

International NGOs Targeted by Terror: The Impact of Religiosity on Independence, Neutrality, and Impartiality

Kathryn M. Lambert

*School of Security & Global Studies
American Military University*

ABSTRACT

The literature recognizes faith-based organizations as distinct humanitarian actors. Attempts to explore how these organizations differ from their secular counterparts produce few empirical results. This study focuses on international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) attacked by terrorists to assess whether faith-based organizations differ from secular organizations across two issues: 1) commitment to the humanitarian principles of neutrality, independence, and impartiality and 2) commitment to advocacy and global engagement. Religiosity, neutrality, independence, impartiality, advocacy, and global engagement are operationalized using the social media presence of organizations attacked by terrorists between September 12, 2001 and December 31, 2018 as specified in the Global Terrorism Database. The faith of international NGOs is coded at the ordinal level using the categories of secular, faith-inspired, and faith-based to capture increasing degrees of religiosity. Ordinal logistic regression reveals that as the religiosity of organizations increases, commitment to independence and neutrality decreases. No relationship is observed between religiosity and commitment to impartiality, suggesting that religious victim-organizations are equally committed to this humanitarian principle. Religiosity and global engagement are not significantly related. However, faith impacts advocacy efforts with increasing levels of religiosity associated with decreasing levels of policy advocacy. This study concludes that religious organizations are distinct actors whose faith may complicate commitment to core humanitarian principles.

Keywords: international non-governmental organization (INGO), religiosity, neutrality, independence, impartiality, advocacy, faith-based

El impacto de la religiosidad entre las ONG internacionales atacadas por el terrorismo

RESUMEN

La literatura reconoce a las organizaciones religiosas como actores humanitarios distintos. Los intentos de explorar en qué se diferencian estas organizaciones de sus contrapartes seculares producen pocos resultados empíricos. Este estudio se centra en las ONG internacionales atacadas por terroristas para evaluar si las organizaciones religiosas difieren de las organizaciones seculares en dos aspectos: 1) compromiso con los principios humanitarios de neutralidad, independencia e imparcialidad y 2) compromiso con la promoción y el alcance del compromiso global. La religiosidad, la neutralidad, la independencia, la imparcialidad, la promoción y el compromiso global se ponen en práctica utilizando la presencia en las redes sociales de organizaciones atacadas por terroristas entre el 12 de septiembre de 2001 y el 31 de diciembre de 2018, según se especifica en la Base de datos mundial sobre terrorismo. La fe de las ONG internacionales se codifica a nivel ordinal utilizando las categorías secular, inspirada en la fe y basada en la fe para captar grados crecientes de religiosidad. La regresión logística ordinal revela que a medida que aumenta la religiosidad de las organizaciones, disminuye el compromiso con la independencia y la neutralidad. No se observa ninguna relación entre la religiosidad y el compromiso con la imparcialidad, lo que sugiere que las organizaciones religiosas de víctimas están igualmente comprometidas con este principio humanitario. La religiosidad y el compromiso global no están relacionados de manera significativa. Sin embargo, la fe impacta los esfuerzos de promoción con niveles crecientes de religiosidad asociados con niveles decrecientes de promoción de políticas. Este estudio concluye que las organizaciones religiosas son actores distintos cuya fe puede complicar el compromiso con los principios humanitarios fundamentales.

Palabras clave: organización internacional no gubernamental, religiosidad, neutralidad, independencia, imparcialidad, promoción, religión

宗教性在遭受恐怖主义威胁的国际 非政府组织中产生的影响

摘要

现有文献将基于信仰的机构视为独特的人道主义行动者。为探究这些机构如何有别于世俗机构而作的尝试，所得实证结果不多。本研究聚焦于被恐怖分子袭击的国际非政府组织，以期评估基于信仰的机构是否在两大问题上有别于世俗机构：1) 对人道主义原则（中立性、独立性、公正性）的承诺；2) 对倡导的承诺和全球参与的范围。全球恐怖主义数据库记录了2001年9月12日至2018年12月31日期间遭遇恐怖分子袭击的机构，本研究通过使用这些机构在社交媒体上的出现情况，对宗教性、中立性、独立性、公正性、倡导、以及全球参与进行了操作化。通过使用三种机构分类（世俗、受信仰所激发、基于信仰）来表示递增的宗教性，对国际非政府组织的信仰进行了排序编码。序数逻辑回归显示，随着机构的宗教性不断增加，对独立性和中立性的承诺不断降低。未发现宗教性和对公正性的承诺之间存在关系，这暗示遭受恐怖袭击的宗教机构都平等对待公正性这一人道主义原则。宗教性与全球参与不存在显著相关性。然而，信仰会影响倡导工作，宗教性越强，政策倡导的程度则越低。研究结论认为，宗教机构是独特的行动者，它们的信仰可能会让对核心人道主义原则的承诺变得复杂。

关键词：国际非政府组织，宗教性，中立性，独立性，公正性，倡导，基于信仰

Introduction

Faith has long inspired individuals and groups to serve communities most in need. However, its involvement in relief efforts occasionally raises concern and suspicion. Allegations of proselytism, whether warranted or not, attract attention especially when religious organizations are expelled by host governments, such as occurred in Afghanistan in 2010 (Department of

State 2020a) or when criminal charges are brought against aid workers, as took place in Uzbekistan in 2005 (Department of State 2020b). Faith-based organizations (FBOs) are often labeled amateurish, which may marginalize their contribution to relief efforts (Lipsky 2011 and Bowers du Toit 2019). Finally, religious organizations radiate vulnerability when they allow, wittingly or unwittingly, terrorists and insurgents to exploit them. The US government iden-

tifies protection of the charitable sector as a critical component of its global war on terrorism. The Department of Treasury (2020) offers numerous resources to help charities in this effort to include a matrix to assess risk and a list of best practices.

Few empirical studies seek to unravel the complexities that surround religious organizations. This study assesses the relationship between the level of religiosity of international non-government organizations (INGOs) attacked by terrorists and their commitment to the humanitarian principles of neutrality, independence, and impartiality. Religiosity is operationalized into an ordinal variable to ascertain whether the degree of religiosity impacts organizational commitment to these humanitarian principles. This study offers insight into whether religious INGOs representing larger organizations or communities, such as Catholic Relief Services or the Aga Khan Development Network, differ in their commitment to the principle of independence from less aligned religious organizations and secular ones. Additionally, the paper examines whether faith organizations that pursue global justice goals commit less to neutrality to remain unencumbered to condemn egregious human rights violations. This study explores whether religious organizations differ in their commitment to impartiality from secular organizations. Some authors (see, for example, Kraft and Smith 2019) find that faith-based organizations are likely to share a culture, language, or religion with their aid recipients. In their study of aid distribution in Myanmar, Benson

and Jaquet (2014) found that recipients care about organizations' religious make-up. These authors studied a predominately Christian area where Christian aid organizations played a key role and found that recipients traveled to the closest Catholic or Baptist camp rather than the nearest aid center. If recipients increase their expectation of aid based on a shared commonality with those delivering it, the INGO may find itself under pressure to violate impartiality.

The second issue explored in this paper is the impact of religiosity on organizations' scope of activity and commitment to advocacy, specifically policy-level efforts. The advocacy literature is significant, but few studies operationalize the concept and subject it to empirical analysis. Conclusions about the effectiveness of advocacy efforts range from Hudson (2002), who identifies the conditions when advocacy is effective, to Will and Pies (2017), who highlight the harmful and unintended consequences of such efforts, to Fernández-Aballí (2016) who completely rejects the need for or usefulness of advocacy.

Faith-Based Organizations (FBOs)

International and domestic non-governmental organizations (NGOs) often perform their humanitarian mission under the most extraordinary circumstances. These organizations alleviate pain, suffering, hunger, poverty, and misery while promoting equality and justice. They put their employees at risk to help those most in need. There is no doubt that INGOs perform a

much-needed service to the world and that faith-based organizations contribute to this effort (see, for example, Ferris 2005). The literature considers faith-organizations as distinct actors. Rather than exploring FBOs' role in development, the literature tends to attack or defend their existence (Heist and Cnaan 2016). While additional studies have emerged in subsequent years exploring the issue from a theological perspective (see, for example, Hancox 2019), there still lacks empirical studies investigating the differences between faith-based and secular organizations.

Trust and Faith-Based Organizations

The literature on faith organizations is replete with claims that such organizations offer unique advantages. For example, Lipsky (2011) sees faith as a "comparative advantage" that enhances organizations' moral and ethical standing, while Guiney (2012) sees faith as creating "spiritual capital" for the organizations. Belshaw (2006) classifies the unique advantages of FBOs as "non-material," while Kraft and Smith (2019) discuss the "spiritual influence" that these organizations wield in the communities in which they operate. The advantages identified by these authors are best classified as non-tangible, making it difficult to assess their role empirically. A common theme within these articles is that the unique characteristics render FBOs more trustworthy than secular organizations (see, for example, Heist and Cnaan 2016). Butcher and Hallward (2018, 518) interviewed recipients of aid and concluded that trust emanates from a sense of know-

ing "why" FBOs engage in development work and a belief that religion rather than politics serves as the motivating factor for that engagement. However, an executive of the faith-based organization World Vision maintains that recipients of aid do not care whether it is "paid for by a church in the U.S., by a secular charity, or by the U.S. government If [the recipient] doesn't make the distinction, why should we" (Anderson 2008, 22).

Fear of Exploitation by Terrorists

That terrorists and insurgents exploit charities is well known by governments and NGOs. To protect charities and their stakeholders and donors, some governments publicly identify those with a known association to terrorism. In the United States, Executive Order 13224 authorizes the designation of global charities linked to terrorism. This list includes the Holy Land Foundation for Relief and Development, a charity that acted as a front for Hamas and led to the largest terrorist financing case in US history. The literature on designations tends to focus on the consequences of it for the non-profit sector. Atalay (2016, 394) finds that designation lists in the United States and elsewhere, including Europe, produce suspicion and distrust of Islamic charities in the non-Muslim world. In a similar vein, Othman and Ameer (2014, 106) report that governments presume Islamic NGOs are linked to terrorist organizations. While these authors are concerned about the consequences of designation, there are national and international attempts to protect charities from victimization.

As previously mentioned, the Treasury Department offers a host of resources for non-profits to protect themselves. Additionally, the United Nations partners with NGOs to counter terrorism and radicalization, as expressed in its January 2020 *Civil Society Engagement Strategy*. The inter-governmental organization Financial Action Task Force also offers guidelines for non-profits vulnerable to terrorist exploitation.

Concerns of Proselytism

Ethical issues of proselytism and evangelism usually arise when discussing faith-based organizations (see, for example, Jayasinghe 2007). Several faith-based organizations that explicitly denounce proselytization include Catholic Relief Services, Adventist Development and Relief Agency, and Aga Khan Development Network. Some religious organizations engage in evangelism to include Samaritan's Purse (2020), which states on its website, "We believe that the ministry of evangelism (sharing and proclaiming the message of salvation only possible by grace through faith in Jesus Christ) and discipleship (helping followers of Christ grow up into maturity in Christ) is a responsibility of all followers of Jesus Christ." The distinction between proselytism and evangelism is somewhat murky. It seems that proselytism requires some degree of coercion or effort to convert others to a specific belief system. This position is taken by Koehrsen and Heuser (2020, 10), who maintain that most Christian NGOs reject proselytism but will not deny someone who wishes to convert to Christianity. Ferris (2005) also distin-

guishes between evangelical groups that proselytize and those simply motivated by their Christian traditions. Nevertheless, Ferris (2005, 323–25) found that evangelical organizations operating in Indonesia spread the Gospel while disseminating aid, leading to criticism that their goal was to Christianize the country.

Another intriguing issue explored by Ferris (2005) is Muslim aid organizations' perception that any humanitarian gesture, regardless of whether the organization is faith-based, is rooted in religiosity. This perception notwithstanding, Ferris (2005) reported that the evangelical groups operating in Indonesia damaged the relationship between the Christian and Muslim organizations. Further complicating the issue is the argument that any transference of belief could constitute proselytism. Donors who restrict their funding to specific activities or programs may promote particular values intending to influence the recipient. Lynch and Schwarz (2016, 636) argue that donor restrictions serve to pass neoliberal ideas through to recipients and that this process constitutes what they call "donor proselytism."

There is little empirical evidence on FBOs' role in development from either a humanitarian or religious perspective. In their text, Koehrsen and Heuser (2020, 6) conclude that "due to the limited empirical data, the FBO impact on development processes is almost impossible to establish at this stage." Hancox (2019, 1), who focuses on Christian organizations, agrees that development has emerged as a field

within theology, but little research on these faith organizations has occurred thus far.

Neutrality, Independence, and Impartiality

Classical humanitarianism rests on the 1965 proclamation by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) that its actions are based on the principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality, independence, voluntary service, unity, and universality. Members of the broader International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) were required to adhere to these principles to ensure consistency in response efforts. In 1994, the IFRC and ICRC published the *Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Relief*. The document lists the following ten core principles:

1. The humanitarian imperative comes first.
2. Aid is given regardless of the race, creed, or nationality of the recipients and without adverse distinction of any kind. Aid priorities are calculated on the basis of need alone.
3. Aid will not be used to further a particular political or religious standpoint.
4. We shall endeavour not to act as instruments of government foreign policy.
5. We shall respect culture and custom.
6. We shall attempt to build disaster response on local capacities.
7. Ways shall be found to involve programme beneficiaries in the management of relief aid.
8. Relief aid must strive to reduce future vulnerabilities to disaster as well as meeting basic needs.
9. We hold ourselves accountable to both those we seek to assist and those from whom we accept resources.
10. In our information, publicity and advertising activities, we shall recognise disaster victims as dignified humans, not hopeless objects.

The IFRC website lists criteria to register as a signatory to the *Code of Conduct* and a signatories list. The IFRC (2020) does not monitor compliance with the *Code of Conduct* or provide any vetting of signatories other than verifying their contact information.

The literature on these core principles focuses on neutrality, frequently cited as the most controversial principle. Neutrality receives accolades for opening doors to crisis-affected populations and generates accusations that it tacitly endorses oppressive regimes. NGOs' commitment to neutrality may invoke an ethical conundrum if it remains silent while operating amid egregious human rights violations. The ICRC's refusal to condemn Nazi brutalities is often cited as the starting point for this discussion (see, for example, Gordon and Donini 2015; Rieffer-Flanagan 2009). Failure

to condemn human rights abuses may cost organizations their political courage and intelligence, as noted by Labbé and Daudin (2015, 190). Host governments, even authoritarian regimes, may benefit from the activities and programs of neutral NGOs, as it is the latter that permits the former to operate (Schenkberg 2015). INGOs that condemn atrocities of oppressive regimes may find that the cost of violating neutrality is expulsion from the country, thus depriving assistance to those in need (Gordon and Donini 2015).

Impartiality refers to the provision of aid based on proportional need without regard to factors such as race, ethnicity, or religion. Impartiality can lead to accusations that neutrality was violated by a belligerent who receives less than a perceived “fair” share of the aid. Hilhorst (2018) writes that implementing impartiality is challenging, as needs are difficult to measure. The author explains that an NGO might provide recipients with winter clothing made of higher quality material than that worn by the rest of the population. This disparity in quality may give rise to calls of unfairness. Humanitarian organizations often use proportionality to prioritize those who are most in need (Labbé and Daudin 2015, 187), but this formula does not prevent the politicization of aid distribution, as noted by Mačák (2015, 171). The range of actors operating in a crisis environment can also impact neutrality, independence, and impartiality. Military personnel, private security forces, regional organizations, and United Nations agencies may all affect an NGO’s operations and,

as Shannon (2009) mentioned, complicate NGOs’ commitment to humanitarian principles.

Advocacy and Global Engagement

The second issue this paper explores is whether religiosity explains any differences in advocacy efforts among INGOs attacked by terrorists. Though they do not distinguish between faith-based and secular organizations, Murdie and Stapley (2014, 90) conclude, based on a large-scale study, that attacks against NGOs increase as the number of NGOs engaged in human rights advocacy increases and that the threat decreases as the number of organizations declines. Scant research exists that focuses on religious organizations’ advocacy efforts, so it remains unknown how FBOs might impact this formula. Studies (Butcher and Hallward 2018; Freeman 2020) note that religious organizations massage the language and narrative of advocacy to invoke a spiritual sense of duty. Specifically, Butcher and Hallward (2018, 519) explain that religious organizations use the term socio-economic rights instead of human rights to appeal to a sense of religious obligation. For example, the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA 2020) advocates for all children to attend school and calls on supporters to recognize this goal as their “moral and Christian responsibility.”

The literature on advocacy NGOs focuses on defining advocacy and assessing its effectiveness. Keck and Sikkink (1998) recognized the role of Transnational Advocacy Networks (TANs)

in international politics and called for more research on these non-state actors. While academia answered this call with numerous studies on advocacy, few large-scale empirical works or attempts to operationalize the concept exist. Part of the reason for this state of affairs is a lack of consensus on the definition of advocacy. Will and Pies (2017, 1081) are among those authors who summarize NGOs' advocacy activities with the often-used phrase "framing, naming, shaming, or protesting." Some authors, such as Hudson (2002) and Bloodgood (2011), who represent a classical approach to the concept, focus on actors and institutions, while others, such as Jordan and Van Tuijl (2000), study advocacy's impact on power relations. International organizations define advocacy in ways that reflect these various approaches. Save the Children (2020) represents the classical approach and defines advocacy as influencing "governments, international institutions, and the private sector." On the other hand, the United Nations (2010) takes a much broader view of advocacy and devotes an entire webpage to its definition, highlighting power relations at its core.

The advocacy literature may offer insights into the advocacy efforts of faith-based organizations. Carpenter (2007) asks why some issues generate advocacy efforts while other issues do not. The author examines two issues that attract advocacy attention—child soldiers and girls in war—and one that does not—protection needs of children born of wartime rape. The author concludes that major organizations serve as gatekeepers, with minor organizations

influencing their counterparts' issue choice. Many faith-based organizations represent larger communities that are sometimes even global in nature. Some of these religious organizations may meet Carpenter's criteria for gatekeeper status. Since faith-based organizations employ different narratives and language from secular groups, an impact on future global advocacy agendas is possible. Another factor that influences advocacy agendas is the degree to which international consensus exists that an issue is important. Hudson (2002) argues that more agreement on an issue results in more significant advocacy effort. Hudson identifies the ban on landmines as an example of an issue with a high degree of consensus and corresponding high advocacy effort and arms exports as an issue with low consensus with a corresponding low degree of advocacy effort. The focus of religious-based advocacy is rooted in theology and not international opinion, as noted by Hudson, which may influence the issues on the global advocacy agenda as the number of faith organizations expands.

Several studies explore the unintended consequences of policy change as a result of advocacy effort. Will and Pies (2017) examine the food crises of 2007 and 2010 and conclude that German NGOs sought to improve food security by engaging in advocacy campaigns that, if successful, would have reduced rather than enhanced such security. During the two food crises, academics and practitioners recognized that regulation of the futures markets in the agricultural sector was a counterproductive solution to the food cri-

ses. Nevertheless, NGOs called for such strict regulation, which the authors referred to as “poor advocacy” and suggest that “faced with scientific counter-evidence, the NGOs chose to ignore or even negate these findings.” The authors conclude that NGOs fail to consider other actors’ interests when designing their advocacy campaigns, and as a result, their impact can vary significantly from their expectations. Similarly, Unerman and O’Dwyer (2006) write a theoretical piece on the potential broad ramifications of advocacy. The authors conclude that even if advocacy efforts are successful in changing policy, other consequences of that effort are unknown and may harm target populations. Faith-based and secular INGOs may react differently to unintended consequences and experience different repercussions from their supporters and stakeholders.

Methodology

The Global Terrorism Database (GTD) was used to identify terrorist incidents in which an INGO was attacked. All incidents were reviewed to determine the identity of the victim INGO. GTD events in which a specific INGO was not named and was not identified through additional research are excluded. A total of 331 incidents meet the criteria for inclusion in this research: 1) the incident is listed in the GTD, 2) the INGO was attacked between September 12, 2001 and December 31, 2018, and 3) INGO identity is known. There are ninety-two unique victim-organizations in this dataset. The

level of religiosity was coded for each of the victim-organizations and serves as the dependent variable. The five independent variables are the organizations’ public commitment to independence, neutrality, impartiality, advocacy effort, and global engagement level.

Operationalization of the Dependent Variable

Much of the literature on faith-based organizations recognizes the difficulties in defining such entities. Clarke and Ware (2015, 39) review fifty studies on faith-based organizations and find no standard definition but observe that scholars view such organizations as different though the “distinctiveness ... [was] not clear.” Koehrsen and Heuser (2020, 7-8) also identify FBOS as distinct from other humanitarian organizations in that they act as “boundary agents,” freely moving between religious and secular environments, interacting with people of various faiths, and operating across development contexts. Faith-based and secular organizations recognize that religion plays a significant role in many crisis-affected populations. Both Lipsky (2011) and Hershey (2016) conclude that differences between religious and secular organizations become fuzzy when secular organizations incorporate religious elements into their operations to enhance their relationship with aid recipients.

This study adopts Bano’s (2011) method for classifying organizations as religious. Bano sees self-identification as the only effective means to classify organizations as faith-based. Any method

Table 1. Faith-Affiliated Victim Organizations

Faith-Affiliated Victim-INGOs	Organization Type	Religious Affiliation	Frequency of Attacks
World Vision International	Faith-Based	Christianity	7
Aga Khan Development Network	Faith-Based	Islam	5
Catholic Relief Services	Faith-Based	Christianity	3
Caritas International	Faith-Based	Christianity	2
International Assistance Mission	Faith-Based	Christianity	2
Islamic Relief Organization	Faith-Based	Islam	2
Ora Kinderhilfe	Faith-Based	Christianity	2
Adventist Development and Relief Agency	Faith-Based	Christianity	1
Art of Living	Faith-Based	Spiritual	1
Bread for the World	Faith-Based	Christianity	1
Claret Samal Foundation	Faith-Based	Christianity	1
Cordaid	Faith-Based	Christianity	1
Focus Humanitarian Assistance	Faith-Based	Islam	1
Food for the Hungry	Faith-Based	Christianity	1
Gift of the Givers Foundation	Faith-Based	Islam	1
Green Helmets	Faith-Based	Inter-faith	1
Helping Hand for Relief & Development	Faith-Based	Islam	1
Interchurch Organization for Development Cooperation	Faith-Based	Christianity	1
International Aid Services	Faith-Based	Christianity	1
Minhaj ul Quran International	Faith-Based	Islam	1
Operation Mercy	Faith-Based	Christianity	1
Partner Aid International	Faith-Based	Christianity	1
Samaritan's Purse	Faith-Based	Christianity	1
Serve Afghanistan	Faith-Based	Christianity	1
Shelter for Life International	Faith-Based	Christianity	1
Trocaire	Faith-Based	Christianity	1
World Concern	Faith-Based	Christianity	1
World Relief	Faith-Based	Christianity	1
Mercy Corps	Faith-Inspired	Christianity	6
Hanns Seidel Foundation	Faith-Inspired	Christianity	1
Nonviolent Peaceforce	Faith-Inspired	Christianity	1
One Nation	Faith-Inspired	Islam	1
World Organization of the Scout Movement	Faith-Inspired	Inter-Faith	1

other than self-identification, the author argues, will result in the misclassification of many secular organizations that operate in South Asia and the Middle East. This study develops a two stage-process

to measure the degree of religiosity in international NGOs. The ninety-two victim-organizations are classified as secular, faith-inspired, or faith-based with the degree of religiosity increasing

from one category to the next.

At stage one, organizations' websites and Facebook pages were reviewed. Annual reports, mission statements, press releases, posts, charters, constitutions, and statement of values and principles were evaluated for indicators that the organization adheres to religious doctrine. Stage one produced thirty-three organizations in which a degree of religiosity was observed. Stage two determined whether the thirty-three organizations participated in a faith-based network or faith-based alliance, registered as a tax-exempt religious organization in the United States, attended a faith-based meeting for NGOs, or hosted an inter-faith event. Of the thirty-three organizations characterized as faith-affiliated in stage one, twenty-eight met the criteria established in stage two, and are therefore classified as FBOs. The remaining five organizations, classified as religious in step one but that did not meet the criteria in stage two, are classified as faith-inspired organizations (FIOs). The term faith-affiliated organizations is used in this study to represent both faith-based and faith-inspired INGOs. The remaining fifty-nine organizations are classified as secular. Table 1 lists the thirty-three unique victim-organizations classified as faith-affiliated with their religious affiliation and frequency of attack.

The dataset contains a total of 331 attacks against INGOs, with fifty-four against faith-affiliated organizations and 277 against secular organizations. Approximately one-third of attacks against both religious organiza-

tions (33 percent) and secular organizations (39 percent) occurred in Sub-Saharan Africa, suggesting that religiosity did not impact the likelihood of an attack. South Asia witnessed 56 percent of all attacks against religious organizations but only 33 percent against secular organizations. Even more noteworthy is the discrepancy that occurs within the Middle East and North Africa. Only 7 percent of attacks against religious organizations happened in this region, compared to 21 percent of attacks against secular organizations. Religiosity did not appear to be a factor in Sub-Saharan Africa, while it seemed to increase risk in South Asia and decrease it in the Middle East and North Africa. These regional differences may exist for many reasons, including terrorist opposition to specific INGO activities and programs, increased opportunity to target INGOs due to terrorist and insurgent control of territory in which the organization operates, and varying cultural beliefs and perceptions about other faiths.

Operationalization of Neutrality, Independence and Impartiality

Organizations, including INGOs, design their websites to reflect a well-crafted public persona. This virtual presence allows organizations to showcase their self-defined attributes and educate their audiences about their purpose, mission, and activities. Websites elicit donations for the organization, raise awareness about an issue, and provide transparency and accountability by making financial statements and annual reports avail-

able to the public. Organizations define their mission and explain their values on their websites. For many INGOs, this includes addressing the humanitarian principles to which they adhere. The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies posts the *Code of Conduct* on its websites and the *Code's* signatories. The IFRC (n.d., para. 2) maintains that “adherence to the *Code* has become one important way for ... NGOs to define themselves as humanitarians.” INGOs that claim to adhere to the *Code of Conduct* on their websites may or may not comply in their operations. It is also possible that INGOs comply with the *Code* in operations but not on their websites. Hilhorst (2005) interviewed signatories to the *Code of Conduct* and reported that signatories place a high value on the *Code*. The author lists a dozen suggestions for improving the *Code*. One suggestion offered by Hilhorst is for NGOs to acknowledge their signature on the *Code of Conduct* on their websites and provide a link to the document. A review of the *Code of Conduct* Signatory page (IFRC 2020) reveals that thirty-nine victim-organizations in this study signed the document and fifty-three victim-organizations did not. The majority of both faith-affiliated (55 percent) and secular (59 percent) organizations did not sign the *Code of Conduct*.

The ninety-two victim organizations’ websites were reviewed to measure commitment to the humanitarian principles of neutrality, independence, and impartiality. Organizations were classified according to their public state-

ments on each of the three humanitarian principles. It is not required that the INGO expressly commit to each principle by using specific terms. For example, it is not uncommon for an INGO to describe its impartial distribution of aid without using the word “impartial.” In fact, the *Code of Conduct* itself does not use the term impartial. An INGO may list the entire *Code* on its website such as FBO Operation Mercy (2020) or use a unique explanation such as that used by FBO Gift of the Givers (2020), which explains “assistance is provided unconditionally; assisting the needy, irrespective of human or animal, race, religion, colour, class, political affiliation of geographic location.”

Neutrality, independence, and impartiality are coded as Purposive Placement, Incidental Placement, or No Placement for each of the ninety-two victim-organizations. Placements coded as Purposive include INGOs that present the principle in its description of itself, often labeled “About us” or “Who we are,” and those that cite the principle under Mission or Mandate. Purposive Placement is also coded if the INGO lists the principle in its Annual Report, Trustee Report, Charter, Strategic Goals, Strategic Priorities, Code of Ethics, or includes a link to the *Code of Conduct* on the ICRC or IFRC websites. Incidental Placement is coded for those organizations that mention the principles in blogs, job descriptions, recruitment and training literature, FAQs, and press releases. INGO websites that contain no reference to the principles are coded as No Placement. The highest category

(Purposive) is used for those organizations that express their commitment at both the Purposive and Incidental levels.

Of the ninety-two victim-organizations, only thirty display Purposive Placement of all three principles. Of these thirty organizations, ten (33 percent) are faith-affiliated, and twenty (67 percent) are secular. However, twenty-nine organizations do not publicly commit to any of the principles. Of these twenty-nine organizations, six (18 percent) are faith-affiliated, and twenty-seven (82 percent) are secular. The remaining twenty-nine organizations commit to one or two principles with a combination of Purposive and Incidental placements.

Operationalization of Advocacy and Global Engagement

Many INGOs engage in advocacy, but the scope of their activities varies significantly. Three categories are used to measure the advocacy efforts of each of the ninety-two victim-organizations. INGOs are categorized as engaging in Policy Advocacy, Programmatic Advocacy, or No Advocacy. A humanitarian organization that seeks to empower women by mandating that its programs include women is engaged in Programmatic Advocacy. In contrast, a humanitarian organization that seeks to influence legislation to protect women's rights is engaged in Policy Advocacy. Organizations that engage in Programmatic Advocacy may still intend to influence national legislation. This bottom-up approach may lead to national change just as those that achieve national change hope for the effects to filter

down to the local level. Each INGO is classified at the highest level of advocacy observed since organizations engaged in Policy Advocacy are likely engaged in Programmatic Advocacy as well.

Advocacy efforts for the ninety-two victim-organizations were ascertained through reviews of websites, Facebook, and pertinent documents such as Annual Reports. Of the ninety-two victim-organizations, fifty-three engage in Policy Advocacy. One-third (34 percent) of these organizations are faith-affiliated, while two-thirds (64 percent) are secular. Programmatic Advocacy is the highest engagement level for thirteen victim-organizations, with seven (54 percent) classified as faith-affiliated and six (46 percent) as secular. The remaining twenty-six victim organizations do not maintain an advocacy agenda. Of these twenty-six, 8 (31 percent) are faith-affiliated, and eighteen (69 percent) are secular.

The final independent variable is the level of global engagement of the victim-organizations. INGOs vary greatly in the number of countries in which they operate, from a handful to over 100. Due to this vast range, an ordinal variable was designed to reflect low, moderate, and high global engagement. INGOs coded as Low Engagement operate in one to fifteen countries, INGOs coded as Moderate Engagement operate in sixteen to forty-nine countries, and INGOs coded as High Engagement operate in fifty or more countries. There are twenty-six INGOs with high engagement scores. Of those twenty-six, twelve (46 percent) are faith-affiliated and fourteen (54 percent) are secular.

However, one-third of all faith-affiliated INGOs, and only one-quarter of secular organizations, have high engagement scores. The more expansive engagement by faith-affiliated organizations is likely driven by the support received from the larger religious entities of which they are a part. For example, Catholic Relief Services serves as the official international humanitarian agency for the Catholic Church in the United States, with access to a vast global network of supporters and institutions.

Ordinal Logistic Regression Results

This study used ordinal logistic regression to assess the relationship between religiosity and the independent variables. The four assumptions of ordinal logistic regression are satisfied. First, the dependent variable is coded at the ordinal level, as each of its three categories reflect an increasing level of religiosity. Second, all independent variables are continuous, categorical, or ordinal. Third, multicollinearity tests were conducted. The Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) for all five independent variables is below five, Tolerance Levels are all above .20, and the Condition Indices are all below fifteen, indicating that multicollinearity is not an issue. Fourth, proportional odds tests were conducted and confirm that each independent variable has the same effect on each cumulative split of the dependent variable.

Due to the low frequency of faith-inspired organizations, there were numerous empty cells when conducting the regression analysis. The independent variables were collapsed into a binary

format to address the low cell frequency problem. Neutrality, impartiality, and independence were recoded into Commitment, by combining the Purposive and Incidental categories, and Non-Commitment. Advocacy was recoded into Policy Advocacy and Non-Policy Advocacy, with Programmatic Advocacy folded into the Non-Policy category. This binary variable still allows for a distinction between INGOs advocating at the national level and those that do not. Global Engagement was recoded as High Engagement and Non-High Engagement with Moderate Engagement was folded into the High Engagement category. This binary variable still allows for a distinction between INGOs with and those without a global presence. Even with the compression of predictor variables, the ordinal logistic regression resulted in a large number of empty cells. As a result, separate ordinal regressions were run for each of the five binary predictor variables.

Ordinal Regression Results for Religiosity and Neutrality

An ordinal logistic regression with proportional odds was run to determine the effect of religiosity of victim-organizations on public commitment to neutrality. There are proportional odds, as assessed by a likelihood ratio test comparing the fitted model to a model with varying local parameters, $X^2(1)=.714$, $p=.398$. The deviance goodness-of-fit test indicates that the model is a good fit to the observed data, $X^2(1)=.714$, $p=.398$. The model is statistically significant and predicts the dependent variable over and above the intercept-only model, $X^2(1)=11.165$, $p=.001$.

Table 2. Ordinal Regression Results for Religiosity and Neutrality

		Parameter Estimates						95% Confidence Interval	
		Estimate	Std. Error	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Threshold	[Faith-Based]	-2.158	.194	123.716	1	.000	.116	-2.538	-1.778
	[Faith-Inspired]	-1.909	.181	110.725	1	.000	.148	-2.264	-1.553
Location	[Non-Commitment Neutrality=0]	-1.142	.327	12.152	1	.000	.319	-1.783	-.500
	[Commitment Neutrality=1]	0 ^a	.	.	0	.	1	.	.

The odds ratio of being in a higher category of the dependent variable for victim-organizations with non-commitment to neutrality is .319 (95 percent CI, -1.783 to -.500), a statistically significant effect, $X^2(1)=12.152$, $p=.000$. For victim-organizations with non-commitment to neutrality, the odds of scoring higher on religiosity are greater than for victim-organizations with a commitment to neutrality. In other words, as the religiosity of victim-organizations increases, their commitment to neutrality decreases.

Ordinal Regression Results for Religiosity and Independence

An ordinal logistic regression with proportional odds was run to determine the effect of religiosity of victim-organizations on public commitment to independence. There are proportional odds, as assessed by a likelihood ratio test comparing the fitted model to a model with varying local parameters, $X^2(1)=1.338$, $p=.247$. The deviance goodness-of-fit test indicates that the model is a good fit to the observed data, $X^2(1)=1.338$, $p=.247$. The model is statistically significant and predicts the dependent variable over and above the intercept-only model, $X^2(1)=16.219$, $p<.001$.

Table 3. Ordinal Regression Results for Religiosity and Independence

		Parameter Estimates						95% Confidence Interval	
		Estimate	Std. Error	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Threshold	[Faith-Based]	-2.245	.202	123.958	1	.000	.106	-2.641	-1.850
	[Faith-Inspired]	-1.992	.189	111.180	1	.000	.136	-2.362	-1.622
Location	[Non-Committed Independence=0]	-1.334	.319	17.485	1	.000	.263	-1.959	-.709
	[Committed Independence=1]	0 ^a	.	.	0	.	1	.	.

The odds ratio of being in a higher category of the dependent variable for victim-organizations with non-commitment to independence is .263 (95 percent CI, -1.959 to -.709), a statistically significant effect, $X^2(1)=17.485$, $p=.000$. For victim-organizations with non-commitment to independence, the odds of scoring higher on religiosity are greater than for victim-organizations with a commitment to independence. In other words, as the religiosity of victim-organizations increases, their commitment to independence decreases.

Ordinal Regression Results for Religiosity and Impartiality

An ordinal logistic regression with proportional odds was run to determine the effect of religiosity of victim-organization on public commitment to impartiality. There are proportional odds, as assessed by a likelihood ratio test comparing the fitted model to a model with varying local parameters, $X^2(1)=.224$, $p=.636$. The deviance goodness-of-fit test indicates that the model is a good fit to the observed data, $X^2(1)=.224$, $p=.636$. However, the model is not statistically significant and does not predict the dependent variable over and above the intercept-only model, $X^2(1)=.101$, $p=.751$.

Table 4. Ordinal Regression Results for Religiosity and Impartiality

		Parameter Estimates						95% Confidence Interval	
		Estimate	Std. Error	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Threshold	[Faith-Based]	-1.894	.173	119.476	1	.000	.150	-2.234	-1.555
	[Faith-Inspired]	-1.654	.161	105.526	1	.000	.191	-1.969	-1.338
Location	[Non-Commitment Impartiality=0]	-.135	.419	.104	1	.748	.874	-.957	.687
	[Commitment Impartiality=1]	0 ^a	.	.	0	.	1	.	.

The odds ratio of being in a higher category of the dependent variable for victim-organizations with non-commitment to impartiality is .874 (95 percent CI, -.957 to .687), which is not significantly significant, $X^2(1)=.104$, $p=.748$. Religiosity does not affect victim-organizations' commitment to impartiality.

Ordinal Regression Results for Religiosity and Advocacy

An ordinal logistic regression with proportional odds was run to determine the effect of religiosity of victim-organizations on advocacy efforts. There are proportional odds, as assessed by a likelihood ratio test comparing the fitted

model to a model with varying local parameters, $X^2(1)=.324$, $p=.569$. The deviance goodness-of-fit test indicates that the model is a good fit to the observed data, $X^2(1)=.324$, $p=.569$. The model is

statistically significant and predicts the dependent variable over and above the intercept-only model, $X^2(1)=10.875$, $p=.001$.

Table 5. Ordinal Regression Results for Religiosity and Advocacy

		Parameter Estimates					95% Confidence Interval	
		Estimate	Std. Error	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)	
Threshold	[Faith-Based]	-2.130	.189	126.368	1	.000	.119	-2.502
	[Faith-Inspired]	-1.881	.177	113.400	1	.000	.152	-1.759
Location	[Non-Policy Advocacy=0]	-1.179	.341	11.960	1	.001	.308	-1.847
	[Policy Advocacy=1]	0 ^a	.	.	0	.	1	-.511

The odds ratio of being in a higher category of the dependent variable for victim-organizations with a non-policy level of advocacy is .308 (95 percent CI, -1.847 to -.511), which is significantly significant, $X^2(1) = 11.960$, $p = .001$. For victim-organizations that engage in policy advocacy, the odds of scoring higher on religiosity is less than for victim-organizations that do not participate in policy advocacy. In other words, as the religiosity of victim-organizations increases, their likelihood of engaging in policy advocacy decreases.

Ordinal Regression Results for Religiosity and Level of Global Engagement

An ordinal logistic regression with proportional odds was run to determine the effect of religiosity of an organization on its level of global engagement. There are proportional odds, as assessed by a likelihood ratio test comparing the fitted model to a model with varying local parameters, $X^2(1)=.908$, $p=.341$. The deviance goodness-of-fit test indicates that the model is a good fit to the observed data, $X^2(1)=.908$, $p=.341$. The model is not statistically significant and does not predict the dependent variable over and above the intercept-only model, $X^2(1)=3.390$, $p=.066$.

Table 6. Ordinal Regression Results for Religiosity and Global Engagement

		Parameter Estimates						95% Confidence Interval	
		Estimate	Std. Error	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Threshold	[Faith-Based]	-1.998	.180	123.536	1	.000	.136	-2.351	-1.646
	[Faith-Inspired]	-1.755	.167	110.054	1	.000	.173	-2.083	-1.428
Location	[Engagement=0]	-.715	.370	3.733	1	.053	.489	-1.440	.010
	[Engagement=1]	0 ^a	.	.	0	.	1	.	.

The odds ratio of being in a higher category of the dependent variable for victim-organizations with non-high levels of engagement is .489 (95 percent CI, -1.440 to -.010), which is not significantly significant, $X^2(1) = 3.733$, $p = .053$. Religiosity does not impact victim-organizations' level of global engagement.

Conclusion

This study assesses the differences between religious and secular organizations across two issue areas. The first issue pertains to organizational commitment to the humanitarian principles of neutrality, independence, and impartiality. It is noteworthy that twenty-nine (32 percent) of the ninety-two victim-organizations fail to express a public commitment to a single principle. Secular organizations are twice as likely not to mention the three principles than faith-affiliated organizations. Why do so many organizations, particularly secular ones, fail to embrace these well-established principles? Most of the organizations that fall in this category rank low on global engagement. Smaller organizations with

established niches may not see a benefit to publicly embracing the principles. Similarly, organizations with a focused mission and specialized skill set, such as land mine removal, may also not benefit from such public acknowledgment. It is also possible that some organizations that do not publicly commit to the principles on their social media may indeed adhere to them in practice. However, it remains unclear why an organization would comply with the principles in practice but not claim to do so on their websites.

Organizations' religiosity did not impact the principle of impartiality. It is uncommon to give prominence to a non-significant finding. However, the lack of any relationship between religiosity and commitment to impartiality deserves such attention as it confirms that religious organizations are equally committed to providing aid based on need alone as secular organizations. Fourteen organizations commit to only one principle on their websites. Nine of the fourteen organizations commit only to the principle of impartiality. As previously mentioned, religious organizations may have constraints on their commitment to independence and neutrality due to

their relationship with a larger institution or community. The vast majority of faith-affiliated groups that adhere to impartiality did so at the purposive level, making very clear their commitment to this principle. The *Code of Conduct* does not weight the importance of its ten principles. Yet, the need to impartially distribute aid clearly resonates as a higher priority with many INGOs. It should be noted that negative incentives also exist that encourage commitment to impartiality. An INGO perceived as bias could endanger itself in a conflict zone, alienate potential donors, find itself marginalized in a specific relief effort, or ostracized by civil society.

The results of this study suggest that religiosity impacts INGOs' commitment to neutrality and independence. As religiosity of an organization increases, its commitment to neutrality and independence decreases. Why are religiously affiliated organizations less likely to embrace these two principles? INGOs with a religious affiliation may not stray from official doctrine or refute their benefactor's position in a conflict. The term "non-governmental" implies that an organization characterized as such is independent of government control but not necessarily from other actors such as religious institutions or broader religious communities. Religious organizations may not suffer severe consequences for violating neutrality and independence due to the following mitigating factors. First, the principle of neutrality remains controversial both in the literature and within civil society. Second, the uniqueness of faith-affiliated organizations, specifical-

ly their alignment with institutions and larger communities, lessens expectations that they commit to neutrality and independence.

Advocacy and global engagement represent the second issue area examined. Religiosity is not a factor in explaining the global engagement of victim-organizations. However, religiosity is negatively related to policy advocacy. As religiosity increases, organizations are less likely to maintain a policy advocacy agenda. Religious organizations seem less interested in advocating at the policy level than their secular counterparts. Again, many religious organizations are part of a more extensive network where other components may engage in such activities.

This study shows that faith-affiliated INGOs victimized by terrorists do differ from their secular counterparts. Further research is needed to determine whether these associations between religiosity and commitment to humanitarian principles exist in the larger INGO community. Also, the only operational activity examined in this study was advocacy. Research that examines the association between religiosity and advocacy effort, as well as advocacy agendas, within the broader INGO community is also needed. Nevertheless, this study contributes to an understanding of the differences between faith-affiliated organizations and secular organizations. Calls for INGOs to respect the principles outlined in the *Code of Conduct* should consider religiosity and its impact on organizations' willingness and ability to commit to these principles.

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