



Dr. Abdul Rahman Al-Sumait:

A Globally Underappreciated Humanitarian

A glimpse into how Arab Muslim philanthropists and Islamic charities are represented in Western media and public discourse compared to their Western counterparts

Lothar Marc Kampf

Communication for Development

Two-year master

15 Credits

[Semester Year 2023]

Supervisor: [Anders Høg Hansen]

Index

1. Abstract	p. 4
2. Introduction	p. 5
3. Literature Review	p. 7
3.1 Edward Said: Orientalism.	p. 7
3.2 Edward Said: Covering Islam.	p. 8
3.3 Cheryl McEwan: Postcolonialism, Decoloniality and Development.	p. 9
3.4 Virginie Mamadouh: Eurocentrism/Orientalism in news media.	p. 10
3.5 Shariq Siddiqui: Muslim philanthropy.	p. 12
3.6 Chanfi Ahmed: Networks of Islamic NGOs in sub-Saharan Africa.	p. 13
3.7 Mayke Kaag: Gulf Charities in Africa.	p. 15
3.8 Lilie Chouliaraki: The Ironic Spectator.	p. 17
4. Theoretical Framework	p. 20
5. Methodology	p. 23
5.1 Biographical case study.	p. 23
5.2 Discourse analysis.	p. 24
6. Biographical case study: Abdul Rahman Al-Sumait and Direct Aid	p. 27
6.1 Abdurrahman Al-Sumait.	p. 27
6.2 Direct Aid.	p. 28
7. Analysis	p. 30
7.1 Media Representation.	p. 30
7.1.1 Western Centrism/Eurocentrism.	p. 30

7.1.2 Global Influence of the English Language.	p. 32
7.1.3 Orientalism.	p. 33
7.1.4 White Saviorism.	p. 33
7.1.5 Bias towards Arab Muslims.	p. 35
7.2 Geopolitics and Philanthropy.	p. 37
7.2.1 Association of Islamic Charity Organisations with Terrorism by Governments and by Extension the Media.	p. 37
7.2.2 Links of some Islamic Charities and Muslim Philanthropists to Islamist Political Movements.	p. 40
7.2.3 Association of Islam and Muslims with Terrorism in Media Narratives.	p. 41
7.3 Cultural Differences in Philanthropy.	p. 43
7.3.1 Discreet charity and not wanting to seek fame.	p. 43
7.3.2 The missionary character of Islamic charities.	p. 44
8. Conclusion	p. 46
Bibliography	p. 48

“Does Islamic philanthropy exist?”

Only an elementary knowledge of Muslim history is needed to make the question redundant. What is true is that the representation of Islamic organised charity in the Western mass media has been extremely muted until recently, when it became for the most part negative.”¹

Jonathan Benthall and Jerome Bellion-Jourdan

¹ Benthall, J. & Bellion-Jourdan, J. (2003). *The Charitable Crescent*. London: I.B. Tauris, p. 1.

1. Abstract:

This thesis examines the underrepresentation of Arab Muslim donors and Islamic charities in Western media and public discourse. It delves into the notion of Orientalism, the Eurocentric perspective in media, and the cultural disparities in philanthropic endeavours. The thesis investigates the biases and misconceptions prevalent in Western media that overshadow the humanitarian endeavours of the Arab Muslim world, with a specific focus on the life and work of Abdul Rahman Al-Sumait and his charitable organisation, Direct Aid. Furthermore, it examines the influence of the geopolitical environment following the events of 9/11 on Islamic charitable organisations, closely analysing media portrayals that frequently associate Islam and Muslims with acts of terrorism. The thesis seeks to expose the inherent prejudices and structural components in media portrayal, fostering a more equitable comprehension of worldwide charity.

2. Introduction:

In a time when the media is so important in forming public opinion, one could wonder why Islamic charities and Arab Muslim philanthropists receive less (positive) attention in Western media and public discourse than their counterparts from the West. This study aims to investigate this occurrence by utilising significant findings from current scholarly works on media portrayal, cultural prejudices, and the intricacies of worldwide philanthropy. The central focus of this investigation revolves around the notion of Orientalism, as elucidated by Edward Said. Said's research illuminates the enduring Western practice of distorting the image of the East, perpetuating preconceptions and misunderstandings that have significant consequences for the perception and appreciation of Arab Muslim civilizations and their contributions, especially humanitarian endeavours, in the Western world (Said, 1978, pp. 26-27). Theoretical framework is crucial for comprehending media biases and the overshadowing of charitable accomplishments by individuals from Arab Muslim origins. Additionally, the thesis will investigate how Eurocentrism in Western media results in a concentration on Western narratives and viewpoints, frequently disregarding non-Western individuals and locations. The disproportionate attention given by the media leads to a lack of coverage of humanitarian endeavours originating from the Arab Muslim world. This, in turn, hampers the acknowledgment and visibility of their contributions on a worldwide scale. Furthermore, the thesis will investigate the influence of increased scrutiny after the September 11 attacks and the worldwide war on terror on how Islamic charities are seen and operated. The atmosphere of distrust and increased scrutiny around Islamic groups has made it more difficult for them to carry out their charitable activities, and may affect how they are depicted and acknowledged in Western media.

My main research question is:

How are Arab Muslim philanthropists and Islamic charities represented in Western media and public discourse compared to their Western counterparts?

Sub Questions:

Are there any long-standing stereotypes and misconceptions about Arab Muslim societies in Western media that may affect the recognition of their philanthropic efforts?

How does the Eurocentric focus in Western news media affect the coverage and recognition of philanthropic activities by Arab Muslim philanthropists and Islamic charities?

How do cultural and religious practices in philanthropy within Arab Muslim societies, particularly those emphasising discreet and sincere giving, affect their recognition in Western media?

Subsequently, this thesis seeks to gain a comprehensive understanding of the causes that contribute to the lack of acknowledgment of Arab Muslim philanthropists in Western media by examining these themes in depth. The objective is to reveal the inherent prejudices and structural elements that impact media portrayal, and to promote a more comprehensive and fair comprehension of worldwide philanthropy.

3. Literature review:

3.1 Edward Said: Orientalism.²

Said's book *Orientalism*, in which he introduced the concept that colonialism was not just a form of military and economic control but also a means of discourse-based domination, is often seen as the foundational text of present-day postcolonial theory (McEwan, 2018, p. 75). Said documents a number of inaccurate and occasionally contradictory preconceptions of so-called Oriental peoples (people from Asia, North Africa, and the Middle East), including claims that they are dishonest, sluggish, sceptical, or naive. The Middle Eastern peoples are frequently represented as being helpless, savage, and illogical. Comparatively, Westerners are portrayed as being powerful, forward-thinking, and of high intellect.

According to Said, Arabs "are thought of as camel-riding, terroristic, hook-nosed, venal lechers whose undeserved wealth is an affront to real civilization. Always there lurks the assumption that although the Western consumer belongs to a numerical minority, he is entitled either to own or to expend (or both) the majority of the world's resources. Why? Because he, unlike the Oriental, is a true human being" (Said, 1978, p. 108). These stereotypes, which are often racist or romanticised, contribute to a perspective that rationalises Western colonialism and imperialism.

The term 'Orientalism' refers to the scientific, intellectual, political, and ideological phenomenon that has influenced Western authors, public figures, and governments to describe and identify the Islamic cultures of the Middle East as 'the Orient' (Said, 1978, p. 3). Orientalism does not accurately represent these societies' or their inhabitants' realities. Instead of objective facts, imagined creations are used to generate knowledge about the East. Over the course of the last two centuries, Orientalist concepts, stereotypes, and methodologies have been revived and repeated, and their presence can still be observed in contemporary times. Abdul Rahman Al-Sumait was an Arab Muslim philanthropist who defied stereotypes through his education,

² Edward Said was University Professor of English and Comparative Literature at Columbia University and the author of more than twenty books. <https://palestine.mei.columbia.edu/edward-said-archive>

intelligence, and integrity. Despite his remarkable achievements in humanitarian aid, he received relatively low global recognition, possibly due to biases associated with his background.

3.2 Edward Said: Covering Islam: How the Media and the Experts Determine how we see the Rest of the World.

Similar to what is being explored in the book *Orientalism*, Edward Said addresses in his book *Covering Islam* false portrayals of Muslims and sweeping generalisations about Islam. Hence, it is an elaboration of the fundamental concepts Said laid out in *Orientalism*. The book is divided into three primary sections.

The section titled 'Islam as News' is highly pertinent to this thesis. It explores how Americans, and indeed the Western world as a whole, are largely unaware of Islam and its followers, except in relation to topics deemed newsworthy such as oil, Iran, Afghanistan, and terrorism (Said, 1981, pp. 6-7). The media's coverage of these issues frequently serves to obscure or cover up the true nature of Islam and its adherents. Therefore, the phrase 'covering' Islam has a twofold meaning: reporting on it and simultaneously concealing, disguising, or obscuring it. Said writes: "It is only a slight overstatement to say that Muslims and Arabs are essentially covered, discussed, apprehended, either as oil suppliers or as potential terrorists. Very little of the detail, the human density, the passion of Arab-Muslims life has entered the awareness of even those people whose profession it is to report the Islamic world" (Said, 1981, p. 26).

The section 'Islam as News' furthermore examines the process of selecting 'newsworthy issues' to determine what makes news. According to Said, news is not just an inert fact but the result of a complex deliberate selection process, since "journalists, news agencies, and networks consciously go about deciding what is to be portrayed, how it is to be portrayed and the like. Journalists and the American media inevitably collect information on the outside world inside a framework dominated by government policy" (Said, 1981, p. 50).

In general, the determination of what topics are considered newsworthy is heavily influenced by groups that represent the political and economic interests of energy corporations as well as the defence and intelligence communities. The media's preference for 'newsworthy' stories over important charitable work could have contributed to the lack of global recognition for Al-Sumait and his organisation.

3.3 Cheryl McEwan: Postcolonialism, Decoloniality and Development.³

McEwan's book *Postcolonialism, Decoloniality and Development* provides an explanation, review, and critical evaluation of current discussions surrounding postcolonial and decolonial perspectives and their impact on the field of development studies (McEwan, 2018, p. 36). It delineates these current discussions thoroughly, and explores their consequences for how the developing world is perceived, described, and interacted with in terms of policies (McEwan, 2018, pp. 39-40).

The author posits that postcolonialism does not have a single origin but encompasses various approaches, theories, and strategies. The chapter *Histories and Geographies of Postcolonialism* takes a comprehensive approach to understanding postcolonialism as a spectrum of responses to colonialism and decolonization, inspiring both liberation movements and academic exploration (McEwan, 2018, p. 46).

McEwan explains that while, in theoretical terms, postcolonialism has significantly been influenced by Marxist political economy and post-structuralist cultural and linguistic analysis. Edward Said, who has been mentioned earlier, arguably had the most significant influence within post-colonial theory, followed by the likes of Homi Bhabha and Gayatri Spivak (McEwan, 2018, p. 75). In addition to praising him extensively, McEwan also brings up some critiques of Said's colonial discourse, which she borrowed from Young and Loomba. These critiques include, among other points, Said's tendency to make broad historical generalisations based on a limited number of literary texts, and his criticism of the West for its all-encompassing discourses, even though he could be equally criticised for portraying the West as homogeneous and overlooking the differences between European empires (McEwan, 2018, p. 78).

One of the concepts, which McEwan mentions in her book, in connection with postcolonialism and Orientalism, is 'othering'. Othering is a social process that involves attributing negative characteristics to people or groups who are different from oneself in order to marginalise and contrast them (Rohleder, 2014, pp. 1306-1308). Othering involves creating a binary opposition between the familiar 'self' (Europe, the West, 'us') and the unfamiliar 'other'

³ Cheryl McEwan is University Professor and Head of Department in the Department of Geography at Durham University. <https://www.durham.ac.uk/staff/cheryl-mcewan/>

(the Orient, the East, 'them') (McEwan, 2018, p. 76, pp. 150-153). For instance, if colonised people are considered irrational, Europeans are seen as rational; if the former are labelled as barbaric, sensual, and lazy, Europe is portrayed as the epitome of civilization, and so on. It is important to note, as McEwan argues, that the construction of 'self' and 'other' is not exclusive to the West (McEwan, 2018, p. 160). The Shi'ite revolution in Iran and the recent emergence of extremism within Sunni Islam, as exemplified by the so-called Islamic State in parts of Iraq and Syria, are driven by a vehement rejection of the West. In these cases, the West is perceived as the embodiment of moral decay, unjust global dominance, and the exploitation of other nations' wealth and sovereignty.

3.4 Virginie Mamadouh: Eurocentrism/Orientalism in news media.⁴

In this chapter of the *Routledge Handbook of Media Geographies*, Mamadouh discusses the role of the media in perpetuating Eurocentrism and Orientalism in popular geopolitics, particularly in news media. She explains that Eurocentrism and Orientalism are two biases commonly found in Western media. Eurocentrism refers to the Western biases that influence the selection and framing of news, where Western places are given more attention and nuance compared to other parts of the world. On the other hand, Orientalism pertains to the negative stereotyping of non-Western places and people (Mamadouh, 2021, p. 232).

Eurocentrism is the cultural phenomenon of viewing non-Western societies from a European or Western perspective. It assumes the superiority of European cultural values and presents them as universal, advocating for imitating Western values as the solution to various societal problems (Pokhrel, 2011, p. 321). The notion of Orientalism, as coined by Edward Said, suggests that the portrayal of Asian cultures and societies in the West is often too simplistic, based on stereotypes, and can be offensive. The origins of Orientalism can be traced back to European imperialism, and it encompasses the assumption that all Asian cultures are uniform and reliant on Western influence for progress (Said, 1978). Orientalism involves the othering of the Orient as the significant Other of Europe (or the West). This binary exhibits a strong asymmetry, where a positive value is assigned to the Western and a negative value to the non-Western.

⁴ Virginie Mamadouh is Associate Professor of Political and cultural geography at the University of Amsterdam. <https://www.uva.nl/profiel/m/a/v.d.mamadouh/v.d.mamadouh.html>

Mamadouh then elaborates on Eurocentrism by clarifying that it is a phenomenon that arises from the expectation that news about nearby places and people should matter more. News media tend to focus on the areas where their audiences reside and cover topics that are more relevant to them. Most transnational and global media are Western-based, often owned by Western firms, and organised according to a Western conception of journalism and market logic. They primarily serve a Western audience and select news that is deemed most relevant to that audience, especially when their main goal is to expand their audience and generate more income. As a result, they are more likely to cover news from Western regions with greater frequency, intensity and detail and from a Western perspective (Mamadouh, 2021, p. 234). In addition to the aforementioned aspect of Eurocentrism, Orientalism affects news coverage even further and influences how Western and non-Western actors and places are portrayed, creating and sustaining power imbalances between the West and non-West. This leads to a disproportionate focus on Western affairs in the media. In essence, Orientalism reinforces Eurocentrism.

Mamadouh also provides a number of examples of Orientalism. One of the most long-lasting examples of Orientalism in the media is the portrayal of Africa (the continent in which Abdul Rahman Al-Sumait and his organisation carried out their extensive humanitarian aid work) as a dark and underdeveloped continent. A study conducted on the news coverage of the conflicts in Rwanda and Bosnia from 1990 to 1994 in six major American quality newspapers, explored differences in the representation of two large-scale and violent ethnic conflicts and the response of the international community. The study found that there was more attention given to Bosnia than to Rwanda, as evidenced by the difference in the volume of coverage (Mamadouh, 2021, pp. 236-237).

From this chapter by Mamadouh, one can deduce how both Eurocentrism and Orientalism may have contributed to the lack of recognition Abdul Rahman Al-Sumait and his organisation received, both globally and even locally, in comparison to well-known philanthropists like Bill Gates, Warren Buffett and Mother Theresa. Eurocentrism is observed as the primary reason for this, as the international media, which is mostly based in the West, tends to focus on stories and figures that are more relatable to their primary audience. As a result,

philanthropic tales from the Global South, particularly from the Middle East, are either underrepresented or ignored. On the other hand, Orientalism plays a part in this as well, as Western media may hold biases that impact the portrayal and coverage of Arab and Muslim figures in a less favourable light. On top of that, Western media targeting non-Western audiences often give disproportionate attention to Western events and people, causing locals to be less known. Another interesting point to be considered in this context is that many of the world's leading media outlets operate primarily in English. As a result, stories about Western philanthropists who often communicate in English are more likely to get broader global coverage.

3.5 Shariq Siddiqui: Muslim philanthropy: living beyond a Western definition.⁵

In this research article, Siddiqui explains that the current definition of philanthropy is heavily influenced by Western culture and non-Western communities and scholars do not connect with it. Additionally, the field of philanthropic studies has primarily developed based on Western-centric research, as most of the foundational research that is building this field has been conducted in the West (Siddiqui, 2022, p. 338).

The conventional definition of philanthropy that is used in Western scholarship does not encompass several acts of philanthropy commonly practised by Muslims. Some scholars have argued that Zakat should not be included in the definition of philanthropy, as it is an obligatory form of giving. They believe that philanthropy should be understood as 'voluntary action for the public good', which excludes mandatory giving. Therefore, according to this Western-centric definition, Zakat does not qualify as philanthropy. However, many Muslims view Zakat as a personal act of charity and disagree with this definition. For centuries, Muslim philanthropy has extended beyond the limited scope of Western definitions of philanthropy. Siddiqui argues that such a Western interpretation of philanthropy narrows our understanding of Muslim

⁵ Shariq Siddiqui is an Assistant Professor of Philanthropic Studies and Director of the Muslim Philanthropy Initiative at the Indiana University Lilly Family School of Philanthropy. <https://philanthropy.indianapolis.iu.edu/people-directory/siddiqui-shariq.html>

philanthropy and should not be given more importance over other cultural and religious traditions' perspectives of philanthropy (Siddiqui, 2022, p. 339).

The article examines theological and cultural sources to explore Muslim philanthropy and suggests a more inclusive conception of philanthropy within an Islamic context. It also highlights the challenges that scholars face in adhering strictly to the Western definition of philanthropy when studying Muslim philanthropy. Ultimately, it proposes a framework for the field of philanthropic studies to broaden its definition beyond the Western-centric view and be more accommodating of other cultural and faith perspectives (Siddiqui, 2022, p. 339). Accordingly, many of Abdul Rahman Al Sumait's philanthropic deeds may not align with a Western-centric definition of philanthropy, which could be one reason for his relatively low global recognition.

3.6 Chanfi Ahmed: Networks of Islamic NGOs in sub-Saharan Africa: Bilal Muslim Mission, African Muslim Agency (Direct Aid), and al-Haramayn.⁶

As the title suggests, this article from the *Journal of Eastern African Studies* analyses the operations and networks of three Islamic NGOs in sub-Saharan Africa: The African Muslim Agency (Direct Aid), the Bilal Muslim Mission, and al-Haramayn. Ahmed explains that these three Islamic NGOs have two main objectives. Firstly, they aim to provide support to those in need, and secondly, they aim to spread their particular version of Islam, which is a common goal for modern Islamic NGOs (Ahmed, 2009, p. 426). The Bilal Muslim Mission is promoting the Shia faith, while the African Muslim Agency and al-Haramayn are advocating for Sunni Islam.

According to Ahmed, these Islamic charitable associations are influenced by the Muslim Brotherhood and similar groups. Their approach to charitable work differs from governmental and other non-governmental organisations as they view it as a form of da'wa, or missionary effort, and an integral part of their wider struggle to establish a more Islamic and just society (Ahmed, 2009, p. 427). The relevance of the African Muslim Agency (later named Direct Aid) to

⁶ Chanfi Ahmed is Lecturer on the History of Africa with a focus on the History of Islam in Africa at the Institute for Asian and African Studies, Humboldt University-Berlin.
<https://www.ehess.fr/fr/personne/chanfi-ahmed>

this thesis lies in its creation by Abdul Rahman Al-Sumait, who founded it in 1981 following a visit to Malawi.

The central aim of the organisation, as declared by Al-Sumait, is to provide religious, medical, social, and educational services to as many people as possible. Similar to other organisations, the African Muslim Agency puts a strong emphasis on religion (Ahmed, 2009, p. 428). Abdul Rahman Al-Sumait revealed in an interview that he was previously affiliated with various Islamic groups such as the Jamâ'at al-Tablîgh, the Muslim Brotherhood (al-Ikhwân al-muslimûn), the Salafis, and others. He acknowledged that he learned a lot from each of these groups, and they have significantly influenced his way of thinking. In his home country, some people considered him to be part of the general Islamist current (al-tayyâr al-islamî), if not a member of the Muslim Brotherhood. However, he also stated that he had abandoned politics entirely and devoted himself solely to charity work (Ahmed, 2009, p. 428).

According to Ahmed, the African Muslim Agency, which was founded by Abdul Rahman Al-Sumait, who had an affiliation with the Muslim Brotherhood, cannot be considered a Muslim Brotherhood-inspired organisation. This, although it does belong to the general Islamist current known as al-tayyâr al-islamî. However, Ahmed clarifies that the majority of the organisation's members, as well as its founder, are not radical or fundamentalist Islamists.

Despite this, Ahmed asserts, the growing impact of political Islam and the emergence of Islamic militancy during the 1980s, have led to much uncertainty. Following the Afghan conflict between Soviet and Afghan communists, the conflicts in Kosovo and Bosnia, and most significantly, the terrorist attacks of 9/11 and its aftermath, organised da'wa (missionary) activities, such as those by Islamic NGOs, have become widely viewed with suspicion (Ahmed, 2009, p. 427).

Abdul Rahman Al-Sumait's involvement with the Muslim Brotherhood and the African Muslim Agency's association with the general Islamist current *al-tayyâr al-islamî* (The Islamic Movement) may have caused certain media outlets to be hesitant in wanting to report about the enormous humanitarian efforts of the organisation and its founder, especially after the events of 9/11. They could have feared that the NGO was being used as a front for spreading political Islam or that it was harbouring extremists. This could partially explain why Abdul

Rahman Al-Sumait and his organisation did not receive world wide recognition for their extensive charity work.

3.7 Mayke Kaag: Gulf Charities in Africa.⁷

In this chapter of the book *Gulf Charities and Islamic Philanthropy in the 'Age of Terror' and Beyond*, Kaag focuses on the work of Gulf charities in Africa. These charities have been encountering different working conditions compared to their countries of origin. The differences include levels of wealth, state policies, and social and cultural circumstances such as religion and forms of Islamic practice. Charities from the Gulf have been operating in Africa since the 1980s and have a long-standing presence in the continent, which the chapter provides a historical and geographical overview of. Islamic charities from the Gulf operate in Africa, providing emergency relief, medical care, care for orphans, and constructing wells, mosques, and schools. Building wells and mosques often go hand in hand, as water is essential for the faithful to purify themselves before praying (Kaag, 2014, p. 81).

Kaag elucidates that the organisations examined in the study presented in this chapter are Islamic NGOs, not just NGOs operated by Muslims. They have a missionary (da'wa) role and are mainly concerned with the promotion of Islam. This could be through the deepening of people's understanding of Islamic principles and improving Muslims' religious practices (re-Islamization), as well as the conversion of non-Muslims (Islamization). When interviewed, religious experts and NGO personnel confirmed that the da'wa of these NGOs was essentially the same. Furthermore, Saudi, Kuwaiti, and Sudanese organisations use each other's promotional and educational materials, which is also a testament to their similarity (Kaag, 2014, p. 82).

The author discusses how Gulf-based charities typically prefer to work directly with their intended beneficiaries, without involving any intermediary organisations. Although there may be some minor variations, most Islamic charities from the Gulf follow a similar approach, work

⁷ Mayke Kaag is a University Professor in the anthropology of Islam in Africa and its diaspora at the University of Amsterdam, and a senior researcher on the political anthropology of Africa's global connections at Leiden University. <https://www.uva.nl/profiel/k/a/m.m.a.kaag/m.m.a.kaag.html>

in similar sectors, and convey similar messages. However, it should be noted that they operate in a variety of local African contexts, which can affect how their messages are perceived and what they are able to accomplish (Kaag, 2014, p. 83). The author cites examples of this phenomenon in countries such as Chad, Senegal, and Tanzania.

Kaag explores the impact of the war on terror on Gulf charities operating in Africa. She points out that these charities have been working in Africa for a long time, but without much external scrutiny. However, the 'war on terror' has brought them under the spotlight, resulting in negative global publicity and government actions that have significantly affected their operations in recent years.

According to Kaag, the Bush administration's 'war on terror', which started after 9/11, had a severe impact on the Islamic charity sector. Although Islamic NGOs had been accused of supporting terrorism since the early 1990s, the accusations became more widespread and severe after 9/11, leading to a massive witch hunt. Gulf charities faced increasing restrictions from their own and foreign governments, making it harder for them to work outside their home countries (Kaag, 2014, p. 86).

Consequently, the number of Gulf charities operating in Africa has been limited by the 'war on terror', which has also reduced their ability to offer aid and carry out activities on the ground. Additionally, there is a trend among Islamic charities to become less conspicuous as Islamic organisations. They are increasingly transforming, at least nominally, into more general humanitarian organisations while promoting their Islamic projects as secondary activities (Kaag, 2014, p. 87). Examples of Gulf charities that have undergone this transformation include Human Appeal International and Direct Aid. The latter was previously known as the African Muslims Agency (AMA), the organisation founded by Abdul Rahman Al-Sumait.

Kaag makes several references to the African Muslims Agency (Direct Aid) in her chapter, highlighting that it was one of the Islamic NGOs that started working in Africa during the 1980s. The organisation primarily focuses on education and invests predominantly in constructing large centres that integrate a mosque, a school, an orphanage, a centre for professional education, and a women's centre.

In terms of how the war on terror affected the African Muslims Agency (AMA), Mayke Kaag notes that in an interview with the director of the AMA country office in Chad, it became clear that the organisation was not experiencing the same problems as other Gulf charities. Instead, the program had grown, and the organisation had expanded its reach in Chad. She admits that it is challenging to assess why AMA's experience is different from that of other Gulf charities. The AMA country director suggested that Kuwait has better regulation and coordination mechanisms in place than the other Gulf countries. However, the Director informed her that the organisation would no longer carry the name of African Muslims' Agency but would use the name of its mother organisation, Direct Aid, instead (Kaag, 2014, p. 87).

The chapters' main focus is on Islamic charity organisations, particularly those operating in the Gulf region, and the significant charity work they have been carrying out. As Kaag points out, these organisations were viewed with suspicion due to the impact of the war on terror. Consequently, the media may have portrayed these organisations negatively, fearing they might be perceived as supporting charities that fund terrorism. Unfortunately, this may have resulted in the excellent charity work done by Islamic charities, such as the African Muslims Agency and its founder Abdul Rahman Al-Sumait, not receiving their due recognition and perhaps even going unnoticed, especially in the West.

3.8 Lillie Chouliaraki: The Ironic Spectator: Solidarity in the Age of Post-Humanitarianism.⁸

Chouliaraki argues in her book *The Ironic Spectator: Solidarity in the Age of Post-Humanitarianism* that humans are now in an age of 'post-humanitarianism', which "situates the pleasures of the self at the heart of moral action" (Chouliaraki, 2013, p. 4). This era places self-pleasure at the core of moral action, unlike the 1950s and 60s when humanitarianism was characterised by solidarity. According to Chouliaraki, the concept of humanitarianism has changed significantly since the mid-20th century, and aid work is now being commercialised. This means that those who provide aid benefit themselves more than

⁸ Lillie Chouliaraki is a University Professor and Chair in Media and Communications in the Department of Media and Communications at London School of Economics and Political Science.
<https://www.lse.ac.uk/media-and-communications/people/academic-staff/lillie-chouliaraki>

the people in need of help. Celebrities and other spectators seem to be taking centre stage, serving their own interests instead of focusing on the needs of those who are suffering (Chouliaraki, 2013, p.45). As a result, the essence of humanitarianism has shifted, and solidarity is no longer a top priority.

Although there are now more sophisticated and diverse methods of communication to raise awareness and generate funds, the essence of humanitarianism, which involves demonstrating real solidarity, compassion, and empathy with those whose lives are to be improved worldwide, is declining and needs to be brought back to people's attention. For example, nowadays donating money has become very easy and can be done effortlessly via contactless donation terminals or card readers, for instance. While this is a positive development, the negative side effect is that many people need to learn precisely what or to whom they donate. Therefore, potential donors must be well-informed about where their money will be going and the recipients' condition so they can feel a sense of solidarity. Moreover, too often, the only thing that connects the goodwill ambassador celebrities of today with the individuals affected by humanitarian crises is pictures (Chouliaraki, 2013, p. 79, 91-96). Unfortunately, these celebrities use these pictures to promote themselves and their own feelings instead of telling the victims' stories and speaking up on their behalf.

There is the view that seeing celebrities and movie actors voicing global engagement and social responsibility is good. Sometimes, their ideas are more intelligent and practical than what is portrayed in the media. However, the media's excessive use of celebrities can distort global relations, which is a cause for concern (Pieterse, 2018, p. 143). In many Muslim Arab societies, charitable acts are often motivated by religious teachings that emphasise discreet giving without seeking praise or recognition. In Islam, sincerity is of utmost importance and is considered one of the key aspects of the Islamic faith. In fact, it is the most important one. Therefore, performing good deeds in order to receive praise and recognition from people is strictly prohibited in Islam and is considered a form of idolatry (shirk). It has been reported that Prophet Muhammad said: "What I fear for you (O my followers) the most is the lesser form of idolatry (shirk)," upon which he was asked: "And what is the lesser form of idolatry (shirk)," to which he replied: "Showing off (one's righteous deeds)(Riya)." (Ahmad, no. 27742; al-Albaani,

1555) It is possible that Abdul Rahman Al-Sumait and his charity organisation received little global recognition due to their lack of effort to become famous or well-known. This could be because they followed the doctrine mentioned above of carrying out one's actions discreetly and avoiding ostentation.

4. Theoretical Framework:

The thesis will use postcolonial theory, media studies, and globalisation theory to analyse the underrepresentation of Arab Muslim benefactors in Western media. These theories will help in understanding how Arab Muslim philanthropists and Islamic charities are portrayed in Western media and public discourse in comparison to their Western counterparts. The central research question being addressed is: How are Arab Muslim philanthropists and Islamic charities represented in Western media and public discourse compared to their Western counterparts? In order to establish a strong theoretical foundation for this thesis, I have tried to integrate perspectives from the scholarly works we have been studying throughout the ComDev programme.

It is essential to analyse the worldwide situation and the existence of several centres of power, as expanded upon in the research conducted by Eriksen (2014) and Pieterse (2018). The perspectives provided by their research are of great significance in understanding the development of globalisation in both the Western and Eastern regions. These perspectives are also essential for examining the impact of globalisation on the acknowledgment of donors from non-Western regions in Western media. This pertains to the sub-question: How does the Eurocentric focus in Western news media affect the coverage and recognition of philanthropic activities by Arab Muslim philanthropists and Islamic charities? The research by Eriksen and Pieterse also sheds light on the factors that contribute to globalisation and its consequences, emphasising the importance of a grassroots approach. This viewpoint has enabled me to comprehend the difficulties and possibilities faced by philanthropists from non-Western regions in a world characterised by several centres of power. It has also enabled me to understand topics such as the 'war on terror' and the spreading of the English language globally.

Furthermore, the thesis will be situated within the postcolonial and decolonial frameworks, as expounded by McEwan (2018) and Said (1978). Said's theory of Orientalism, including the concept of othering, has been invaluable in analysing the portrayal of Arab/Muslim benefactors in Western media. McEwan picks up on this theory, and her contributions clarify current theoretical discussions and their effects on how the developing

world is perceived, described, and addressed in policy contexts. This perspective examines explicitly the research sub-question: Are there any long-standing stereotypes and misconceptions about Arab Muslim societies in Western media that may affect the recognition of their philanthropic efforts?

I also found it important to examine the role of communication in international help, taking into consideration the perspectives propounded by Eyben (2014). Working for the well-being of people in nations other than their own presents daily challenges for humanitarians that I could better grasp through her work. This allowed me to draw a parallel to Gulf charities operating in Africa and encountering different working conditions than those in their countries of origin.

In order to gain comprehension of the function of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in the development field, I found O'Sullivan's (2021) work very helpful. It gave me insights into the growth of development and humanitarian NGOs in the Western world and how the author defines compassion. It allowed me to compare this with Islamic NGOs and the definition of compassion in Islam.

Also, in order to thoroughly examine the intricacies of the worldwide humanitarian situation, I found the scholarly work by Richey (2015) on the phenomenon of celebrity humanitarianism essential. Her viewpoint enabled me to comprehend the influence of celebrities and power dynamics in the domain, elucidating how these dynamics affect the prominence and acknowledgment of various charitable individuals. This goes hand in hand with Chouliaraki's (2013) notion of "post-humanitarianism" and the influence of celebrities in contemporary humanitarian endeavours, which is a stark contrast to the religious practice of discreet and sincere giving in philanthropy within Arab and Muslim societies. The conventional Western definition of philanthropy does not fully encompass the range of philanthropic actions commonly practised by Muslims. Siddiqui's (2022) analysis of the Western-centric interpretation of philanthropy is crucial for comprehending the impact of certain cultural and religious customs in Arab Muslim countries on their portrayal in Western media. This framework will examine the effects of cultural and religious practices in philanthropy within Arab Muslim

societies, mainly focusing on discreet and sincere giving, and how these practices affect their recognition in Western media.

Finally, for this thesis it was crucial to take into account the ideas of racism, the white saviour complex, and media portrayal, by referring to the writings of Denskus (2019 & 2020) and the research of Hopkins (2018). These provide important understanding of the prejudices and preconceived notions that can impact the acknowledgment of Arab/Muslim benefactors in the field of charity and international development.

5. Methodology:

5.1 Biographical case study

I started my research because of my interest in Muslim and Arab philanthropy and how it contributed to development efforts. That being so, I looked into the example of Abdul Rahman Al-Sumait and the nonprofit Direct Aid. It was soon apparent that, in contrast to the widespread recognition of individuals like Mother Teresa and Bill Gates, notable Arab figures such as Abdul Rahman Al-Sumait were largely unknown in the West. By investigating the life and accomplishments of Abdul Rahman Al-Sumait as a biographical case study, I hoped to uncover at least some of the reasons contributing to the lack of recognition of Muslim and Arab philanthropists in Western societies such as himself.

Janet L. Miller discusses in her contribution to “The SAGE Encyclopedia of Qualitative Research Methods” that authors of biographies typically focus on well-known and prominent individuals. However, scholars from various disciplines emphasise the significance of documenting the lives of individuals who are rarely acknowledged or entirely overlooked in historical and contemporary contexts. Portraying and acknowledging these marginalised individuals could play a crucial role in rectifying historical narratives and altering inaccurate public perceptions (Miller, cited in Given, 2008, pp. 61-63).

The genre of biography, as a literary form and a qualitative research approach, is influenced by various disciplines such as history, literature, anthropology, sociology, psychology, and education. The interdisciplinary character of biography has led to the development of several approaches and concepts, including life tales, life histories, memoirs, and numerous types of autobiography. Biography beyond the simple gathering of information about a person entails a subtle analysis to provide a thorough depiction of their life and the historical circumstances in which they existed.

In this study, I examine the ongoing discussions in various fields regarding the difficulties of authentically recounting an individual's life, the influence of the researcher's own history, and the significance of memory and the reader in creating the narrative. When performing

biographical research, it is crucial to be thorough and careful in choosing people, collecting and examining historical documents, and conducting interviews (Given, 2008, pp. 61-63).

Unfortunately, due to Abdul Rahman Al-Sumait's passing, I could not conduct a face-to-face interview with him. However, I thoroughly examined many interviews featuring him and conversations discussing him with his friends and family members.

5.2 Discourse analysis

Nevertheless, it became evident that relying just on a biographical case study would not adequately address my research question and its sub-questions. Consequently, I chose discourse analysis, an academic discipline focused on examining the social use of language, whether it is used in spoken interactions or written texts. This field, which combines many academic disciplines such as psychology, sociology, philosophy, and linguistics, relies on their respective historical traditions and research approaches (Given, 2008, pp. 216-217).

Discourse analysis comprises two main methodologies: ethnomethodological and Foucauldian. Ethnomethodological discourse analysis, based on the research of Harold Garfinkel, aims to reveal the underlying laws that dictate human behaviour and communication. The study centres on the mechanisms of communication that generate significance, operating under the assumption that communication is organised, consistent, and contingent on the context. Researchers in this subject may investigate the utilisation of language in particular situations, such as the manner in which teens generate and discuss collective interpretations pertaining to substance usage. (Given, 2008, pp. 216-217)

Conversely, Foucauldian discourse analysis highlights the power dynamics that exist inside language. This study examines the impact of language, as employed by different societal figures such as physicians, caregivers, mass media, and governing bodies, on the marginalisation of particular social groups. Additionally, it analyses the communication of excluded factions, including adolescents, as a means of opposing prevailing cultural narratives. Foucauldian analysis takes a more critical approach, examining how power is exerted through language. As such, discourse analysis involves a wide range of techniques used to examine how language

influences social interactions. It assigns equal significance to both the coherence and structure of language in its environment and the inherent power dynamics intertwined with it (Given, 2008, pp. 216-217).

By employing discourse analysis to examine the relationship between philanthropy and media representation, particularly in the Eastern and Western contexts, I uncovered a complex network of language that influences how perceptions, identities, and power dynamics are formed. This method explores the process of narrative construction and its profound impact on global comprehension. By scrutinising Western portrayals of the East, emphasising significant themes such as Orientalist caricatures and cultural dominance, I will examine the role of language in both reflecting and reinforcing Western dominance. It creates a discourse that sustains power disparities between the West and the East. Discourse analysis will uncover a prejudiced and Eurocentric perspective in Western media's depiction of the East, influenced by the choice of terminology and framing techniques employed.

The discussion thereafter shifts onto the notion of philanthropy, specifically highlighting the differences between Western and Islamic interpretations. The main emphasis is on how Western language frameworks might exclude or sideline non-Western types of generosity. The approach explores how language shapes definitions and settings, consequently impacting comprehension and identification. An examination of how Islamic NGOs are depicted in a world after the September 11th attacks provides valuable insights into the language construction of connections and identities. The media's depiction of these non-governmental organisations (NGOs), particularly in regards to specific associations, offers a rich opportunity to examine how language influences and predisposes perceptions, ultimately affecting international acknowledgment.

The role of Islamic charities in relation to the financing of terrorism is also examined and scrutinised. This analysis specifically examines the discrepancy between accusatory narratives portrayed in the media and the tangible humanitarian efforts being carried out. It emphasises how the rhetoric employed after the 9/11 incident fosters an environment of mistrust. Another vital issue is the influence of the war on terror narrative on Gulf charities operating in Africa. The dissemination of this story, facilitated by deliberate linguistic selections, has had a profound

impact on the depiction and functioning of these charitable organisations. The investigation also examines how these organisations have reacted to worldwide examination, frequently altering their identities and activities as evidenced by their language utilisation. The arrival of post-humanitarianism has brought about a shift in the humanitarian discourse, indicating a fundamental change in the nature of humanitarianism. This section of the analysis explores the vocabulary used to describe this change and its impact on global unity. It also investigates how celebrities influence humanitarian situations by their language, which in turn shapes public opinions and behaviours.

To conclude, discourse analysis uncovers the various levels of significance in narratives concerning philanthropy and media representation, thus exposing the significant influence that language has on our comprehension of these occurrences. This method not only enhances the understanding of the narratives themselves but also provides a glimpse into the wider socio-political and cultural settings in which they exist. The biographical case study of Dr. Abdul Rahman Al-Sumait and Direct Aid enhances the understanding of speech by presenting a tangible illustration of how charitable narratives are influenced by personal experiences, religious motivations, and organisational methods. It highlights the significance of analysing the language employed in charity to comprehend its complex characteristics and how it is perceived in diverse cultural and geopolitical settings.

6. Biographical case study - Abdul Rahman Al-Sumait and Direct Aid:

6.1 Abdurrahman Al-Sumait.

Dr. Abdul Rahman bin Hamood Al-Sumait, a religious Muslim Arab and medical practitioner who dedicated his life to humanitarianism, was born on 15 October 1947 in Kuwait. He completed his medical studies in Iraq, the UK, and Canada. In 1972, he earned his Bachelor of Medicine and Surgery degree from the University of Baghdad, followed by a Diploma in Heat Area Diseases from the University of Liverpool in 1974. His postgraduate degree, specialised in internal medicine and gastroenterology, was obtained from McGill University in Canada in 1978 (Direct Aid, n.d., a).

He conducted several medical scientific research studies, some of which were published, including 'The Open Between Pancreas and Colon,' published in the Canadian Medical Society Magazine. Between 1974 and 1978, he worked as a practitioner at Montreal Public Hospital. After that, he worked as a specialised physician at King's College Hospital in London from 1979 to 1980. In 1980, he returned to Kuwait where he worked at the Al-Sabah Hospital as a doctor specialising in diseases of the digestive system until 1983. From 1983 to 2008, he worked for Direct Aid, starting as a general secretary before becoming chairman afterward (Direct Aid, n.d., a).

Following a trip to Malawi in 1981, where he saw the tragedies and pains of the people there, he decided to dedicate the rest of his life to humanitarian aid in Africa. He helped everyone, regardless of their religion or culture, and after gaining vast experience in the field, he became a mentor to other upcoming humanitarians (Leichtman, 2020, pp. 98-99). Despite his desire to engage in relief and social welfare, Abdul Rahman Al-Sumait saw himself as an enthusiastic Muslim missionary. Because of his fervour for the cause, he chose to use the services of his charity organisation, which he founded in 1981, in two ways. On the one hand, he saw it as a crucial humanitarian organisation and, on the other, a suitable conduit for carrying out Muslim missionary activities (Haron, 2020, p. 150).

Several honours, awards, trophies, and certificates were bestowed upon al-Sumait for his charitable contributions. In 1996, he was granted the highly esteemed King Faisal International Prize for Service to Islam, recognizing his efforts. Abdul Rahman Al-Sumait, who dedicated more than 30 years of his life to aid work in Africa, passed away on 15 August 2013. (Direct Aid, n.d., a).

6.2 Direct Aid.

Abdul Rahman Al-Sumait founded Direct Aid in 1981 in response to a severe famine in Africa. Initially known as the 'Malawi Muslims Committee,' the organisation quickly expanded beyond Malawi. In 1984, it changed its name to the 'African Muslims Agency.' Finally, in 1999, it became known as the 'Direct Aid Society,' the name it still holds today. Over the years, Direct Aid's humanitarian and developmental programs have benefited communities, both Muslim and non-Muslim, in the areas it serves (Khafagy, 2020, p. 7).

Direct Aid, the largest Muslim non-governmental organisation in Kuwait, is primarily committed to helping orphans; in the process, it offers all the services that the orphans and the communities around them may require. This implies that in addition to food, water, and social activities, Direct Aid offers housing, healthcare, basic education, and vocational training. The general public can access schools and health centres at subsidised prices. The NGO also provides scholarships to underprivileged students so they can pursue university and postgraduate studies (Leichtman, 2023).

Direct Aid has achieved numerous accomplishments. In 2021, they were recognized for excellence with a 3-star rating from the European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM). They have also sponsored over 83,245 orphans and provided scholarships to more than 16,640 students. Additionally, they have established, managed, and operated six hospitals, built and operated 326 dispensaries, founded and managed 314 schools ranging from kindergarten to high school, constructed over 5,992 mosques in various countries in Africa, drilled over 24,945 surface and artesian wells to provide fresh water to people living in poor and remote areas in

Africa and Yemen, established and operated 79 women's centres, and they have founded and operated four universities, offering a wide range of academic disciplines (Direct Aid, n.d., b).

Individual donations primarily provide funding for Direct Aid. The organisation has a hierarchical structure. After the passing of Dr. al-Sumait in 2013, his son became the Director General and has been consulting with a Board of Directors of notable Kuwaiti businessmen and other professionals (Leichtman, 2023).

7. Analysis:

7.1 Media Representation.

7.1.1 Western Centrim/Eurocentrism.

The international media, primarily based in the West, focuses on figures and stories that resonate with their primary audience. For this reason it tends to focus more on Western philanthropists, partly because of the audience's familiarity with them. Consequently, tales of philanthropy from the Global South, especially from the Middle East, often remain underrepresented or overlooked. This disproportionate focus on Western events and figures in media could be affecting the visibility of philanthropic efforts by Islamic charities and Arab/Muslim individuals, such as Direct Aid and Abdul Rahman Al-Sumait, and be a reason for their lesser global recognition.

Western Centrim/Eurocentrism arises from the belief that news related to nearby places and people should be of greater importance (Mamadouh, 2021, p. 234). News outlets usually concentrate on regions where their audiences are located and cover topics that are more pertinent to them. The majority of global and transnational media are Western-based, often owned by Western corporations, and organised according to a Western understanding of journalism and market principles. They primarily cater to a Western audience and choose news that is believed to be most relevant to that audience, especially when their primary objective is to increase their audience and generate more revenue. Consequently, they are more inclined to report on news from Western regions with greater frequency, intensity, and detail, and from a Western perspective. Furthermore, media aimed at non-Western audiences frequently highlights Western events more than other regions. On the other hand, the fact that economic, political, and cultural power still resides overwhelmingly in the West gave rise to postcolonial approaches (McEwan, 2018, p. 9).

A group of scholars from over a dozen national organisations compiled data on foreign affairs coverage by various daily newspapers and major broadcasting channels in 29 different

countries over a period of two weeks in 1984. The final report identified six major findings: (1) selection criteria in international news reporting are almost universal; (2) regional events and actors are emphasised by all national media systems; (3) the US and Western Europe are consistently covered in news reporting across all regions; (4) 'hot-spot' stories are the next most covered items after the US and Western Europe; (5) Third World countries not covered as 'hot spots', as well as socialist countries, remain the least covered areas in international news reporting; (6) the national news agency or the 'own correspondent' is the most important source for international news, followed by the major international news agencies (Van Ginneken, 1998, p. 142).

The dominance of global news flows by the Anglo-American alliance was strengthened when the US replaced British imperial power after the Second World War. This impacted how international affairs were portrayed, including coverage of military conflicts, financial and corporate news, and promoting popular and digital cultures. Following the end of the Cold War, an era characterised by high levels of global communication, a novel form of neo-colonialism in news media surfaced. This development was brought about by the expansion of satellite and cable networks owned by Western countries that spanned the globe, further bolstered by the emergence of digital empires in the new millennium (Thussu, 2022, p. 1578).

The impact of the United States on global communication technology and software is still significant. However, due to the increasingly mobile, interconnected, and digital communication infrastructure, there has been an increase in the circulation of content from non-Western nations. Despite the continued dominance of the US-UK news partnership in the global news space, new players have emerged in the 21st century, offering a more diverse perspective on international affairs and contributing to the process of global news decolonization (Thussu, 2022, p. 1587).

Despite this, the Western media continues to hold significant influence, resulting in the prevalence of Western-centric/Eurocentric viewpoints. This is, as mentioned previously, because most international media outlets are based in the West and tend to prioritise stories and individuals that are more relatable to their primary audience. Along with this, there is also the act of choosing news-worthy topics to determine what becomes news, which is usually

subject to the influence of groups that represent the political and economic interests of energy corporations, as well as defence and intelligence communities (Said, 1981). The decision on which subjects are considered newsworthy is heavily influenced by these groups. Islamic charities and Muslim philanthropists, such as Direct Aid and Abdul Rahman Al-Sumait, have made remarkable contributions towards humanitarian aid, yet they are often lesser recognised globally. These factors could be a reason for this lack of recognition.

Furthermore, regarding Direct Aid and Abdul Rahman Al-Sumait, their primary efforts have been directed towards Africa. While the impact is profound, it is geographically concentrated, which may have limited global awareness. In discussions about religion and development, Africa is rarely a prominent topic. This is in line with the ongoing marginalisation of Africa in global and human matters. While the 'global' media outlets regularly cover a minor event in Europe or North America, a catastrophic incident in Africa may not even be mentioned briefly (Chitando et al., 2020, p. 15). This behaviour of the media is yet another example of Western centrism.

7.1.2 Global Influence of the English Language.

Many of the world's leading media outlets operate primarily in English. As a result, stories about Western philanthropists who often communicate in English may get broader global coverage. This, in turn, may lead to stories about Muslim Arab philanthropists who can not communicate well in English, or perhaps not at all, to receive less global coverage, resulting in lower global recognition.

The rise of English as the dominant language has changed the position of other major languages. Although more people speak these languages today than ever before, their status has been diminished, and they are now considered inferior to English (Hjarvard, 2004, p. 76). However, it seems an overstatement to say that English is the primary global leveller and imposes its standards on people everywhere else, because there are other languages that have eradicated more local languages than English, and most people who learn English use it as a foreign language or lingua franca (Eriksen, 2014).

Besides being dominant due to its adoption as a second language by many countries and people, and its use as a lingua franca through global networking, English is also dominant due to its widespread use in the media (Crystal, 2003, pp. 90-91). The media, a conduit for the dissemination of English-language information and Anglo-American culture, has been actively involved in solidifying English's superiority over other languages.

The media's emphasis on English speakers and English language content raises questions about linguistic diversity and equity and can marginalise non-English speakers. Consequently, content from the Arab world, such as Islamic philanthropy, may not get comprehensive global coverage. This could be a reason for the lesser global recognition of Islamic charities and Muslim Arab philanthropists.

One could argue that English has been widely adopted as a second language in the Arab world, with many individuals using it for communication. However, other factors may contribute to the comparatively lower global recognition of Islamic charities and philanthropists from the Muslim Arab community. These factors include Orientalism, which will be further elaborated in the upcoming chapter.

7.1.3 Orientalism.

The issue of Orientalism may have contributed to the limited worldwide recognition of Abdul Rahman Al-Sumait and his organisation's humanitarian work. Orientalism can be separated into two parts: white saviorism and the bias towards Arabs and Muslims. Essentially, Orientalism involves depicting Westerners as superior and people from the Orient (such as Arabs, North Africans, and Asians) as inferior (Said, 1978; Mamadouh, 2021).

7.1.4 White Saviorism.

The stereotype of a white saviour is, unfortunately, often associated with the terms 'humanitarian' and 'philanthropist.' A quick Google search of these two words reveals that most of the stock images are of white people from American or European backgrounds.

Elizabeth Smith Cooney-Petro, who worked as a Community Health Volunteer for the U.S. Peace Corps, analysed white saviourism by examining thousands of posts on Instagram tagged with #HowISeePC, a hashtag frequently used by current Peace Corps volunteers worldwide, and 116 images on the Barbie Savior Instagram account. The results indicated blatant white saviorism. According to Cooney-Petro, saving the world and helping others is a narrative that most people are familiar with, whether it is a fictional tale of heroism or an actual news report, as exemplified by characters like Superman and Princess Diana (Cooney-Petro, 2019). This is because, in American and European society, both Superman and Diana represent white saviorism. Furthermore, the white saviour character is a recurring theme in movies and TV series.

Another example of white saviorism and how some humanitarian organisations continue with this narrative despite being reprimanded, resulting in a never-ending cycle, is what happened with Comic Relief. Despite being called out for white saviorism in late 2017 by an aid watchdog, Comic Relief sent yet another celebrity to Africa, resulting in plain white saviorism again. This incident was flagged by a British MP who highlighted the need to abandon the white saviour narrative and communicate about development better, bringing in the voices of the marginalised (Denskus, 2019).

Barbara Arlene Heron argues that the belief that white Westerners are responsible for saving humanity from suffering originated during the colonial era. She suggests that the continued discourse that Northern, white, bourgeois people are superior in planetary consciousness and morality, along with modernity's notion of progress as universally valued, have contributed to a global entitlement and obligation for bourgeois individuals to intervene (Heron, 1999, p. 72). These twin dimensions of the bourgeois self emerged in the late twentieth century. Some people justified this entitlement to intervention based on the assumption that only white people, due to their dominance, superiority, and intelligence, could free humanity from suffering, even though white people often caused this suffering in the first place.

Others, driven by religious beliefs or good intentions, followed the principle of 'loving for others what you love for yourself'. This trend became especially apparent in the 1950s and beyond when tens of thousands of well-meaning Westerners left their homes to volunteer as

aid workers in far-flung corners of the world (Sobocinska, 2021). Thus, humanitarianism is deeply embedded in European and American culture in one way or another.

7.1.5 Bias towards Arabs/Muslims.

The media in the West might harbour biases that affect the portrayal and coverage of Arab and Muslim figures in a less favourable light, which could be a reason for the low level of recognition of the charity work of Abdul Rahman Al-Sumait and his organisation. Stereotypes about the Arab and Muslim world can overshadow the positive contributions of individuals and organisations from these communities. As a result, their philanthropic efforts might not be highlighted or recognized to the same extent.

In the field of Communication Studies, Empirical Media Studies are increasingly documenting and analysing the representation of Arabs, Muslims, and Arab American Muslims. These studies are distinct from hermeneutical investigations in literary studies because they provide empirical evidence of Orientalist framing and its impact on the media and the public during different phases of its formation (Schmidt, 2014, pp. 148-152).

Studies on Orientalism in the press began in the 1980s with a focus on framing, following significant events such as the 1973 Oil Crisis and the 1979 Iranian Hostage Crisis. These early examinations highlighted Orientalism as the dominant ideological frame used to depict Arabs. The aftermath of the Gulf War marked the beginning of the second significant wave of research on Arab stereotypes. During this time, the tendency to depict Arabs and Muslims within the Orientalist framework reached its highest point. The Orientalist perspective was utilised to create the image of Arabs as adversaries, not only in politics but also in terms of culture and ethics. The time period after the 9/11 attacks saw a significant increase in empirical studies conducted on Arabs and Muslims in the media.

The numerous studies carried out on the portrayal of Arabs and Muslims in public discourse provide compelling evidence for the existence of Orientalism as an ideological media frame. Overall, the evidence gathered overwhelmingly supports the notion that Orientalism is a prevalent media frame. Consulting public opinion data is necessary to determine the extent to

which this frame is conveyed to the broader media audience. It is noteworthy that these studies, which include various public opinion polls and surveys, reflect a bias with an Orientalist perspective.

The meta-frame of Orientalism and its influence on public opinion are supported by empirical evidence, highlighting its significance and ideological nature. These findings validate Said's hypothesis, which he formulated over 40 years ago in his book *Orientalism*.

The studies mentioned in the previous paragraphs are related to studies on Orientalism in the press. Similarly, there are also extensive studies on Orientalism in Hollywood movies. Jack G. Shaheen, in his work 'Reel Bad Arabs', has extensively documented and discussed the portrayal of Arabs in Hollywood films, which spans over 900 movies (Shaheen, 2003). The majority of these films misrepresent the actual characteristics of Arab men, women, and children. Some notable films contributing to this distortion include *True Lies* (1994) and *The Mummy Returns* (2001). This article offers an overview of Hollywood's prejudiced representation of Arabs and Muslims, which has persisted for more than a century. The stereotypes are deeply ingrained in American cinema.

Through their warped glasses, filmmakers have been portraying Arabs as ruthless, barbaric, primitive, religious fanatics. Typical scenes include Arabs raping or kidnapping a fair lady, expressing hatred towards Jews and Christians, and displaying a desire for wealth and power. The hook-nosed Arab stereotype is contrasted in the article with a comparable portrayal of Jews seen in Nazi propaganda. Seldom do Arab actors portray typical human characters in films, and even more seldom do they portray heroic characters like those in *Lion of the Desert* (1981) and *The 13th Warrior* (1999).

In summary, this chapter on Orientalism and its manifestations—such as white saviorism and bias against Arabs and Muslims—has demonstrated how Orientalism has been used for a considerable amount of time in the media and in motion pictures, and how it affects the perceptions of the target audiences regarding Arabs and Muslims. These media portrayals that emphasise negative aspects of Arab and Muslim societies contribute to overshadowing the philanthropic achievements of individuals and organisations from these backgrounds. Given this, it is very reasonable to conclude that the attitude of the Western media is one of the

causes of the lack of recognition of Arab and Muslim philanthropists and their organisations, like Abdul Rahman Al-Sumait and Direct Aid, on a worldwide scale, particularly in the wake of the 9/11 attacks.

7.2 Geopolitics and Philanthropy.

7.2.1 Association of Islamic Charity Organisations with Terrorism by Governments and by Extension the Media.

The American-led 'War on Terrorism' resulted in a rise in Islamophobia worldwide. This rise was reflected in the way media outlets portrayed and stereotyped Muslim populations. Although a few intentionally presented Islamic coverage in a positive light to combat Islamophobia, many portrayals of Muslims contributed to the perpetuation of harmful media stereotypes (Media Smarts, 2012; Wasif, 2021, p. 1140). The war on terror and subsequent debates on terrorism, anti-terror measures, and counter-terrorism legislation have been having a significant impact on Islamic charities, which have come under thorough investigation. Many Islamic charities have been labelled as extreme or radical, and several were closed down. Given these circumstances and the growing resentment towards Muslims, one can assume that the media, particularly in the West, were not too inclined to report positively about Islamic charities and their contributions to humanitarian aid. This could be one of the reasons why Abdul Rahman Al-Sumait and his organisation did not receive as much local and global recognition.

Islamic charities, particularly those based in Gulf countries, were regarded by various governments, led by the U.S. government, as supporters of terrorism. It is possible to trace the origins of terrorism support, including the contemporary Al-Qaida terrorist financing network, back over thirty years to the organisational strategies used during the Soviet-Afghan war (Feiler, 2007, p. 6; Kohlmann, 2006, p. 1). During that period, several NGOs offered different forms of support that proved to be invaluable in the prolonged conflict. Given that the Qur'an describes the struggle to overcome greed and offer wealth to others as a sort of jihad, Osama bin Laden is the most well-known example of a Saudi volunteer drawn to Afghanistan by the jihad of charity.

In the 1980s, Osama bin Laden travelled to Afghanistan to carry out acts of humanitarian jihad; however, with encouragement from the West during the Cold War, he later turned to more violent forms of jihad (Lacey & Benthall, 2014, p. 1; Bokhari et al., 2014, p. 202).

Immediately after 9/11, the US government used financial sanctions as a weapon against individuals and organisations it believed were responsible for the attacks. Various formal and informal rules have been established to address suspicions of support for terrorism by certain entities. The policies have had a significant impact on Saudi and Gulf-based charities, particularly in terms of reputation. These charities are often viewed as backers of terrorist groups such as Al-Qaeda, despite efforts by some to engage with international organisations (Belew, 2014, pp. 232 & 254). Practically speaking, the policies have caused organisational disruption, with some charities being closed down entirely, such as Al-Haramain, and others experiencing significant obstacles in carrying out their charitable work. Furthermore, there is valid concern that radical organisations may now find a way inside key conflict areas as a result of the withdrawal of Islamic charities.

Regarding Abdul Rahman Al-Sumait's organisation, the African Muslims Agency's (Direct Aid), it seems that the branch in Chad did not encounter any issues in the way it functioned (Kaag, 2014, p. 87). The program expanded, and the organisation widened its scope in the country. Although there was little to no damage to the organisation's functionality, there was severe damage to its reputation, as with all the Gulf charities and Islamic charities in general. In addition, during the era following 9/11, the African Muslims Agency and other Muslim NGOs were frequently scrutinised by Western think tanks, including the Rand Corporation and the African Center for Strategic Studies (Haron, 2020, p. 152). These organisations consistently raised questions about the status of these charities.

In the United States, the 9/11 attacks had a detrimental impact on the nonprofit organisations within the Muslim-American community. Following the Twin Towers attacks, the FBI conducted raids and closed down four prominent Islamic charitable organisations (Wasif, 2021, p. 1139). The impact of 9/11 on the reputation of the Islamic nonprofit sector has been just as significant, if not more so. Nonprofits rely on their reputation for success in their efforts. A nonprofit's portrayal in the media is one component of its reputation. A research study that

examined whether the 9/11 events impacted how Islamic nonprofits in the US were depicted in the media discovered a rise in negative perceptions of Islamic nonprofits after 9/11, even those organisations not accused of terrorism (Wasif, 2021, p. 1139). Additionally, the media was more inclined to associate the Islamic nonprofit sector with terrorism following 9/11. In 2009, the American Civil Liberties Union published a report about the US government's crackdown on Muslim charities. The report stated that while preventing humanitarian aid and charity donations from being used to support terrorism is important, the laws and interpretation of those laws by the government raise serious concerns about human rights and the constitution. The laws give executive branch officials nearly unlimited power to designate groups as terrorist organisations, and the enforcement of these laws has disproportionately affected Muslim charities (American Civil Liberties Union, 2009).

Similarly, Samantha May, a lecturer in Politics and International Relations at the University of Aberdeen, discusses in one of her blog posts the growth of Muslim charities in Britain and how they have been treated with suspicion by the government following events such as 9/11 and the London Bombing of 7/7. She questions the government's harsh stance, stating that there is no evidence that charities, Muslim or otherwise, have been involved in terrorist financing in recent decades. She also argues that current counter-terror policies applied to British charities are counter-productive and undermine efforts to strengthen social integration (May, 2023).

For a long time, there have been concerns that counter-terrorism laws and policies are causing Muslims, particularly young people and students, to feel alienated. Moreover, it has been suggested that these measures may actually be fueling terrorism instead of preventing it. Studies reveal that extremist groups employ discrimination and political marginalisation of Muslims as a part of their recruitment strategy (Choudhury and Fenwick, 2011). Thus, after the events of 9/11, the US government, followed by other governments, portrayed Islamic charities in a negative light, and the media amplified this message. The portrayal of Islamic charitable organisations in the Western mass media was largely absent until after the 9/11 attacks, when it became predominantly unfavourable. On the other hand, aid agencies from the West at the international level have been engaging in a mutually beneficial relationship with the mass

media, giving access in exchange for publicity (Benthall & Bellion-Jourdan, 2003, p. 1). Furthermore, the narrative that "terrorists are Muslims" is explained by unconscious discrimination, whereas the one that "white people aren't terrorists" is explained by white privilege (Corbin, 2017, p. 466). Two sides of the same coin—a racially hierarchical structure—are discrimination and privilege.

To summarise, the negative portrayal of Islamic charities by governments and the media in the context of the war on terror has dramatically affected their reputation. This is a very rational factor in Muslim philanthropists like Abdul Rahman Al-Sumait and Islamic charities receiving less recognition on a global and local scale despite their immense aid for Africa and other places. On the other hand, Western charities that do not face this large scale of negative publicity have greater chances of being positively recognised.

7.2.2 Links of some Islamic Charities and Muslim Philanthropists to Islamist Political Movements

It is worth noting that there are Islamic charities that are associated with Islamist political movements like the Muslim Brotherhood (Said, 2019, pp. 39-41). Although not all of these movements aim to seize control of the state, a significant portion of them engage in preaching and missionary activities, including but not limited to almsgiving, publishing, constructing mosques, providing medical services, and promoting public virtue in local communities. Nonetheless, many Muslim nations and even Western countries view them with suspicion because they engage in the political domain. As a result, Islamic charities that are involved with these groups are viewed with suspicion, too.

Abdul Rahman Al-Sumait was once influenced by the Muslim Brotherhood at some point in his life (Ahmed, 2009, p. 428; Haron, 2020, p. 150). The Muslim Brotherhood, which was founded in 1928 in Egypt by Hasan al-Banna and which was the first Islamist organisation to be inspired by modern organisational theories and structures such as Marxism, began establishing itself in Kuwait in the 1940s (Alkandari, 2014, pp. 68-69). Despite disassociating himself from the group, many people in his home country still believed that Abdul Rahman Al-Sumait was a

member. This perception could have had a negative impact on his reputation and, by extension, on the reputation of his charity.

Many Muslim nations have outlawed the Muslim Brotherhood; ironically, the United States, which endured the most horrifying terrorist attack on its soil in September 2001, has not outlawed the mother organisation that produced the ideology that the 9/11 Al-Qaeda terrorists embraced (Ghoraba, 2020). The ideologies of Hassan al-Banna, the founder of the Brotherhood, and Sayyid Qutb, the group's senior ideologue, strongly influenced Al-Qaeda commanders. Egypt has categorised the Muslim Brotherhood as a terrorist organisation after a series of terrorist attacks that took place within its borders. The Muslim Brotherhood was also declared a terrorist group by Saudi Arabia and the UAE. Other countries with a predominantly Muslim population that have categorised the Muslim Brotherhood as a terrorist organisation include Bahrain, Syria, and the Libyan parliament of Tobruk, as well as Tajikistan, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan. Therefore, it is possible that Abdul Rahman Al-Sumait's past affiliation with the Muslim Brotherhood may have negatively impacted both his personal and organisational reputation, thus contributing to their relatively low local and global recognition.

7.2.3 Association of Islam and Muslims with Terrorism in Media Narratives

The Western media has been extensively covering terrorism, which is frequently linked to Islam and Muslims. For instance, terrorism and conflicts are the most commonly reported topics in British media when covering Muslims and Islam. According to a study that analysed over 140 million words of newspaper articles on Muslims and Islam, there has been a tendency in the media to cover more news related to Islam and Muslims in the aftermath of events like terror attacks and conflicts such as the invasion of Iraq, 9/11, 7/7, and the Madrid bombing (Baker, Gabrielatos & McEnery, 2013, pp. 5-8). The study used a combination of corpus linguistics and discourse analysis methods to provide an unbiased overview of the media's attitudes towards Islam and Muslims. All the articles published in the major British daily newspapers between 1998 and 2009 that refer to Islam and Muslims are included in the corpus. It contains around 200000 articles that mention the words Muslim(s), Islam, Islamic, Islamist, and Islamist. All the

articles that were collected to create the corpus showed that words pertaining to terrorism, such as terror, terrorist, terrorists, and terrorism, were more common than the words related to Islam, such as Islam, Islamic, Islamist, and Islamists. (Baker, Gabrielatos & McEnery, 2013, pp. 7-10) It is interesting to note that the articles were specifically gathered to contain words related to Islam, yet words pertaining to terrorism, which were not part of the collection process, were more frequent. Thus, the study offers insights into the issue of Islamophobia in the British media. It highlights how particular linguistic patterns used in newspapers create an extremely negative perspective in the current press portrayal of Islam and Muslims.

Another study analysed the portrayal of Muslims in relation to Islamist terrorism and the extent to which journalists employ undifferentiated coverage that associates Muslims with terrorism, or differentiated coverage that distinguishes Muslims from terrorism. (Von Sikorski et al., 2022) The research examined how Muslims were depicted in connection with Islamist terrorism in three European countries - Austria, Germany, and Switzerland - between 2015 and 2017. The study included the analysis of over 1,000 news articles published in 12 different newspapers, including two quality and two tabloid newspapers per country.

The findings demonstrated that journalists actively distinguish between Muslims and Islamist terrorists by using differential news coverage, which they do regularly (26%) in their reporting. More significantly, though, is that undifferentiated reporting that deliberately associates Muslims with terrorism occurs far more frequently (nearly twice as frequently) than differentiated reporting; at least one such undifferentiated comment was found in nearly every other story. (Von Sikorski et al., 2022) The results presented in the study expand upon previous findings related to the negative representation of Muslims in the media. There were no notable differences between countries with regards to the types of news coverage provided, except that German newspapers tended to provide more differentiated coverage compared to those based in Austria. Some have suggested that this difference could be due to the fact that, in general, Germany is more liberal than Austria, which may have influenced the reporting of terror-related news. The observation that nearly 50% of the analysed articles featured undifferentiated news coverage speaks volumes about the prevalence of stereotype-activating information among news consumers in Austria, Germany, and Switzerland. This phenomenon was consistent across

all three countries. The frequent exposure to mediated associations that consistently link Muslims with negative concepts like terrorism has been found to foster negative attitudes towards Muslims and contribute to the growth of Islamophobia (Von Sikorski et al., 2022).

Thus, considering these two studies, there is a very high possibility that the repetitive association of Islam and Muslims with terrorism in media narratives has been affecting the recognition of Islamic charities and Arab/Muslim philanthropists. This may explain why Abdul Rahman Al-Sumait and his organisation are not as widely known on a global scale.

7.3 Cultural Differences in Philanthropy.

In addition to media representation and geopolitical influence, cultural differences in philanthropy may contribute to the recognition disparity between Western and Muslim Arab philanthropists and their respective organisations. The following chapter will explore two aspects: the concept of hiding one's good deeds and the missionary nature of many Islamic Gulf charities.

7.3.1 Discreet charity and not wanting to seek fame.

In the current era of humanitarianism, there is more emphasis on self-promotion and self-expression rather than genuine solidarity and true empathy toward those in need (Chouliaraki, 2013, p.4). Moreover, the current definition of philanthropy is predominantly based on Western-centric research and heavily influenced by Western culture. It does not encompass several acts of philanthropy commonly practised by Muslims (Siddiqui, 2022, p. 339).

Religious teachings in Muslim Arab societies emphasise empathy and discreet giving (sadaqah) without seeking praise or recognition as a driving force behind charitable acts. In the classical Islamic understanding of philanthropy, empathy is considered a form of charity, even if it is not accompanied by action (Konrath et al., 2021, p. 34). The concept of empathic concern, a

type of emotional empathy, is equated to compassion. Compassion, or rahmah, holds a crucial place in Islamic teachings.

Islam strongly emphasises being humble and keeping donations private, as exemplified by the phrase "Let not your left hand know what your right hand is giving." This value is also reflected in the general tendency towards discretion and privacy in Saudi Arabia and the Gulf region, which sometimes appears deliberate in its cultivation of obscurity (Lacey & Benthall, 2014, p. 2). Islamic philanthropic organisations in the Gulf tend to be less transparent in their financial and business dealings compared to "Western" charities, but they do not feel the need to apologise for their discretion. However, there have been recent efforts towards greater accountability and transparency. Islamic charities in Kuwait, such as Direct Aid, the largest Kuwaiti Islamic NGO, are being subject to more government and US Department of the Treasury regulation in the aftermath of 9/11 (Leichtman, 2023). Cash donations have been prohibited by law in Kuwait, and all donations, regardless of anonymity, must now be trackable through electronic means.

Therefore, it is possible that prior to 9/11, Islamic charities had an easier time practising discreet charity, which could be one reason for their lower global recognition. What needs to be added to the equation, however, is that Islamic charities, too, inform their donors about their operations to provide proof of where the funds are going, get their trust, and secure continuous funding. Direct Aid, as an example, provides detailed reports, including photos, videos, and GPS location of the project, ensuring transparency and accountability (Leichtman, 2023).

7.3.2 The missionary character of Islamic charities.

This chapter discusses the difference between Islamic and Western secular charities, focusing on the former's missionary nature. Islamic charities and their aid work and missionary character, deeply intertwined with Islamic teachings, may not have resonated universally. Other "Western" organisations may operate from a secular standpoint, broadening their appeal.

From the mid-1980s onwards, there has been a growing involvement of faith-based organisations (FBOs) in humanitarian relief efforts. These organisations challenge the unclear

boundaries between "humanitarian mission" and "religious missionary" work, and also seek to transform the dominant secular framework of such relief efforts (Khafagy, 2020, p. 1). Notably, both Christian and Islamic organisations have emerged as significant players in the international arena, alongside other FBOs.

Besides offering humanitarian aid, Islamic charities have a missionary goal of spreading Islam through educating Muslims (sometimes in their particular understanding of Islam) and inviting non-Muslims to the religion (Kaag, 2014, pp. 81-82; Ahmed, 2009, p. 426). Secular NGOs have raised concerns about the practice of combining humanitarian aid with religious mission. They argue that Muslim faith-based organisations, like the African Muslims Agency (Direct Aid), should not be preaching Islam while providing aid to the vulnerable and needy (Haron, 2020, pp. 150-151). Regarding the African Muslims Agency (now Direct Aid), its programs for religious proselytization respect the freedom of belief and conversion. There is no evidence found that links the conversion to Islam with the provision of social services by the organisation (Khafagy, 2020, p. 9). The name change to Direct Aid in 1999 (before 9/11) was warranted due to the expansion of services provided to Muslims and non-Muslims.

It is worth highlighting that the combination of humanitarian and political objectives is not unique to NGOs that are founded on Islamic principles. Most NGOs have political aims in addition to their humanitarian efforts, even if they do not express them explicitly (Ahmed, 2009, p. 435). Nonetheless, concerns about the missionary nature of some Muslim faith-based organisations expressed by secular NGOs may be shared by others and may cast a negative light on Islamic charities and faith-based organisations in general. This could be why Islamic charities may not receive as much global recognition as "Western" charities operating from a secular perspective.

8. Conclusion:

This thesis has examined the factors that shape the worldwide perception and acknowledgment of philanthropic activities originating from the Middle East, with a specific focus on the case study of Abdul Rahman Al-Sumait. It has also examined the influence of Western-focused media, cultural prejudices, and Orientalist viewpoints on constructing narratives regarding donors from the Middle East. Furthermore, it has analysed how the 'war on terror' has influenced how Islamic charities are perceived. It also sheds light on the cultural variations in philanthropic activities, specifically focusing on the significance of discreet philanthropy in Islamic tradition. It has argued that Western media frequently fails to acknowledge the intricate and varied nature of generosity in Islamic societies, primarily due to deep-rooted Eurocentric and Orientalist biases.

Furthermore, this thesis has delved into the interconnectedness of charity work and missionary activities among Islamic charities, questioning the prevailing Western narratives that frequently distort these endeavours. Through the analysis of these intricate connections, it emphasises the necessity for a fairer and more sophisticated approach in comprehending and portraying philanthropy on a worldwide scale. The need arises to transition from Eurocentric viewpoints to a more comprehensive outlook that acknowledges and values the diverse manifestations of generosity in various cultures and places.

Moreover, this thesis provided a substantial and noteworthy addition to the discussion surrounding media portrayal, cultural prejudices, and worldwide charitable efforts. It emphasises the significance of moving beyond Eurocentric narratives and embracing a culturally sympathetic approach to understand and value the different charitable landscapes across the globe. This thesis not only illuminates the often overlooked contributions of philanthropists such as Al-Sumait, but also facilitates a more comprehensive and equitable acknowledgment of philanthropic initiatives worldwide. Dr. Abdul Rahman Al-Sumait's commitment to Africa's marginalised is no less significant than the contributions of more globally recognized figures. His relative obscurity on the world stage is a poignant reminder that global recognition does not always equate to the magnitude of impact.

It is imperative to examine the intricate correlation between Islamic charity and the notion of terrorism. While recognizing the existence of terrorist dangers, it is unjust to assume culpability for Islamic charities. They necessitate assistance in enhancing transparency and accountability. The discussion above promotes the idea of redefining Islamic non-governmental organisations (NGOs) as allies rather than opponents in the efforts to combat terrorism and address its underlying causes.

Media organisations must undergo a significant institutional transformation, which involves diversifying their recruiting practices and editorial positions, in order to guarantee unbiased reporting. It is crucial for journalists to differentiate between Muslims and Islamist terrorists, as merging the two fosters Islamophobia and undermines intergroup relations in Western democracies. Furthermore, journalists should exercise caution when determining whether the religious beliefs of individuals mentioned in their stories are genuinely pertinent to their reporting.

Word count: 13.549

Bibliography:

Ahmad ibn Hanbal. (n.d.) *Musnad Ahmad*, Hadith no. 27742. Classed as authentic by Muhammad Nasiruddin al-Albaani in *Saheeh al-Jaami'*, Hadith no. 1555.

Ahmed, C. (2009) 'Networks of Islamic NGOs in sub-Saharan Africa: Bilal Muslim Mission, African Muslim Agency (Direct Aid), and al-Haramayn', *Journal of Eastern African Studies*, 3:3, pp. 426-437. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1080/17531050903273727>

Alkandari, A. (2014) *The Muslim Brotherhood in Kuwait, 1941-2000: A Social Movement within the Social Domain*. University of Exeter. [online] Available at: <https://ore.exeter.ac.uk/repository/handle/10871/14930>

American Civil Liberties Union (2009) *Blocking Faith, Freezing Charity: Chilling Muslim Charitable Giving in the 'War on Terrorism Financing'*. [online] Available at: <https://www.aclu.org/publications/blocking-faith-freezing-charity-chilling-muslim-charitable-giving-war-terrorism-financing>

Baker, P., Gabrielatos, C., & McEnery, T. (2013) 'Sketching Muslims: a corpus driven analysis of representations around the word 'Muslim' in the British Press 1998-2009', *Applied Linguistics* 34(3). Corpus Approaches to Social Science (CASS), Lancaster University. Available at: <https://cass.lancs.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/CASS-Islam-final.pdf>

Belew, W. (2014) 'The Impact of US Laws, Regulations, and Policies on Gulf Charities', in Lacey, R. & Benthall, J. (eds), *Gulf Charities and Islamic Philanthropy in the "Age of Terror" and Beyond*. London: Gerlach Press, pp. 231–258. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt1df4hza>

Benthall, J. & Bellion-Jourdan, J. (2003) *The Charitable Crescent*. London: I.B. Tauris.

Bokhari, Y., Chowdhury, N., & Lacey, R. (2014) 'A Good Day to Bury a Bad Charity: The Rise and Fall of the Al-Haramain Islamic Foundation', in Lacey, R. & Benthall, J. (eds), *Gulf Charities and*

Islamic Philanthropy in the "Age of Terror" and Beyond. London: Gerlach Press, pp. 199–230.

Available at: <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt1df4hzq.12>

Chitando, E., Gunda, M. R. & Togarasei, L. (2020) 'Introduction: Religion and Development in Africa. in Chitando', in E., Gunda, M. R., Togarasei, L. & Kügler, J. (2020) *Religion and Development in Africa*. Bamberg: University of Bamberg Press. Available at:

<http://dx.doi.org/10.20378/irb-47759>

Choudhury, T. and Fenwick, H. (2011) The Impact of Counter-Terrorism Measures on Muslim Communities. *International Review of Law, Computers & Technology*, [online] 25(3), pp.151–181. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1080/13600869.2011.617491>

Chouliaraki, L. (2013) *The Ironic Spectator: Solidarity in the Age of Post-Humanitarianism*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Crystal, D. (2003) *English as a Global Language*. 2nd edn. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511486999>

Cooney-Petro, E. S., (2019) *Branding White Saviorism: The Ethics and Irony of Humanitarian Discourse on Instagram*. MA Dissertation. Syracuse University. Available at: <https://surface.syr.edu/thesis/316/>

Corbin, C. M. (2017) *Terrorists Are Always Muslim but Never White: At the Intersection of Critical Race Theory and Propaganda*. *Fordham Law Review*, Vol. 86, Iss. 2, Art 5. Available at: <https://ir.lawnet.fordham.edu/flr/vol86/iss2/5>

Denskus, T. (2019) *White saviour communication rituals in 10 easy steps*. Aidnography. Available at:

<https://aidnography.blogspot.com/2019/03/white-saviour-dooley-lammy-comic-relief-communication-rituals.html>

Denskus, T. (2020) *Racism in the aid industry and international development-a curated collection*. Aidnography. Available at:
<https://aidnography.blogspot.com/2020/06/racism-aid-industry-development-curated-collection.html>

Direct Aid (a) (no date) *Dr. Abdul Rahman Hamoud Al Sumait*. [online] Direct Aid Society. Available at: <https://direct-aid.org/cms/en/about-us-ar-2/dr-al-sumait/>

Direct Aid (b) (no date) *Our achievements*. [online] Direct Aid Society. Available at: <https://direct-aid.org/cms/en/about-us-ar-2/our-achievements/>

Eriksen, T.H. (2014) *Globalization: The Key Concepts*. London: Bloomsbury Academic.

Eyben, R. (2014) *International Aid and the Making of a Better World: Reflexive Practice*. Oxon: Routledge.

Feiler, G. (2007) 'Sources of Islamic Terror Funding', in *The Globalization of Terror Funding*. Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies, pp. 6–27. Available at:
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep04720.5>

Ghoraba, H. (2020) *More Countries Ban Muslim Brotherhood*. [online] The Investigative Project on Terrorism. Available at:
<https://www.investigativeproject.org/8483/more-countries-ban-muslim-brotherhood>

Given, L. M. (ed.) (2008) *The Sage Encyclopedia of Qualitative Research Methods*. Los Angeles Calif: Sage Publications. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781412963909>

Haron, M. (2020) *Africa's Muslim Non-Governmental Organizations: Competitive Charities, Altruistic Allies?* in Chitando, E., Gunda, M. R. & Togarasei, L. (2020) *Religion and Development in Africa*. Bamberg: University of Bamberg Press. Available at:
<https://fis.uni-bamberg.de/server/api/core/bitstreams/d396ce31-8f72-4c6f-a319-dd6628626869/content>

Heron, B. (1999) *Desire for Development: The Education of White Women as Development Workers*. PhD Thesis. University of Toronto. Available at:

<https://tspace.library.utoronto.ca/bitstream/1807/13165/1/NQ41173.pdf>

Hjarvard, S. (2004) "The Globalization of Language: How the Media Contribute to the Spread of English and the Emergence of Medialects." *Nordicom Review*, 25.1/2: pp. 75–97. Available at:

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/286349707_The_globalization_of_language_How_the_media_contribute_to_the_spread_of_English_and_the_emergence_of_medialects

Hopkins, S. (2018) 'UN celebrity 'It' girls as public relations-ised humanitarianism', *International Communication Gazette*, 80:3, pp. 273-292. Available at:

<https://doi.org/10.1177/1748048517727223>

Kaag, M. (2014) 'Gulf Charities in Africa' in Benthall, J. and Lacey, R., in *Gulf Charities and Islamic Philanthropy in the "Age of Terror" and Beyond*. London: Gerlach Press, pp. 79-94. Available at:

<https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt1df4hzq.7>

Khafagy, R.A. (2020) Faith-based organizations: humanitarian mission or religious missionary. *Journal of International Humanitarian Action*, 5:13. Available at:

<https://doi.org/10.1186/s41018-020-00080-6>

Kohlmann, E. F. (2006) *The Role of Islamic Charities in International Terrorist Recruitment and Financing*. Copenhagen: Danish Institute for International Studies. Available at:

<https://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep13293>

Konrath, S., Siddiqui, S., & Pervez, S. (2021) 'Muslim Education Reform: Prioritizing Empathy and Philanthropic Acts'. *Journal of Education in Muslim Societies*, 2(2), pp. 31-56. Available at:

<https://doi.org/10.2979/jems.2.2.03>

Lacey, R., & Benthall, J. (2014) 'Introduction', in Benthall, J. and Lacey, R., *Gulf Charities and Islamic Philanthropy in the "Age of Terror" and Beyond*. London: Gerlach Press, pp. 1-24.

Available at: <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt1df4hzq.4>

Leichtman, M. A. (2020) "Humanitarian Aid in Yemen Through the Eyes of a Kuwaiti Role Model for Women: Interview with Maali Alasousi", *Journal of Muslim Philanthropy & Civil Society*, 4(2), pp. 89–114. Available at:

<https://scholarworks.iu.edu/iupjournals/index.php/muslimphilanthropy/article/view/4001>

Leichtman, M. A. (2023) 'Humanitarian Sovereignty, Exceptional Muslims, and the Transnational Making of Kuwaiti Citizens.' *Ethnography*, 24(3), 407-431. Available at:

<https://doi.org/10.1177/14661381221134415>

Mamadouh, V. (2021) Eurocentrism/Orientalism in News Media', in Adams, P. C. and Warf, B. (eds) *Routledge Handbook of Media Geographies* Routledge. Available at:

<https://www.routledgehandbooks.com/pdf/doi/10.4324/9781003039068-18>

May, S. (2023) *Conflating charity with extremism is a political mistake*. Available at:

<https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/politicsandpolicy/conflating-charity-with-extremism-is-a-political-mistake/>

McEwan, C. (2018) *Postcolonialism, Decoloniality and Development*, 2nd ed. London: Routledge.

Media Smarts (2012) *Media Portrayals of Religion: Islam*. [online] MediaSmarts. Available at:

<https://mediasmarts.ca/diversity-media/religion/media-portrayals-religion-islam>

O'Sullivan, K. (2021) *The NGO Moment: The Globalisation of Compassion from Biafra to LiveAid*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Pieterse, J. N. (2018) *Multipolar Globalisation: Emerging Economies and Development*. London: Routledge.

Pokhrel, A.K. (2011) *Eurocentrism*. In: Chatterjee, D.K. (eds) *Encyclopedia of Global Justice*.

Springer, Dordrecht. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4020-9160-5_25

Richey, L. A. (ed.) (2015) *Celebrity Humanitarianism and North-South Relations: Politics, Place and Power*. Oxon: Routledge.

Said, E. W. (1978) *Orientalism*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Said, E.W. (1981) *Covering Islam*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Said, M. (2019) *The War on Terror and Islamic Charities: Securitisation and the Evolution of Policy and Practice*. University of Exeter. [online] Available at:
<https://ore.exeter.ac.uk/repository/handle/10871/36880>

Schmidt, S. (2014) 'The Framed Arab/Muslim: Mediated Orientalism', in *(Re-)Framing the Arab/Muslim: Mediating Orientalism in Contemporary Arab American Life Writing*. Transcript Verlag, pp. 137–190. Available at: <https://www.istor.org/stable/j.ctv1xxs1s.6>

Shaheen, J.G. (2003) Reel Bad Arabs: How Hollywood Vilifies a People. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 588(1), pp. 171–193. Available at:
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0002716203588001011>

Siddiqui, S. (2022) Muslim philanthropy: Living beyond a Western definition. *Voluntary Sector Review*, 13(3), pp. 338-354. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1332/204080521X16366613535698>

Sobocinska, Agnieszka (2021) *Saving the World? Western Volunteers and the Rise of the Humanitarian-Development Complex*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Thussu, D. K. (2022) 'De-colonizing Global News-flows: A Historical Perspective', *Journalism Studies*, 23:13, pp. 1578-1592. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1080/1461670X.2022.2083007>

Van Ginneken, J. (1998) *Understanding global news: A critical introduction*. London: Sage Publications.

Von Sikorski, C., Schmuck, D., Matthes, J., Klobasa, C., Knupfer, H., & Saumer, M. (2022) 'Do journalists differentiate between Muslims and Islamist terrorists? A content analysis of

terrorism news coverage', *Journalism*, 23(6), pp. 1171-1193. Available at:

<https://doi.org/10.1177/1464884921990223>

Wasif, R. (2021) *Terrorists or Persecuted? The Portrayal of Islamic Nonprofits in US Newspapers Post 9/11*. *Voluntas: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations* 32, 1139–1153. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11266-021-00317-x>