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“WE THINK THAT THIS JOB PLEASURES ALLAH”: ISLAMIC CHARITY, SOCIAL ORDER, AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF MODERN MUSLIM SELFHOODS IN JORDAN

Abstract

This article explores the role of Islam in contemporary Jordanian charities and social welfare organizations. In what ways do these organizations relate to Islamic traditions in their work? What role do religious convictions play in the construction of modern selfhoods among their employees and volunteers? Do these constructions relate to broader, globally relevant, social imaginaries? The article tries to answer these questions by applying a novel analytical framework to qualitative data from fieldwork conducted among Jordanian charities and social welfare organizations. We treat these organizations as “social sites” for the reinterpretation of Islamic traditions in the context of global modernity as well as for the construction of meaningful forms of modern selfhoods among their members. In doing so, we argue that these specifically Islamic identity constructions can fruitfully be understood with reference to different types of globally relevant social imaginaries.

“We think that this job pleases Allah.” This is what the female volunteers in the Jordanian Islamic charity Jam‘iyyat Anwar al-Huda al-Islamiyya (Light of Faith Islamic Association) kept telling us, when asked about their involvement in the organization. Established in 1982, this women’s organization provides assistance to the poor in the local neighborhood. Like many of Jordan’s charities and social welfare organizations, volunteers and staff in Anwar al-Huda (AH) draw on an Islamic discourse when explaining the rationale of their work. In this sense, they are embedded in a centuries-long Islamic tradition in which charity and social welfare in varying forms have been an integral part of religious belief and practice. However, such activities and therewith the concrete manifestations of this tradition have always been conditioned by historically specific contexts and social imaginaries of a nonreligious character. Consequently, the understanding and experience of “pleasing God” has historically and socially contingent meanings.¹ In what ways do contemporary Jordanian charities and social welfare

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organizations relate to Islamic traditions? What role do religious convictions play in the construction of modern selfhoods among their employees and volunteers? Do these constructions relate to broader, globally relevant, social imaginaries?

In this article, we try to answer these questions by applying a novel analytical framework to data from fieldwork that includes qualitative interviews and participant observations conducted among Jordanian charities and social welfare organizations in 2006, 2007, and 2010.² Regarding their religious dimension, the article argues that in these organizations we can observe processes of the reinterpretation of Islamic traditions in the context of global modernity. We thus perceive religious traditions not to be in principal contradistinction to modernity. Instead of applying the conceptually crude dichotomy between tradition and modernity, we adopt the position of “civilizational theories” in viewing religious and other traditions as constitutive elements in the construction of multiple modernities.³

Much scholarly work on Islamic charities has focused narrowly on their role in formal politics, whether as fronts for militant networks such as al-Qa‘ida or as supporters of national political parties and resistance groups in Palestine, Sudan, Afghanistan, and elsewhere.⁴ Other analyses have sought to explore more broadly the social, economic, and cultural dimensions of these organizations, including issues such as the privatization of social welfare, women’s Islamic activism, and the relation between Islamic charities and the middle class.⁵ Janine Clark, for example, situates her study in the discussion around the moderation of Islamist activism, identifying the new educated middle class as the central carrier of modern Islamic social institutions.⁶ In what follows we engage with, and add a new dimension to, this second strand of research. Through the theoretical prism of a number of globally relevant social imaginaries of the modern, we treat charity and social welfare organizations in Jordan as “social sites” for the construction of meaningful forms of modern selfhoods among their members.⁷ In analyzing these organizations within a global modern context, we identify them as vehicles for social engagement that are highly relevant both for negotiations over Jordan’s modern Islamic identity and for the formation of individual modern Muslim subjectivities. The purpose of this article is not to provide a detailed and comprehensive ethnography of Jordanian charities but rather to demonstrate the relevance of global social imaginaries for contemporary Muslim identity constructions and therewith to challenge the intertwined assumptions of the exclusiveness of Western modernities and the alterity of Islamic ones.

The argumentation takes four major steps. First, we present our analytical framework, which is derived from social theory and combines theories of successive modernities with poststructuralist approaches to the formation of modern subjectivities as well as with some concepts borrowed from the sociology of religion. This section discusses several modern social imaginaries as ideal types that we then use in later sections to interpret our empirical observations.⁸ Second, we provide a brief overview of the historical context in which Jordanian charities operate, focusing especially on the ambiguous relationship between the state and the Muslim Brotherhood movement and on their respective conceptions of Islamic modernity. Third, moving on to the actual analysis of charities and social welfare organizations in Jordan, we then present four organizational ideal types, exploring the different roles they play in negotiating the Islamic character of the country’s social order. Fourth and finally, we zoom in on the microlevel, observing processes of individual subjectivity formation among these organizations’

members. We underpin this interpretative analysis with examples from our interviews and participant observations, which we consider to be representative of the findings of our fieldwork.

MODERN SUBJECTIVITIES, ISLAMIC REFORM, AND
CONTEMPORARY CHARITY ORGANIZATIONS

Social theorists have identified in the “affirmation of ordinary life” a major feature of modernity. According to Charles Taylor, this term designates aspects of human life that are concerned with production and reproduction.⁹ He perceives work and the family to be central institutions for the formation of meaningful modern selfhoods.¹⁰ Similarly, Andreas Reckwitz has outlined three areas in which processes of modern subjectivity formation take place: as working subject, as subject of private and intimate relations (intimacy), and as subject of technologies of the self.¹¹ Each area is characterized by networks of discourses and social practices that offer various arrangements of institutionalized modes of behavior and symbolic orientations through which modern individuals interpret themselves in a framework of collectively acknowledged social dispositions.¹²

Reckwitz constructs three ideal types of subject cultures in light of the historical development of so-called Western modernities: the classical bourgeois subject, the peer-group oriented subjectivity of the salaried masses, and the postmodern subject of the creative worker and entrepreneur. The first form gains autonomy as a morally sovereign individual and is predominantly a subject of work. In terms of intimacy, marriage developed into the central moral institution and literacy—writing and reading—became a central practice of self-formation. Diaries, letters, newspapers, and books are media of the hermeneutical self-reflection of the bourgeois. With the beginning of the 20th century, Reckwitz observes the gradual erosion of the hegemonic status of bourgeois culture in the West, which became replaced by the peer-group-oriented culture of the salaried masses. In contradistinction to the rationalistic and introverted self of the bourgeois, this second form of subjectivity was characterized by an extroverted and consumption-oriented generalization of behavior. Bourgeois individual work ethics gave way to collectively binding practices of efficient work coordination of the managerial type and the classical bourgeois subject’s culture of literacy was superseded by new practices in which audiovisual media, modes of consumption, the body, and public performances were of growing importance.¹³ The third form of subjectivity formation, then, advocates a self whose imaginary is related to individualized patterns of consumption and creative action. This so-called postmodern subject culture combines the type of the creative worker with the entrepreneur, rejecting the tropes of rational calculability, bureaucratic organization, and technical coordination that characterized the managerial imaginary of the peer-group oriented type. The use of digital media has facilitated highly individualized forms of work associated with this imaginary of the creative entrepreneur who is engaged in a number of shifting projects.¹⁴

These three ideal types of modern subjectivities largely parallel a sequence of social orders that has been conceptualized in theories of successive modernities. Scholars such as Beck, Giddens, and Wagner distinguish among successive stages of modernity. The first form, associated with a “restricted liberal modernity” in 19th-century

bourgeois society, was characterized by an elitist application of morally and rationally grounded liberal rules, largely excluding the broader population from its modern liberal cosmos. This classical bourgeois society was replaced by a state-centered model of modernity that included the population in terms of the organized masses. The major pillars of this form of organized modernity, predominant during the first half of the 20th century, was a collectively shared belief in linear progress, instrumental rationality, and the top-down management of society. In the second part of the 20th century, this model gradually gave way to what has been called second or high modernity.¹⁵ This form of modernity is characterized by the disembedding of political and economic institutions from the nation-state context and by the continuous experience of doubt and multiple choices. As such, organized modernity with its focus on collectivity has gradually been replaced by the more individualist and pluralist patterns of second modernity, often also described as postmodernity.¹⁶ Contrary to Ulrich Beck and Anthony Giddens, we perceive these successive forms of social order and modern subjectivity formation not as radical breaks. Although we concede that these forms have achieved a relative hegemony in successive historical phases, these phases do not represent a process of linear replacement. As hegemonic forms, bourgeois, first, and second modernities have never been without competitors and some elements of previous types have lived on in later ones. Similar to Reckwitz, we therefore understand these types as different horizons in ongoing cultural conflicts about legitimate representations of modernity.¹⁷

Taylor and Reckwitz have derived their concepts from the European historical experience and they are inclined to assign the analytical relevance of their theories to “Western” societies alone. This reductionist position is often mirrored in Islamic studies. An overview on recent scholarship on Muslim societies concluded that contemporary studies on Islam still tend to conceptualize modernity as an external colonizing force rather than perceiving it as an integral part of Muslim societies.¹⁸ In both social theory and Islamic studies, the binary between “Western” and “non-Western” societies still plays an important role. Contrary to this position, we contend that a critical application of concepts of contemporary social theory in a Muslim context can tell us something about ongoing social transformations in Muslim societies. These concepts should certainly not be understood as normative blueprints of the ways in which these societies ought to unfold, but rather as heuristic instruments for analytical and interpretative purposes. In applying our analytical framework, we can in fact detect similarities between subject formations in Islamic history and Western history. The course of modern Islamic reform, from the elitist 19th-century movement around Muhammad ‘Abduh through organized Islamist mass movements such as the Muslim Brotherhood in the first part of the 20th century to contemporary forms of transnational Islamic networks and religious markets, share clear similarities with the three dominant subject formations of European history outlined above. As in European modernity, Muslim subjectivity formations have related to competing elements of cultural types defined by cultivated moral individuality, collectively sanctioned peer-group behavior, and more loosely organized forms of consumerist and creative self-made identities. However, in the historical formation of modern Muslim subjectivities, religion seems to play a rather different role from the one it plays in the mainstream European trajectory, in which religious identity markers seem to have declined. In Muslim societies, the classical bourgeois, the organized modern,

and the postmodern formations have often been constructed with explicit reference to Islamic traditions.

In order to observe the role of religious traditions in shaping Muslim modernities, we need to clarify what we mean by the term religion. In the ongoing heated debate about the general viability of definitions of religion we take a pragmatic stance. Building on modern systems theory and Max Weber's theory of religious social action, we do not claim to define religion as such, but to use concepts of religion as analytical constructs in the analysis of our empirical observations. According to modern systems theory, religion has gained relative autonomy as a subsystem of modern society by restricting its specific form of communication to communication with the supernatural. The communicative boundaries of modern religion are drawn by binary codes such as transcendent/immanent, profane/sacred, or blessed/cursed, distinguishing the religious system from other societal subsystems such as politics, law, economics, or science. From this perspective, modernization does not imply the disappearance of religion but rather the transformation of religious communication into a recursive and self-referential system of communication distinct from other domains of society.¹⁹

At the microlevel, however, these communicative boundaries of the macrostructures become blurred. Individual actors combine various forms of communication and social action in rather heterogeneous ways. For individual subjectivity formation, references to religious traditions may play a role or not. Under modern conditions, religion also offers individual actors a collectively shared reservoir for normative and moral guidance, helping us to understand the world, to rationalize our complex experiences, and to order them into a meaningful "cosmos."²⁰ In the context of modernity, however, religious ethics are in constant competition with ethical demands and cognitive patterns from other—nonreligious—spheres of social life. Given the plurality of possible ends, scholars in the Weberian tradition do not define religious social action by its ends,²¹ but by its means, by the communication of human beings with supernatural forces.²²

These theoretical and conceptual reflections will guide and organize our empirical observations on the following pages. We want to show the ways in which the organizational rationales of Jordanian charities and social welfare organizations, as well as the individual identity constructions of their members, relate to different secular social imaginaries and to religious traditions in shaping historically specific Islamic modernities. We try to understand these identity constructions through the lenses of the above-mentioned models of successive modernities and the respective three types of modern subjectivity formation. We can thereby observe the heterogeneous ways in which organizational and individual identity constructions combine patterns of these ideal types with religious elements in historically and socially contingent forms.

CHARITY, STATE FORMATION, AND JORDAN'S ISLAMIC IDENTITY

The history of organized charity in present-day Jordan precedes the official foundation of the state in May 1946. The first explicitly Islamic charity organization, al-Maqasid al-Hijaziyya, was founded in 1931, and a little more than ten years later, in November 1945, the Jordanian Muslim Brotherhood was established. While most of these early charities limited their activities to specific ethnic or religious communities, organizations with

a nonreligiously defined constituency soon emerged. The Jordanian Youth League, for instance, was established in 1937 and the Women's Social Solidarity Society in 1944.²³ Following the first Arab-Israeli war in 1948 and the influx of hundreds of thousands of Palestinian refugees, the country witnessed an increase in voluntary activism and the foundation of numerous social welfare organizations, including the Jordanian Red Crescent, established in 1951. Since then the number of charities has grown steadily, exceeding 800 by 2006.²⁴

Jordanian charities, in particular the Islamic ones, have been shaped by and are closely knitted into the logic of politics. Since the foundation of the modern Jordanian state, its rulers have been confronted with difficult state- and nation-building challenges, insofar as they could not rely on any premodern form of territorial or cultural entity to ensure the social cohesion of a population divided by tribal, ideological, cultural, socioeconomic, and regional boundaries. In particular, they have had to bridge the gap between Transjordanian and Palestinian identity constructions. In this situation, the turn to Islam—the Hashimites' assumption of the "mantle as Islamic leaders" and their related role in Arab nationalist politics²⁵—was an obvious choice. Presenting the king as the incarnation of Jordanian religious identity and national unity, the royal family nurtured a kind of religious nationalism as a powerful tool in Jordanian nation-building as well as a strategy in legitimizing dynastic rule.²⁶ Thus, in the modern Jordanian state, political authority and legitimacy came to be closely intertwined with, and reliant upon, references to Islam, and the management of Islamic discourses and practices must remain under strict state control.

Until the end of the 1980s, the royal family and the state exerted this control over the religious field in cooperation with the Muslim Brotherhood. Since its foundation, the Jordanian branch of the Brotherhood has had an ambiguous relationship with the regime, moving from mutual support and joint management of religious discourse toward contestation and conflict. In its first years, the Muslim Brotherhood focused primarily on Islamic education, social welfare, and cultural activities, with the aim of contributing to the development of a new Arab culture.²⁷ Rather than calling for revolution, the organization's constituents, consisting primarily of property owners and merchants who profited from the economic policies of the Hashimite state, were interested in political stability. They acknowledged the legitimacy of the regime and the status of the king as a direct descendant of Muhammad and supreme ruler of the country. This made the Brotherhood an obvious ally in the rulers' attempt to create a modern national state organized around the idea of an Islamic society, in opposition to internal and external ideological challengers, whether Nasirist, Ba'athist, or communist.²⁸

This collaboration between the Muslim Brotherhood and the state was strongest and most visible during the period of martial law from 1957 to 1989. In contrast to most civil society organizations and all political parties, the Brotherhood was allowed to work more or less openly throughout this period. In 1963, the Brotherhood established the *Jam'iyyat al-Markaz al-Islami al-Khayriyya* (Islamic Center Charity Society [ICCS]) as a charitable wing of the movement, strengthening its social networks and popularity with significant parts of the population.²⁹ Furthermore, members of the Muslim Brotherhood were often offered influential government positions, including in the Ministry of Education, which provided them with opportunities to shape the educational system and curriculum in a religious direction.³⁰ By providing the Muslim Brotherhood with

access to key sites for the construction of modern Islamic identity—including social welfare and education—the royal institutions delegated the dissemination of Islamic modernism throughout much of Jordanian society to the Brotherhood rather than strictly asserting their own interpretations of Islam. Thus, for ordinary Jordanians, the country's Islamic modernity was largely defined by the Brotherhood's peer-group oriented model of an organized Islamic society, which emphasized the management of society in light of collectively binding Islamic rules and norms.

In recent decades this relationship between the Jordanian state and the Muslim Brotherhood has increasingly come under strain, leading to open contestations and conflicts over the nature of Jordan's modern Islamic identity. While the reasons for this rift are manifold, two transformative developments stand out. First, the Muslim Brotherhood developed from a movement primarily concerned with religious, social, and cultural activities into a well-structured organization pursuing its interests in a much more political way. With the legalization of political parties in 1992, the Brotherhood formally established its own political arm, the *Jabhat al-ʿAmal al-Islami* (Islamic Action Front [IAF]), now explicitly opting for formal participation in the political system. Second, a series of domestic, regional, and international political events aggravated tensions between the regime and the Muslim Brotherhood. In particular, the 1994 peace agreement with Israel and the government's "normalization" policy were met with open and vehement resistance from the Brotherhood. The peace treaty and the failure of the related economic peace dividend not only deepened the gap between the state and the Brotherhood³¹ but also brought together previous ideological enemies in a group that the IAF formed with seven leftist parties.³²

Since the foundation of the IAF, the regime has taken various steps to curb and restrain the influence of the Muslim Brotherhood, including by amending the election law in 1993.³³ Similarly, the Brotherhood's charities have been subject to increasing bureaucratic supervision and direct state control. Apart from employing such coercive means, the royal family and the state apparatus have also become more actively engaged in promoting what is often referred to as "moderate Islam," making the interpretation of Islamic traditions one of the major battlefields in the struggle between the regime and the Muslim Brotherhood.³⁴ Although the state has always promoted a specific form of official Islam, the dissemination and management of public religion was, at least to a certain extent, for many years left to the Muslim Brotherhood, as noted above. Yet with the politicization of the Brotherhood, the regime has increasingly tried to regain this terrain by promoting its own visions. Most recently, the royal family has sought to shape Jordan's Islamic modernity, in particular through intra-Islamic and interfaith initiatives, international conferences on dialogue, coexistence, and moderation, and support to political parties and organizations that promote such "moderate" interpretations of Islam. The royal family attempts to design Jordan's Islamic modernity according to an imaginary of an apolitical "religion of tolerance, wisdom and charity."³⁵

The country's charity associations have emerged as major arenas in this struggle over the character of Jordan's modern Islamic identity. Through his public support of the governmental Zakat Fund (*Sunduq al-Zakat*), the king underlines the importance of Islamic charity, bolstering the political legitimacy of the monarchy while enhancing his own image as a good Muslim who lives up to his religious duties by paying his zakat. Similarly, the regime seeks to challenge the Muslim Brotherhood's dominance

in the field of Islamic charity traditions through the establishment of religiously framed royal nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). For example, the charity Tkiyet Um Ali (Ali's Mother's Shelter), founded in 2004 by members of the royal family, is actively engaged in promoting and disseminating the regime's version of Islam in the provision of nongovernmental social welfare.³⁶ The next section describes the major actors in the field of social welfare in Jordan and explores how they position themselves in the broader societal negotiations of the country's Islamic identity.

CHARITY AND JORDAN'S ISLAMIC MODERNITY

Many Jordanian social welfare organizations explicitly claim an Islamic identity, reflecting the general discourse on Islamic authenticity that has been an essential part of Jordanian state and nation building. Some of the organizations are related to or supported by the Muslim Brotherhood, including the above-mentioned ICCS; others, such as AH, claim to be independent organizations. Apart from the Islamic organizations, a number of non-religious organizations have emerged, particularly since the end of martial law, including the Jordan Hashemite Fund for Human Development (al-Sunduq al-Urduni al-Hashimi li-l-Tanmiyya al-Bashariyya [JOHUD], 1999). Finally, the field of social welfare and charity also includes the national Zakat Fund, established by the Ministry of Religious Foundations in 1978 as a governmental counterpart to nongovernmental charities.

In this section, we will take a closer look at four organizations that, at least to a certain extent, can be said to represent four different types of charity and social welfare organizations in Jordan: royal NGOs, state institutions, organizations related to the Muslim Brotherhood, and organizations that claim to be independent of political affiliations. In the complex negotiations around Jordan's Islamic identity, we can identify different positions associated with each of these organizations. In constructing their organizational identities they refer in idiosyncratic ways to various elements of the different social imaginaries that we have discussed above. We will start our examination with JOHUD, a nonreligious royal NGO chaired by Princess Basma bint Talal.³⁷ Then we move to the governmental Zakat Fund. Third, we look at the ICCS, established by and closely related to the Muslim Brotherhood. And finally, we briefly analyze AH as an example of an independent organization. In examining the discourses and practices of these organizations, we will link them to the different forms of social order and modern subjectivities outlined above and investigate the ways in which they employ religious language in their activities and self-representations.

JOHUD

Originally founded under the name Queen Alia Social Welfare Fund in 1977, JOHUD is a royal NGO comprising about fifty community development centers and educational institutes across the country. Given its focus on Jordan's rural areas, JOHUD might have been assumed to prioritize the country's tribal population among its beneficiaries, thus reflecting the state's preferential treatment of Transjordanians.³⁸ In our field visits, however, we were not able to verify this bias toward a Transjordanian constituency with respect to the ethnic backgrounds of JOHUD's employees, volunteers, or beneficiaries.³⁹

In general, royal NGOs are highly professional organizations, chaired by members of the royal family and typically engaged in mainstream developmental activities of

various kinds, including community development, women's empowerment, children's rights, and microfinance programs. They are registered with the state as private societies and as such are not subject to the same laws that regulate organizations registered as charities and social welfare organizations. This means, among other things, that they are free to cooperate with and receive funding from international donors without applying for ministerial permission. JOHUD, for example, receives a large portion of its budget from international aid agencies and transnational NGOs such as USAID, DANIDA, CARE, and Save the Children. It is also generously funded by government entities, including the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation, the Ministry of Social Development, and the Ministry of Health. Finally, JOHUD enjoys extensive support from private businesses such as PepsiCo, Phosphate Company, and Intel; the last of these sponsors the organization's Intel Computer Clubhouse for after-school activities. The organization's large budget is clearly displayed in both its headquarters facilities, located in one of Amman's fashionable neighborhoods, and its many community centers, which are all equipped with modern IT equipment.⁴⁰

Like many other royal NGOs, JOHUD's self-representation draws on the global discourses of development and human rights that are also typical of the international organizations and foreign NGOs working in the country. On its website, JOHUD declares that "everyone is born with fundamental human rights," that "poverty is a denial of human rights," and that "JOHUD strives to ensure that these rights are recognized, respected and upheld at all times."⁴¹ In this organizational rationale, religion plays no explicit role nor is the organization's membership defined by it, though Islamic traditions might be an important motivational factor for some of its members. Many royal NGOs seem to display a pluralist discourse, appealing to members and volunteers whose worldview we would associate with the individualized, postmodern forms of second modernity. This does not exclude individual or collective references to Islam—we will later see how religious members of JOHUD combine pluralist and Islamic discourses in constructing specifically Islamic forms of subjectivity—but religion is not a core element of JOHUD's organizational communications.

While Islam does not define the membership or organizational rationale of JOHUD, this does not mean that religion does not play any role at all in the organization. In our interviews we found that Islamic discourse seems to function sometimes as a communicative tool in JOHUD's efforts to reach out to its donors and beneficiaries. Employing Islamic symbols and traditions, JOHUD uses religion instrumentally as a means to translate discourses on development and human rights into a mutually intelligible idiom in Jordanian society. By applying a religious language, holding annual Ramadan *iftārs* for potential donors, and offering to collect zakat from believers, royal organizations try to tap into religious constituencies.⁴² As a representative of JOHUD said, explaining this ambiguous role of religion: "If we want a message disseminated, we will talk to the preachers."

Zakat Fund

In 1978, the government established the national Zakat Fund, with the purpose of collecting religious alms and distributing them to the country's poor and needy. Through slogans such as "Paying zakat will give you happiness and blessings," "Zakat is a reward," and

“Zakat will purify your soul and money,”⁴³ the Fund represents itself in religious terms, emphasizing the individual benefits of almsgiving by reference to a system of benevolent deeds and rewards. Through local zakat committees, the Fund provides financial and in-kind assistance, facilitates the celebration of religious holidays, provides health care, and administers orphan sponsorships. The Zakat Fund has grown into the second largest governmental provider of social assistance in Jordan, exceeded only by the nonreligious National Aid Fund. Its 170 local zakat committees are staffed by volunteers and are responsible for collecting alms, assessing community needs, and providing services to the poor. The committees enjoy a good reputation among the population and the—mostly pious—volunteers are well-respected and trusted community members. All volunteers have been approved by the Ministry of Religious Foundations, which also supervises the work of the committees.⁴⁴

The governmental role of the Zakat Fund is also apparent in the discursive framing of its relationship to beneficiaries. While the majority of the Fund’s aid goes to Muslim beneficiaries, it does provide some assistance to non-Muslims through a specifically designated account. The Fund’s director explained this practice to us as a way of promoting interfaith dialogue and peaceful coexistence among religions. In these ways, the Fund echoes the royal family’s discourse on “moderate Islam” rather than the Muslim Brotherhood’s version of a shari‘a-based Islamic order. The Fund may thus be seen as an important tool in the regime’s strategy to challenge the tendency of Islamist discourses to become hegemonic in Jordanian society. In terms of members, donors, and beneficiaries, the Zakat Fund addresses a similar audience as the Muslim Brotherhood. However, the Fund does so with a message that largely affirms Jordan’s public order. In its organizational representation, the Fund fuses religious communication with the political intention of state authorities. The Zakat Fund employs references to Islamic traditions in order to enhance the legitimacy of the monarchy and to stabilize the established system of rule. Contrary to the postmodern and pluralistic rhetoric of royal NGOs such as JOHUD, however, the Zakat Fund does so by relating to an institutional setting of organized modernity in which religion contributes to maintaining the political status quo of society.

ICCS

The ICCS employs about 4,000 staff and 700 volunteers and is one of Jordan’s largest NGOs, predominantly funded by individual donors. Running community centers, health clinics, hospitals, universities, schools, and kindergartens, ICCS provides social services for more than 100,000 people all over the country,⁴⁵ although with a specific focus on urban areas around Amman, Irbid, and Zarqa, all of which have a high percentage of Palestinian residents. While the activities of the community centers and health clinics are primarily directed at poor people, the hospitals, schools, and universities also cater to the middle classes. The ICCS thus addresses two different constituencies: the country’s poor and the pious segments of its middle class. The ICCS was established by the Muslim Brotherhood, which thereby functionally separated its charitable activities from its more politically oriented ones.⁴⁶ Reflecting the organization’s urban middle-class character and its relationship to the Muslim Brotherhood, ICCS members and beneficiaries are predominantly Jordanians with a Palestinian background.⁴⁷ However, in our interviews and participant observations this ethnic bias of ICCS was never articulated.

Relations between the ICCS and the Muslim Brotherhood remain close, and in recent years the ICCS has also been linked to the Brotherhood's political party, the Islamic Action Front. However, from the outside it is often difficult to determine precisely how the three organizations are related to each other. While high-profile members of the Muslim Brotherhood publicly acknowledge the connections, ICCS representatives seem much more reluctant to do so. This reluctance most likely reflects the tension between the regime and the Brotherhood and the fact that in 2006 the ICCS was put under the control of a government-appointed committee due to accusations of corruption.⁴⁸

Shaped as it is by the Muslim Brotherhood ideology, the organizational rationale of the ICCS is, not surprisingly, firmly anchored in religious discourse. In this zakat plays a central role. However, the ICCS views the payment of zakat not only as an individual means to achieve divine rewards but also as serving a societal function. In this sense, the organization is somewhat in line with the Zakat Fund, but whereas the Zakat Fund aims at the stabilization of the political status quo, the ICCS advocates zakat as a means to change society, since its leaders view poverty not as a question of fate but as a consequence of social problems. Many of our interviewees explained that zakat should be used to solve these problems through the implementation of social reforms that would lead to a just Islamic order. In the words of one of our ICSS informants: "If the proper Islamic approach was applied, there would be no poverty." Interestingly, many of our interviewees contrasted their work in ICSS with more charity-oriented approaches, such as those of the governmental Zakat Fund and its local committees. The dichotomy between developmental aid and mere charity was clearly a part of ICCS' self-representation. We frequently heard statements such as: "The role of the zakat committees as it is now is just to give money to the poor—they will buy food and eat it and that's it."

Presenting activities such as women's rights education, microfinance projects, and job training in an Islamic idiom, the ICCS Islamizes global discourses on development and human rights, making them an authentic part of its vision of a properly organized Islamic society. As an ICCS volunteer put it: "Everything we do is Islamic. Islam is empowerment, Islam is participation, Islam is human rights." Thus, the work of ICCS is carried out within a holistic religious framework; references to Islamic traditions are an integral part of both its self-identification and its external representation. However, the narration of current tropes of developmental discourses in an Islamic vernacular does not remain undisputed within the organization. Rejecting concepts such as empowerment and women's rights as intrinsically Western, some ICCS staff members we met at the headquarters and at local centers criticized this Islamized discourse of development and individual rights as an essentially un-Islamic attempt to please the West. This internal critique points to a conflict between two competing, religiously molded discourses in ICCS, one drawing on models of a collectively binding Islamic order and the second articulating elements of the more pluralistic and individualistic social imaginaries of high modernity.

Anwar al-Huda

While JOHUD, the Zakat Fund, and ICCS are clearly affiliated with political actors—the royal family, the state, and the Muslim Brotherhood, respectively—this is not the

case with our fourth type of charity, which we call the independent organization. The independent organizations make up a relatively large part of Jordanian charities. Most of them are very small, run by volunteers or a few paid employees and with limited budgets. Some maintain their headquarters in the basement of a mosque, some rent a small room in an office building, and others use their members' homes. They depend on the support of friends, families, colleagues, and local communities. The typical activities of independent organizations include minor financial and in-kind assistance to the poor, support to orphans, training courses for women (such as in sewing, kitchen hygiene, or marriage preparation), and celebration of religious events such as the *ifṭār* during Ramadan and sheep sacrifice at 'Id al-Adha.

The women's association AH is one such independent organization, founded in 1982 by fifteen women from different ethnic backgrounds who met at the local mosque. AH does not receive any funding from state institutions or international organizations, and is instead supported by individuals and businesses from the area, an affluent neighborhood in Amman, and by some income from a bakery, which employs eight poor women from the neighborhood as kitchen staff. The organization provides regular in-kind and financial assistance to a few hundred poor families in the neighborhood. It also offers courses in cooking, flower decorations, computer skills, and other topics deemed to be relevant and "appropriate" for women, targeting not only the poor but also middle- and upper-middle-class women from the area. While AH, like most other independent organizations, claims to be open to non-Muslims, it seems to predominantly cater to Muslim beneficiaries.

As in most independent charities, the staff and volunteers of AH are between 40 and 70 years old. Most of them are from the upper middle class and have some form of higher education. Some have work experience, the majority as schoolteachers. The director of AH worked for several years as an English teacher in Kuwait. While Jordanian Muslim women are increasingly active in independent organizations, they primarily engage in women-only associations such as AH, leaving other independent welfare organizations in the domain of male volunteers and employees.

In our interviews, members of AH explicitly stressed the nonpolitical nature of their charity and denied any connections to the Muslim Brotherhood. They presented their engagement in social welfare not as an attempt to change society but as a way of fulfilling their individual religious duties. As the director told us: "We think that this job pleases Allah. You have to do something for your next life." Many of the members of independent organizations explained their engagement to us within the religious coordinates of good and bad deeds. On the Day of Judgment, God will make an accounting of your deeds: if you have managed to collect a large number of good points you will go to heaven, but if you primarily collected bad points you will go to hell. This understanding of charity as an individual religious duty, carried out for the purpose of ensuring one's place in paradise, was common among the independent organizations we visited.⁴⁹ However, the language of religious awards and duties was also found in the Zakat Fund and in organizations associated with the Muslim Brotherhood movement. Apparently, the Islamic discourses of all three kinds of organizations draw on similar forms of religious language as defined by Weber, addressing issues of this- and other-worldly salvation by referring to a transcendental actor. These forms of communication may define the organizations as Islamic, at least in contradistinction to an NGO like JOHUD.

Yet in our interviews, most of the independent organizations applied Islamic discourse with a strong emphasis on personal piety and individual religious morality, seemingly distinguishing their motivations from the collective social and political demands of the Muslim Brotherhood.

CHARITIES AND MODERN MUSLIM SUBJECTIVITIES

The previous section analyzed the ways in which Jordanian welfare organizations, in the context of the ongoing construction of Jordan's modern Islamic identity, position themselves with regard to the more general features of two ideal types of successive modernities. In light of our analytical framework, the organizational rationale of royal NGOs resembles the pluralistic and individualized patterns of second modernity, whereas the ICCS and the Zakat Fund seem to imagine Jordan's social order with reference to collectively binding versions of organized Islamic modernity. In emphasizing an exclusively religious rationale, independent organizations try to avoid any visible engagement in this struggle over Jordan's legitimate social order. However, as the restriction of their communicative discourse to matters of salvation and redemption indicates, they seem to implicitly acknowledge the functional separation of communicative subsystems such as religion, politics, economics, and law and thereby a certain kind of secular order.

Zooming in on the microlevel of individual members, we can observe a similar positioning toward global social imaginaries by the employees and volunteers of Jordanian charities and social welfare organizations. In this section, we look more closely at two different types of members. These ideal types we label the "postmodern Muslim professional" and the "peer-group oriented and religiously devoted employee."⁵⁰ The former is often found among JOHUD's members and the latter in ICCS and, albeit to a lesser extent, in the Zakat Fund. Our interlocutors from independent organizations constituted a much more heterogeneous sample that did not allow a similar classification under one of the two ideal types. In treating charities as social sites for the self-realization of modern individuals as working subjects, we did not distinguish between employees and volunteers. In light of Jordan's staggering unemployment rates, we consider both working and volunteering in a welfare organization to be important opportunities for the construction of meaningful modern selfhoods through work.⁵¹ From our theoretical perspective, they both constitute "working subjects" and volunteering was in fact often considered a potentially important step toward employment.

The individualistic, postmodern Muslim professional, according to our observations often a woman,⁵² is typically from the upper middle class. She is well educated, from a family of certain means and might have studied abroad. She is employed (or engaged as a volunteer) because of her professional qualities and skills, not because of her religious or political convictions.⁵³ The more peer-group oriented and religiously devoted employee also comes from the middle class (albeit perhaps more often from the lower middle class) and holds a college or university degree, but generally speaking from a public university in Jordan and rarely from abroad. He or she might also have a degree in Islamic sciences or some other form of religious training. His or her employment is not only based on professional skills but is also linked to the appearance of being a dedicated Muslim and/or a supporter of the Muslim Brotherhood (in the case of the ICCS).

The Postmodern Muslim Professional

The majority of JOHUD's members are young and resourceful people with university degrees in disciplines such as law, business, economics, development studies, and the social sciences. Application procedures in JOHUD reflect this strong focus on professionalism, higher education, and internationalism. Job announcements, always posted in English, underline the importance of relevant skills and experiences just as the organization's website repeatedly emphasizes the "technical skills," "human resource capacities," and "in-house expertise" of its staff.⁵⁴ JOHUD's official employment discourse contains many of the buzzwords closely related to the social imaginary of the creative, dynamic, and self-reliant worker that is characteristic of the entrepreneurial postmodern type of modern selfhood. Even volunteers and interns have to live up to these standards and must apply formally for a position. The successful applicants then undergo training at Queen Zein al-Sharaf Institute for Development (ZENID), where they participate in courses such as "Management and Leadership Skills," "Training of Trainers," and "Community Development."⁵⁵

With its organizational rationale firmly anchored in nonreligious and global discourses of development and human rights, JOHUD attracts employees and volunteers whose education conforms to the organization's self-representation and who want to further their professional careers. This constituency, whether religiously minded or not, reflects postmodern forms of subjectivity with its preference for creative, nonbureaucratic styles of work. In addition to affirming a belief in humanitarian or religious ideals, our interlocutors often presented their choice to work in social welfare as a professional decision, motivated by the desire to have a challenging and satisfying career. This rather postmodern social imaginary is embodied in JOHUD's premises. When visiting the headquarters in Amman, we were met by spacious and light offices, some of them colorfully painted in green and blue. The walls were adorned with human rights posters and children's drawings.

In this environment, we met with Hanin, a former volunteer who had become an employee in JOHUD. A tall and confident woman in her midtwenties with a degree in computer science, she was wearing a long turquoise dress and a matching headscarf. While many of JOHUD's members do not consider religion to be a prime motivation of their work, Hanin appeared to be a devoted Muslim and situated her work in an Islamic framework:

I suddenly realized that human development actually matches my own goals and ideas. I don't know how to explain this to you—but we Muslims believe that Allah has said to us that we were created to pray, to get people into Islam and to improve things, to make things better. This is the mission of every Muslim. But that is also the mission of human development.

Hanin described the human development approach of JOHUD as entirely consistent with her Islamic values. In translating contemporary developmental discourses into Islamic language, she applied translation strategies similar to those the Islamic reform movement invented more than 100 years ago.⁵⁶ However, she did so in a very individualized way. Hanin's attitude did not resemble the classical bourgeois one of a Muhammad 'Abduh; instead she was fashioning the Islamic character of her work in an independent way, according to her own interpretation of religious traditions. In addition, it did not matter for

Hanin whether JOHUD is explicitly Islamic or not: “I haven’t thought about working in an Islamic organization. It doesn’t matter to me.” She was not looking for an organization with religious peers, for a collectively defined Islamic work place. For her, Islam does not lie in formal structures or organizational rationales, but in the ways in which the individual works and thinks about his or her work. It is this interpretation of her work in JOHUD, framed with reference to Islamic traditions, that makes Hanin a successful modern Muslim. In her eyes, the fact that JOHUD is not an Islamic organization, but includes people of various religious backgrounds, contributes to diversity, variety, and pluralism, all of which are important ideals in her vision of an Islamic life: “People that work here are a mixture. There are Christians, Muslims, Muslims that don’t act like Muslims, all kinds of people. I think that diversity is what makes this place great.”

We had no doubts that Hanin interpreted Islamic traditions according to the pluralistic traits of second modernity. The kind of Islam that Hanin and other young activists presented to us was an individualistic and self-conscious interpretation of Islamic traditions. These young people appeared to us as pious Muslims who reject the state-centered model of an organized Islamic modernity with its preference for the collectively regulated coordination of social action. Instead, their ideal religious community seems to emanate from individual forms of pious behavior. Emphasizing emotions and personal choice, this postmodern type of an Islamic subjectivity tends to refute the model of a rigid social order based on a binding Islamic system.

The Religiously Devoted Employee

The regular staff of ICCS is made up of young professionals with university degrees in teaching, social work, computer science, or engineering. Many of them had studied Islamic sciences and some staff members actively use their religious education. The director of one of the ICCS schools, for instance, preached regularly in a local mosque. Women make up a large number of employees in the ICCS, in many cases even at mid-level management, working as deputy directors, team leaders, teachers, PR experts, and social workers, but often in separate women’s sections. Likewise, a large proportion of volunteers are women. However, all leading positions are, without exception, staffed by men, including the directors of all community centers, departmental directors in the headquarters, and the current and former general directors of the organization at the time of our field research.

Visiting a community center in East Amman, we were welcomed by two young women, wearing headscarves and long dresses, one brown and the other dark blue. Their appearance was modest and far from the latest fashion of girls in Amman’s fancy shopping malls and cafes (and in JOHUD, for that matter). All women working for ICCS wore headscarves and long dresses, just like most men had at least a short beard, thus displaying a much more homogenous body language than what we observed in JOHUD. In some centers, activities were gender segregated, and women put on a full face veil before entering the men’s domains. In other centers, activities were mixed and some women wore a face veil, while others only put on a headscarf. All ICCS centers had prayer rooms, and most staff members would take time to pray during their workday. Religious rules and bodily Islamic practices thus visibly shaped staff relations in ICCS. This emphasis on religion was also reflected in the conversations we had about

employment procedures. When hiring new staff, ICCS members told us they base their selection not only on skills but also on religious commitment, often choosing candidates with connections to the Muslim Brotherhood over other applicants.⁵⁷ In the words of one of our interviewees: “People work at the centre because of their religion. Everybody is a practicing Muslim. You have to wear the veil and the proper Islamic dress.”

Employees of ICCS tended to present their work to us within a collectively shared and binding Islamic framework. Whereas the young activists of JOHUD, whether practicing Muslims or not, talked about “inner peace,” “human development,” and “personal motivation,” stressing their individualist approach, our interlocutors at ICCS often quoted verses from the Qur’an and traditions of the Prophet Muhammad, framing their activities with strong reference to the collectively authoritative traditions of Islam. Like many of the religiously minded young activists we met in JOHUD, they were motivated by a wish to fulfill religious obligations. Yet they interpreted Islamic traditions not through the lenses of their individually defined values and principles, but through the application of collectively binding patterns of religious norms. Emphasizing elements such as “family atmosphere” and “a sense of solidarity,” many of our interviewees connected their reasons for working in ICCS to the religious identity of the organization and its promotion of an Islamic community and brotherhood.⁵⁸

In our interview with Rula, Ala’a, and Sylvia, we met three representatives of these more peer-group oriented employees, working in an ICCS center in East Amman. Rula served as a PR manager, Sylvia was employed as Qur’an teacher, and Ala’a worked as a project manager for women’s and children’s activities. Their jobs reflected general ICCS traditions of assigning women responsibility over areas that are considered to involve “appropriate” female activities. The three women wore the obligatory headscarves and long dresses. They were young and giggly, impatiently interrupting each other from time to time and clearly eager to tell us about their work. “We are so proud of our work,” Rula said, “many organizations come to us and ask for advice.” Ala’a had worked in the center for three years. Before becoming a salaried staff member she was a volunteer and received training in women’s rights and childcare. For all three, the Islamic nature of the organization and the amicable relations with colleagues were major reasons for working in ICCS. Sylvia explained to us the importance of religion in her work:

It means a lot to me that this is an Islamic place. Perhaps in other places I would feel a gap of belief. I am not sure I would get along with my colleagues. The fact that it’s an Islamic place means that you get support for your own beliefs. You already have the beliefs, but you want to work in a place that supports these beliefs and makes it easier for you to practice your beliefs.

This understanding of Islamic traditions as shaping communality was confirmed by almost all of the staff members we met. As one said: “There’s a special atmosphere among the staff here. We love each other, we are like brothers.” In terms of our three types of modern subjectivity formation, the members of ICCS can be said to identify most closely with an Islamic version of the model of the extraverted, peer-group oriented masses. In their individual identity constructions they related to features of an embraced mass collectivity, exposing ideals of the collective regulation and coordination of social action. In constructing individual selfhoods, their reference to Islamic traditions displayed a desire to resemble a collectively binding average type of modern Muslim.

However, in our interviews, Rula, Ala'a, and Sylvia did not only appreciate this collective atmosphere of their workplace; they also pointed to other dimensions of their work, characterizing it as fun, challenging, and exciting. As Sylvia put it: "When you work in other places you get stuck in the same routines every day; here it is different." They were proud of their work and emphasized its creative aspects. Working in the ICCS also contributed to their personal development: "When I started, I was so shy, I didn't know how to give speeches and lectures. They taught me at the centre and I am still learning." Ala'a's statement exemplifies how the young women, through their work in the ICCS, were able to foster meaningful technologies of the self. Apparently, the more individualized set of postmodern values also made an impact on the self-imagination of our younger interlocutors at ICCS. In analyzing our three female interviewees under the category of working subjects, they actually displayed hybrid combinations of peer-group oriented and postmodern forms of subjectivity.

CONCLUSIONS

In this article we have introduced a novel analytical framework in order to discuss different kinds of Jordanian charities and social welfare organizations. We argue that the identity constructions of these organizations and their members can fruitfully be understood with reference to different types of globally relevant social imaginaries. In contrast to the binary between Muslim and Western societies often applied by social theorists as well as scholars in Islamic studies, we claim that these imaginaries provide a common global horizon against which individual and collective identity constructions take place, in both Western and Muslim societies. Moreover, our approach goes beyond discussing Islamic charities as fronts for political groups or as catering to the interests of a pious middle class. In treating them as social sites, we stress the active role of these organizations in ongoing negotiations around legitimate forms of social order in Jordan. Moreover, we perceive them as stages for the individual construction of successful modern selfhoods. Finally, our approach can help us to understand better the various ways in which engagement in the field of social welfare can be considered, in religious terms, to "please God."

According to our findings, explicitly Islamic charities in Jordan define themselves through a discourse of religious duties and awards at the organizational level. They often do so, however, by fusing religious and nonreligious discourses. The Zakat Fund and ICCS seem to promote imaginaries of an organized society as a legitimate social order. Yet they do so in different ways. While the Zakat Fund aims at stabilizing the status quo, the ICCS and the Muslim Brotherhood advocate transforming the social order. Yet, in our interviews, members of both organizations applied the dichotomy between developmental aid and almsgiving, using this distinction, which is characteristic of global developmental discourse, to brand in normative language the approach of their respective opponents as outdated.

Turning to the microlevel, the collectively binding religious discourse that differentiates Islamic from non-Islamic organizations does not necessarily tell us anything about the role religion plays for their members. From the perspective of the individual, it is perfectly possible to "please God" by joining a nonreligious organization. Hanin, for instance, combines discourses on religious traditions with developmental ideas and

elements of the pluralistic and individualized imaginary of a postmodern form of subjectivity. For her, it is precisely the nonreligious nature of JOHUD, and not the collective religious framework of other organizations, that gives her room to conduct her work as a consciously practicing Muslim. This is different for many members of ICCS, who told us that they appreciated the specifically religious organizational rationale of this charity, as it provides them with what they consider to be the necessary, collective framework to act as good Muslims.

With respect to our analytical approach, we organize these two different ways of combining religious orientations with global imaginaries of modernity into the rather simplistic heuristic categories of “the postmodern Muslim professional” and “the peer-group oriented and religiously devoted employee.” It seems that social stratifications among Jordan’s middle class play a role in the identification of the activists with one or the other type. According to our observations, upper-middle-class workers tend to combine Islamic traditions with the pluralistic and individualized set of values of high modernity, whereas those from the lower-middle class identify with the peer-group oriented model of organized modernity that is represented by the mainstream of the Muslim Brotherhood and ICCS. In a number of conversations with ICCS members, however, we also realized that some of our interlocutors related to elements of different imaginaries in constructing their individual identities. This heterogeneous character of individual identities was apparent among our interviewees who combined the peer-group oriented features of collectively applied religious discourses and bodily practices with the appreciation of the creative, project-oriented working attitudes of the postmodern entrepreneur.

Finally, focusing on religious individuals does not mean to perceive them only—or even primarily—as religious. The successful construction of modern Muslim selfhoods among our interviewees reflects a mixture of instrumental and ideational reasons for engagement, such as contributing to the relief of suffering and poverty, achieving personal redemption and salvation, making economic gains, shaping friendships, and gaining political power and social status.⁵⁹ Moreover, engagement is also facilitated by networks of locality and ethnicity.⁶⁰ Yet through the lens of our particular analytical framework, we can clearly discern that the individual identity constructions of our interlocutors relate to crucial elements of types of subjectivity formation that social theorists have derived from and reduced to the European historical experience. Apparently these types are not a European property but of more global relevance. Their application to non-European environments can open up avenues for comparative research that goes beyond an understanding of cultural differences based on fundamental binaries such as those between Western and non-Western societies. Taking the horizon of globally shared social imaginaries seriously might be one way to contribute to “provincializing Europe,” promoting the abandonment of the still influential equation of modernization with Westernization.⁶¹

NOTES

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¹Amy Singer, *Charity in Islamic Societies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 223.

²We spent four months total in Jordan and conducted about ninety interviews with staff and volunteers in approximately fifty organizations, predominantly located in Amman and Zarqa. Most interviews were conducted in Arabic with the use of a translator, while a few were conducted in English. The interviews were organized around relatively open themes and our interlocutors seemed to speak with ease and confidence, not being afraid to talk about Islam in relation to social welfare activities. They were relatively eager to participate and nobody turned down our request for interviews.

³A paradigmatic article for this approach is Samuel N. Eisenstadt, “Multiple Modernities,” *Daedalus* 129 (2000): 1–29. See also Johann P. Arnason, *Civilizations in Dispute: Historical Questions and Theoretical Traditions* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2003); and Samuel N. Eisenstadt, *Comparative Civilizations and Multiple Modernities* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2003).

⁴See J. Millard Burr and Robert O. Collins, *Alms for Jihad: Charity and Terrorism in the Islamic World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006); and Matthew Levitt, *Hamas: Politics, Charity and Terrorism in the Service of Jihad* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2006). For a more balanced approach, see Jonathan Benthall and Jerome Bellion-Jourdan, *The Charitable Crescent: The Politics of Aid in the Muslim World* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2003).

⁵See, for example, Anne Marie Baylouny, *Privatizing Welfare in the Middle East: Kin Mutual Aid Associations in Jordan and Lebanon* (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 2010); Lara Deeb, *An Enchanted Modern: Gender and Public Piety in Shi'i Lebanon* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2006); Sherine Hafez, *An Islam of Her Own: Reconsidering Religion and Secularism in Women's Islamic Movements* (New York: New York University Press, 2011); Rana Javad, *Religion and Social Welfare in the Middle East: A Lebanese Perspective* (Bristol: Policy Press, 2009); Saba Mahmood, *Politics of Piety: The Islamic Revival and the Feminist Subject* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2005); Caroline Montagu, “Civil Society and the Voluntary Sector in Saudi Arabia,” *Middle East Journal* 64 (2010): 67–83; Marie Juul Petersen, “Trajectories of Transnational Muslim NGOs,” *Development in Practice* 22 (2012): 763–78; idem, *For Humanity or for the Umma? Aid and Islam in International Muslim NGOs* (London: Hurst & Co, 2014); and Quintan Wiktorowicz, *The Management of Islamic Activism: Salafis, the Muslim Brotherhood and the State in Jordan* (Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 2001).

⁶Janine A. Clark, *Islam, Charity, and Activism: Middle-Class Networks and Social Welfare in Egypt, Jordan and Yemen* (Bloomington and Indianapolis, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 2004).

⁷Theodore R. Schatzki, *The Site of the Social: A Philosophical Account of the Constitution of Social Life and Change* (University Park, Pa.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2002).

⁸Given the limitations of a journal article, this theoretical section is necessarily only a brief sketch. For a comprehensive overview of our theoretical position and analytical tools, see Dietrich Jung, *Orientalist, Islamists and the Global Public Sphere: A Genealogy of the Modern Essentialist Image of Islam* (Sheffield: Equinox Publishers, 2011); and Dietrich Jung, Marie Juul Petersen, and Sara Lei Sparre, *Politics of Modern Muslim Subjectivities: Islam, Youth, and Social Activism in the Middle East* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2014).

⁹Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 211.

¹⁰*Ibid.*, 23.

¹¹Andreas Reckwitz, *Das hybride Subjekt. Eine Theorie der Subjektkulturen von der bürgerlichen Moderne zur Postmoderne* (Weilerswist, Germany: Velbrück Wissenschaft, 2006), 53.

¹²*Ibid.*, 51–53.

¹³*Ibid.*, 275–440.

¹⁴*Ibid.*, 441–630.

¹⁵There is a difference in the numbering and consequently naming of the three types of successive forms of modernity that might confuse the reader. In Wagner's typology, the first type refers to the bourgeois society of the 19th century; this does not play a role in the theories of Beck and Giddens, who only talk about first and second modernities with respect to the organized mass society and its postmodern follower of reflexive modernity. In fusing these concepts, in our analytical framework, first and second modernity are preceded by what Wagner called restricted liberal society.

¹⁶Ulrich Beck, *Risk Society: Towards a New Modernity* (London: Sage, 1992); Anthony Giddens, *The Consequences of Modernity* (Cambridge: Policy Press, 1990); Peter Wagner, *A Sociology of Modernity: Liberty and Discipline* (London: Routledge, 1993).

¹⁷Reckwitz, *Das hybride Subjekt*, 635.

¹⁸Benjamin Soares and Filippo Osella, "Islam, Politics, Anthropology," *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 15 (May 2009): 1–23.

¹⁹For approaches employing modern systems theory, see Peter Beyer, *Religion and Global Society* (London and New York: Routledge, 2006); and Niklas Luhmann, "Society, Meaning, Religion—Based on Self-Reference," *Sociological Analysis* 64 (1985): 5–20. For Max Weber's theory of religious social actions, see "Religious Rejections of the World and Their Directions," in *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, ed. H. H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills (London: Routledge, 1991 [1948]), 129–56.

²⁰Weber, *From Max Weber*, 281.

²¹With regard to their ends, Weber associated religious actions with two spheres: the dispensation from worldly suffering and the transcendental realm of redemption.

²²Martin Riesebrodt, *The Promise of Salvation: A Theory of Religion* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009); Steven Sharot, *A Comparative Sociology of World Religions: Virtuosos, Priests, and Popular Religion* (New York: New York University Press, 2001), 22–23.

²³Egbert Harmsen, *Islam, Civil Society and Social Work: Muslim Voluntary Welfare Associations in Jordan between Patronage and Empowerment* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2008), 155. Harmsen only cites the names of these organizations in English.

²⁴Hisham Kassim, ed., *The Directory of Civil Society Organizations in Jordan* (Amman: al-Urdun al-Jadid Research Center, 2006).

²⁵Yoav Alon, *The Making of Jordan: Tribes, Colonialism and the Modern State* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2007), 39.

²⁶Jennifer Noyon, *Islam, Politics and Pluralism: Theory and Practice in Turkey, Jordan, Tunisia and Algeria* (London: Royal Institute of International Affairs, 2003), 81.

²⁷Harmsen, *Islam, Civil Society and Social Work*, 137.

²⁸Phillip Robins, *A History of Jordan* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004); and Kamal Salibi, *The Modern History of Jordan* (London: I. B. Tauris, 1993).

²⁹The ICCS uses both its Arabic and English name.

³⁰Harmsen, *Islam, Civil Society and Social Work*, 141.

³¹The government tried to "sell" peace with Israel by promising future foreign investment and economic benefits for the whole of the country. However, these economic peace dividends never materialized and turned out to be a mere fantasy. See Paul L. Scham and Russel E. Lucas, "Normalization and Anti-Normalization in Jordan: The Public Debate," *Israel Affairs* 9 (2003): 141–64.

³²D. Kornbluth, "Jordan and the Anti-Normalization Campaign 1994–2001," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 14 (2002): 80–108.

³³The government changed the law shortly before the 1993 elections. While the former election system was based on multiple votes, the new law introduced a single-vote system, undermining the ability of the opposition, in particular the IAF, to win seats. In addition, the new law gerrymandered electoral districts in a way that "favored rural pro-regime constituencies over more urban bases of support for opposition groups from the secular left to the religious right." Curtis R. Ryan and Jillian Schwedler, "Return to Democratization or New Hybrid Regime?: The 2003 Elections in Jordan," *Middle East Policy* 11 (2004): 143.

³⁴In the regime's "liberal interpretation" of Islamic traditions, Prince Hassan played an important role in promoting Islam as a religion of tolerance and openmindedness. Kornbluth, "Jordan and the Anti-Normalization Campaign," 96.

³⁵Speech by King 'Abd Allah II at the Catholic University of America, 13 September 2005, <http://www.jordanembassyus.org/hmka09132005.htm>.

³⁶The name relates to the traditional Islamic concept of *tikiyya*, going back to a Sufi-inspired provision of food for the poor in the 11th century. See <http://www.tkiyetumali.org> (accessed 22 September 2012).

³⁷Although JOHUD does not define itself as an Islamic organization, we have included it for three reasons. First, it represents a major player in the field of social welfare provision and is therefore deeply involved in the societal negotiations that have been going on in this field. Second, while not religious at the organizational level, some members of JOHUD claim religious motivations for their engagement in the organization. Third, in analyzing organizations that do not have a distinct religious rationale, we try to avoid the bias toward pious

organizations, which has been strongly criticized, for instance, in relation to the work of Saba Mahmood. See Sindre Bangstad, "Saba Mahmood and Anthropological Feminism after Virtue," *Theory, Culture & Society* 28 (2011): 28–54; and Samuli Schielke, "Being Good in Ramadan: Ambivalence, Fragmentation, and the Moral Self in the Lives of Young Egyptians," *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 15 (2009): 24–40.

³⁸Harmsen, *Islam, Civil Society and Social Work*, 164.

³⁹The tensions between Jordanians of Transjordanian and Palestinian descent are not often discussed in public. Therefore, we did not ask our interlocutors about their ethnic backgrounds, and none of them raised the issue during our interviews.

⁴⁰Janine Clark and Wacheke M. Michuki, "Women and NGO Professionalisation: A Case Study of Jordan," *Development in Practice* 19 (2009): 332.

⁴¹<http://www.johud.org.jo>.

⁴²In 1978, the Queen Alia Foundation obtained a fatwa from the chief mufti of the country permitting Muslim citizens to pay their zakat through the Fund. See Basma Bint Talal, *Rethinking an NGO: Development, Donors and Civil Society in Jordan* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2004), 118.

⁴³Brochure from the Zakat Fund, authors' translation.

⁴⁴The secretary general of the Ministry of Religious Foundations even said that the ministry plays a daily role in supervising the committees. See Muhammed Mhaisin, *Secretary General of the Jordanian Ministry of Awqaf: No Obstacles in the Way of Charity Activities in Jordan*, Amman, humanityvoice.net, 24 September 2008, http://www.humanityvoice.net/news_details.php?id=1170.

⁴⁵According to the ICCS management, the clinics treat approximately 140,000 people annually, more than 15,000 students are enrolled in the schools, 13,000 orphans receive support, and 25,000 families use the services of the community centers.

⁴⁶A spokesperson from the Brotherhood told us that the ICCS is the only organization formally under the authority of the Brotherhood, while a number of other organizations are connected to it by personal friendships, strategic alliances, and the convergence of persons in management positions.

⁴⁷The ICCS is very active in Palestinian camps and the Muslim Brotherhood recruits most of its followers from among the country's Palestinian population. See Mohammad Abu Rumman, *The Muslim Brotherhood in the 2007 Jordanian Parliamentary Elections: A Passing 'Political Setback' or Diminished Popularity?* (Amman: Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, 2007), 16, 39.

⁴⁸For more details, see Janine Clark, "Patronage, Prestige, and Power: The Islamic Center Charity Society's Political Role with the Muslim Brotherhood," in *Islamist Politics in the Middle East*, ed. Samer S. Shehata (London and New York: Routledge, 2012), 69–87.

⁴⁹Harmsen, *Islam, Civil Society and Social Work*, 228.

⁵⁰A third type could be described as the piously committed citizen. It has traits of the classical bourgeois subject and is predominantly represented in the independent organizations or among the volunteers of the Zakat Fund.

⁵¹At the time of our fieldwork, the official unemployment rate was 15 percent. Unofficial figures estimated an unemployment rate of about 30 percent. Among young people, unemployment reached 41 percent. See Christine Guégnard, Xavier Matheu, and Musa Shteivi, *Unemployment in Jordan* (Torino, Italy: European Training Foundation, 2005).

⁵²This predominance of women distinguishes royal NGOs from other Jordanian civil society organizations, Islamic as well as non-Islamic, which are generally male dominated.

⁵³There is no doubt that employment in Jordanian welfare organizations is not based on qualifications and convictions alone. On the contrary, in all types of organizations personal patronage (*wasta*) and networks based on ethnic, tribal, and family affiliations often play an important role. As a general feature of Jordanian society, however, these forms of patronage do not render the aforementioned differences in the recruiting procedures of JOHUD and the ICCS irrelevant.

⁵⁴Examples from <http://www.johud.org.jo>.

⁵⁵Information from website and interviews.

⁵⁶See, for example, Aziz al-Azmeh, *Islams and Modernities*, 2nd ed. (London: Verso, 1996); Albert Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age 1798–1939* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1962); and Dietrich Jung, *Orientalists, Islamists*, chap. 6.

⁵⁷Clark, *Islam, Charity, and Activism*, 106; Anne Sofie Roald, *TARBIYA: Education and Politics in Islamic Movements in Jordan and Malaysia*, Lund Studies in History of Religions, vol. 3 (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell International, 1994), 173.

⁵⁸Many of our interviewees also mentioned more tangible benefits such as the facilitation of jobs, favors, and personal relations as their prime motivation, underlining the network character of the Islamic movement.

⁵⁹Michael David Bonner, Mine Ener, and Amy Singer, eds., *Poverty and Charity in Middle Eastern Contexts* (Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 2003), 2.

⁶⁰While the Palestinian issue definitely has played a role in the tension between the Muslim Brotherhood (as well as left-wing parties) and the regime, we cannot attribute the Transjordanian-Palestinian divide a major role in identity constructions at either the organizational or the individual levels. However, this finding is strongly qualified by the fact that this divide is rarely discussed in Jordanian society and therefore might play a rather invisible role in the ways in which these identity constructions relate to global social imaginaries.

⁶¹Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2000).