



ISLAM *in a* CHANGING MIDDLE EAST

Islamist Social Services

October 15, 2014



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The Project on Middle East Political Science

The Project on Middle East Political Science (POMEPS) is a collaborative network that aims to increase the impact of political scientists specializing in the study of the Middle East in the public sphere and in the academic community. POMEPS, directed by Marc Lynch, is based at the Institute for Middle East Studies at the George Washington University and is supported by the Carnegie Corporation and the Henry Luce Foundation. For more information, see <http://www.pomeps.org>.

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What do we really know about the provision of social services by Islamist movements? It's hard to find a popular article about a group like the Muslim Brotherhood or Hezbollah that doesn't reference their ability to win popular support by providing social services through their extensive network of charities, clinics and community centers. Most observers have long believed that these charitable activities played a key role in Islamist outreach and organization, built their reputations for honesty and efficacy, conferred a significant political advantage, and helped to promote the Islamization of society.

A recent wave of scholarship has challenged many of the prevailing assumptions about the nature and significance of these social services, however. Evidence for the scope, superiority or political utility of these charitable activities has proven elusive. Volunteers in the Islamic charitable sector profess a far wider set of motivations for their participation than just political rewards. The rise of non-governmental charities – and not only Islamic ones – seems to be driven at least in part by neoliberal reforms and the broader structural changes in the region's political economy. What's more, whatever explains the patterns and effects of social service provision in the past might no longer apply. Major changes on the ground such as the crushing of Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood and the dramatic move into service provision by jihadist groups raise serious questions about how these dynamics might play out in the future.

Last month, therefore, a Project on Middle East Political Science workshop brought together a small group of scholars who have been doing innovative research on the Islamic social services sector. Their memos, along with several other recent Monkey Cage essays, have now been released as a free PDF download in the POMEPS Studies series. Those papers, and the discussions in the workshop, offer a rich window into the changing nature of Islamic social services and their relationship with political movements and parties.

The specific mechanisms by which social service provision translates into votes or public support are not obvious. It is not as straightforward as just buying votes – especially as other political forces, especially local notables who are not unfamiliar with patronage, can easily do the same. As Tarek Masoud argues, “inasmuch as social-service provision is something that any party could decide to do, why is it that only (or mainly) Islamists do it? Is there anything to prevent nonreligious parties from distributing the bottles of oil and bags of sugar that many of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood's detractors credit with that movement's rise to power in 2011?”

Some efforts, such as food and medical caravans sent to swing districts, do seem to be blatantly electoral. But, as Melani Cammett and Steven Brooke each argue, the long-term provision of social services from bricks-and-mortar agencies are very different from the cash payments or one-shot food distribution efforts which predominate at election time. Those long-term investments in communities are often thought to contribute to spreading Islamist identities and values. This has been difficult to document empirically, however. A decade ago, Janine Clark

demonstrated that Islamic charities catered more to the middle class than to the truly poor, and were having such effects. Brooke's forthcoming study of the geographical distribution of Islamist clinics, like Mona Atia's recent study of Egyptian Islamic charities, should offer fascinating perspective.

The dramatic turn of the Egyptian public against the Muslim Brotherhood last year suggests that this long-term cultivation of Islamist identity had not taken as deep root as expected. Masoud inclines toward Cammett and Pauline Jones Luong's argument that Islamists translated social services into political advantage by building a reputation for good governance and "for being uniquely competent, trustworthy, and pure" in relationship to their principal rivals. This may offer an answer to the puzzle of the Brotherhood's rapid reversal. A reputation for good governance, as opposed to an alignment with common identity or values, could prove especially vulnerable to political failure, particularly in the context of the bare-knuckled existential battles in transitional countries such as Egypt. Mohamed Morsi's poor performance as president would then outweigh the provision of social services because of the reputational costs cutting to the heart of the original appeal.

I can't do justice to the breadth and depth of the discussion in these papers. Instead, I wanted to highlight a few points which piqued my interest:

1. There's a lot that we just don't know. Steven Brooke, a graduate student at the University of Texas who has spent years studying Islamic clinics in Cairo, warns of systematic gaps in our knowledge. As Cammett and Luong pointed out in an influential survey article this year, "little if any research examines systematically the extent and quality of Islamist welfare programs and activities in the Muslim world. Most claims about Islamists' social welfare initiatives are based on minimal, if any, hard data." That came through powerfully in the workshop's discussions. The literature on Islamist social services has been heavily weighted toward Egypt, and specifically the Greater Cairo area. A lot more attention gets paid to the Muslim Brotherhood's activities than to what George Washington University's Mona Atia describes as a "*plethora* of organizations providing social services in the name of Islam; there are numerous social service providers not affiliated with political parties." Even Egyptian Salafi Islamist charities are neglected, notes Moustafa Khalil. Those profound empirical gaps in our knowledge are now beginning to be filled, and used to examine the specific mechanisms by which Islamist movements translated – or failed to translate – their social services into political support. But there's a long, long way to go.

2. Charities have had good reason to keep it that way. The authoritarian context in the region has driven many of these charities to hide their affiliations out of fear of state repression. The Islamic social sector came under understandably tight scrutiny from security services intent on monitoring and suppressing Islamist political activity. In several cases, such as Jordan in the mid-2000s and Egypt today, governments seized control of Islamic services. This makes them very different from, say, the social services provided by Hezbollah and other political movements in Lebanon, where competing political movements proudly claimed such activities. The ambiguity, if not outright secrecy, has obvious implications for researchers who may struggle to correctly code the identity and affiliations of these organizations. It also raises questions about their political utility: If a clinic actively conceals its relationship with Islamist movements or parties, and refrains from proselytizing, then what lessons could its patients be drawing from their efforts? Survey work by Masoud suggests that few Egyptians were even aware of having taken advantage of Islamic clinics.

3. Neoliberalism may matter more than political strategy. The focus on how social services strengthen movements such as the Muslim Brotherhood may be distracting attention from much deeper changes in regional political economy. Neoliberal economic reforms, argues Gizem Zencirci, have driven a rise in private social charities and a rethinking of their meaning for Islamic identity. As the state retreats, by this argument, the private sector – Islamist or otherwise – must step forward to fill the spaces vacated by the state. In this regard, Atia points out that “Islamic associations have a great deal in common with secular development non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and Christian faith-based ones alike.” To the extent that they buffer the state from the dislocations which might otherwise have followed from their cuts in benefits and services, such social services, Islamist or otherwise, help rather than undermine the regimes carrying out the reforms. As Kevan Harris puts it, states didn’t need to crush these parallel sectors, then – they ate them. And, as Tom Pepinsky demonstrates, in countries such as Indonesia and Malaysia where the economic conditions don’t create a demand for such a sector, Islamist social services are far less politically effective.

4. It’s not just political. Researchers tend to be primarily interested in the political motivations for charitable work, but that doesn’t mean that politics are actually motivating the social service providers. Abdullah Al-Arian warns that the obsession with vote buying “limits our understanding of these institutions solely to their relevance in the political sphere, rather than the broader social function that they provide.” For some, charity is an Islamic virtue in its own right, a means of self-actualization or a way to display piety and faith. Atia’s concept of “pious neoliberalism” suggests that charitable giving offers a vehicle for a pious emerging middle class to reconcile their faith with their newfound wealth and opportunity. In a recent American Ethnologist article, Amira Mittermaier describes the concerns of the volunteers in Egyptian Islamic clinics as “living piously” and doing something to manifest their convictions. As Cammett puts it, “a variety of non-political motivations coexist with more overtly political goals in shaping Islamist welfare activities.”

5. Would closing down these social services destroy the Muslim Brotherhood? Egypt's July 2013 military coup included a large-scale crackdown on the parallel Islamic sector. Jordan has been pressuring the Brotherhood's charities for years. Regionally, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates have criminalized the Muslim Brotherhood and are working to curtail its funding and ideological appeal. If charitable work was really central to the Brotherhood's appeal, will this crackdown fatally undermine its political prospects? Maybe not. The electoral success of Tunisia's Ennahda despite the absence of the enormous social service sector administered by electorally successful Islamists in Egypt, Jordan or Palestine suggests that such a parallel sector is not necessary for Islamist political success.

6. What will jihadists get out of it? Over the last several years, jihadist movements which long shunned social service provision have adopted it in a big way. It isn't only the Islamic State. As Aaron Zelin has pointed out, jihadist groups in North Africa and Yemen have also taken up the types of social welfare activities that had in the past been dominated by Muslim Brotherhood affiliates or nonpolitical Salafis. There's nothing new about insurgencies offering such services, as Megan Stewart demonstrates, but jihadist groups may face distinctive challenges to effective governance based on their ideology. Will such efforts founder in the face of ideological constraints and international hostility or build up popular legitimacy for jihadist governance?

These are only a few of the issues raised by the memos collected in POMEPS Studies #9 Islamist Social Services – download and read it today!

*Marc Lynch, Director of POMEPS
October 15, 2014*

A State Without a State: The Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood's Social Welfare Institutions

By Abdullah Al-Arian, Georgetown University School of Foreign Service in Qatar

Although social welfare institutions have been an integral part of modern Islamic movements from their earliest days, Western scholarship has addressed this phenomenon only recently. As an extension of the broader literature on modernization of Arab societies, traditional studies of organizations like the Society of the Muslim Brothers in Egypt tended to focus on its ideological foundations and political ambitions. By the 1980s, scholars had begun to tackle the question of militant violence and the revolutionary potential of these same movements in the wake of the so-called "Islamic resurgence." However, as the Muslim Brotherhood's presence in society became "normalized" by a regime that turned a blind eye toward the group's development of a robust social welfare sector, a new wave of scholarly studies focused on the role that these institutions play in the promotion of Islamic activism.¹

Many of these works have been instrumental in expanding our understanding of how Islamic movements maintain their base of support within society and mobilize their resources in the course of their contention against the state. In the wake of the Arab uprisings, there appeared to be more urgency to this question, especially as many popular analyses applied the knowledge of Islamic social welfare institutions as a measure of how Islamist parties would fare in a nascent democratic political order. In fact, as the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood succeeded in election after election following Hosni Mubarak's removal from power, there was no shortage of analyses that argued that the proliferation of social welfare projects, from clinics and schools to bread lines and charities, played a direct role in mobilizing millions of impoverished Egyptians to vote for

the Muslim Brotherhood's candidates.²

These recent analyses are problematic in that they limit our understanding of these institutions solely to their relevance in the political sphere, rather than the broader social function that they provide. In fact, the regime of Abdel Fattah al-Sisi that emerged after the coup of July 3, 2013 has operated largely by the same logic. During his presidential campaign, Sisi audaciously pledged that "there will be nothing called the Muslim Brotherhood during my tenure."³ His strategy to fulfill that promise has centered on breaking the perceived base of Muslim Brotherhood support across Egyptian society. Over the course of the past year, the government has taken unprecedented measures to dismantle the network of social services institutions run by the Muslim Brotherhood and its sympathizers, irrespective of what this means for many Egyptians who depend on them for their basic welfare needs.⁴

Due to the serious consequences that this strategy carries for the future of Egypt, it is worth interrogating the assumptions that form the basis for claims made by analysts and regime proponents alike. To do so requires that we examine some of the key findings by specialists in this field, as well as to trace the historical development of the phenomenon in question.

In her 2004 study of Islamic medical clinics, Janine Clark challenged the prevailing notion among some scholars who suggest that "the mere successful provision of services by the middle class to the poor is generally assumed to

1 Some prominent examples of these studies include: Janine Clark. *Islam, Charity, and Activism: Middle-Class Networks and Social Welfare in Egypt, Jordan, and Yemen*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004. And Carrie Rosefsky Wickham. *Mobilizing Islam: Religion, Activism, and Political Change in Egypt*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2002.

2 See for instance Frederick Kunkle, "In Egypt, Muslim Brotherhood's charitable works may drive political support," *Washington Post*, April 8, 2011.

3 Louisa Loveluck. "Sisi says Muslim Brotherhood will not exist under his reign," *Guardian*, May 5, 2014.

4 Louisa Loveluck, "Egypt court bans Muslim Brotherhood, eliminating its critical social services," *Christian Science Monitor*, September 23, 2013.

result in a growing number of adherents to the Islamist movement in the streets and/or at the ballot box.”⁵ As Clark demonstrates, not only is there no basis to draw a direct correlation between the provision of services and political mass mobilization, but in fact the Islamic medical clinics in Egypt were run largely “by and for the middle class.”⁶

The rise of a new middle class during the second half of the twentieth century, what Carrie Wickham has termed the “lumpen intelligentsia,” provided the Muslim Brotherhood with a fresh base of support. Resulting from a shift in state policy that began under Gamal Abdel Nasser, this classification is defined by recently urbanized, educated, professionals, many of whom specialize in fields such as medicine and engineering. There is an important distinction to be made between the role that social welfare institutions play in establishing networks for Islamic activists and their ability to actively mobilize large swaths of the Egyptian public.

One can trace the development of the former through the historical re-emergence of the Islamic movement during the early 1970s. This decade is noted for the rise of a vibrant Islamic youth movement based in Egypt’s colleges and universities. Many of the leaders of this movement were students at Cairo University’s College of Medicine where, as part of their medical training, they treated patients in a wing of Qasr al-Aini Hospital that housed prisoners seeking medical care. It was during the course of those interactions that young leaders like Abdel Moneim Aboul Fotouh, Essam el-Errian, and Helmi al-Gazzar would come to meet veterans of the outlawed Muslim Brotherhood for the very first time.⁷

Those interactions increased over the course of the decade. With their gradual release from prison, veteran leaders of the Muslim Brotherhood committed themselves to reestablishing the group’s internal structure, while at the same time continuing to form linkages with the broader

youth movement. Student leaders demonstrated a strong commitment to popular activism as well as political engagement. They swept student union elections and developed programs that offered students subsidized textbooks, free medical care, safe modes of transportation, and even religious pilgrimage trips. On occasion, they also confronted the regime of Anwar al-Sadat on policies ranging from the lifting of food subsidies to Egypt’s hosting the overthrown shah of Iran.

In short, the development of these expressions of Islamic activism was part of an organic process in which newly urbanized middle class students were cultured into broader communal engagement that encompassed social welfare programs as well as political activism. By the early 1980s, that same spirit was internalized into the rejuvenated Muslim Brotherhood with the admission of thousands of young Egyptians into its ranks under the leadership of General Guide Umar al-Tilmisani. Those efforts continued into the subsequent decades with the Muslim Brotherhood’s entry into professional associations, its development of social welfare institutions, and its increasing political engagement with the state.

In the course of this enhanced visibility within Egyptian society, major tensions emerged between some Muslim Brotherhood leaders who promoted broader engagement with society and others who eschewed it in favor of a more inward focus devoted to establishing discipline across the ranks and organizational durability in the face of the inevitable next wave of state repression. The tendency by some observers to conflate the emergence of these distinct trends lends credence to the notion that the Muslim Brotherhood represents a “state within a state.” The rise of social welfare institutions demonstrates that the Muslim Brotherhood emerged as a direct competitor to the state in the provision of services that are a direct extension of the state’s domain. Coupled with that, the continued existence of an insular organizational structure on the order of the Muslim Brotherhood’s Guidance Bureau gives the appearance of a non-state entity that seeks to displace the regime and impose its vision of a decidedly Islamic state.

5 Clark, p. 3.

6 Ibid. p. 33.

7 Abdullah Al-Arian. *Answering the Call: Popular Islamic Activism in Sadat’s Egypt*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2014, p. 156.

In the post-Mubarak transition, those impressions were put to the test, resulting in the widespread belief that the Muslim Brotherhood's decades of work in the social services sector would translate directly into success at the polls. However, the group's leading political operators, figures like Khairat al-Shater and Mohamed Morsi, represented the insular *tanzim* or organizational school of thought within the Muslim Brotherhood and had a limited history of civic engagement. Whatever attempts they made to mobilize longstanding networks of social services toward immediate political objectives were a recent, makeshift development resulting from Egypt's rapidly shifting political environment. Meanwhile, Aboul Fotouh, who had dedicated the bulk of his career to public service, abandoned the Muslim Brotherhood name altogether in deciding to resign from the organization and run as an independent candidate for the Egyptian presidency.

Preliminary studies of the demographic breakdown of the Egyptian electorate appear to substantiate the claim that Islamists did not fare better among the poorest Egyptians who went to the polls. While support for Islamist parliamentary lists in the 2011-2012 elections ranged from 64 percent to 71 percent among the categories marked

poor and very poor, respectively, they ranged from 65 percent to 70 percent among the upper and lower middle classes, respectively.⁸

Despite the fact that Islamists account for nearly half of Egypt's social welfare institutions, scholars have long maintained that these institutions "were not places for Islamist political mobilization; they simply acted as service organizations."⁹ As contemporary political analysts begin to contemplate an increasingly authoritarian Egypt devoid of social welfare institutions run by Islamists, it is instructive to consider whether their existence was ever truly a threat to the dominant political order.

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⁸ www.ducoht.org

⁹ Asef Bayat. *Making Islam Democratic: Social Movements and the Post-Islamist Turn*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007, p. 44.



Pious Neoliberalism

By Mona Atia, George Washington University

The Islamist political parties that rose to power in the region—Turkey’s AKP, Tunisia’s Ennahda, Lebanon’s Hezbollah and Egypt’s short lived Justice and Development Party, to name a few, were well known for providing social services to their constituency. Many scholars have argued that the provision of social services was key to their success and the majority of populations, whether they saw it in a positive or negative light, routinely assumed that Islamist parties were the main providers of aid in the country. However, my research indicates that we must pay attention to the plethora of organizations providing social services in the name of Islam; there are numerous social service providers not affiliated with political parties.¹ In Egypt, for example, the Muslim Brotherhood was perceived as the main provider of social services, or put differently, the Muslim Brotherhood benefited from the work of numerous independent charities with which they had no affiliation. I would like to underscore therefore, the importance of differentiating different actors who are engaged in Islamic social service provision. In Egypt, several key issues or traits constituted major differences between Islamic associations. Some of the most important variables I identified were: the relationship of the association to the state, their resource levels, their interpretation of Islam, the history of the association and its ideological underpinnings, the organization structures, the locations they worked in, whether they identified primarily as a charity or a development association, and finally whether volunteers were driven more by a desire to please God or a desire for measurable impacts on the ground. Greater clarity about precisely what organizations one is studying will provide a much more nuanced understanding of the field. In addition, while understanding the political dimension of charity is important, it is equally important to understand how charity has worked as an act of governance. Charity is a

powerful mechanism used to manage populations and organize the social order. Since Islamic charities frequently tie aid to religious lessons, personal conduct is also linked to the regulation of political or civic conduct. It is important therefore to understand Islamic charity from a governmentality perspective.²

Secondly, scholars and practitioners frequently consider Islamic associations as alternatives to a Western aid-dominated development project. However, I found that many Islamic associations have a great deal in common with secular development non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and Christian faith-based ones alike.³ I highlight the ways that Islamic associations have engaged in practices that were once solely associated with western development paradigms. Many Islamic social service providers have shifted the provision of social services in response to broader political and economic changes in the region. Their success is contingent upon the merging of capitalist and religious sensibilities that I call “pious neoliberalism.”

Pious neoliberalism connotes a transformation in both religious practice and modalities of capitalism. It represents compatibility between business and piety that has produced different kinds of institutions, systems of knowledge production and subjectivities. As such, charitable acts are as much economic interventions as they are political ones, and there are multiple and sometimes contradictory aspects of the fusion of Islamism and

1 Many of the arguments made in this paper come out of Mona Atia *Building a House in Heaven: Pious Neoliberalism and Islamic Charity in Egypt*. University of Minnesota Press, 2013.

2 On governmentality see Andrew Barry, Thomas Osborne and Nikolas S. Rose, *Foucault and Political Reason: Liberalism, Neo-Liberalism and Rationalities of Government*, eds. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996).

3 See Omri Elisha, “Moral Ambitions of Grace: The Paradox of Compassion and Accountability in Evangelical Faith-Based Activism,” *Cultural Anthropology* 23, no. 1 (02, 2008): 154-189.; Nadia A. Mian, “‘Prophets-for-Profits’: Redevelopment and the Altering Urban Religious Landscape,” *Urban Studies*, 45, no. 10 (09, 2008): 2143-2161; Hackworth, Jason R. *Faith Based: Religious Neoliberalism and the Politics of Welfare in the United States*. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2012.

neoliberalism. Here neoliberalism connotes both the economic policies instituted by states – deregulation, privatization, marketization, economic growth without regard for social equity, and declining state-sponsored social services (to name a few) as well as a form of governmentality that encourages calculability and self-regulation.⁴ For example, Islamic charities have instituted extensive policies that monitor recipients and place conditions on their provisions. Pious neoliberalism then, is about the reconfiguration of religious practices in line with principles of economic rationality, productivity, and privatization. These traits are presented by preachers and association leaders as part of what it means to be religious and are applied to religious practices. Islamic practices are simultaneously neoliberalized, as characteristics of faith see as incompatible with neoliberalism (like social equity) are diluted, while new religious practices are formed. Pious neoliberalism therefore represents the merging of a market-orientation with faith; it is a productive merger that has produced new institutional forms, like private mosques, private foundations, and an Islamic lifestyle market. Pious neoliberalism is marked by self-regulation and entrepreneurialism, as subjects engage in a moral economy that is inextricably linked with the market, self-government, and faith.

Islamic associations' participation in the project of development required a complex negotiation of their perspectives on poverty, development, and faith. Many associations began complementing cash transfers, in-kind goods and social services with the promotion of entrepreneurship and self-sufficiency through development projects. More and more givers felt the role of associations was to help people help themselves out of poverty, and this translated into integrating the poor into the global circuits of finance capital. Income-generating projects like entrepreneurship, microfinance and skill

4 While the term neoliberalism is contested, mainly because of it has been used widely and imprecisely, geographers have offered some precise definitions of neoliberalism, see for example Wendy Larner, "Neo-Liberalism: Policy, Ideology, Governmentality," *Studies in Political Economy* 63 (Autumn, 2000): 5-25. Neoliberalism is neither "monolithic in form, nor universal in effect" Jamie Peck and Adam Tickell, "Neoliberalizing Space," *Antipode* 34, no. 3 (Jun2002, 2002): 380.

upgrading could create entrepreneurs out of the poor. Islamic development projects inculcated neoliberal values as Islamic values, transforming both in subtle ways.

To be clear, not all Islamic social service provision has transformed, in fact most charities in Egypt continue to give direct aid to the eight categories of *zakat* recipients outlined in the Quran. What has changed is the precise meaning of these categories and the accounting systems used to select, monitor and evaluate recipients. Numerous Islamic charity administrators I interviewed saw the poor as seekers of infinite aid and thus developed extensive social research systems that required recipients to quantify and verifying their neediness. Relying on both self-help and disciplinary techniques, Islamic charities circumscribed aid along conditions of verifiability and productivity. Other scholars of Islamic charity in both Lebanon and Turkey have witnessed a similar introduction of business practices into charitable work.⁵ Some refer to the intersection of market forces and religion as an "Islamic neoliberal" ethic or assemblage.⁶ In the Turkish case, pious neoliberalism also produced an "entrepreneurial Islam"⁷ as a response to Kemalist imposed secularism coupled with rapid neoliberalization of the Turkish economy.⁸ In Indonesia, Islamic associations democratized the state as "civil Islam" while state-owned companies turned to spirituality and management practices, or "market Islam" to increase the productivity and competitiveness of

5 Nada Momtaz, *Modernizing Charity, Remaking Islamic Law*. City University of New York dissertation, 2012; Ozan Karaman, *Urban Neoliberalism with Islamic Characteristics, Urban Studies*, 2013; Cihan Tuğal, "Contesting Benevolence: Market Orientations among Muslim Aid Providers in Egypt" *Qualitative sociology*, 2013.

6 Banu Gökariksel and Anna Secor, "New Transnational Geographies of Islam, Capitalism, and Subjectivity: The Veiling-Fashion Industry in Turkey," *Area* 411 (2009): 6-12.; Y. Atasoy, *Islam's Marriage with Neoliberalism: State Transformation in Turkey* (Basingstoke England ; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 288.

7 E. B. Adas, "The Making of Entrepreneurial Islam and the Islamic Spirit of Capitalism," *Journal for Cultural Research* 10, no. 2 (2006): 113-24.

8 Tuğal, *Passive Revolution: Absorbing the Islamic Challenge to Capitalism*, 306.; Berna Turam, *Between Islam and the State : The Politics of Engagement* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2007), 223..

Indonesian steel.⁹ The merging of Islamic and neoliberal practices has impacted various sectors.

Finally, in addition to understanding the political and economic dimensions of charity, attention should be given to the geography of Islamic charity – the sites, neighborhoods, spatial dimensions, administration of, sources of funding for, and broad social networks associated with them. For example, paying attention to the spatiality of Islamic charity, I found that Islamic associations also spread piety throughout Cairo by

9 Robert W. Hefner, *Civil Islam: Muslims and Democratization in Indonesia* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2000), 286.; Daromir Rudnycky, “Market Islam in Indonesia,” *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 15 (05/02, 2009): S183-S201.

coupling *dawa* (the call or invitation to Islam, preaching) with charitable giving. Islamic charities moved religion outside the space of the mosque and into unexpected, everyday spaces like shopping malls, sporting clubs and street corners. Paying attention to the spatiality of Islamic charity can help underscore other social/cultural impacts of Islamic social service provision beyond the political and economic realm.

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Assumptions and Agendas in the Study of Islamic Social Service Provision

By Steven Brooke, University of Texas at Austin

Most studies of Islamist groups written over the past three decades contain some version of the sentence: “Islamists’ network of hospitals, schools, day cares, soup kitchens, and other social services help the group (choose one of the following): win elections, Islamize the population, recruit and retain members, delegitimize the state, or demonstrate their commitment to Islam.” Yet rare was the study that provided enough empirical evidence to evaluate these causal claims. This is beginning to change, however, as a number of theoretically sophisticated and empirically rich studies have begun to evaluate these arguments across a number of geographic contexts.

Against this backdrop I want to draw from my own research on the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood’s efforts at social service provision to make some observations and gentle recommendations to think about as we move forward. First, we rely on a series of assumptions in

our work, but we should be wary of neglecting critical reassessments of these assumptions as our research agendas expand. That said, I think that there are a number of interesting new directions for research on Islamist social service provision that are worth highlighting.

In terms of our assumptions, Melani Cammett and Pauline Jones Luong note that we often take for granted that Islamists’ social services are *better* than the services their competitors offer. In light of the anecdotal evidence this seems a reasonable assumption to make, but without more systematic data we should proceed with caution. Given how much theoretical weight this assumption supports, the relative absence of empirical information about Islamist social services (in both absolute and relative terms) should move much higher on the research agenda.

We should also consider what we mean by “better.”

One answer might be that Islamists' facilities are better equipped or their staff more highly trained. If so, the strategy might be to assess the objective quality of services Islamists offer: the provisioning of Islamist schools, the education of Islamist doctors, and the efficacy of Islamist vocational training. But "better" may also mean that people simply enjoy the experience at Islamists' facilities more (or dread it less) than a trip to their competitors. Thus we should focus on exploring recipients' subjective views of Islamists' social service efforts: Are citizens happy with the healthcare they received or satisfied with their child's educational progress?

It may well be the case that the gap in technical capacity between Islamist and non-Islamist facilities is negligible, yet a yawning gulf appears in how people *perceive* the respective experiences (my own research suggests this is the case). Put differently, the Islamists' advantage may lie more in the relational experience between doctor and patient than the doctor's training or the sophistication of the equipment. Not only will this justify our assumptions, it can also help specify our theoretical mechanisms and where to look for causal effects.

There also lurks a second assumption in our arguments that Islamist medical, educational, vocational, material, and charitable efforts are essentially interchangeable in the larger basket of social service provision. For theory building this is defensible, but we should stop to consider how this leaves potentially important empirical variation unexamined. Do internal organizational fissures, membership characteristics, or resource constraints shape an Islamist group's decision to open a school versus a medical clinic? Among the population, does a trip to an Islamist hospital produce different effects than enrolling at an Islamist school?

One example from my own research highlights how the *method* of social service delivery can vary while the *type* of provision remains constant. In January 2013 the Muslim Brotherhood and the Freedom and Justice Party (FJP) inaugurated a massive campaign of social service provision in anticipation of upcoming parliamentary elections (the elections were still in preparation at the time of the

July 3 military coup). The mobile "medical caravans" were intensely politicized. Personnel were clad in FJP shirts, hats, and vests, operating under banners trumpeting the FJP and Muslim Brotherhood's involvement in the efforts. Dispatches from the caravans plastered party websites and social media.

The Brotherhood's brick-and-mortar medical facilities, in contrast, were much less overtly politicized. For instance, during the 2012 presidential campaign between Mohamed Morsi and Ahmed Shafiq the Islamic Medical Association's head admonished one of his subordinates in a Delta governorate for politicizing their medical provision in a letter. "We do not provide any support to any party or trend or person, and we deal respectfully with all of them," it reads. "Please fully comply with everything we have mentioned."

As the study of Islamist social service provision expands upstream into party strategies and downstream into population effects these assumptions can be tested and revised. At the same time, there are a number of exciting new angles of Islamist social service provision to explore. In the following section, I want to point out a few particularly promising patches of untilled soil.

To this point, the study of Islamist social service provision efforts has been almost totally confined to the political (rather narrowly defined). Ultimately, we've been preoccupied with how this provision affects Islamists' fortunes as political actors: how it helps them gain legitimacy, win adherents, mobilize for elections, or buffer themselves against crackdowns. We want to know about effects on the population, but only to the extent that service provision influences their behavior and then reverberates in terms of the aforementioned political or electoral outcomes.

Despite the considerable breadth of these research agendas, we should also not lose sight of the immediate effects of these efforts inside their communities. For instance, it would be worthwhile to know if these facilities actually produce measurable effects on population health and well-being. Does establishing a school increase levels of educational achievement? Does a hospital reduce

instances of treatable illnesses? Does a soup kitchen alleviate hunger and malnutrition? Does a vocational training program cause unemployment to drop? Especially when speaking of an Islamist “advantage” (especially vis-à-vis other providers) outcomes are an important piece of the puzzle.

In addition to being worthy subjects of study in and of themselves, connecting Islamist social service provision to measurable outcomes on the population helps connect study of Islamist social service provision to questions familiar to a broad range of political scientists. For example, we have puzzled over how regimes have been able to pursue often-dramatic policies of economic adjustment without provoking the ire of an increasingly hard-up citizenry. At the same time, we tend to conceptualize Islamist social service provision in antagonistic terms vis-à-vis the state. But amidst a fraying public sector, Islamist social service provision may actually serve to reduce those grievances that have historically spurred anti-regime mobilization.

A second potential research agenda should be to examine when, and if, variation in the type of Islamic organization “matters.” For instance, most of the scholarly and media attention in Egypt has examined political Islam, and specifically the Muslim Brotherhood. But other Islamic organizations’ social service networks dwarf the Brotherhood’s efforts. The vaguely Salafist Gamiyya Shariyya is, according to Sarah Ben Nefissa, “the most important Islamic charity organization in terms of social and political power, and in geographic spread. It has come to win the largest ‘market share’ of Islamic social services in Egypt.” Yet the Brotherhood’s network of social service provision looks positively overexposed compared to the much lower profile Gamiyya Shariyya.

Stretching the question further leads to the emerging phenomenon of violent Islamic groups providing social services. As Thomas Hegghammer points out, for much of al Qaeda’s history the group abjured service provision and confined itself to violent activism. This has recently started to change. Among a trove of documents recovered in 2012 from an al Qaeda safehouse in Mali was a letter in which Nasir al-Wuhayshi, the leader of al Qaeda in the Arabian

Peninsula (AQAP), counseled his counterpart in Mali on how to secure popular support:

Try to win them [the population] over through the conveniences of life and by taking care of their daily needs like food, electricity and water. Providing these necessities will have a great effect on people, and will make them sympathize with us and feel that their fate is tied to ours. This is what we’ve observed during our short experience [in Yemen].

The ongoing conflict in Syria has supercharged these developments, as the Islamic State has gobbled up more and more territory and begun to institute structures of local and regional governance. A similar dynamic seems to be unfolding in Libya as well. A number of analysts have followed and written on these developments, including Charles C. Caris and Samuel Reynolds, Daveed Gartenstein-Ross and Amichai Magen, Zachariah Mampilly, and Aaron Zelin, but the potential for tying these developments to larger social science literatures on state building, insurgent social service provision, and patterns of violence and stability is only just beginning to be tapped. Especially given the dramatic proliferation of high-quality open source information on these particular groups’ efforts at service provision these cases hold particular value for researchers.

Some of these proposals may seem to be at cross-purposes, for instance the need to more fully consider prior assumptions while also pushing forward new projects. I don’t believe that this is so – the need to more fully consider and verify prior assumptions can lead to new research agendas. This is especially true for Islamist social service provision, which has relatively recently started to emerge from a haze of rumor and speculation and take shape as a subject of careful, empirically grounded study.

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How Hezbollah helps (and what it gets out of it)

By Melani Cammett, Brown University

** This piece appeared on The Monkey Cage on WashingtonPost.com, October 2, 2014.*

Hezbollah, the Lebanese Shiite Muslim political party cum social movement and militia, famously provides its constituents a wide array of social services. As my new book *Compassionate Communalism* suggests, the truism that Islamists buy support through the provision of social services depends heavily on context and should be qualified by acknowledging the multiple, simultaneous motivations for delivering and receiving social benefits. Why did Hezbollah, like other religious and sectarian movements, sometimes reach out to broad constituencies and at other times focus its efforts on its hard-core base? Why does Hezbollah offer social services at all? What does it really get for its efforts?

Hezbollah's social service provision is rooted in the nature of Lebanon's state and society. In Lebanon, sectarian differences are sharply politicized and institutionalized, and virtually all political players (as well as religious groups and secular NGOs) offer social welfare in one form or another. The Lebanese state is notoriously weak with respect to social provision and religious and sectarian organizations have long played a vital role in the health, education and social assistance. Competition between sectarian groups typically shapes the extent and intensity of welfare provision. More than electoral politics is at stake. Some sectarian organizations aim to build "street power" and engage in militia politics, and not just to win votes – which shapes their distinctive strategies of allocating social welfare.

Hezbollah in its early years primarily opted for an extra-state political strategy in which it works outside formal state institutions and challenges state authority, in part by maintaining an armed militia. It has disproportionately funneled benefits to its most committed supporters, who tend to be in-group members, rather than toward

a larger mass of existing and potential voters. Beginning in the mid-2000s, however, Hezbollah increasingly worked through state channels by seeking executive and legislative positions. The electoral imperative and the need to convince a broader public of its "good governance" credentials compelled it to distribute at least limited baskets of social goods to a broader array of citizens. By the early 2000s, what's more, Hezbollah became the dominant actor in an alliance with its one-time Shiite rival, the Amal Movement.

However, the organization's decision to send fighters to Syria has once again placed heavy emphasis on its militia activities. Reports indicating that Hezbollah favors its hard core supporters with renewed vigor, especially the families of militia fighters, are consistent with this political shift. Mounting dissatisfaction with Hezbollah in Lebanon, including from in-group members, as a result of its ongoing and intensified participation in the Syrian conflict may be weakening its dominant position within the Shiite community. The narrowed distributional pattern reflects Hezbollah's shifting political strategy but may also exacerbate a decline in popularity by bolstering the perception that it caters to a small core group of supporters.

The provision of social welfare by Hezbollah and other Islamists is not merely founded on a material exchange of services for support. A variety of non-political motivations coexist with more overtly political goals in shaping Islamist welfare activities. A long tradition of charitable work as well as an enduring history of non-state welfare provision in Lebanon have compelled Hezbollah and other Lebanese sectarian and Islamist groups to offer social goods as part of their organizational mission. Visions of social justice undoubtedly also motivate these organizations to provide social assistance. Hezbollah may distribute or facilitate access to social services to fulfill altruistic commitments, present itself as the protector and guarantor of well-being,

gain supporters or consolidate control over territory and people. In short, specific political goals as well as charitable motivations likely underlie the provision of social services by Hezbollah and other groups in Lebanon.

“Buying support” through service provision is not necessarily an economic or material transaction, nor does it always occur through direct exchanges. As in-depth interviews with citizens in Lebanon reveal, the receipt of services directly or by family members or neighbors may compel some citizens to vote for the political party associated with the provider or to participate in demonstrations organized by the party. Even for these informants and other citizens, however, service provision is usually more than an instrumental exchange. Welfare engenders a sense of belonging to a community, which has enormous psychological benefits, particularly in the context of underdeveloped and unstable national state institutions. The provider organization establishes itself as a source of social protection or a guardian of the community, however defined, which may garner popular allegiances. “Bricks-and-mortar” welfare programs, which operate from fixed physical locations in specific neighborhoods and villages, are particularly effective in establishing the provider as a community guardian because they signal a long-term commitment to a geographical space and its inhabitants. The provision of social services from bricks-and-mortar agencies as well as long-term relationships of social provision are distinct from cash payments or one-shot food distribution efforts, which predominate during electoral contests.

Welfare programs may also inspire support by individuals and families who have not received services themselves but who have observed or heard about the actions of providers in their communities and beyond. Service provision projects an image of organizational capacity and efficiency as well as a commitment to protect, which may garner the admiration or respect of observers and not just the direct beneficiaries. This is especially valuable for a political organization that aims to build a reputation as a reliable and capable actor – one that is qualified to govern. The importance of building a strong reputation cannot

be overstated, particularly because it enables Islamists to cultivate a much broader range of supporters, potentially even among non-supporters or those who are ideologically distant.

The provision of social services is not the sole means that Hezbollah uses to mobilize support, but it plays an important role, particularly in a national context in which alternative sources of social protection are underdeveloped or absent. So does it work? Hezbollah and other sectarian parties in Lebanon clearly calculate that welfare activities engender political support, even if this is not their sole motivation for distributing social goods. Thus far, my own research on the impact of services on the recipients (the demand side) has been far less systematic than my work on the politics of provision (the supply side). However, extensive qualitative interviews with recipients and non-recipients of social services from Hezbollah and other groups, as well as circumstantial evidence from electoral returns, indicate that social welfare has political payoffs. Furthermore, Lebanese citizens have come to expect that officials and political parties distribute social benefits on a discretionary basis. Survey data indicate that voters themselves prioritize the provision of social services by their elected representatives in their voting calculus. In 2001, a national poll asked citizens who voted in the 2000 national elections to list the two most important factors shaping their vote choices. Over 50 percent of the respondents listed the social service activities of the candidate as one of the two most important reasons for their vote.

For Hezbollah, which has largely prioritized non-electoral political mobilization, appropriate data for assessing the political effects of welfare distribution are not readily available. Extra-state political strategies entail forms of political engagement that are inherently difficult to measure, such as participation in demonstrations and riots and service in a militia, and therefore electoral data are less illuminating. That said, a look at electoral returns from the 2005 elections yields some suggestive insights given that Hezbollah stepped up its participation in mainstream, electoral politics and increasingly sought executive offices

at this time. In the Lebanese context, shifts in the degree to which sectarian parties attract support from out-group members is an indirect indicator of the political efficacy of welfare outreach for parties that participate in elections. Although data on sectarian trends in voting patterns are difficult to obtain given their political sensitivity, local analysts have generated data on party vote share by sect for the 2005 and 2009 national elections. Thus, it is useful to examine the degree to which parties, including Hezbollah, garnered out-group support in these elections, with the rather large caveats that the assassination of Prime Minister Rafik al-Hariri and mounting regional Sunni-Shiite tensions undoubtedly shaped voter behavior. The attendant fear-mongering and intergroup conflict muted the effects of clientelism on electoral trends in recent electoral cycles.

The turnout rates for the 2005 and 2009 elections provide some insights into the political effects of welfare outreach, although the linkages between social provision and electoral behavior are tenuous for the aforementioned reasons. A comparison of the returns of the two elections indicates that Hezbollah increased its share of Christian support substantially in all districts where the party fielded candidates. This is probably due to the alliance between Hezbollah and Michel Aoun's predominantly Christian Free Patriotic Movement (FPM) beginning in 2006. Many Christian FPM supporters undoubtedly voted for Hezbollah to express their endorsement of Aoun's decision to ally with the Shiite party; however, the receipt of social benefits from Hezbollah, which placed more emphasis on a state-centric political strategy after 2005, may have reinforced this trend. In particular, in the aftermath of the 2006 war and the alliance with the FPM, Hezbollah embarked on an extensive effort to distribute social assistance to Christian families affected by the conflict. (At the same time, in the context of rising regional and domestic tensions, Hezbollah lost Sunni vote share.) The observable trends are consistent with the claim that state-centric political strategies garnered support from out-group voters for Hezbollah, particularly across Muslim-Christian lines, although other explanations cannot be ruled out.

Anecdotal evidence (and, for the education sector, test score results) indicates that Hezbollah is indeed an effective supplier of social services, as are other Islamist groups. I suspect this is due primarily to features of organizational culture, such as internal discipline and hierarchical structure, rather than to the faith component of their missions per se. Some studies of faith-based contend that religious organizations tend to attract personnel who are committed to their missions on spiritual grounds, making them willing to put in long hours, often for relatively minimal compensation. High levels of motivation among staff members therefore enable faith-based organizations to offer comparatively high quality services at low cost. Although Koranic injunctions to serve the community and engage in charitable works undoubtedly serve as a key motivation for many staff members of Islamist welfare agencies, the alleged Islamist governance advantage likely has less to do with religious commitments. Many religious institutions from Muslim and other faith traditions operate social service programs in the Middle East, yet do not all appear to offer services of equal caliber. Arguably, staff members at non-Islamist institutions are no less committed to religious principles than Islamists, yet do not have reputations for providing high-quality services. Furthermore, Hezbollah offers noticeably higher quality services on multiple dimensions than most other non-profit health networks, even when compared with co-religionist organizations.

Specific features of Hezbollah's organizational culture are amenable to the provision of high-quality social services. In particular, its coherence and hierarchical structure facilitate the dissemination and standardization of practices and protocols as well as procedures for staff training and management. Of course, not all Islamists in the same countries or across different countries are likely to exhibit the same levels of organizational coherence and hierarchical structure. To the extent that the organizational culture explanation is true, differences in these organizational characteristics may at least partly explain their variable success in designing and implementing social programs. This raises many additional questions related to the origins of an organizational culture favorable to

high-quality service provision as well as potential selection effects compelling motivated and qualified staff to seek employment at effective Islamist welfare networks in the first place.

The question of why and how Islamists distribute social services has garnered increasing attention, particularly as outside observers try to understand the roots of their popularity. Although social science frameworks compel analysts to isolate monocausal explanations for the motivations for and effects of Islamist welfare activities, in reality multiple factors underlie their decisions to delivery services and the effects on citizens. Beyond the political ramifications of Islamist social service provision, it is imperative to understand more about how such groups

organize and deliver services. With the decline of public welfare functions, citizens increasingly rely on an array of public, private, and non-state actors to meet their basic needs, and Islamists play an important role in this welfare mix in some contexts.

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The Rise of the Machines

By Kevan Harris, Princeton University

There is a disconnect between popular accounts of Islamist social service organizations and the broader scholarship on welfare politics. A few city-states notwithstanding, state welfare systems are rarely designed from scratch. They are often built on top of pre-existing social structures with internal flows of reciprocal aid or tributary assistance. States can plug into, tame, and incorporate these networks, a far less costly option than replacing them *de novo*. States do not wipe out service-providing political machines or religious organizations. States eat them.

This process commonly leads to indigestion. Local actors often resist being trumped by a supra-political entity. In many European countries, Christian Democratic parties were largely the “unintended offspring” of Protestant and Catholic Church attempts in the late 19th and early 20th centuries to ward off Liberal parties’ usurpation of social

policy and education away from religious hands.¹ The Democratic Party in the United States depended on urban patronage machines well into the 1930s, yet the decline of “bossism” occurred more as a result of implementing a federal social security program than any direct assaults against city machines.² Distributional coalitions of aid, health care, education, and pensions thus tend to form, expand, or rearrange during bursts of state building.

Local actors and their social service networks do not necessarily disappear alongside state building. They often maneuver in areas where direct state intervention into households and communities is reckoned as impractical or

1 Kees van Kersbergen and Philip Manow, eds., *Religion, Class Coalitions, and Welfare States* (Cambridge University Press, 2009), 4.

2 Observed firsthand by Robert Merton, *Social Theory and Social Structure* (Glencoe, IL: Free Press, 1949), 247–48.

costly by political elites. In this sense, Islamist social service institutions are analogous to mafias, urban machines, warlords, or other reappearing “traditional” political communities.³ All are service-providing institutions that sometimes compete with the state and sometimes cooperate with it. Sometimes the state swallows them, and sometimes they burst out in a mess as in the movie *Alien*.

From this lens, Islamist welfare politics do not solely occur in the shadow of a retreating state. The prevalent emphasis on Islamist welfare organizations as handmaidens of neoliberalism is partly due to the fact that there are plenty of areas in the Middle East where states are retreating, if not shattering altogether. Nevertheless, the full house of Islamist welfare organizations contains more diversity. Below I discuss three cases to highlight this variation while also giving attention to the distinctiveness, if any, of the religious character of these organizations.

Egypt: As the government of Hosni Mubarak oversaw the rollback of state welfare policy during the past two decades, religious charity organizations multiplied throughout Egypt. Many were independent from the Muslim Brotherhood, but the growth of a discourse of pious giving among middle class urbanites lent legitimacy to the Brotherhood’s activities. Private religious organizations framed their aid work in numerous ways, from simply good deeds to a precursor for development. As their activities expanded, Islamist charities broke out of mosques and headed into shopping malls. In doing so, aid organizations actively sought to take over social networks which had atrophied during the state’s haphazard liberalization attempts.⁴

The distinct advantage of the religious aid sector in Egypt seemed to be its compatibility with both state authoritarianism and a middle class habitus. Yet the Muslim Brotherhood’s success in creating a counter-elite

and thousands of loyal cadres also relied on fostering diverse networks of solidarity within social service activities. As with Turkey, welfare organizations that claimed to be apolitical or post-ideological could turn into vehicles of political mobilization against the government.⁵ When states outsource welfare to Islamist service organizations, they are producing political machines of a sort. But unlike a public welfare system where distribution rules are transparent and routinized, political machines usually have to spend energy and resources on cultivating and maintaining middle level brokers to find clients or beneficiaries. This is costly: Any political machine’s social network is inherently self-limiting.⁶ On the whole, Islamist social service providers are not excluded from this organizational dynamic. Political machines are not “mini-states,” and neither are Islamist service providers.

Indonesia: Under the Suharto dictatorship, Islamist welfare organizations in Indonesia were tightly controlled. The state collected religious taxes from Muslims who worked in the public sector. These were voluntary but encouraged, and Suharto claimed himself as the largest donor. As an export and commodity boom in the 1990s raised incomes, middle class communities established religious welfare funds, which were tolerated by the confident Suharto regime as preferable to allowing Islamist political parties into the New Order. Many of the individuals who participated in the Islamist turn had risen within the state bureaucracies.

After the East Asian financial crisis and fall of Suharto, the new democratic government under president B.J. Habibie promised to devolve central state authority to the country’s many provinces. In this framework, middle class Muslims started a wide variety of religious welfare NGOs. In doing so they distinguished themselves from mosque-based welfare activities that the older ulama had largely monopolized. The government welcomed this

3 Georgi Derluguian and Timothy Earle, “Strong Chieftaincies Out of Weak States, or Elemental Power Unbound.” *Comparative Social Research*, no. 27 (2010): 51–76.

4 Mona Atia, *Building a House in Heaven: Pious Neoliberalism and Islamic Charity in Egypt* (Minneapolis: University Of Minnesota Press, 2013).

5 Carrie Wickham, *The Muslim Brotherhood: Evolution of an Islamist Movement* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2013); for Turkey, see Joshua Hendrick, *Gülen: The Ambiguous Politics of Market Islam in Turkey and the World* (New York: NYU Press, 2013).

6 Susan Stokes et al., *Brokers, Voters, and Clientelism: The Puzzle of Distributive Politics* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

brand of “civil Islam” partly because state leaders feared a comeback by the military. The resulting social compact formed a check against Suharto’s revanchist supporters.⁷ The distinctive advantage here seemed to be the manner in which the flexibility of religious charity became a mechanism for building a new social coalition to support state elites in a precarious position. Unabsorbed by the state, Islamist social welfare organizations provided a form of glue that held together the democratic transition.

Iran: Islamist welfare in Iran is a definitional tautology. What else would it be in an Islamic Republic? But therein lies the politics if one scratches the surface. Muslim Brotherhood-styled welfare organizations existed in pre-revolutionary Iran. Bazaar merchants collected donations to support underground Islamist movements. In 1979, a few months after the establishment of the Islamic Republic, these networks were corralled into a self-proclaimed revolutionary welfare organization, the Imam Khomeini Relief Committee (IKRC). It quickly spread throughout Iran, played a major auxiliary role in the 1980s war with Iraq, and continues to enjoy organizational autonomy today. Yet the IKRC is fully governmental, an example of state incorporation and expansion of a pre-existing aid network.

Who are the beneficiaries of this organization? There is no official poverty line in Iran under which individuals receive transfers. Instead, aid is given based on a multitude of status categories: rural elderly, mother-headed household, disability, housing conditions, etc. With piously flexible targeting, the organization is surprisingly effective in counter-cyclical poverty reduction. When incomes go down, enrollments go up.⁸ At times, the IKRC secures support for state policies, but there is no formal internal mechanism for buying votes. Rather than the poor becoming dependent on the IKRC, a more accurate picture

is that the government became dependent on it. Since the 1980s, technocrats and populists alike have relied on the organization’s capacity to reach hard-to-target households for implementation of new social policies.⁹ Though this process, the status categories for beneficiaries stretched outwards. What was originally a clientelist organization became pushed and pulled into a bureaucratic pillar of Iran’s social welfare system. The Islamist orientation of the IKRC went through a similar transformation as the earlier two cases, exhibiting a shift towards a middle class disposition at ease with development speak and technocratic jargon. Yet as a state-incorporated service network, this process eventually broadened the social welfare compact.

In sum, the politics of Islamist welfare organizations are tethered to the state-society context in which they operate: presence or absence of elite conflict, developmental priorities of the government, and the relevance or irrelevance of particular social coalitions. They are distinctive because of their functional mutability, but there is a broad similarity in how their organizational identities link up with the making and unmaking of social classes. If current challenges to state capacity and political order in the Middle East continue, we can expect an influx of new competitors. Many of these will contain Islamist welfare networks with distinctive claims for legitimacy. But we can also recognize it another way: The coming rise of the machines.

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7 Robert Hefner, *Civil Islam: Muslims and Democratization in Indonesia* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000); Siti Kusujarti, “Pluralistic and Informal Welfare Regime: The Roles of Islamic Institutions in the Indonesian Welfare Regime,” in *The Sociology of Islam: Secularism, Economy and Politics*, ed. Tugrul Keskin (Reading, UK: Ithaca Press, 2011), 419–52.

8 Hadi Salehi Esfahani and Seyed Mohammad Karimi. “The Distributional Consequences of Economic Growth and Public Spending Programs in Iran.” *Working Paper*, October, 2013.

9 Kevan Harris, “The Politics of Welfare After Revolution and War: The Imam Khomeini Relief Committee in the Islamic Republic of Iran,” in *The Cup, The Gun and The Crescent: Social Welfare and Civil Unrest in Muslim Societies*, ed. Sara Crabtree et al. (London: Whiting & Birch, 2012), 134–50.

Islamic-Based Civil Society Organizations Between Myth and Reality

By Moustafa Khalil, University of Manchester

I spent the past six years of my life studying poverty reduction activities of Islamic-Based Civil Society Organizations (IBCSOs) in Egypt for my doctoral thesis. The findings of my thesis are too long to pack in the limited space allowed by this memo. However, I will use this opportunity to highlight an area of my findings where I believe that the current literature on IBCSOs can be seriously challenged. In this memo, I shall reveal three of the most common misperceptions on IBCSOs in the literature. Firstly, there is the single categorization of IBCSOs. Secondly, there is the overplaying of the role of their poverty reduction activities in political mobilization. And finally, there is the underestimation of the significance of these organizations' exclusive dependence on local financing, as opposed to foreign aid or government financing. The following lines explore each of these three misperceptions in turn.

First and foremost is the trap that has caught many of those who have examined the work of Islamic-based CSOs and almost caught me in the early stages of my work. This is the assumption that IBCSOs could be viably researched as a single category which falls under the greater umbrella of a single Islamic civil society or the umbrella of faith-based organizations. During the process of planning my thesis, I decided to select case study organizations based on their geographic locations in urban and rural Lower Egypt and rural Upper Egypt in order to account for their socio-economic diversity. However, soon after my work commenced in the field, I discovered that while socio-economic variations between IBCSOs in different geographic areas of Egypt might be important, the more significant variations between them would arise from their nature as either community-based organizations or from their affiliation with larger religious groups or political movements such as the Salafis or the Muslim Brotherhood. Case study organizations from these categories are varied in many aspects including goals, type of assistance they provide, and the role played in political mobilization. There

is variation even within these categories. For instance, the Salafi movement is divided into numerous subgroups that have different, and sometimes contradicting, views on the methods and approaches that are used to achieve Salafi religious, social, and political agendas – even when these agendas and the values that dictate them are almost identical across the Salafi spectrum.

The failure to identify the above divisions in research on IBCSOs has left wide areas of their work undiscovered, or at best under-researched. The most vital of these areas is the social work conducted by Salafi organizations in Egypt, which has received minor attention in favor of the work affiliated with the Muslim Brotherhood. Most probably, this has been driven by the political significance of the Muslim Brotherhood. While this conclusion might still require further quantitative evidence to safely generalize it over Egypt as a whole, my research found that the size and depth of poverty reduction activities conducted by my Salafi case study organization was significantly more advanced and organized than the other organizations I covered. In addition to their advancement on the operational level compared to other IBCSOs, the Salafis showed a distinctive understanding of poverty and poverty reduction that reflects a deeper theoretical framework than what is found at IBCSOs elsewhere. The organization's leaders offered a clear discourse on the purpose of their work and the philosophy that stands behind it, and they were able to relate it to wider social and economic contexts, and to see how it can fit into teachings of their religious doctrine. This was not the case at other IBCSOs, nor was it the case at the secular organization that I studied for comparison.

The second misperception revealed by my thesis results from the over promotion of Islamic-based CSOs' poverty reduction activities' role in political mobilization for the Islamic movement in Egypt. The Muslim Brotherhood's position as the most prominent opposition group in Egypt

during the era of Hosni Mubarak was often mentioned in the literature immediately followed by a reference to mosque-based charity and community service work allegedly used to buy loyalty of the poor masses that were felt abandoned by the incapable government. However, my case study organization, which was the biggest Muslim Brotherhood-affiliated mosque in a district that was won by the Muslim Brotherhood in the 2011 general elections, has left many doubts over such claims in the literature. The single case study is not enough to generalize the findings, but it is enough to raise questions over what was previously thought of IBCSOs' role in the Brotherhood's political success. The Muslim Brotherhood may have indeed been the biggest and most active political group during the run-up to the 2011 revolution that put an end to Mubarak's rule. This was (at least as far as the district I studied was concerned) the result of having a wide membership base as well as the ability to use mosques and other community organizations and institutions as bases for advocacy and political campaigning. It was not the result of buying loyalties through the use of poverty reduction and other social service activities. To be more specific, my research discovered that:

(1) Except for the Muslim Brotherhood-affiliated organization, case study IBCSOs and other Islamic-based organizations encountered in their communities have been politically passive, particularly before the revolution. The tight surveillance by State Security Investigations (SSI) that IBCSOs (as part of civil society at large) had been operating under before the revolution left no room for any functional form of political mobilization to take place within these organizations. Case study CSOs were left to conduct charitable top-down approach activities. However, any attempt to link these activities to efforts that aim at creating a politically active grassroots movement for example was never tolerated.

(2) The level of political participation of the recipients at case study organizations had been nonexistent, or at most very limited, before the revolution. Recipients who received help from case study IBCSOs did not

vote, express political elegances, or even express their interest in the political process before the revolution. Although recipient interviews were qualitative, they still covered a significant percentage of recipients in the three IBCSO case studies. Of all recipients interviewed before the revolution, only three recipients out of a total of 61 interviewed across all case study IBCSOs mentioned they had ever voted before the revolution. Moreover, many of them were not even sure if the CSO they received help from was actually affiliated with the Brotherhood. Those who knew that seemed to have known it from rumors circulating within the community and not as a result of a clear politically motivated message delivered to them by the CSO. The claim therefore that Islamists politically depended on votes of the poor in the past requires serious reconsideration.¹

Finally, the third uncovered misperception about Islamic-based CSOs in the literature is the underestimation of the importance of their dependence on local financing. It has been often assumed that Islamic-based CSOs in Egypt receive generous funding from the more conservative oil-rich Arab Gulf countries. In particular, the Muslim Brotherhood and the Salafis have been accused of receiving millions of dollars from the Gulf, especially in the 1990s. Again, my qualitative case study research is not extensive enough to completely dismiss such allegations, but case study IBCSOs have shown a remarkable ability to generate regular and sustainable funding for their poverty reduction activities depending entirely on local donations. These organizations did not show the symptoms of the financial shortages suffered by Egyptian civil society at

1 It is important to underline that what I am dismissing here is the claim that poverty assistance was used by political Islamists (in particular the Muslim Brotherhood) to buy the political loyalty of the poor masses. I am challenging the claim that poor recipient of social assistance make the backbone of the Muslim Brotherhood's support. However, my work did not cover the role of other forms of social service provision such as education or health care in reflecting a positive image of the Muslim Brotherhood amongst voters (especially those from the middle class). I am also not dismissing that the brotherhood's success in infiltrating mosques and CSOs operating in the poverty reduction field may have been used for political mobilization in other ways such as the utilization of these mosques' religious activities (collective prayers and religious lessons etc.) for political campaigning purposes.

large. Most interviewed donors said they would happily donate to non-religious organizations and that their main motivation to donate to their picked CSOs was not their religious affiliation but rather the level of trust acquired by the individuals who run these organizations. However, almost all such donors said they only donated to religious organizations, which shows that these organizations are more capable than others in gaining donors' trust, and therefore funds.

On the other hand, the regular donation fundraising technique (e.g., orphan sponsorship or subscription fee) used by case study IBCSOs has enabled them to expand by forming huge databases of regular members who make small monthly donations. This has provided these organizations with the benefit of having a regular and steady flow of locally raised funds, which is a crucial factor in studying IBCSOs from a civil society perspective. Unlike non-religious organizations, IBCSOs have the luxury of acting freely from one of the major sources of pressure that applies to civil society across developing countries worldwide: the chronic dependence on foreign funding. If this finding can be generalized by quantitative evidence, it will open the door for considering the potential of IBCSOs

as home grown CSOs capable of securing self-funding and therefore enabled to determine their own strategies and lines of activity. It could perhaps even go as far as shaping their own indigenous model of development, which could challenge the universal models enforced by major international donors.

In conclusion, there remains a need to study IBCSOs as actors for development and providers of social safety nets rather than just considering them as a tool in the hands of the Islamic movement used to push forward political or religious agendas. My research has shown that there is still a lot that we need to know about IBCSOs that can be revealed if the debate surrounding them is depoliticized. Of course achieving this while the consequences of the Arab Spring remain an unfolding story is difficult, but I can at least claim that I have tried.

Moustafa Khalil received his doctorate from the Institute of Development Policy and Management at the University of Manchester in the United Kingdom. His thesis was "The Role of Faith-Based Organizations in Poverty Reduction in Egypt."



Why Do Islamists Provide Services, and What Do Those Services Do?

By Tarek Masoud, Harvard University

The scholarly literature has long argued that one of the reasons that parties like the Muslim Brotherhood of Egypt are able to earn the loyalties of voters is through their provision of health, welfare, and educational services that the cash-strapped states of the Arab world are increasingly unable (or unwilling) to provide. However, in recent years, the provision of social services by Islamist parties has gone from being an explanation of Islamist success to something to be explained in itself. After all, clientelistic service provision has long been recognized to be an effective – even basic – electoral strategy. An account that locates Islamist success in such a strategy would have to also explain why competitors to Islamists do not also pursue the same means of winning votes. In other words, inasmuch as social-service provision is something that any party could decide to do, why is it that only (or mainly) Islamists do it? Is there anything to prevent nonreligious parties from distributing the bottles of oil and bags of sugar that many of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood’s detractors credit with that movement’s rise to power in 2011?

There are three potential answers to this question, all of which focus on the characteristics of Islamist organizations versus those of their rivals. The first holds that Islamists possess an organizational model – built on highly selective recruitment methods, the relentless inculcation of norms of loyalty to fellow members and obedience to superiors, and a regimented system of promotion – that makes that group more capable of concerted action than those who lack such a model.¹ In this telling, Islamists are better able to provide services because their internal organizational structure makes them better at doing *everything*. However, there are several reasons to doubt this account. First, Egyptian Communist organizations also did similar things,

1 See, for example, Eric Trager, “The Unbreakable Muslim Brotherhood,” *Foreign Affairs*, July 2011; Shadi Hamid, “How Egypt’s Muslim Brotherhood Will Win,” *Foreignpolicy.com*, November 3, 2011; and Mohamad Adam, “Brotherhood youth say tight structure is the key to its success,” *Egypt Independent*, January 27, 2013

thoroughly vetting initiates and employing systems of clandestine cells and emphasizing loyalty among their members, and yet were unable to become anything more than fringe groups in Egyptian political life.² Second, the Salafi party, Hizb al-Nur – the second-most popular party in the 2011-2012 parliamentary elections – does not apply the Brotherhood’s organizational model and is still electorally successful and appears to have engaged in service provision.

The second argument holds that Islamists are better able to provide services because of their religious nature. On the one hand, their religious focus is supposed to make them *more concerned* with service provision than their rivals. This may be the case, and I have not collected data on the question. Given the supposed electoral return to service provision, however, it seems remarkable that non-religious rivals would not get in on the act, if only out of self-interest. Moreover, the ideologies that animate some Islamist rivals, particularly on the left, are more than sufficiently concerned with the uplift of the poor to motivate collective action in this arena. One need only look at the clientelistic operations of leftist parties in Latin America to put to rest this idea that a concern for the poor is a special characteristic of religious groups.³ An alternative rendering of the argument that religion makes Islamists more likely to provide services (and to do it well) lies in the role faith plays in making organizations disciplined and cohesive. There are lots of testimonies to the fact that religion is a powerful resource within groups, and that groups like the Muslim Brotherhood

2 See Tareq Yousif Ismael and Rif’at Sa’id. 1990. *The Communist Movement in Egypt: 1920–1988*, Syracuse University Press.

3 See, for example, Michael Penfold-Becerra, “Clientelism and Social Funds: Evidence from Chavez’s Misiones,” *Latin American Politics and Society*, Vol. 49, No. 4, 2007; Simone R. Bohn, “Social Policy and Vote in Brazil: Bolsa Familia and the Shifts in Lula’s Electoral Base,” *Latin American Research Review*, Vol. 46, No. 1, 2011; and Susan C. Stokes, “Perverse Accountability: A Formal Model of Machine Politics with Evidence From Argentina,” *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 99, No. 3, 2005.

and the Salafis are more capable of concerted action (such as providing charity) because the religious authority with which their leaders are imbued, and the religious mission of their organization, inspires greater commitment and follow-through. This sounds plausible on its face, but again, the experience of Leftist parties around the world belies the notion that Islamist organizations have a monopoly on “religion.”

A third account, and the one I tend to agree with, is that Islamists simply possessed greater opportunities for service provision than their rivals. A traditional society replete with mosques and Islamic social service organizations in which, as Janine Clark has documented, both Islamists and ordinary citizens are embedded, provides religious actors with numerous conduits through which to reach potential voters.⁴ A Muslim Brotherhood member who is also a board member of a local Islamic charity is going to be able, at election time, to festoon the offices of that charity with Muslim Brotherhood posters and campaign materials, and to piggy back off of the charity’s ties within the community to identify potential targets for clientelistic appeals (particularly after the fall of Hosni Mubarak, when restrictions on such activities were lessened). For leftist politicians, who are just not as likely to participate in these forms of religious life, there are no real analogues to the religious networks available to Islamists. Labor organizations, which one might expect to serve this function, and which form the backbone of leftist parties around the world, are weak and inchoate in Egypt (a function of both government manipulation and the country’s relatively underdeveloped industrial sector).⁵ This is not to say, however, that non-Islamists were bereft of means of servicing voters—after all, the other great “traditional” form of organization endemic in Egypt is, as several scholars have noted, the institution of the

“local notable,” rooted in the patriarchal affective ties that characterize rural life.⁶ Goods provision has always been an important part of how these local notables garner support, and it is why the only real challenge to Islamists at the local level has ever come from these kinds of actors. During the Mubarak era, many of the most potent local notables were co-opted by the ruling party. After Mubarak’s fall, the power of these notables was temporarily disrupted by the dissolution of the ruling party and a shift in electoral rules that raised the costs of political participation, leaving the political landscape more or less open before Islamists.

The upshot of the above discussion is this: To the extent that service provision is a determinant of Islamist success, it is best conceived of as an intervening variable in a longer causal chain, in which developmental factors and regime strategies combine to create a dearth of opportunities for non-Islamists (particularly leftists) to engage in the same strategies.

What do Islamist social services do?

Now, the account I’ve offered above assumes that Islamist social service provision is an arrow in a largely clientelistic quiver. But this is not the only way of conceiving of it. There are three alternative ways in which service provision may be operating to generate support for Islamists. None of these accounts does violence to the basic intuition I’ve offered above, but they do provide alternative predictions as to the durability of an Islamist support base created by service provision. The first holds that commitment to Islamism is actually *logically prior* to the receipt of Islamist social services. In this telling, services are a “selective incentive” offered to in-group members. In other words, in order to take advantage of Islamic clinics or services, you must be an Islamist. The second account posits that services are offered as a way of *creating* Islamists. Here, as with the clientelistic account, support for Islamists is *logically subsequent* to service provision, which serves to

4 Janine Clark, *Islam, Charity, and Activism: Middle-class Networks and Social Welfare in Egypt, Jordan, and Yemen*, Indiana University Press, 2004. For exploration of a similar dynamic in India, see Tariq Thachil, “Embedded Mobilization: Nonstate Service Provision as Electoral Strategy in India,” *World Politics*, Vol. 63, 2011.

5 Marsha Pripstein Posusney, *Labor and the State in Egypt: Workers, Unions, and Economic Restructuring*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1997.

6 See Ellen Lust, 2006. “Elections under Authoritarianism: Preliminary Lessons from Jordan.” *Democratization* 13(3):456–71; and Lisa Blaydes, *Elections and Distributive Politics in Mubarak’s Egypt*, Cambridge University Press, 2010.

put the recipient in close contact with Islamist providers and facilitate some process of ideological change. Finally, the third alternative account (advanced by, among others, Nathan Brown and Melani Cammett and Pauline Jones Luong) is that Islamist participation in social service projects are simply opportunities for Islamists to build reputations for effectiveness, pro-social behavior, and other positive qualities that stand them in good stead at the ballot box.⁷

Each of these mechanisms leads to different expectations regarding the staying-power of support for Islamists that is generated through service provision. If social services are merely part of a clientelistic strategy, it should not have much persistence beyond the last election. If it is offered *only* to Islamists, or *creates* Islamists, then we should find the relationship between Islamist support and receipt of Islamist services to be robust over time, even in the face of shocks such as the defamation campaign suffered by the Brotherhood in the wake of the June 30 protests and subsequent military coup. Finally, if social services merely create positive reputations for Islamists, then these reputations (and support for Islamists) are potentially open to disruption as voters receive alternative information about those groups.

In the remainder of this memo, I want to try to offer a very preliminary test of these mechanisms. Specifically, I want to see whether the relationship between receipt of Islamic services and support for Islamists changes over time. Our baseline measure of the relationship comes from a survey I conducted with colleagues around Egypt’s first post-Mubarak parliamentary election (November-January 2012). A nationally representative sample of 1,675 adults were asked whether they had ever used health services attached to a mosque or an Islamic charity. Only 347 of them answered in the affirmative. Of these, 147 (or 42 percent) said they had a “lot of confidence” in the Muslim Brotherhood, and 86 (or 25 percent) said they had a “lot of confidence” in the Salafi Call Society (the

Muslim Brotherhood’s main Islamist counterpart and sometime rival). So, our baseline is that there was a strong relationship between the two things, further reinforced by the fact that recipients were more likely than non-recipients to trust the Brotherhood (42 percent to 33 percent) and the Salafis (24 percent to 20 percent). This is represented graphically in the “mosaic” plots in figure 1, which show the conditional distributions of support for each party and receipt of Islamic health services.

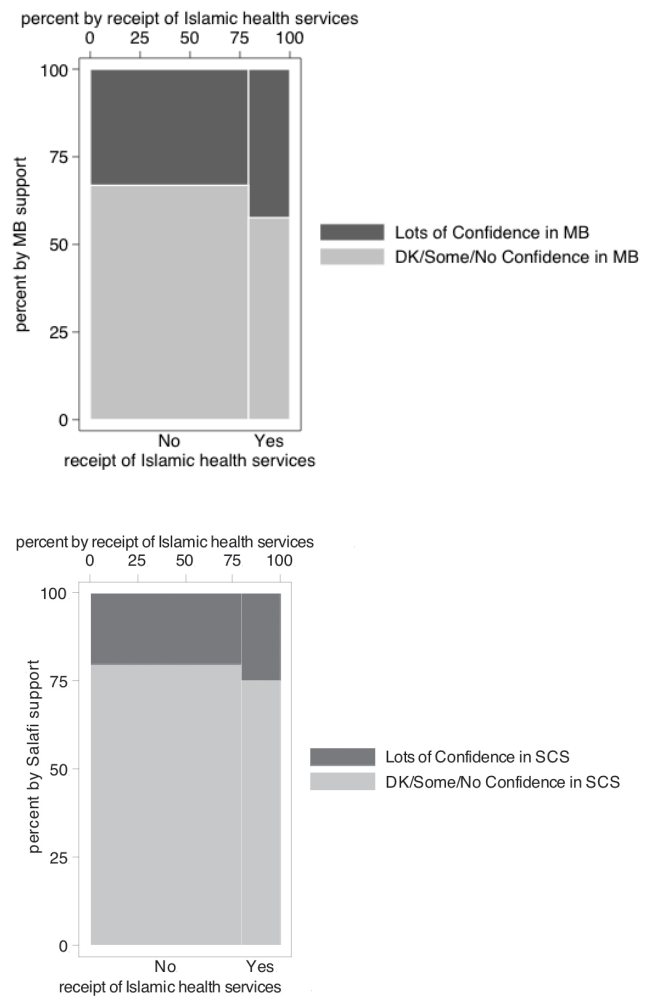


Figure 1. Relationship between service receipt and Islamist support, 2011

In a survey conducted in May 2014, we asked similar (but, alas, not identical) questions to 1,312 adult Egyptians. First, respondents were asked whether in the *previous two years* they had relied on healthcare services attached to a mosque or Islamic charity. Only 168 said they had.

7 Nathan Brown, *When Victory is not an Option: Islamist Movements in Arab Politics*, Cornell University Press, 2012; Melani Cammett and Pauline Jones Luong, “Is there an Islamist political advantage?” *Annual Review of Political Science*, vol. 17, 2014.

This is probably due to a combination of the temporal limitation we introduced to the question (in 2014 we asked about the “previous two years,” whereas the 2011 survey did not include this phrase), and fear of being associated with Islamists at a time when they were actively being repressed. What this means is that our results should be biased *in favor* of showing a strong relationship between social service receipt and support for Islamists, because it’s likely that only the most committed would proudly declare their association with organizations then in bad odor. We then asked people if they had “no trust,” “some trust,” and “lots of trust” in the Muslim Brotherhood and the Salafis. Because so few people were willing to evince lots of trust in Islamists, we code as having high trust anyone who said “lots” or “some,” on the reasoning that even declaring “some” trust in a group like the Muslim Brotherhood was a fairly bold statement at this particular moment in Egyptian history (which was, incidentally, in the weeks prior to Abdel Fattah al-Sisi’s election to the presidency). Again, this was likely to have the effect of biasing our results *in favor* of showing a strong relationship between social service receipt and support for Islamists. Instead, of the 168 people who reported reliance on Islamic services, only 19 (11 percent) said they had “lots of” or “some” trust in the Brotherhood, and only 26 (15 percent) said they had “lots of” or “some” trust in the Salafists. It’s worth nothing that, in terms of absolute percentages, fewer recipients of Islamic services trusted the Brotherhood than non-recipients (11 percent vs. 16 percent), and the same is true of the Salafis (15 percent vs. 19 percent). This is represented graphically in figure 2.

What this suggests is that Islamist services are likely to generate support through the strictly clientelistic mechanism or the “reputation-building” identified by Cammett and Jones-Luong and others, both of which are consistent with the observed diminution in support for Islamists even among those who receive services. Again, however, given that this analysis lacks any controls for potential confounds, it is at best suggestive. Further work clearly remains to be done in this exciting and important area.

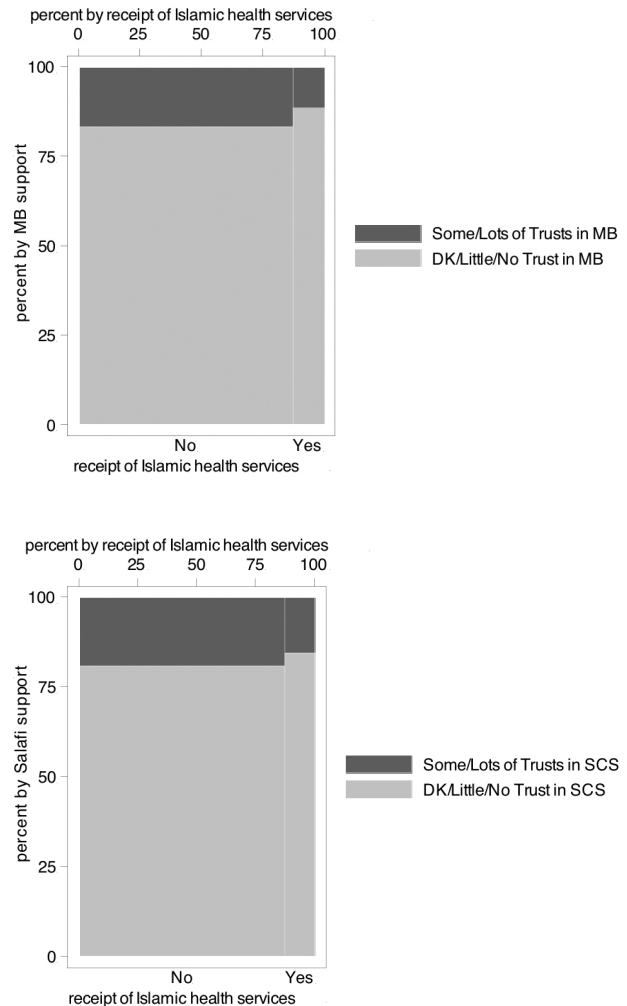


Figure 2. Relationship between service receipt and Islamist support, 2014

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Social Services and Political Islam in Southeast Asia: Two Failures

By Thomas Pepinsky, Cornell University

Social service delivery is an important component of Islamist party and movement strategies in the Middle East and North Africa. It is also believed to be successful: Not only do parties and movements use social service delivery to build movement and electoral strength, they are also successful in doing so. In the Muslim majority states of Southeast Asia, however, social service delivery is not nearly as important to Islamists, and when employed, it is not as effective. The purpose of this short essay is to offer a Southeast Asianist’s perspective on these differences and to suggest some explanations for the “failures” of partisan social service delivery in Muslim Southeast Asia.

Background: Parties and Movements

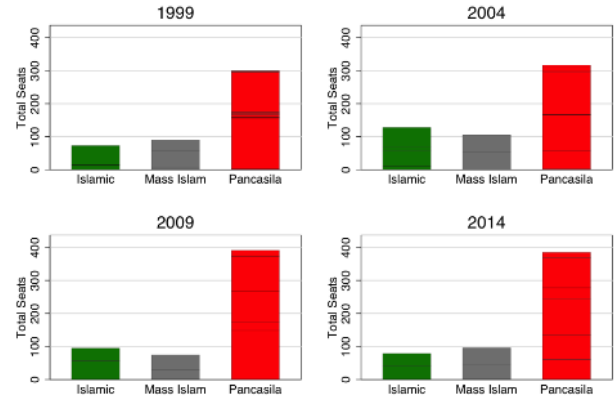
The two relevant Southeast Asian country cases are Indonesia and Malaysia.¹ There are a number of Islamist political parties in Indonesia today (there were others prior to 1957). The two key Islamist parties are the Prosperous Justice Party (PKS) and the United Development Party (PPP), which together have about 15 percent of the vote. Another 15 percent goes to the National Awakening Party (PKB) and the National Mandate Party (PAN), two political parties that are rooted in large mass Muslim organizations (Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah, respectively). I do not consider either PAN or PKB to be Islamist, however, given their decisive choice not to embrace Islam as their party foundation after 1998.² The figure below shows the relative seat shares for Islamic parties, non-Islamic (or “Pancasila-based”) parties, and “Mass Islam”-based parties (PKB and PAN) in the four post-New Order legislative elections.

The dominance of non-Islamic parties is clear, as is the relative parity between Islamist and “Mass Islam” parties.

1 Brunei Darussalam is also a Muslim-majority state, but data on Islamism and Islamists there is scarce. As I am unable to comment knowledgeably about this case, I will not address it here.

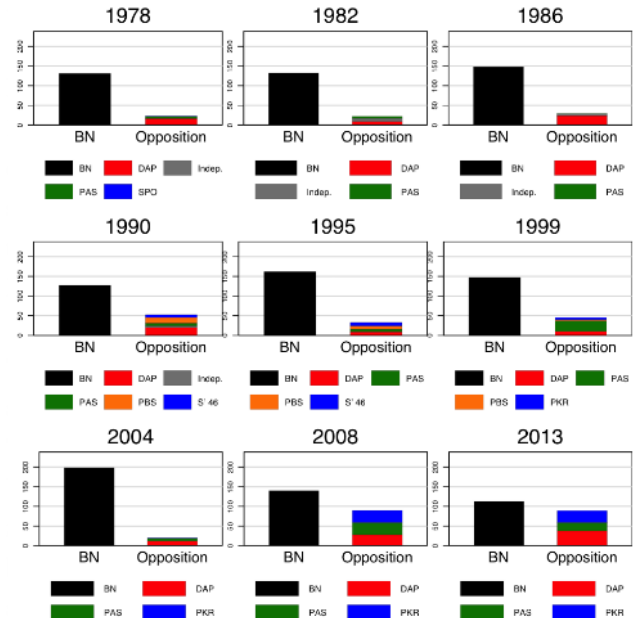
2 Pepinsky, Thomas B., R. William Liddle, and Saiful Mujani. 2012. “Testing Islam’s Political Advantage: Evidence from Indonesia.” *American Journal of Political Science* 56(3), 584-600.

Indonesian Legislative Seat Shares by Party Type, 1999–2014



In Malaysia, there is only one Islamist party, the Pan-Malaysian Islamic Party (PAS). It tends to run in districts with large ethnic Malay majorities (in Malaysia, all Malays are Muslims by law). Moreover, it is most likely to win in heavily Malay districts, which tend to be in the rural northeastern region of peninsular Malaysia. Other Malaysian parties are either ethnically defined, or are multi-ethnic and multi-faith parties based on liberal or social democratic principles. The figure below shows parliamentary seat shares for PAS as well as other opposition parties and for the ruling Barisan Nasional (BN) coalition for every parliamentary election since 1978.

Malaysian Parliamentary Seat Shares, 1978–2013



nor does either aspire to be.³ PKS has a movement base. Originally known as PK, it was organized as a cadre-based party from the moment that Indonesia democratized, growing out of Indonesia's *tarbiyah* movement and drawing on movement repertoires from the Middle East.⁴ PPP has no movement base. It is hard to know how to classify Malaysia's PAS. Organizationally, PAS resembles PKS in Indonesia with its cadre-based system, but it is worth noting that this is a recent development.⁵

Social Services

With this background on the relevant parties and movements, we can now understand the two failures of social service delivery. There are two important clarifying points to make here. First, social services are very important to organizations like NU and Muhammadiyah. Beyond *dakwah* and inculcating Islamic and humanistic values, NU is heavily involved in education and strives to promote inclusive development and equality of opportunity.⁶ Muhammadiyah, for its part, has a dedicated "Council of Social Services" (*Majelis Pelayanan Sosial*), and its leaders stress the importance of education, inclusive development, and other social goods.⁷ Tens of millions of Indonesians go to NU or Muhammadiyah schools, seek treatment at hospitals and clinics, enjoy basic financial services from their credit cooperatives, and so forth. But such strategies have not translated into political power, either for them as movements or for the parties (PKB and PAN) founded by their leaders. Instead, social service provision is by NU and Muhammadiyah is probably best understood as helping to increase their organizational membership, and complementing their

organizational goals of spiritual and social development among Indonesian Muslims.

Second, there are some Islamists in Southeast Asia who do employ social service delivery to win voters and supporters. The prime example is Indonesia's Prosperous Justice Party (PKS). Writes Hamayotsu (2011),

As the party has become involved in competitive and expensive electoral politics, PKS has increasingly emphasized welfare services to recruit and mobilize supporters. The provision of welfare services such as religious schooling and health care was packaged in "Islamic" terms as an essential component of the *dakwah* movement to build a caring, just society. These comprehensive programs have expanded for the most part in urban areas but also have grown, slowly, in rural areas to expand community networks. Disciplined and adaptable organization was key to developing a range of services and programs while keeping their recipients loyal to the movement. PKS has not only expanded a disciplined, cadre-based party machinery staffed with skilled and dedicated young men and women but has forged strategic coalitions with various Islamic nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) to expand service operations. Unlike other Islamist movements in the Middle East that cater mainly to a narrow class interest, PKS mechanisms have worked to cut across class boundaries to forge a link between the party elites and the masses.⁸

The last sentence is important: Hamayotsu contrasts PKS's broad class efforts with "narrow class interest" of Islamists in the Middle East, citing Clark (2004).⁹ I am not enough of an expert in the Middle Eastern cases to evaluate this contrast, but I do know that PKS's party platform stresses inclusive development, just like every other Indonesian political party.¹⁰ It is worth noting, however, that PKS supporters

3 Nahdlatul Ulama was a political party in the 1950s.

4 Machmudi, Yon. 2006. *Islamising Indonesia: The rise of Jemaah Tarbiyah and the Prosperous Justice Party (PKS)*. PhD thesis, Faculty of Asian Studies, Australian National University.

5 Noor, Farish. 2003. "Blood, Sweat, and Jihad: The Radicalization of the Political Discourse of the Pan-Malaysian Islamic Party (PAS) from 1982 Onwards." *Contemporary Southeast Asia* 25(2), 200-232.

6 See <http://www.nu.or.id/a,public-m,static-s,detail-lang,id-ids,1-id,11-t,tujuan+organisasi-.php> and <http://www.nu.or.id/a,public-m,static-s,detail-lang,id-ids,1-id,14-t,lembaga-.php>, for example.

7 See <http://www.muhammadiyah.or.id/id/content-201-list-majelis-lembaga.html> and <http://www.muhammadiyah.or.id/en/content-55-det-program-kerja.html>, for example.

8 Hamayotsu, Kikue. 2011. "The Political Rise of the Prosperous Justice Party in Post-Authoritarian Indonesia." *Asian Survey* 51(5), 971-992.

9 Clark, Janine A. 2004. *Islam, Charity, and Activism: Middle-Class Networks and Social Welfare in Egypt, Jordan, and Yemen*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

10 See, for example, Partai Keadilan Sejahtera. 2008. *Memperjuangkan Masyarakat Madani: Falsafah Dasar Perjuangan dan Platform Kebijakan Pembangunan PK Sejahtera*. Jakarta: Majelis Pertimbangan Pusat Partai Keadilan Sejahtera.

tend to be urban, especially from around Jakarta.

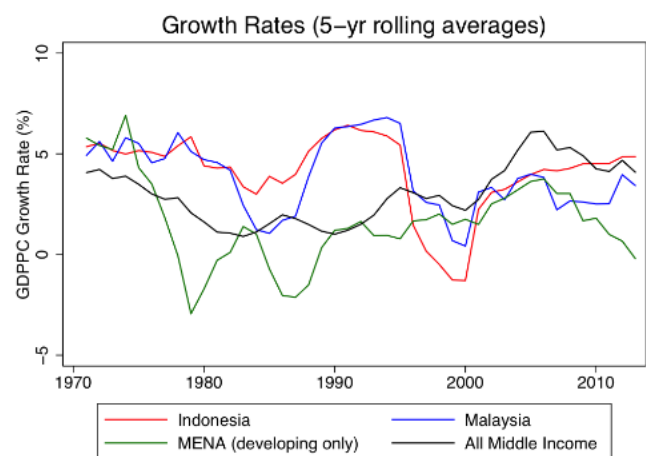
With these two caveats in mind, the failures of social services for Islamists are failures in a *relative* and narrowly *political* sense. They are failures not in raw numbers, but in political power: No mass Muslim movement in Indonesia has been as effective in using social services as part of a mass mobilization strategy as was the Communist Party of Indonesia (PKI) prior to 1965, and Golkar (New Order's official vehicle for mass organization) under the Suharto regime.¹¹ Moreover, what successes PKI/PKS has had since 1998 have been dwarfed in electoral terms by the appeal of nationalists and populists. To be sure, social service provision has probably helped PKS in district-level and provincial-level races, especially in the greater Jakarta region, but for a party with national ambitions its record in national politics remains disappointing. In Malaysia, only the ruling United Malays National Organization (UMNO) party has been truly effective in using social service provision to secure political power on a national scale. PAS's success – especially in those Malaysian states where it has won state-wide office – is not easily linked to social service provision, but is probably best explained by its consistent ideological message, its deep roots in the rural northeastern Malay states, and its willingness to partner with other reformist parties.

Explaining the two failures of social services in Southeast Asia is not straightforward. Additionally, there may be different explanations for these failures in Indonesia versus Malaysia. But there is one similarity between Indonesia

11 The case of PKI is not an exact parallel of the kind of social service provision that NU and Muhammadiyah today engage in, but it was undoubtedly the most consistent advocate for the poorest Indonesians under Sukarno. In mobilizing supporters, the general strategy of the PKI was not to provide services that the state did not provide, but to organize groups (workers, peasants, etc.) to make demands on the state for those services. However, some of the PKI's tools in doing so—literacy campaigns, for example—can be understood as a kind of non-state provision of public goods. There are, moreover, some examples of actual provision of social services and public goods; see e.g. Hindley, Donald. 1964. *The Communist Party of Indonesia, 1951-1963*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press. (See 174-176 on peasants and 193-194 on youth).

In the case of Golkar under the New Order, Golkar *itself* did not provide social services. As the regime's own party, though, it championed the accomplishments of the state in social service provision, and served as a conduit to official patronage.

and Malaysia that comprises an important background condition when understanding how and when Islamists uses social services as a mobilizational strategy: successful developmentalism under non-Islamist rule. To highlight this similarity in the broadest possible terms, and to contrast it with the experiences of the Middle East, the figure below plots rolling averages of annual growth in per capita gross domestic product for Indonesia, Malaysia, the developing countries in the Middle East and North Africa, and all middle-income countries. (Data from World Bank 2014.)¹²



The critical period for Islamist mobilization in the Middle East was from the 1970s to the 1990s, an era of stagnant development.¹³ During the same period, Indonesia and Malaysia were enjoying rapid and robust economic growth – even if that growth ultimately proved to be fragile. The data above show just how exceptional the growth experiences of Indonesia and Malaysia were during this period, relative both to developing countries in the Middle East and North Africa (green line) and relative to all middle income countries (black line). During the early 2000s, Indonesia's and Malaysia's growth performance fell to a level comparable to other middle income countries in the MENA region and elsewhere; since then, however, patterns have diverged once again, driven by a further collapse in growth in the MENA region.

12 World Bank. 2014. *World Development Indicators*. <http://databank.worldbank.org/data/views/variableSelection/selectvariables.aspx?source=world-development-indicators>.

13 Khoury, Philip S. 1983. "Islamic Revivalism and the Crisis of the Secular State in the Arab World," in Ibrahim, ed., *Arab Resources: The Transformation of a Society*. London: Croom Helm, 213-36.

As I have recently argued, one consequence of relatively consistent economic growth in Muslim Southeast Asia is that Islamists there cannot access a mobilizational frame based on the failure of non-Islamist regimes to provide material prosperity.¹⁴ As a result, social service provision probably does not have the same mass political appeal there that it does in countries such as Egypt, Jordan, or Yemen. This may help to explain why social service provision has not been widely embraced by Islamists in either Indonesia or Malaysia, and why it has proven relatively unsuccessful as a national project for PKS in Indonesia.

But there are specific dynamics within the broader context of each country that likely matter even more for explaining the political failure of social service provision. I advance these as hypotheses; further research is needed to probe their ability to explain the nuances of these two important cases and also to tease out their comparative implications. In Indonesia, the depoliticization and subordination of NU and Muhammadiyah under the New Order allowed them to build broad infrastructures for social service provision. They could do this because they were not competitors to Golkar. Upon the collapse of the New Order, when the *tarbiyah* movement entered politics, it confronted a landscape of social service provision that was already densely packed with Islamic social organizations. Indonesians viewed NU and Muhammadiyah as doing good work, and the two groups had no organizational interest in entering politics. PK and PKS would only make political inroads using social service provision as a mobilizational tool in places where NU and Muhammadiyah were relatively ineffective.¹⁵ PPP, the other influential Islamist party in Indonesia, was created to “represent” Islam under the New Order. This freed it from any need to develop deep movement roots or independent organizational capacity, and ensured that it remained subordinate to the New Order political machine. Today, it is a legacy party.

14 Pepinsky, Thomas B. forthcoming. “Political Islam and the Limits of the Indonesian Model.” *Taiwan Journal of Democracy*.

15 One important question—beyond the scope of this short essay—is why NU and Muhammadiyah have not sought to capitalize on their organizational strengths for political purposes, and instead maintained an arms-length relationship with PKB and PAN.

In the Malaysian case, the sheer capaciousness of the Malaysian state and its direct embrace of pro-Malay redistributive policies, mean that social service provision from opposition parties or mass movements is simply not necessary. The close links between Malayness and Islam are important for understanding the Malaysian case, for nearly the entire constituency for an Islamist party or social movement already benefits tangibly from social services provided by the state. In fact, the strategic problem facing PAS is to convince Malays that *they will not lose* their ethnic privileges under non-BN rule, or alternatively, to convince Malays that they *should not want* ethnically-based redistributive policy. Neither of those messages would fit easily into a political strategy that uses social service provision to compete politically against what is already a formidable provider of social services.

Concluding Remarks

The benefit of considering the cases of Muslim Southeast Asia in any discussion political Islam and social service provision in the Muslim Middle East is that the Southeast Asian cases remind us that the use of social service provision as a mobilizational strategy for Islamists is neither obvious, nor always effective. Indonesia and Malaysia are not exactly “non-cases” because social services matter in Southeast Asia and some Islamists there do provide them. But they are cases where social service provision does not readily translate into political power, either because Islamists have little incentive to use these strategies or because those providing social services do not seek political power. Theoretically, this discussion highlights the importance of considering party and movement strategies within the context of the broader ecology of political competition and state capacity in Muslim states.

Thomas Pepinsky is an associate professor and director of undergraduate studies in the Government Department at Cornell University. He is the author of Economic Crises and the Breakdown of Authoritarian Regimes: Indonesia and Malaysia in Comparative Perspective (Cambridge University Press, 2009).

What's so new about the Islamic State's governance?

By Megan A. Stewart, Georgetown University

* This piece appeared on *The Monkey Cage* on *WashingtonPost.com*, October 7, 2014.



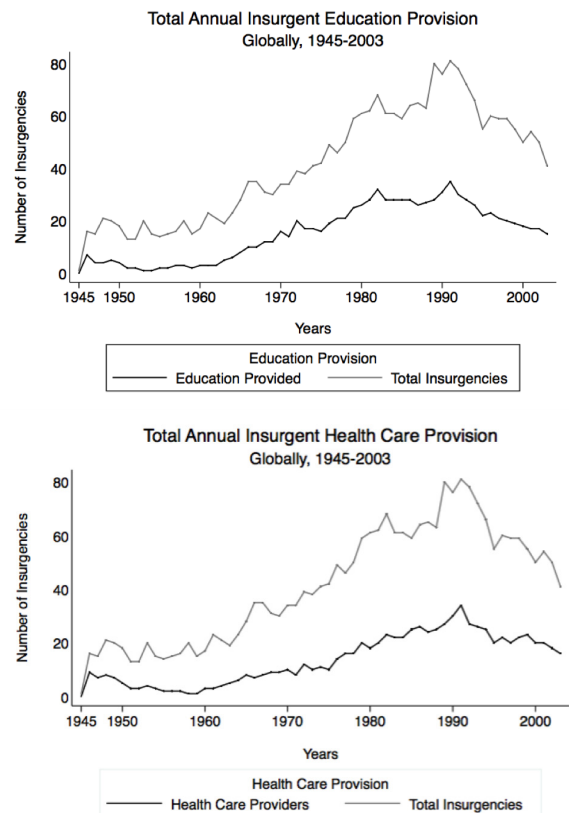
The entrance to a museum in Lebanon's Bekaa Valley that Hezbollah built to commemorate its militants and military victories. Like the Islamic State, Hezbollah has also provided hospitals, schools, and welfare services to civilians in Lebanon since the 1980s. (Author's Photo)

As the United States ramps up military activities against the Islamic State group, President Obama has claimed that the Islamic State's rapid accumulation of territory was both unpredictable and a surprise to U.S. intelligence officials. Not only have Islamic State militants been able to beat back the Iraqi army and consolidate territory throughout Syria and Iraq in a relatively short span of time, but the Islamic State has been able to hold this territory and develop a nascent state-like governing apparatus. As recently as August, the Islamic State provided education, paid municipal salaries, built roads, opened hospitals, maintained electric, trash and sewage services, and even began issuing parking tickets.

Although the militant group's speed may have been surprising, its ability to hold territory and act like an "(Islamic) State" is hardly unusual. Recently on the *Monkey Cage*, Aaron Zelin noted that the Islamic State's

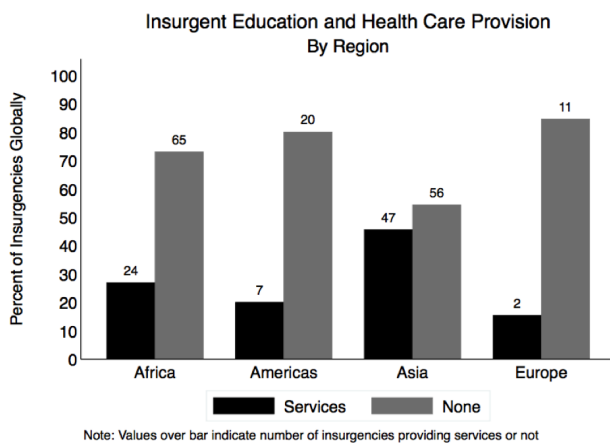
social service provision is hardly unique among jihadist groups, and Daveed Gartenstein-Ross and Amichai Magen describe the challenges of governance that jihadist groups face (but the Islamic State may be particularly adept at working with civilians, despite access to natural resources, as Ariel Ahram writes). Yet, jihadist groups are by no means the first or only set of groups to provide social services and face the challenge of rebel governance.

According to new global data I collected for my dissertation on the social service provision by all active insurgent groups from 1945 to 2003, over one-third of insurgencies have provided education or health care to either members of the insurgency or civilians. This trend is fairly consistent with insurgencies across time: As the number of insurgencies began increasing in the 1960s before declining in the mid-1990s, so too did the number of insurgencies providing social services.



Regional variation, however, is fairly substantial. In Europe, when excluding conflicts such as the breakup of Yugoslavia, just 15 percent of groups provided education or health care to civilians (when including these conflicts, however, the number jumps to over 30 percent). In the Americas and Africa, 27 and 20 percent of insurgencies provided either education or health care to civilians, respectively. In Asia, nearly 46 percent of groups provided some education or health care to civilians.

Although the cause of this regional variation is unclear, three factors may be important: State strength and development in Asia may have been slightly higher than in Africa, making it easier to recruit trained personnel, but lower than in the Americas and Europe, where it would have been more difficult to control territory and set-up a competing branch of social service provision; the influence of Mao in Asia and the proximity to China; and the rising prominence of Islamist groups. What's particularly interesting is although Communist groups have been thought more likely to provide services than other groups, as Zaccariah Mampilly finds, fewer Communist groups have arisen since the end of the Cold War. As the Cold War began to wind down, Islamist groups like Hezbollah and Hamas grew in prominence in the Middle East and in Africa. These groups often possessed a strong sense of *dawa*, or a call to understand a group's interpretation of Islam, often through the provision of social services.



Even more striking, of the insurgencies that provided education and healthcare, nearly 72 percent of insurgencies

provided education to civilians and just over 71 percent of rebel movements provided health care. In other words, if an insurgent group provides social services, they are more likely to offer these services to civilians. Once an insurgency acquired territory, nearly 49 percent would ensure that the civilian population received education or medical care, consistent with recent research on rebel governance.

Why would an insurgent group divert financial and personnel from the insurgency to the civilian population? By providing services, not only does the insurgency lose critical resources, but if it holds territory, it can also become a clear target for the same U.S. airstrikes: The rebel group cannot hide, unless it abandons the territory it has sought to control. Some scholars have argued that social service provision helps attract recruits, or recruits that are more committed to a particular cause are more willing to engage in higher levels of violence. Some groups, such as the Viet Cong in Vietnam, used education as a tool to monitor the population for potential threats. Several insurgent organizations that provided education and health care achieved their goals or received key concessions, such as the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front in El Salvador, the People's Liberation Army in China, or the Eritrean People's Liberation Front, but a systematic link between the two has not yet been determined. However, over 33 percent of groups that achieved outright victory provided education or health care. Moreover, although social service provision may not necessarily predict success, it may stave off failure. The Karen National Union of Burma, for example, which has been active since 1949, is the longest ongoing insurgency in the world and has been developing an incredibly robust education and health care system. While the KNU has not achieved its independent state, it has not ended its over half-century campaign.

What does this mean in terms of U.S. foreign policy? While the Islamic State group's territorial control and social service provision might make it a clear target for airstrikes, it is unclear whether or not the airstrikes alone will help the United States achieve its military and policy goals. Because the Islamic State has embedded itself so

deeply inside the civilian population, it may be difficult to limit the number of civilian casualties. Even if airstrikes are successful, the United States will have to contend with a power vacuum in the areas where Islamic State militants formerly held control. This power vacuum could open up the space for more violent and dangerous insurgents to consolidate control, while placing the health and well being of civilians that relied on the Islamic State's services at risk. As Andrew Shaver and Gabriel Tenorio point out, the lack of services after the U.S. withdrawal in 2011 has been a major source of discontent in Iraq, and the authors

advocate for a counter insurgency strategy that consists of both military action and addressing civilians' governance needs. Although certainly not the main factor in determining U.S. foreign policy against the group's threat, the Islamic State's territorial control and social service provision is certainly an important one.

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When jihadists learn how to help

By Aaron Y. Zelin, King's College London

** This piece appeared on The Monkey Cage on WashingtonPost.com, May 7, 2014.*

Within the academic literature on global jihadi organizations there has been a major lacuna on the issue of groups evolving to become more than just violent actors; many now act as social movements, too. While no one denies this change, little has been written about it, save for smaller non-academic pieces. Thus far, there have only been examples of localized dawa (calling people to the particular individual or group's interpretation of Islam/proselytization), social services, and proto-governance efforts, even if the organizations profess a transnational ideology and goal. However, this trend is no longer true: New evidence suggests that Ansar al-Sharia in Libya (ASL) is conducting these types of activities not just in Libya, but also abroad.

ASL has a number of identities as an organization: On the one hand, it's a charity, a security service and a health services and religious education provider. On

the other hand, it's a militia, a terrorist organization, and it trains individuals for foreign jihads. While many jihadi organizations are involved in the latter within transnational networks and a smaller percentage are active in the former on a local level, ASL is the only global jihadi organization that has an international dawa campaign. ASL's unprecedented reach belies the notion that the organization has only local aims, while it is in fact attempting to cultivate an international constituency based on aid and proselytization to its strict legal interpretations of Islam.

Theoretically speaking, there is now a spectrum of jihadi organizations that can be described as purely focused on violent jihad on a local or global level and that use dawa as their main organizing principle, yet still utilize violence on a local or global level. There are also mixed cases in which neither violent jihad nor dawa take precedence over the other. These categories are not necessarily static for organizations and can change depending on endogenous and exogenous factors.

Table 1. Types of Jihadi Organizations

	Local	Transnationally
Violent Jihad-First	Gamaa al-Islamiyya, Abdullah Azzam Brigades	Al Qaeda, Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham
Mixed	Jabhat al-Nusra, al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, Harakat al-Shabab al-Mujahidin	No known cases
Dawa-First	Ansar al-Sharia in Tunisia	Ansar al-Sharia in Libya

The most important trend within the global jihadi movement after the Arab uprisings in 2011 is its ability to step beyond just the terrorism box to add tools to its repertoire to expand its support from its clandestine base. While it is true that organizations such as Harakat al-Shabab al-Mujahideen in Somalia had been involved in dawa and proto-governance principles before 2011, it became more of a norm with the open spaces provided by new freedoms or liberated territories, depending on the country-specific context. More freedoms have allowed global jihadi groups from Yemen to Tunisia to Libya to Syria to evolve into multipurpose organizations.

In the context of Yemen, with al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) and its front group Ansar al-Sharia in Yemen (ASY), and even more so in Syria, with groups like Jabhat al-Nusra (JN) and to a lesser extent the Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham (ISIS), these organizations have become true insurgent forces and are relying on the population as much as the population has come to rely on them. This is partially a result of the implementation of the lessons learned from the failed takeover of territory by ISIS's predecessor al Qaeda in the Land of Two Rivers (Iraq) last decade. It is true that ISIS has repeated its own mistakes again in the Syrian context, but in Iraq, since its re-emergence, ISIS has been a lot more adept at dealing with the local populace (though part of it also has to do with the Maliki government's alienation of the Sunni populations, too).

In non-war zone contexts, ASL along with its neighbor sister organization, Ansar al-Sharia in Tunisia (AST), have been able to become true social movements within each of their countries. While AST was more or less a national organization from its beginning, ASL had to build out its support from its base in Benghazi to other areas such as Tripoli, Ajdabiya, Sirte, Darna and the Gulf of Sidra, among other smaller locales. This success was a result of its dawa efforts such as providing food, medical care, religious education and other services to the poor and others. ASL has also helped fix roads and bridges, repaired homes of the needy, provided slaughtered meats on the main Muslim holidays of Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha, and mediated disputes between tribes. As part of all of these activities, it has passed out custom ASL-approved Islamic literature, highlighting the twin purpose of service and the call to Islam.

What makes ASL stand out compared to all of the other groups, though, is that it has internationalized its dawa campaign to areas that are not part of its considered traditional constituency within the borders of Libya to a few other countries. ASL has conducted a number of campaigns to help the people of "Bilad al-Sham," Gaza, and Sudan. This illustrates that ASL is not just rhetorically talking about assisting the umma (Muslim community), but actually acting on it and trying to show that while its home base is indeed in Libya, the "imagined" umma is just as much a part of this constituency, since borders are irrelevant from its perspective. This is highlighted by the name of ASL's overseas dawa efforts: "The Convoy Campaign of Goodness To Our People in 'X-location.'"

ASL organized its first such effort organized in November 2012, sending aid packages to Syria and Gaza, including its dawa literature. ASL did the same thing Feb. 23, 2013, promoting it as "aid to our injured people in Syria and Gaza." These first two campaigns were relatively low key and did not take on the same type of theatrics and show of organizational strength and capacity as later convoys. What highlighted this new range in ability was its campaign in Sudan in late August and early September 2013.

In early August 2013, many locations in Sudan were ravaged by severe flooding. An estimated 14 of 18 Sudanese states were affected, along with more than 300,000 people, with more than 25,000 homes destroyed, and almost 50 people killed. In addition to the traditional aid agencies that went to assist in response to the natural disaster, ASL also took part, and openly, too – members did not hide evidence of their affiliation. This shows that ASL is not worried about perceptions or inability to operate in light of its terrorist and other potentially illegal activities inside Libya.

On Aug. 28, 2013, ASL prepared a number of items for cargo delivery to Khartoum International Airport on Aug. 31-Sept. 1. The first batch included five tons of medicine, 12 tons of grains and legumes and eight tons of children's milk. The second batch had 24 tons of clothing and 1.5 tons of floor carpets for mosques. All of this was marked with ASL's logo. The level of aid in itself is outstanding, but the fact that it came from a global jihadi organization and it was able to procure it all and send it safely to Sudan's capital airport openly also says a lot about its organizational capacity as well as potential dealings with the Sudanese government.

On arrival, the unnamed head of ASL's mission to Sudan, who landed there with the cargo among other ASL leaders and members, and who was wearing an ASL-logoed jacket, was interviewed by the local Sudanese TV station al-Fadaiyya. ASL also had a team of members from Libya and hired Sudanese workers to help unload and place on large tractors all of the aid, further highlighting that it was not attempting to hide or obscure ASL's presence or involvement in the campaign. On Sept. 2, a number of ASL members, including Sheikh Faiz Attiya, who leads many dawa events inside Libya, toured a number of locales affected by the flooding just outside of Khartoum: Marabu Elsharif, Taiba al-Kebabish and Karayib. Attiya also interviewed local sheikhs and children about the events.

Months later, from Jan. 19-23, 2014, ASL again showed its organizational capabilities abroad when sending aid personally and openly to Syria. It raised tens of thousands

of dollars to undertake this specific initiative. The tagline for this campaign was "Uplifting the umma, freedom from forced rule, Western dominance, and uplifted by the goodness, pride, and dignity under the law of *rahman* (one of the holiest of the 99 names of God within Islam)." ASL sent three batches of aid to the rural Latakiya towns of Salma and Kasab and others nearby. Similar to efforts in Sudan, the men involved with delivering the aid to these villages wore ASL-logoed shirts or jackets as well as the boxes of aid brandishing the logo, too.

The first batch included slaughtered cow meat that the men prepared, as well as passing out boxes of aid in a large area. The second batch had a more personal touch: ASL members went door-to-door with boxes and had a list of specific names of individuals to receive the aid. The third batch was of large wheat packages that they then used at the local bread factory to make freshly baked bread, which was then given to locals. ASL members also provided large generators along with drums of gas needed for them in the Jabal Akrad region. This again illustrates the high level of organization needed ahead of time, since ASL is not based in Syria yet was able to gain access to local resources and have the connections on the ground to know where to go and to whom to give the aid.

The most recent campaign occurred Jan. 24, when ASL responded rapidly to an Israeli airstrike carried out in Gaza only a couple of days prior. The campaign was marketed as "We are over here in Libya and our eyes are on Jerusalem." To help the families that had property destroyed, ASL quickly raised money and sent it off to its ASL contact inside of Gaza. The contact then went door-to-door in the al-Nafaq neighborhood offering cash-filled envelopes that had ASL's logo on them to those affected, "whose houses were damaged by the shelling of the Zionists." This suggests the possibility of ASL's network having membership inside Gaza, due to the rapidity of this campaign. This could make sense in light of the information that ASL, alongside AST and Ansar al-Sharia in Egypt, had at the very least received advice from Palestinian Salafis on administration, organization and management in 2012.

Put together, this highlights a potential future in which jihadi organizations are not only involved in potential terror and training locally or transnationally, but also exporting their local dawa campaigns abroad to facilitate the spread of their ideology via new constituencies. Of course, to go beyond the local arena, as ASL has, requires a lot of organization, resources, capital and connections in other countries to allow the facilitation and acceptance of its campaign(s), especially since it has been done so openly, even though it has been designated a terrorist organization by the United States. This adds a whole new layer to the meaning of the global jihad and how the various global groups might try to engage populaces outside of their local areas of operation. Whether this softer-power approach works or is possible due to legal constraints or ability to

operate abroad in a legitimate fashion remains to be seen. At the very least, ASL is showing that it has the ability to operate transnationally and that it has broader aims and concerns beyond the borders of Libya. Indeed, ASL is the first truly global jihadi dawa organization.

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Neoliberal Islam and Emergent Forms of Social Service Provision in Turkey

By Gizem Zencirci, Providence College

The study of Islamic social services generally relies on one of two analytical frameworks that attribute Islamist advantage either to political strategy or religious culture. The political strategy framework assumes that Islamist movements use social service provision as a medium for distributing clientelistic favors and acquiring electoral support. In this view, Islamists are seen as having an advantage due to their success in creating and consolidating patron-client networks. The second framework, in contrast, attributes the success of Islamist social service provision to religious-cultural reasons. In this perspective, Islamist advantage is attributed to their presumed cultural affinity with religious notions of need, charity, and poverty.

In contrast to these dominant perspectives I advocate for an economic explanation that takes into account

both how Islamist movements benefit from processes of neoliberalization, as well as how neoliberal technologies of poverty governance have been incorporated into Islamist social service provision. Thus, I suggest that the Islamist advantage neither stems exclusively from political strategy or religious culture, but rather is the outcome of the successful blending of neoliberal ethics and religious values.

The Turkish case is illustrative of this phenomenon. Since the Justice and Development Party (JDP) came to power in 2002, the Turkish welfare regime has acquired both neoliberal and Islamic characteristics. This neoliberal-Islamic welfare regime is marked by the incorporation of market logics into the financing of assistance programs, the selection of eligible recipients and the distribution of monetary and in-kind assistance to the poor. The success of Islamic social service provision in Turkey cannot be

understood without paying attention to the complexities of neoliberal Islam.

Justice and Development Party and the Reconfiguration of the Turkish Welfare Regime

The Turkish case also helps us understand how Islamists reshape national welfare regimes when they move from opposing the state to being the state. Because alternative social service provision by Islamist movements are a constitutive element of their public legitimacy, understanding how these movements act when they become responsible for national welfare policy is important.

One of the reasons behind JDP's ongoing success has been its ability to create a cross-class coalition between the rising Muslim bourgeoisie and the poor. By combining a commitment to free market principles with a dedication to Islamic social values, the JDP has garnered support among large segments of the Turkish population.

JDP's variant of Islamic neoliberalism was also instrumental in its reconfiguration of Turkey's welfare regime. On the one hand, the JDP eliminated the public benefits system that characterized the country's pre-existing developmental welfare regime. For example, the 2004 Law on Social Security and General Health Insurance introduced incentives for the provision of specific health services and insurance programs by the market. On the other hand, social assistance programs which targeted the poor expanded. In 2004, the JDP transformed the previously existing Social Fund (which was created in 1986) into a Social Solidarity and Mutual Assistance (SSMA) Ministry. The number of SSMA foundations (public welfare offices) increased and they were given more responsibility. In addition, the JDP encouraged the creation of SSMA associations (private charity organizations) that were expected to assist the state in social service provision even if they were legally part of the NGO sector. As a result, many Islamic associations began to focus on social service provision instead of political activism. Further, the state endorsed a moral language which encouraged charitable giving. By referencing Islamic religious values and glorifying

the Ottoman heritage of social generosity, the JDP sought to channel the philanthropic donations of the new Muslim bourgeoisie toward the provision of social services.

This social assistance-based welfare regime integrated market ethics with religious values at various stages of the poverty alleviation process.

Financing Assistance

Although JDP's neoliberal welfare regime was largely and somewhat paradoxically funded by public funds, private Islamic philanthropy also played a key role in financing social service provision. Islamic business firms often donated food, clothing, and monetary funds to public and private welfare organizations. In addition to these large-scale donations, which either consolidated already existing business-political relationships or confirmed those that are in the making, many welfare organizations also collected smaller donations from the Turkish public. To this end, many organizations began to use humanitarian advertisements. These charitable ads juxtaposed visual representations of the ideal poor, such as the elderly, women, and orphans with slogans of brotherhood, solidarity, and goodness. In addition to participating in national and transnational *kurban* (sacrifice) campaigns, prospective donors could choose from a plethora of relief and developmental projects (e.g., building schools, hospitals, wells) organized in a number of Muslim countries including Niger, Sudan, and Palestine. The goal of these charitable projects was to appeal to the religious sensibilities of the new Muslim middle classes who struggled to balance the moral dilemmas of pious wealth. In such a conjuncture, generosity became a venue for self-fulfillment and not just a religious duty performed in order to become closer to God.

The Deserving Poor

In contrast to traditional Islamic charity, which assumes that the needy do not have to prove their status in order to be assisted, under the new welfare regime acquiring information came to be seen as the proper way to determine whether an applicant was truly deserving of assistance.

The collection, analysis, and cataloging of information about the poor began as soon as a person applied for aid. As part of their application, each potential recipient was expected to provide a number of documents such as a cover letter, a completed application form, a photocopy of one's national ID card, and a *muhtar*¹-issued poverty certificate, etc. These documents were filed under the personal folder of each applicant, which were then handed to "social investigation" teams – ad hoc groups consisting of a mix of volunteers and workers who conducted home visits in order to determine whether or not the applicant's household situation matched the information on his/her file. Social investigation teams observed the conditions of the household, asked questions, and took extensive notes during these visits. Each team was provided with a "Social Investigation Form" that included questions to be asked to each applicant. Decisions about whether or not, and if so what type of assistance would be provided was decided via social investigation. As a technique of eligibility, social investigation focused on finding the truth about poverty because as one volunteer put it, "Applicants were known to lie." These concerns about truthfulness lead to the institution of a new information system, Social Assistance Information System (SOYBIS), which centralized information about each applicant that received social assistance from state welfare foundations. Presented as a model that would bring "service with one-click," SOYBIS aimed to make sure that applicants would not be able to falsify their information in order to collect assistance from a variety of organizations. These new technologies of determining deservingness made the poor an object of state surveillance, thereby transforming social assistance into a new technique for disciplining the poor.

Distributing Assistance

In addition, new technologies for distributing social assistance also emerged. First, since charitable giving traditionally skyrocketed during the month of Ramadan, many supermarket chains began to offer "Ramadan packages." The package system reformed the religious practice of giving to the poor during the month of Ramadan. These packages generally included imperishable

food items such as grains, pasta, rice, and canned goods. These packages could be purchased for between 25 and 50 TL (12 – 25 USD) depending upon the generosity of the individual donor. Ramadan packages were also used by welfare organizations. Both during the month of Ramadan and the rest of the year, organizations frequently distribute food boxes by packaging goods donated by Islamic business such as supermarket chains.

Despite its popularity, the package system came under scrutiny because it was argued to constrain individual agency: the recipients had no say in what would be included in the food boxes. In order to address this shortcoming, the "social market" was invented. The social market is a collection of rooms usually adjacent to public welfare offices and private charity organizations. These rooms were set up in a market-like manner. Shelves mounted on the room's walls carried clothing items, shoes, and food. Most social markets also included shopping carts, a barcode system and checkout counters. The market-like character of social assistance distribution was argued to enhance the "freedom" of recipients who could pick and choose what they really need instead of receiving "hand-outs."

In short, the Turkish case illustrates that pro-market values have transformed the terrain of Islamic social services in novel ways. In response to the key questions of this workshop, I would argue that the Islamist advantage neither exclusively stems from effective political strategy nor can be merely attributed to a cultural affinity with "indigenous" values. Rather, Islamists have been effectively able to adjust their social services within a market-oriented conjuncture by bringing Islamic values and neoliberal ethics in alignment. Future research into this topic might explore how Islamic movements negotiate pro-market and anti-market understandings of charity, need and poverty, and how these movements might continue to provide social services without adopting neoliberal technologies of governance.

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1 *Muhtar* are the elected heads of neighborhoods and villages.

The Project on Middle East Political Science

The Project on Middle East Political Science (POMEPS) is a collaborative network that aims to increase the impact of political scientists specializing in the study of the Middle East in the public sphere and in the academic community. POMEPS, directed by Marc Lynch, is based at the Institute for Middle East Studies at the George Washington University and is supported by the Carnegie Corporation and the Henry Luce Foundation. For more information, see <http://www.pomeps.org>.