Iznik Tiles, 16th century

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GENERAL CALL FOR PAPERS
The Journal of Muslim Philanthropy & Civil Society

The Journal of Muslim Philanthropy & Civil Society (JMPCS), is a bi-annual, peer reviewed, open access journal published by the Center on Muslim Philanthropy in partnership with the IUPUI University Library Center for Digital Scholarship, and the Lilly Family School of Philanthropy at Indiana University.

JMPCS seeks original academic research examining the broad scope of Muslim philanthropy and civil society. This peer reviewed online academic journal will publish research related to Muslim nonprofit, philanthropic and voluntary action. The terms "Muslim" and "philanthropy" are defined broadly to be inclusive of cutting-edge research from across the world and disciplines.[1] *JMPCS* is intended to shed light on the dynamic practice and understanding of Muslim Philanthropy. We seek to draw articles by researchers from across disciplines (History, Political Science, Religious Studies, Sociology, Public Affairs, Nonprofit Management, Business, Philanthropy, etc.) and practitioners throughout the world working in this emerging field.

Along with standard Research Papers (8000 words) and Book Reviews (1500 words), *JMPCS* also welcomes Commentaries (short articles commenting in a significant way on, or supplementing arguments and evidence in, a Research Article or a Review Article) of up to 2500 words. Authors are welcome to submit original Research Papers, Book Reviews, and Commentaries dealing with themes relating to the mission of the journal.

Editor's Prize: $1,000 in research funds will be provided to those authors whose work the editorial board deems to be truly outstanding contributions to the journal and the field, after a double-blind review process during the 2017 and 2018 calendar years. The funds will be disbursed upon publication of the article in *JCMPS*. The winning articles will be determined by the editors of *JCMPS*.

Submission instructions

All papers should be submitted via the Open Journal Systems system. Visit https://journals.iupui.edu/index.php/muslimphilanthropy/information/authors for more details about submitting your work.

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[1] By "Muslim" philanthropy, we mean philanthropic activity of any kind which involves self-identifying Muslim individuals, institutions, communities, and societies as key agents in shaping the context and content of this activity. Given the extent to which any construction of Muslim identity necessarily entails the influence of other faiths as well as various expressions of secular culture, the Journal's scope is intentionally broad. Our definition of "philanthropy" is similarly broad and encompasses any intentional act of generosity. As such, "philanthropy" includes practices of generosity ranging from the activity of discrete individuals of all socio-economic backgrounds to that of not-for-profit organizations, social movements, and a variety of other forms of civic engagement.

We hope you will consider submitting your research to the *Journal of Muslim Philanthropy & Civil Society*.

Please contact Managing Editor Rafia Khader at rkhader@iupui.edu with any questions.

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Volume 1, Issue 1 - November 2017

From The Editors' Desk

We are pleased to introduce you to the inaugural issue of the *Journal of Muslim Philanthropy and Civil Society*.

An important step in the journey toward creating the *Journal* began over a year ago when we hosted a Symposium on Muslim Philanthropy and Civil Society at the Lilly Family School of Philanthropy at Indiana University. Together with generous support from the New Frontiers in Research grant (from Indiana University's Office of Research), Dr. David King, Director of the School of Philanthropy's Lake Institute on Faith & Giving, and the Indiana University-Purdue University-Indianapolis University Library, we were able to collaborate with Dr. Gregory Witkowski in convening a group of internationally prominent figures in the study of and engagement in Muslim philanthropy and civil society. The symposium was what we intend to be the first of many opportunities the *Journal* will offer scholars and practitioners who work in the area of Muslim philanthropy and civil society to share with one another and broader audiences their rich contributions to this emerging field.

Before introducing you to the contents of this issue, allow us to say a few words about the way in which we are attempting to employ the categories of "Muslim philanthropy" and, by implication, "civil society."

By "Muslim" philanthropy, we mean philanthropic activity of any kind which involves *self-identifying Muslim individuals, institutions, communities, and societies as key agents* in shaping the context and content of this activity. This includes any and all activity in which Muslims themselves either give or receive, as well as any activity in which there is an identifiable and significant connection to Muslims and/or Islam. Given the extent to which any construction of Muslim identity necessarily entails the influence of other faiths as well as various

expressions of secular culture, the *Journal*'s scope is intentionally broad as it assiduously seeks to avoid re-inscribing any and all false binaries between things "Muslim" and "non-Muslim." For example: for us, the frequently referenced concept of the "Muslim world" has little basis in either critical scholarship or Qur'anic discourse. Thus, in terms of geographic regions, there is no area of the world beyond the parameters of our interest.

Our definition of "philanthropy" is similarly broad and extends beyond an examination of the activity of wealthy individuals or philanthropic institutions. In essence, we define philanthropy as encompassing *any intentional act of generosity*. As such, "philanthropy" includes practices of generosity ranging from the activity of discrete individuals of all socio-economic backgrounds to that of not-for-profit organizations, social movements, and a variety of other forms of civic engagement. Such a broad definition is not only in keeping with current theory in philanthropic studies, but also with traditional Islamic definitions of philanthropy that require us to challenge longstanding Western Protestant concepts of philanthropy as "voluntary action for the public good" (Payton & Moody, 2008). Although it is a good starting point, this definition ultimately fails to encompass some of the deepest meanings and structures of philanthropy, especially within the framework of Islamic theology.

According to a well-known saying of the Prophet Muhammad (*s*), for example, even a smile is considered an act of "righteousness" or charitable giving (Ar. *sadaqa*). According to another story from the life of Muhammad (*s.*), he once declared that, "Every Muslim has to engage in acts of righteousness/charitable giving." In reply, his Companions asked, "O Prophet of God, how about those who have nothing to give?" The Prophet responded: "They should work with their hands for their own benefit and also give in charity." His Companions then asked: And if they cannot do even that?" He replied: "They should help one who is eager to have help."

To which they further asked: "And if they cannot do even that?" He answered: "Then they should do good and abstain from evil; this is charity for them." Thus, all Muslims are called to participate in philanthropic activity. Those who can afford to do so must give of their wealth, while those who have few material resources can act charitably by *refraining* from doing evil deeds. Therefore, Muslim philanthropy includes voluntary *inaction* for the public good as well. Beyond the action and inaction question are also questions about whether philanthropy can entail giving out of a profound sense of divinely imposed *obligation*. There is no sense in which Islamic philanthropy can exclude imposed obligation as a motivating and transformative factor for the giver and receiver alike.

This inaugural issue contains revised and enhanced versions of four of the excellent papers exchanged at last year's symposium. The regional focus of three is the United States; one examines giving in Turkey. In his article, Kambiz GhaneaBassiri demonstrates the ways in which a critical examination of Muslim philanthropic activity in a post-9/11 context helps to deconstruct the securitization dynamic which informs so much public and policy discourse regarding Muslim philanthropy in the U.S. By doing so, he also underscores the ways in which the study of Muslim philanthropy in the U.S. is key to the important larger academic and civic project of de-pathologizing Islam and Muslims. The article by Brad Fulton argues that faith-based community organizing is becoming a viable pathway for Muslim communities to strengthen themselves internally by developing civic leaders and mobilizing everyday Muslims to address issues affecting their community, as well as to strengthen their external ties by bridging religious and social differences and by promoting policies that also benefit non-Muslims. David Campbell's essay explores the determinants of giving in Turkey. Among other things, what David and his co-researchers found is that both the formal and informal giving that

we see in Tukey is not included in philanthropic studies done by most Western observers.

Finally, Ihsan Bagby looks at the giving practices of U.S. mosques. His study reveals that, unlike

the case of many Christian churches, a high income and education does not correlate with higher

levels of giving. He argues that there are several reasons why this is the case, some of which are

theological, some of which are more broadly cultural, but all of which have important

implications for the study of Muslim philanthropy in the U.S.

Our inaugural issue also contains Rafia Khader's review of an important book by Amelia

Fauzia on the intersection of public policy and Muslim philanthropy in Indonesia.

This inaugural issue would not have been possible without the hard work of people too

numerous to name. We are especially grateful to the work of the Editorial Board. Their guidance

and selfless response to our requests for peer reviewers and reviews continue to be critical to the

work of the *Journal*. In addition, this issue would never have seen the light of day without the

dedication to excellence and unparalleled efficiency of our two Managing Editors over the past

nine months: Sabith Khan and Rafia Khader. Of course, above all, our thanks is to God for the

gift of life and the privilege of being given the opportunity to attempt to live it in service to Him

and to one another.

Sincerely,

Scott C. Alexander, PhD and Shariq A. Siddiqui, PhD, Co-Editors-in Chief

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U.S. Muslim Philanthropy after 9/11

Kambiz GhaneaBassiri

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Abstract

Since 9/11, U.S. Muslim philanthropy has generally been framed in terms of national security and civil liberties. In practice, however, U.S. Muslims' charitable giving has posed no threat to national security, nor has the government's closing of some of the largest Muslim relief organizations after 9/11 had the chilling effect that many predicted it would have on U.S. Muslims' giving. This article argues that American Muslim philanthropy post-9/11 belies enduring presuppositions about the alleged 'rigidity" of Islamic norms and the alleged "insularity" of the U.S. Muslim community. Each of these presuppositions has yielded widespread misapprehensions about the nature of Muslim philanthropy in the U.S. since 9/11. Contrary to these misapprehensions, the actual philanthropic practice of the U.S. Muslim community in the post-9/11 moment highlights the polyvalence and fluidity of the public practice of Islam. In the fluid space of practice, American Muslims have brought together Islamic vocabularies of charity and American legal and sociopolitical norms regarding philanthropy to forge new relations across groups of varying social, religious, political, cultural, and economic backgrounds.

Keywords: American Islam, Muslim charities, *zakat*, "war on terror," anti-Muslim sentiments, Holy Land Foundation, Benevolence International Foundation, Global Relief Foundation, KindHearts

Until recently, the study of Islam in the United States focused primarily on questions of

assimilation and identity formation, with the aim of ascertaining how well Muslims fit into U.S.

society. These questions were propelled by a general assumption that U.S. society and Islamic

beliefs and practices are incongruent and thus require a special act of reconciliation worthy of

scholarly attention.[1] More recent research into the centuries-old presence of Muslims in the

United States, however, has shown that this assumption is not historically tenable (Curtis, 2013).

Scholars have thus begun to explore Islam as one of a number of religions practiced in America

since colonial times. In doing so, they are complicating facile dichotomies between Islam and the

West, modernity and tradition, and immigrant and indigenous Muslims. Rather than approaching

the study of Muslims in the United States with such preconceived binaries, more recent

scholarship on American Islam focuses on the lived experiences of Muslims. It explores how

U.S. Muslims have built communities, institutions, and intellectual networks based on their

beliefs and traditions and in relation to relevant legal, social, and political structures as well as

the plurality of religions, cultures, races, and ethnicities in the United States. In light of this shift,

the study of Muslim philanthropy in the United States is not only welcome but also well overdue

as to how it focuses scholarship on how U.S. Muslims bring their religious values, their sense of

individual and communal needs, and American social norms and political values into dialectical

relations that cross social, political, and economic boundaries through giving.

Distinctive Contextual Practices of Zakat in the United States

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[1] I have discussed these issues in some depth; see GhaneaBassiri (2010, 4f).

Given that *zakat*, one of the pillars of Islam, enshrines charity as a divinely ordained duty, and given that voluntary giving in the forms of *sadaqa* (meritorious giving to the needy) and *waqf* (pious endowment) have a long and significant history in Muslim-majority societies, the relative dearth of scholarly analyses of Muslim philanthropy gives reason for pause.[2] Is charity such a ubiquitous Muslim practice that scholars have taken it for granted? Is it so pervasive that it has not required systematic study? In tackling these questions, I focus on the scholarship on Islam in the United States, and I use philanthropy and charity interchangeably while recognizing that most scholars of philanthropy do not consider the two synonymous. As Robert Payton and Michael Moody explain, philanthropy differs from charity in that it aims to make systematic changes "to improve the quality of life" of people less fortunate whereas charity works "to relieve suffering" that results from an immediate need (Payton & Moody, 2008, p. 38). This distinction, however, does not map directly onto Islamic practices of *zakat*, *sadaqa*, and *waqf*. It is important to be mindful of them so as not to indiscriminately map onto Islam academic notions of charity rooted in nongovernmental organizations and Christian understandings of charity.

As religious acts subject to God's judgment, *zakat*, *sadaqa*, and *waqf* could be employed to both improve quality of life and relieve suffering, depending on one's interpretation of what constitutes a need that demands a religious response. In the case of *zakat*—traditionally construed as a divinely ordained obligation to give a specified percentage of one's wealth to

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[2] Some noteworthy studies of Muslim charity and philanthropy include Sabra (2000); Bonner, Ener, and Singer (2003); Singer (2008) and Amelia (2013). For Muslim philanthropy in America, see Siddiqui (2013) and Siddiqui (2010).

specific groups—another important consideration is whether or not other Muslims, particularly legal scholars (*ulama*) who strive to interpret God's will for humanity, would also consider one's choice of charitable giving as fulfilling God's command. This question has come up for many U.S. Muslims in relation to contributions to nonprofit organizations that advocate for Muslim rights, particularly in the aftermath of 9/11. Do these contributions fulfill *zakat* obligations according to Islamic law? To address this concern, Muslim rights organizations have asked Muslim scholars for their learned opinions (*fatawa*). The Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR), for example, cites an opinion by Sheikh Ahmad Kutty from the Islamic Institute of Toronto and asserts that

> [n]umerous Muslim scholars have confirmed that Zakat is payable to organizations that exist to serve the Muslim community by protecting their rights. This is because work done by CAIR (and other such organizations) can be classified as **fi-sabilillah** ["in the path of God"], which is one of the eight categories of Zakat recipients detailed in the Quran (Chapter 9, Verse 60)" (emphasis theirs). (Council on American-Islamic Relations, 2015)

Thus, in the contemporary context of rising anti-Muslim sentiment where Muslims fear for their civil rights, *zakat* could be employed not only to alleviate an immediate need but also to effect systematic change in people's lives. Similar questions are raised about whether or not *zakat* could be used to build mosques or Islamic schools in the United States, and in each case individual Muslims answer these questions based on a combination of their personal understanding of what God demands of them, what Muslim scholars say about the matter, and the laws and customs of their local community.

In other cases, we find U.S. Muslims giving, not because they are trying to alleviate a need, but because they deem the act of giving meritorious in the eyes of God. One of the clearest and earliest examples of this occurs among Muslim slaves who, in the nineteenth century, distributed *saraka*[3] in the form of small cakes to children on plantations off the coast of Georgia. This act was both frequent and memorable enough that decades later, in the 1930s, their grandchildren recounted the rituals surrounding its distribution to ethnographers of the Works Progress Administration (WPA). Shad Hall, for example, recalled that his grandmother, Hestuh,

> make strange cake, fus ub ebry munt. She call it "saraka." She make it out uh
>
> meal an honey. She put meal in bilin watuh an take it right out. Den she mix it
>
> wid honey, and make it in flat cakes. Sometimes she make it out uh rice. Duh
>
> cake made, she call us all in an deah she hab great big fannuh full an she gib us
>
> each cake. Den we all stands roun table, and she says, "Ameen, Ameen, Ameen,"
>
> an we all eats cake (Granger, 1940, p. 159).

In the antebellum South, where slaves were stripped of any wealth as well as ancestral and religious ties, the distribution of *saraka* cakes became a means of entering into communal relations through a praiseworthy act in Islam rather than a form of charitable donation to the

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[3] According to Sylviane Diouf, *saraka* was the pronunciation of the Arabic word *sadaqa* used by the Malinke of Guinea and the Hausa of Nigeria, and members of both of these ethnic groups were found among slaves on the plantations of the Georgia Sea Islands. See Diouf (1999, p. 27).

needy.[4] This distinctive practice of *saraka* among West African Muslims enslaved in the United

States is similar to instances of the practice of *nadhr* found in many Muslim-majority societies.

Nadhr is a personal vow to fulfill a pious act in exchange for God or a saint fulfilling one's

supplication. It often involves the distribution of food to the poor or to visitors to a shrine.[5]

Although those who practice *nadhr* often vow to perform a charitable act involving food, their

primary objective in taking such a vow is not necessarily charity. Rather, it is to receive divine

assistance.

The preceding examples demonstrate how deeply charity and philanthropy are embedded

in Islam and Muslim societies, but also how Islamic notions of *zakat, sadaqa, nadhr*, and *waqf*

have distinct connotations and social implications that are not always in accord with notions of

service, voluntarism, and the public good commonly associated with philanthropy. The

characterization of philanthropy in the contemporary United States as other-directed, voluntary,

and for the public good has its roots in Christian notions of *caritas*, or selfless love of others,

from which the English word "charity" is derived. In Islam, *zakat* may be self-regulated and

require sacrificing one's wealth, but its purpose is not defined by voluntarism. It is a religious

obligation that is subject to divine reward and punishment. Though *nadhr* is a vow to perform a

pious act often involving charity, it is not obligatory, nor is it necessarily selfless. There are also

times when *sadaqa* is performed as a meritorious act in and of itself regardless of whether it

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[4] For an excellent discussion of communal dimensions of *sadaqa* in West Africa, see Launay (1992, pp. 211–218).

[5] See Singer (2008, p. 76) for a discussion of *nazr* in Afghanistan.

actually alleviates a need or contributes to the public good. *Waqf*s are endowments that support

institutions for what may be typically construed as the charitable and religious purposes

associated with Western concepts of philanthropy. But they also serve as financial trusts through

which patrons could shelter their wealth and assure the financial security of their own families or

loved ones. This is usually done by stipulating a salary for members of one's family from the

waqf in exchange for their management of the assets associated with it. Although subject to

abuse, the fact that the family *waqf,* or *al-waqf al-ahli,* is designed for the benefit of kin makes it

no less an act of charitable giving by traditional Islamic norms. Indeed, one of the "attributes"

(*sifat*) that classically qualifies a group to receive *zakat* is that its members be among one's

familial relations.[6] In sum, although the nature and telos of each of these Islamic practices of

giving vary, they all function in establishing relations between different individuals and social

groups.

The Polyvalence of Muslim Practices of Giving

By calling attention to these distinctive implications of charity in Islam, I do not mean to

suggest that Muslim philanthropists do not value altruism, voluntarism, or the public good. Quite

the contrary. In fact, there is no doubt that these values have played an influential role in how

Muslims have decided to pay *zakat*, give *sadaqa*, make *nadhr*, or establish *waqf*s. I also do not

intend to revive the unhelpful dichotomy between Islam and the West by juxtaposing so-called

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[6] Abu Hamid al-Ghazali, for example, enumerates as his "sixth quality" of the proper

recipients of *zakat*: "that they be among one's close relatives or distant kin" (*an yakuna min al-*

aqarib wa dhawi l-arham). See al-Ghazali (1405 AH/1982 CE, p. 95).

"Islamic" and so-called "American" conceptions of charity. It goes without saying that, in practice, not all instances of non-Muslim philanthropy in the United States are other-directed, voluntary, and for the public good. Rather, by highlighting the distinct colorings of philanthropy in Islam, I hope to illustrate that, although most Muslims agree that charity is a divinely ordained obligation, there is no single Islamic conception of charity or philanthropy. At the risk of stating the obvious, the critical point here is that Muslims interpret Islamic values differently, and it is these differences that have made charity a polyvalent practice in the innumerable and varied social contexts of Muslim life.

Unfortunately, the polyvalence of Muslim identity and practice, albeit colorfully visible in cultural expressions, has generally been muted in public discourses on Islam. Such discourses, even among Muslims themselves, rarely conceptualize Islam as a dynamic tradition through which Muslims attempt to address an entire spectrum of challenges—especially those posed by modernity—as do their non-Muslim counterparts in the "West." According to this view of Islam and modernity, because nearly all Muslim-majority societies in the modern era came under some sort of political or economic subjugation at the hand of European empires, most Muslims were introduced to the political, technological, and scientific advances associated with modernity at the same time as Muslim states lost political autonomy. Consequently, public discourses on Islam have generally conceived of modernity as a problem for Muslims, and students of Islam have generally concerned themselves with how Muslim elites have addressed the question of Euro-American dominance in the world while overlooking the religious question of how Muslims have interpreted Islam in their daily lives. Questions, for example, about how individuals practiced charity or paid *zakat* under colonial rule or in post-colonial nation-states

have not been deemed as important as questions surrounding the rise of so-called Islamist

movements in the modern era.

This neglect of everyday religious practices has been further sustained by the widespread

notion that there is no distinction between religion and politics in Islam as there is in secular

modernity. Because the prophet Muhammad b. 'Abd Allah (d. c. 11/632) founded both a religion

and a polity through his teachings, it has generally been assumed that Muslim political and

religious history are one and the same. This notion has been so widespread that in his influential

book *Islam in Modern History*, Wilfred Cantwell Smith felt it necessary to offer a lengthy

defense of his approach to Islam as a "faith." He argued that Islam not only shapes social and

political institutions but also affects an individual's worldview and personal relation to God

(Smith, 1957, pp. 7–12). However, despite challenging conventional approaches to Islamic

history as the history of Muslim politics by focusing on Islam as a "faith," even Wilfred

Cantwell Smith associated modernity with a "very serious decline" in Islam and attributed this

decline to Muslims' loss of military and political power to European states. He wrote that, at the

onset of the modern era,

> Muslim society was losing its once firm, proud grip on the world. Moreover, it so
>
> happened that this degeneration coincided with the exuberance of Europe. At
>
> about this time Western civilization was launching forth on the greatest upsurge
>
> of expansive energy that human history has ever seen. Vitality, skill, and power
>
> vastly accumulated. With them the West was presently reshaping its own life and
>
> soon the life of all the world. This new giant, striding forth in exploratory

restlessness, met the Muslim world and found its own growing might confronted

with growing infirmity (Smith, 1957, p. 38).

One of the consequences of conceptualizing modernity as a political crisis for Muslims

has been that, up until recently, scholarship on modern Islam did not focus on Muslims as

creative agents engaging modernity on their own terms. Rather, as Smith's quote illustrates, it

focused on Muslims as subjects who reacted to a world shaped by a politically and militarily

dominant Euro-American culture, commonly referred to as "the West."[7] This view of Muslims

shaped the study of Islam in the United States and has led many scholars to look for sources of

friction in U.S. Muslim experiences, rather than seeing Muslims as one of the many agentive

participants in a religiously, culturally, and racially diverse America. From such a politicized

vantage point, quotidian activities associated with Islamic practices such as prayer, fasting, and

charity were rendered invisible despite their immense importance in orienting Muslims spatially,

temporally, and socially.

Rendering Muslim Giving Academically Invisible

The field of comparative religion furnished another set of blinders to the practice of Islam

in the latter half of the twentieth century through its operative premise that *homo religiosus* was

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[7] I should note that Smith was one of the early critics of the notion that Islam is "inert, the

passive recipient of [Western] influence." Nonetheless, as the above quote demonstrates, he did

not see Muslims as participants in the making of a modern world. Rather he saw the "thrust of

Islam in this situation" in "the dynamics of its *reaction* . . . to the modern world" (1957, p. 14,

emphasis mine).

the only religious subject of any sociological or historical import in an increasingly rationalistic world.[8] The comparative study of religion through the lens of *homo religiosus* reduced religions to the experience of the "sacred." It operated under the assumption that as empirical reasoning became the basis of modern social, economic, and political structures, the study of institutions and rituals based on religious notions of the supernatural was of secondary importance to individual's private experiences of the transcendent. The former was seen to conflict with modernity, whereas the latter was believed to accommodate it by rendering the religious to the private realm. Religious differences embodied in institutions, customs, laws, and rituals were seen as derivatives of manifestations of the sacred experienced by humans, which could be best understood symbolically rather than through history and social scientific study. From this point of view, the only religion that mattered was the one based on an internal feeling or experience of the sacred. Thus the social and political embodiment of religion in institutions and rituals as well as in social concepts such as race, gender, and class were pushed out of sight. They were replaced by a sacred-profane binary that regarded the physical and the socio-historical as profane or "unreal" and defined the sacred or "the real" in terms of an immanent and eternal self-

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[8] The most notable and influential proponent of this idea in the United States was Mircea Eliade. See in particular *The Sacred and the Profane* (1959) in which he builds on the controversial tradition of Rudolf Otto's attempt (Otto, 1917/2010) to articulate *sui generis* categories for what ironically was intended to be a non-reductionist critical study of religious experience in the context of the modern Western academy.

manifestation of the divine, which *homo religiosus* experienced internally and secondarily expressed symbolically through religious texts and rites.[9]

In this view of religion, which remains enormously influential in American culture despite numerous critiques from within the academy,[10] charity was not considered a significant act in and of itself but a positive, outward consequence of internal religious sentiments. William James famously defined it in *Varieties of Religious Experience* as "a usual fruit of saintliness," (James, 1902, p. 306) or more specifically, as one of the "practical consequences" of a "fundamental inner condition," which he described as "a shifting of the emotional centre towards loving and harmonious affections" toward others (pp. 299–300). Feelings, which following liberal theological understandings of charity, he asserted, "follow logically from the assurance of God's friendly presence, the notion of our brotherhood as men being an immediate inference from that of God's fatherhood of us all" (p. 306). In other words, James explained that charity is an "organic consequence" of faith or a feeling of being in unity with something greater than oneself that fosters happiness, sympathy, and kindness in individuals, a form of other-directed "healthy-mindedness . . . which looks on all things and sees that they are good" (pp. 101, 307).

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[9] In the latter half of the twentieth century, in addition to Mircea Eliade, these ideas were popularized in the United States through the works of scholars such as Joseph Campbell, Seyyed Hossein Nasr, and Huston Smith.

[10] By way of example, see Smith (1987); Wasserstrom (1999); McCutcheon (1997)*;* Shaw 1995) and Fitzgerald (2003).

James identified religious interiority that resulted in healthy-mindedness as "genuine religion." Genuine religion fostered individual happiness, but James was too much of an empiricist and too careful of a scholar to whitewash all religion as happy. He also realized that religious people do bad things and are often unhappy. He argued,

> The basenesses so commonly charged to religion's account are thus, almost all of
>
> them, not chargeable at all to religion proper, but rather to religion's wicked
>
> practical partner, the spirit of corporate dominion. And the bigotries are most of
>
> them in their turn chargeable to religion's wicked intellectual partner, the spirit of
>
> dogmatic dominion, the passion for laying down the law in the form of an
>
> absolutely closed-in theoretic system. The ecclesiastical spirit in general is the
>
> sum of these two spirits of dominion. (James, 1902, p. 370)

He went on to beseech his reader not to confuse the "tribal or corporate psychology" presented by the church with "the purely interior life," which he defined as religion (p. 370).

More recently, the popular *New York Times* columnist David Brooks evoked William James's *Varieties of Religious Experiences* to argue that President Obama "is clearly wrong when he refuses to use the word 'Islam' in reference to Islamist terrorism." In deciding whether or not to call acts of political violence undertaken by certain individual Muslims "Islamic," Brooks argued that it is useful to keep in mind the distinction James made between "genuine religion" and its "wicked practical partner, the spirit of corporate dominion." According to Brooks, James's work clarifies "the core of our confusion . . . about what a religion is" (Brooks, 2016). Shadowing the association of religion with interiority in the early study of comparative religion, Brooks explains,

It seems blindly obvious to say, but the spirit of religion begins with a sense that

God exists . . . and out of that flows a set of values and experiences: prayer,

praise, charity, contrition, grace and the desire to grow closer toward holiness. . . .

The spirit of dominion . . . does not start with an awareness of God. It starts with a

sense of injury and a desire to heal injury through revenge and dominion.

(Brooks, 2016, p. A29)

In other words, the terrorist's religion is not "healthy-minded." For Brooks, such

"religion" associates injury with "some external enemy . . . rather than internal weakness." And

at this point, political ideology enters into religion and "gives the injured a course of action that

will make them feel grandiose and heroic" (Brooks, 2016). From this, it logically follows that

insofar as one could detect "the spirit of dogmatic dominion, [and] the passion for laying down

the law" among even a few Muslims, violent acts carried out by groups like al-Qaeda or the

Islamic State may justifiably be called "Islamic," even though they cannot be called "genuinely

religious."

It is important to note that in making his argument, Brooks did not concern himself with

what Muslim practices reveal about religion. He did not inquire into the voluminous discourses

in the Islamic tradition about violence, happiness, charity, God, or divine union. His concern, as

well as the concern of most of his readers, was to explain how Islam fits into the prevailing idea

that "good religion" is essentially an internal experience of the sacred that reconciles the

individual with the sociopolitical and economic structures that impede their happiness. Indeed, in

the contemporary United States, to the extent that Islam does not fit comfortably into this

conception of religion—a conception that effectively defines "good" religion as one that

accommodates, and even defers to, the power of the sovereign secular nation-state—it has been

pathologized. It is thus no wonder that more energy and time have been spent identifying the

pathologies of Islam in the modern era than examining how millions of Muslims practice their

religion.

Pathologizing Muslim Philanthropy as Politically Subversive

A telling example of pathologizing approaches to Islam in discussions of Muslim

philanthropy after 9/11 is found in J. Millar Burr and Robert O. Collins's (2006) *Alms for Jihad*:

> In ["Western"] Christian countries institutions seeking financial support for charitable
>
> activities have discreetly segregated the secular from the religious, reflecting the historic
>
> separation of church and state. . . . In contrast, Islam does not distinguish between church
>
> and state. Muslims who are obligated to perform *zakat* and individual donors make no
>
> distinction between the secular and religious uses to which their donations may be
>
> employed. That allows those who administer Islamic charities a great deal of latitude as
>
> to how the money is spent and for what purpose. (Burr & Collins, 2006, pp. 6–7)

The specific purpose that Burr and Collins have in mind is religious militancy and

terrorism, and they rely on above-discussed preconceptions to identify its pathology in Islam.

They further rely on their readers sharing in the facile assumption that religion and politics are

one and the same in Islam and that, historically, while so-called Christian societies modernized,

Muslim-majority societies stuck to tradition. Their pathologizing approach to Islam results in

their identification of a doctrinal Muslim practice, *zakat*, as a possibly nefarious source of

funding for terrorism, irrespective of the way individual Muslims decide to practice *zakat*. From

such a dubious perspective, all acts of Muslim charity are suspect. Either Muslims naively fulfill

an obligation that terrorists could then hijack for their own purposes or they knowingly

contribute to militant causes in the name of charity because they do not make a distinction

between religion and politics. Whichever of these views one takes, neither recognizes the

creative agency exercised by Muslims as they attempt to critically engage their sociopolitical

circumstances through charitable giving.

This pathologizing approach to Islam also informed the U.S. government's early

reactions to the attacks of 9/11. A few days after the attacks, President George W. Bush ordered

the Treasury Department to freeze the assets of 27 not-for-profit entities that the government

considered to be "fronts for terrorism." Among these were the three largest U.S. Muslim relief

organizations: the Holy Land Foundation for Relief and Development, the Global Relief

Foundation, and the Benevolence International Foundation. "Just to show you how insidious

these terrorists are," President Bush warned U.S. Americans, "they often times use nice-

sounding, non-governmental organizations as fronts for their activities." He went on to explain

that the government had "targeted" this pathological use of charity and was working to freeze

and block the use of their assets both in the United States and abroad (Bureau of Public Affairs

Department of State, 2001). The decision to freeze the assets of three of the largest Muslim

charities in the United States rather than require them to demonstrate unequivocally the legal use

of their donations for charitable purposes is a telling sign of the depth and consequences of the

pathologizing approaches toward Islam that are still pervasive today. The targeted Muslim

charities were treated as monolithic entities and stigmatized as sources of contagion that needed

to be contained, rather than as civic institutions of sociopolitical agents subject to their national

context and donor base—agents who could respond dynamically to changing circumstances and

government regulations.

Another telling sign of the depth and consequence of pathologizing approaches to Islam

after 9/11 was present in the treatment of the remittances U.S. Muslims of immigrant

backgrounds sent to friends and families in their native lands. Similar to their non-Muslim

counterparts, most Muslim immigrants came to the United States in search of what they hoped

would be a better life. Because many of them have achieved relative success, they have felt an

obligation to help their less fortunate family members and friends "back home." Because some

of these Muslim immigrants are from countries that are impoverished or in political turmoil

(oftentimes a primary reason for their emigration to the United States), their family and friends

do not always have easy access to the international banking system. For this reason, like many

non-Muslim immigrants from similar backgrounds, they rely on informal financial networks to

remit money to support loved ones in their native countries (GhaneaBassiri, 2010, pp. 166–167).

This common practice among immigrants from poor or politically unstable countries, however,

was painted negatively in the media and state discourses as a "Muslim" practice susceptible to

nefarious use. This was done by referring to it by its Arabic name[11] as *hawala* rather than simply

---

[11] This is a subtle but highly effective strategy for "othering" Muslim instances of a

practice undertaken by countless non-Muslim citizens from immigrant backgrounds—most

notably Mexican Americans.

as "remittances," thus obfuscating its purpose and bringing suspicion to anyone associated with it.[12]

Interpreting *Zakat* in Response to State Pressure

It is noteworthy that U.S. Muslim activists did not initially respond to the government's targeting of international Muslim relief efforts by portraying themselves as victims of the political system. They depicted the government's actions as a by-product of the public's ignorance of Muslim practices and Islamic values and, in some cases, of "Zionist" opposition to Muslim political interests (Ameri, 2004). In general, they regarded the U.S. political system as fair and subject to change (Skerry, 2006). They saw themselves as one of the latest links at the end of a long chain of minority civil rights struggles in U.S. history. They insisted that "American and Islamic values can intertwine," and that U.S. Muslims should see it as their civic and Islamic responsibility to use their unique "opportunities of freedom and success to help the needy and poor in the United States and other countries" (Ameri, 2004).

This interpretation of the government's actions toward Muslim charitable giving did not directly challenge the pathologizing of Islamic beliefs and practices as potentially subversive, though it did enable Muslim activists to engage government officials on familiar grounds. Whether this was a case of political pragmatism or an instance of self-disciplining in the face of

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[12] For examples of media reports on *hawala* shortly after 9/11, see Girth and Miller (2001); Day (2001); McKinnon, Chorney, and Carnig (2001); and Frantz (2001). For an example for governmental discussion of *hawala* in relation to terrorism, see Jost and Sandhu (2000). Also see Burr and Collins (2006, pp. 71–75).

state power is debatable. What is clear is that—for at least a few years after 9/11, when

government officials and the public more generally looked to Islam through the lens of

pathology, and especially "terrorism," and deemed Muslim charitable giving suspect—most

leading U.S. Muslim organizations did little to challenge the state's logic. Rather, they sought to

work with the government by asking the Treasury Department to clarify its conception of what

constituted sound charitable practices. U.S. Muslim activists organized nationally to urge the

government to put together a list of Muslim charities to which Muslims could donate without

worrying about the government confiscating their donations or worrying that they themselves

might become a target of the state (Al-Marayati, 2004). They also asked the Treasury

Department to issue guidelines based on which Muslim charities could operate securely and thus

assure that their donations would not end up in a government-frozen account, or in the pockets of

pricey lawyers (Ameri, 2004). The Holy Land Foundation had even approached government

officials prior to 9/11 for help in complying with the law, but was rebuffed (Turner, 2009).

KindHearts reported that, in December 2003, it formally appealed to testify before the Senate

Finance Committee to explain its activities and the transparency of their finances. They did not

receive a reply and had their funds frozen in February 2006 (Bafaquih, 2006).

  Overtime, the government's reluctance to provide concrete guidance[13] or to directly

engage with Muslim leaders became an impetus for activists to challenge the logic of its actions.

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  [13] As I discuss below, the government *did* respond to these requests by issuing *broad*

voluntary guidelines that international charities and foundations found too general to be

applicable.

They argued that they faced a "fishing expedition" or "witch-hunt" that unconstitutionally expanded the powers of the government and impinged on Muslims' rights to free exercise of their religion (Al-Marayati, 2004). Noted U.S. Muslim lawyer and scholar of international human rights law, M. Cherif Bassiouni, called the government's actions an "assault upon constitutional freedoms under the guise of terrorist-related prosecutions" and a "fear-mongering campaign . . . supported by avowedly anti-Muslim groups" (Bassiouni, 2008). There was a general sense among U.S. Muslim activists specifically, and civil rights groups more generally, that

> [t]he government's actions have created a climate of fear that chills American Muslims' free and full exercise of their religion through charitable giving, or *Zakat*, one of the 'five pillars' of Islam and a religious obligation for all observant Muslims." (Turner, 2009, p. 6)

Not unlike earlier responses to the closing of Muslim charities—responses which did not directly challenge the logic of state power and were presented in the familiar bureaucratic language of U.S. political culture—later civil rights arguments against state overreach were also presented in terms of political values and presuppositions about Islam and religion that were familiar to the public. This point is illustrated in the 2008–2009 interviews with select U.S. Muslims that the American Civil Liberties Union cited to proffer evidence of the chilling effect the government's actions have had on the free exercise of religion.

> I feel this is part of my religion, part of my faith: that I have to help through donation, to needy people in Palestine or Bangladesh, people living in war or occupation, people suffering a disaster like an earthquake. Now I can't make

donations—it's clear to everybody you can't give to Muslim charities. . . . Since

HLF [the Holy Land Foundation] was closed, now there is no way to give in a

way that is clearly legal. We don't know how to give now, and there is no way to

give Zakat now. . . . Right now I am not giving, I have halted my Zakat, and this

means I am not complying with my religion. Even international law says I can

help people in need according to my religion. (Turner, 2009, p. 89)

Before I was giving to any Muslim charities that help the Muslim

community, if it was a humanitarian organization. There were a couple of good

ones, but the government shut them down and named them terrorist organizations.

Now we are scared to give to any. After what we're seeing from the Bush

administration, and too many innocent donors being questioned, I just stopped.

I'm not giving anymore. (Turner 2009, p. 91)

While it is understandable that a Muslim who donates to international Muslim relief

organizations may fear doing so after the government precipitately shuttered some of them for

allegedly supporting terrorism, it is not at all clear why these actions would impede Muslims

from fulfilling the obligation of *zakat* by giving to the needy in general. After all, needy Muslims

did not suddenly disappear from the United States. Couldn't U.S. Muslims personally find needy

individuals or charitable causes for their *zakat*? This is, in fact, a technical possibility in Islamic

law, which recognizes the right of a legitimate Muslim ruler to collect and distribute *zakat*

according to Islamic law but does not release individuals from the obligation of *zakat* in the

absence of such a ruler, permitting them to pay *zakat* directly to the needy or to another

organization that could be trusted to distribute it properly.[14]

Now, given that individual Muslims can technically distribute their own *zakat* money to

the needy, it seems safe to assume that those who argued that the government's closing of

Muslim charities created "a climate of fear" that "made it impossible for [Muslims] to fulfill

their religious obligation" (Turner, 2009, p. 9) did so with its political effects in mind; they

sought to protect U.S. Muslims from state intimidation. Furthermore, they argued within a

conceptual framework more resonant with U.S. legal and civic discourses than with Islamic law.

As such, they indirectly re-inscribed presuppositions about the inflexibility and doctrinaire nature

of Islam as well as about the essentially private nature of religion. Consequently, clunky

arguments were put forth that made little sense in terms of the normative practices of charity in

Islam, which in fact afford Muslims measured flexibility in giving their *zakat*, but were perfectly

sensible in the political culture of the United States and its paradoxical understandings of Islam

as rigidly zealous and of religion as interiorized and private.

> For six years I really have not been able to fulfill Zakat. . . . HLF was in the news
>
> and they painted all the Muslim charities with a very broad brush; for a very long
>
> time we haven't known what charity we could trust to give to. . . . It is an
>
> obligation we have as a Muslim: you have to pray, you have to go on Hajj, and
>
> you have to give Zakat if you can afford it. This is all part of being a Muslim, and

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[14] The history and legal opinions surrounding *zakat* payments are complicated and vary

by region and era. For a learned overview, see Singer (2008, pp. 44–62).

we absolutely have not been able to practice our religion to the extent we are

obligated to do so. This is why the Pilgrims sailed here, for religious freedom. I

don't have any religious rights anymore; I ask am I living in America? It is

disheartening, disappointing. I feel that I sinned. (Turner, 2009, p. 14)

Another interviewee, echoing William James's association of charity with healthy-

minded spirituality, argued, "Closing down the charities, you are getting to the spiritual essence

of the human being. Every person needs to give to charities as a religious obligation, to feel good

as a person, and the government has closed this off" (Turner, 2009, p. 91). The notions that one

cannot pay *zakat* if a specific set of international relief organizations are not accessible or that

charity is related to the spiritual essence of humans may be dissonant with the notion of charity

as a divinely ordained obligation in Islam, but they nonetheless echo American political

sensibilities and Protestant theological understandings of freedom of conscience.

As political scientist Peter Skerry (2006) notes, "Muslims never sound quite so American

as when asserting their rights against government policies they consider unjust." By interpreting

Islamic practices in the language of U.S. democratic values, U.S. Muslim activists gained a

partial hearing from both the non-Muslim public and government officials. Writing in *The*

Chronicle of Philanthropy, the executive director of the Ohio Association of Nonprofit

Organizations admonished the industry for its "silence" on Muslim charities:

The implications for Muslim charities are already being felt and are disturbing.

No list of "clean" organizations—those organization not under governmental

investigation—exists, creating a chilling effect on donations to all Muslim

organizations, especially those that work overseas. . . . It may not be appropriate

to express outright support for the Muslim organizations that have been shut down

as part of the government's war on terrorism, but America's nonprofit leaders

should be paying attention, and should express some concern about the issues of

due process, accountability, and fair treatment raised by these cases. (Moyers,

2002)

The Department of Treasury sought to respond to these concerns expressed by U.S.

Muslim activists and industry leaders by issuing in 2002 a set of voluntary "anti-terrorist

financing guidelines" for U.S.-based charities. Charities and foundations, however, criticized

these guidelines because of the heavy investigative burden they placed on charities and

foundations. The guidelines required charitable organizations to collect a broad range of

information on the financial practices and accounts of their grantees (Council on Foundations,

2003). Later in 2004, the Treasury Department asked charities and foundations for advice on

drafting voluntary guidelines for U.S.-based charities. This process led to a revised set of

guidelines issued in 2005 (Williams, 2004). In June 2004, the Treasury also appointed Mahmoud

el-Gamal, a professor of economics at Rice University, as the first Islamic Finance Scholar-in-

Residence to assist it with better understanding Islamic financial practices (Reuters, 2004). The

Obama administration advanced efforts to work with domestic Muslim organizations. In his

widely publicized 2009 Cairo University speech to the global Muslim community, President

Obama validated U.S. Muslim activists' concerns about the consequences of the government's

treatment of Muslim charities for Muslim civil and political rights and responded to their request

for collaborations:

Freedom of religion is central to the ability of peoples to live together. . . . For

instance, in the United States, rules on charitable giving have made it harder for

Muslims to fulfill their religious obligation. That's why I'm committed to

working with American Muslims to ensure that they can fulfill *zakat*. (Obama,

2009)

A New Dialectic: Flourishing between Alienation and Resistance

Those who pathologized Islam targeted Muslim charities with the stated intent to contain

the threat of terrorism. Meanwhile, those concerned about civil rights saw contagious symptoms

of government overreach in the fear American Muslims felt after 9/11. Although these two

camps often stood in political opposition, both politicized American Muslim philanthropy and

further contributed to the highly problematic securitization of U.S. Muslim identity[15] by framing

the government's actions against Muslim charities in terms of balancing national security with

religious freedom. This framing of Muslim charitable giving as a problem for U.S. Americans'

security and liberty does not reflect the reality of U.S. Muslim philanthropy post-9/11, but there

is no denying that it has had real consequences by securitizing international relief work in the

United States and bringing U.S. Muslim activists into conversation with the state as

intermediaries who could help balance the presumed conflict between national security and

religious liberty.

Muslim philanthropy in the United States after 9/11 belies Muslim charity as a problem

for security and liberty. On the whole, U.S. Muslims never stopped giving to charity in response

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[15] For a discussion of this issue, see Mandaville (2013) and Fox and Akbaba (2015).

to the government's investigation and prosecution of the largest U.S. Muslim international relief organizations. In reality, U.S. Muslims gave in larger numbers and diversified their donations by giving to non-Muslim charities and rights organizations, to local U.S. Muslim non-profit organizations, and to smaller regional charities in their home countries. U.S. Muslim philanthropists donated to universities to establish chairs and centers for Islamic Studies.[16] The annual budget of the Chicago-based Inner-City Muslim Action Network (IMAN), which fights poverty and other forms of structural injustices in inner-city neighborhoods, increased from $200,000 to $2 million after 9/11. More U.S. Muslim philanthropic dollars also went to Muslim rights organizations. Donations for the construction of mosques, Islamic schools, and community centers increased (Hartman, 2011). Donations to major relief organizations also never ceased. In fact, they seem to have increased significantly. As Shariq Siddiqui's (2013) research has shown, charitable giving to the 14 largest American Muslim relief organizations "rose from a little more than $29 million in 2002 to more than $96 million in 2008."

And despite its drawbacks, framing Muslim charity in the language of national security and religious freedom resulted in the securitization of U.S. Muslim charities and led U.S. Muslim rights organizations to become conciliators between Muslim nonprofits and governmental bureaucracies. So what does the latent realization that, in practice, U.S. Muslims never stopped giving to charity reveal about the role of Muslim philanthropy in the United States? What is

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[16] A significant example of this is the Abbasi Program in Islamic Studies established at Stanford University (Delevett, 2003).

learned by focusing on the actual practice of Muslim philanthropy in the United States rather

than its politicization by the government and U.S. Muslim activists?

First and foremost, it is clear that the average U.S. Muslim practiced *zakat* according to

the principles of Islamic law, which do not necessitate *zakat* to be paid to any particular

institution. They did not stop giving *zakat* money to charitable causes in the face of intimidating

state tactics. Furthermore, the select Muslims cited by the ACLU withstanding, most U.S.

Muslims did not subjugate their obligation to pay *zakat* to politics; they did not stop paying *zakat*

in order to proffer evidence for civil rights organizations to argue against government violations

of U.S. Muslims' First Amendment rights. In spite of the politicized din surrounding Muslim

philanthropy in the United States after 9/11, the average Muslim did not lose sight of the fact that

the needy and philanthropic causes did not disappear because of the U.S. government's

intimidating actions. When local exigencies prevented them from giving to certain charities, they

fulfilled God's command by giving to others.

Structurally, beyond the choices made by individual Muslims about how to give to

charity, U.S. Muslim philanthropy post-9/11 has been consonant with the general role

philanthropy plays in the broader civil society, fulfilling needs that the state cannot or fails to

address. A pertinent illustration of this form of U.S. Muslim philanthropy is the establishment of

free health clinics and the contributions made toward organizations such as IMAN. Furthermore,

by financially helping U.S. Muslims develop new support networks or strengthen existing ones,

U.S. Muslim philanthropy has functioned as a means of resisting state policies and public

discourses that targeted Muslims and stigmatized Islam in general. These support networks were

bolstered by charitable donations to Muslim civil rights organizations, such as the Council on

American-Islamic Relations, and to community-building efforts, such as the construction of

mosques, schools, and Muslim community centers. The sociological consequence of this

community-bolstering philanthropy was that it provided a marginalized minority community a

means of resisting oppressive state actions and stigmatizing public discourses, while at the same

time becoming more deeply invested in American social and political structures.

It could then be said that—in practice—U.S. Muslim philanthropy post-9/11 has

maintained a productive tension between alienation and resistance on the one hand and

assimilation and accommodation on the other. The diversification of U.S. Muslim philanthropic

activity after 9/11 is partly the result of this tension, which has provided Muslims the

sociopolitical space to act decisively and varyingly as U.S. citizens *and* Muslims. This resulting

space between alienation and assimilation, and between resistance and accommodation, has

allowed Muslims to integrate their individual and communal needs and religious values into a

productive dialectical relationship with U.S. civic norms and political principles. The

polyvalence of Muslim practices and the relative flexibility of interpretation that the Islamic

tradition affords its adherents have enabled these dialectical relations, and they have, in turn,

pushed U.S. Muslims into social relations of care with people of widely varied cultural, political,

religious, and economic backgrounds. These various groups have not all agreed on what

constitutes the greater good to which people should give. There is no doubt, for example, that

despite their mutual engagement at various points, the state and U.S. Muslim relief organizations

have not seen eye to eye. Nonetheless, giving, in and of itself, based on varying understandings

of Islamic values has forged social relations that are shaping both U.S. Muslim religious

identities and modes of communal belonging. According to a Muslim American civil engineer

working with the U.S. military's U.S. Disaster Assistance Center during the 2005 Kashmir

earthquake,

> One of the many rewarding parts of this trip was the coordination effort between
>
> the different groups of people in Pakistan. Everyone was there for the same
>
> reason—to help in whatever capacity they could. . . . For me, as a Muslim
>
> American (Pakistani), it was comforting to see the Pakistani and American
>
> military work hand in hand. . . . How ironic to feel such warmth and unity in the
>
> midst of such tremendous destruction and devastation." (Khan, 2006)

Focusing on the practice of philanthropy reveals both the diversity and the critical nature

of American Muslims' engagement with American society and politics. At the time of this

writing, American Muslims are in alliances with social justice and civil rights organizations

through financial support of organizations critical of U.S. policies and society, such as Black

Lives Matter and the ACLU. There are also U.S. Muslims whose sizable donations to the two

major U.S. political parties have provided individual Muslims access to political insiders. In the

case of the Republican Party, it has even afforded individual U.S. Muslims meetings with figures

like Donald Trump and Newt Gingrich who have promoted a ban on Muslim immigration and

have advocated anti-Shari'a legislation ("A Muslim at the RNC," 2016).

At a more organized level, in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina in 2005, several major

Muslim relief organizations came together to form the Muslim Hurricane Relief Taskforce which

pledged to raise $10 million for Katrina relief effort. At a time when U.S. Muslim charitable

giving was under suspicion, they sought to shape a different relation with the state and the public

through philanthropy. They touted the taskforce's special "focus on financial transparency and

accountability as set forth in relevant government regulations and standards." They also

emphasized their relations to fellow Americans and the state as American citizens. The subtitle

of a special report on Hurricane Katrina published in the most widely distributed American

Muslim magazine of the time, *Islamic Horizons*, read, "Muslim Americans Rally to Help Fellow

Citizens." The Secretary General of the Islamic Society of North America told the American

public, "It is a national and Islamic obligation to assist one's neighbors when they are in need."

At a time when national Muslim organizations were dealing with the government shutdown of

Muslim relief organizations, his statement evinced U.S. Muslim organizations' awareness of how

philanthropy forges relations between groups of varying political interests as well as between

adherents of different religions. "Outside the mosque," *Islamic Horizons* reported, "a Christian

mission from Dallas arrives and pulls the doors of a supply truck open and offers medicines to

the needy victims at the mosque. And so it goes, Christian shelters and Muslim shelters

intermingle their support" (*Islamic Horizons*, 2005a, pp. 1–2, 4).

The social relations that have been and can be forged through the dialectical tension that

philanthropy maintains between resisting oppressive state practices and integrating into dominant

sociopolitical structures is also evident in the work of the American Muslim Taskforce for

Disaster Relief, which was formed in response to the devastating Kashmir earthquake of 2005.

The work of this taskforce was also featured in a special report in *Islamic Horizons*, but its tone

was expressly different. Rather than emphasizing national ties between citizens, the report

emphasized religious ties between fellow Muslims as the report quoted the Prophet Muhammad

saying, "Whoever relieves a believer of some of the distress of this world, God will relieve him

of some of the distress of the Day of Resurrection." Furthermore, rather than seeking a new

relationship with the government by emphasizing transparency and adherence to regulations, this

report highlighted the opportunity U.S. relief efforts provide for the government to change its

relations with people of a region who have been negatively affected by the George W. Bush

administration's "war on terror." At a press conference held in Washington, DC, on October 12,

2005, the "[Kashmir earthquake] taskforce called on President Bush to appoint an ad-hoc

committee of U.S. governmental and American Muslim non-governmental relief agencies to

offer coordinated relief to earthquake victims." In a letter to the administration, the taskforce

sought to drive home the point that through its relief efforts, the United States could form new

relations with South Asian Muslims who have suffered adverse repercussions from the so-called

"war on terror" and the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan. They argued, "Muslim humanitarian

organizations know where the relief is needed the most and how it can be delivered in the most

effective way. Hence, the partnership between the U.S. government and Muslim humanitarian

organizations is vital to American interests. We are ready and willing to make the response to the

South Asian earthquake disaster another shining example for America's goodwill and

compassion" (*Islamic Horizons*, 2005b, pp. 1–4, 6–10).

Conclusion

In contemporary American public discourse, Islam is generally conceptualized as a

doctrinaire religion whose adherents stand uncomfortably in relationship to modernity, whereas

modern religion is generally conceptualized as a system based on internal experiences of

transcendence that help individuals meet any structural challenges they face in life. Within the

realm of these presuppositions, political acts of violence carried out by militant Muslim

organizations, such as al-Qaeda, are generally seen as a consequence of Islam's incongruence

with the values and structures of modernity. Many government officials and members of the public at large thus look to Islamic doctrines for explanations of Muslims' political acts of violence and for perceived solutions to the threat of terrorism. Such pathologizing approaches to Islam post-9/11 have focused on U.S. Muslim philanthropy as a possible source of funding for terrorism. The government's investigation and closing of several American Muslim international relief organizations have, in turn, raised questions about state violations of U.S. Muslims' constitutional right to practice *zakat*. Consequently, the public discourse on U.S. Muslim philanthropy post-9/11 has been framed by the perceived need to balance national security and religious liberty.

U.S. Muslims' actual philanthropic practices, however, contradict this framing of U.S. Muslim philanthropy. American Muslims, collectively, never stopped practicing *zakat* as a result of the actions the government took against the largest Muslim philanthropic organizations, nor have U.S. Muslim charities been shown to pose a threat to American national security. In contrast to general presumptions in U.S. public discourse about Islam's rigidity and religion's interiority, the actual practice of charity among U.S. Muslims highlights the polyvalence of Islam and the fluidity of the public practice of Islam. In the fluid space of practice, U.S. Muslims have brought Islamic vocabularies of charity and legal and sociopolitical norms regarding philanthropy in the United States into conversation with one another, and in doing so, they have forged and reconfigured relations across groups of varying social, religious, political, cultural, and economic backgrounds. In this process, they have shaped American Islam as multifarious and dynamic and have disclosed the profound variety of interpretations and motivations that underlie charitable giving in this country.

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Fostering Muslim Civic Engagement through Faith-Based Community Organizing

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Abstract

Muslims often encounter discriminatory practices similar to those experienced by other minority groups living in the United States. Such practices range from mass incarceration and anti-immigration efforts to racial and religious profiling. In response, a growing number of U.S. Muslim leaders are organizing their communities and collaborating with non-Muslims to address these issues through civic participation and political action. At the same time, several foundations throughout the country have begun asking how to promote civic engagement among U.S. Muslims. Although little is known about U.S. Muslim civic engagement and its outcomes, data from a national study indicate that faith-based community organizing is becoming a viable pathway for Muslim communities to (1) strengthen themselves internally by developing civic leaders and mobilizing everyday Muslims to address issues affecting their community and (2) strengthen their external ties by bridging religious and social differences and by promoting policies that also benefit non-Muslims.

Keywords: Muslim, civic engagement, faith-based, community organizing, philanthropy

Muslims often encounter discriminatory practices similar to those experienced by other minority groups living in the United States. Such practices range from mass incarceration and anti-immigration efforts to racial and religious profiling. In response, a growing number of U.S. Muslim leaders are organizing their communities and collaborating with non-Muslims to address these issues through civic engagement and political participation.

This article begins by highlighting several forms of Muslim civic engagement and collaboration in the post-9/11 era. Then it describes one specific form—*faith-based community organizing*—and explores recent trends with respect to U.S. Muslims' civic engagement via this form of organizing. Particular attention is given to the degree to which U.S. Muslims, as a minority community, have discovered both the necessity and the benefits of organizing with people from other faith traditions as a type of intersectional activism for social change.

Muslim Civic Engagement and Collaboration in the Post-9/11 Era

In the immediate aftermath of the September 11 attacks in 2001 and the attendant threats to the civil rights of Muslims, Muslim communities across the United States realized the urgent need to develop new modes of organized and strategic engagement with the broader civil society. By the latter half of the 2000s, the interfaith organizing efforts of U.S. Muslims began to cross the threshold of public visibility. In May of 2007, for example, members of Chicago's Inner-City Muslim Action Network (IMAN), a social justice-oriented nonprofit, joined thousands of non-Muslim community members for a May Day immigration rally (Lyden, 2013). IMAN's participation in this march was part of its ongoing effort to partner with other local organizations to advocate for the rights of immigrant families and communities. This collaborative spirit is reflected in most of IMAN's activities, which include tackling inner-city food deserts, advocating for juvenile offenders, and promoting small businesses in low-income communities

(Parsons, 2013). In addition, IMAN's annual Takin' It to the Streets festival, which seeks to promote cooperation among Chicago's residents, draws several thousand participants each year (Freedman, 2014). As IMAN bridges racial, ethnic, and religious divides, it is also successfully organizing and mobilizing thousands of Muslims in Chicago to become civically engaged and address the challenges facing their communities (Lyden, 2013).

In January 2013, a group of 125 Muslim, Christian, and Jewish activists gathered in an Upper West Side church to mobilize against Islamophobia and "stop and frisk" practices in New York City (Kane, 2013). This event, which highlighted commonalities among these forms of discrimination, bolstered a growing coalition between Muslim organizations addressing anti-Muslim hate crimes, Black and Latino organizations opposing racial profiling, and Jewish organizations supporting their work. Linda Sarsour, a Palestinian-American Muslim, explained, "Whether you're spying on the Muslim community or stopping and frisking Blacks and Latinos, it's the same thing. Let's stop separating the issues" (Kane, 2013:1). With a shared opposition to criminalizing communities of color, these organizations have joined together to advocate for bills to reform NYPD practices and increase police accountability. Spearheading this collaborative effort is the Communities United for Police Reform, which is a racially and religiously diverse coalition that is supported in large part by $2.2 million in grants from the Open Society Foundations (Goodman, 2013).

In March 2014, nearly 100 Muslims in the San Francisco Bay Area, along with 100 other concerned citizens, attended an Oakland City Council meeting to oppose the creation of a $11 million Department of Homeland Security funded surveillance center (Winston, 2014). The proposed Domain Awareness Center would have aggregated information from nearly 1,000 video cameras, sensors, social media feeds, and real-time data to track the activities of people

throughout the Oakland city limits. As the Muslim community members provided public testimony to the city council, they shifted the discussion to highlight concerns about mass surveillance and its impingement on civil liberties. Imam Zaid Shakir stated, "This is not a Muslim issue, but an American issue. We don't want other communities to go through what the Muslim community has gone through" (Craun, 2014:1). Successfully persuading the council to significantly scale back its plans to build a citywide surveillance center was a powerful organizing victory for U.S. Muslims that is resonating throughout the Bay Area and the nation.

Although these high profile examples represent relatively large-scale instances of U.S. Muslim civic engagement and collaboration, similar smaller-scale movements have taken place in communities around the country, including Atlanta, Minneapolis/St. Paul, Baltimore, Los Angeles, and Tacoma (Rurik, Izumizaki, & Jasani, 2014). Through these efforts, Muslim civic engagement via faith-based organizing demonstrates U.S. Muslims' capacity to work collaboratively with non-Muslim communities and organizations to influence public policy. Particularly important for the success of these campaigns are three factors: (1) the ability to mobilize everyday Muslims who are not typically perceived to be political activists, and thus can garner greater credibility in policy circles (Collins, 2010); (2) the ability to remain engaged over sustained periods (measured in years) in order to help form and reform policy, build political credibility, and forge lasting coalitions with other organizations in favor of pragmatic policies that benefit not only Muslims but also other members of the community (Tesdahl, 2015); and (3) the ability of religious leaders to fluently connect pragmatic policy critiques and alternatives to the deep moral languages and ethical framing of their faith tradition (Wood & Fulton, 2015).

During the same period in which these locally organized efforts have emerged, a number of foundations throughout the country have demonstrated an interest in faith-based community

organizing as a tool for promoting Muslim civic engagement in the United States (Craun, 2014; Kobara, 2015; Mehdl, 2014; Morris, 2011; Rurik et al., 2014). One Nation Foundation, a philanthropic collaborative partnering with community foundations to strengthen U.S. Muslim communities, has funded several community-based initiatives, including faith-based organizing, as a strategy to reduce misperceptions of Muslims while fostering community resiliency (Rurik et al., 2014). From this collaborative effort emerged the One Nation Bay Area project, in which a consortium of funders came together to fund community-based organizations with an interest in deepening Muslim civic engagement projects in the San Francisco Bay Area (McAllister, 2012). Similarly, in Chicago the One Chicago One Nation initiative, which included the Chicago Community Trust, was launched with the aim of engaging Muslims within Chicago's diverse communities through interfaith social-action projects (J. Warren, 2010, 2011). Additionally, in New York City, the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs and several NYC-based foundations, along with the One Nation Foundation, formed a strategic partnership to promote civic-based immigrant integration (Dolnick, 2011). These funders and foundations exhibit an expectation that faith-based organizing can provide a vehicle for Muslim communities to (1) strengthen themselves internally by developing civic leaders and mobilizing everyday U.S. Muslims to address issues affecting their community and (2) strengthen their external ties by bridging religious and social differences and by promoting policies that also benefit non-Muslims (Fulton & Wood, 2012; Warren, 2009).

Faith-Based Community Organizing

Faith-based community organizing (FBCO) arises from the democratic ideals promoted by grassroots political activists such as Jane Addams, Saul Alinsky, Larry Itliong, Cesar Chavez, and Martin Luther King Jr., and shares roots with union organizing efforts and civil rights

movements concerning the status of African Americans, Asian Americans, Latinos, and women (Bretherton, 2015; Orr, 2007; Smock, 2004; Wood, 2002). Ed Chambers of the Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF) pioneered early elements of organizing based explicitly in community institutions, which were often religious congregations, but also included a variety of secular institutions such as public schools, labor unions, and neighborhood associations (Stout, 2010; Swarts, 2008; Warren, 2001). Today, most FBCO organizations are affiliated with one of several sponsoring networks. Nationally, these include IAF, the PICO National Network, the Gamaliel Foundation, and National People's Action. Important regional networks include the Direct Action and Research Training Center (DART) in the Southeast and Midwest and the InterValley Project (IVP) in New England. In addition, a smaller number of FBCO organizations exist independent of the formal sponsoring networks. Although each of the organizations just mentioned has developed its own approach to organizing, all are built with community institutions as their foundations, and the similarities in their respective sets of organizing practices justify treating them collectively as one field of activity (Warren & Wood, 2001).

Over the past decade and a half, the FBCO field has built a significant presence throughout the United States by building its member base among congregations and other community institutions (Wood, Fulton, & Partridge, 2012). As of 2011, 189 local FBCO organizations existed in the United States, with a presence in 40 of the 50 states, and in every major city and most mid-major cities. Approximately 7% of all U.S. congregations are members of a local FBCO organization (Chaves, Anderson, & Eagle, 2014). The people represented in these organizations (i.e., in the congregations and other types of member institutions) number over five million. Civic associations that incorporate such a large number of people are rare in U.S. history, and those that have accomplished this level of engagement (e.g., the American

Anti-Slavery Society, the National American Woman Suffrage Association, and the American

Red Cross) have profoundly shaped society (Skocpol, Ganz, & Munson, 2000).[1]

FBCO organizations are typically nonprofit organizations, set up under section 501(c)3 or

501(c)4 of the IRS tax code, with the goal of empowering residents of poor, working-class, and

middle-class communities to motivate the government and corporations to address community

concerns (Schneider, 2006). Each organization recruits a broad array of community institutions

to become dues-paying members. Members include not only religious congregations but also

neighborhood associations, schools, immigrant organizations, and unions. Each organization is

led by a board of directors comprising representatives from its member institutions. In addition,

FBCO organizations employ organizers who work with their board members and member

institutions to develop leaders, prioritize which issues to address, and implement action plans

(Wood et al., 2012).

FBCO organizations also promote leadership among their member institutions, providing

training to help participants organize their communities and promote public policies that will

improve their communities' quality of life (Wood & Fulton, 2015). The organizations sponsor

"political actions" or "accountability sessions" at which they call on political officials to support

particular public policies (Hart, 2001). Drawing on the faith traditions of their members, they

undergird that call by articulating a vision of a thriving community (Fulton & Wood, 2012). This

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[1] The key historical threshold for such influential civic associations is mobilizing 1% of

the U.S. population. The five million people represented by the FBCO field's member

institutions easily exceed this figure (~1.5%). Note, however, that with this form of organizing,

membership is composed of institutions rather than individuals, so the comparison is not exact.

model of organizing has a record of contributing to progressive policy changes in the areas of education, health care, immigration, affordable housing, policing, and living wages (Wood et al., 2012); the fields' most sophisticated practitioners have organized and trained long-standing teams of leaders in communities that previously suffered from a lack of effective democratic representation (Rusch, 2012).

FBCO organizations bolster their public influence and achieve their objectives by exercising a mix of hard and soft power (Keohane & Nye, 1998). Hard power derives from the internal relational work of coalition building; this power is projected into the public sphere when FBCO organizations, through the sheer weight of their numbers, hold political officials accountable. Soft power extends that relational power externally in more systematic ways via a wider set of organizing practices, including cultivating long-term relationships with political officials and other institutional leaders, negotiating policies, forming strategic alliances, and drawing on specialized policy expertise (Wood & Fulton, 2015). Although the balance of hard and soft power varies by organization and the broader organizing networks with which they are affiliated, every FBCO organization uses its relational and cultural resources to prioritize social needs, propose possible solutions, and generate the urgency needed to ensure the swift implementation of those solutions (Hart, 2001).

With regard to strengthening the social fabric of U.S. society, the FBCO field demonstrates a growing capacity to produce outcomes that deviate from major social trends (Wood & Fulton, 2015). Amid evidence that U.S. society is becoming increasingly fragmented (Fischer & Mattson, 2009), FBCO organizations bring people together across racial, class, and religious lines. Indeed, FBCO organizations are among the most racially and socioeconomically diverse organizations in the United States (Braunstein, Fulton, & Wood, 2014); FBCO

organizations are, on average, more racially diverse than congregations and public schools. More than 50% of all FBCO organizations' board members are people of color (Wood et al., 2012), whereas only 19% of all nonprofit board members in the United States and only 13% of Fortune 500 board members are people of color (Lang, Donald, Orta, & Hokoyama, 2011; Ostrower, 2007). In terms of socioeconomic diversity, more than 50% of FBCO organization board members have a household income of less than $50,000 per year, and roughly 25% have less than a bachelor's degree (Wood et al., 2012). Although no nationally representative data on the socioeconomic status of nonprofit boards exist, general knowledge of the nonprofit sphere indicates that the FBCO field incorporates greater socioeconomic diversity than most nonprofit boards.

This unusual concentration of influence among individuals belonging to otherwise disadvantaged groups suggests that FBCO organizations provide a countervailing force against societal trends of increasing inequality (Neckerman & Torche, 2007; Osterman, 2002). By developing leaders within marginalized communities, FBCO organizations are generating substantial political power among underrepresented populations to counterbalance the elites and lobbyists who currently dominate the political arena (Chambers & Cowan, 2003; Ganz, 2009).

In general, FBCO organizations are dedicated to strengthening public life, building democratic power, and improving social conditions in poor, working-class, and middle-class communities (Fine, 2006; Smock, 2004). They bolster public life by identifying leaders (often from marginalized and/or historically disenfranchised groups) and developing them into effective advocates for their communities (Andrews, Ganz, Baggetta, Han, & Lim, 2010). They contribute to democracy in the United States by grounding democratic action in the social institutions that structure the daily lives of individuals, families, and communities (Bretherton, 2015). In doing

so, they help communities organize and generate power that can be channeled toward shaping public policy to meet needs at the local level, and increasingly at the state and national level as well (Wood & Fulton, 2015). As a result, FBCO organizations have become significant partners in promoting civic engagement, encouraging political participation, and addressing social issues at all levels of government.[2]

As FBCO organizations engage in and impact the public sphere, they simultaneously strengthen their institutional members by developing a strong leadership base among their constituents (Flaherty & Wood, 2004). In 2011 the FBCO field reported that more than 20,000 core leaders were playing active voluntary roles within local FBCO organizations and that more than 5,000 of those leaders had attended a multi-day training event in the past year (Wood et al., 2012). Through these multi-day intensive training programs and other ongoing leadership development workshops, and by providing members with opportunities to practice their leadership skills, FBCO organizations have allocated substantial resources to (1) equip leaders with critical analytical, interpersonal, managerial, and political skills (Wagner, 2008); (2) deepen religious leaders' understanding of organizing in their congregation and in the public sphere (Bretherton, 2015; Stout, 2010); and (3) cultivate lay leaders' democratic skills not only for local engagement but also for participation in higher-level political arenas (Wood & Fulton, 2015). Furthermore, many FBCO organizations explicitly seek to develop minority members, who have been marginalized from the realm of legitimate democratic discourse, by empowering them to

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[2] See Osterman (2002), Gecan (2009), and Wood et al. (2012) for extensive, in-depth analyses that highlight the organizations' impact on specific social issues and the public arena in general.

represent themselves within the decision-making structures of their organization and by affirming their particular culture, history, and challenges (Oyakawa, Fulton, & Wood, 2015; Yukich, Fulton, & Wood, 2016).

Assessing Muslim Civic Engagement in the United States

The FBCO model for promoting civic engagement and developing leaders—especially those who have been marginalized by mainstream society—resonates with many U.S. Muslims who aspire to develop civic skills and become leaders within their communities (Jamal, 2005; Sirin & Katsiaficas, 2011). In particular, Muslim immigrants, who often have strong ties to a local mosque, may find faith-based organizing to be an approachable means of becoming civically engaged (Guo, Webb, Abzug, & Peck, 2013; Levitt, 2008; Numrich & Kniss, 2007). Furthermore, the leadership skills participants develop through community organizing can help accelerate their process of social integration and social mobility (Handy & Greenspan, 2009; Smock, 2004). Little is known, however, about the scope and scale of U.S. Muslim participation in faith-based community organizing or in other forms of civic engagement.

A significant challenge with assessing Muslim civic engagement in the United States and its consequences is the limited data on Muslim civic participation at local and national levels (Read, 2015; Siddiqui, 2014). Data of this nature could help mosques, community organizations, and government entities better understand, represent, and address the needs of Muslim communities (Downey, 2009; Jamal, 2005). This information could also help potential funders who are seeking to promote Muslim civic participation, develop local leaders, and build community capacity (Rurik et al., 2014; Senzai & Bazian, 2013; Siddiqui, 2010). With respect to the academic researchers, a greater amount and depth of data are needed to provide a deeper understanding and more comprehensive portrait of Muslim civic engagement.

In 1999 Interfaith Funders conducted a national study that included every FBCO organization in the United States in order to provide a baseline for understanding this field of organizations (Warren & Wood, 2001).[3] This study offered a portrait of the FBCO field that informed practitioners and simultaneously credentialed the work of faith-based organizing for a broad circle of funders, researchers, advocates, and potential collaborators. Over the ensuing decade, however, both the global context and the FBCO field changed substantially, especially with regard to U.S. Muslims.

To highlight the expanding scope and scale of faith-based community organizing in the United States and to specifically examine its role in promoting Muslim civic engagement, this article uses data from the National Study of Community Organizing Organizations (NSCOO), which is a replication and expansion of the study conducted in 1999 (Fulton, Wood, & Interfaith Funders, 2011). The population for the NSCOO included every FBCO organization in the United States that had an office address, at least one paid employee, and institutional members. Based on these criteria, the study identified 189 active organizations by using databases from every national and regional community organizing network, databases from 14 foundations that fund community organizing, and archived IRS 990 forms. The NSCOO surveyed the entire field of these organizations during the second half of 2011 by distributing an online survey to the director of each organization. Respondents were asked to provide extensive data on their organization's history, finances, and activities as well as detailed demographic information on

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[3] The FBCO field has been known by various names, including "congregation-based," "broad-based," and "institution-based" community organizing, all of which refer to similar organizing models that share common historical and institutional roots.

their institutional members, board members, and employees. This census study achieved a response rate of 94%, gathering data on 178 of the 189 organizations in the country and demographic information on the 4,145 member institutions, 2,939 board members, and 628 paid staff members affiliated with these organizations (Fulton, 2016).

The structure of the NSCOO enables the data to be analyzed at two levels—the field level, to demonstrate patterns in the field as a whole, and the organization level, to assess similarities and differences among individual FBCO organizations. The NSCOO also allows for customized analyses of FBCO involvement in addressing specific social issues as well as analyses of specific constituent's participation levels—as is the case with this article's focus on Muslim involvement. In addition, because the 2011 study replicated items from the 1999 study and included the organizations surveyed in 1999, analyses can assess changes in the field (and in individual organizations) over the past decade. This comparative model offers a more dynamic view than possible with only a one-time snapshot.

Since 1999 the FBCO field has grown substantially in its breadth, depth, and level of engagement. The number of FBCO organizations increased by 42%, and the number of states with at least one organization increased from 33 to 40. At the same time, many organizations have expanded beyond core urban areas and now organize entire metropolitan and regional areas. In addition, many organizations have begun participating in multi-organizational collaborations and are addressing issues at higher levels of government. Although these organizations remain deeply embedded within their local communities, they now operate with a strategic vision that carries them into regional-, state-, and national-level work.

The FBCO field has achieved this growth with fairly modest financial resources. Since 1999 the median annual revenue for FBCO organizations has increased from $150,000 to

$175,000, but adjusted for inflation, this change actually represents a slight decline in revenue for the average organization.[4] Funding sources have shifted significantly. Although FBCO organizations prioritize raising funds from their institutional members in order to protect the organization's autonomy, the percentage of funding that comes from member dues decreased from 22% to 15%. The percentage of funding provided by the Catholic Campaign for Human Development decreased from 19% to 15%, and the percentage provided by other faith-based funders decreased from 12% to 7%. The overwhelming majority of faith-based funders are Christian, Jewish, and Unitarian-Universalist organizations, and the percentage of funding from Muslim organizations remains very limited. Meanwhile, the percentage of funding provided by secular foundations and corporations increased from 30% to 39%. In 2011 donations from corporations constituted 4.5% of total reported local organization revenues, with secular foundations constituting 34.5%.[5]

Muslims Increasing Religious Diversity of FBCO Organizations

The FBCO field exhibits substantial religious diversity among its member institutions, board members, and organizing staff. Although most of the member congregations are Mainline

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[4] In 1999 $150,000 had the purchasing power equivalent of approximately $202,000 in 2011 (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics); the change would thus be a 12% drop from 1999 to 2011. Part of the decrease in 2011 can be attributed to the effects of the Great Recession. Note though that the reported decrease pertains only to local FBCO organizations and does not reflect revenues of national-level organizing efforts, nor does it reflect pre-recession budget levels.

[5] The 1999 data do not separate donations from corporations and donations from secular foundations.

Protestant (32%), Catholic (27%), and Black Protestant (24%), Evangelical, Jewish, and Muslim

congregations are increasing their representation within the field. The growing presence of

mosques as member institutions is particularly noteworthy because the FBCO field had almost

no Muslim member institutions in 1999. Furthermore, although mosques make up approximately

0.6% of all religious congregations in the United States, they constitute approximately 1.3% of

FBCO member congregations.[6] In comparison, almost half of the congregations in the United

States are Evangelical, yet they make up less than 5% of all FBCO member congregations.[7] As

FBCO organizations seek to involve a broad base of religious traditions, Evangelical

congregations are poorly represented relative to their prevalence among U.S. congregations,

whereas mosques are notably well represented. Furthermore, even though the overall percentage

of Muslim member institutions is small, they are distributed throughout the FBCO organizations

rather than concentrated within a small number of organizations. Twenty percent of FBCO

organizations have at least one Muslim member institution, and 17% have at least one Muslim

and one Jewish member institution.

Similar patterns emerge when analyzing the religious affiliation of FBCO board members

and organizing staff. Among the board members, Muslims make up 1.5% of members and are

distributed throughout 19% of the organizations. With regard to organizing staff, in 1999 the

entire field had only one Muslim organizer; as of 2011 there were nine. Although both the

absolute number and the percentage of Muslim institutions and people in the FBCO field are

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[6] Estimates based on data from the US Mosque Study (Bagby, 2011) and Hadaway and
Marler (2005).

[7] Estimates based on data from the National Congregations Study (Chaves et al., 2014).

small, more than 25% of the organizations have at least one Muslim member institution, board member, or staff person, and Muslim representation in the field substantially exceeds Muslim representation in U.S. society (see Figure 1). Furthermore, there is tremendous social significance for the FBCO field to transition from having essentially no Muslim involvement to having some Muslim involvement in one out of four organizations, and for a local FBCO organization to transition from having no Muslim member institutions or board members to having at least one.[8]

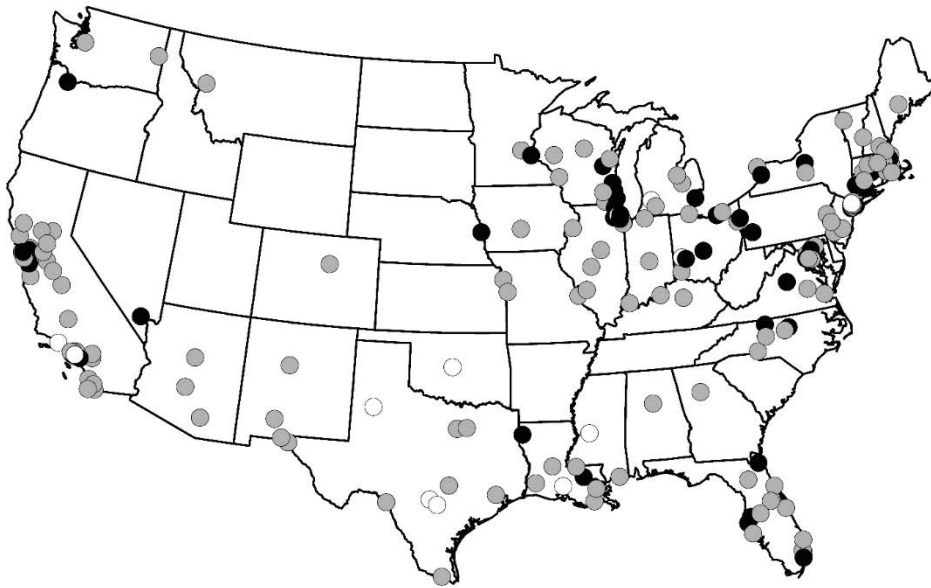*Figure 1*. Muslim representation among faith-based community organizing organizations in the United States.

Key:

● Organization with Muslim representation

● Organization with no Muslim representation

○ Organization with no data on religious affiliation

Source: 2011 National Study of Community Organizing Organizations (N = 189)

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[8] For a parallel argument with regard to race, see Chaves and Anderson (2014).

Multi-Faith FBCO Organizations Navigating Religious Differences

As FBCO organizations have become more religiously diverse and have included an increasing number of non-Christian faith traditions, they have had to develop strategies for navigating religious differences. Even though the leaders of FBCO organizations are often encouraged to draw on their specific faith traditions, they seldom focus on their religious differences. Most of the organizations reported discussing religious differences only "rarely" to "sometimes," and most indicated that religious differences had a minimal effect on their planning meetings. Likewise, those organizations that were more religiously diverse were no more likely than less diverse organizations to indicate that religious differences complicated, prolonged, or hindered their planning meetings. However, there are a few exceptions. Organizations that had at least one Muslim or Jewish member institution were more likely to report that religious differences complicated their planning meetings. One director specifically noted that Muslim prayer occasionally interrupted and prolonged the organization's planning meetings. Another director of a religiously diverse organization, which included Muslims, noted an ongoing tension to ensure that all of the faith traditions can participate, and she explained that her organization had not been completely successful at accomplishing this goal. In addition, organizations that frequently discuss religious differences were more likely to report that their differences affected their planning meetings, but it is important to clarify that an organization's propensity to discuss religious differences was unrelated to its degree of religious diversity. Furthermore, the directors of religiously diverse organizations did not report greater difficulty in accommodating different faith traditions in their organizing work than did directors of less diverse organizations.

As members of FBCO organizations from diverse faith traditions work together to improve their communities, they appear to navigate their religious differences by downplaying

them. In an increasingly polarized political culture, in which religious differences are often used

to amplify political disagreements, FBCO organizations are thus strikingly countercultural.

Rather than using differences to pit faith communities against each other (or to antagonize

divergent strands within a particular tradition), FBCO culture seeks to transcend their differences

by focusing on shared values and pursuing common goals. This evidence suggests that

religiously diverse organizations avoid potential conflicts and maintain cohesion by choosing to

not focus on religious differences.

Multi-Faith FBCO Organizations Harnessing Religion Despite Differences

Despite the FBCO field's tendency to de-emphasize religious differences, religious

teaching and practices continue to be an integral part of the organizations' internal and external

activities. Sixty percent of the organization offices contain objects with religious references, and

80% of the organizations reported that their promotional material contains religious content.

Furthermore, the directors are, on average, more religious than the general U.S. population (i.e.,

they pray, read sacred texts, and attend religious services more often than the average U.S. adult)

(Smith, Marsden, Hout, & Kim, 2011), and most FBCO organizations actively integrate religious

practices into their organizing activities. More than 90% of the organizations reported that they

often open and close their meetings with a prayer, and more than 75% often have discussions

about the connection between faith and organizing. Many organizations also draw on religion as

they build an organizational culture for political engagement. For example, most organizations'

public activities include music, stories, and symbols rooted in their represented faith traditions.

Given that FBCO organizations primarily comprise religious congregations, religion functions as

a key mechanism by which these groups live out their commitment to improve the quality of life for

disadvantaged communities.

Increasing the religious diversity of an FBCO organization does not seem to dampen the influence of religious faith in the organization. In fact, religiously diverse organizations are more likely to incorporate religious practices into their organizing activities, and the directors of diverse organizations reported feeling more comfortable doing so. Furthermore, socially diverse organizations often draw on religious practices to help bridge their members' racial and socioeconomic differences (Braunstein et al., 2014). Overall, rather than being venues for interfaith dialogue, FBCO organizations are vehicles for interfaith action. Instead of discussing potentially divisive differences, faith-based organizing forms relationships between leaders of differing faiths and harnesses their shared beliefs to motivate and mobilize them around issues of common concern. Moreover, an organization's tendency to incorporate religious elements is strongest among those that are religiously diverse and led by religiously active directors.

The FBCO field's success at achieving, navigating, and harnessing religious diversity occurs at a time when religious traditions are struggling to retain and redefine the place of religion in the public sphere (Fulton & Wood, 2017a). Culturally defensive religious forms—and at times explicitly anti-intellectual and fundamentalist expressions of them—have come to dominate religiously framed public discourse, at least in the popular perception conveyed in media coverage (Beckford, 2000; Wood & Fulton, 2015). This perception is pervasive and has been fueled by isolated cases of fanaticism and extremism, which undermines the credibility of religious voices in the public sphere (Dionne, 2009). It remains an open question how much faith-based community organizing will contribute to strengthening public religion and reestablishing a credible religious voice for deepening civic engagement (Fulton & Wood, 2017b). FBCO's likelihood of helping religious communities achieve this civic credibility lies in

its unique capacity to bridge religious differences and then harness those differences to promote the common good.

Conclusion

As U.S. Muslim communities, along with other members of U.S. society, seek to confront the escalating social and economic challenges of the 21st century, it is critical to generate new sources of democratic vigor, provide pathways for civic engagement, and promote broad-based collaborations. Faith-based community organizing offers a compelling and comprehensive model for accomplishing these goals by developing civic leaders from diverse backgrounds to work together to address issues of common concern. In particular, faith-based organizing is well positioned to meet the needs of Muslim communities through encouraging political participation, promoting collaborations, increasing community capacity, and preserving religious vitality.

Faith-based community organizing actively promotes expanding grassroots political participation, which includes voter registration drives, voter education forums, and get-out-the-vote campaigns (Wood & Fulton, 2015). As Muslim leaders contribute to planning these initiatives, they can help design and promote such activities in ways that appeal to the values of U.S. Muslims, thereby increasing the likelihood of Muslim participation. Embracing and endorsing these political participation initiatives can help Muslim communities develop the skills and capacities they need to increase civic engagement.

Efforts by U.S. Muslim leaders to organize their communities and collaborate with non-Muslims can be supported through involvement in local FBCO organizations, which have an organizational structure that encourages participation from a wide variety of community members and an organizational culture that facilitates collaborations across social differences.

Participating in such community-based collaborations can produce a deepened sense of interfaith and multicultural cooperation and partnership for the collective good (Wood & Fulton, 2015). Additionally, participating in FBCO organizations can help strengthen Muslim communities' institutional infrastructure through developing leaders and increasing organizational capacity. This leadership development may be particularly critical for nascent organizations or organizations composed primarily of Muslim immigrants or indigenous U.S. Muslims from disadvantaged socioeconomic backgrounds.

Finally, faith-based organizing offers a welcoming setting for religiously active Muslims to become civically engaged. In such settings, rather than feeling the need to suppress their deeply held religious beliefs and practices, they are encouraged to harness their faith to help advance the goals of the organization (Wood & Fulton, 2015). Harnessing their faith to support civic efforts for the public good can also help non-Muslims develop a greater understanding and appreciation of the Islamic faith and see how many of its core values overlap with those of their own faith traditions.

Overall, for foundations seeking to encourage U.S. Muslims to participate in civic life, engage in participatory governance, and work together with non-Muslims, faith-based organizing can provide an accessible pathway to accomplish these goals. Although Muslim communities have been increasing their civic participation through faith-based organizing, many foundations inclined to support Muslim civic engagement have been slow to fund these organizing efforts. Having additional financial resources could help catalyze greater Muslim involvement and advance the goals of faith-based organizing. By funding FBCO organizations, foundations would be investing in organizations that promote Muslim civic engagement, develop Muslim leaders,

and strengthen Muslim institutions, and at the same time, encourage partnerships with non-

Muslim leaders and organizations.

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Determinants of Formal Giving in Turkey

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Abstract

This article shares the results of a recent study on individual giving to civil society organizations in Turkey. Using interview data collected from a random sample of 2,495 Turkish citizens in 2015, we estimate that about 12% to 13% of the Turkish population engage in giving, a relatively low figure compared to international giving. We find that being male, being educated, being satisfied with one's income, being satisfied with one's economic circumstances, being a rural resident, as well as one's level of religiosity, civic activism, and institutional trust are all positively associated with giving in Turkey. Our findings provide a foundation for understanding philanthropic giving in Turkey and contribute to ongoing research about determinants of individual giving across countries.

Keywords: Turkey, Philanthropy, Civil society

In recent years, scholars have pursued two related areas of research on philanthropy. One area of study has focused on the factors influencing individuals' giving behaviors with the goal of making specific claims that can be broadly generalized to different contexts. This well-developed area includes many empirical studies across a range of disciplines that address the demographic and social characteristics that shape philanthropic giving. Dutch researchers René Bekkers & Pamala Wiepking (2011a, 2011b, 2012) have provided a comprehensive summary of the state of knowledge, in a review that includes nearly 600 sources. The second line of inquiry examined the practice of philanthropy (and the related development of civil society) in individual countries (Salamon et al., 2013; Wiepking & Handy, 2015). This line of inquiry addressed the nature and extent of philanthropic giving in specific contexts, as well as the types of organizations that comprise the civil society sector and the philanthropic support they receive.

Despite the depth of knowledge we have acquired about individual giving and country-specific philanthropy, little has been published about the determinants of giving in developing countries. For example, *The Palgrave Handbook of Global Philanthropy* by Wiepking and Handy (2015) provides an excellent overview on the nature of and approach to philanthropy in many countries in the developing world; however, its focus is not on the determinants of giving. A review of the recent academic research on individual giving practices in developing countries yields only a handful of studies, that is, from Mexico (Butcher Garcia-Colin & Santiago, 2016), South Africa (Everatt et al., 2005), Sri Lanka (Osella et al., 2015), and Puerto Rico (Osili et al., 2016). Furthermore, researchers have only begun to examine whether what we have learned about giving behavior in particular settings is generalizable across countries and cultures. For example, it is unclear whether the current research on the demographic and social determinants of giving in developed countries explains giving behavior in other contexts. It is also unclear to

what extent cultural attitudes about philanthropy motivate giving and whether they are consistent with research conducted in other settings.

In this study, we contribute to the efforts being made to understand philanthropy in different contexts by drawing on the most recent data on individual giving to civil society organizations in Turkey (Çarkoğlu & Aytaç, 2016). We focus on the relationship between several socio-demographic and attitudinal factors and individual giving and seek to find out whether the factors that affect individual giving as identified in the literature are at work in Turkey as well. Our results show a relatively low level of giving to civil society organizations, with about 12% of the Turkish population reporting giving in the past month and 13% in the past year. These figures put Turkey in the bottom quintile for donating money to organizations from among 145 countries surveyed by and published in the Charities Aid Foundation's *World Giving Index* (2015). We find that for men the following are positively associated with giving in Turkey: education, income, satisfaction with one's own economic circumstances, being a rural resident, religiosity, civic activism, and institutional trust. Age also emerges as a positive predictor of individual giving, though not as robustly as other factors.

The profiling of Turkish giving behavior as reported here should help to extend our knowledge of individual giving practices around the world. The article is organized as follows. First, we briefly discuss the individual-level factors identified in the literature as determinants of giving. Next, we present our data and measures on individual giving in Turkey, followed by the results of our analysis. The final section discusses our findings from Turkey from a comparative perspective.

Determinants of Individual Giving

Research that addresses individuals' motivations for making philanthropic donations falls into two broad categories. One body of work emphasizes the demographic characteristics and facilitating conditions that make a person more likely to give. The second body considers how core beliefs affect attitudes toward giving. In the latter category, we focus on research on social trust.

The most helpful research on philanthropic giving behavior is the series of three papers written by René Bekkers and Pamala Wiepking, in which they synthesize current knowledge about giving determinants (Bekkers & Wiepking, 2011a, 2011b; Wiepking & Bekkers, 2012). Because their work captures the current state of knowledge, we draw on it heavily in our discussion. They divide the drivers behind giving into two categories, demographics (such as age, education, and income) and motivational mechanisms (including awareness of need, solicitation, and costs and benefits). Their analysis of earlier works yielded a long list of factors affecting giving and a set of theoretical frameworks about the relationships among those factors. In broad terms, they argue that giving mechanisms mediate demographic variables in explaining giving. For example, while education (a demographic variable) is positively associated with philanthropic giving, awareness of need (a giving mechanism) mediates it (Bekkers & Wiepking, 2011a).

Their review identifies several demographic and socioeconomic factors that researchers have consistently found to be positively related to philanthropic giving (Bekkers & Wiepking, 2011b; Wiepking & Bekkers, 2012). Those factors include religiosity, age (up to age 65), education level, owning a home, being married, having children, and having parents with either a high income, a high level of education, or a history of volunteering. Furthermore, they note that

studies have indicated that women are more likely to give than men but that men give larger

amounts. The effect of income on philanthropic giving is more ambiguous; that is, although

income level is consistently found to have a positive effect on the amount of an individual's

donations, researchers have found mixed results when analyzing whether income is a predictor of

giving in general. The factors that positively mediate the effects of these demographic and

socioeconomic characteristics include whether a person is solicited for a donation, whether

others know about the donation, awareness of community needs, and trust in charitable

organizations, all of which may be products of social capital or of the demographic factors

themselves.

Most of the studies Bekkers & Wiepking (2011a) used for their analysis came from the

United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, and the Netherlands. Studies conducted in different

parts of the world have sometimes reached different conclusions. For example, two studies—one

from Korea (Park & Park, 2004) and one from Taiwan (Wu, Huang, & Kao, 2004)—about

education level and giving did not find a significant relationship. Also, the same Korean study

and another conducted in Indonesia did not find the significant relationship between age and

giving reported by Bekkers and Wiepking (Park & Park, 2004; Okten & Osili, 2004). The fact

that the studies diverging from the consensus about these giving motivations are from outside the

United States, Canada, and Western Europe raise questions about the role of culture, and related

factors might play in shaping giving behavior and suggest the need for research from a wider

range of settings.

Bekkers & Wiepking (2011a, p. 941) include "attitudes and values" among the mediating

factors that affect individual giving decisions. They argue that prosocial values such as

interpersonal social trust and trust in institutions contribute to individuals' giving decisions.

Because there is considerable variation across countries in the aggregate levels of both interpersonal social trust and institutional trust, their study might be valuable in accounting for between-country variations in giving. Trust is important in understanding giving behavior because giving to institutions (but also to individuals) reflects some level of trust by the donor in the recipient that the recipient will appropriately use the donation. As many scholars have noted, theories of civil society organizations argue that donors give to these institutions because of their legal status; that is, they are bound by the non-distribution constraint, which means they cannot distribute their profits at will (Bekkers, 2003; Salamon, 2012). As such, donors may give because they trust that these legal guidelines ensure that their donations will be used to advance an organization's charitable purpose.

In addition to prosocial values like trust, several researchers have examined social capital in order to gauge its relationship to giving. Some use social capital as a proxy for social trust (Brooks, 2005 Brown & Ferris, 2007), while others seem to distinguish between the two, arguing that the networks that define social capital are different from the psychological aspects of giving (Wang & Graddy, 2008). Despite these differences, using large samples of American adults, they all found a significant relationship between social capital and philanthropic giving. A study from Japan reached a similar conclusion by reporting that among the Japanese both interpersonal and institutional trust are positively associated with individual giving, with institutional trust being a better predictor (Taniguchi & Marshall, 2014).

Data and Measures on Individual Giving in Turkey

Our data are based on a nationally representative face-to-face survey conducted with 2,495

respondents from 68 provinces of Turkey between August 29 and November 29, 2015.[1] The

sampling procedure started with the use of the Turkish Statistical Institute's (TUIK) NUTS-2

regions. The target sample was distributed according to each region's share of the urban and

rural population, in accordance with the Address Based Population Registration System's current

records. Next, TUIK's block data were used with the block size set at 400 residents. Probability

proportionate to size sampling was used in distributing the blocks to NUTS-2 regions. The

individual to be interviewed in each household was selected via a lottery method on the basis of

the reported target population of 18 years or older in the household.

We asked our respondents about their giving behavior in two different ways. First, we

used the exact question format employed in the *World Giving Index* annual reports of the

Charities Aid Foundation (CAF).[2] CAF, in collaboration with the international polling

organization Gallup, has been collecting data on basic philanthropic behaviors since 2010 to

provide a comparative framework for evaluating variations across countries and time. The

questions used by CAF are as follows (*CAF World Giving Index*, 2015, p. 3):[3]

Have you done any of the following in the past month?

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[1] The survey was generously funded by the Third Sector Foundation of Turkey. The

interviews were conducted by Infakto Research Workshop

[2] www.cafonline.org

[3] Because our focus in this study is on giving to organizations, we do not analyze the

questions on helping others and volunteering.

1.   Helped a stranger, or someone you did not know who needed help?

2.   Donated money to a charity?

3.   Volunteered your time to an organization?

It should be noted that the CAF question format requires respondents to consider a rather short period (the past month) when thinking about their giving behavior. The decision to ask respondents to consider this short period has both advantages and disadvantages. A disadvantage is that it might fail to capture seasonal variations in giving behavior, and thus the results might be heavily dependent on the timing of the fieldwork. For example, surveys that are fielded just before and after the Christmas season might result in significantly different estimates of the prevalence of giving in Christian majority nations. Similarly, religiously motivated giving in Muslim majority contexts might increase significantly during religious holidays, and the survey results would again be heavily influenced by the timing of the fieldwork. This feature of the CAF approach makes it difficult to engage in cross-country and over-time (within a country) comparisons of the prevalence of giving behavior. A potential advantage of the CAF question format is that it should be easier for respondents to recall their giving behavior during the past month compared to a longer period. Therefore asking about giving behavior this way should result in a relatively small measurement error when estimating the prevalence of giving during the period considered.

Our second approach to measuring giving behavior involved presenting respondents with a comprehensive list of different types of civil society organizations (e.g., sports clubs, environmental organizations, alumni associations, and charity organizations) and asking them whether they had donated money to any such organizations during the *past year*. Using the whole year allowed us to capture seasonal variations in giving behavior, which was not possible

with the CAF questions. The use of a comprehensive list of different types of organizations was intended to mitigate this concern by helping respondents recollect their giving behavior.

We considered a range of variables to identify the determinants of giving behavior. The first set of variables relates to respondents' demographics—gender, age, years of formal education, marital status, urban residence, religious practice (frequency of prayer), and a dummy variable for Kurdish speakers.[4] The second set of variables includes number of individuals in the household, household income, and satisfaction with economic conditions. Last, we considered respondents' level of interpersonal social trust (whether they think most people can be trusted), level of civic activism, and trust in civil society organizations in general.

The descriptive statistics of the sample for these variables are presented in Table 1. Our sample has perfect gender balance, and the average age of respondents is 42 years. The level of education, measured in years of school attendance, averages about eight years. The average household size is 3.5, and 81% of our respondents live in urban areas. We measured religiosity on a scale ranging from no religious practice (0) to participation in religious activities more than once a week (5). We also asked respondents to rate their satisfaction with their current economic condition on a scale from 0 (not satisfied at all) to 10 (very satisfied). We designated those individuals who rated their economic situation above 5 on this scale as "economically satisfied"—about 29% of our respondents fall into this category.

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[4] Kurds constitute a large ethnic minority group in Turkey, residing primarily in the Eastern and Southeastern provinces. Based on our data, we estimate the proportion of Kurds within the adult population of Turkey to be around 15%, a figure in line with what is reported in other recent research (e.g., Aytaç & Çarkoğlu, 2017).

Consistently low levels of interpersonal trust in Turkey have been well documented

(Aytaç, Çarkoğlu, & Ertan, 2017); in line with those findings, only about 10% of our respondents

agreed that most people could be trusted. We measured civic activism by asking how often the

respondent gets together with his or her neighbors to discuss and find solutions to local

problems, using a scale between "not at all" (0) to "very often" (3). The average value of this

measure in our sample is about 0.9, reflecting a rather low level of civic activism in Turkish

society. Finally, we asked our respondents how much trust they have in civil society

organizations in general on a scale from 1 (not trusting at all) to 10 (fully trusting). The mean

level of trust is 6.2 on this scale.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics of the Sample

Variable	Min.	Max.	Mean	Std. Dv.
Female	0	1	0.50	0.50
Age	18	89	41.6	16.2
Education	0	15	7.96	4.41
Married	0	1	0.67	0.47
Urban resident	0	1	0.81	0.39
Kurdish speaker	0	1	0.15	0.36
Household size	1	15	3.49	1.77
Household income (Log)	0	4.30	3.16	0.33
Religious practice	0	5	3.80	1.72
Economically satisfied	0	1	0.29	0.45
Most people can be trusted	0	1	0.10	0.30
Civic activism	0	3	0.87	0.86
Trust in civil society organizations	1	10	6.21	2.45

Findings

First, we report the overall levels of giving behavior in Turkey. The *CAF World Giving*

Index annual reports include information about levels of giving in Turkey from 2010 to 2014, and

because we used the exact question format employed in these reports, we are able to present our

2015 results together with the CAF figures. Figure 1 presents the prevalence of giving in the *past*

month in Turkey from 2010 to 2015. We observe very little change over time in the prevalence of

giving, with it fluctuating between 10% and 14% during the period from 2010 to 2015. In the latest

available data point (2015), we estimate that about 12% of the Turkish adult population donated

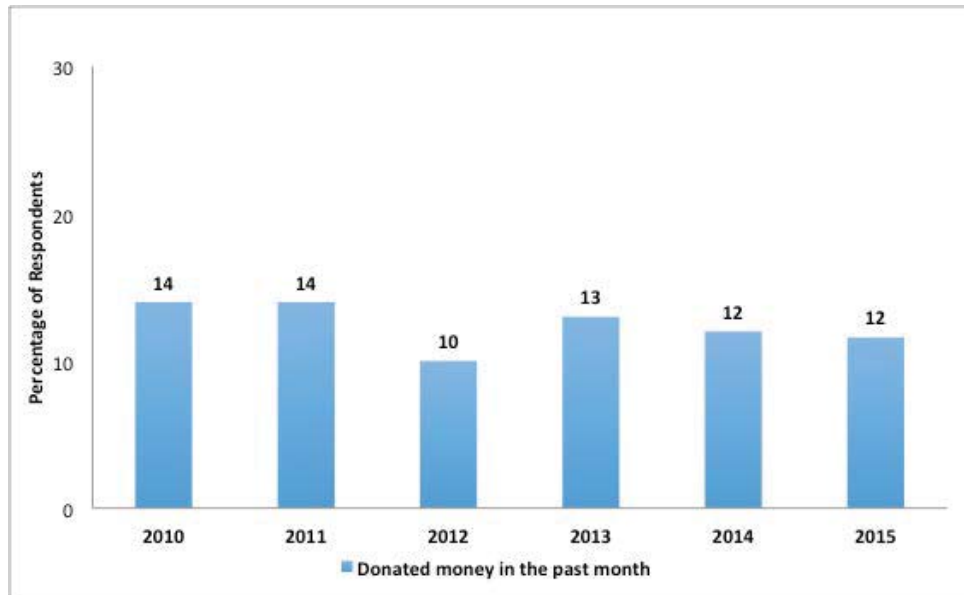money to a civil society organization in the past month.

Figure 1. Prevalence of donating money in the past month in Turkey. *CAF World Giving Index*
2010–2014 and TÜSEV 2015 study. *Note:* The values for 2010 to 2014 are taken from *CAF
World Giving Index,* whereas 2015 data are from the authors' original survey that uses identical
questions as the CAF index.

When we asked respondents about their giving behavior using our second approach (i.e.,

presenting a list of types of organizations and asking about the past year), we obtained similar

results. In this case, about 13% of respondents reported having donated in the previous year.

Thus our two approaches for measuring giving behavior in Turkey result in figures consistent

with each other, suggesting that about 12% to 13% of the Turkish population engage in giving to

organizations.

To analyze the determinants of individual giving in Turkey, we created a binary variable

indicating whether a respondent donated money in the past month (the CAF question format) and

another binary variable for respondents who donated money in the past year (our own question format). Table 2 presents the results of logistic regressions taking these two binary variables as dependent variables and using the explanatory variables described earlier. The two question formats yield consistent estimates for the determinants of giving, so asking about different time periods did not make a significant difference in our case.

Among the demographic variables, gender, education level, religious practice, and urban residence have statistically significant effects on donating money to civil society organizations both in the past month (Model 1) and in the previous year (Model 2). Considering giving behavior in the previous year (Model 2), men are about 52% more likely than women to make donations. Education exhibits a positive effect—each additional year of formal education increases one's likelihood to donate by about 7% percent, which means someone who graduates from eight years of primary school is on average about 56% more likely to have made a donation over the past year than someone who has not attended school. Individuals living in rural areas are about 67% more likely to make donations than individuals living in urban areas.

Religious practice, too, has a positive and statistically significant effect on individual giving. An individual who prays (*namaz*) more than once a week is about 40% more likely to have made a donation over the past year than someone who does not pray at all. Age has a positive and significant effect only in Model 2, where each additional year of age increases the likelihood of donating by about 1%. Marital status, speaking Kurdish, and household size do not seem to have an impact on the likelihood of individual giving.

Table 2

Determinants of Individual Giving to Civil Society Organizations

Dependent variable	Model (1) Donating money in the *past month*			Model (2) Donating money in the *past year*		
	B	Sig.	Exp (B)	B	Sig.	Exp (B)
Female	**-.52**	**.00**	**.60**	**-.41**	**.01**	**.66**
Age	.00	.93	1.00	**.01**	**.01**	**1.01**
Education	**.05**	**.04**	**1.05**	**.07**	**.00**	**1.07**
Married	.08	.69	1.08	-.16	.35	.85
Urban resident	**-1.03**	**.00**	**.36**	**-.52**	**.00**	**.60**
Kurdish speaker	-.13	.65	.88	.03	.90	1.03
Household size	.04	.45	1.04	.05	.28	1.05
Household income (log)	**1.54**	**.00**	**4.65**	**1.02**	**.00**	**2.76**
Religious practice	**.10**	**.05**	**1.10**	**.07**	**.09**	**1.08**
Economically satisfied	**.46**	**.01**	**1.59**	**.35**	**.03**	**1.42**
Most people can be trusted	-.31	.25	.73	.13	.57	1.14
Civic activism	**.34**	**.00**	**1.40**	**.28**	**.00**	**1.33**
Trust in civil society organization	**.07**	**.04**	**1.07**	**.08**	**.01**	**1.08**
Constant	**-7.91**	**.00**	**.00**	**-7.01**	**.00**	**.00**
-2 Log likelihood	1086.479			1274.805		
Cox & Snell R Square	.065			.053		
Nagelkerke R Square	.129			.096		
N	1708			1711		

Note: Logistic regressions. Bold entries indicate statistically significant effects ($p < 0.1$).

The fact that our sample showed that individuals living in rural areas are significantly more likely to make donations to organizations than individuals living in urban areas was somewhat unexpected. We also have data on the types of organizations to which individuals have donated their money, and many people in rural areas reported that they have donated to the mosque in their village. It is quite typical for the congregation of a mosque in Turkey to establish a voluntary organization to support the material needs of the mosque; it seems that such organizations are better able to solicit donations in rural areas. These donations to the mosques in villages push up the prevalence of donations in rural areas relative to urban areas, and therefore

we observe a positive relationship between donating and being a rural resident rather than an urban one.

Other variables with positive effects on giving behavior are household income, positive economic evaluations, civic activism, and trust in civil society organizations. It should not come as a surprise that those with higher household incomes and a positive outlook for their economic circumstances are more likely to donate, although as we noted earlier, the literature shows mixed results about income as a predictor of the likelihood of giving. The positive effects of higher levels of civic activism and trust in civil society on donations are also expected—the donations that we consider are made to civil society organizations, and individuals with higher levels of civic activism and trust in these organizations would be both more familiar and more comfortable with donating. We find interpersonal trust to play no role on the likelihood of individual giving to organizations.

Discussion

Our findings expand our knowledge about the determinants of individual giving in different contexts by providing data from a nationally representative survey in Turkey. The socio-demographic and attitudinal factors shaping individual giving in Turkey entail both similarities and differences with what has been reported elsewhere. Higher levels of education increase the likelihood of individual giving in Turkey, which is consistent with the previous literature (Bekkers & Wiepking, 2011b). More religious Turks are also more likely to give, and religiosity is also shown to be positively associated with giving in different contexts. We also find a positive association between income and likelihood of making donations. This finding is compatible with the broader literature as well, though some studies challenge the importance of income as a predictor of the likelihood of giving (Wiepking & Bekkers, 2012).

Age emerged as a significant and positive predictor of giving over a one-year period but not over a one-month period in our study. This mixed result resonates with research on individual giving in non-Western contexts. Studies from Indonesia and Korea, in contrast to Western studies, have not found that age is a determinant of giving (Okten & Osili, 2004; Park & Park, 2004). The non-Western setting is the only obvious difference between these studies and others that have reported age as a determinant of giving.

The effects of gender and marital status on the likelihood of giving in Turkey diverge from what other studies have reported. We find that men are more likely to give than women. This result differs from many studies in Western contexts that have reported women to be more likely to give than men, though men tend to give more (Wiepking & Bekkers, 2012). Although our finding merits further study, one explanation for this difference may be the persistence of traditional household gender roles in Turkey. We also report no relationship between the marital status of individuals and their likelihood of giving to organizations.

In our study, we distinguished between interpersonal social trust and institutional trust, and we find that while institutional trust is positively related to making donations, interpersonal social trust is not a significant predictor. The finding on institutional trust is consistent with determinants of giving identified among residents of Japan (Taniguchi & Marshall, 2014); however, interpersonal social trust was also positively associated with giving in that study and in U.S.-based studies discussed earlier. It is difficult to speculate about the insignificance of social trust; however, the association between institutional trust and giving to institutions seems intuitive, as does the related association between civic activism and giving. People give to institutions if they trust them. Furthermore, survey respondents who indicated that they engage

with fellow citizens in collective problem-solving may do so through civil society organizations. This participation may both cultivate and reflect the kind of trust that leads to making donations.

One area for further study that we do not consider here is informal giving, that is, general helping behavior and giving to family, friends, neighbors, and others directly without any intermediating organization. As noted, the Charities Aid Foundation surveys include data on these types of philanthropic behaviors, as does the survey we have drawn on. Given the relatively low levels of giving to organizations, which can be designated as formal giving, identified in this study, it would be worthwhile to explore whether informal giving is more common in Turkey and if so why. Most research in philanthropy, particularly given its Western context, emphasizes formal giving as a measure of philanthropic activity. A more complete understanding of giving behavior in Turkey would require more research about the nature and extent of informal giving. Future work should also explore the factors that are responsible for differences in individuals' preferences for formal vis-à-vis informal giving.

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Exploring the Giving Practices in American Mosques:

Why Do Muslims Give So Little to Their Mosques?

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Abstract

This article represents the first effort to explore the giving practices of Muslims in American mosques. The research for this article was based on two studies: (1) a previously published study, "The American Mosque 2011," which consisted of 524 telephone interviews of mosque leaders; and (2) a previously unpublished 2013 study of 3 mosques and the 2016 follow-up interviews with donors from the three mosques. The results show that mosque attendees give much less than their counterparts in churches. Interviews with donors in the three mosques were conducted in order to draw some preliminary conclusions as to why the giving rate in mosques is low. The interviews indicate that one of the underlying factors for the low rate of giving is that mosque attendees do not have a clear theology for giving to mosques and that a culture of giving to mosques does not exist among immigrant Muslims. It must be emphasized that this article is exploratory. Broader and more in-depth studies are needed to develop definitive conclusions about giving practices in mosques.

Keywords: Mosque, American Muslims, Giving

Although Muslims have been present since America's beginnings, they have had a significant presence only since the 1960s when America opened its doors to immigration from the Muslim world and large numbers of African Americans started to convert to Islam. The Pew Research Center estimated that as of 2015 the Muslim population was 3.3 million, with the expectation that the population will more than double to 8.1 million by 2050 because of continued immigration and a high birth rate (Basheer, 2016). In the US Mosque Study 2011, a total of 2,106 mosques were counted, which constituted a 74% increase from the year 2000 when 1,209 mosques were counted (Bagby, 2012a, p. 5). Just as the number of mosques is increasing, attendance in mosques is fairly robust: the average attendance at the weekly congregational prayer on Fridays (*Jum'ah* prayer) is 353, and the median number is 173 (Bagby, 2012a, p. 7). In comparison, the median figure for attendance in all U.S. congregations is 105—much lower than in mosques. In addition, attendance in mosques is increasing. Almost two-thirds of all mosques (65%) have experienced an increase of more than 10% in the past three years (Bagby, 2012a, p. 8).

Another positive factor for mosques is that the socioeconomic indicators for American Muslims are overall very healthy. In fact, their socioeconomic indicators are similar to the general U.S. population. The 2011 Pew study found that 14% of American Muslims have an income of $100,000 and above, as compared with 16% of the general population (p. 17). The study also showed that, in terms of education, 22% of American Muslims have obtained at least a college degree as compared with 28% of the U.S. population (p. 17). Thus the giving rate in mosques should not be hampered by demographic variables such as low income.

The income and education levels of the three mosques studied are higher than the averages in other U.S. mosques. In terms of income, two of the three mosques have attendees

who earn more than the average American: the median income for attendees at the large suburban mosque is $87,000, and the median income for attendees at the small university-town mosque is $60,000, which is comparable to the 2013 median American household income of $52,000. The median income of the midsize urban mosque is $40,000, which is below the general population's median income.

Although the American Muslim community is similar to the U.S. population in terms of education, attendees at the three mosques studied are much more educated. According to the 2011 Pew study (p. 17), 28% of the U.S. population have a college or graduate degree, but in the large suburban mosque, a remarkable 83% of the attendees have a college or graduate degree, whereas the small university town has 68% and the midsize urban mosque has 55%.

Thus all of the indicators of attendance, growth, individual income, and education demonstrate that American mosques are very healthy; therefore the logical assumption would be that the giving rate in mosques is comparable to the giving rate in other American religious congregations. However, as we will see, this assumption is false.

In understanding American mosques, a complicating factor is that they do not follow the pattern of traditional mosques that exist overseas. Mosques in America are congregations, and they follow the typical pattern of American congregationalism, meaning that they are worship groups that are largely self-governing and self-supporting. Based on this understanding, congregations can be understood as a group of people who assemble regularly to worship at a particular place and are organized in a "pattern that places considerable power in the hands of the local body of lay leaders" (Wind & Lewis, 1994, p.2). Mosques thus function very much like other American religious congregations, in that they are largely controlled by a lay board and their survival largely depends on the generosity of the attendees.

The complication for Muslims is that mosques overseas are not actually congregations in the same sense as just defined. The majority of mosques in the Muslim world are indeed gathering places for worship, but they are not controlled or financially supported by attendees. Mosques in the Muslim world are usually controlled either by the government or by a rich patron. Thus there is not a custom of attendees giving to mosques in order to pay for the salaries of prayer leaders (imams) or for maintenance of the mosques. All those expenses are covered by the government or a rich patron.

Research Design

This article relies on a few past studies and on the original research conducted for this paper. The past studies include the US Mosque Study 2011 (Bagby, 2012a), which was a key-informant, randomly sampled survey of 524 mosques.[1] Comparisons and insights into congregational giving were drawn primarily from Dean Hoge's classic study, *Money Matters: Personal Giving in American Churches* (Hoge, Zech, McNamara, & Donahue, 1996), and from the more recent study by Christian Smith, *Passing the Plate: Why American Christians Don't Give Away More Money* (Smith, Emerson, & Snell, 2008). The original, unpublished research includes a study of three mosques that was part of the 2013 *National Needs Assessment of Mosques Associated with ISNA and NAIT* (Bagby, 2013). Although the general findings of the *Needs Assessment* were published in 2013, the findings of the study of the three mosques were never reported. The data from the 2013 study of the three mosques included mosque participant

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[1] The US Mosque Survey 2011 counted 2,106 mosques. From that list, 727 mosques were sampled and 524 phone interviews were conducted with mosque leaders. The margin of error was +/- 5%.

surveys, interviews with mosque leaders, and observation visits to each mosque.[2] In 2016

follow-up telephone interviews were conducted with selected mosque participants from the three

mosques, focusing exclusively on issues of giving.[3]

The three mosques include (1) a large suburban West Coast mosque, (2) a medium-size

urban Midwest mosque, and (3) a small university-town Southern mosque. Ethnically, all three

mosques are extremely diverse and are not controlled by any one ethnic group. Two of the three

mosques have a significant number of African American attendees. Although it cannot be

claimed that these three mosques represent all American mosques, the three mosques are fairly

typical of the diversity of mosques in terms of location, size, and ethnicity; they definitely do not

represent outliers.

Giving Rates in Mosques

One way to calculate the giving rate in a congregation is to look at the average budget of

the congregation and then divide that figure by the average number of attendees.[4] Because

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[2] Mosque Participant Questionnaires: 227 questionnaires were completed in the large

suburban mosque, 119 in the midsize urban mosque, and 124 in the small university-town

mosque. Interviews with mosque leaders were conducted in 2013 and 2016, some in person and

some by telephone. Observation visits took place in 2013 and 2016.

[3] Twelve interviews were conducted: six in the suburban mosque, three in the urban

mosque, and three in the small university-town mosque.

[4] Budgets of mosques and other religious congregations are comparable because budgets

in both are generated largely by attendee donations as opposed to overseas donations, grants, or

endowments.

averages are sometimes distorted because some congregations have gigantic budgets, some researchers prefer to look at median figures (median refers to the middle point of a distribution) to gauge typical levels of giving.

According to the US Mosque Study 2011, the average annual budget of mosques was $167,000 but the median budget was $70,000 (Bagby, 2012b, p. 20). Considering that the average attendance at mosques is 353, the average annual giving rate is $473 per person. Calculating the median budget and the median attendance at 173, the median annual giving rate is $405.

Looking at the three mosques as they were in 2011 and dividing the stated budget by the Friday attendance, we can see that the mid-size urban mosque had the highest annual giving rate of $467 per person, followed by the small university-town mosque with a rate of $400, and finally by the large suburban mosque with a rate of $200. This is exactly opposite a ranking based on attendee income—the richer suburban mosque had a much lower giving rate per person than the poorer urban mosque. This means that the large suburban mosque had a greater percentage of attendees who gave little or nothing to the mosque. One possible explanation is that many attendees in the suburban mosque thought other people in the large, wealthy mosque would shoulder the congregation's financial burdens.

Table 1

Annual Giving Rates for Three Mosques Based on Budget and Attendance Figures

	Budget	Attendance	Giving Rate
Urban	$140,000	300	$467
Small town	$50,000	125	$400
Suburban	$300,000	1500	$200

These figures are extremely low in comparison with the giving rate in church congregations. Although reports on the annual giving rate in churches vary greatly, the low calculation in the 2011 edition of Lindner's *Yearbook of American and Canadian Churches* shows that the average rate that year was $646 (p. 387); a higher rate is the calculation taken from the 2010 FACT study of $1,429 per person which is based on median figures (p. 1). Hoge's classic 1996 study of church annual giving ranks Presbyterians the highest with an average giving rate of $1,106 per person, which is $1,812 in 2014 dollars; and ranks Catholics the lowest, with an average giving rate of $283 per person, which is $464 in 2014 dollars (Hoge et al., p. 32).

Comparing the average Muslim contribution of $473 with the *Yearbook* figure of $646, we can see that Muslims give two-thirds of what Christians give. Comparing the FACT figure of $1,429, we see that Christians give three times as much as Muslims.

Another way of calculating the giving rate is through a survey of individuals who report the amount of money they give to their congregation. Most researchers would agree that self-reported rates of giving are most likely inflated when compared to the actual money collected. Another possible bias in such surveys is the assumption that people who give are more likely to fill out a survey because they are probably more active and therefore more positive about the congregation.

The 2013 survey of the three mosques asked mosque attendees how much they give to the mosque.[5] The highest rate of reported giving among the three mosques was in the small

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[5] Responses to this question were lower than for other questions, but the response rate is acceptable: 83% of the respondents in the midsize mosque answered the question on giving,

university-town mosque where the average donation of attendees is $671 per year and the

median rate is $480 per year. The average giving rate of the suburban mosque is $562, and the

average rate of the urban mosque is $492. The median rate of giving for the suburban and urban

mosques is well below the small university-town mosque.

Table 2

Self-Reported Giving Rates in Three Mosques

	Average Donation	Median Donation	Budget/Attendance Calculation
Small mosque	$671	$480	$400
Urban mosque	$492	$240	$467
Suburban mosque	$562	$270	$200

Merging the figures for the three mosques, the average self-reported giving rate for all

three mosques is $598 per person.

The rates for self-reported contributions to churches are again much higher than those to

mosques. Although Hoge concedes that his figures in the 1996 study are undoubtedly inflated, he

assumes that self-reported contributions to churches are nevertheless remarkably higher than

mosque contributions. In Hoge's survey, Baptists have the highest giving rate of $2,810 per

person, which amounts to $4,604 in 2014 dollars. The lowest rate is among Catholics: $1,032,

which amounts to $1,691 in 2014 dollars (Hoge et al., 1996, p. 50).

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whereas 68% of the suburban mosque and 56% of the small-town mosque answered the

question.

A third way of looking at giving rates is to compare donations with the donor's income before taxes, which produces a percentage of income that is given in charity.[6] The 2011 figure for the average contribution of Christians to their churches was 2.3% of one's income (Ronsvalle & Ronsvalle, 2013). In 1998 the figure was 4.1% for all Protestants and 1.8% for all Catholics. However, for regularly attending Catholics, the figure was 3.7%, and for all regularly attending Protestants, the figure was 7.4% of their income. In Hoge's study, the Baptists had a giving rate of 6.9% and the Catholics a giving rate of 2.9% (Hoge et al., 1996).

In the study of the three mosques, the percentage of income given as a contribution to the mosque never reached 1%, and the median figure (median income compared to median contributions) never reached 0.5%.

Table 3

Giving Rate as Percentage of Income in Three Mosques

	Average	Median
Small mosque	0.95%	0.44%
Urban mosque	0.72%	0.30%
Suburban mosque	0.61%	0.24%

Combining the three mosques, the average giving rate was 0.7% of one's income, and the median rate was 0.3%.

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[6] These figures from the three mosques studied are the least reliable ones because less than a majority of respondents answered both the income and giving question: 40% of respondents in the suburban mosque, 33% in the midsize mosque, and 28% in the small-town mosque answered both questions.

Using these calculations, Christians give at least two times as much as Muslims, and regular attending Christians give at least four times more than Muslims.

The overwhelming conclusion is that mosque attendees give much less to their mosques than their counterparts in churches. Ironically, these results are in light of the fact that Christian and religion researchers bemoan what they consider to be a low rate of giving among Christians. The research of the well-respected sociologist, Christian Smith, on giving in churches is an unrelenting criticism of the low levels of Christian giving (Smith et al., 2008). The Christian giving rate of 2.5% of one's income, which is the figure he cites, is considered by Smith an embarrassment. How about 0.7% for mosque attendees?

Effect of a Low Giving Rate on Mosques

The low giving rate of mosque attendees is manifest most clearly in the fact that only 36% of all mosques have a full-time, paid imam (equivalent to pastor or rabbi). In comparison, according to FACT 2010, 71% of all U.S. congregations have a full-time, paid religious leader, and that is with a median attendance of 105 (p. 6). Mosques have a median attendance of 173, and only 36% have a full-time Imam. As might be expected, paid program staff in mosques such as youth directors are also few—in less than 5% of all mosques. The low giving rate in mosques has been a great obstacle for generating the necessary budget to hire full-time Imams and staff.

Variables and Giving Rates

Before we ask why the giving rate of mosque attendees is so low, let us explore the factors that are usually associated with giving. Most researchers such as Hoge have postulated that higher giving rates in congregations are associated with higher levels of attendance, volunteerism, income, age, and education (Hoge et al., 1996, pp. 58–70; Hoffman, Lott, &

Jeppsen, 2010, pp. 324–325). The study of the three mosques in general supports these

conclusions with important exceptions.

Although none of the variables has a strong statistical association with higher giving, the

clearest association with higher giving was whether or not the attendee volunteered at the

mosque. For example, at the urban mid-size mosque, those who volunteered gave on average

$998 annually as opposed to $271 for those who did not volunteer.

Table 4

Volunteerism and Average Giving Rate in Three Mosques

	Urban	Small Town	Suburban
Yes, volunteered	$998	$874	$649
No, did not volunteer	$271	$516	$579

In all three mosques, those who had the highest percentage of giving nothing to the

mosque were those who did not volunteer; and the highest percentage of those who gave over

$1,000 each year were those who volunteered.

It might be hypothesized that those who volunteer give more because they have a greater

sense of belonging and a greater commitment to that particular mosque and that those who do not

volunteer in the mosque do not have a sense of belonging or commitment to that mosque.

Although volunteering can be viewed as a sign of commitment and therefore a ready marker for

a person likely to give more, the reality is that volunteering can also be a vehicle for increasing

one's commitment and increasing one's sense of belonging to a community.

The other clear variable associated with giving is age—the older the attendee, the higher

the giving rate. In all three mosques, attendees over 55 years of age have a substantially higher

giving rate than other age groups. For example, in the suburban mosque, attendees 55 and above

give on average $1,035 per year, as compared to those age 40 to 54 who give $678 per year and those age 30 to 39 who give $562.

Table 5

Average Annual Giving Rate and Age

	Suburban	Small Town	Urban
18–29	$332	$584	$166
30–39	$562	$371	$394
40–54	$678	$711	$514
55+	$1,035	$1,117	$772

The three mosques follow the general trend that the older the attendee, the more the attendee gives. The age variable is undoubtedly due to the fact that the older person, especially over 55, is more settled, has a higher income, and has fewer dependent children.

The variable of income has some association with rates of giving, but the picture is complicated. In none of the three mosques is there a straight progression of higher income equaling higher giving rates. In two mosques (suburban and small town), the only clear pattern is that those who make over $100,000 give substantially more than other income categories. However, in the urban mosque, the highest giving rate is among those who make $75,000 to $99,999. Although it can be said that in general high income attendees tend to give more than low income attendees, the picture is not a simple higher income to higher giving ratio. A possible assumption is that the commitment to give to a mosque is unevenly distributed among the attendees in various mosques and that the lack of commitment can trump the option of giving excess wealth to a mosque.

Table 6

Average Annual Giving Rate and Income

	Small Town	Urban	Suburb
100,000	$1,384	$525	$881
75,000–99,999	-------	$750	$409
50,000–74,999	$207	$564	$485
30,000–49,999	$690	$229	$196
Less than 30,000	$353	$300	$276

Somewhat surprisingly, higher rates of *Jum'ah* attendance are not associated with higher giving rates. In two of the mosques, those who attend several times a month have a higher rate of giving than those who attend every week. In one of these mosques, exactly 25% of those who attend every week give nothing to the mosque. In all three mosques, a significant percentage of regular *Jum'ah* attendees give little to nothing to the mosque. Clearly, the motivation to attend *Jum'ah* prayers regularly is not accompanied by the motivation to give to the mosque. Apparently, the theological rationale for attending *Jum'ah* prayer regularly is not complemented with a theological rationale for donating to the mosque.

How often a person attends the mosque other than for *Jum'ah* has a much stronger association with higher rates of giving, but not as expected. In two mosques (urban and suburban), those who attend "often" as opposed to "very often" or "sometimes" have the highest rate of giving. In both of these mosques, those who only attend "sometimes" give more than those who attend "very often." Those who attend very often are largely those who attend the mosque for daily prayer (salah), and therefore this group is not a large contributor to the mosque.

Again the theological rationale for attending daily prayers at the mosque is apparently not associated with a theological rationale to give to the mosque.

Education is also not associated with higher rates of giving. In two of the mosques, there is little distinction between the average giving rate for attendees with a graduate degree, a college degree, or some college. In one mosque, those attendees with a college degree give much more than an attendee with a graduate degree.

Why Do Mosque Attendees Give So Little to Mosques?

In order to propose some possible answers as to why Muslims give so little to mosques, follow-up interviews in 2016 were conducted with mosque leaders and mosque attendees in the three mosques. Although these interviews cannot provide definitive answers, they do provide some perspective and some understanding of the phenomena of the low giving rate of mosque attendees.

(1) Mosque attendees give more to other charities.

One possible answer is that mosque attendees are generous but just not to mosques. The interviews provide support for this proposition because all the interviewees donated less to their mosque than to other categories of charitable giving.

One category of charitable giving for a Muslim is zakah, which is understood by most Muslims to be a donation of 2.5% of accumulated wealth to the poor, the needy, and the cause of Islam. In the minds of most Muslims, zakah cannot go toward payment of mosque expenses, so Muslims give their zakah money to other Muslim charitable organizations such as relief organizations. In all but one case, interviewees gave more of their designated zakah money to other Muslim organizations than they gave to mosques. Mosques do receive a trickle of zakah money. However, this money is kept in a separate account for zakah and is used to give direct

financial aid to those in need, or the zakah funds are given to other charitable organizations that support the needy. Zakah does have a strong theological appeal to Muslims because it is a requirement of the faith. Therefore the arguments for zakah donations are more effective in general than the arguments for mosque donations.

Other categories of charitable giving that receive substantial donations include full-time Islamic schools and civil rights organizations. According to many of the interviewees, the appeal of Islamic schools to educate Muslim youth and the appeal of civil rights organizations to respond to attacks on Muslims in the public square constitute powerful motivations for giving.

Donations that the interviewees made to relatives overseas constitute another kind of charitable giving: about one-third of the interviewees give substantial sums of money to relatives overseas, and another one-third give small amounts. Interviewees who were more recent arrivals to America were more likely to send money back home. However, in only one case did the money sent overseas constitute the largest percentage of the giver's charitable donations.

No interviewees gave any substantial donations to non-Muslim charities.

(2) Very few interviewees explained their giving to the mosque as a religious duty founded on a theology of giving or a scared vision of a faithful community.

Most interviewees explained that they give to the mosque out of a sense of duty to pay the bills of the mosque. Although there is a strong theological basis to donate to build a mosque, there is little explicit theological argument to support the day-to-day functioning of a mosque. Thus Muslims are very generous in donating to build a mosque, but they demonstrate little generosity in sustaining a mosque. There was little need in Islamic history to develop a theology for supporting mosques because most mosques were sustained by the government or rich patrons, not by attendees.

Most religion researchers agree that individuals give more when they are giving for theological reasons as opposed to giving to simply pay the bills (Hoge et al., pp. 72–73). Muslims would undoubtedly explain their payment of zakah in terms of religious duty, but not in terms of giving to the mosque.

Donors do give generously to new mosque projects. In two of the mosques, new mosque projects generated pledges and donations that were on average six times the amount given to the mosque. The large suburban mosque raised almost $6 million over a few months in its initial capital campaign, and the small university-town mosque raised more than $1.7 million over a two-year period to completely pay off a new purpose-built mosque. Donating to establish a new mosque has a strong theological rationale because of the Prophet Muhammad's saying that "One who builds a house of God, God will build a house for him in paradise."

(3) Most donors do not give regularly to the mosque, and prefer to give for immediate, tangible needs. This is a formula of giving less.

Based on the interviews, few donors give regularly to the mosque—at best their regular giving is dropping a few dollars in the donation box. Many donors do give modest lump sums to the mosque during the fasting month of Ramadan when most mosques make annual appeals for donations. During Ramadan, mosques do have a theological argument that Muslims are supposed to be most generous in Ramadan, but again the argument is to be generous in general and not to be generous specifically to the mosque.

Donors most often expressed their preference to give when there was an immediate need. Interviewees mentioned that they gave when the mosque needed something specific, like remodeling an ablution area, furnishing a new classroom, or repairing the roof. Notice that this preference for giving to an urgent need fits the age-old model of giving to zakah, when appeals, for example, are made to help a starving person or someone in dire straits.

The absence of regular giving manifests in a reluctance to pledge or to give through an automatic withdrawal from one's bank account. This reluctance to use automatic withdrawals can be attributed to numerous factors, including 1) a fear of loss of control by giving their checking account information to a system they do not entirely trust or understand, 2) a fear that their economic situation may change, leaving them exposed to a commitment they cannot meet, 3) a fear of being identified with a Muslim organization that might be a target of investigation, 4) last and possibly most important, to the absence of any strong rationale for why they should make such a commitment to the mosque.

The common wisdom of religion researchers is that donors give more if they give on a regular basis, and they give even more if the regular giving is based on a pledge (Smith et al., pp. 91–96).

(4) Mosque attendees, especially first-generation immigrants, do not have a culture of giving to a mosque.

One of the underlying reasons mosque attendees do not support their mosque is the absence of a culture of giving to a mosque, and the absence of a vision for why a mosque should be supported. While disabusing themselves of this attitude, many interviewees mentioned this point as a problem in the mosque. As mentioned before, Muslims from overseas do not have the custom of supporting mosques since mosques are funded by the government or rich patrons. In addition, many Muslims view the mosque as no more than a place of prayer, which should have minimal expenses, as opposed to a vision of a mosque as a community with a full-time staff that caters to the various needs of the community. Such a vision of a community with full-time staff requires a larger budget. Although mosques in America are indeed congregations, meaning that they are run and funded by its members, many attendees have not reconciled themselves to this vision of a mosque as community or congregation. In light of the overseas notion that mosques

are funded by others, it is easy for a large percentage of attendees to fall into the trap of thinking

that their donations are not necessary, because wealthy Muslims will keep the mosque afloat.

(5) Mosques are not aggressive or efficient in raising money.

Mosques are surprisingly casual in fundraising. Most mosques, including the three

mosques studied, have a donation box that is fairly inconspicuous. Passing the plate is not a

tradition in Islam, and few mosques have adopted this custom. At the Friday service in all three

mosques, brief encouragement is made to give in order to pay mosque expenses. In two of the

mosques, this encouragement is given after the service when a good percentage of attendees are

on their way out. With its new leadership, the suburban mosque has embarked on a campaign to

get every attendee at the Friday service to give at least $5 to $10. A short appeal is made at the

end of every sermon so that the attendees are not distracted. This strategy has had moderate

success as donations average about $6,000 every Friday, but with the total attendance being

1,500 people, that amount comes out to $4 per person. If everyone were to give $4 a week, their

donations would equal only $208 a year, which would be insufficient to fund the mosque.

The three mosques do ask for pledges or automatic withdrawals, but they do not

campaign by setting goals or by contacting individuals personally to solicit pledges or automatic

withdrawals. Their appeals for pledges or automatic withdrawals are usually done half-heartedly.

Muslims are reluctant to give regularly to the mosque, and mosques are reluctant to ask.

(6) Mosques do not have a membership base.

The lack of a membership base undoubtedly reflects the ambiguity that attendees have for

being members of a mosque. Again, overseas mosques are not congregations, and therefore the

idea of membership at a mosque is somewhat strange. The theology is that Muslims are members

of the ummah (the worldwide Muslim community) but not of a mosque. The three mosques do

have a concept of membership, but their membership list is used almost exclusively for voting privileges and only becomes important when elections approach. Two of the mosques do not have an accurate count of members. The suburban mosque has adopted a new approach of emphasizing membership and requiring all members to pay their modest membership dues through automatic withdrawals. Nevertheless, they have only 390 official members out of 1,500 people who normally attend the Friday service.

The ambiguity of a concept of membership is undoubtedly reflected in a limited sense of community and of belonging to a mosque. Without a sense of belonging, giving will always be hampered.

Mosque leaders in all three mosques acknowledge, with some frustration, that a large percentage of attendees do not give regularly to the mosque, and they recognize that they are not very good at raising money. The suburban mosque has taken steps to focus on encouraging regular giving but is still unsure about how to accomplish this goal. The urban and university-town mosque are both planning and taking small steps to deal with the issue. If our three mosques are indicative of trends in other mosques, it can be concluded that mosques in America are starting to face the challenge of increasing regular giving to mosques.

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Book Review of *Faith and the State:*

A History of Islamic Philanthropy in Indonesia

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What is the relationship between civil society and the state? Amelia Fauzia undertakes this question through the lens of Islamic philanthropy in Indonesia. Charting a history of this relationship during three distinct periods – the pre-modern Islamic monarchy, Dutch colonial rule, and the modern secular state – Fauzia shows that the inverse relationship between civil society and the state has affected philanthropic activities in the country. Namely, when the state is weak, civil society - and thus philanthropy - thrives. When the state is powerful on the other hand, civil society and its corollary philanthropy operates in a more modest way.

Faith and the State is divided into three parts. Part One (Chapters 1 and 2) gives an overview of *zakat* (alms-giving) management and *waqf* (endowments) and how these institutions gradually became independent of the state throughout the Islamic world. Focusing on Indonesia during the 13th and 19th centuries, Fauzia alleges that there was no uniform relationship between the state and civil society; the relationship was largely dependent on the nature of the ruler. Overall, the Muslim monarchs played a relatively small role in managing the philanthropic activities of its populace. Independent actors, including local religious leaders, *sufi tariqas*, and mosques, played a more dominant role.

Part Two (Chapters 3 and 4) traces the practices of philanthropy during Dutch colonial rule. During this time, we see both a strong state and a strong civil society. While one would expect a strong colonial power to stifle on-the-ground movements, the opposite was true in Indonesia. Faith-based philanthropic activity was allowed, as long as these activities did not undermine colonial power. While the Dutch were suspicious of movements that sought to overthrow them, they nevertheless avoided interfering in the philanthropic activities of their Muslim subjects. This section of the book seems to contradict Fauzia's central thesis *prima facie* (i.e. the inverse relationship between the state and civil society). But upon closer examination,

we see that this relationship is complex and must also take into consideration its historical and political context. Islamic philanthropy can actually become stronger under the domain of civil society when a strong state recuses itself from involvement in religious matters. Overall, Fauzia's assessment of Dutch colonial rule is a nuanced interpretation that draws the reader to reexamine if and how a strong state and civil society can function simultaneously. It would be interesting to see more studies on the relationship between colonial powers and civil society with regards to religious philanthropy. Fauzia's nuanced approach provides a unique pathway for further research in this area.

Part Three (Chapters 5 and 6) ends with a discussion on Islamic Philanthropy after Independence. The state, now under Muslim rule, began to take a greater interest in the management of Islamic philanthropy, though its approach was again far from uniform. As Fauzia writes, with regards to the state vis-à-vis religion, the state fell "somewhere between the ideological and the indifferent" (Fauzia, 2013, p. 7). As we saw with the early Muslim monarchs, a stronger state often correlated with a weaker civil society. This time however, the state faced competition from the NGOs which had been operating relatively independently since colonial rule. Even though Islamist Muslims have sought to intensify state control of *zakat*, most urban Muslims continue to give zakat privately. How successfully either the state or civil society manages philanthropy remains unclear at the end of the book. But what is clear is that there remains a tension between the two sectors that will inevitably continue.

One problematic aspect of the book are the author's definitions of certain key words. While Fauzia's main argument is the contestation between the Indonesian state and civil society, "Faith" might be too overreaching for the purposes of this book, which focuses on religiously based institutions. Although the beliefs and practices of the individuals who make up these

organizations undoubtedly play a role, it is misleading to use the word "faith" because the beliefs and practices of Indonesians not affiliated with these organizations are not included. Another problem is that Fauzia's definition of "philanthropy" might be too limiting. She uncritically adopts a Euro-centric notion, defining it as "as voluntary activities of private giving and service for the public good" (Fauzia, 2013, p. 16). Shariq Siddiqui has argued that to fully understand Islamic philanthropy, we must unchain ourselves from the western conception of philanthropy. Under the definition that Fauzia adopts, zakat could not be a category of study, even though it is the primary focus of the book. Regardless of state enforcement, for practicing Muslims zakat is not a voluntary act. Furthermore, what is considered the "public good" is often contested. We see this contestation come to the fore when Fauzia discusses the struggles for independence during colonial rule. Indonesians considered these activities as serving the public good, but the Dutch obviously did not. Who then gets to decide what the "public good" is?

In addition, while the contestations between different non-state actors plays an important role in the state-civil society relationship, the labels of these different actors (Modernist, Islamist, Revivalist, or Traditionalist) are sometimes hard to follow. While the distinction of the Traditionalists is clearer, the distinctions between the Modernists, Islamists, and Revivalists (the latter two often lumped together) are less so. Another issue is the simplistic division of Muslims either as Traditionalist, Modernist, or Revivalist. Do all Traditionalists view faith as a private matter and therefore inveigh against the state's involvement in managing zakat? Are all those who would wish to manage their own philanthropy Traditionalists? Are all Revivalists promoters of the state's involvement in managing philanthropy? In the reverse, are all those who promote the state's involvement Revivalist? Without a careful examination of the individuals who make up these different definitions, we do not really know.

Studies on Islamic philanthropy as a whole have tended to focus on its theological dimensions. *Faith and State* charts news territory by focusing more on practice. The book is an admirable attempt to bridge the divide between theory and practice. Fauzia sought to write a "new history" by engaging perspectives from non-political actors. I applaud her effort.

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Summary of 2016 Symposium

On Muslim Philanthropy and Civil Society

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The Center on Muslim Philanthropy (CMP) hosted the first annual Symposium on Muslim Philanthropy on September 1-2, 2016. The symposium was held in Indianapolis, USA through a research grant from the Indiana University Office of Research in partnership with the Lilly Family School of Philanthropy and Lake Institute on Faith & Giving. The Symposium hosted scholars from all over the world who presented their research on Muslim philanthropy and civil society. Papers presented at the Symposium are eligible to be published in the *Journal on Muslim Philanthropy and Civil Society* after an additional blind review process. What follows below is a brief summary of the two-day event. You can find links to the videos on our website: http://muslimphilanthropy.com/research/symposium-on-muslim-philanthropy/

Dr. Amy Singer opened up the symposium with her paper, "The Politics of Benevolence." Philanthropy, she argued, is not just reactive, but intertwined with politics and power. The public kitchen that was the focus of Singer's study was located in Jerusalem. The location was very much intentional in an effort to make the city more *Ottoman*. In the same session, Dr. Sabith Khan's paper argued for the opposite, saying that because Islamic philanthropy operates differently in different contexts, it ought to be depoliticized. His paper shows that Islamic philanthropy is a living tradition with multiple interpretations. While Meira Naggaz's presentation was not a typical academic paper, the ISPU poll results she shared provided a helpful snapshot of the Muslim-American community and hints to giving potential and gaps. The biggest takeaway from her presentation was the finding that a stronger Muslim identity correlates with a stronger American identity. This suggests that Muslim American are strongly invested in community engagement.

During Session II, Rahma Ali provided possible solutions to what NGOS can do when they become embroiled in politics. Ali provided a case study of Resala, a student group at Cairo

University, that saw a loss in support when the Egyptian media labeled them as supporters of the

Muslim Brotherhood; and how Resala responded in light of these allegations. Dr. David

Campbell's presentation explored the determinants of giving in Turkey. What David and his co-

authors found is that the formal and informal giving that we see in Tukey is not included in

philanthropic studies done by Westerners. You can find this paper in its full in this issue. Amelia

Fauzia noted that the growth of Islamic philanthropy in Indonesia has encouraged a movement in

the rest of Southeast Asia and beyond. She argued that Islamic Philanthropy networks have

softened the traditional binary oppositions between state and civil society, Islamic and

secularism, and Muslims and non-Muslims. Dr. Barbara Ibrahim concluded the session by

stressing the importance of networks. But she also shared her concerns about the challenges

ahead. In her experience, building a network of scholars and practitioners involved in Islamic

philanthropy proved difficult for several reasons: inadequate funding and a lack of infrastructure.

During session III, Dr. Kambiz GhaneaBassiri presented his paper on Muslim

Philanthropy after 9/11. Islam has been pathologized especially after the terrorists attacks.

Kambiz argued for depathologizing Islam to see what we can learn from Muslim giving. You can

find his explorations of this question in this issue. Dr. Brad Fulton covered the topic of Muslim

Civic Engagement through Faith-Based Community Organizing. There are social issues that do

not affect just one community or faith tradition, poverty being one of them. The Inner-city

Muslim Action Network (IMAN) is one such example of a coalition. You can find Fulton's

paper also in this issue. Dr. Peter Weber came back to the issue of giving after 9/11. His paper

however took a slightly different approach. Coming from a thoroughly Western perspective,

Weber was surprised by the already existing literature (a theme that was brought up by several

authors during the symposium) and what actually happened. What he found was that Muslim

giving shifted from more international to local, was largely in-kind, and that Muslims were more

engaged than ever before. During the last presentation in this session, Ihsan Bagby presented on

the giving practice of U.S. mosques. Unlike churches, a high income and education is not

correlated with higher levels of giving. There are several reasons why this is the case, some of

which are theological and cultural, and they have important implication for the study of Muslim

philanthropy. Dr. Bagby's paper also appears in this issue.

During the final session, Uzma Mirza discussed the "Sustainable Human." She argued

that we need to change the way we view philanthropy and Muslim philanthropy in particular. For

Muslim, the act of giving is not simply a voluntary act. Philanthropy is required. As she put it,

once you are a conscious human being, you become a steward of the earth and all its living

things. In his presentation, Tariq Cheema talked about the need to channel giving for

humanitarian crises to eradicating the root causes of these crises. Currently, a large percentage of

Muslim giving goes to emergency responses. Cheema is interested in further studies on how

zakat can be used for humanitarian assistance that gets to the roots causes of poverty. Danielle

Abraham's paper provides a case study of an NGO in Hyderabad, India attempting to do just

that. After a decade of stop gap measures, the Hyderabad Zakat & Charitable Trust decided to

change their focus by addressing the root cause of poverty amongst Indian Muslims: lack

education. By linking zakat to gender (poverty, she argued, is a gendered phenomenon), the

Trust provides an example of practical theodicy. According to Jasim Al-Najmawi, most of the

literature on Muslim Philanthropy is based on the experience of the Christian West. These

studies do not fully appreciate the theological influences on Islamic philanthropy. Al-Najmawi

argued that there needs to be more use of original sources of Islamic jurisprudence, focus beyond

waqf, and more empirical studies. In all four papers presented during the final session, we see

there is a tension between the ideal and the norm. The challenge, according to discussant Cathie Carrigan, is how to overcome the superficiality of Western studies of Islamic philanthropy.

What we found in this two-day conference is that there are no easy answers to any of the questions that were posed. Islamic practice of philanthropy is evolving, according to discussant Dr. David King. It continues to be influenced by political power, theological (re)interpretation, and institutional discourses. It is our hope that the *Journal on Muslim Philanthropy and Civil Society* can provide the forum to allow for these voices to be heard.

Reflections on Session I

Framing Muslim Philanthropy and Civil Society

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It has been a tremendous privilege to host an entire symposium dedicated to the understanding of Muslim philanthropy. This opening panel was a wonderful place to start, as these scholars truly engaged the title of the session, "Framing Muslim Philanthropy and Civil Society," and opened up multiple ways to frame Muslim philanthropy and its role within civil society. These papers held together well despite the diversity of angles and disciplines from which they addressed the issue: history, ethics/philosophy, sociology, and current polling data. What struck me from these papers is the authors' success in expanding our field of vision – reminding us that the study of philanthropy, particularly religious philanthropy – is never simply measuring dollars, cents, and donor intent. Religious philanthropy, Muslim philanthropy in particular, can serve as an entrée into much broader and deeper questions about how individuals, institutions, and communities engage with one another. In this reflection piece, I will offer brief thoughts on each individual paper in hopes of opening up a conversation with you, the reader, to engage these scholars' good work.

Dr. Amy Singer's paper, "The Politics of Benevolence," begins by reminding us of the descriptive task of the historian, noting that these questions surrounding philanthropy have existed for centuries. The role of historians, as she remarked, is to "interrogate the past to enhance the present and the future."[1] In defining her terms, Singer framed benevolence as including a broad definition of philanthropy; she also named what she means by politics. Politics are not good or bad; they are simply a part of life – the nature of living in relationship with other human beings. Singer rightfully focused on these politics, group dynamics and individual

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[1] Quotations cited in this reflection piece are from working papers presented at the Symposium that we hope to publish in a future issue of *JMPCS.*

relationships (think donor/recipient), as well as issues of power, which are so often at the heart of the gift exchange in societies.

Not only was I struck by the initial broad framing of Singer's article, I also found her particular historical examples instructive. The public kitchen in Jerusalem allowed the Ottomans to find a way into the city's landscape when traditional religious institutions (such as imperial mosques or madrasahs) were not allowed. The multiple forms of philanthropy in Istanbul offer a contrast (from markets and mosques to hospitals and fountains). She noted that, in some sense, these philanthropic legacies dotting the landscape can be interpreted like a text. I think that point is worthy of us stopping to ponder.

Philanthropy is not only reactive, called upon to meet needs when other sectors fall short; in fact, the more modern notion of three sectors did not even really translate into Singer's story. Philanthropy is often intertwined with politics and power, creative in the ways in which it take shape, and visual markers of how cultures develop. This is all the more interesting as Singer made the interpretive move from past to present – connecting the prevalence of neo-liberal economic policies worldwide. Many have argued, like Singer, that neoliberalism and the contraction of state welfare systems have made the need for philanthropy more necessary. The additional twist Singer offered, however, is the question of whether the prevalent forms of Islamic philanthropy found in the Middle East historically have made it easier to adapt to these new contexts. In some sense, yes, these forms of elite philanthropy and endowments have a long tradition. In other ways, cultural norms have not caught up to match new political and economic conditions.

This led to a host of intriguing questions – not only for Singer's particular historical examples but also for religious philanthropy broadly. How do we think about the role of

traditional religious practices in new forms? What is the role of theology, interpretations of sacred texts, and evolving practices on cultures and communities? Contemporary analysts of philanthropy and fundraising miss the textured traditions and practices involved. As Singer noted, these questions across religious traditions, cultures, and societies is worth comparative study. The question of moral paradox that Singer left us with is intriguing. How do we begin to ask these questions? What is the role of scholarship in addressing morality and ethics within philanthropy? It is worthy of discussion and a question that Fady Qaddoura opened up in our second paper.

In "Strategic Muslim Philanthropy: A Vision for Societal Reform and Social Justice," Fady began with an even broader definition of philanthropy: a philosophy of life and a clear ethical position that philanthropy must accomplish for a just society. This is a clearly proactive view of philanthropy and its goals. Fady forced us to consider the role of philanthropy and the philanthropist. I heard echoes of Aristotle and his notion of the magnanimous donor. Let me be clear: I welcome Fady's question and his insistence in taking philanthropy and its work so seriously that we must consider the work in some sense as a higher calling. With that said, however, I do want to ask how we are to measure what is just and good philanthropy? Who is the arbiter? Is philanthropy necessarily an unquestioned good? In addition, is political and civic engagement the right way or necessary way to engage? How we define philanthropy, its work, and its purpose are key questions I would encourage Fady to develop even as he pushes philanthropy to follow a higher calling. As Fady turned to Muslim philanthropy, I was struck by how he capitalized on the religious tradition to root his call for reform and social justice. In the relationships between giver and recipient, and through the non-negotiable protection of human life, Islam and all of the Abrahamic traditions agree in liberation and justice as key for

philanthropy. This type of analysis within a tradition and comparatively across traditions was very helpful. As Fady encouraged us in his conclusion, we must move from the tools of philanthropy to its objectives. Rooting Muslim philanthropy in its texts, traditions, and practices is a vital way to delve into the larger questions Fady sought to explore.

Dr. Sabith Khan, like his fellow panelists, sought to reframe Muslim philanthropy through multiple lenses in his paper "A Kinder, Gentler Islam?" First, he critiqued the over-politicization and over-securitization of Islamic Studies. While this might not be the case so much in Religious Studies, this is true in many other disciplines. His suggestion that Islamic praxis is actually depoliticized is an interesting one. If that allows for an entrée into studying global Islam outside the overly political, then practice is a great place to study Muslims and their daily lives. The addition to this line of reasoning, which I find helpful and innovative, is to see NGOs and humanitarianism as the locus of this Muslim praxis. In first focusing on community, Sabith noted the various connotations of this concept. For Muslims, it is the global ummah. What does that mean for Muslims in non-Islamic states in the West and their philanthropic expectations at home and abroad?

Quite effortlessly, Sabith brought in multiple academic debates (notions of bureaucratization of NGOs, questions of the secular and notions of public religion, institutional isomorphism among organizations and how that might affect FBOs) and then applied these larger debates within Muslim humanitarianism. There is much more to be said here than Sabith had time to cover, but I believe this is an extremely fruitful line of inquiry. Do Muslim FBOs professionalize in the same way as Christian ones? What does that mean for their religious identity? Sabith highlighted the multiple tensions within these questions. One thing I hope we came away with from our two days together is that there are no easy answers to the many

questions that were posed. Sabith noted that Islamic praxis of philanthropy is "evolving under the influence of the relations of political power, theological interpretations, and also institutional discourses of Muslim groups." Narrowly focusing on a single variable or approach does a disservice to the complexity of these traditions and cultures. I commend Sabith's attention to practice – and to note that belief and practice matters for humanitarian organizations and individual donors – but in attending to these matters, we must realize we are entering a living tradition with multiple interpretations. In turning to Muslim philanthropy as a factor worth exploring, how one defines oneself as a Muslim or an American Muslim or a practicing Muslim or perhaps even a "good" Muslim is a fascinating set of questions worthy of exploring further.

Finally, our last paper "American Muslim Poll: Participation, Priorities, and Facing Prejudice in the 2016 Elections" presented by Meira Neggaz of The Institute For Social Policy and Understanding (ISPU) left us with a contemporary snapshot of American Muslims. I do not have much to add here because the presentation was quite straightforward. However, the need for such work should go without explanation. Dispelling myths, uncovering the diversity of American Muslims as well as how they are alike and different from their fellow Americans is a worthy project. I was struck by the correlation of religious identity with American identity, as well as continued clarity that religious attendance and engagement are important measures of the role religion plays in people's lives.

These four papers, individually and together, have really opened up the framing of Muslim philanthropy and civil society. Through these multiple vantage points, they have pushed us to consider questions from within specific academic disciplines. Nevertheless, each paper also made the turn to ask bigger questions of how we might study Muslim philanthropy more broadly

and what these questions mean for our contemporary context. I look forward to our continued

discussion.

Reflections on Session IV

Muslim Philanthropy in Practice

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It is an honor and a privilege to be invited to comment on the papers in this section, "Muslim Philanthropy in Practice." The authors in this closing panel demonstrated a variety of perspectives that deal with global and local responses to problems, as well as some cross-cultural problems with the scholarship on Muslim Philanthropy. Identifying these complications and their possible solutions, both in the field and the academy, can serve to extend our understanding of Muslim philanthropy at the intersection of theory and practice and even get us to think about the role of our own work—as a community of scholars and practitioners—in academic diplomacy.

The first major theme in this panel was maintaining the dignity of the person. This was eloquently expressed by Uzma Mirza in her paper, "A Sustainable Human," by aligning ideas of "green" and "sustainability" with the idea of a sustainable human. A sustainable human being is achieved not through inaction, but instead through a lifestyle that allows for sustainable behavior that rejects Western models of development and consumerism. Uzma called for balance: between body/mind, the material/spiritual, and a unified understanding of philanthropy from both Eastern and Western perspectives. This is a rich narrative. It is also a call to stewardship that recognizes the central place of education. As Uzma warned us, "Those who deprive women and girls of an education are harboring the making of an unsustainable human and unsustainable society where philanthropic stewardship is obsolete."[1]

As a student in anthropology, I learned that we all experience the tension between the ideal and the norm given the contingencies of our local experience. This was illustrated well by Dr. Danielle Abraham's interviews with the Hyderabad Zakat and Charitable Trust in her paper

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[1] Quotations cited in this reflection piece are from working papers presented at the Symposium that we hope to publish in a future issue of *JMPCS*.

"Zakat as Practical Theodicy: Precarity and the Critique of Gender in Muslim India." As she noted at the outset, "in theological terms, giving zakat is pious action, an unambiguous gesture of doing what is right and has been commanded by God." The moral obligation to end the suffering of poverty, however, led the Hyderabad Zakat and Charitable Trust practitioners to give to beneficiaries outside the traditional categories of recipients identified in the *Qur'an*. Thus, they faced the risk that their zakat may not be legitimate in the eyes of God. However, the tradeoff, they hoped, was that their philanthropy would result in human beings who are whole and able to practice their faith with hope. Dr. Abraham introduced us to donors who push zakat "beyond the redistribution of wealth in hopes of changing the structural determinants of poverty itself." It is worth repeating the words of one donor: "Everything we were doing, it was all first aid, just stop-gap measures. We gave zakat, and still poor people were poor. We had to think about the long-term. Education is the key…." This philanthropy represents moral action because in this local context, the poverty resulting from the practice of dowry was endangering the ability of the people to be productive members of their society and faith community. As one donor said, "I know this could make our zakat impure… but we have to do it. The stakes are too high."

We also heard that the recipient of *zakat* is as important as the donor; both are needed for the sacred exchange. This idea of reciprocity is a recurrent theme in philanthropy and is a reminder to all of us, academics and practitioners alike, to be mindful of the issues surrounding exchange, the politics of helping, and what it means to be a recipient. What could that ethos mean for a world in which inequality continues to grow?

Dr. Tariq Cheema explored this idea in his paper covering global humanitarian crises and the urgent need to find more funding to save the lives of the estimated 125 million people impacted by wars and natural disasters worldwide. Although the available funding has increased

in recent decades, the concurrent increase in need has resulted in a US$15 billion funding gap. Given the extreme wealth in the world today, Dr. Cheema challenged us to see that closing this gap is an attainable goal. He cited the first UN Humanitarian Summit in 2016, which concluded that we must find ways to reduce the need, create new ways to mobilize traditional funds, and to provide more efficient humanitarian responses. The root causes of humanitarian crises should be addressed through emergency funds and disaster preparedness in vulnerable areas, as well as through conflict prevention and resolution in fragile states. Muslim philanthropy has recently been put forth as a possible source of funding to address the global gap in humanitarian assistance; estimates of charitable giving generally range from $200 billion to $1 trillion each year across the Muslim world. It is, however, difficult to know how much zakat is actually given worldwide. Data collected from Indonesia, Malaysia, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and Yemen indicate that $5.7 billion is collected in zakat each year. If some of this already goes to humanitarian causes and we hope to increase it to meet the funding gap, Dr. Cheema asked, "Who should collect it? To what extent should this be formalized? What mechanisms should channel it for humanitarian response? How can conflicting interpretations on who is eligible to receive zakat be reconciled with each other and with humanitarian principles?" He closed with a call for more engagement between humanitarian and Islamic leaders to establish shared understanding and guidance, and for academic and research institutions to be engaged to collect data on and coordinate zakat funding with the broader humanitarian response system in order to ensure complementarity with the broader development community.

This discussion of humanitarian work and the role of academic centers was a good segue to Jasim Al Najmawi's paper, "Islamic Philanthropy: Challenging Perceptions." A leader in humanitarian work with decades of experience in UK and Qatar NGOs, Mr. Al Najmawi began

the process of drafting a paper on that work for submission to this Symposium. However, in exploring the Western academic literature on Muslim philanthropy, he found significant problems. As it stands there is a dearth of scholarship in Western literature on philanthropy from non-Western perspectives—and what little has been published has focused on *waqf* rather than the theological influences on Islamic philanthropy. This has important implications for both scholars and international practitioners. Mr. Al Najmawi held that philanthropy in Muslim societies should instead be studied from the perspective of the individual, who is philanthropic in all aspects of life, and charitable organizations, who depend on contributions from individuals. The problem intensified after 9/11 when Muslim giving came under increased scrutiny. Moving forward, we need to study the motives and practice of Islamic philanthropy.

This critique reminded me of something a close colleague in China once told me about U.S. researchers on Chinese philanthropy. With some notable and important exceptions, Chinese academics find American research on China to be superficial. To remedy this superficiality, Mr. Al Najmawi called for "more culturally nuanced research which explores philanthropy in different cultures and faiths." How do we overcome this challenge of superficiality? One of IUPUI's international learning outcomes calls for our students to be "humble in the face of difference, tolerant of ambiguity and unfamiliarity, and willing to be in the position of a learner when encountering others."[2] This strikes me as good lifelong advice as we strive to be aware of our biases.

On a practical level, how do we move all of these conversations forward, together? Our panelists outlined a potential research agenda. In addition to those who presented papers at this Symposium, which other scholars are publishing good work? For those of us committed to

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[2] IUPUI is Indiana University's core campus in Indianapolis.

improving the understanding and practice of philanthropy, who should we seek out in order to

learn more? What foundations and organizations are examples of ideal Muslim philanthropy in

practice – and could case studies be created to inform practitioners and academics alike? How

might we continue to engage with each other to answer these questions in our own work? By

raising these issues, the panelists engaged in an important step toward shared understanding of

Muslim philanthropy in our interconnected world.

Muslim Philanthropy's Response to Rising Humanitarian Crises

Tariq Cheema[1]

World Congress of Muslim Philanthropists

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[1] Dr. Tariq Cheema is the founder of the World Congress of Muslim Philanthropists, a global network of affluent individuals, corporations, foundations, governments and academia, dedicated to advancing effective and accountable giving. His trendsetting efforts towards institutionalizing Muslim Philanthropy have earned worldwide acclaim. Dr. Cheema ranks among the 500 most influential Muslims impacting the world today.

While global figures on the number of people suffering from natural disasters and conflicts are constantly rising, Muslim-majority countries are affected more than other countries by these large-scale humanitarian crises and disasters. This trend is unfortunately on the rise, according to a recent report published by the Statistical, Economic and Social Research and Training Centre for Islamic Countries (SESRIC, 2017).

In 2015, sixty percent of armed conflicts recorded worldwide occurred in Muslim majority countries, resulting in severe humanitarian crises and displacement. Alarmingly, 71% of people globally (around 89 million) who require humanitarian assistance due to natural or man-made disasters reside in Muslim-majority countries (SESRIC, 2017). Widespread extremism and instability across the world in general and in Muslim communities in particular has made the aforementioned scenario even worse. In 2015 for instance, 75% of all terrorist attacks and more than 90% of fatalities had been recorded in Muslim majority countries.

Muslim giving is the lifeline of humanitarian organizations that contribute toward a robust relief network on the ground. However, this relief network is challenged by two main issues: Firstly, the overwhelming proportion of Muslim giving is directed towards disaster relief, thus leaving very little room to diversify funding. As a result, less money is available to invest in addressing other societal needs, such as health, education, food security, and economic empowerment. Secondly, the high burden of humanitarian crises combined with limited availability of human and financial resources and lack of coordination among relief actors compromises the effectiveness of service delivery.

Against this backdrop, it is of paramount importance that Muslim Philanthropy adopts a holistic approach whereby devising and funding interventions for both crises management *and* crises prevention. Philanthropy is a problem-solving mechanism that drives towards creating

solutions for sustainable change and investing in the future. Muslim philanthropic giving is closely related to the Arabic concept of *Takaful,* which translates to standing in solidarity with the needy. Muslim giving is heavily influenced by the fundamental pillars of philanthropy present in the Islamic faith: *Zakat,* the compulsory alms giving of Muslims, and *Sadaqa*, the discretionary charity that can take the form of financial resources, donation of material needs, or voluntary service. These practices most closely encompass an understanding of giving as a spiritual and social obligation (Cheema, 2013).

In a region where philanthropy is predominantly faith-inspired, the resolution of longstanding religious and geopolitical conflicts is critical to the peace and prosperity of the region and its neighboring borders. Humanitarian work in Muslim societies has taken the form of ad-hoc charity relief efforts. It involves providing immediate aid for day-to-day needs and action to challenges that demand a quick response. Today, the innumerable organizations that are lending humanitarian support across the Muslim world are unable to address and focus on the root causes of the challenges faced. Although the Muslim community has an effective network which responds to the challenges, it has, in a way, mimicked the act of fire fighters by providing immediate responses and relief to control the damage instead of searching for solutions that can contribute to permanent change.

Unresolved national and regional political issues manifest into violent reactions. In these contexts, the public voice is not the most effective tool for change, as democratic regimes are not the common norm of governance in many Muslim-majority countries. As a result, public opinion has a minimal effect in steering policy. This contributes towards the persistent requisite for governing bodies to identify and implement sustainable resolutions for humanitarian crises afflicting the Muslim community. Conflicts in countries such as Syria and Iraq demand

immediate attention and relief, and many donor organizations working within the region are

compelled to provide reprieve to disaster stricken communities, stretching their financial

resources thin, thereby creating a gap between immediate assistance and long term resolutions.

Furthermore, humanitarian actors are often working in isolation in providing relief, even

competing against each other to exhibit their impact, thus lacking coordination and sometimes

even harmony.

Muslim Philanthropy has become synonymous with humanitarian aid, which is a

characterization that needs to be altered. It has become imperative to fight the battle in conflict

zones on both the short and long-term fronts (Ashmawey, 2015). Simultaneously addressing

these aspects is how philanthropic actors in the region will be able to implement sustainable

measures instead of providing only temporary relief. There is a need to re-evaluate definitions of

what constitute '*humanitarian'* and '*developmental'* needs in order for these countries to

progress (Gelsdorf, 2010). Take for example, the internal conflicts and natural disasters in Sudan

that exacerbated the humanitarian crisis the country experienced. Sudan has been a witness to

violent conflicts since 2003. Over time, aid has decreased; thus leaving disaster relief efforts on

hold and pushing the internally displaced population to a rising proportion. The country has also

been riddled with natural disasters, requiring both immediate short-term relief for survival and

initiatives for long-term restoration. These two needs divided the financial resources the

government was able to provide as well as the philanthropic and humanitarian aid Sudan

received from around the world (SESRIC, 2017). Nearly fifteen years into violent conflicts and

natural disaster afflictions, Sudan is still struggling to implement sustainable infrastructure and

facilitate the rehabilitation of a majority of the population.

Focusing on the following strategic areas can transform the philanthropic definition in these environments:

1) <u>Altering the Relief Ecosystem</u> - Humanitarian actors working in Muslim societies must collaborate with one another and encourage information sharing and partnership building in order to tackle problems rapidly and effectively.

2) <u>Fueling Innovation</u> – Humanitarian actors working in Muslim societies should encourage innovative solutions for problems instead of managing crisis the conventional way. For instance, practitioners in the field ought to leverage Information Technology & Communication (ICT) for building disaster prevention or resilience and introduce human-centered design thinking in developing low-cost, high-impact solutions that are compatible with the local environment and in alignment with the ground realities. It is imperative that philanthropy engage with solutions and not remain exclusive to interventions that hold risk of handout dependence.

3) <u>Exploring Strategic Areas</u> - Providing short term relief to communities at risk is extremely important, however, conflict-ridden countries such as Iraq and conflict-affected countries such as Jordan need solutions for long term sustainability and impact to truly help the community at large. Moreover, the importance of advocacy for critical issues such as Conflict Resolution and Rights Abuse Protection cannot be ignored.

4) <u>Inculcating Applied Approaches</u> - Humanitarian actors working in Muslim societies ought to learn from the legacy of faith-based and other philanthropic traditions from around the world that have strategically transformed local and national communities.

There is a need for resilience building in Muslim societies and as such, investing in strategic areas is key to creating an infrastructure that can support sustainable giving.

Philanthropy aims to impact communities by way of long term holistic approaches. This can be achieved by investing in communication and media strategies, introducing technological innovation for disaster relief and sustainable solutions, and introducing technology in inaccessible conflict areas. The challenge of today, in which the root causes of social and economic injustices span beyond families, villages, cities, regions and even nations, poses a new mandate for which organized efforts are ever more crucial.

Humanitarian giving can consist of a pool of resources with strong positive implications if it is utilized under a unified ideology. Interventions thus must be re-evaluated according to environmental context and with visionary future goals, integrating conflict sensitive principles to create a ripple effect for peace, principled humanitarian approaches for conflict resolution, and disaster relief management in all countries afflicted by crises (Lange & Quinn, 2003).

Philanthropy in Muslim societies, despite facing a complex set of external and internal challenges, is bound to grow both in its maturity and effectiveness (Cheema, 2013). However, without the application of research and innovation, conventional giving models will continue to be less effective. Further, in a region where philanthropy is predominantly faith-inspired, the resolution of longstanding religious and geopolitical conflicts is critical to the peace and prosperity of the region and its neighboring lands.

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Situating Muslim Philanthropy in Time and Place

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At the launch of this journal to deepen research and understanding of Muslim philanthropy, it is worth looking back over past experience in the field. The path toward a more coherent, empirical approach to the study of Muslim faith and giving has not always been without bumps in the road, some of which I will examine in this essay. For the small but growing group of contemporary scholars, this journal is a welcome initiative. It holds the promise of drawing a fresh cohort of researchers from diverse disciplines into our ranks. Through symposia and online discussion, it may also reinvigorate past efforts to link our scholarly community worldwide.

One such effort worthy of evaluation is the Muslim Philanthropy Network (MPN), which several members of the editorial board of this journal helped to initiate in 2008. While that formal network is currently dormant, many of the professional ties it spawned remain active.[2] In this essay, I will attempt to understand the dynamics underlying that network and efforts to expand its membership and scope of action in Muslim-majority countries.

MPN was the initiative of a young academic center at the American University in Cairo[3] dedicated to the study of philanthropy and civic engagement throughout the Arab region, in partnership with Indiana University's long-standing Center on Philanthropy.[4] From its founding in 2006, AUC's Gerhart Center set about documenting the array of deeply-rooted religious

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[2] A collection of documents, studies, and the proceedings of the founding meeting are accessible online at the American University in Cairo portal, DAR: http://dar.aucegypt.edu.

[3] Now the John D. Gerhart Center for Philanthropy, Civic Engagement and Responsible Business, American University in Cairo.

[4] Renamed and expanded in 2013 to become the Lilly Family School of Philanthropy.

practices of giving and conceptions of social responsibility throughout the Arabic-speaking region. In books and working papers, an effort was launched to identify emerging trends in institutional giving and to advocate for a more strategic vision of what philanthropy might accomplish in the world.[5]

Similarly, under the leadership of Dean William Plater at IUPUI, the Center on Philanthropy began promoting a new program of graduate training and research on Muslim philanthropy. My relationship with the Center on Philanthropy dated to previous residence for a PhD program at IU Bloomington. In 2006, I met Dean Plater and discovered our mutual interests in the philanthropy of the Muslim world. Over the next two years, we developed the idea for an international network that would link scholars sharing an interest in research, teaching, and advocacy for Muslim philanthropy. A concept note soon followed. We set out in search of universities and individuals who might become founding members, and of course, for donors. What follows is an account of that journey.

I firmly believe that lateral networks are an emerging feature of how our digitized world operates and will increasingly operate in the future. Elsewhere I have linked the network model

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[5] In 2011, the Gerhart Center initiated an annual conference called Takaful, focusing on philanthropy and civic engagement. Takaful has become an established venue for scholars and practitioners from across the world to exchange knowledge and experience as it relates to the Arab region. You can find a selection of papers at http://schools.aucegypt.edu/research/gerhart/rprogram/takaful/Pages/TakafulPub.aspx.

to recent social movements and civic initiatives in the Arab region.[6] From the worlds of business to politics to academia, networks are proving to be powerful vehicles for sharing information and mobilizing around a collective goal. This journal itself provides a new venue for understanding how the emerging field of Muslim philanthropy is networked digitally and in geographic space.

The one-sentence summary conclusion I have reached about our early endeavors with the Muslim Philanthropy Network is this: gathering individual scholars and practitioners is relatively straightforward – we had nearly 140 members and an impressive number of active participants toward the end of the process. However, getting universities, foundations, and think tanks to join in a collaborative network around Muslim philanthropy was much more difficult. The reasons behind this disparity are worth reflecting upon for those who pick up the baton and promote similar networks in the future.

The challenges were in part related to funding, or more accurately the lack thereof, despite extensive efforts to find support in the Arab region and beyond. As a result, institutions – especially universities – were hesistant to participate in our new initiative. Administrators are understandably wary of overstretching their faculty and resources with new projects that do not have adequate seed money.

Our problems raising capital were two-fold. First, very few donor organizations recognize the potential of programs seen as involving 'infrastructure' rather than actual projects with tangible products and outcomes that can be measured. We argued that building a network

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[6] Ibrahim, B. L. (2017). Higher Education in Contested Settings: the Global-Local Challenge. *Higher Education in the World. Towards a Socially Responsible University: Balancing the Global with the Local*. Retrieved from http://guninetwork.org.

takes time and patience. Ultimately, we aspired for a high-impact outcome – a linked set of academic institutions prepared to exchange curricula, students and faculty, to engage in interdisciplinary research, as well as organize convenings and publications. That was a big dream, but one that seemed to us worth working toward, even while taking small steps in the beginning.

We also struggled to find donors who were willing to make multi-year grants to maintain and grow the network and support its activities. After an initial and very successful founding seminar in Pocantico, supported by the Rockefeller Brothers Foundation at their conference center in New York, and despite multiple proposals to US, European and MENA region donors, only one foundation came on board to support the network. In response to a proposal to build a global consortium of universities, the Gerhart Center received instead a modest contribution for one year of core support for the Center from the Prince Alwaleed Foundation.

Dean Plater was determined to keep the MPN viable and connected. He allocated funds at his disposal to hire a young graduate of the Masters program in philanthropy to coordinate a newsletter among members. During that period, IDRC provided a one year grant to set up and populate a digital library at AUC to support the MPN. We stretched that over two years to form a steering group, hire an active coordinator and begin the process of collecting materials for the digital library. As envisioned, the Muslim Philanthropy Digital Library would not only contain published research but also archival-type materials such as *waqf* accounts, charters for foundations and endowments, video interviews with philanthropists, conference proceedings and so forth.[7]

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[7] This process was facilitated by cooperation with IUPUI's Payton Philanthropic Library.

Receiving permission to digitize was the most difficult task of all, not because of reluctance to allow access, but because communication with libraries and research centers in the Middle East and Asia was painfully slow. Most of our requests received no response at all. Recent news that the library of the University of Tehran, with extensive collections on *awqaf* and *zakat* in Iran, is interested to cooperate on such a project is indeed welcome. It suggests that with time, university libraries and perhaps others are becoming more responsive to efforts to create global repositories of digitized materials.

In retrospect, however, I believe it would be misleading to attribute the primary challenge faced by MPN to inadequate funding or lack of interest in digital repositories. Networks, by definition, are laterally organized and non-hierarchical structures that should be able to survive lean years if members are motivated to engage with their peers. Indeed, there were enthusiastic responses from individual scholars and a robust growth in membership for several years. Members exchanged research papers and met in side meetings at conferences. We were able to encourage junior scholars by including them in AUC's Takaful conference and other opportunities to gather with peers. At least two PhD students at IUPUI pursued dissertation topics related to Muslim philanthropy and one now teaches on their faculty. The Muslim Philanthropy Digital Library coordinator provides another example of a PhD student who wrote her dissertation at Oxford on philanthropy in post-revolutionary Tunisia. On an individual level, the network succeeded. We need, then, to look elsewhere for the major obstacles to sustainability for the MPN.

As mentioned before, our ultimate vision was of a global network of universities that would collaborate on research, offer student exchanges, and develop curricular materials that might someday make possible a circulation of specialized faculty and jointly-offered graduate

degrees. While recognizing the ambitious nature of this goal, we wanted to lay the groundwork -

and students were excited about the prospect of greater international exposure during their

graduate studies. In the early stages, we anticipated that the main obstacles would come from

administrators, who often object that graduation requirements must be met in residence on their

own campuses or voice concerns about the costs of faculty and student exchange programs. Yet

when we began to raise the idea of a consortium on the theme of Muslim philanthropy among

universities in the Middle East, we were greeted by reluctance or outright resistence, with very

few exceptions

We do not believe the resistence was because philanthropy as an academic field is still in

its infancy. Several of the vice chancellors and provosts we met with were enthusiastic about the

idea of philanthropic studies at their institutions. Rather, we had to conclude that the term

"Muslim" as a qualifier was at the heart of our failure to gain interest from university leaders,

and even many faculty members, with whom we discussed the Muslim Philanthropy Network.

Early on, we defined Muslim philanthropy more broadly than religiously-motivated giving. Our

definition embraced the wide range of beliefs and practices around giving in Muslim-majority

countries and their Diasporas. A topic that we thought would be fresh and attractive in the

MENA region, instead invoked various degrees of concern or polite disinterest. The same

academics who routinely decry the dearth of indigenous research and theory were not prepared at

that juncture to entertain the idea of devoting a special program to Muslim philanthropy.

To understand this response, it is necessary to place it within the contemporary context of

national debates in Egypt and Turkey, the two countries we canvassed initially. Each country in

2008 was at a different stage of response to the resurgence of political Islam. For Turkey, there

was a growing realization that an elected Islamist government was chipping away at well-

established secular foundations of the society. In Egypt, where Islam has formed a pillar of the

state for years, in word if not in deed, a similar religious movement was not in power, but

growing rapidly. Egyptians we spoke to were particularly sensitive to the large amount of Gulf

funding that supported both Salafism and the Muslim Brotherhood through schools, mosques,

and publishing houses. Both countries were thus in the throes of an intense struggle over faith

and national identity.

It had become virtually impossible by 2008 to keep politics out of the debates. In the

MENA region, the fault lines were drawn sharply, as conservative strands of Islam sought to

shape communities to mirror their vision of a Muslim society. They condemned the 'godless

Arab state' and provided social services to poor communities neglected by the government.

Those who favored liberal, more tolerant interpretations of Islam, embracing ethnic and religious

diversity for example, were (and are) accused by Islamists of western pollution and of embracing

a diluted form of the faith. Films, school texts, dress for women and the segregation of public

space became arenas for contestation. Many believing Muslims, especially a younger generation

in the academy, turned away from engagement in any form of religious discourse or public

debate. They argued that the lines were so firmly drawn that no one ever convinced another to

shift position; it was much better to avoid religious topics altogether. In that atmosphere, a new

academic program with the word 'Muslim' in its title stood little chance of acceptance.

In 2008, the IU-AUC team[8] visited Turkish and Egyptian universities to elicit interest in

the consortium. The fault lines of that debate formed a subtext of every conversation we had

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[8] The delegation was made up of Bill Plater, Dwight Burlingame, and Patrick Rooney

from IUPUI and myself.

about the consortium and its goals. We visited mainly private universities and semi-autonomous

ones with a liberal arts tradition such as Boğaziçi University in Istanbul. In each visit, we argued

that a fuller understanding of the rich history and current innovation in Muslim giving was

actually a bulwark against extremism.[9]

As we encountered them, universities offered clear reflections of the political milieu of

the times, in which faculty and administrators felt a need to hold the line against insertion of

religious-political ideology into the independence of their institutions. Even university presidents

who were interested in pursuing a joint program of work with us faced other geopolitical

problems, such as tensions around inviting scholars from Israel to visit their campuses. Two

university presidents attended the organizing meeting in Pocantico - and still the consortia of

universities never made it off the ground.

I would argue that the term 'Muslim' was being reduced from its historical and cultural

meanings to become a code for something else. To qualify any noun with 'Muslim' was to be

suspected in some quarters of insinuating political and conservative Islam into the academy. In

Turkey in 2008 (as in Egypt following the election of a Muslim Brotherhood president in 2012),

the widespread view was that the ruling party was systematically dismantling the secular

foundations of the republic. We probably appeared somewhat naive to many Turks, who were

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[9] Liberal thinking within Islam is usually framed around openness to diversity and

acceptance of reinterpretations regarding gender, science, and personal rights that make the faith

more consistent with modern society. It is distinct from secularism, which supports the complete

removal of religion from public life, although this term is widespread in framing the debate in

Turkey and to a lesser degree in Egypt.

living every day with the policy changes instituted by the AKP. However, Erdogan's

government still appeared to many both in the Arab region and beyond as a promising example

of 'moderate Islam.'

As we dug deeper into the resistance to our project, it became clear that it had little to do

with philanthropy as practiced by Muslims at all. Many felt compelled to protect their

universities from the rising political discourse on Islam. Faculty pointed to the frequent news

reports from around the region of extremist funding being used for the spread of terror or

political recruitment. From Turks, we heard accounts of a government that was trying to

influence what books could be taught and of ministries where it had become impossible to be

hired unless a woman wore the headscarf. Of course, Turkish university administrators and

faculty were not actors in a cultural vacuum. They were deeply influenced by the modernizing

and secularist mission of Kemal Attaturk and the historical moment in which post-Ottoman

Turkey was founded. Kemalism was the dominant national discourse for decades before the rise

of the AKP - and it was Kemalists in power who had first politicized the headscarf by barring it

in public institutions, including universities.

As we became more nuanced in our understanding of the layers of meaning attached to

Muslim philanthropy, we began to appreciate this irony: the region which gave birth to the

central institutions of Muslim philanthropy, including *zakat, sadaqa, waqf* and *qard el hassan*, is

now among the most contested spaces for its study. We recognized that much of the controversy

is only peripherally about philanthropy per se, stemming instead from region-wide political

struggles between Islamists and the more liberal groups who oppose them. In an attempt to

diffuse the debates, we stepped back and reviewed the way we presented our definition of

Muslim philanthropy. These internal debates were intense, sometimes heated, and revealed that

even within the Gerhart Center at AUC, we did not always agree on the identity of our program. One outcome was to begin using a messier mouthful to describe our intent. "Philanthropy and Social Investing in Muslim-majority Societies" became the program title and we stressed an interest in non-Muslims, as well as Muslims in the diaspora.

As readers may already have guessed, these changes made little or no difference in the reception of our ideas. Until the present time, the polarization on university campuses in the Arab region continues. In 2012-13 when Egypt was briefly governed by the Muslim Brotherhood party, societal divisions reached a new high. During that chaotic period we faced lobbying from some at AUC to change the title of our Muslim Philanthropy Digital Library; the term "Muslim" was dropped and only remains as part of a descriptive blurb on the home page.

Looking ahead, this is not a challenge that will go away soon. Nevertheless, we have an opportunity as scholars and others who care deeply about the field to move ahead. We can build on the early membership roster of MPN and add to it from the promising new cohort of scholars, especially from the Arab region, Africa and Asia. One goal should be to demonstrate through research and documentation that the mutual demonization of the other side in these debates is harming everyone. In this task we have several important allies, including leaders at the World Congress of Muslim Philanthropists and the newly-formed program on Muslim Philanthropy at the Lilly Family School of Philanthropy at IUPUI.[10]

It is also helpful to remember that the politicization of giving is a phenomenon elsewhere in the world. The Clinton Foundation was attacked for its manner of soliciting donations during the 2016 U.S. presidential debates. George Soros is opposed for his work to strengthen

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[10] This initiative draws on earlier support from the Lake Institute on Faith & Giving.

democracy around the world, paradoxically with claims that he is trying to make money when he announces that he is giving most of it away. No region is immune to criticism of its philanthropic practices. However, and partly for that reason, the idea of discouraging further teaching or research is one that we should vigorously oppose.

The prospects for reviving an international Muslim philanthropy network among academics are robust. IUPUI's Symposium on Muslim philanthropy in September 2016 was inspiring. It promises to reinvigorate the scholarly network and research production. Early wins would be possible in growing the Philanthropy Digital Library at AUC and seeking translation funds for the excellent studies to be published in this journal. The global philanthropy support organization, WINGS, is launching an affinity group for academics interested in the research-to-practice nexus. Their mapping exercise turned up over 50 university departments or centers outside North America with teaching, research, or consulting activities around philanthropy, several of these in Muslim countries.[11]

In summary, we are challenged to live 'in interesting times.' For the field of Muslim philanthropy to thrive, all of us must use our talent, resources, and commitment to scholarship to push ahead. The early sojourn of the Muslim Philanthropy Network can become one of the signposts along the way.

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[11] WINGS' affinity group will hold its first meeting in Amsterdam in July 2018. Once launched it may provide a good incubator for the revived Muslim Philanthropy Network.