Anderson David, accessed May 4, 2015.
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/412084/TAFA_2014__4th_report_.pdf.

building and peace-building in parts of the world where designated and proscribed groups are active."[126]

Discussing the recent counter-terrorism legislation in the UK, one must be certain what is meant by the definition "terrorism" that is used in this setting. Since there is no coherent international definition of "terrorism," each country defines on its own what it understands as "terrorism". The legal definition of "terrorism" implemented in Section 1 of the Terrorism Act (2000) states," the use or threat of action where…the use or threat is designed to influence the government or an international governmental organization or the intimidate the public or a section of the public, and the use or threat is made for the purpose of advancing a political, religious, racial or ideological cause."[127] Referring to "actions," this definition includes those which "[involve] serious violence against a person" or "serious damage to property," "endangers a person´s life, other than that of the person committing the action," "creates as serious risk to the health or safety of the public or a section of the public," or is "designed seriously to interfere with or seriously to disrupt an electronic system."[128] This definition however is open to criticism because it is wider than in other countries´ jurisdictions since it includes the threat to commit an act, as well as its actual commission.[129] What is even more striking is "...the manner in which 'support' to terrorism has been interpreted directly impacts upon the work of humanitarian organizations."[130]

UK counter-terrorism strategy – CONTEST and PREVENT

In 2003 the UK government first developed its counter-terrorism strategy "CONTEST." Elaborated by the Home Office, this strategy consists of four work streams, which are called the "four P´s": PREVENT: to stop people becoming terrorist or supporting

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[126]Ibid.

[127] "Terrorism Act 2000," UK Parliament, accessed May 4, 2015
http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2000/11/pdfs/ukpga_20000011_en.pdf.

[128] Ibid.

[129] Mackintosh and Duplat, "Study of the Impact of Donor Counter Terrorism Measures on Principle Humanitrian Action," 39.

[130] Sara, Pantuliano and others, "Counter-Terrorism and Humanitarian Action – Tensions, Impact and Ways forward", *Overseas Development Institute (*2011), 5.

terrorism; PURSUE: to stop terrorist attacks; PROTECT: to strengthen the protection against a terrorist attack; and PREPARE: to mitigate the impact of a terrorist attack. The aim of CONTEST is "to reduce the risk to the UK and its interests overseas form terrorism, so that people can go about their lives freely and with confidence."[131] The independent advocacy organization CAGE published a report on the UK government's counter-terrorism strategy, stating that PREVENT was created as first an all-encompassing social policy to target almost every aspect of Muslim life.[132] Furthermore, the report that after the London bombing in July 2005 the British government created a taskforce to prevent "Violent Muslim Extremism" under the CONTEST strand. Since then PREVENT has undergone a number of revisions both in 2011 and in 2013.[133] This policy however was critiqued not only by the charity sector but also notably by various Muslim NGOs and Muslim communities in the UK. London-based independent advocacy organization CAGE[134] published a report on the PREVENT strategy, critiquing its widespread curtailment of the freedoms and rights of British Muslims. Claiming that PREVENT policy is a central part of the domestic "War on Terror" and seen as the leading blueprint for counter-terrorism policy by politicians across the world, CAGE expressed concern that these measures negatively impacted Muslim communities.[135] Criticizing the approach of the strategy, the CAGE report found:

> PREVENT incorrectly conflates defeating and ideology (which it describes as `Islamism`) with defeating terrorism. All terrorists and acts of political violence have an ideology or goal. However, terrorism and political violence is not caused by ideology, it is a methodology. Rooting out an ideology or in this case a theology will

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[131] "CONTEST," UK Parliament, accessed May 4, 2015, https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/97994/contest-summary.pdf.
[132] "The Prevent Strategy: A Cradle to Grave Police-State," CAGE, accessed May 4, 2015, http://cageuk.org/report.pdf.
[133] Ibid.
[134] CAGE is an independent advocacy organization working to empower communities impacted by the War on Terror.
[135] "The Prevent Strategy: A Cradle to Grave Police-State," CAGE, accessed May 4, 2015, http://cageuk.org/report.pdf.

not end Politically Motivated Violence (PMV) because it does not address the political causes. PREVENT focuses on dealing with religious and political ideology as a means of dealing with PMV. Instead of addressing the political struggles that lead to violence that need a solution.[136]

The objectives of PREVENT are "to respond to the ideological challenge of terrorism and the threat we face from those who promote it, to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism and ensure that they are given appropriate advice and support, and work with a wide range of sectors (including education, criminal justice, faith, charities, the internet, health) where there are risks of radicalization which we need to address."[137] Charities are defined as "outward facing and inclusive, not inward looking or for private benefit. They should not be exclusive clubs that only a few can join against strict membership criteria. If a charity runs a debate or forum that excludes people of certain faiths or views this could breach charity law requirements. We will be looking at this further with the Charity Commission."[138] In both the PREVENT strategy of 2011 and in its 2014 annual report, the government stresses the important role of the Charity Commission as adviser and controller of the charity sector and therefore they are consulting on supporting the Commission to better enable their action.[139] Furthermore, the Charity Commission has fully embraced PREVENT with the appointment of a new Chairman, William Shawcroos, who is regarded with mistrust and criticized by many Muslim charities for his position towards Muslim communities, ideology, extremism and terrorism[140] In his first interview after his appointment as Chairman Shawcross said, "The problem of Islamist extremism is not the most widespread problem we face in terms of abuse

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[136] Ibid.
[137] "PREVENT-Strategy," UK Parliament, accessed May 4, 2015,
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/97976/prevent-strategy-review.pdf.
[138] Ibid.
[139] "Contest, the United Kingdom´s strategy for Countering Terrorism – Annual Report for 2014," HM Government, accessed May 4, 2015,
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/415708/contest_annual_report_for_2014.pdf.
[140] Belaon, "Muslim Charities a suspected Sector," 6.

of charities, but is potentially the most deadly. And it is, alas, growing."[141] As Chairman, he is responsible for accurately and responsibly representing the views of the Commission Board. Additionally he leads the board in making sure "the commission carries out its statutory duties and responsibilities and exercises its legal powers appropriately," "carries out the board´s plans for the future, including its contribution to legislative reform," and "carries out its service in line with agreed targets."[142] Being criticized not only for the appointment of the new chairman but also for the membership of Peter Clarke, who is a Charity Commission Board Member and former head oft he Anti-Terrorism Branch of the Metropolitan Police.[143] These factors however concern Muslim charities to be subject to greater intervention and surveillance by the Charity Commission.[144]

Charities under the Law: Security Measures to "Protect the Charitable Sector from Terrorist Abuse"

The primary legal framework for UK Charities is the Charities Act (2011 and 2006). In this legislation, "charity" is defined as "an institution that is established for charitable purpose only, and falls to the subject to the control of the High Court in the exercise of its jurisdiction with respect to charities."[145] Charities in England and Wales are obliged to register with the Charity Commission if they have an annual income of more than £5.000 or are charitable-incorporated organizations. Furthermore, registered charities are subject to a range of legal obligations under the charity law: "They must submit information on their activities, including accounts, to the Charity Commission on an annual basis; they must tell the Charity Commission and the public about their work; they must only conduct activities

[141] "Islamic extremism a "deadly" problem for charities," The Guardian, accessed May 4, 2015, http://www.theguardian.com/society/2014/apr/20/islamic-extremism-charities-deadly-problem-william-shawcross.
[142] "Chairman William Shawcross," Charity Commission, accessed May 4, 2015, https://www.gov.uk/government/people/william-shawcross.
[143] Belaon, "Muslim Charities a suspected Sector," 6.
[144] "The Prevent Strategy: A Cradle to Grave Police-State," CAGE, accessed May 4, 2015, http://cageuk.org/report.pdf, 3.
[145] "Charities Act," UK Parliament, accessed May 4, 2015, 2011, http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2011/25/pdfs/ukpga_20110025_en.pdf.

that are considered `charitable` in law; they must be run by trustees who do not benefit from the charity; and they must be independent."[146]

In May 2007, the Home Office and HM Treasury published the consultation paper "Safeguards to Protect the Charitable Sector (England and Wales) from Terrorist Abuse." Posing a number of specific questions and inviting comments on a set of recommendations by the government, the Charity Commission and several sector umbrella organizations led to an assessment of "…existing safeguards within the charitable sector and identified the key requirements for an effective, proportionate response to this evolving terrorist threat."[147] Although most respondents agreed that this was an important issue, they gave a fair warning not to overestimate the threat since the scale of terrorist links to charitable action is relatively small compared to the size of the sector.[148]

In November 2014 the House of Parliament appointed a Joint Committee to scrutinize the draft Protection of Charities Bill and to recommend any changes, based on the evidence it received and reported to the House of Parliament in February 2015. The draft Bill would amend the Charities Act 2011 by making a number of changes especially to the powers of the Charity Commission. Furthermore it gives the Charity Commission a number of new investigatory and inquiry powers and the new power to issue a statutory warning.[149] Besides it examines concerns "raised about the impact of counter-terrorism legislation on the charity sector and recommends that the government brings forward new legislation to ensure that genuine humanitarian work in conflict zones are not hindered by the 'chilling effect' of laws designed to counter-terrorism."[150] Although there are some critical voices that are concerned

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[146] Mecalfe-Hough, "UK Humanitarian Aid in the Age of Counter-Terrorism," 3.
[147] "Review of Safeguards to Protect the Charity Sector (England and Wales) From Terrorist Abuse," HM Treasury, accessed May 4, 2015,
http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+/http:/www.homeoffice.gov.uk/documents/cons-2007-protecting-charities/cons-2007-charities-responses?view=Binary.
[148]Ibid.
[149] "Draft Protection of Charities Bill," Parliament UK, accessed May 2, 2015,
http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/jt201415/jtselect/jtcharity/108/108.pdf. 3.
[150] Ibid.

with the potential abuse of power and the Commission's defective policy on extremism[151] the majority of charities - including some Muslim NGOs ones – utilized the opportunity to give evidence before the government on their main concerns regarding the charity and counter-terrorism legislation.[152] However the Muslim Charities Forum (MCF) expressed concern that the inappropriate application of Charity Commission rules and broader counter-terrorism lawsare perceived to unfairly target Muslims. At the same time they challenge the assumption made by the draft Bill like the exaggeration on the number of charities "at risk" when it comes to the abuse from terrorism. MCF highlights that this assumption is overestimated and the costs of an innocent charity responding to a mistaken Charity Commission investigation is underestimated.[153] Additionally the approach of the Charity Commission to publish the names of organizations under investigation is criticized, because it may lead to a damage of a charities' reputation when it is innocent of contravening counter-terrorism legislation.[154]

The Charity Commission and its Function as Controller of the Charity Sector

The main tasks of the Charity Commission are to register and regulate charities in England and Wales and to ensure the public can support charities with confidence. It is a non-ministerial government department and answers directly to the Parliament.[155] Responsibilities of the Commission include the registration of charities, taking enforcement action, ensuring that charities meet their legal requirements, publishing appropriate information about each registered charity and providing only service and guidance to the charities.[156] The Charities Act 2011 sets out the objectives, general functions, and general duties of the Charity

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[151] Belaon, "Muslim Charities a Suspected Sector," 18.
[152] "Joint Committee on the Draft Protection of Charities Bill," UK Parliament, accessed May 4, 2015, http://www.parliament.uk/documents/joint-committees/draft-protection-of-charities/evidence-volume-protection-of-charities.pdf.
[153] "Response to Consultation on Draft Protection of Charities Bill, 2014," Muslim Charity Forum, accessed May 4, 2015, http://data.parliament.uk/writtenevidence/committeeevidence.svc/evidencedocument/draft-protection-of-charities-bill-committee/draft-protection-of-charities-bill/written/16722.html.
[154] "Joint Committee on the Draft Protection of Charities Bill," 47.
[155] "Draft Protection of Charities Bill," Parliament UK, accessed May 2, 2015, http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/jt201415/jtselect/jtcharity/108/108.pdf, 5.
[156] "About us," Charity Commission, accessed May 4, 2015, https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/charity-commission/about

Commission in sections 13-20.[157] In their 2013-2014 annual report the Commission´s chairman Shawcross stated that the organization is undergoing rapid changes. Not only is the funding position of the Commission unstable. According to Shawcross, the weaknesses in current legal powers are undermining the ability of the Commission to be an effective regulator.[158] The funding and the legal powers of the Charity Commission are another theme, which is also discussed in the draft Protection of Charities Bill. The Bill however tries to equip the Charity Commission with enlarged powers. Charities expressed their concerns on budget cuts for the Charity Commission and claimed that the Commission would focus more on their role as controller then on the role to guide and support charities: "The Government made cuts about three or four years ago which crippled the Charity Commission. We need the Charity Commission to be empowered by having the right funds to regulate and to engage, and to build the capacity of charity organizations."[159]

The Charity Commission's 2008 Counter-terrorism Strategy

Evaluating terrorism as a serious and continual threat to UK society and to the charity sector, the Charity Commission developed a counter-terrorism strategy in 2008. Stating that the risk of terrorist abuse does not affect the whole charity sector on equal terms and can take a variety of forms - including exploiting charity funding, abusing charity assets, misusing a charity name and status – the Commission abandons a "one-size fits all" approach.[160] Tackling the threat of terrorism abuse the Charity Commission outlines a four-strand approach embracing:

- awareness; aims to prevent abuse by raising awareness in the sector of risk.

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[157] "Charities Act 2011," UK Parliament, accessed May 4, 2015, http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2011/25/pdfs/ukpga_20110025_en.pdf.
[158] "Annual Report 2013-2014," Charity Commission, accessed, May 4, 2015, https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/343006/Charity_Commission_Annual_Report_and_Accounts_2013_14_Body_Text.pdf, 1.
[159] "Joint Committee on the Draft Protection of Charities Bill," 44.
[160] "Counter-Terrorism Strategy," Charity Commission, accessed May 3, 2015, https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/406859/Counter-Terrorism_Strategy_LowInk.pdf. 5-6.

- oversight; proactively monitoring the sector.

- co-operation; strengthen partnership with government regulators and law enforcement agencies both nationally and internationally.

- Intervention: examining each case individually and taking into account whether the trustees have acted reasonably and responsibly when deciding its regulatory response.[161]

This strategy is developed in line with the UK government's counter-terrorism strategy CONTEST, the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1373, and the recommendations by the Financial Action Task Force.[162] Focusing on support and guidance to the charities is one of the approaches the Commission uses to prevent problems and abuse in the first place. Furthermore when suspicions arise that a charity is involved or has links to terrorist affiliated groups/persons the Commission states they would act proactively, swiftly and effectively.

> Where we have evidence or serious suspicion of terrorist abuse involving charities we will investigate proactively and swiftly. We also deal with counter-terrorism related issues in our monitoring visits programme. We submitted evidence to the Home Affairs Select Committee inquiry into counter-terrorism, which focuses on the Pursue strand of CONTEST in October 2013.[163]

The Commissions handling, in the case that a charity is misused for terrorist purpose, is constructed on three key principles: First, they will not register an organization that has supported terrorism explicitly or implicitly; second, the use of a charities´ assets for support of terrorist activity is not a proper use of those assets and is illegal; and third links between a

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[161] Ibid.

[162] "Background Information on the Charity Commission and UK governments Counter-Terrorism Strategies," Charity Commission, accessed May 3, 2015,
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/396157/CT-1-M2.pdf.

[163] "Tackling Abuse and Mismanagement – Report of Charity Commission´s investigations and compliance case work," Charity Commission, accessed May 4, 2015,
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/313371/tam_2012_13.pdf.

charity and terrorist activity spoil public confidence in the integrity of charities.[164] Developing guidance the Charity Commission supports charities, especially trustees, to fulfill their legal duties, which include managing risks to protect their charity; acting lawfully; and maintaining public trust and confidence. Along with this support for charities, the guidelines aim to raise awareness amongst trustees of the legal requirements in relation to both criminal law and charity law.[165]

Making it difficult for humanitarian organizations but especially for Muslim NGOs to carry out their work, counter-terrorism legislation influences the core values of the humanitarian space.[166] At this point, I turn to the specific areas in which Muslim NGOs are influenced by counter-terrorism legislation and what this means for them to work as Muslim FBOs in the humanitarian aid field.

After having discussed the counter-terrorism legislation in the UK and the theoretical approach to Muslim NGOs in chapter one and two, I will now discuss how the above-mentioned UK-based Muslim NGOs operate within a paradigm of counter-terrorism legislation and humanitarian aid. I then focus on how they position themselves vis-á-vis the UK government, its counter-terrorism legislation and the mainstream humanitarian aid field. As a way to confine my subject to the influence of counter-terrorism legislation on the of work of Muslim NGOs and how they present themselves, I mainly focus on their religious identity and how it might influence a particular approach to humanitarian relief. Moreover, I discuss how these particular organizations negotiate with the humanitarian field and the realpolitik in the UK.

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[164] "Background Information on the Charity Commission and UK governments Counter-Terrorism Strategies."
[165] "Tackling Abuse and Mismanagement – Report of Charity Commission´s investigations and compliance case work," 41.
[166] Paras and Gross Stein, "Bridging the Sacred and the Profane in Humanitarian Life," 214.

Chapter 3

Case study of four UK-based Muslim NGOs; Islamic Relief, Muslim Aid, Islamic Aid and Interpal

This chapter will focus on the organizational culture, the objectives, strategies and modus operandi of Islamic Relief, Muslim Aid, Interpal (Palestinians Relief and Development Fund) and Muslim Hands. Examining their decision-making tools as well as their statements and practices, it becomes particularly important to analyze how these organizations define and position themselves within the context of humanitarian aid and UK counter-terrorism legislation. This chapter draws on an analysis of the aforementioned Muslim NGOs drawing on aid cultures impacted by development aid as well as Islamic aid culture, in their own construction of aid ideologies.

Marie Juul Petersen argues that transnational Muslim NGOs are best perceived as part of two different aid cultures: namely, development aid and Islamic aid.[167] Working within the dichotomies of these two different aid cultures, the role of Muslim NGOs in the humanitarian aid field needs to be studied in this particular setting. Benthall summarizes this aspect stating, "Many international Islamic agencies classify themselves as NGOs and use the jargon of Western aid professionals… The tension between maintaining a distinctive religious character, and encouraging the professionalization of relief, remains a significant issue for Islamic welfare and relief organizations."[168] This is particularly important since these circumstances both enable and interfere with the work of Muslim NGOs and are important to understand their self-perception and how British authorities perceive them. In that which follows I will therefore clarify the discourse of these organizations focusing on their organizational culture and characteristics. By using the term organizational culture, I mean "a set of shared, taken-for-granted implicit assumptions that a group holds and that determines

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[167] Petersen, *For Humanity or for the Umma?,* 63.
[168] Jonathan Benthall, "Humanitarianism, Islam and 11 September," in *Humanitarian Action and the "Global War on Terror: A Review of Trends and Issues,* ed. Joanna Macrae and Adele Hamer, (London: Humanitarian Policy Group 2003): 37-47.

how it perceives, thinks about and reacts to its various environments."[169] Organizational culture influences employees´ attitudes and behaviors and consists of collective values, beliefs and assumptions.[170] Examining the organizational culture of UK-based Muslim NGOs therefore clarifies their perception of the discourse on religion and aid and, sheds light on how and to which degree "Islam" and "religion" play a role in their day-to-day work.

Currently, there are 56 Muslim NGOs identified working in the humanitarian relief and development field.[171] Altogether the number of Muslim charities and trusts in the UK amounts to approximately 1000 organizations.[172] Recently the number of Muslim NGOs in the UK is rising due to the ongoing crises in Syria, Iraq, the oPT and so many other emergencies and conflicts in the Middle East and North Africa. Although it is difficult to speak of a homogenous UK Muslim relief and development NGO sector because of its diversity and a lack of shared identity and objectives, many of these organizations share concerns over unfair treatment after the 9/11 attacks on Washington and New York City. In 2007, five UK-based Muslim NGOs (Islamic Relief, Muslim Hands, Muslim Aid, Human Appeal International and Human Relief Foundation) established an umbrella organization – the Muslim Charities Forum - which aims "(…) to improve British Muslim charities contribution to international development by promoting the exchange of experience, ideas and information amongst the members, between networks of NGOs in the UK and internationally, with the Governments, and other bodies with the interest in international development."[173]

Traditionally, there were more Muslim NGOs established in the UK than in any other European country because of their transparent and simple charity legislation and policies as compared to other EU countries. Likewise two other factors have impacted the establishment

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[169] Edgar Schein, "Culture: The Missing Concept in Organization Studies," *Administrative Science Quarterly* 41 (1996): 236.
[170] Chad A. Hartnell and others, "Organizational Culture and Organizational Effectiveness: A Meta-Analytic Investigation of the Competing Values Framework´s Theoretical Suppositions," *Journal of Applied Psychology* 96, no. 4 (2011): 677
[171] Kroessin, "Mapping UK Muslim Development NGOs," 7
[172] Ibid.
[173] Ibid. 15.

of more Muslim NGOs in the UK. First, there are sociological factors stemming from the 1980s and 1990 when a second generation of the Muslim immigrant community in Britain grew up and became socially active. Although this generation had looser ties with their country of origin, culture and language of origin, they nevertheless identified with the Islamic faith as part of both their traditional identity and a transnational cultural framework.[174] The second factor, which had an impact on the Muslim immigrant community in the UK, was (and still is) the influence of the global media. The broadcasting of crises and emergencies, especially in countries with large Muslim populations, to television audiences in the UK facilitated an overwhelming support for Muslim communities to get involved – in one way by establishing Muslim NGOs like Islamic Relief, Muslim Aid, Interpal and Muslim Hands. All of these organizations relevant to this thesis were established as a response to certain crises that took place during the 1980s and 1990s, such as the Soviet-Afghan war, the famine in Ethiopia or the Bosnian War.[175]

In the middle of the Soviet-Afghan war and the Ethiopian famine, Islamic Relief and Muslim Aid were established, while Islamic Relief was founded in 1984 by a group of medical student immigrants from Egypt. Muslim Aid was started in 1985 by the famous singer Yusuf Islam (formerly Cat Stevens). Both organizations had a period of growth during the Bosnian war in the 1990s.[176] A while later in 1993, Muslim Hands was established as direct response to the Bosnian war, too.[177] One year later Interpal was founded, focusing mainly on the occupied Palestinian Territories (oPT), Jordan, Lebanon and, recently, Syria. Although three out of four Muslim NGOs examined in this thesis draw on Islamic values to legitimize their action, they do not consider themselves primarily "Islamic" but describe

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[174] Bruno De Cordier, "Faith-based Aid, Globalisation and the Humanitarian Frontline: An Analysis of Western-based Muslim Aid Organisations," *Disasters* 33, no. 4 (2009), 610-612.

[175] Ibid.

[176] Benthall, and Bellion-Jourdan, *The Charitable Crescent,* 78.

[177] A Muslim Hands Programme Manager explained: "Our organization was founded during the war in Bosnia (…) So, many thought that if this happens to them, it can happen to other European Muslim minorities, even to well-integrated and assimilated ones. That is why there was this transnational solidarity." See: De Cordier, "Faith-based Aid, Globalisation and the Humanitarian Frontline," 613.

themselves, for instance, as "an independent humanitarian and development organization,"[178] an international relief and development agency,"[179] and "international aid agency and NGO."[180] Framing their claims and strategies more or less entirely in the language of development and humanitarian relief culture, they nevertheless identify with Islamic values and embed them in their work, too. Interpal is the only organization relevant in this thesis, which does not use any religious symbols or *Qur'anic* citations neither on its homepage nor in their annual reports or booklets they published.[181]

As abovementioned, there are two significant factors that lead to the foundation of numerous Muslim NGOs in the UK. First, the transparent and simple charity legislation and policies offer good conditions to establish a charity there and second, the social activism of the huge Muslim immigrant community that felt the need to help people in their countries of origin. Although these two factors seem to imply that it is relatively uncomplicated for Muslim NGOs in the UK it does not reveal the whole picture. After the 9/11 attacks, Muslim communities and organizations in Britain experienced Islamophobia, and were put under control by the government. This scrutiny was also felt among Muslim NGOs, specifically in relation to new counter-terrorism legislation. For a better understanding on how the counter-terrorism legislation in the UK has an impact on Muslim NGOs it is necessary to take a look at their self-conception, organizational culture and their day-to-day work.

Studying the organizational culture of UK-based Muslim NGOs below, I now turn to examine the ideology of these organizations. As aforementioned I understand ideology first and foremost as a study of (re) presentations, focusing on discourse, texts and rhetorical struggles analyzing how these organizations (re) present themselves. Therefore I focus on how and when they adjust their language either to development or Islamic values vocabulary.

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[178] "About us," Islamic Relief, accessed May 4, 2015, http://www.irwaqf.co.uk/about-us/
[179] "About us," Muslim Aid, accessed May 4, 2015, https://www.muslimaid.org/about-us/
[180] Ibid.
[181] "20 years of helping Palestinians in need," Interpal, booklet published by the organization.

Ideology of aid

The primary language used by the four Muslim NGOs is that of mainstream development and humanitarian aid. Terms like "empowerment," "poverty reduction," or the Millennium Development Goals are mainstream development discourses with which these organizations engage in their annual reports and present on their websites.[182] Muslim Aid´s chairman Dr. Manazir Ahsan states in the 2014 annual report: "Our prime focus has always been on delivering aid in the most effective way, and in recent years we have extended our aim to encourage sustainable living for communities."[183] Petersen argues that Islamic Relief builds its work on "Islamic humanitarian values" which are defined and adjusted to the values of the mainstream development and humanitarian aid field.[184] Furthermore, she states that Muslim NGOs such as Islamic Relief and Muslim Aid claim to be legitimate providers of aid not because they are faith-based but professional.[185] "Thus, in Islamic Relief, the discourse of development and humanitarian aid is the main language. Islam is presented as largely invisible and sharply divided from the organization´s aid activities, primarily relevant in relation to personal motivation and organizational values and always subsidiary to broader humanitarian and development principles."[186]

I agree with Petersen that the language of development and humanitarian relief discourse entered the language used by Muslim NGOs discussed here, partly because they are actors in the international humanitarian aid field and, partly because they had to adjust their language and organizational culture in order to underline their professionalism.[187] Providing policy research on topics like climate change, microfinance, gender justice and conflict transformation, Islamic Relief predominantly uses a professional language. Nevertheless, there is also a focus on policy research dealing with the faith perspective, which is covered in

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[182] Annual Report, Islamic Relief, accessed June 2, 2015, http://www.islamic-relief.org/annual-reports/.
[183] Annual Review 2014, Muslim Aid, accessed, June 3, 2015, https://www.muslimaid.org/media-centre/publications/.
[184] Petersen, "Islamizing Aid: Transnational Muslim NGOs after 9.11," 146.
[185] Petersen, *For Humanity or for the Umma?,* 184.
[186] Petersen, "Islamizing Aid," 147.
[187] Petersen, *For Humanity or for the Umma?,* 193.

reports on an Islamic perspective on human development, the rights of forced migrants in Islam, and on Islamic finance.[188] "Muslim Aid tries to establish a non-religious image in its family support program or its coffee shop. Islamic Relief´s recent attempt to produce policy positions on key issues has perhaps led to a more over faith basis for its work than before, with policies on HIV and reproductive health underscored by Islamic evidences and fatawa (legal rulings)."[189]

This dichotomy is not only obvious when looking at Islamic Relief or Muslim Aid, but it also holds true for other Muslim NGOs discussed in this thesis as well. Claims to professionalism and seeing themselves as part of the wider development and humanitarian environment as well as drawing on conceptions of religious values are both important factors one can recover in the organizational culture of these organizations. Although all of these organizations have adjusted their language to mainstream development discourse, different aspects of religiousness influence the vision and mission statements of three organizations I focus on. This is demonstrated, in part, by quoting of *Qur'anic* verses on their websites and in their published materials, as is the case for Islamic Relief, Muslim Aid and Muslim Hands.[190] While Muslim Hands (figure 4)[191] and Interpal (figure 3)[192] do not use an Islamic symbol in their emblem, Islamic Relief (figure 2)[193] has a mosque in its emblem and Muslim Aid (figure 1)[194] has integrated the crescent in their emblem.[195]

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[188] "Faith Perspective," Islamic Relief, accessed May 3, 2015, http://policy.islamic-relief.com/portfolio/faithperspective/.

[189] Kroessin, "Mapping UK Muslim Development NGOs," 16.

[190] For example see: "About us," Muslim Hands accessed June 2, 2015, http://muslimhands.org.uk/about-us/.

[191] "Emblem," Muslim Hands, accessed June 13, 2015, http://www.vocfm.co.za/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/397muslimhands.jpg.

[192] "Emblem," Interpal, accessed June 13, 2015, http://ams-uk.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/Interpal-copy.jpg

[193] "Emblem," Islamic Relief, accessed June 13, 2015, http://oxfamblogs.org/fp2p/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/Islamic-Relief-Blue.jpeg.jpg

[194] "Emblem," Muslim Aid, accessed June 13, 2015, http://jliflc.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/Muslim_Aid.jpg.

[195] Islamic Relief states: "In the first instance, in contrast to many other FBOs, Islamic Relief´s name provides a clear indication of its religious status. This is consolidated by the organisation´s symbol, which is especially useful as a non-literate means of communication. The unambiguous religious nature of the name and symbol, which are displayed everywhere from vehicles and offices to staff clothing and flags, reveals that Islamic Relief believes it is beneficial to announce their Muslim identity." See: "Does Faith matter? Examination of Islamic

fig.:1

fig.:2

fig.:3

fig.:4

The way in which Islamic Relief, Muslim Aid and Muslim Hands understand religion can be described as secular religiosity relegated to the spheres of personal motivation and underlying values. "Religious authority is first and foremost understood in terms of 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"[196] This can be seen in the organizations vision and mission statements as well as in their publications. For example, Islamic Relief published a paper entitled "Faith and Identity in Practice." Here they state that: "It (Islamic Relief) seeks to be both true to its faith and at the same time adhere to international humanitarian and accountability standards."[197] Moreover, in their Code of Conduct they emphasize their adherence to both the Islamic aid culture and the development aid culture:

Relief´s work with Refugees and Internally Displaced People," Islamic Relief, accessed May 3, 2015, http://www.islamic-relief.org.uk/content/uploads/2013/09/Policy_Values_Islam_Refugees.pdf.

[196] Petersen, *For Humanity or for the Umma?,* 189.

[197] "Faith and Identity in Practice," Islamic Relief, accessed May 2, 2015, http://policy.islamic-relief.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/Faith-and-identity-in-practice.pdf.

The values and beliefs Islamic Relief adhere to stem from: The Ideological and spiritual inspiration contained in divine revelation and revealed through all oft he Creator´s messengers from Adam to Muhammad, and in the scriptures and guidance contained in revealed texts, culminating with the Qur´an. They also stem from the knowledge and practice gained over the years from dedicated and principled humanitarian workers, academics and professionals from all faiths and regions who have developed universally recognized good practice in this field.[198]

Examining the influence of counter-terrorism legislation on Muslim NGOs it is important to understand the organization´s ideology of aid, because the way in which they define aid and for example recipients differs. Moreover it seems that these organizations wish to represent themselves as professional actors in the humanitarian aid field without any difference to secular NGOs or other FBO. Facing a dilemma, Muslim NGOs are forced on the one hand to proof more than other NGOs that they work professional and stick to international principles and be often more transparent then their secular counterparts. This ambition to become professional is directly related to the control of and suspicion towards Muslim NGOs after the 9/11 attacks and the following "War on Terror". Besides the control and suspicion by the British government and Charity Commission, Muslim NGOs have to deal with newly formulated "development and security" strategies by bilateral donors.

These signify a general reorientation of assistance to address the causes of radicalization and extremism as well as to support southern governments to create their own counter-terrorism structures. This reorientation has channeled resources to

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[198] "IR Beliefs, Values and Code of Conduct," Islamic Relief, accessed May 4, 2015, http://ir-iraq.org/files/IRs%20Beliefs,%20Values%20and%20Code%20of%20Conduct-20052014-0201b856.pdf.

organizations and groups working within Muslim communities, where donors are seeking new engagement to build relations and counter radicalizations.[199]

On the other hand, the Muslim NGOs I discuss here do want to underline their uniqueness in the humanitarian aid field. The argument here is that they are better equipped to work in Muslim environments.

Mission / Objectives/ Strategies

After I examined the organizational culture and ideology of Aid, I now analyze how the four Muslim NGOs formulate their mission statements and objectives by examining their strategies to achieve these aims. This however, gives an insight into how the organizations understand aid and whom they see as recipients of their aid. By framing recipients either in terms of religion or as part of a common humanity also shows which role faith plays in a particular Muslim NGO.

Formulating their charities aims, all four NGOs pay attention especially to the reduction of poverty and long-term development approaches. Furthermore their mission statements are not primarily spiritual but rather incorporate a terminology of mainstream development and humanitarian aid stating for example: "Poverty is an outrage against humanity. It robs people of dignity, freedom and hope, of power over their own lives. According to all four Muslim NGOs the provision of aid is not restricted to Muslims but they claim to deliver aid "regardless of ethnicity, creed or political persuasion and where required"[200] similarly Muslim Hands formulates that "we believe that everyone, irrespective of race, color or faith has the fundamental right to a life of dignity, free of poverty and oppression."[201] Benthall states, "It (Islamic Relief) has adopted an impartial and neutral

[199] "Aid, Security and Civil Society in the Post -911 Context," (briefing report of an International Workshop, organized by the center for Civil Society, London School of Economics, Goodenough College, London, 2007).
[200] "Muslim Aid Summary Information Return 2013," Charity Commission, accessed May 3, 2015, http://apps.charitycommission.gov.uk/SIR/ENDS24%5C0000295224_SIR_20131231_E.PDF.
[201] "Muslim Hands Summary Information Return 2013," Charity Commission, accessed May 5, 2015, http://apps.charitycommission.gov.uk/SIR/ENDS56%5C0001105056_SIR_13_E.PDF

position in its humanitarian action, which allows assistance to be used to help people regardless of their religious affiliation. The slightly smaller Muslim Aid insists that its work should be used to benefit Muslims only."[202] Being no longer understood in terms of a Muslim *ummah*, recipients are perceived as part of a global humanity. Expression like these especially became more prominent after 9/11 when Muslim NGOs were objected to close scrutiny. Petersen argues that in earlier annual reviews and reports of both organizations, Islamic Relief and Muslim Aid discussed more "the Muslim Ummah," or "projects to improve the quality of education and skills for younger Muslims."[203] Arguing that both organizations underwent a change in their language and strategies, they now emphasize their work with non-Muslims.[204] Although it holds true that all four organizations are claiming to provide aid to everyone regardless of their faith, etc., it also is obvious that they continue to work primarily in predominantly Muslim countries. Furthermore, they still play an important role, and envision themselves as advocates for an Islamic perspective on poverty and human rights. Islamic Relief just published *"Islamic Relief Worldwide and the post 2015 process – Making Islamic perspectives heard.*"[205] In this report however the organization states:

> …Muslim majority countries and Islamically inspired institutions and organizations have not yet developed coherent, Islamically rooted policy positions of their own. Often this leaves them in a defensive position with respect to policies shaped at the UN. The particular values, priorities and contributions of the Ummah may be omitted or alienated if our voice is not heard. Given the importance of the Post 2015 Agenda for shaping global discussion, it is important that Muslim majority countries and institutions make their voices heard to clarify their priorities for sustainable development and poverty alleviation, including reforms to uphold justice and oppose

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[202] Benthall, "Humanitarianism, Islam and 11 September."
[203] Petersen, *For Humanity or for the Umma?,* 197.
[204] Ibid.
[205] "Post-2015 Process," Islamic Relief, accessed May 2,2015, http://policy.islamic-relief.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/Post-2015-process.pdf

oppression in their own societies. Actively participating in this process is the best way of ensuring that the perspectives of Muslim majority countries are respected rather than ignored or worse attacked.[206]

Focusing on disaster relief and reduction of poverty, the organization´s strategies and projects are similar not only to the other Muslim NGOs mentioned in this thesis but also to development NGOs, FBO and secular alike. The four Muslim NGOs predominantly work in fields such as education, healthcare, livelihoods, emergency relief and food/water supply. Although each organization focuses on a particular field, all of them have at least one project in each of these sectors. As an immediate example, formulating their strategies in the language of mainstream development, Islamic Relief states, "Our projects provide poor people with access to vital services. We protect communities from disasters, and deliver life-saving emergency aid. We provide lasting routes out of poverty, and empower vulnerable people to transform their lives and their communities."[207] Besides these projects, all four Muslim NGOs furthermore carry out projects in traditional fields of Islamic charities, such as the care for orphans, the distribution of food during Ramadan and other important Muslim feasts celebrated. As a part of Islamic aid culture, these projects were the first ones the abovementioned Muslim charities engaged in. Later on projects in development aid accompanied these programs.[208]

Although all four Muslim NGOs relevant to this thesis draw on notions of sustainable livelihoods and self-reliance, three of them constantly include religious vocabulary and symbols, albeit in different ways. Islamic Relief, Muslim Aid and Muslim Hands base their work on Islamic values citing *Qur´anic* verses and *hadith*-literature. Defining poverty not in spiritual terms, it gives them the room to provide aid to everyone, including poor people regardless of their religion. Adjusting the spiritual and mainstream humanitarian language,

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[206] Ibid.
[207] "About us," Islamic Relief, accessed May 3, 2015, http://www.islamic-relief.org/about-us/.
[208] Petersen, *For Humanity or for the Umma?,* 211.

they balance a universalist approach, which sometimes clashes with certain donor expectations when it comes to traditional concepts of donating, such as *zakat*.[209] However the organizations use strategies of ambivalence and pragmatic arguments in order to satisfy both the donors and the international humanitarian aid field. "In order to overcome the schism between mainstream development ideals and religious wishes of donors, there is a constant attempt on the part of the organisations to adjust the religious activities to development strategies through ideological negotiations."[210] One part of doing this and not seeing religious activities as an integrated part of aid provision, is to relegate these activities for example to religious holidays. This however, can be seen in Muslim Aid´s, Islamic Relief´s and Muslim Hand´s projects during Ramadan for example. Interpal is the exception of the organizations I studied for this thesis. As a Muslim NGO, Interpal does not use any religious symbols or references to the *Qur´an* or *hadith*-literature. Neither in its vision and mission statements nor in other publications or on its websites are there any statements that would indicate that religion plays a role in its organizational culture. Interpal therefore can be conceptualized as a Muslim NGO but not as FBO. Therefore it is distinct from the four organizations relevant for this thesis. Among the four examined, Interpal was investigated three times by the Charity Commission.[211]

Despite of their different understanding and identification with "Islam" these organizations have huge annual budgets on hand, playing a significant role in humanitarian and disaster relief. Islamic Relief and Muslim Aid, two of the largest Muslim NGOs in the UK, have huge annual budgets from £4,543,620 to £82,814,292 and are able to raise funds not only among Muslim communities but also from international donors such as the UK

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[209] Ibid. 212.
[210] Ibid. 213.
[211] Though at present I was unable to access organizational material from before the time of the first inquiry, it is interesting whether the organization may have adjusted its language to mainstream development discourse after the investigations and kept a distance to religious symbols and language.

government, the UN, and the World Bank.[212] Despite increasing institutional funding, all four Muslim NGOs raise most of their donations from individual donors. Muslim Aid, for instance, has 30,000-40,000 regular individual donors.[213]

Balancing between individual donors but also depending on institutional and governmental funding Muslim NGOs in the UK are forced to recapitulate their image of how they are being perceived especially by the British government. These factors combined with the increasing control and suspicion that these organizations are confronted with because of the counter-terrorism legislation and the "War on Terror" led to a change to professionalism. In the next paragraph I therefore discuss this trend.

Change to Professionalism and Mainstream Development - Responding to an increase in Suspicion and Control

Jonathan Benthall argues that the geopolitical events between 1990-1992 marked a turning point for Islamic charities because increased control by governments during the 1990-1991 Gulf War, led to the adoption of a sharp demarcation between aid on the one hand and *jihad* on the other hand.[214] By taking on a strategy of neutrality and denying being involved in the conflict of the Bosnian war, Muslim NGOs tried to ensure their legitimacy. Benthall describes two main developments during this period that led to a change within the organizations. First, Muslim charities isolated themselves from political and paramilitary action and second, "a wish to professionalize and accept effectiveness as an indispensable condition of recognition for any 'humanitarian agency,'"[215] These two developments provoked tensions and resistance within the organizations themselves and also in the Muslim community.[216] Despite the depoliticization of Muslim NGOs during this period, they did not try to imitate secular NGOs

[212] "About us," Muslim Aid, accessed May 3, 2015,
http://www.muslimaid.org.bd/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=22&Itemid=57
[213] Petersen, *For Humanity or for the Umma?,* 178.
[214] Benthall, and Bellion-Jourdan, *The Charitable Crescent,* 76.
[215] Ibid.
[216] "Playing the card of humanitarian recognition on the international scene, and defending the principle of universality in aid provision, ran the risk of criticism from militant Islamists, who continued to analyse political situations in a dichotomy of friends versus enemies, Muslim victims versus non-Muslim aggressors." See: Benthall, and Bellion-Jourdan, *The Charitable Crescent,* 76.

but rather tried to promote a specific form of humanitarianism rooted in Islamic traditions, such as almsgiving, and charitable activities, such as the caring for orphans.[217] Nevertheless, like any other NGO, Muslim NGOs became more prominent social actors and therefore their organizational structures and staff became more professionalized as well.[218]

This internal conflict was often held between more militant founders of Muslim NGOs and professional managers. Mahmoud Hassan, founder of Islamic Aid, became executive director of Muslim Aid in 1993 before he established his own Muslim NGO. Trying to reform the organization through recruiting professional staff, he defended his policy and faced resistance from the board of trustees who had no experience in the relief and development fields.[219] Furthermore, there was tension in the transition from "Islamic solidarity" to "Islamic Humanitarians, "; which has been most obvious in the campaigning of both Islamic Relief and Muslim Aid. Both organizations refute allegations that they support political activities, defending their position as strictly humanitarian although their programs still maintain a strong communitarian character, symbolically binding Muslim donors and beneficiaries.[220] Drawing on their own conception of aid, though foregrounding their adherence to the principle of the universality of aid, allows them to provide assistance to Muslims and non-Muslims - although there is still a priority in helping Muslims.[221]

As it can be seen in three out of the four case studies mentioned above, UK-based Muslim NGOs tend on the one hand to professionalize but on the other hand they are still rooted in traditions of Islamic aid culture and do legitimize themselves also through their religion. Benthall argues that by no means the evolution of Muslim NGOs should be

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[217] Ibid. 82.
[218] Johnson, and Prakash, "NGO Research Program."
[219] Benthall, and Bellion-Jourdan, *The Charitable Crescent,* 80.
[220] Benthall, and Bellion-Jourdan, *The Charitable Crescent,* 81.
[221] Ibid.

perceived as a process where de-politicization and professionalization automatically lead to secularization.[222]

Arguing that Muslim NGOs tend to be clearer about their faith identity because of their younger, more homogenous staff and because they are less dependent on public funds and thus less influenced by secular environment, Rick James also contends in his Praxis Paper "What is so distinctive about FBOs? – How European FBOs define and operationalize their faith," that staff politics, an aspect of organization culture to which I now turn, is also important.[223] Although I acknowledge the point he makes here, I do not agree with him. I would argue, that Muslim NGOs depend on secular donors - like governments and other institution - and are therefore influenced by secular environment and have to care about their representation. Adjusting their language to the mainstream development and humanitarian aid field is only one example. Although the number of young staff members rises due to internal changes, the boards of trustees' stays mainly unchanged. Additionally Islamic Relief and Muslim Aid in recent years employ more women and non-Muslims.[224] Therefore these changes led to a very heterogeneous staff constellation, carrying with it internal conflicts and different views on how aid is perceived.

Although counter-terrorism legislation has an impact on the internal structures of Muslim NGOs in the UK, there is another factor that I will discuss in the next paragraph. When analyzing Muslim NGOs in the context of the UK´s " War on Terror" it is vital to critically examine the organizations position vis á vis the British authorities and the Charity Commission. Hence I study the relation between these different stakeholders.

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[222] Ibid. 84.
[223] Rick James, "What is distinctive about FBOs? – How European FBOs define and operationalize their faith," *INTRAC Praxis Paper* 22 (2009).
[224] Petersen, *For Humanity or for the Umma?,* 180

Positioning vis à vis British Authorities and Charity Commission

Examining the organizational culture of the abovementioned Muslim NGOs as well as their struggle in the humanitarian aid field concerning counter-terrorism legislation, it is vital to explore their positioning vis-á-vis the UK parliament and the Charity Commission, which implement, control, and monitor these legislations. As a result of Britain's transparent and simple charity legislation and policies compared to other countries, such as France or the US, coupled with governmental ideologies of multiculturalism, these initiatives encouraged Muslims to establish charity organizations and create a stable foundation for good partnership.[225] Approaching a different road than the US government in the treatment of Muslim NGOs, British authorities intensified their cooperation with Muslim NGOs in the aftermath of 9/11. Especially Muslim Aid and Islamic Relief were seen as ideal partners to promote dialogue initiatives during this period. Both organizations have regular contact and interaction with politicians and the British royal family.[226] Islamic Relief, for example, was the first Muslim organization Prince Charles visited after 9/11. Former Prime Minister Gordon Brown thanked Muslim Aid at its 25th anniversary dinner, stating, "For a quarter of a century the valuable work Muslim Aid has been doing means that millions of people across the world are today safer and healthier. I wish Muslim Aid and its passionate and committed staff and supporters the very best for another 25 years of achievement."[227] Although there is no evidence that Muslim NGOs had troubles with the Charity Commission in the past, the appointment of William Shawcross as chairman gave cause for concern amongst them. Stating that they welcomed the role of the Charity Commission and acknowledged that there was a need to strengthen the Commission, the Muslim Charity Forum accredit a good

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[225] Petersen, *For Humanity or for the Umma?,* 173.
[226] Ibid.
[227] " HRH the Prince of Wales and Prime Minister congratulate Muslim Aid as over 600 Guests attend its 25th anniversary dinner," Muslim Aid, accessed May 2, 2015, https://www.muslimaid.org/media-centre/news/hrh-the-prince-of-wales-and-prime-minister-congratulate-muslim-aid-as-over-600-guests-attend-its-25th-anniversary-dinner/

understanding of the sector to the Charity Commission. [228] Yet they too expressed concerns about the appointment of Shawcross, arguing that his criticized interview, in which he stated that Islamist extremism is the "most deadly" problem, is reason for concern. [229]

Strategies of association and national identity play an important role when it comes to the relation between British authorities and UK-based Muslim NGOs in the context of counter-terrorism legislation. Shared British values are a priority on the agenda of the government on which to base its Counter-Extremism Bill. [230] The four Muslim NGOs examined in this thesis associate themselves with their ties to Britain. For example, Interpal is "a British registered non-political charity working on the ground in the Occupied Territories of the West Bank and Gaza." [231] Besides the identification with British Values, the partnership with the government and other British organizations is a variable in which the position vis á vis the British authorities reflects itself.

Fostering partnership not only with other Muslim NGOs but also with other FBOs and secular NGOs, all four Muslim NGOs work in functional networks within the international humanitarian aid field. For example Islamic Relief has consultative status with the UN Economic and Social Council; it is a signatory to the Code of Conduct for the international Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGO's Disaster Relief, and a member of British Overseas NGOs for Development (BOND). [232] Moreover as the largest Muslim NGO in the world, Islamic Relief is both a member of the Disasters Emergency Committee, an organization that raises funds for an elite of British NGOs, and as an operational partner with

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[228] "Response to the Consultation on Draft Protection of Charities Bill, 2014," Muslim Charities Forum, accessed May, 2015, http://data.parliament.uk/writtenevidence/committeeevidence.svc/evidencedocument/draft-protection-of-charities-bill-committee/draft-protection-of-charities-bill/written/16722.html.
[229] Ibid.
[230] "A stronger Britain, based on our Values," UK Parliament accessed: June 2, 2015, https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/a-stronger-britain-built-on-our-values.
[231] "About us," Interpal accessed: June 2, 2015, http://www.interpal.org/what-we-do/about-us/.
[232] "Tenders," Islamic Relief, accessed May 3, 2015, http://www.islamic-relief.org/tenders/

Oxfam and the Catholic Agency for Overseas Development (CAFOD).[233] Similarly, Muslim Aid works together with Save the Children, Christian Aid, and World Vision, to name just a few, and has consultative status at the UN, too.[234] Muslim Hands has partnerships with the UN, WWF, War Child, Christian Aid, and DFID.[235] For Interpal as of this writing, there was not enough published information accessible on their partnership, but that they are mainly cooperating with local organizations.[236] To promote partnership between Muslim and non-Muslim NGOS and aiming to strengthen these partnerships, Hany el-Banna, founder of Islamic Relief, established in cooperation with Oxfam and the British Red Cross, the Humanitarian Forum.[237] All of these examples given above proof that Muslim NGOs are not operating within a vacuum and are open to partnership and interchange with other organizations in the humanitarian aid field. This also has an effect on their relation to British Authorities and the way these organizations are perceived by the government.

Embodying inter-faith dialogue and bridge-building, partnerships between Muslim NGOs and Christian NGOs are very popular with the British government. At least three out of the four Muslim NGOs examined above cooperate with Christian FBOs. When Muslim Aid signed its partnership agreement with the United Methodist Committee on Relief in 2007, former treasury Minister Stephen Timm´s reaction reflected the British government´s support for cross-national and trans-faith partnership.[238] Furthermore, former Prime Minister Gordon Brown mentioned this partnership in a 2008 speech to the UN Inter-Faith Conference,

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[233] Jonathan Benthall, "Islamic Charities, Faith-Based Organizations, and the International Aid System," in Understanding Islamic Charities, ed. Jon B. Alterman and Karin von Hippel, (Washington DC: Significant Issues Series 29, no.7, 2007), 6.
[234] " About us," Muslim Aid, accessed May 2, 2015, http://www.muslimaid.org.bd/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=22&Itemid=57
[235] "Serving Humanity 20 Years", Muslim Hands, accessed May 5, 2015, http://muslimhands.org.uk/media/17533769/nl2013_32_page_final_30052013.pdf
[236] "Advocacy and Awareness," Interpal accessed June 2, 2015, http://www.interpal.org/what-we-do/education-6/.
[237] Petersen, For Humanity or for the Umma?, 176.
[238] Ibid.

bringing up the collaboration between these two organizations as an example of "the potential of faith."[239]

While emphasizing interfaith dialogue and partnership with other FBOs and secular NGOs, most of these organizations are still driven by a religiously defined sense of solidarity. Negotiating between their predominantly individual Muslim donors and a universalist humanitarian approach, Muslim NGOs still have to legitimize how aid is conceived. Although increased control and scrutiny towards Muslim NGOs intensified in the aftermath of 9/11, these measures of control already began in the 1990s. Nevertheless their partnership with other organizations in the humanitarian aid field and with the British government show that they are important actors in humanitarian and development aid and are therefore appreciated by British authorities. In the next chapter I critically engage with the consequences of suspicion and control on the day-to-day work of the organizations discussed above. In addition I provide an analysis and outlook on the current situation of Muslim NGOs and new challenges they face when working in high risk zones such as Syria, Iraq or the oPT.

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[239] Ibid. 177.

Chapter 4

Muslim NGOs under Surveillance – Justified Suspicion or Untenable Prejudice

After examining the UK government´s and Charity Commissions counter-terrorism legislation and discussing the ideologies of aid and modus operandi of four UK-based Muslim NGOs this chapter examines the influence of the former on the latter. Counter-terrorism laws undermine the independence and neutrality of humanitarian organizations in general and are likely to become an additional factor in the unraveling of the legitimacy and acceptance of humanitarian responses, especially in high-risk conflict zones such as Syria, Iraq, and Somalia or lately in Yemen, places that have been infiltrated by various terrorist organization.[240]

Criticizing the UK´s counter-terrorism laws for being too vague and open to wide interpretation, Muslim NGOs believe they are being disproportionality impaired by these laws. Subject to greater scrutiny and held in greater suspicion than other UK-based NGOs by the government and the Charity Commission, they also experienced discrimination by some banks that limit their access to financial services.[241] Since 1998, the Charity Commission has conducted only 20 inquiries into suspected links with terrorism, ten of which have since been dropped. At the same time, more than 1,000 Islamic charities and trusts in the UK have been exposed to extraordinary levels of scrutiny under anti-terrorism legislation.[242]

In 2004 the Humanitarian Forum was initiated by Islamic Relief to foster partnerships and cooperation between Western humanitarian organizations and Muslim NGOs in Europe and in Muslim-majority countries. Aiming to support Muslim NGOs in joint capacity-building, advocating for a legal framework for greater transparency and promoting humanitarian principles and standards, this initiative highlights the demand for action and

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[240] Pantuliano and others, "Counter-Terrorism and Humanitarian Action," 12.
[241] Mecalfe-Hough, "UK Humanitarian Aid in the Age of Counter-Terrorism," 10.
[242] Ralf Mohammed Kroessin, "Islamic Charities and the 'War on Terror': dispelling the Myths," *Humanitarian Practice Network* 38 (2007), 27.

proactive change within the Muslim charity sector.[243] A similar project, the "Islamic Charities Project," formerly known as the "Montreux Initative," was launched in 2005 by the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, aiming to remove unjustified obstacles for Muslim charities.[244] Concerned with the inappropriate application of counter-terrorism laws and the discrimination of Muslim NGOs, these initiatives point out that Muslim NGOs have to deal with unfairly suspicion and are impacted by counter-terrorism legislation. In what follows, I focus on different areas that are important to Muslim NGOs to manage their day-to-day work, but which are hindered by counter-terrorism legislation either directly or indirectly. These areas encompass the access to financial services that are important to transfer funds to projects overseas but are restricted by the banking sector. Additionally I focus on the damage to their reputations when being investigated by the Charity Commission or being discriminated by the media. Another point I touch upon is the problem Muslim NGOs face when it comes to transparency, and the administrative burden they have to deal with. Examining these areas provides an insight into the obstacles counter-terrorism legislation can pose to Muslim NGOs.

Influence of the UK's Counter-Terrorism Legislation on the Everyday Work of Transnational Muslim NGOs

Although the whole humanitarian sector experiences the impact of counter-terrorism legislation, Muslim NGOs have been most severely afflicted. The range of regulatory measures that have been introduced has led to the rise of not only operating costs, but also to the slowing down of administrative functions, the curtailing of funds, the undermining of partnerships, the preventing of access, and the altering of the quality and coordination of assistance.[245] Moreover, confusing and inconsistent formulations of counter-terrorism laws

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[243] Kroessin, "Islamic Charities and the 'War on Terror'," 29.
[244] "Islamic Charities Project," The Graduate Institute Geneva, accessed May 5,2015, http://graduateinstitute.ch/fr/home/research/centresandprogrammes/ccdp/ccdp-research/clusters-and-projects-1/religion_politics/islamic-charities-project.html.
[245] Pantuliano and others, "Counter-Terrorism and Humanitarian Action," 11.

have contributed to the negative consequences these organizations have had to face. For example, the broad interpretation of the definition of "material support" subject to fear that even straightforward humanitarian activities such as the provision of school supplies, could be seen as prosecutable action.[246] A study published in 2007 by the National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) suggest that counter-terrorism regulations focusing on the risk of the charity sector would have the opposite effect to that which was intended, "undermining rather than protecting the interests of charities and their ability to provide aid to those who need it most and distracting attention from the particular risks that leave some organisations vulnerable to abuse by terrorist."[247] Especially the access to financial service can have a tremendous impact on the ability to provide aid to people in need. In 2014 and in early 2015, several banks in the UK froze bank accounts of Muslim NGOs without even informing the charities about their procedure.[248]

As a charity with an Islamic background working in the polarized context of Palestine is more likely to be investigated and controlled for working with local partners seen as prohibited groups by international funders and governments. As such, Interpal was subject three times to a Charity Commission investigation in 1996, 2003 and, most recently between 2008-2009, although they were later cleared.[249] Although the Commission found that there was insufficient evidence to conclude that Interpal had organizational links to Hamas and the organizations' bank accounts were released, Interpals humanitarian work in the oPT was undoubtedly disrupted, and donor confidence in the organization may have been undermined.[250] Yet Interpal still remains a "Specially Designated Global Terrorist

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[246] Ibid.
[247] Quigley, and Pratten, "Security and Civil Society," 7.
[248] "Why are banks targeting British Muslim NGOs?," Vice Magazine, accessed May 2, 2015. http://www.vice.com/en_uk/read/muslim-organisations-bank-account-closures-610
[249] "Inquiry Report Palestinian Relief and Development Fund (Interpal)," Charity Commission, accessed June 2, 2015, http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20090810111012/http://www.charity-commission.gov.uk/Library/investigations/pdfs/interpal09.pdf.
[250] Kroessin, "Islamic Charities and the 'War on Terror'," 27.

organization" on the US Specially Designated Nationals List.[251] According to the organization the damage to their reputation still causes them troubles to carry out their work and to raise funds. In the booklet published for their 20th anniversary, they state, "The designation, however, continues to have a negative effect on the charity, with the banking system in particular making it almost impossible to transfer funds overseas for fear of provoking legal action in US courts for offering 'material assistance' to a 'terrorist' organization."[252] What makes it so complicated for charities like Interpal is that organizations like Hamas are not per se prohibited but that every country has its own list of banned organizations. For instance, in the UK only the radical wing of Hamas, the Hamas Izz al-Din al-Qassem Brigade, is proscribed under the Terrorism Act 2000; However the EU and the US have designated Hamas as a whole, including its political wing, on its terror list.[253]

Financial Service

Access to financial service to transfer funds is tremendously important for charities working overseas. Any restriction or delays can endanger charities, their partners and projects influencing not at least the recipients of aid. Why is it then that banks are targeting charities and interrupting their ability to provide aid? Moreover why do they hazard the consequences of driving charitable giving into less regulated channels?[254] Delays in the transfer of funds have become the norm for most Muslim NGOs in the UK, including also organizations that are in full compliance with counter-terrorism legislation.[255] Officials of UK-based Muslim NGOs told *al Jazeera* that "access to banking facilities is vital for transparency and good governance and (that they) fear that fundraising and aid work in Muslim communities could

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[251] "Early Day Motion 786 – Interpal," UK government, accessed May 5, 2015, http://www.parliament.uk/edm/2013-14/786.

[252] "Helping Palestinians in Need", Interpal, 20 year booklet published by the organization.

[253] "Inquiry Report Palestinian Relief and Development Fund (Interpal)," Charity Commission, accessed June 2, 2015, http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20090810111012/http://www.charity-commission.gov.uk/Library/investigations/pdfs/interpal09.pdf.

[254] Kroessin, "Islamic Charities and the 'War on Terror'," 29.

[255] Pantuliano and others, "Counter-Terrorism and Humanitarian Action," 7.

otherwise be driven underground."[256]

In 2014 and 2015 British Muslim NGOs fell under increased scrutiny based on concerns that first, British citizens intent on fighting in Syria would use these organizations to travel to conflict zones and second, fears that donations raised in the UK could go to extremist groups.[257] *The Guardian, Vice Magazine* and *The Telegraph* published articles in August 2014 claiming that HSBC, a British bank, sent out letters to Muslim NGOs stating "that services could no longer be provided because they fell out of bank´s 'risk appetite.'"[258] Although it seems that UK banks target Muslim NGOs, this is not because they are actively seeking to shut down Muslim NGOs, but rather as a result of the regions in which these organizations predominantly operate.[259] Dr. El-Banna, director of Muslim Charities Forum, expressed concerns regarding the banking sector and the Charity Commission, stating that the banks "do not respect our Charity Commission, because they give authority to stop transfer to a registered organization in a country – a credible organization, a new one or an old one. They close bank accounts without considering the role of the Charity Commission. The banking industry is now playing a very difficult role."[260]

Stringent money laundering and counter-terrorism legislation force the banking sector to take a cautious approach when dealing with the money of charity organizations, with the result that these organizations are treated guilty unless proven innocent.[261] David Anderson, an independent reviewer of terrorism legislation, expressed that there are "acute concerns within the charitable sector regarding banks withdrawing or curtailing services to NGOs,

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[256] "Are UK banks targeting Muslim NGOs?," Al Jazeera, accessed May 3, 2015,
http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2014/08/are-uk-banks-targeting-muslim-charities-20148582932885804.html
[257] Ibid.
[258] "Why are banks targeting British Muslim NGOs?"
[259] "More UK bank accounts held by Muslim organizations risk closure," The Guardian, accessed May 3, 2015, http://www.theguardian.com/business/2014/aug/10/hsbc-muslim-accounts-close
[260] UK Parliament. "Joint Committee on the Draft Protection of Charities Bill." Accessed May 4, 2015.
http://www.parliament.uk/documents/joint-committees/draft-protection-of-charities/evidence-volume-protection-of-charities.pdf. 43.
[261] "More UK bank accounts held by Muslim organizations risk closure."

resulting in delays or obstacles to the transfer of funds."[262] Furthermore, he warned that there "is a risk that necessary anti-terrorism laws will be given a bad name if they resulting avoidable restrictions on the ability of NGOs to conduct vital humanitarian and peace building operations in parts of the world from which terrorism emanates."[263]

Taking a closer look on the banking perspective in their report "UK Humanitarian Aid in the age of counterterrorism – perceptions and reality," Victoria Metcalfe-Hough, Tom Keating and Sara Pantuliano examine two factors influencing the way banks deal with British NGOs. On the one hand, charities are not particularly profitable for banks; on the other hand, banks consider that dealing with charities increases their vulnerability to risk of censure or dines under counter-terrorism legislation.[264] Furthermore a lack of specific guidance from the government on "how banks should interpret UK legislation pertaining to terrorist financing has left them with little option but to take a broadly risk-averse approach for fear of finding themselves in breach of the law."[265]

Reputation

Reputation is a charities most vulnerable possession and can be easily damaged by false allegations from the media or investigations carried out by the Charity Commission, regardless if the charity will be found guilty or innocent.[266] Although there is a threat to the charity sector of abuse by individuals or organizations supporting extremism or terrorist activities, charities argue that the UK government and the media overestimate these incidents. Cases in which the media reported on Muslim NGOs, incorrectly accusing them of having links to proclaimed terrorist organizations or individuals linked to terrorism, occur quite often. In 2014 Muslim Aid responded to an article published in *The Telegraph* that wrongly accused

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[262] "Fourth report on the operation of the Terrorist Asset-Freezing ETC. Act 2010."
[263] Ibid. 72.
[264] Mecalfe-Hough, and others, "UK Humanitarian Aid in the Age of Counter-Terrorism," 13.
[265] Ibid, 15.
[266] Interpall, Isalmic Relief and Muslim Aid have all been subject to repeated media allegations that they are linked in some way or extremism or terrorist activities or groups. See: Mecalfe-Hough, "UK Humanitarian Aid in the Age of Counter-Terrorism," 9.

them of "funding organisations closely linked to the banned terror groups Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad."[267] Giving the impression that abuse is pervasive in the charity sector, this has implications on the day-to-day work of these organizations. Indeed, measured against the size of the charity sector, such incidents are small in number. Nevertheless, Muslim NGOs are especially perceived to be vulnerable to abuse. In 2013 Muslim Aid was subject to suspicion because three teenagers from Birmingham, were volunteering for the organization, collecting money on the streets. In fact they misused the name of the charity to receive donations and transferred the money to groups affiliated with terrorism.[268] But it is not only Muslim NGOs that have to deal with incidents like this and are worried about their reputation. The UN World Food Program (WFP) was heavily concerned at the beginning of 2015 when they found out that the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL)[269] was using food parcels of their program and had pasted over the WFP printed logos read "Islamic State Syria."[270]

Incidents like these concern Muslim NGOs that the Charity Commission´s counter-terrorism legislation and rules unfairly target them. In the written response to the consultation on the "Draft Protection of Charities Bill," the Muslim Charities Forum (MCF) voiced concerns that publications of the Charity Commission on ongoing inquiries could damage the reputation of the charity and that this influences donors and banks decisions on supporting the charity under surveillance. MCF has since recommended that before a warning is made public, the process should be laid out in the Bill should be both clear and transparent

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[267] "Muslim Aid´s response to the Sunday Telegraph article on 30th November 2014," Muslim Aid, accessed May 4, 2015, https://www.muslimaid.org/media-centre/press-release/muslim-aids-response-to-the-sunday-telegraph-article-on-30th-november-2014/
[268] "Muslim Aid has no link with the Birmingham terrorists," The Asians, accessed May 4, 2015. http://www.theasians.co.uk/story/20130304_muslim_aid_pc
[269] The Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant, also known as the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), is an Islamic extremist terrorist group that proclaimed a caliphate in June 2014.
[270] "UN worried as ISIS distributes "stolen" WFP food parcels with Islamic State Label," International Business Times, accessed May 4, 2015. http://www.ibtimes.co.in/un-worried-isis-distributes-stolen-wfp-food-parcels-islamic-state-labels-622359

process.[271] Furthermore they are concerned with the direct costs for a wrongfully investigated charity responding to a Charity Commissions investigation. Therefore they urge that the Charity Commission "must proactively 'rehabilitate' the reputation and functioning of a charity that it has publicly reprimanded and not closed. The Charity Commission should endeavor in all cases where misconduct has not been found, to repeatedly defend the charity in the press and issue a clear public statement exonerating the charity."[272] A further point of concern to charities in the UK was the Charity Commission´s involvement in the government´s counter-terrorism strategy PREVENT, which led to a less independent function of the Commission.[273]

Risk Management

Working in conflict zones, negotiating access to the needy and the need for guarantees for safety and staff inevitably forces Muslim NGOs to engage with prohibited groups like ISIL, Al Shabaab or Hamas. Therefore these organizations often see themselves in the position to establish costly risk management measures in order to first, minimize their own risk to be abused by individuals or groups with links to terrorism or extremis and second, be more transparent and credible vis á vis donors and their governments at home. Moreover higher risk exposure for Muslim NGOs relates to the challenges they face in balancing Islamic concepts of charity with professional institutional standards. Like already discussed in this thesis Muslim NGOs highly depend on individual funding from their local communities, but are furthermore dependent on those local Muslim communities to legitimize themselves as "Muslim organizations". Moreover Muslim NGOs are often blamed that trustees have individual links to proscribed groups or individuals. Often discussed in the media, these

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[271] "Response to the Consultation on Draft Protection of Charities Bill, 2014," Muslim Charities Forum, accessed May, 2015, http://data.parliament.uk/writtenevidence/committeeevidence.svc/evidencedocument/draft-protection-of-charities-bill-committee/draft-protection-of-charities-bill/written/16722.html.
[272] Ibid.
[273] Mecalfe-Hough, "UK Humanitarian Aid in the Age of Counter-Terrorism," 8.

incidents often stem from a lack of understanding amongst Muslim NGOs, politicians and their local communities of the difference between charity and "political activism".[274]

To prevent fraud, Muslim NGOs like Islamic Relief are instituting increasingly robust risk management based on professional standards that are specifically related to counter terrorism-measures. Screening staff, partners and beneficiaries against lists of proscribed groups or individuals requires financial resources and are therefore only feasible for NGOs with a high budget. Additionally it is reported that some Muslim NGOs screen all donations above $8000, despite the significant administrative burden this imposes.[275] Although some of these measures embraced by Muslim NGOs to protect themselves from terrorist abuse are a necessary and welcomed step towards more transparency, the ongoing humanitarian crises in Syria and Iraq pose new challenges to the humanitarian sector as a whole and Muslim NGOs in particular. In the following paragraph I focus on these new challenges concerning counter-terrorism legislation as well as humanitarian work.

Muslim NGOs and the Syrian Crisis – New challenges for counter-terrorism legislation and humanitarian work

An article published in the 2011volume of *International Review of the Red Cross* deals with humanitarian engagement under counter-terrorism and how humanitarian organizations have to be mindful of both counter-terrorism legislation and humanitarian law although both do contradict each other.[276] More recently in 2014 and interrelated to the crisis in Syria, three studies have been published dealing with the impact of counter-terrorism legislation on humanitarian aid in Syria.[277] Furthermore the Charity Commission has published guidelines

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[274] Ibid, 11.

[275] Pantuliano and others, "Counter-Terrorism and Humanitarian Action,".7.

[276] Naz K. Modirzadeh and others, "Humanitarian Engagement under Counter-Terrorism," *International Review of the Red Cross* 93, no. 883 (2011).

[277]Eva Svoboda, "Aid and the Islamic State - Adressing needs in Syria," *IRIN/HPG Crisis Brief* (2014). Jessica Burniske and others, "Counter-Terrorism laws and regulations – What aid agencies need to know," *Overseas Development Institute* (2014).

on how to donate safely to charities working in Syria.[278] Between 2013 and 2014 the Charity Commission carried out full statutory inquiries into five British NGOs working in Syria – all of which are Muslim NGOs. Newly founded charities and aid convoys are under closer scrutiny since the government fears that it might be an easy way for Britons to join terrorist groups in Syria.

At stake is not only the counter-terrorism legislation´s impact on the humanitarian organizations themselves but also on International Humanitarian Law (IHL). Aforementioned counter-terrorism laws impact the way humanitarian actors can engage with prohibited groups. Although IHL clearly provides humanitarian actors to offer services to all parties of a conflict, some actors fear the consequence of doing so. Additionally the failure to engage with different parties of the conflict limits the ability to provide aid to the populations under the control of these groups. Among others, Sara Pantuliano argues, "Whilst IHL balances the principle of military necessity with that of humanity, and places limits on the waging of war, the application of a counter-terrorism framework to conflict threatens to erode those limits and with them the ability of persons affected by conflict to receive humanitarian protection and assistance."[279]

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[278] "Safer giving advice for Syria," The Charity Commission, accessed May 4, 2015. https://www.gov.uk / government/news/safer-giving-advice-for-syria.
[279] Pantuliano and others, "Counter-Terrorism and Humanitarian Action".

Conclusion

This thesis contends that the British government's counter-terrorism legislation and strategy impact UK-based Muslim NGOs on different levels. As this thesis draws on key aspects of the literature and organizational material, it becomes obvious that counter-terrorism legislation does influence Muslim NGOs in their organizational culture and how they perceive and locate themselves vis á vis the British authorities and the mainstream development aid field. Promoting and individualized religiosity subordinated to discourse and practice of the mainstream development and humanitarian aid field, these organizations place themselves within the "War on Terror" discourse, functioning as bridge builders between "Islam" and "the West." It is this dichotomy of the two different aid cultures that is recurrent when looking at the positioning of the NGOs, Interpal, Muslim Hands, Muslim Aid and Islamic Relief. Moreover it is in the light of these dichotomies in which these organizations also aim to become more "professional" and to adjust their language to the mainstream development aid field. This becomes important also because the "War on Terror" has brought "Muslims within the gaze of donor agencies, a gaze, however, that constructs Muslims as problematic."[280]

Besides Muslim NGOs must raise standards with regard to risk management and accountability effecting particularly small organizations and their budget since these measures are expensive. Remarkably the financial service of Muslim NGOs in the UK is limited due to the perception of banks, which view Muslim NGOs as higher risk because of the locations in which they work. The example of Interpal is a case-in-point: the organization had to work hard to regain the trust of donors and the government after it was investigated and then cleared.

Discussing the issue of the influence of counter-terrorism legislation on UK-based Muslim NGOs, it is evident that a lack of proportionality has fueled negative perceptions on

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[280] "Aid, Security and Civil Society in the Post-911 Context," 6.

all sides. Therefore all stakeholders must unify in an open and truthful dialogue to address the negative impacts of counter-terrorism legislations. The consequences for Muslim NGOs are only one aspect of a wider problem these legislations are posing to a wider British Muslim community and I would argue to the British society as well. Debates on shared national identity, integration and multiculturalism as well as on the importance of British values have to be revisited in light of a growing Islamophobia and atmosphere of fear.[281] In this context British Muslim NGOs can figure as a key role in mediating between the actors.

The "War on Terror" has emboldened governments to institute new counter-terrorism legislations. These legislations affect adversely fundamental human rights and individual liberties as well as it impacts certain communities, predominantly Muslim, that have come under suspicion in a context of anxieties and fears over "Islamic fascism".[282] Although there is a real terrorist threat to the UK the presumed threat by terrorist abuse to the charity sector is overestimated. This overreaction against Muslim NGOs as well as increased suspicion and control does hamper the organizations work in high risk zones and damages their reputation. The lack of support for Muslim NGOs in the UK to help them address their shortcomings in accountability and transparency, and the rhetoric about their funding for terrorism continues. In this respect it needs more initiatives like the Humanitarian Forum or the Islamic Charities Project, to help foster partnership and a better understanding of Muslim NGOs. Moreover the way forward is to enable a more open and informed debate about Muslim NGOs in the UK and the influence of counter-terrorism legislation on civil society. To engage with Muslim NGOs as partners not as enemies is a step forward. Like Mohammed Kroessin formulates it: "Their vilification must end, and they must be helped to better engage with the mainstream humanitarian community, since their contribution to relief and development is considerable.

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[281] "We need tough evidence based counter-terrorism strategies," The Muslim Council of Britain, accessed June 2, 2015, http://www.mcb.org.uk/we-need-tough-evidence-based-counter-terrorism-strategies/ http://www.mcb.org.uk/shared-national-identity-not-seen-lens-security-mcb-responds-prime-ministers-munich-speech/.
[282] "Aid, Security and Civil Society in the Post-911 Context," 1.

Any further fallout from the ill-directed "War on Terror" will only make the problem more deep-rooted, whilst the victims of today´s greatest evil, poverty, remain unaided."[283]

In which direction the British government will lead its counter-terrorism legislation and deal with Muslim NGOs has to be seen in the future months and years. This debate however, is not only about Muslim NGOs but includes Muslim transnationalism and questions on national identity and cultural proximity. For the wider development and humanitarian aid field, questions of how counter-terrorism regimes affect their partners overseas and the debate on humanitarian principles in view of counter-terrorism operations and changing military competencies will be vital discussions to deal with.

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[283] Kroessin, "Islamic Charities and the War on Terror'," 29.

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