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Aid as pan-Islamic solidarity in Bosnia-Herzegovina:

Toward an anthropology of universalism

ABSTRACT

For decades Arab Muslims have engaged in pan-Islamic solidarity aid work in Bosnia-Herzegovina. In delivering aid from the Middle East to a European country, they disrupt the racial and civilizational hierarchies that structure most international relief work. Their experiences demonstrate the utility of a more capacious anthropological understanding of universalism. Rather than dismiss universalism as mere ideology or as a set of homogenizing processes, I highlight how universalist projects put into practice complex idioms that are notionally directed at all of humanity.

Ethnographic attention to these relief workers' material conditions reveals that they lack many of the privileges of the white, Western, and highly mobile protagonists of most ethnographies of aid. Moreover, it illuminates how spiritual practices coalesce with considerations of transnational mobility, class, and political action—considerations that are often neglected in anthropological work on Islamic piety. [*universalism, solidarity, humanitarianism, charity, aid, Islam, pan-Islamism, Bosnia-Herzegovina*]

كانت البوسنة والمهرسك مستقرا لأعمال التضامن الإسلامية طوال عقود، وباعتبارها دولة أوروبية فقد أربك ذلك التراتبية العرقية والحضارية التي تأسست عليها أغلب أعمال الإغاثة الدولية. وقد أبانت تجربة كهذه عن جدوى المقاربة الأنثروبولوجية الأرحب لفكرة الكونية. لذا سأظهر كيف تُطبق المشاريع العالمية المفاهيم النظرية المتوجهة للبشرية جمعاء على أرض الواقع بدلا من نبذ الكونية على اعتبار أنها مجرد أيديولوجية أو مجموعة من عمليات خلق التجانس. كما أن الملاحظة الإثنوغرافية للظروف المادية لعمال الإغاثة المسلمين تظهر افتقارهم للكثير من امتيازات الناشطين البيض الغربيين المبرزين في معظم إثنوغرافيات الإغاثة. كما تتجلى الصلة الوثيقة بين الممارسات الروحية وبين اعتبارات الحراك العابر للحدود والطبقات والعمل السياسي، وهو ما تغفله عادة الكتابات الأنثروبولوجية حول التقوى الإسلامية. [الكونية، التضامن، الإنسانية، العمل الخيري، الإغاثة، الإسلام، التضامن الإسلامي، البوسنة والمهرسك]

In the early 1990s the eyes of the world were on Sarajevo, the capital of Bosnia-Herzegovina, which was emerging from the collapsing socialist federal state of Yugoslavia, in southeast Europe. Under prolonged siege by Serb nationalists, the multiethnic but predominantly Muslim city became a symbol of tolerance and pluralism under threat. It was, moreover, a key site of concern for the “International Community,” as embodied by visiting “Internationals”—diplomats, peacekeepers, aid workers, and journalists.¹ And their most famous gathering spot was the bar at the iconic Holiday Inn, built in Sarajevo for the 1984 Winter Olympics, a monument to cosmopolitan modernity.

In 1993 one of the more atypical guests at the Holiday Inn was Nasser Al Saeed, head of the regional office of the Saudi High Committee to Aid Bosnia-Herzegovina (SHC). Al Saeed was a specialist in childhood education who graduated from the University of Oregon, and he would later serve on Saudi Arabia's Consultative Assembly. At the personal invitation of Bosnia's president, Al Saeed arrived on an evening flight from Zagreb, Croatia, to the Sarajevo airport, which was then operating under UN supervision. Al Saeed soon found himself admonished by a French peacekeeper for being unaware that the armored UN escort he was expecting would not be leaving for town until the next morning. Years later he recalled the testy conversation in a press interview:

I said to him, “I am carrying a UN identity card, and you are with the UN. Right now we are both equal. I came here on a UN plane. Why didn't they tell me in Zagreb not to arrive at this time?” He said, “No, I am not responsible. You can leave the airport now, in the cold and with any Serb bullets that may kill you.” I told him, “I will not leave this place, I am part of the same body [*ghurfa*] as you.” (al-‘Assāf 2007)²

After much badgering, the Frenchman relented, but only after placing Al Saeed in a jeep with an Italian journalist, who lacked any official standing other than a press pass. Once Al Saeed arrived at the Holiday Inn, he was told that there was no proper water or electricity and that to get to his room he had to climb seven flights up the

rear staircase (the front one being exposed to Serb sniper fire). Al Saeed did so only to encounter a locked door, so he trudged back down and went up another staircase, finally reaching his room and finding barely enough water to perform ablutions for his prayer. For Al Saeed, the ordeal of getting to the Holiday Inn led not to the reward of a stiff drink and cavorting with other Internationals, but instead the possibility of a small measure of ritual cleanliness and solitude in preparation for the days to come. Even though he stayed in the most iconic building of Bosnia's international social scene, his account reflects little sense that he belonged to it. And although SHC became a major conduit for foreign aid into Bosnia, its Sarajevo offices were raided by US troops in the aftermath of the September 11, 2001, attacks.

Al Saeed's plea for recognition from the French peacekeeper ("I am part of the same body as you") highlights how pan-Islamic aid workers participate in the UN-led International Community even as they are not as always accepted as part of it. Their experiences are useful for rethinking universalism. During and after the war, Arab Muslims who engaged in aid, relief, or charity work in Bosnia were surveilled as suspected terrorists, and in some cases detained and deported. They were seen as foreign, and they lacked many of the privileges of the white, Western, and highly mobile protagonists of most ethnographies of aid. And their spiritual practices coalesced with considerations of transnational mobility, class, and political action, considerations that tend to be muted in anthropological work on Islamic piety. Through ethnographic attention to these relief workers' material conditions and experiences of racialized mobility, this article develops an anthropological approach to universalism. Rather than dismissing universalism as mere ideology or a set of homogenizing processes, highlighting universalism as a category for anthropological analysis entails understanding how complex idioms notionally directed at all of humanity are put into practice in the face of lived differences. Moreover, as will be discussed in the conclusion, an ethnographic approach to universalism can also help clarify the conceptual and political stakes of solidarity practices more generally.

The 1990s wars in ex-Yugoslavia—and especially the 1992–95 conflict in Bosnia—are widely understood as a major site in the development of post-Cold War humanitarianism (Coles 2007; Gilbert 2020; Vah Jevšnik 2009). Media images of mass atrocities introduced the term *ethnic cleansing* into the global lexicon, and Western public opinion was galvanized by the prolonged siege of Sarajevo (Maček 2009) and the genocidal massacre in the town of Srebrenica in the presence of Dutch UN peacekeepers (Wagner 2008). The Bosnian War also occasioned significant pan-Islamic solidarity organizing among Muslim communities worldwide, organizing that has been much less studied than its Western counterparts. Pan-Islamic solidarity activity included

providing diplomatic support, relief, and aid; proselytizing; and participating in combat, the latter denominated as jihad. In contrast to other recent wars that raised concerns over humanitarianism and terror, the Bosnian War had a distinctive racial politics (Baker 2018), given its European location. In a global order that tended to racialize Muslims as nonwhite, the Europeanness of Bosnian Muslims—whether understood through phenotypical traits or signs of "modernity" and "moderation"—made them objects of fascination and suspicion from different directions. Liberals in the West saw "saving" Muslims in Bosnia as an important test of Europe's commitments to secular civilization; similarly, to many Muslims around the world (including those in the West), the whiteness of Bosnians was a reminder of Islam's universality and transracial scope. For these reasons, the Bosnian War is helpful not only to think with as one site among many for pan-Islamic relief work but also to highlight how *all* transnational relief work is situated in a variety of concrete political contestations.

The research for this article was shaped by the fraught nexus of terror and humanitarianism that also affected my interlocutors. My own engagements with this topic began when I worked for human rights NGOs addressing detention and torture policies in the War on Terror, culminating in several years working as part of a clinical legal team defending a Saudi held by the US military at Guantánamo Bay. Many of the captives at the base have claimed to be aid workers—an assertion readily dismissed by their captors as a "cover story." Frustrated by the limited understandings of these experiences among NGOs and defense attorneys, I embarked on ethnographic research on Arabs who traveled to Bosnia for jihad and settled in the country after the war as civilians. This work also brought me into contact with Arab migrants who had *not* participated in fighting, but whose very racialized religiosity—in contradistinction to the white and largely secular Bosnian Muslim population around them—made them objects of suspicion.

For my own part, racial outsidership marked both constraint and opportunity during the 12 months of ethnographic research conducted in Bosnia-Herzegovina, mostly from 2009 to 2011. I encountered skepticism as a US passport holder but guarded curiosity as a person of Chinese origin at a time when China was seen primarily as a potential counterweight to US hegemony. In the end, my background in human rights—which I originally sought to shed as unhelpful baggage—turned out to be the easiest way for interlocutors to make sense of my interest in their lives. I became involved in some human rights advocacy opposing deportation and detention policies, and my affiliation with a local human rights NGO allowed me to visit some of my interlocutors after they were placed in an immigration detention center on the outskirts of Sarajevo (Li 2020, 18–22). The research was necessarily multisited, since I had to capture a sense of my interlocutors' range of movements. Some

of them had been deported from Bosnia or had fled under threat of deportation; while my mobility was relatively frictionless, theirs was fraught and heavily conditioned by state border regimes.

Background: Aid as pan-Islamic solidarity practice

In recent decades significant analytical attention has been devoted to international aid groups that are explicitly denominated “Muslim” or “Islamic.” Such groups focus on proselytizing and providing education and material assistance, often crossing categories of development, humanitarianism, and charity. Charitable activity broadly construed has always been an important part of Islamic traditions, especially the duty of alms giving, or *zakāt*, referenced in multiple verses of the Qur’ān. The anthropology of Islamic charitable practices across historical contexts has analyzed many forms, including individualized giving, kinship and community-based networks, endowed properties (*waqf*), and formal institutions (Atia 2013; Mittermaier 2019; Mostowlansky 2019; Moumtaz 2021). Notwithstanding significant continuities and overlaps among these diverse phenomena, the focus of this article is conceptually distinct: groups that operate through formalized transnational institutions inflected by the rise of the aid sector in the West. Such “Islamic aid” has been forced into fraught relations of comparison, imitation, and overlap with its non-Muslim counterparts, portrayed as less professional and narrower in their focus. Anthropological work on such groups emerged in the post-9/11 moment, often in response to allegations of links to armed activity (Bellion-Jourdan and Benthall 2003; Feldman 2015; Ghodsee 2010, 130–58; Kroessin and Mohamed 2008; Petersen 2016). This work has only deepened in the wake of more recent crises, especially in Syria.

The transnational activity that is the subject of this article can be thought of as pan-Islamic in the sense of invoking an idea of solidarity with a global Muslim community, or *umma*. This came up one day in 2010 when I was having coffee in downtown Sarajevo with Kamal,³ a Syrian who had spent several years working for SHC in Bosnia in the aftermath of the war and knew many other Arab aid workers in the country. Kamal argued that unlike non-Muslims, Bosnian Muslims could see an Arab like him as a “son of the faith” (*ibn dīn*), sharing not only a religion but also a common destiny (*maṣīr*). “I help you because what is happening to you could also happen to me,” as Kamal put it. At the same time, pan-Islamic solidarity does not demand erasing all differences between Muslims or even necessarily bringing them under a common political authority: for example, pan-Islamic activists can argue for Muslim unity without disavowing existing nation-state arrangements.⁴ And in terms of sectarian, doctrinal, and political orientations,

pan-Islamic solidarity formations are as heterogeneous as the societies from which they originate. Bosnia was an arena for competing forms of pan-Islamic aid, coming from states such as Iran, Turkey, and Saudi Arabia; from opposition movements such as the Muslim Brothers in Egypt and the Refah Party in Turkey (precursor to the AKP); and from diasporic Muslim communities in Europe and North America.

Most conspicuous—for reasons detailed below—were aid organizations operating on the ground from the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states, which in the 1990s were emerging as a major hub of neoliberal capital on the global scene. Charitable efforts have been an especially prominent example of pan-Islamic solidarity, partly owing to the perceived absence of strong geopolitical coordination from intergovernmental bodies, such as the Organization of the Islamic Conference. In this sense it is unsurprising that aid work has faced suspicions that it is connected to the most notorious form of pan-Islamic activity, namely armed action classified as jihad.

Pan-Islamic aid similarly sits at the intersection of two significant developments in anthropological scholarship: namely, the emergence of humanitarianism as a field of study and the attention to piety and ethics in the study of Islam. The anthropology of humanitarian aid has largely focused on the human as an embodied object of care, in studies of refugees, victims of mass atrocity, and other afflicted bodies—or studies of the organizations that care for them (Agier 2012; Fassin 2012; Feldman 2018; Malkki 2015; Redfield 2013; Ticktin 2011). This rich literature has done much to interrogate the assumptions and actions of humanitarian logics primarily emanating from the West, moving “from embrace of the morality underlying humanitarianism to critiques and denunciation of humanitarianism and finally to more cautious, ethnographic examinations and descriptions of its complexities, limits, and boundaries” (Ticktin 2014, 283).

In parallel, within the anthropology of Islam there has been the widely remarked turn to piety, ethics, and religious law, a development that has posed formidable challenges to conceptualizations of secularism and, relatedly, liberalism. Serious ethnographic attention to forms of piety has helped parochialize liberal accounts of agency (Hirschkind 2006; Mahmood 2005) and taken secularism itself and the institutions inscribing it as objects of empirical study (Agrama 2012; Asad 2003; Fernando 2014). The upshot has been to unsettle notions of secularism as a natural and desirable demarcation of religion from public life and instead to explore secularism as a habituated modality of power (including its attendant sensibilities), one that is invested in policing and reconstituting this demarcation.

These two literatures can be productively read together as an extended conversation about the category of humanity: the scholarship on humanitarianism critically

deconstructs those who claim to embody it, while the work on Islamic piety takes seriously those seen to cultivate a robust alternative. Pan-Islamic aid organizations provide an opportunity to connect and complement the rich insights of these two bodies of literature, but also to disrupt the dichotomy between the West and the rest, which their easy juxtaposition could reproduce. Transnational Muslim aid workers from the Global South face very different challenges from the highly empowered, white, and mobile expatriates who populate ethnographies of humanitarianism; this difference is itself only an example of larger, unmarked forms of white mobility that have been largely overlooked in migration studies (Lundström 2014). In this respect, this article builds on recent scholarship by Adia Benton (2016) on African expatriate aid workers and Rania Sweis (2019) on Syrian American physicians navigating overlapping regimes of state violence to provide help in their war-torn homeland. And while such aid workers are frequently pious, their experiences of Muslim populations' sheer diversity—national, racial, doctrinal—highlight new avenues for exploring Islam as an anthropological category. In doing so they confound debates between orthopraxy and “everyday” religion (Deeb 2015; Fadil and Fernando 2015; Schielke 2015). This is especially important insofar as ethnographies of Islamic piety and revivalism have tended to take the nation-state for granted as a framework for analysis. They have, moreover, yet to develop tools for considering questions of solidarity and pan-Islamism, to say nothing of other transregional processes, such as racialization among Muslims (Abdul Khabeer 2016, 238).

The marginality of pan-Islamic solidarity in these two literatures is, however, not a question of mere empirical oversight: it points to the utility of moving beyond interrogating the category of humanity and instead theorizing the category of universalism. Universalism is not often thought of in relation to pan-Islamic solidarity, which embraces partisanship and thus differs from the logic of intervention from above, often undertaken in the name of the “International Community.”⁵ Yet analyzing some of the structural parallels at work can be helpful in elucidating a broader anthropological approach to universalism.

Universalism: Anything but universal

Anthropological interrogations of the category of humanity are consistent with one of the discipline's structuring problematics, namely the question of universalism. Let us think of universalisms (or universalist projects) as structures of aspiration that direct a particular message to all of humanity in the face of lived differences. Anthropology has often approached claims to universality by demonstrating their limitations, contradictions, erasures, contingencies, or exclusions. Such purported failures, however, do not make these projects any less universalist; indeed, they are en-

demically universalist endeavors and are the starting point of analysis. Universalisms are many things, but they are never universal.

This approach builds on the work of Anna Tsing (2005, 7) and her analytical attention to “how universals work in a practical sense.” Tsing largely tracks the movement of certain Western ideas (especially concerning environmentalism) from the Global North to the Global South; here, in contrast we are following the circulation of people between different parts of the Global South under a non-Western rubric. Taking seriously on their own terms varieties of universalism less familiar to Western anthropologists arguably alters the stakes of the debate. Generalized rejection of universalisms may be more than simply unenlightening; it can also contribute to the dismissal of efforts by marginalized actors to organize and connect across distances geographical and cultural—this is especially the case for universalisms marked as Islamic, which are often presented as the paradigmatic case of ungrounded, unaccountable forms of transnational action (Devji 2008).⁶

Such themes were opened up in my conversations with Kamal, the Syrian mentioned above. Kamal was pious, praying regularly and avoiding ritually proscribed activities. But he also wore a beard with a shaved upper lip, a practice associated with the Salafi orientation toward Islam, which is uncommon in Bosnia. Although a slight majority of Bosnians identify as Muslim by background or nationality, Kamal's grooming choices and his darker skin index a conspicuously foreign or “Arab” brand of Islam. SHC and other Gulf-based NGOs were widely criticized for attempting to import unwelcome or “alien” Islamic practices through proselytizing efforts and the construction or renovation of mosques in ways deemed an affront to the country's architectural and aesthetic traditions (Akšamija 2011) (see Figure 1). For their part, many of the aid workers saw Bosnian Muslims' attitude toward the faith with a mix of disapproval and resignation that was not too dissimilar from the way secular humanitarians may regard local backwardness.

Yet Kamal had also lived in the Balkans more than half his life and was fluent in the local language, working part-time as an Arabic-Bosnian translator. Kamal was aware of how different he seemed to many Bosnian Muslims, even as he identified strongly with them. During our conversation about solidarity mentioned above, Kamal claimed that a non-Muslim International helping a Muslim may act from “human sympathy” (*al-ta'ātuf al-insānī*), but that is not the same as the sympathy between Muslims. At the same time, however, this solidarity still had an orientation toward all others: in this sense, his work was also part of a universalist project. When I asked if the Islamic NGOs he knew also served non-Muslims, he scoffed. “Of course!” he said. “When people need help, you help them, that's all.”⁷ Instead of querying these statements'



Figure 1. The King Fahd bin Abdul Aziz Al Saud mosque in the Alipašino polje neighborhood in Sarajevo, Bosnia, December 2006. Built with financing from Saudi Arabia, it is the country's most visible symbol of "Gulf Islam." (Darryl Li) [This figure appears in color in the online issue]

empirical veracity or posing them as in tension with one another—as one might be tempted to do in analyzing hegemonic forms of universalism—we can discern in them some basic parameters for thinking anthropologically about universalisms.

The first thing to note is that the aspirational nature of universalism requires horizons of mediation between existing communities and all of humanity. Universalisms conjure communities that include some people while treating all others as theoretically capable of incorporation. This is what allows, for example, human rights activists to invoke "the International Community" in claiming that certain rights are universal, even if they may concede that most human beings do not accept such claims. Like the International Community, the *umma* "lies not in a proper unity of the believers but in terms of their dissolution" (Iqbal 2019, 141–42); it is often affectively conjured through expressions of failure or lament, as well as in claims for justice. In this sense, both aspiration and disappointment can coexist, since the ideal of unity among Muslims is thought of as a potentiality that must be brought about through concerted action. For Kamal, the *umma* is both the subset of humanity that has accepted Islam and humanity's ultimate horizon through the possibility—however remote or hypothetical—of conversion, as attested by the subtle invitations to join the faith I constantly received from him and others. Islam is

treated not as a parochial subset of the human, but rather as a vanguard of it.⁸

Second, an anthropological approach to universalism must attend to issues of scale and focus on concrete, empirically observable endeavors and campaigns. Every universalist project has an idiom, but the processes and practices for translating that idiom in the face of various lived differences are equally important. Too often, universalisms are reduced to their idioms—in other words, categories like "liberalism," "Islam," and "Marxism" are not anthropologically apprehensible forms of universalism, nor is there any singular form of Islamic or liberal or Marxist universalism. Rather, an anthropological approach to universalism requires identifying concrete projects in the world that may draw from idioms—sets of norms, vocabularies, repertoires for argumentation—that can be loosely labeled Islamic, liberal, Marxist, and so on.⁹ This point is crucial to avoid treating universalism as shorthand for discredited monolithic categories, such as civilization. In the above instance, we must recall that Kamal's former NGO work may have been part of a universalist endeavor that marked itself as "Islamic," but it was hardly in any position to monopolize that label. The particular visions of Islam that the NGO represented or that Kamal may practice remain very much marginalized in the Bosnian context. In this sense, analyzing pan-Islamic solidarity as universalism is not to reject the

ethnography of local Muslim practice but rather to affirm a common orientation to understanding spiritual practice within material and political contexts (Henig 2020)—in the process, moving beyond the false choice between discursive traditions and ethnonationalist identity as analytical frameworks.

Third, anthropological approaches to universalism must move questions of difference from the margins to the center of the analysis. No universalism seeks to enforce total homogeneity; its appeal stems in large part from the promise of transcending and managing differences, not obliterating them. Moreover, attention to the materiality of such differences sheds light on the pragmatics of universalist projects. While Internationals with Western passports may seem to move with little friction in and out of a place like Bosnia, their Arab counterparts working in Islamic organizations were inextricably tied up with coercive experiences of forced displacement, labor migration, and securitized border regimes. Not all universalisms operate on similar or even comparable levels of power. One of the reasons why Kamal has made Bosnia his home is that he is also effectively an exile: for years, he opposed the ruling regime in his native Syria, and the war rendered dreams of safe return even more distant.

In the sections that follow, I will present three ethnographic life histories of Arabs who worked for Gulf-based Islamic NGOs in Bosnia during and after the war, married Bosnian women, and attempted to settle there. They will highlight, respectively, precarious mobility, dynamics of localization, and questions of violence—all areas in which the universalist projects highlighted in this article differ quite markedly from conventional accounts of humanitarianism. This is neither the classic ethnographic gaze that seeks to fix the authentic local subject into place, nor the “studying up” that provincializes purportedly global institutions; it is, rather, a lateral glimpse of people renegotiating the boundary between the universal and the particular (Ho 2006).

Beyond the “export model”

Pan-Islamic solidarity, especially as expressed in aid work, has often been understood through a “petrodollars and piety” model, which posits that wealthy GCC states seek to export their own particular versions of Islam—labeled as “Salafi” or (more pejoratively) “Wahhabi”—to other parts of the world. The effects of this are manifested in new and different styles of mosques, women covering their hair or faces, men growing longer beards, and so on. As in other places, moral panic around such changes has arisen in Bosnia (Mesarič 2013). Scholarship on transnational aspects of Salafi Islam has complicated this narrative by showing how local factors affect the reception and unfolding of these discourses (Bonnefooy 2011; Farquhar 2016; Østebø 2012). While the particular forms of capital and Islam preva-

lent in the Gulf states are certainly very important for understanding pan-Islamic aid, attention to the pragmatics of universalism highlights a much more polycentric view of this phenomenon.

During the war in Bosnia, Gulf-based Islamic charities rushed to join in relief efforts. The two most prominent organizations were from Saudi Arabia and reflected competition among the country’s elites: (1) the International Islamic Relief Organization (IIRO), which was founded in the late 1970s and affiliated with the Jeddah-based pan-Islamic organization the Muslim World League; and (2) SHC, which eventually overshadowed IIRO and was set up to centralize fundraising for Bosnia in the hands of Prince Salman bin ‘Abd al-‘Aziz, the longtime governor of Riyadh Province who ascended the throne in 2015. While women and men both participated heavily in these organizations’ fundraising and publicity activities in support of Bosnia, staffing of field operations was reserved for men. To the extent that pan-Islamic solidarity activists who traveled to Bosnia were women, they often came from Western countries and usually for short visits (Werbner 2002, 269–70). The heads of these offices shared the nationalities of the organizations that employed them. The bulk of the field staff, however, were not GCC nationals.

For professional roles—office managers, accountants, logisticians, interpreters—these organizations mostly hired non-GCC Arab men, such as Egyptians, Algerians, Iraqis, and Syrians. This is borne out in a detailed survey, compiled by the Bosnian secret police, of foreign Islamic NGOs in the northeastern city of Tuzla: IIRO’s two employees were a Palestinian and a Jordanian; the director and deputy director of SHC’s office were Saudis; the other four foreign employees were Jordanian, Syrian, Algerian, and Lebanese, and three of them had been students in ex-Yugoslavia.¹⁰ This was hardly surprising: GCC states have perennially struggled to “nationalize” both public and private organizations at home, in part because their relatively generous social welfare schemes have been blamed for discouraging educational attainment and active labor market participation. Other Arabs were seen as more likely to have the appropriate skill set, to be motivated, and to settle for lower wages. They were also easier for office heads to communicate with than local Bosnians (most of whom were likely to speak English or German if they had a second language) (see Figure 2).

These people were not recruited directly from their countries of origin but through preexisting diasporic networks that were themselves already deeply masculinized. One major source of Arab labor for Gulf-based Islamic aid organizations was a considerable cross-Mediterranean labor diaspora that grew dramatically over the 1980s. Neoliberal shocks in Egypt, Tunisia, and Morocco drove thousands to seek employment in western Europe, especially Italy. War and political repression also augmented the numbers of



Figure 2. An image scanned from a publicity booklet distributed in the late 1990s by the Saudi High Committee to Aid Bosnia-Herzegovina. Here, inverted racialized labor hierarchies are at work in the unloading of relief supplies at a port in Croatia. Dress cues suggest that the man in the middle is a Gulf national overseeing the operation; on the left is likely a non-Gulf Arab, working as an intermediary manager; to the right, locals carry out manual labor. [This figure appears in color in the online issue]

migrants, including Algerians fleeing civil conflict and Egyptians who had been working in oil-rich (and labor-starved) Iraq in the 1980s. As a result, many of those delivering aid to Bosnians in the name of the *umma* were themselves subjected to various forms of forced migration, challenging the racialized assumptions that underlie the distinction between “expats” and “migrants” (Kunz 2016). Thus, the stereotypical category of the “Arab” in Bosnia as a wealthy sheikh rested on material foundations made possible by Arabs from non-GCC states who were far more economically precarious.

One such migrant-turned-humanitarian-turned-refugee was Nidal, a Tunisian whom I met for coffee in the 12th Arrondissement of Paris in 2010. We spoke in a mix of somewhat formal Arabic and French. Nidal avidly followed politics back home, forwarding me articles by email about the country’s ruler, Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, whose fall later that year would precipitate the Arab Spring. Nidal described his upbringing in Tunisia in a religiously conservative (*muḥāfiẓīn*) family and said he had been sympathetic to the country’s Islamist opposition movement. Nidal served as a paratrooper in the army for 10 years, rising to the rank of sergeant. But when he saw other accused Islamists being purged from the military, he decided to seek employment abroad. “It’s better to leave on your own,” he said, “because if they kick you out, it’s

much worse for you.” Nidal left for Italy in 1990, finding a job with a stonework company in Parma and working in support of the opposition in exile. Italy provided the Ben Ali regime with an important source of remittances, and it was also a convenient place to dump the disaffected, where they were far enough not to disturb the regime too much but still under the watchful eye of a friendly government. Around that time, Italian authorities were arresting and forcibly repatriating Tunisian dissidents singled out by the Ben Ali regime, including one of Nidal’s friends, who was tortured for months before escaping to Switzerland. Nidal feared he would soon lose his immigration status and face deportation himself.

Taking advice from a friend, Nidal decided to seek work just across the Adriatic Sea with an Islamic aid organization. For him, Bosnia at war was safer than an Italy collaborating with the Ben Ali regime. Nidal described his thinking at the time: “In Bosnia, if I get killed, if a bullet strikes me in the head, then that’s it. My family will hear about it, and they will cry, but it will be over and I will be gone. But if I am in Tunisia, it is much worse. So you’re between the hammer and the anvil [*bayn al-maṭraq wal-sindān*].”

As a refugee, Nidal would be regarded by many as an archetypal example of bare humanity stripped of all political belonging (Agamben 1998; Arendt 1968). But he was also very vocal in articulating an alternative, if overlapping,

vision of world politics. He had strong political and religious views not only on the importance of solidarity between Muslims but also of standing up for humanity. Like supporters of humanitarian intervention in the West, Nidal rejected any notion of neutrality in the face of mass atrocity. “If you see some injustice occurring in front of you and you just stand by and watch,” he said, “you are participating.” For Nidal, the actions of the International Community were unconscionable: fruitless visits by the UN secretary-general while an arms embargo effectively prevented Bosnian Muslims from overcoming their disadvantage in weaponry and defending themselves. Although he did not participate in the jihad, Nidal defended those who did, since they were at least trying to rectify the situation. And while Nidal was emphatic in framing this duty to help in broad terms not specific to Muslims, the source of the duty was deeply rooted in his faith. “On Judgment Day,” he said, “I won’t be asked by God, Why did you *do nothing* to stop the killing of this person? I will instead be asked, Why did *you* kill this person? Because when you fail to act, that is the same as participation.”

Nidal fled Italy by joining an aid convoy that entered Bosnia in late 1994 and working for a variety of pan-Islamic aid organizations. By day, he distributed aid to locals; by night, he slept in his employers’ warehouses and offices. Nidal married a Bosnian woman he met who was participating in one of the training courses offered by an NGO where he was working. He left aid work as soon as the war ended and settled in his wife’s village to farm and peddle vegetables in his new country. After 2001 the United States pressured Bosnia to deport Arabs deemed suspicious—even those with Bosnian spouses and children—and Nidal began facing legal troubles. His identity documents expired, and he lodged an asylum appeal. Once that was rejected, Nidal paid smugglers who got him all the way to the Gare du Nord train station in Paris, where he was stopped and detained for 40 days before being released. Nidal lived without papers for another 11 months before gaining asylum from the French authorities. When we met, he was working as a plumber and making decent wages, and his family had been able to join him in Paris. Even with so many years of tribulations having passed since the war, his reflections were earnest and fresh, and he brooked no regrets: for Nidal, aid work was not only a hustle to support himself while on the move, but also, self-evidently, another way to support fellow Muslims and to take up tasks that the International Community was failing to perform.

Around the world in 80 clicks

Nidal’s peregrinations as a refugee, humanitarian, and refugee highlight the circuits of mobility that make possible certain universalist projects. But equal attention must be

paid to the processes by which universalist projects attempt to realize themselves within the local. These processes can be appreciated by looking at Arab aid workers who stayed, married, and acquired Bosnian citizenship, occupying categories of local and foreign at once. In contrast to humanitarian organizations that tend to stress detachment from local forms of sociality through ideologies of neutrality and rapid turnover of expatriate staff, the universalist projects studied here built atop masculinized forms of mobility that valorize marriage and child rearing, even establishing kinship relations with those who are being helped. Kinship is what allows these aid workers to appear more “grounded” and accountable to local contexts even as they explicitly call out to more distant horizons.

Marriage was especially important, but my ethnographic approach to the subject was necessarily oblique, given the gender segregation norms that structured my research experiences. Since I was a nonkin male, my encounters with Bosnian women married to my interlocutors were usually limited to the polite exchange of pleasantries. Nevertheless, women were undeniably central to universalist practices of pan-Islamic aid work. The aid workers I knew all regarded their wives as their most important teachers in the Bosnian language and local customs. In many cases marrying a Bosnian woman provided the legal basis for naturalization—in contrast to countries in the Arab region, which tend to allow naturalization only through marriage to men.

For the Arab-Bosnian families that stayed in the country, Islamic NGOs were one of the major sources of men’s employment. One aid worker I visited several times was Rida, an Algerian employed by an Islamic NGO based in western Europe. Rida had the longest and most consistent professional record in pan-Islamic solidarity aid of anyone I knew in Bosnia. I cannot name the city where he lives because to do so would identify him, given its small size and the tiny number of Arabs residing there. Rida had been in Bosnia for over 15 years when we first met, had a Bosnian family, and spoke the local language fluently. During my visits, I would sometimes accompany Rida on his rounds as part of his work, collecting applications for microcredit loans and running assorted errands, especially distributing meat to families during the *bajram* (Eid) holidays. In these encounters, he ably performed both insidership and outsidership, as required by any effective universalist project: as an Arab, he had the benefit of the doubt as a kind of presumptively idealized Muslim subject. But he was also someone who had settled into the context and was well known throughout the town. And like other locals, he had his complaints. On days when he was driving and grumpy, Rida would complain about people’s lack of road etiquette: failures to signal turns, insisting on seizing the right of way, and so on. These signs of inconsiderate behavior reminded him of the reckless driving behaviors he attributed to the Saudi

aid workers he knew during the war and who were “not civilized” (*laysa ḥaḍarī*).

After Rida’s rounds in the town, we would invariably end up at his modest home down the road from the large concrete mosque built after the war with donations from the Gulf. One of Rida’s favorite habits was to explore satellite maps of the world using Google Earth on his desktop computer. We showed each other our respective childhood hometowns in northeastern Algeria and the northeastern United States and other places we had visited. Outside the Balkans, the only place both of us had been to was Peshawar, Pakistan, and the computer helped us remember its layout together. Peshawar is a major city near the Afghan border; as such, it became a hub for aid workers, journalists, diplomats, researchers, and spies from the 1980s onward. In the early 1990s Rida spent more than two years working in Peshawar at a school for Afghan orphans run by a Saudi-funded NGO. Rida delighted in showing me the school’s location, scrolling past Peshawar landmarks such as Board Bazar and Nasir Bagh road, and I would in turn zoom in on the hostels where I had stayed during my visits.

Rida continued his Google Earth-enabled narrative of his peregrinations. By the spring of 1993, Pakistan was cracking down on Arab expatriates in Peshawar, suspecting them of involvement with jihad groups, especially in Egypt and Algeria. Rida was eager to leave, and the former Yugoslav countries were among the few states that would allow him entry without a visa. One of the other Arab-run Islamic NGOs in Peshawar hired Rida to open an office in Zagreb, Croatia, where many organizations assisting Bosnians could operate in relative safety. But Rida quit after a month because he was working for only room and board, not a salary, as he had been promised. He spent the next few years in Zagreb shuttling between the offices of the two major Saudi NGOs, IIRO and SHC, looking for the best opportunity to get a stable residence permit so he would not have to go back to Algeria. He finally entered Bosnia in 1994 to work for a newly established SHC provincial office. This was where he met his wife and settled down. After the SHC closed that branch a few years later, Rida worked for a series of pan-Islamic NGOs, distributing aid to orphans, teaching in schools, and processing microcredit applications.

One day when I came to visit in 2010, Rida came to meet me at the bus station and excitedly told me about a telephone interview he had a few days earlier with headquarters about possibly deploying to Haiti for a three-month rotation. Nearly a year after the enormous earthquake that had devastated the island, the NGO Rida worked for was still scrambling to mobilize experienced personnel from its offices around the world. Rida wasn’t sure how the conversation went, especially the questions about the depth of his logistics experience. He said the interview had been cut short by the Friday noontime prayers, and headquarters still hadn’t followed up on the promise to call him

back and complete the discussion. He also complained that they had postponed following up several times, on ever-thinner pretexts.

I asked Rida what he hoped to get out of the Haiti job. Would it pay more, for example? He shrugged and said he hadn’t even asked about the money: the job’s appeal was mostly that it would provide him a new and different experience, the chance to see someplace new. Here, the aspirational aspects of universalism were especially salient: the fact that most of the NGO’s beneficiaries in Haiti were not Muslim was immaterial to the organization’s vistas and to Rida’s interest in the job. As we spoke, Rida opened the Outlook email program on his computer and idly showed me the emails about scheduling the interviews, pointing out the diversity of the employees. One had a Japanese name, and he presumed this was one of the organization’s many non-Muslim staffers. As we watched television over tea with his children scurrying in and out of the room—Rida was especially partial to shows about nature—his mind kept returning to Haiti. He was expecting a delivery of coal for his furnace, which would be needed to keep the house warm for the coming winter. He wanted to make sure that it was stored properly for his family to use in case he had to leave, and he calculated that he may need to hire a friend to help.

Rida’s longing for a sense of mobility was palpable. He hoped to migrate in search of new opportunities elsewhere, but his options were very limited. Deindustrialization made for a seemingly barren landscape, as many young single people left the country to work elsewhere (Kurtović 2020). Returning to Algeria seemed unappealing, since Rida’s wife and children spoke only rudimentary Arabic. Even staying in his position was become increasingly difficult. As the 2000s wore on, international interest in Bosnia waned and NGO budgets shrank, including those of Islamic aid groups. Rida watched as coworkers were let go and his own situation diminished; his salary flatlined even as his family needs grew and his seniority increased. After a certain point, Rida was told that he was not needed in the office any more. Instead, he was directed to focus exclusively on handling microcredit loans—a job that would require him to visit and meet with beneficiaries throughout the town. But he was no longer allowed to use the NGO’s automobile and would have to get around at his own expense.

The frustrated experiences of mobility—spatial, material, and otherwise—were hard on Rida. He constantly turned to his faith to put things in perspective, including through technological forms of mediation not dissimilar from the ones he used for making sense of geography and cultural distance. A YouTube video Rida liked to watch and showed me more than once followed a person in a field. The camera quickly zoomed out by orders of magnitude, moving from scales of a person, a town, country, continent, planet, solar system, and galaxy in a matter of minutes, only to then magnify all the way back to the microscopic level of

cells, molecules, atoms, and subatomic particles. For Rida, the fact that our daily troubles coexist with enormously different scales is a reminder of humanity's ultimately minor place in a divine order—that, in the words of a verse from the Qur'ān he pointed out to me, “the life of this world is but amusement and diversion and adornment and boasting ... [and] the enjoyment of delusion” (57:20). Although neither the YouTube video nor Google Earth was necessarily created with divine aims in mind, for Rida the ocular scalability of these technologies made them obvious vehicles for spiritual reflection as well as for cultivating the sensibilities of a universalist project.

Rida's situation was a paradoxical one: as the sole foreigner in the office, he found himself increasingly isolated from his Bosnian coworkers. Yet it was this foreignness that made him valuable enough to assign him with one of the more public-facing tasks: in dealing with Bosnian Muslim beneficiaries, it was Rida's Arabness—as well as his groundedness in the local context, including command of the Bosnian language—that embodied a kind of Islamic idiom giving shape to the NGO's universalist aspirations. At the same time, he was greatly constrained by global regimes of racialized mobility, unlike Internationals with Western passports who could cross borders at will, return home, or explore new lands, earning them the label “expatriate.” Rida was arguably more grounded and more accountable to the local community than that of most Western aid workers—indeed, he was relatively precarious and vulnerable. Unsurprisingly, Rida never went to Haiti.

Altruist, terrorist

Understanding pan-Islamic aid as a type of universalist activity requires a return to a dilemma raised earlier: the nexus of suspicion tying aid work to jihad. The accusation that Islamic aid groups merely provide cover for jihad is undoubtedly inflected by anti-Muslim animus. But it is also a reminder of the ideological work performed by the notion that military and humanitarian functions should be strictly separated. In this light, exploring the intersection between pan-Islamic aid and jihad is an occasion to reckon with the necessarily ambiguous relationship with violence that *all* universalisms must cultivate. On the one hand, universalisms disclaim the need for violence because they present their ideals as self-evidently appealing and requiring no coercion to prevail; on the other hand, universalisms cannot dispense with violence because the ideals they present, if they are so compelling, must also justify resort to arms to defend them.

Since the 1990s, a significant and wide-ranging body of scholarship has explored the mutual entailments between humanitarianism and violence in what are often shared projects of governance (Grewal 2017; Pandolfi 2003; Rancière 1999, 123–40). Although various attempts by the US

military to co-opt aid organizations have sparked vociferous pushback, some level of basic coordination is difficult to avoid in practice (Duffield 2001). And while aid groups' efforts to preserve their independence are salutary, they also belie humanitarianism's deep genealogical entanglements with warfare (Asad 2015) and gendered histories of ideas of innocence and violence (Kinsella 2011). This separation between the humanitarian and the military is based on a fundamental tenet of international law, the distinction between combatants (who can lawfully kill and be intentionally killed) and civilians (who cannot kill and whose deaths are lawful only when described as incidental). The distinction between violence and humanitarianism has been naturalized and sanctified against a backdrop of various state-sponsored institutional formations. In this vein, one of the world's best-known humanitarian organizations, the International Committee of the Red Cross, has two primary functions: (1) to deliver aid and other humanitarian services and (2) to elaborate and revise international rules that calibrate and regulate the violence of warfare.

The relationship between aid and jihad is also an opportunity to reconsider the relationship between universalist projects and violence beyond the notion of governance. For a segment of those engaged in pan-Islamic solidarity—especially during the pre-9/11 era in the shadow of the US-supported jihad in Afghanistan—both aid work and military assistance were potentially valid forms of solidarity, means to similar ends. This contrasts with governments like that of the United States, which maintain separate military and aid apparatuses and wield both with maximum flexibility. In both cases, an appeal to humanity may be connected to violence, but only one has the luxury to selectively invoke a norm such as neutrality.

At the individual level, the ambiguous overlap between armed and unarmed forms of solidarity was shaped by material and nonmaterial forms of constraint. These issues arose in my conversations with Hasan, an Algerian I met while conducting fieldwork in an immigration detention center outside Sarajevo, which I visited as an unpaid consultant for a local human rights organization. An affable man with a Salafi beard, Hasan was appealing the revocation of his Bosnian citizenship, which was taken away as part of the general post-War on Terror crackdown on suspicious Arabs. He later won his case and was able to leave the center, but without having resolved his citizenship status. In the meantime Hasan supported himself through very different kinds of informal repair work: fixing computers and practicing therapeutic blood-cupping (*al-hijāma*), which catered to Muslim and non-Muslim customers alike in a budding local market for “Islamic” healing (Jašarević 2017, 260–66). Our conversations continued over the following months in the new shopping malls popping up all over Sarajevo.

Hasan's trajectory resembled those of my other interlocutors. He completed university studies in Algeria in the early 1990s as the civil war there broke out. He went on pilgrimage to Saudi Arabia and sought out ways to avoid going home. After a brief stint teaching in Peshawar at a school run by a Jeddah-based Islamic NGO, Hasan returned to the kingdom and worked without a permit as a market peddler before finding a job with the SHC. He traveled to Zenica, a city in central Bosnia, to open a field office, and like the other men featured in this article, he moved from one pan-Islamic NGO to another, dissatisfied with his conditions of employment. With further travel threatened by the deteriorating situation, Hasan joined the Bosnian army. In a conflict zone, armies and aid groups were among the few institutions that could provide protection and a sense of purpose—this was especially the case for migrants like Hasan, who could not rely on the familial and other social networks that Bosnians used to share resources and alleviate burdens in the wartime environment. Being attached to the army carried other material benefits, such as steadier access to food.

Hasan's choice to join the Bosnian army was also a decision to engage in jihad. He chose an unusual unit, one that self-identified as Islamic and encouraged prayer and other forms of piety. This contrasted sharply with most of the army, in which attitudes toward religious practice could be lax or even irreverent. The unit was composed of several hundred men and included about a dozen or so Arabs who played an important role as mascots for pan-Islamic solidarity. Its commander was an imam who had studied at al-Azhar University in Cairo and was fluent in Arabic, so he could communicate easily with the foreign volunteers. So like the UN peacekeepers in Bosnia, the unit boasted diverse nationalities to underline its commitment to universalism (it also fought as part of an army that was avowedly multiconfessional and included non-Muslims); but unlike the peacekeepers, the unit pursued jihad as an explicitly partisan endeavor, and it was integrated into one of the warring armies.

Despite joining the jihad, however, Hasan saw little change in his day-to-day work. Drawing from his experience, contacts, and language skills, he worked as a liaison with foreign Islamic NGOs to obtain relief supplies, such as children's clothing, soap, and the like. Some of these goods were consumed by the soldiers themselves; others were given to local civilians. These charities did not exclude the Bosnian army from its definition of humanitarian relief or aid.¹¹ It seems that not only could fighters become aid workers, but they could also become aid recipients—contrary to international humanitarianism law, which permits the starvation of enemy armed forces as a method of warfare.

Hasan had come full circle, moving from an NGO that provided the army with food to an army unit that requested

food from NGOs. By crossing from the patron side to the client side of the aid relationship, he secured an upgrade in his own status. When I pointed out that he had left two successive jobs because of salary disputes and now found himself being paid nothing at all, Hasan smiled. "Look," he said, "when I was in Bosnia, I wanted to get something financially, but I also wanted to help the people there." The issue was one of fairness and keeping promises: better to work for free fighting in jihad without expecting a salary than to be cheated out of duly promised compensation. Whether in carrying a rifle or handing out sacks of flour, Hasan insisted that he was seeking both to support himself and to serve God and fellow Muslims alike.

Universalism and solidarity

Through an ethnography of Arab migrants working in pan-Islamic NGOs in Bosnia, I have sketched an anthropological conceptualization of universalism. Whereas universalism is often conceptualized as moving from the West to the rest, this ethnography highlights multicentric patterns of transregional migration; whereas the avatars of universalism are often seen as white, privileged, and mobile, the protagonists here are racialized as nonwhite, precarious, and heavily surveilled; and whereas universalist projects in a humanitarian idiom exercise violence as a form of intervention, others may operate from an orientation of solidarity. To conceptualize universalism I have tried to illuminate parallels between pan-Islamic aid and its better-known Western counterparts, yet the practice of solidarity remains a key area of difference. At the same time, solidarity is hardly the exclusive property of pan-Islamism, as socialist and anarchist traditions show quite well (Hong 2015; Nunan 2016; Razsa 2015; van Dijk 2019). Some reflection on solidarity is helpful in light of the resurgent interest in diverse forms of political connection captioned under terms such as *solidarity*, *allyship*, and *accomplicehood*.

If we recall etymological traces of Latin notions of solidity (*solidum*) and, further back, soil (*solum*) (Anidjar 2020), we can think of solidarity as a way of *sticking together* while *standing one's own ground*. This sense of mutual responsibility, or even shared liability, is also apparent in the morphology of the Arabic term often used to translate solidarity, *al-taḍāmun*. At the same time, mutuality must be carefully distinguished from transactionalism as well as from pure beneficence, lest feelings of misplaced obligation arise (Rozakou 2016). In this context, aid defies the logic of both commodity and gift. Also helpful here is the notion of ground—by standing one's own ground, those engaged in solidarity presuppose and draw strength from heterogeneity. Similarly, Roseann Liu and Savannah Shange evoke a "thick solidarity" that recognizes specificity and incommensurability and operates "despite never being able to fully understand or fully share in the experience"

(Liu and Shange 2018, 190) of others. Solidarity cannot come from a nonplace; rather it requires brutally honest assessments of where and how one stands in diverse forms of relation to others.

This conceptualization of solidarity overlaps with the approach to universalism outlined in this article. Universalism and solidarity both require recognizing and working with difference rather than erasing it. Universalism, however, explicitly speaks to all of humanity—even if, in Islamic idioms, it is to evoke a shared human duty to the divine (Mittermaier 2019)—while solidarity may or may not. Similarly, not every universalism accepts the logic of mutual-ity underlying solidarity. The pan-Islamic aid efforts reconstructed in this article strove to be both solidaristic and universalist. The Western-led International Community, on the other hand, tended to pursue universalism under a rubric of humanitarian neutrality over solidarity. Finally, solidarity without universalism is also possible and indeed ever more apparent in the language of reemergent fascist projects (Cabot 2016, 158).¹²

As the decades-long post-Cold War hangover has receded in favor of more open political possibilities, transnational linkages between movements on both the Left and Right have assumed greater prominence. Precisely because it does not comfortably fit into either category, pan-Islamic activism is helpful for illuminating shared dilemmas and parallel debates. Pan-Islamic solidarity activism, in both armed and unarmed forms, has been widely demonized as terroristic—but even putting aside sensationalism and animus, important concerns persist over questions of accountability and sensitivity to the needs and concerns of Muslim communities it has purported to help. Yet despite these very real problems, it is noteworthy that in the decades since the Cold War, pan-Islamic activism has been a major—if misrecognized—site for transnational solidarity organizing, and one that has arguably had an impact comparable to that of activist movements operating in leftist idioms. And it has done so while engaging with the challenges and dangers of armed action. For these reasons alone, pan-Islamic solidarity is worthy of careful attention beyond the dichotomy of demonization and apologia. Whatever universalist projects and solidarity movements one chooses to study, however, a key task for anthropology is to caution against canonizing texts or leaders and to promote the understanding of frictions, contestations, and the everyday labors and failings that enable connection.

Notes

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1. The terms *International* and *International Community* are capitalized here to reflect their habitual appearance as proper nouns in Bosnia and in other sites of armed conflict that have been governed by international institutions.

2. All translations in this article from Arabic texts and interviews are my own.

3. All interlocutors in this article are pseudonymous.

4. In this sense, the common term *Islamist* connotes that one believes state governance should, in some sense, be conducted according to Islamic values. One can support pan-Islamic solidarity without being an Islamist and vice versa, although in practice the two categories frequently overlap.

5. Discussions of universalism more often take Islam as such as their category of analysis (Kilani 2012), especially in international law scholarship, which has its own normative preoccupations with universalism (Afsah 2008; March and Modirzadeh 2013).

6. Although Tsing's (2005, 236–37) powerful theorization of universalism in *Friction* takes place in Indonesia, the world's largest Muslim-majority society, the references to Islam are strikingly brief and tentative.

7. My own time spent at the Saudi cultural center on the outskirts of Sarajevo, a major site of anxieties over Bosnian Islam's "Arabization," similarly belied popular perceptions that women are welcomed only if they wear headscarves.

8. Rhea Rahman's (2017) ethnography of the UK-based transnational organization Islamic Relief illustrates how the organization adheres to a mandate of humanitarian impartiality grounded in a spiritual commitment to human equality before the divine, even as many of its pious Muslim donors heavily favor giving to other pious Muslims. This is because donors and some aid workers derive spiritual benefit from the prayers and thanks of beneficiaries, which they believe cannot come from helping non-Muslims (Rahman 2017).

9. In this sense, the emphasis on idiom as an interlocking and historically embedded set of ideas differs slightly in emphasis from the approach to universalism proffered by Tsing (2005, 227–38), an approach that tends to present universals as general ideas (freedom, knowledge, prosperity) or as very specific "charismatic packages" of allegorical models that shuttle between contexts.

10. Prosecutor v. Rasim Delić, IT-04-83, Trial Exhibit 678 (Mar. 30, 2009), <http://icr.icty.org/Exe/ZyNET.exe/200016ID3J.txt?ZyActionD=ZyDocument&Client=LegalRefB&Index=ExhibitB&Docs=&Query=&Time=&EndTime=&SearchMethod=&TocRestrict=&Toc=&TocEntry=&QField=DocumentId%5E2000283094&QFieldYear=&QFieldMonth=&QFieldDay=&UseQField=DocumentId&IntQFieldOp=0&ExtQFieldOp=0&XmlQuery=&File=E%3A%5CLEGAL%5FREF%5CBATCHSTORE%5CEXHIBIT%5CBCS%5CEXPORTEDEXHIBIT%5C0000002F%5C200016ID3J.txt&User=ANONYMOUS&Password=ANONYMOUS&SortMethod=&MaximumDocuments=0&FuzzyDegree=1&ImageQuality=r85g16/r85g16/x150y150g16/i500&Display=hpfrw&DefSeekPage=f&SearchBack=ZyActionL&Back=ZyActionS&BackDesc=Results%20page>.

11. Among the Qur'ān's enumerated categories of people who may receive zakat, there are those "in God's path [*fī sabīl illāh*]" (9:60), an expression commonly associated with jihad fighters.

12. That being said, fascist projects can theoretically be universalist. It is of course an altogether different matter whether their universalist visions are well developed or likely to appeal to those excluded from their favored communities.

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