Master Thesis

Religion, spirituality and psychosocial support activities

to people affected by a humanitarian crisis:

the role of faith-based organizations.

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Abstract

Religion and spirituality are important factors in most people's lives around the globe. For many of them, their religion and spirituality determine the way they see the world and perceive what happen to them. It means that many victims of humanitarian crises will very likely feel religious or spiritual. Therefore, non-governmental organizations, faith-based or not, will have to deal with these affiliations when they deliver humanitarian aid, including psychosocial support. This research aims to give a better understanding of the role of faith-based organizations in delivering psychosocial support to people affected by humanitarian crises by analyzing the relation between religion and spirituality, and the psychological wellbeing of people affected by such crises. In order to shed light on this, the research explores the effects of psychosocial support activities with a religious or spiritual component on the psychological wellbeing and clarifies the role of faith-based organizations in delivering psychosocial support to people affected by humanitarian crises. Data were collected through the interviews of six humanitarian workers from different organizations and involved in psychosocial support. The principal results of the analysis show that faith-based organizations can have a positive role in providing psychosocial support activities to people affected by humanitarian crises and that religion and spirituality have their place in psychosocial support activities because they can positively affect the psychosocial recovery of people affected by a humanitarian crisis.

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1. Introduction

With more than 80% of the world population identifying themselves with a religious group in 2010 (Pew research Center, 2012), religion is an important factor in most people's lives around the globe. For many believers, their religion determines the way they see the world and the way they perceive what happens to them. It is one element on which they base their individual and social behavior (Walker, Mazurana, Warren, Scarlett, & Louis, 2012). It means that many victims of humanitarian crises will very likely identify themselves with a religious group. Therefore, non-governmental organizations, faith-based or not, will have to deal with these affiliations when they deliver humanitarian aid.

Furthermore, experiencing a humanitarian crisis can deeply affect people's psychological wellbeing and mental health, and these "tragic events often stimulate religious and spiritual expressions" (Harper & Pargament, 2015, p. 350). Some studies, not specific to humanitarian crises, have shown that faith has a positive impact on the resilience and recovery of people and even that "faith coping predicts recovery from trauma and crisis above and beyond the effects of secular coping measures" (Bosworth, Park, McQuoid, Hays, & Steffens, 2003 cited in Walker et al., 2012, p.120). However, religious coping mechanisms can also have negative effects on the psychological wellbeing of people (Gall & Guirguis-Younger, 2013). Integrating a faith aspect in psychosocial support activities after humanitarian crises is relevant, as "religion and spirituality are often embedded within multiple aspects of the posttraumatic recovery process, including the ways in which people understand crises, the methods they select to cope with adversity, and the short- and long-term outcomes of trauma" (Harper & Pargament, 2015, p. 363).

Finally, when a humanitarian crisis strikes, States become weaker and some cannot take their responsibilities in terms of relief and social services. It is likely that affected people will seek help in their traditional community and religious infrastructures, which will give them a greater feeling of security (Act Alliance, n.d.-c). It is especially true when religion is a big part of people's identity (Hoffstaedter, 2011). Similarly, Thomas (2005) argues that people living in poor communities would tend to trust more their religious leaders and faith-based organizations (FBOs) than their own corrupted government, the public administration and even secular organizations. Moreover, this is particularly true when the government having to face a complex crisis

is weak and tends to turn to the private sector, including religious actors in order to provide the basic services (Lipsky, 2011).

Based on the assessment of the importance of religious and spiritual actors after a humanitarian crisis and their possible role in psychosocial support, the following question, which constitutes the basis of this thesis can be raised: **what is the role of faith-based organizations in providing psychosocial support activities to people affected by humanitarian crises?** Addressing this research question implies answering three sub-questions: what is the relationship between religion and psychological wellbeing of people affected by humanitarian crises?; what are the effects of psychosocial support activities with a religious component on the psychological wellbeing of people affected by humanitarian crises?; How is religion integrated (or not) into psychosocial support activities by humanitarian organizations and specifically by faith-based organizations?

In order to answer those questions, the second section of this thesis will try to provide an overview of the existing academic literature on the relationship between religion and spirituality with psychosocial support, as well as faith-based organizations. It will be followed by the presentation of the research design that was used to develop this master thesis. The fourth section will then detail the results of the interviews and received answers from humanitarian workers. Following that, the results that were highlighted in the first part of this section will be discussed. Finally, the conclusion will summarize the main points of this research before outlining some recommendations and giving some leads for future research.

2. Literature review

2.1.1. Religion and Spirituality

'Religion' and 'spirituality' are two concepts which will be largely referred to in this thesis. Hence, trying to grasp their meaning stands out as a priority, even though there is no commonly accepted definition of those concepts. It is especially true for 'religion'.

Acknowledging the debate[1] around the definition of 'religion', it still seemed important to mention the definitions in current use in psychology and humanitarian aid, because this thesis will partially refer to literature from the psychology and humanitarian fields and the people who were interviewed for this thesis come from these two fields. However, it is important to keep in mind that these definitions are considered simplistic and reductionist from a religious studies perspective and that they can lead to a certain stigmatization of people's beliefs and practices. Moreover, these definitions do not always tally with the way the word 'religion' is used in social life, but again, it is essential to mention the way psychology scholars, as well as humanitarian scholars and workers, use this term in practice.

In psychology, religion can be defined as "the search for significance that occurs within the context of established institutions that are designed to facilitate spirituality" (Pargament, Mahoney, Exline, & Shafranske, 2013, p. 15). This definition mentions spirituality and raises the question of its definition. According to Loewenthal (2013), "spirituality refers to beliefs, practices, relationships, or experiences having to do with the sacred that are not necessarily linked to established institutionalized systems" (p. 239). Spirituality would then be:

> a process, a *search* for the sacred that evolves and changes over the course
> of life (…). This definition of spirituality rests on the assumption that people
> are motivated to discover something sacred in their lives, hold on to or

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[1] A vivid debate is taking place in the academic world regarding whether or not religion is something definable and, if it is, how it can be best defined. Two trends are prominent in this debate. The first one is the scholars' attempt to define religion, and a regular conclusion is that it is not possible. The second trend questions the existence of the category of religion itself and points out its construction (Lindenberg, 2009). For instance, Smith (1982) claims that religion is an academic construct that was only created for 'analytic purpose' and Asad (1993) argues that religion, as a historical category, emerged in Western societies before growing to an universal concept. To sum it up, this debate is in a deadlock and the category of religion itself is questioned by many scholars. As written by von Stuckrad (2010), "it has become almost a truism that definitions of religion are scholarly constructs that have a place and a function in a cultural, political, and academic context" (p. 157).

conserve a relationship with the sacred, and when necessary, transform their understanding of the sacred (Pargament, 2013, p. 260).

Following that definition, the term sacred also has to be clarified:

[It] refers not only to concepts of higher powers and God but also to other significant objects that take on spiritual character and meaning by virtue of their association with the divine (Pargament & Mahoney, 2005 cited in Pargament, 2013, p.259).

In this respect, spirituality can be related to a god or a "religious holy source" but does not have to (Ahmadi, 2006, p.72 cited in Ahmadi & Ahmadi, 2017, p.275). Indeed, it can be "experienced without faith, myths, legends, founding superpersonalities, and superstition and that can be practiced both in a religious context and outside the religious sphere" (N. Ahmadi & Ahmadi, 2017, p. 175). Accordingly, spirituality is "more universal concept that makes it accessible to all people who do not follow religious beliefs but have a desire to develop a positive approach to transcendence and their life" (Krok, 2008, p. 644).

Owing to these elements, it is easily understandable that religion and spirituality are often used interchangeably in the field of psychology (Bowland, Biswas, Kyriakakis, & Edmond, 2011). Both have "the sacred as a valued destination" (Harper & Pargament, 2015, p. 351), but whereas religion includes rituals and religious practices, spirituality is related to a state of wellbeing (Onyango et al., 2011, p. 64). The two concepts overlap but are distinctive. In order to sort this issue, it can be observed that the term 'faith' is more and more employed to name the overlap between religion and spirituality, but like religion, its European-Western origins have also to be acknowledged (Walker et al., 2012). However, it appears that the term 'religion' is still widely used by development and humanitarian scholars and actors as an umbrella term. In this literature review, the different terms will be used as the cited authors mention them in their articles, reports or books.

2.1.2. Faith-based organizations in development and humanitarian aid

This research will essentially focus on the work of faith-based organizations, drawing on the work of scholars that have started researching about them for less than two decades. Before going thoroughly into this topic, it seemed important to first clarify what the concept of faith-based organization means. Many different definitions of faith-based organizations exist and it is usually used as an umbrella concept. The definition that seems to suit best this research is that of Berger (2003) that is inspired by Martens (2002)'s definition of non-governmental organizations. Berger (2003) defines FBOs as "formal organizations whose identity and mission are self-consciously derived from the teachings of one or more religious or spiritual traditions and which operates on a nonprofit, independent, voluntary basis to promote and realize collectively articulated ideas about the public good at the national or international level" (p. 1). This definition was selected because it does not restrict FBOs to religion but opens the possibility of including organizations based on spirituality. Moreover, it also shows the multi-religious/spiritual nature of some FBOs.

Since the nineties, there has been an increase in the number of FBOs, as it can be observed through the development of FBOs's engagement in the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). A 2010 estimation by Petersen (2010) shows that out of the 3.183 NGOs with a consultative status at the ECOSOC, 320, or 10,1%, can be considered as faith-based. As shown by the following table, most of the 320 FBOs are Christian. Jewish FBOs are also over-represented in comparison with the worldwide population adhering to Judaism, on the contrary of Muslims, Hindus and Buddhists FBOs. It is interesting to note that Petersen (2010) included "spiritual" as a religious affiliation, recognizing the fact that FBOs do not necessarily derive their inspiration from what is generally called "world religions"[2]. In her study, Petersen (2010) explains that most of these 320 FBOs mention religion as a source of inspiration and motivation for their work.

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[2] The concept of "world religions" is highly debatable. This is the reason why quotations marks are used here. To learn more about this debate, please see for example:

Masuzawa, T. (2005). *The Invention of World Religions: Or, How European Universalism Was Preserved in the Language of Pluralism*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Religious affiliation (Petersen, 2010)	Number of FBOs at the ECOSOC (Petersen, 2010)	Percentage of FBOs at the ECOSOC (Petersen, 2010)	Percentage of the world population affiliated to this religion (Pew research Center, 2012)
Christians	187	58,4%	31,5%
Muslims	52	16,3%	23,2%
Jews	22	6,9%	0,2%
Buddhists	14	4,4%	7,1%
Hindus	3	0.9%	15%
Spirituals	25	7.8%	/
Multireligious	11	3.4%	/
Other religions	6	1.9%	6,7%[3]
Total	320	100%	83,7%[4]

This table also reflects the trend outside the ECOSOC. Indeed, in the nineties, the number of FBOs was lower than today and they were almost exclusively Christians. Since then, their number keeps increasing and they are more and more diversified in terms of religious affiliations. G. Clarke (2006) and De Cordier (2009) give two different explanations of this evolution. According to G. Clarke (2006), globalization and social changes would have opened an increasing space for religion and consequently for FBOs working in development and humanitarian aid. The second explanation is linked with the growing immigration to Euro-American countries during the last decades. These countries have become more multicultural and multireligious and the newcomers have developed multiple identities by adapting to the culture of their new country, as well as keeping the relationships and the culture from their country of origin. Those people would then have decided to set up NGOs in relation with their original cultural and religious identity in order to offer an alternative to Christian or secular NGOs and to help the people in need who stayed in their country of origin. These two explanations should be considered as complementary and not mutually exclusive.

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[3] In order to match the definition of "other religions" of Petersen (2010), the categories of "Folk Regionists" (5,9%) et "other religions" (0,8%) of the Pew research Center (2012) were merged together.
[4] The total does not reach 100% here because according to the Pew research Center (2012), 16,3% of world population is not affiliated with one religion.

FBOs are working worldwide and in some countries, like Benin for example, they would be the most widespread and visible type of NGOs (Narayan, Patel, Schafft, Rademacher, & Koch-Schulte, 2000). According to many authors, as G. Clarke (2007); Karam (2010); Lipsky (2011); Mcleigh (2011); Nwaiwu (2011); Tadros (2011), FBOs would manage from 30 to 70% of healthcare and education in sub-Saharan Africa. Though they agree with those taken into account by international institutions like WHO and UNPD, these percentages have to be considered with due caution, since, as explained by Wodon (2015), those estimates lack empirical evidence. Yet it is safe to say that an important part of healthcare and education is managed by religious organizations in that region.

The growing significance of FBOs can also be observed through their budgets. In 2006, Clarke wrote that four of the biggest FBOs had a combined annual revenue of 2.5 billion USD, approximately the annual budget of DFID for that same year. A 2006 Boston Globe investigation showed that funds granted by USAID to FBOs doubled during the Bush administration, rising from 10% to 20% for a total of 1.7 billion USD (Boston Globe, 2006). This reflects the increase in the funds received by FBOs from donors that are "in some instances choosing to favor them over 'secular' organizations" (Tomalin, 2013, p. 205).

All these elements showing the evolution and expanding implication of FBOs in humanitarian aid substantiate the relevance of analyzing the work of such actors. However, to better apprehend them, it is of the foremost importance to understand the possible role that this "faith part" can play within an organization. Indeed, faith is a more or less essential part of a faith-based organization. Therefore, it is important to understand the role that faith can play within an organization. McGinnis (2011) identified six ways religious doctrines or beliefs can impact FBOs:

> mission goals of program are shaped by religious doctrine or beliefs, content of service program includes religious rituals and/or stories, intended beneficiaries are co-religionists or are targeted for conversion, reliance on financial support from religious organizations and/or donors, implemented by hired staff or volunteers from a religious community, religious specialists are managers or form majority of oversight board (McGinnis, 2011, p. 4).

As highlighted by these six ways of influence, religious doctrines and beliefs can be present in a FBOs in a lot of different forms. They cannot be all experienced by a FBO.

Finally, it is worth noting that the elements put forward by McGinnis (2011) are slightly reductive in a religious studies perspective, as he based his assumptions on FBOs that derive their inspiration from an institutionalized form of religion.

Faith-based and secular organizations

Faith-based organizations are usually opposed to secular organizations. Before going into the details of that dichotomy, it is important to highlight a few elements regarding secularism. Secularism, as a political doctrine, has been the dominant thesis in Euro-American societies over the last decades and is not an universal doctrine (Asad, 2003). According to A. Ager and Ager (2011), secularism is no longer accurate, especially in humanitarianism. They explain it by the fact that religion plays an important role in the life of beneficiaries of development and humanitarian aid. It is particularly true because most of these humanitarian crises happen in contexts where secularism percolates only little into public discourses, whereas the NGOs' headquarters mainly operate in Europe and North America. Moreover, secularism is a typical Euro-American ideology and actually never thrived in many countries (Holenstein, 2010).

Bender and Klassen (2010) stress that the idea underlying secularism is the attainment of neutrality, but neutrality is not achieved, since secularism promotes an ideology over another. Indeed, they explain that secularism should set the conditions in which pluralism and the multiplicity of ideologies could cohabit. However, as emphasized by A. Ager and Ager (2011), secularism in humanitarianism does not manage different belief systems but is on the contrary a mechanism promoting the belief that religion has not its place in humanitarianism. They claim that the dominance of secularism in humanitarian action marginalizes religious practices and beliefs. As a result, it would not recognize the importance of religious beliefs and what comes with it by not allowing a space for those beliefs to be expressed and considered (Moyer, Sinclair, & Spaling, 2012). This is particularly true in contexts where there is a lack of transparency regarding the ideological content transmitted by secular organizations to the beneficiaries of their activities. Indeed, Kraft (2016) explains that 'awareness-raising' and 'consciousness-raising' activities of secular organizations can be as coercive as the proselytism of FBOs when organizations see a humanitarian crisis as an opportunity to transform the affected communities by "challenging cultural norms" and make them adopt practices "considered better within the values of secular humanitarianism" (Kraft, 2016, p. 405).

Given all these elements explained above, it is safe to say that secularism also contains beliefs. Indeed, all NGOs, be they faith-based or secular, are grounded on a faith, religious or not because "in the humanitarian world, faith-based means religious and nonfaith implies secularism (...) [but] religion is not the only kind of faith" (Barnett & Stein, 2012, p. 23). According to Kroessin and Mohamed (2008), all humanitarian actors are missionaries, not only the religious ones. Thomas (2004) goes even further by claiming that both faith-based and secular NGOs proselytize, each one according to their own conception of modernity and development. Considering those different elements, it is important to keep in mind that all NGOs based their work on their own faith and ideology and therefore that none is as such ideologically neutral.

As mentioned previously, secular organizations are usually opposed to faith-based organizations. However, it was argued in the previous paragraph that both types of organizations are based on a kind of faith. It is legitimate to wonder whether other differences exist between these two types organizations. According to Thaut (2009), the difference between secular organizations and FBOs relates more to the vision they have of their work than to their respective methods, types of activities and operations in general. On the ground, their activities would be similar. It is partially due to the fact that since 2004, a lot of FBOs secularize their operations in adopting an approach and a discourse similar to the secular ones by hiring "secular" humanitarian professionals, "adher[ing] to high professional standards, and rigorously distanc[ing] themselves from anything that can be considered to be missionary activity" (Ferris, 2011, p. 614). It makes them sometimes hardly distinguishable (A. Ager & Ager, 2011; Thaut, 2009). Nonetheless, Tittensor and Clarke (2014) indicate that this secularization is not always possible for all FBOs, especially for the Islamic ones that were not created in the West.

According to Barnett and Stein (2012), this dichotomy between secular organizations and FBOs would also be at the advantage of both of them as it would enable them to have access to sacred places where secular NGOs do not have access. In return, secular NGOs would also have access to places where FBOs do not. This would be one of the reasons why NGOs, secular or faith-based, emphasize on their distinctions in order to have access to populations in need (Barnett, Kennedy, Stein, & Thaut, 2009). However, by doing so, they also stress the distinction between them and make it persist.

Nonetheless, Barnett and Stein (2012) also mention that FBOs would be more concerned about the secularization of their activities than secular organizations

because they are more directly affected, especially regarding their religious engagements. For FBOs seeking to obtain funds from secular and governmental donors, secularization would lead to a loss of independence and to a sacrifice of some of their values. Indeed, being 'too' faith-based or 'too' openly religious can be perceived as negative by donors, mainly Western ones who are largely influenced by the State-religion division (G. Clarke, 2007; Ferris, 2005). This is one of the reasons why funds of FBOs mainly come from private donors, primarily from their constituency (Ferris, 2011).

In short, the dichotomy between secular and faith-based organizations is a binary vision that does not take into account the diversity of organizations involved in development and humanitarian aid. Indeed, some organizations pertaining to the same faith differ more between them than with their dichotomy counterpart (Barnett & Stein, 2012). Despite all the elements mentioned above, this dichotomy is still widely used and present in the humanitarian community. It results in a certain misconception of FBOs and their work in delivering aid. As mentioned earlier, FBOs are often unfairly accused of trying to proselytize their beneficiaries and consequently not respecting the humanitarian principles.

Even though some readers may find this section about faith-based and secular organizations a bit long, it seemed important to us to examine the specific traits of both types of organizations thoroughly, because this examination allowed to bring out an unconscious bias that exists toward FBOs and determine their place in the humanitarian community.

The respect of the humanitarian principles

A specificity of the humanitarian sector is that actions of humanitarian organizations are supposed to be guided by some principles. The humanitarian principles have already been mentioned a few times in this thesis and it seemed essential to clarify them before moving on to the next section. They are published in the 1994 Code of Conduct of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. This Code of Conduct aims at maintaining "the high standards of independence, effectiveness and impact to which disaster response NGOs and the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement aspires" (IFRC & ICRC, 1994, p. 1). The adhesion to the Code of Conduct is voluntarily and more than 600 NGOs outside of the Red Cross movements in more than 90 countries have signed it. Most of the well-known

Western FBOs have signed it and it is reflected in the fact that four out of the height sponsors of this code are FBOs: Caritas Internationalis, Catholic Relief Services, Lutheran World Federation and the World Council of Churches.

The Code of Conduct establishes ten humanitarian principles that are common ethical standards. These principles are supposed to be the guardian to a safer and more accessible humanitarian aid. Two of these ten humanitarian principles are especially pointed out in the case of FBOs. Indeed, some FBOs are sometimes condemned for not respecting the principles of impartiality and neutrality. The principle of impartiality signifies that the humanitarian aid has to be distributed without discrimination, meaning that only the needs are taken into account in the beneficiaries' selection, and not factors such as religion. Under the principle of neutrality, humanitarian aid cannot be used to serve any convictions and humanitarian agencies cannot choose sides in conflicts, including conflicts with a religious component. That does not mean that religion cannot be an inspiration for the NGO or its worker but it cannot determine the type of intervention and the beneficiaries of that intervention (M. Clarke, 2014; Mlay, 2004). However, according to G. Clarke (2013), the Code of Conduct does not explicitly condemn proselytism, which can be confusing for signatories NGOs of the Code of Conduct that mixed humanitarian work and proselytism. The humanitarian principles are not always respected by humanitarian NGOs, be they faith-based or not. Indeed, some actors challenge these principles because of the progressive loss of humanitarian space, of actors who more and more seek to address the causes of vulnerability and not only its effects, and the politicization of humanitarian aid (A. Ager & Ager, 2011). Despite that, most humanitarian actors try to respect these principles, but it is not because the headquarters of an organization sign the Code of Conduct that the workers in the field do (Benthall, 2012).

2.1.3. Impact of humanitarian crises on psychological wellbeing

This section will try to give an overview of the impact that a humanitarian crisis has on the psychological wellbeing of the affected people. But first of all, a clarification of the terms 'humanitarian crises' and 'psychosocial wellbeing' is needed in order to fully grasp how these terms are understood conceived in this research. Following Josse and Dubois (2009), a humanitarian crisis is "an acute situation, difficult to manage, with severe and long-term consequences, which are generally harmful (Josse and Dubois, 2009 translated in Colliard, Bizouerne, Corna, & ACF Mental Health and Care Practices team, 2014, p. 8). It "represents a critical threat to the health, safety, security or wellbeing of a community or other large group of people, usually over a wide area" (Humanitarian Coalition, n.d.). Humanitarian crises can be divided in three groups. The first group consists of natural disasters, including biological disasters such as epidemics. The second group is made up of the man-made emergencies such as armed conflicts. The last group comprises the complex emergencies that usually combine natural disasters, man-made crises and vulnerability conditions (Humanitarian Coalition, n.d.).

The concept of psychological wellbeing is difficult to delineate because of its broadness. According to Huppert (2009), "psychological well-being is about lives going well. It is the combination of feeling good and functioning effectively" (p. 137). It includes emotions such as "interest, engagement, confidence, and affection" (Huppert, 2009, p. 138). However, painful emotions are part of the process of life and do not affect the overall and long-term psychological wellbeing if those emotions are properly managed. The psychological wellbeing of a person is at risk when a person feels the negative emotions in the long-term and these emotions "interfere with a person's ability to function in his or her daily life" (Huppert, 2009, p. 137). In times of humanitarian crises, this means that people can (and should) feel negative emotions, but have to be able to deal with these emotions in order to be resilient.

Williamson and Robinson (2006) designed a framework that highlights all the components of the human wellbeing. These components, also called 'factors', have to overlap, and a certain level of need has to be satisfied with respect to each of these factors for an individual to reach a state of wellbeing. This framework is interesting because it shows that wellbeing does not only depend on the individual, but also on the interactions of this individual with society. Indeed, Williamson and Robinson (2006) insist on the fact that individual and group wellbeing are closely interrelated and dependent. They consider that an individual cannot reach wellbeing if his or her group or community does not either. It is also worth noting that spirituality is one of the components required to achieve wellbeing. Indeed, according to Onyango et al. (2011), inner peace, resulting in better wellbeing is brought, among others, by spirituality. This model is largely used by humanitarian actors to shape their psychosocial interventions, even though the spiritual part of it is often ignored (J. Ager, Abebe, & Ager, 2014; Schafer, 2010).
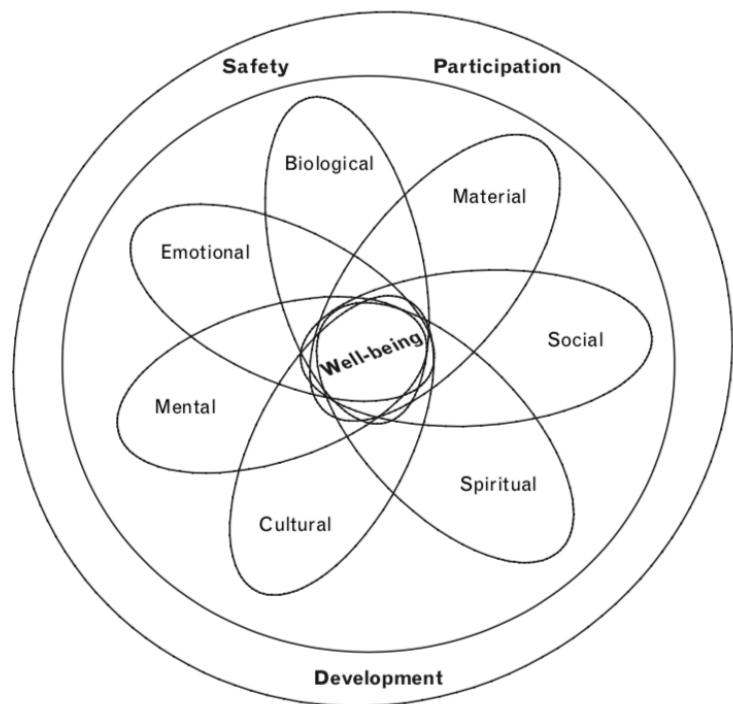
Now that the meaning of these two concepts is clarified, the impact of a humanitarian crisis on the psychological wellbeing will be addressed. Natural disasters and armed conflicts resulting in a humanitarian crisis can "cause significant psychological and social suffering to affected populations" (Inter-Agency Standing Committee, 2007, p. 1), creating a psychosocial wound. It impacts the individual, familial, community and societal levels of a society and also has significant repercussions on already existing psychological resources (Colliard, Bizouerne, Corna, & ACF Mental Health and Care Practices team, 2014; Inter-Agency Standing Committee, 2007). Indeed, "emergencies erode normally protective supports, increase the risks of diverse problems and tend to amplify pre-existing problems of social injustice and inequality" (Inter-Agency Standing Committee, 2007, p. 2). It has acute impacts on the short-term but has also long-term consequences. The Inter-Agency Standing Committee (2007) listed

different mental health and psychosocial problems that can appear in humanitarian crises, either of a predominantly social nature or of a predominantly psychological nature. They include pre-existing problems (e.g. poverty, substance abuse, political oppression), emergency-induced problems (e.g. family separation, grief, anxiety) and humanitarian aid-induced social problems (e.g. disruption of traditional support mechanisms, anxiety because of the lack of information regarding aid distribution) (Inter-Agency Standing Committee, 2007, pp. 2-3).

Most of the affected population will "react quickly and positively, which enables them to cope and return to daily activities after the initial shock" (Colliard et al., 2014, p. 9). However, some people will need help to absorb the shock of a crisis and get back to 'normal'. This difference of reactions can be explained by the "existing previous situation, culture, individual resources, social links and the type of crisis" (Colliard et al., 2014, p. 9). Indeed, the pre-existing conditions of vulnerability of a person, including personal and psychological characteristics such as prior traumas, mental and physical health condition, among others, and the nature of the disaster (if it is a natural or man-made disaster or if a community is specifically targeted for example) will affect the duration and intensity of the trauma, as well as the coping capacity and the resilience of that person and therefore also of its community (Fernando & Hebert, 2011; Joakim & White, 2015; North, Hong, & Pfefferbaum, 2008; Peres, Moreira-Almeida, Nasello, & Koenig, 2007). Other elements pointed out by Rao (2006) can be added to this list of influences of the coping process. They include the "predictability of the event, rapidity and the length of involvement, extent of personal loss and rapidity with which rescue, relief and psychosocial support are provided" (Rao, 2006, p. 501). All these elements make the psychosocial reaction of affected people unique and hardly predictable, even though some patterns can be found.

More than those different elements, some population subgroups are more at risk than others. The Inter-Agency Standing Committee (2007, pp. 3-4) identified eleven sub-groups of people at risks: women (e.g. single mothers), men (e.g. ex-combatants), children, elderly people, extremely poor people, migrants (e.g. internally displaced persons), traumatized people, people with health problems, people living in institutions, stigmatized people and finally people at risks of human rights violations (e.g. political activists). The fact that these sub-groups cover most of the population shows that many people are at risk of developing psychosocial problems as a result of

a disaster. However, the aftermath of the crisis really depends on the characteristics of the crisis itself, as not all these sub-groups will be at risk in all emergencies. The risk is undoubtedly linked to the context and the features specific to each individual.

2.1.4. Psychosocial support to the victims of humanitarian crises

Broadly speaking, the word 'psychosocial' refers to the relationship between the psychological and social parts of an individual (Colliard et al., 2014; Grimaud, 2010; Williamson & Robinson, 2006). This statement supports the point made by Williamson and Robinson (2006) – see above – that individual wellbeing is closely interrelated to social wellbeing. Indeed, this term highlights the existing relationship between both the psychological and social needs of a person (Grimaud, 2010, p. 23). At the personal level, the emotional and psychological wounds result from "experiences that affect the emotions, behaviour, thoughts, memory and learning capacity of an individual" (IFRC Psychosocial Centre, 2012 cited in Ager, Fiddia-Qasmiyed, & Ager, 2015, p.210). At the social level, it is the relations that suffer damages and this can deeply affect the functioning of a community.

The concept of 'psychosocial support' is widely used by the humanitarian community to refer to the process that addresses a "broad range of psychosocial problems and promotes the restoration of social cohesion and infrastructure as well as the independence and dignity of individuals and groups" (Rao, 2006, p. 501). It "describes the care and support provided to an individual (or family), with the aim of protecting and/or developing psychological well-being and/or preventing or treating mental disorders" (Colliard et al., 2014, p. 8). In the humanitarian sector, psychosocial support is closely linked with the concept of resilience that is defined as "peoples' ability to 'bounce back' and thrive after having experienced trauma, a potentially traumatic event (PTE), or other harsh circumstances" (Marks, Lu, Cherry, & Hatch, 2015, p. 370). It also refers to the ability of an individual and a community to absorb the shock of a disaster, to learn from it and to adapt consequently (Joakim & White, 2015). In short, the psychosocial support provided to victims of humanitarian crises will try to strengthen the resilience of individuals and communities that are affected by the crisis by treating the psychological and social problems.

Until the beginning of the new millennium, psychosocial support was usually only for people with a mental health clinical condition. A shift occurred in the past two decades, so that psychosocial support is not any more reserved for psychological trauma (Colliard et al., 2014). Therefore, humanitarian actors have tried to address the psychosocial dimension of a humanitarian disaster, as well as to mainstream psychosocial interventions in all sectors of humanitarian aid and should not be

considered as a distinct element that does not interact with the others because psychosocial needs and physical needs are interrelated and interdependent (Williamson & Robinson, 2006). It is still a work in progress but there is nowadays a real recognition of the important of psychosocial needs of victims of humanitarian crises. Therefore, focusing this thesis on the integration of religion and spirituality in psychosocial support offers an entry point to all the sectors that are active in humanitarian aid.

Different forms of psychosocial support exist and can be adapted to the different phases of a disaster. The first phase is the rescue phase, when people are still in shock and are having emotional reactions which are totally normal under such circumstances. According to Rao (2006), the level of 'psychological discomfort' experienced by affected people are linked to the rapidity of the rescue and relief. Indeed, the fastest they will arrive, the better the affected persons should normally feel. Rao (2006) mentions ten forms of psychosocial care that should already be implemented at this phase:

> comfort and consolation, protection from further threat and distress, immediate physical care and medical attention, helping reunion with loved ones, linking survivors with sources of support, identifying those who need help, facilitating some sense of being in control, allowing for sharing of experience, but not forcing it, provision for culturally appropriate ways of grieving for the dead, normalization of activity and routine as far as possible (Rao, 2006, p. 502).

During the second phase, the relief one, that usually lasts from two weeks to six months, psychosocial care "is primarily supportive in nature and refers to a variety of techniques essentially directed at reducing emotional distress, facilitating problem solving and return to normal functioning" (Rao, 2006, p. 503). Six techniques should be used during this phase in order to address the psychosocial needs of affected people. These include "empathic and active listening, ventilation, mobilization of social support, activity scheduling and externalization of interests, relaxation and tension-reduction methods, spiritual healing and growth" (Rao, 2006, p. 503).

The second to last phase is the rehabilitation phase, when most of people should have returned to normal activities and should not experience strong emotional difficulties anymore. For these people, activities can still be organized with a group or community
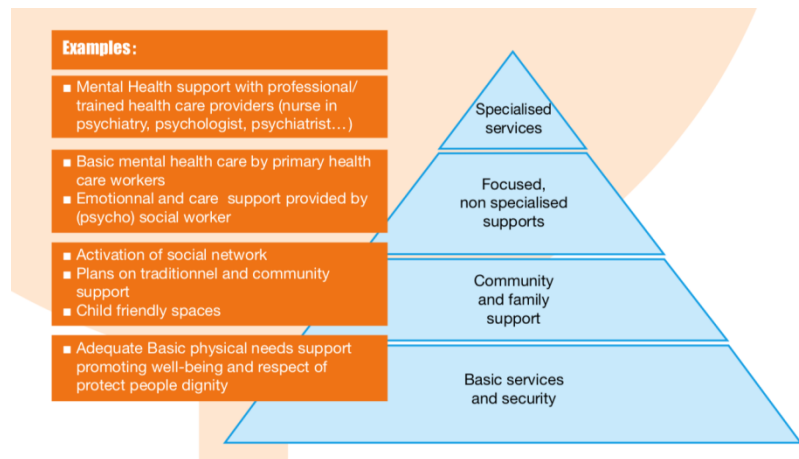
if they so desire. It can help them to find solutions and share their problems with their fellows in order to get emotional support. If people still experience strong emotional difficulties, it means that they probably suffer from mental health problems such as PTSD, psychosomatic disorders, major depression, drugs and alcohol abuse, etc. These people constitute a minority and need to be evaluated and followed by a mental health professional. It is not psychosocial support that humanitarian organizations should ensure at this stage.

The same activities as at the previous phase can still be implemented in the last phase, i.e. the rebuilding phase, which overlaps between humanitarian aid and development work. However, it is the time to ready mental health actors, as well as other local actors such as local faith communities, to intervene if another disaster strikes (J. Ager et al., 2014, p. 73; J. Ager, Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, & Ager, 2015, p. 210; Joint Learning Initiative on Local Faith Communities, 2012, p. 3; Rao, 2006). Training community-level workers in order that they can respond mare adequately to psychosocial needs in case of a new crisis is the main thing to do at this phase. Considering these successive phases, it can be observed that psychosocial interventions after a humanitarian crisis is a continuous process (Rao, 2006).

Guidelines have been worked out in order to help humanitarian actors to respond properly to psychosocial needs of affected people. The main set of guidelines is the "IASC Guidelines on Mental Health and Psychosocial support in Emergency settings" of 2007. These guidelines aim is to:

> enable humanitarian actors and communities to plan, establish and coordinate a set of minimum multi-sectoral responses to protect and improve people's mental health and psychosocial well-being in the midst of an emergency (Inter-Agency Standing Committee, 2007, p. 5).

An important feature of them is that they set minimum standards that humanitarian actors should at least observe and preferably exceed. These guidelines form a pyramid that reflects the extend of psychosocial support services needed after a humanitarian crisis. (Inter-Agency Standing Committee, 2007, p.12 in Colliard et al., p.12)

Examples:

- Mental Health support with professional/ trained health care providers (nurse in psychiatry, psychologist, psychiatrist...)
- Basic mental health care by primary health care workers
- Emotionnal and care support provided by (psycho) social worker
- Activation of social network
- Plans on traditionnel and community support
- Child friendly spaces
- Adequate Basic physical needs support promoting well-being and respect of protect people dignity

Specialised services

Focused, non specialised supports

Community and family support

Basic services and security

2.1.5. Religious coping

In order to cope with a disaster, people resort to different mechanisms. One of them is religion and spirituality. However, religion was marginalized in the field of "mainstream psychological theory and research" until the end of the eighties and its contribution to coping, resilience and psychological wellbeing has only been fully recognized since 1997 and Pargament's work (Gall & Guirguis-Younger, 2013). Already in 1990, at the beginning of the study of religious coping, Pargament et al. (1990) mentioned that religious coping was rather frequent than uncommon. According to Ebadi, Ahmadi, Ghanei, and Kazemnejad (2009), "more than 80% of recently published studies found that religion contributes to a psychological or physical health benefit in people's lives" (p. 348). Gall and Guirguis-Younger (2013) mentioned a few studies in their article showing that religion and spirituality are an unusual coping mechanism, but they insist on the fact that these studies are rare. It is important to mention that most studies concerning religious coping or exploring the relationship between religion, spirituality and mental health are made in Western contexts and consequently not in the most common place where humanitarian crises take place.

Pargament, Koenig, and Perez (2000, p. 521) identified five key functions of religion that constitute the basis of religious coping mechanisms, including for people affected by a humanitarian crisis. Before explaining these functions, the reader's attention should be drawn to the fact that these functions are a bit reductive and tell nothing about the affected people. Indeed, religion does not only serve social functions and most religious scholar would find this psychological approach to religion and religious coping simplistic. Nonetheless, as the work of Pargament et al. (2000) constitutes a basis for humanitarian workers, including psychologists working on psychosocial support, it deserves to be taken into account in this thesis.

The first key function is that religion provides meaning by offering "frameworks for understanding and interpretation" (Pargament et al., 2000, p. 521). Indeed, in times of stressful events such as humanitarian crises, religion and spirituality help people to recover by giving a meaning to the disaster, because for many people, religion is "at the core of their meaning systems" (Park, Edmondson, & Hale-Smith, 2013, p. 160). Joakim and White (2015) give the example of the earthquake that wreaked havoc in Indonesia in 2006, where three reasons attributed to God were mentioned by the local population. The first one is that the earthquake was a warning sent by God to people

in order to make them better Muslims. By doing so, God would show love to humans. The second explanation was that the earthquake was meant to test the faith of the population. The last reason alleged was that it was a punishment from God for past actions and deeds. Joakim and White (2015) mention that the "responses and interpretations often mirrored comments by the religious leaders, indicative of the impact of religious discussions and educational activities in influencing villagers' worldviews and interpretations" (p. 202). They also state that the alternative interpretations given by people do not necessarily have to be considered as a source of vulnerability but "can be understood as alternative worldviews that provide opportunities to facilitate disaster risk reduction and preparedness for future events" (p. 205). It can as well as structure and define the provision of relief (Bush, Fountain, & Feener, 2015). Furthermore, religion and spirituality can help affected people to psychologically integrate their traumatic experience (Koenig, 2006). As a result, it is safe to say that they can greatly impact the interpretation and coping methods of the victims of a disaster (Park et al., 2013; Peres et al., 2007).

This first key function can be closely related to the second one, which is that religion provides comfort to individuals. In times of humanitarian crises, comfort can be provided through meaning, as described with respect to the first key function, but as well by individuals sharing their faith and their religious and spiritual practices with other individuals (Ebadi et al., 2009). This second key function leads seamlessly to the third one, which is the function of providing intimacy with others leading to social cohesiveness. The feeling of community and solidarity going hand in hand with intimacy is essential in psychosocial support, as it is also focused on healing the community and not just the individual. By being and practicing together, as well as giving guidance for decision-making, religion can help people to transform their lives, which is the fourth key function of religion. This is greatly needed for people affected by humanitarian crises who see their lives turned upside down and will never be the same. The last key function is that religion can offer a sense of control of life events pushing the individual "beyond his/her own resources" (Pargament et al., 2000, p. 521) by giving him/her a purpose and having him/her find some coherence in what happened (Park et al., 2013). As pointed out above, these five key functions of religion can be used to enhance positive religious coping by people affected by a humanitarian crisis. These positive religious coping mechanisms result in a better physical and mental health of people who were affected by a trauma (Peres et al., 2007).

However, religious coping is not always positive. Indeed, a disaster can undermine "the belief in a benevolent god or a meaningful universe, or limit (…) the individual's ability to "be intimate" with God" (Bilich, Bonfiglio, & Carlson, 2000 in ; Fallot & Blanch, 2013, p. 373). It is interesting to note that here-above, in the example of the 2006 earthquake in Indonesia, the attribution of the earthquake to God as a sign of punishment was perceived as something positive because it gave meaning, whereas it is here also considered as a negative religious coping because it can result in spiritual distress. This ambivalence shows how much religious coping mechanisms can be ambiguous. In addition to the spiritual distress a disaster can cause, some religious doctrines can also restrain the recovery of people affected by a disaster. Bowland et al. (2011) cite a few studies showing that Christian women felt that their religious tradition was minimizing the trauma they were experiencing or that 'simple theological solutions' such as unconditional forgiveness and silent suffering were promoted to much more complex issues, resulting in negative religious coping.

Generally, people use more positive than negative religious coping mechanisms (Ai, Peterson, & Huang, 2003; Bjorck & Thurman, 2007). The more negative events happen and the greater the loss of control over these events is, the more positive or negative religious coping will be used. However, the use of negative religious coping increases faster than the use of the positive ones. This is why, in the case of humanitarian crises, aid professionals have to be careful that the psychosocial support activities do not entail negative religious coping mechanisms that can harm the psychological wellbeing of affected people (Bjorck & Thurman, 2007; Bowland et al., 2011; Fallot & Blanch, 2013; Harper & Pargament, 2015; Koenig, McCullough, & Larson, 2001; Maton, 1989).

The positive impacts of positive religious coping mechanisms on mental health raise the question of the impact of what would be named "non-religious coping mechanisms" in psychology. Few psychological researches compare the respective impacts of both mechanisms as such. Streib and Klein (2013) explain that the need to talk about existential issues (e.g. the meaning of life) is as much present in non-religious people than in religious people. However, Walker et al. (2012) mention that "numerous studies have shown that faith coping predicts recovery from trauma and crisis above and beyond the effects of secular coping measures" (p. 120). Harper and Pargament (2015) point out that the efficiency of a coping mechanism is more related to the fact that it fits the individual and the context than to its 'religious' or 'non-religious' nature.

In an earlier publication at the beginning of the religious coping studies, Pargament et al. (1990) insist that it can be dangerous to separate too sharply religious and non-religious coping mechanisms activities, since they are interconnected and usually complementary. Finally, according to Gall and Guirguis-Younger (2013), "spirituality is implicit in many aspects of coping" (p. 356).

The importance of religious coping is detailed in many studies, but it is hard to predict the effects of coping as they depend on the context and the individual. Hence, itis interesting to try to identify the elements that entice people to resort to religious coping mechanisms. According to Gall and Guirguis-Younger (2013), highly religious individual will use religious coping mechanisms, which is not surprising. Examining religious coping among Americans, Koenig (2006) explains that some personal characteristics can predict whether someone will use religious or non-religious coping mechanisms. Besides the very religious persons, elderly people, women, less educated persons as well as ethnic minorities and non-North-American and European immigrants are predicted to be more likely to use religious coping mechanisms, unlike younger people, men, well-educated persons, healthy persons, comfortably off people as well as Caucasians and North-American and European immigrants. By mentioning that these predictors are especially true for Americans, Koenig (2006) implies that some of them, such as the age, sex, education, health and economic situation, can be to some extent valid in other contexts.

Even though positive religious coping mechanisms are a bit simplistic in a religious studies perspective, it was important to discuss their existence in this thesis because this mention provided the opportunity to show that integrating religion and spirituality into psychosocial support activities can help affected people to recover better. Taking the aforementioned mechanisms into consideration also made clear that the debate on the integration of the religious and spiritual component in these kinds of activities is a must.

2.1.6. Religion, spirituality and psychosocial support activities

Psychosocial practices are a significant part of the work of religious communities because many symbolic life rituals and rites are proposed by these communities and religious leaders can help make sense of a disaster and offer advice as to how to overcome the disaster (A. Ager & Ager, 2015; Joint Learning Initiative on Local Faith Communities, 2013).

Some of the activities that, according to Rao (2006), are supposed to take place during the four phases following a disaster – see above – could already have been identified as linked with religion and spirituality. Regarding the rescue phase, it was mentioned that there is a need of "culturally appropriate ways of grieving the dead" (Rao, 2006, p. 502). These ways usually involve religious rituals that are important for the family and community not only to mourn the dead, but also to be able to move on (J. Ager et al., 2014). Moreover, "drawing on survivors' inner spirituality as well as observing religious practice and communal worship is not only helpful but necessary for their continued healing and comfort" (Fernando & Hebert, 2011, p. 12). As regards the relief phase, it was mentioned that psychosocial cares at this phase involve "spiritual healing and growth" (Rao, 2006, p. 503). By 'psychosocial cares', Rao (2006) means the organization of prayer groups, religious and spiritual rituals, etc. in order to help people to understand and accept the events that led to the humanitarian crisis.

However, the inclusion of religious and spiritual interventions in the psychosocial activities of humanitarian organizations is subject to a large debate. It is linked to the debate over the respect of the humanitarian principles, as some organizations could use this inclusion as an opportunity to proselytize their beneficiaries. Nevertheless, according to J. Ager et al. (2014):

> concern for neutrality is an important and understandable priority for humanitarianism. However, neutrality in the form of the marginalization or avoidance of religion may result in the failure of programming to connect with the agendas and capacities of faith communities potentially crucial to their trajectories of recovery (J. Ager et al., 2014, p. 73).

In order to avoid the accusation of non-respect of the humanitarian principles, humanitarian NGOs willing to provide activities with some sort of religious and spiritual cares work with local faith communities, because the latter know better the

context and the affected population. These communities are indeed well placed to provide psychosocial first aid to the affected communities - especially if they have been previously trained to do so -, as well as to use and share their facilities for humanitarian aid (J. Ager et al., 2014, p. 76). Moreover, religious leaders can be a strong resource when it comes to sharing information after a disaster, as well as in spiritual counseling, guidance, etc., that respects the local culture and beliefs (Joakim & White, 2015; Onyango et al., 2011, p. 63). What is needed is an intervention that is appropriate in view of the local culture and therefore demands a certain form of religious literacy that many humanitarian workers lack. The possible negative impacts of religious coping should nonetheless be reminded. In their approach, humanitarian actors have to ensure that they respect the "Do No Harm" principle and avoid having negative impacts on their beneficiaries and their communities.

Considering all that precedes in this thesis, it can be said that it is essential for humanitarian organizations to adopt a faith-sensitive approach in their intervention. This is the reason why the guidelines "A faith-sensitive approach in humanitarian response: Guidance on mental health and psychosocial programming" were published in June 2018. These guidelines, in line with the IASC ones previously mentioned, aim "to provide practical support to those involved in planning humanitarian programming who seek to be more sensitive to the faith perspectives and resources of the communities within which they are working" (The Lutheran World Federation & Islamic Relief Worldwide, 2018, p. 7). This approach helps humanitarian actors to implement activities with the cultural appropriateness that was mentioned above in order to execute a program that better suits the needs of their beneficiaries. However, psychosocial interventions, with or without a religious and spiritual component, widely use a language that is usually secular (A. Ager & Ager, 2015; J. Ager et al., 2014, p. 73). The term 'psychosocial' itself is a very secular and Western term that has almost no literal translations in many languages around the world (Williamson & Robinson, 2006). These guidelines fit perfectly with this thesis and show its relevance for humanitarian workers in 2018.

A last important thing to point out is that even though religion and spirituality have the potential to impact positively people affected by a humanitarian crisis, humanitarian organizations should only offer activities with a faith component to people who want it, and not to everyone. All the psychosocial support activities

implemented by a humanitarian organization should not include a religious component when some people do not want to participate in these activities. Other activities such as relaxation programs or group discussions can be implemented alongside with the activities with a religious component.

2.1.7. The specificity of FBOs in delivering psychosocial support

Thanks to their faith, FBOs could have a unique position in bridging humanitarianism and religion, including in the provision psychosocial support with a faith component. Nonetheless, the specificity of faith-based organizations in delivering psychosocial support to people affected by a humanitarian crisis is not largely discussed by scholars, some elements contributing to this specificity can nevertheless be identified.

It is not rare that FBOs are approached by an affected population to engage in religious activities. Schafer (2011) explains the case of World Vision International being approached in order "to provide spiritual nurture and support to local churches, their congregations and communities" (Schafer, 2011, p. 76). This can be problematic for FBOs searching to distance themselves from the faith aspect in order to secularize their activities for donors. On the contrary, some FBOs can see it as an opportunity to stronger engage with local faith communities and have a better impact on their psychosocial wellbeing. However, spiritual nurture and evangelism are two different things, even if sometimes one can be used in favor of the other (Onyango et al., 2011). According to Onyango et al. (2011) spiritual nurture:

> should help to reinforce resources that are already present within the affected individuals, families and communities. As in any situation, there may be some people who will be influenced, or inspired, by the way faith based organisations do their work. However, that is not a reason not to do this work! (Onyango et al., 2011, p. 64)

In this respect, the involvement of local faith communities and leaders is essential to provide a response that is appropriate in view of the prevailing culture.

As mentioned previously, organizations willing to integrate religion and spirituality into their work will usually work in partnership with local faith communities. FBOs could take advantage of reaching those communities, as they usually already have links with them. However, the frequent small size, lack of trained workers and resources within these communities make it difficult for them to implement a large-scale humanitarian response (Kraft, 2016). Nonetheless, in order to engage in these kinds of activities, it is essential to involve them because "LFCs' understanding of the complexities of psychosocial issues and their situatedness within the community, often combined with existing records of pastoral care, may particularly suit them to provide

psychosocial support" (Joint Learning Initiative on Local Faith Communities, 2012, p. 3).

Despite these possible benefits of being a faith-based organization, the so-called secular organizations can also implement psychosocial support activities with a spiritual and religious component. It might be harder for them to connect with local faith communities but the same can be said about FBOs which don't have the same faith as the affected population. For both types of organizations, it can be hard to find the balance between the respect of the humanitarian principles and "at the same time embracing the proven benefits of spiritual practice and engagement" (Schafer, 2010, p. 129). As explained by Tomalin (2013), "there is little evidence that many of the supposedly distinct characteristics of FBOs are exclusive to them, or more prevalent in them than in other sorts of organizations" (p. 227).

The small number of the elements mentioned in this section shows that there is little research about the role of FBOs in delivering psychosocial support with a religious or spiritual component, which implies that there is a real need to cover this area of research. This is what this thesis shall try to do in this thesis.

To conclude this section two and before going to the core of this thesis with the results of our research and their discussion, it seemed important to us to underscore the limits of this literature review that is essentially based on academic articles, reports and books. The subject of all of them is more or less directly linked to FBOs or the relationship between religion, spirituality and psychosocial wellbeing. In the course of this literature review, it was observed that some authors have a certain bias, in the sense that they are usually in favor of or against the involvement of FBOs in development and humanitarian or are in favor of religious coping. In this literature review, an attempt to show the diversity of opinions existing regarding the topic of this thesis. In addition, generalizations in studies about faith-based organizations are usually based on a small sample of organizations that work in a specific context. This specificity is something to be aware of. Finally, as mentioned previously, most psychological researches about religious coping are undertaken in a European or North-American context. It is important to keep all those elements in mind when analyzing this literature review.

3. Research design

This research follows a more deductive approach. This method was selected because there is an existing literature body about FBOs in development/humanitarian aid and the relation between faith and psychosocial recovery after a trauma. This approach enables to answer the research questions about the relationship between humanitarian crisis and psychosocial support with faith and faith-based organizations that were designed based on a first literature review.

A qualitative method to answer the research questions was selected and a triangulation of sources is used to answer the research questions because it makes it possible to treat different kinds of sources. It includes the existing scientific literature, secondary sources such as reports and websites of the organizations, and data derived from semi-structured interviews.

Five semi-structured interviews were done with workers of humanitarian organizations, four from workers of FBOs: ACT Alliance, Islamic Relief World Wide (IRW), the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) and the X organization (as the interviewee wished to stay confidential, the organization will be called X). Another interview was also done with someone from the IFRC psychosocial Centre that is considered as a secular organization in the humanitarian system. The method of semi-structured interviews was chosen because of the flexibility it allows not only in the collection of data, but also in their interpretation. It gives the interview a structure and grants the interviewer more liberty. The interviews were all conducted through Skype calls because none of the interviewers was in the same country as the interviewed. They were completed, because of time constraints, by written answers given following the interview guide by a person working for the Church of Sweden. This interview guide is available in appendix 7 and the interview transcripts are available in appendixes 1 to 6.

All these participants were selected for their implication in the field of humanitarian psychosocial support, their availability and their willingness to participate in this research. However, it is important to note that all of them, except the person from the organization X, were somehow involved in the drawing up of the guidelines for a faith-sensitive approach in humanitarian aid.

4. Data analysis

4.1. Collected data

This section is divided in subsections, each representing an organization from which a humanitarian worker was interviewed. They are ordered by the date their interview took place or the answers were received. Each interviewee will be described, the organization they work for will be presented and then the results from the interview will be shared.

4.1.1. Interview with a technical advisor from the IFRC Psychosocial Centre

A technical advisor who is also co-chair of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee Mental Health and Psychosocial Support Reference group was interviewed through a Skype call on the 24th of May 2018.[5]

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies Psychosocial Centre aims at supporting the different national societies of the Red Cross Red Crescent movement in the promotion of psychosocial wellbeing of beneficiaries, staff and volunteers. More precisely, the Psychosocial Centre aims at enabling "National Societies to understand, respond and utilize evidence based practice in meeting the psychosocial needs of vulnerable groups" (IFRC Psychosocial Centre, n.d.-b) by providing technical support. The Centre is hosted by the Danish Red Cross and is supported by various Red Cross Societies (IFRC Psychosocial Centre, n.d.-b). This Psychosocial Centre was created in 1993 when the humanitarian world started realizing that not only the physical needs of people affected had to be treated but also the psychological ones. It was first named as the Psychological Centre when it was created but changed its name to Psychosocial Centre in 2004 in order to highlight the community-based importance of these kinds of interventions (IFRC Psychosocial Centre, n.d.-a).

More than the technical and operational support to the National societies, it also offers psychosocial trainings and sets up a research network that aims at connecting mental health and psychosocial support practitioners outside the Red Cross Red Crescent movement and National societies. The Psychosocial Centre also hosted the workshop

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[5] She agreed to be cited in this thesis and does not wish to be confidential. The transcript of this interview can be found in appendix 1.

"Faith-sensitive psychosocial support: What does it mean in practice?" that took place in November 2017 and was part of the process of creating the guidelines for faith sensitive approach in humanitarian aid that were discussed previously in this thesis.

It worth noting that the Psychosocial Centre is part of the Red Cross Red Crescent movement, creator of the Code of Conduct detailing the humanitarian principles. They are considered as the guardians of these humanitarian principles in the humanitarian world and recognized as a secular organization, even though some could argue that the Red Cross movement originated in Christianity (Veuthey, 2008).

The interviewee agreed with the main trend of the researches in the relationship between religion and spirituality, and psychological wellbeing. Indeed, she confirmed that many people interpret what happens to them "through the prism of spirituality and religion" (*Interview with a technical advisor from the IFRC Psychosocial Centre*, 2018). It is what was described above as the first key function of religion in coping mechanisms. She also talked about the second function that was the contribution of religion to comfort after such a disaster because "they have survived it and they have been kind of accompanied by this spirituality through the event and it brings them closer to (...) their god or Allah or to whoever their belief system is in" (*Interview with a technical advisor from the IFRC Psychosocial Centre*, 2018).

Social cohesiveness, the third key function of religion, was also indirectly mentioned by the interviewee. Indeed, she pointed out that religion and spirituality "can be an enormous social support after a crisis event" (*Interview with a technical advisor from the IFRC Psychosocial Centre*, 2018). Moreover, religion and spirituality can bring together people with a common pre-existing connection and a common trust in their faith communities and leaders. The importance of religious and spiritual leaders was also highlighted because they often are "the community focal point" and "they pull community members together" (*Interview with a technical advisor from the IFRC Psychosocial Centre*, 2018).

Nonetheless, the usefulness of working with religious leaders is not always related to their involvement in social cohesiveness. Indeed, they meet a lot of people on a regular basis and they can also spread messages around communities. In terms of psychosocial programming, the interviewee pointed out that community programs are easier to implement if religious leaders can be used as a resource and "convening power" in

order to create a "family and community support around a person" (*Interview with a technical advisor from the IFRC Psychosocial Centre*, 2018).

Moreover, the interviewee explained that in case of humanitarian crises, "places of sanctuary" such as churches or mosques are often used as cyclone shelters, distribution points, meeting points, ad-hoc community centers, information points because "there is often many of them" and "they are known, they often are essential locations in villages and town" (*Interview with a technical advisor from the IFRC Psychosocial Centre*, 2018). A great example she gave was the one of mosques that usually have loud speakers and can easily disseminate information.

Nonetheless, she described the effects of religion and spirituality on the psychological wellbeing of people affected by a humanitarian crisis as a "double-edge sword". Indeed, despite all the positive impacts described above, she also explained that there are examples where "religion has coopted psychosocial support in a negative way or has exacerbated a pre-existing problem" (*Interview with a technical advisor from the IFRC Psychosocial Centre*, 2018). This is for example the case when religious leaders are "ignorant" or have their own agenda. It results in the dissemination of "negative or counter-productive" messages to their community and can even sometimes be contrary to human rights. She gave the example of the Ebola crisis in West Africa where there was a huge dilemma between:

> allowing people to come together in these congregations, in groups, allowing them to do things like the communal washing or the washing of bodies, particularly in the Muslim faith for example, and (…) how that needed to stop [or to] be minimized because it was also encouraging the spread of Ebola or any other infectious disease such as cholera as well (*Interview with a technical advisor from the IFRC Psychosocial Centre*, 2018).

This question of proper burials and death rituals is an essential one because in many communities around the world these rituals have a religious or spiritual component. She also explained that not knowing where the loved ones are, in the case of missing persons for example, can cause "an additional level of grief on top of the physical separation" (*Interview with a technical advisor from the IFRC Psychosocial Centre*, 2018) because people have the feeling that the missing persons' souls are "not being laid to rest appropriately or that they haven't been able to pass over to the next life or

the afterlife" (*Interview with a technical advisor from the IFRC Psychosocial Centre*, 2018).

Another insight she gave regarding these negative impacts that was not previously addressed is the specificity of the interpretation of mental health disorders such as epilepsy and schizophrenia through the prism of religions. She thus explained that mental health disorders are sometimes interpreted as people being possessed by the Djinn or the Devil for example. It impacts the affected person negatively if they only consult a shaman or a traditional healer that will not be able to cure this mental disorder and refuse to seek medical treatment at a health facility. She however mentioned that there is no harm in combining the two but that one should not prevent the other. She described this process as one of co-dependency, which is highly relevant to describe the intimate relationship between religion and spirituality with the psychological wellbeing of religious and spiritual people affected by humanitarian crises.

A last negative point observed by the interviewee is that in many conflicts, "religion is being used as a divisive factor between different groups and (…) as a mobilization factor" (*Interview with a technical advisor from the IFRC Psychosocial Centre*, 2018). According to her, it has an extensive psychological component because:

> people are feeling a sense of belonging (…) to a particular religious group
> (…) because of what's happening in their environment (…), so their identity
> and their (…) source of strength, from a psychosocial perspective, is derived
> from their religious identity (*Interview with a technical advisor from the
> IFRC Psychosocial Centre*, 2018).

Furthermore, it is also separating them from their community. She gave the example of the Islamic State fighters where religion is used as a "psychological mean" to indoctrinate. This is particularly true when the education curriculum for children is modified in order to "breed new fighters to insure (…) a consistent supply of militants" (*Interview with a technical advisor from the IFRC Psychosocial Centre*, 2018). She noted that this is not so different from other ideologies, even secular ones. She gave the example of communism because "you also had communist ideology going through schools and that was ultimately creating people that believed in the communist approach as a form of governance" (*Interview with a technical advisor from the IFRC Psychosocial Centre*, 2018).

In addition, she explained that "the humanitarian system is inherently secular" and that humanitarian standards and guidelines are "developed from a Western perspective" (*Interview with a technical advisor from the IFRC Psychosocial Centre*, 2018). She pointed out that the Red Cross movement tradition and the human rights tradition both come from a Western perspective, even though she does not question their "global applicability". She furthermore highlighted that most people affected by a humanitarian crisis

> are people who don't believe in the Western world (…), who are living in countries that have a very very strong tradition of a particular faith or multiple faiths or multiple spiritualties, that have a very different prism of understanding at which they look at the world (*Interview with a technical advisor from the IFRC Psychosocial Centre*, 2018).

Moreover, she mentioned that the humanitarian system as it is now undervalues the importance of religion and spirituality to some people and that this humanitarian system considers the secular way as the most neutral one and "the best way to go", but she is:

> not convinced that the neutral position is actually the same for people that are affected by an emergency because they often have a much stronger connection to spirituality and faith than it's given credit for in Western tradition (*Interview with a technical advisor from the IFRC Psychosocial Centre*, 2018).

Regarding the involvement of faith-based organizations in delivering psychosocial support, the interviewee made the distinction between two levels of FBOs: the local ones and the international ones. She explained that the local FBOs, also called community-based organizations, are usually the first responders. This last point is extremely important because it makes them the first people helping their community and the first people who will help them to adapt to their new reality. They might indeed respond "rightly or wrongly and they might not do it correctly or to necessarily humanitarian standards, but the reality is they are the first responders" (*Interview with a technical advisor from the IFRC Psychosocial Centre*, 2018).

At the international level, she discussed the strong advocacy power within the humanitarian system that international FBOs have. Indeed, they are uniquely positioned to link local communities with larger international institutions. To illustrate

that, she gave the example of the local churches and Caritas. Thanks to their network, they would have the power to set standards and guidelines and make them applicable in many different locations.

Finally, she highlighted the fact that in many communities around the world, the impact of a humanitarian crisis is felt on the community level rather than on the individual level. It shows the importance of a psychosocial support as it combines both individual and community help to answer the psychosocial needs. However, as humanitarian workers, she said that it can be really difficult to navigate between all these understandings of a crisis and the processing of the crisis by the community while implementing psychosocial activities. A "fine balance" has to be found by humanitarian workers, but she does not think "we get it right" but that "we get it wrong more often than we get it right" (*Interview with a technical advisor from the IFRC Psychosocial Centre*, 2018). This is something very powerful and hard to admit for a humanitarian worker. It raises the question of the appropriateness of humanitarian aid and the "Do No Harm" principle.

4.1.2. Interview with a psychosocial specialist from ACT Alliance

A psychosocial specialist who is the co-chair of the ACT Alliance psychosocial community of practice was interviewed through a Skype call on the 29th of May 2018.[6]

ACT Alliance presents itself as "a coalition of more than 140 churches and church-related organisations working together in over 100 countries to create positive and sustainable change in the lives of poor and marginalised people regardless of their religion, politics, gender, sexual orientation, race or nationality in keeping with the highest international codes and standards" (ACT Alliance, n.d.-a). ACT Alliance is a signatory of the Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Relief. The organization is rooted in the Christian faith. It can count on around 25.00 staff members from member organizations and on its annual budget of around $1.5 billion. The work of ACT Alliance is concentrated on advocacy, development and humanitarian aid. The organization tries to be as much as possible rooted in the community it serves.

ACT Alliance is made of different structures such as the ten communities of practice. These include one about psychosocial support. It aims at "strengthen[ing] the alliance's capacity for psychosocial support (...) [and] giv[ing] suffering communities resilience and capacity to cope by building cooperation and opening access to the support they need" (ACT Alliance, n.d.-b). Another community of practice is the one concerned with religion and development. It wants to:

> develop a better understanding of the intersection between religion and development, contributing to improve development interventions that engage people's world views, values and practices informed by religion for sustainability and local ownership, as well as play a constructive role in ensuring that the convergence that seems to be emerging between religion and development is consolidated, appropriated, spread and translated into global policy on development (ACT Alliance, n.d.-b).

These two communities of practice show that the topic of this master thesis is discussed among FBOs and that there is a need for a better understanding of their interactions.

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[6] She agreed to be cited in this thesis and does not wish to be confidential. The transcript of this interview can be found in appendix 2.

The interviewee's view on wellbeing confirms what was said in the definition section of this thesis because she explained that religion and spirituality are part of the concept of wellbeing. She added that "religion and spirituality is (...) something that needs to be recognized and supported" (*Interview with a psychosocial specialist from ACT Alliance*, 2018). She also mentioned that religion and spirituality are a means of coping for people because it is a part of their identity and of the healing process they go through. The only key function of religion in coping mechanisms mentioned here was the interpretation of the event that a religion can provide to someone. However, the social aspect of this process does not have to be diminished as people are usually an "interactive part" of a "worshipping community" (*Interview with a psychosocial specialist from ACT Alliance,* 2018). This is the reason why "an important part of psychosocial activities is to make it possible for people to continue to participate (...) in their religion and in their spiritual life" (*Interview with a psychosocial specialist from ACT Alliance*, 2018). By that she meant creating a space "for people to gather, to worship and pray" (*Interview with a psychosocial specialist from ACT Alliance*, 2018). The social feeling of a community is a considerable one because the social relationship of people affected by a humanitarian crisis has also been damaged and, consequently, their normal social support systems as well, especially because these social systems "allow them to process and function in difficult instances (...) [as well as] to continue over time in an healthy kind of way" (*Interview with a psychosocial specialist from ACT Alliance*, 2018).

The interviewee highlighted the importance of working with religious leaders, especially local ones. She side-noted that an ACT Alliance program willing to include such activities would not be led by the organization themselves but by locals. Indeed, the spiritual needs mentioned are very specific and as she mentioned, even in a global religion like Christianity, it is very culture- and context-specific. The local religious leaders are then better placed to implement such activities according to her. It leads to a negative aspect of integrating religion in psychosocial support that the interviewee addressed. She explained that in some situations people who do not practice that religion could "feel coerced into practicing or following through" (*Interview with a psychosocial specialist from ACT Alliance,* 2018) or that some organizations do not use local community resources (e.g. religious and spiritual leaders) and that would result in activities that "do not recognize the diversity of local cultures" (*Interview with a psychosocial specialist from ACT Alliance,* 2018). According to her, these negative

impacts have to be avoided, since they would not respect the "Do No Harm" principle and could have long-term negative consequences on the communities.

She highlighted the need for all organizations, be they local or international, faith-based or secular, specialized in all sectors, to be psychosocial-sensitive. Moreover, she said that FBOs could have an advantage in delivering psychosocial support if they are local organizations. The use of religious leaders was also mentioned as an important component of psychosocial activities with a religious and spiritual component, especially if they received a training in pastoral cares prior to the humanitarian crisis. However, organizations that do not follow the Code of Conduct could be harmful and an obstacle to the psychosocial recovery of people. Another obstacle cited by the interviewee is the fact that some organizations, because of their beliefs, discriminate the beneficiaries. This is for example the case when organizations do not provide psychosocial services to people because they are LGBTQI or to women who have been raped. A last obstacle is that if people "had a choice between a faith-based organization or a secular organization, people may choose one or the other, depending on their own experience with faith-based or with religion" (*Interview with a psychosocial specialist from ACT Alliance*, 2018). It means that people could choose not to receive psychosocial cares from an organization because of its label and it could therefore have a negative impact as this person might be in great need of these services.

4.1.3. Interview with a global advocacy manager from Islamic Relief Worldwide

A global advocacy manager of Islamic Relief Worldwide was interviewed. The interview took place through a Skype call on the 31st of May 2018.[7] He was highly involved in the development of the faith-sensitive guidelines.

Islamic Relief Worldwide is "an independent humanitarian and development organisation, Islamic Relief has been serving humanity for 34 years" (Islamic Relief Worldwide, 2017a). Their vision is the following:

> Inspired by our Islamic faith and guided by our values, we envisage a world where communities are empowered, social obligations are fulfilled and people respond as one to the suffering of others (Islamic Relief Worldwide, 2017a).

They are openly faith-based as it can be noticed in their vision statement. The organization was created in 1984 and aimed at responding to the famine in Africa by "launching an appeal, they went door to door and from mosque to mosque asking for money, and this paid for food for people affected by the famine" (Islamic Relief Worldwide, 2017b). It then considerably expanded to become the largest Western Muslim-based humanitarian organization. Islamic Relief is a signatory of the Code of Conduct.

The interviewee highlighted the importance of psychosocial support with a faith component, especially when there are fatalities and that people need to grieve and to find closure. The fact that local faith communities can be very helpful in those matters was already mentioned in the literature review. He mentioned that "people of faith" will usually turn to religion and religious leaders for support and advice. It would help them to get closure quickly. He explained that the way religion and spirituality are perceived by the humanitarian community is usually very different from the way they are perceived by the community they are working with. Moreover, faith, faith leaders and faith groups are generally "sidelined and alienated" in the humanitarian response of NGOs (*Interview with a global advocacy manager from IRW*, 2018).

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[7] He agreed to be cited in this thesis and does not wish to be confidential. The transcript of this interview can be found in appendix 3.

According to him, psychosocial support activities with a religious and spiritual component can vary from reading the Coran to taking part in directed prayers or addressing teachings around particular areas. Integrating religion and spirituality in psychosocial support would enable NGOs to better understand the local perspectives on that topic. The main point that came up many times during the interview is the need to integrate chaplaincy services in the humanitarian sector. The interviewee indeed insisted that these services are available in many public settings in Europe, such as emergency services, police, etc. However, he thinks that due to the secular bias in humanitarian aid, religion and consequently chaplaincy services have been excluded from humanitarian aid. He stated that "aid professionals need to understand the reasons why faith-based chaplaincy has been available in other settings" (*Interview with a global advocacy manager from IRW*, 2018). Indeed, chaplaincy is an element "they [humanitarian NGOs] assume would be dealt by religion but in fact they don't provide the space for religion" (*Interview with a global advocacy manager from IRW*, 2018), which, according to him, is essential in order to be able to provide chaplaincy services that would fit the needs of a population affected by a humanitarian crisis. He thinks it is particularly true in cases where people have to grieve and/or feel an extreme trauma and thinks that humanitarian aid agencies try to provide psychosocial support "from a secular perspective" but that is "completely inadequate" for people of faith (*Interview with a global advocacy manager from IRW*, 2018).

The only case where chaplaincy services have been offered by an NGO that he knows of is the American Red Cross but no information could be found about that case. He made an interesting point that this is probably linked to the fact that in America "they don't see religion as a threat" (*Interview with a global advocacy manager from IRW*, 2018). He also mentioned that Christian agencies have probably tried to do it. Moreover, he explained that if NGOs are not willing or able to provide such services, they should work in partnership with faith leaders and faith communities. In order to do so, they could use the recently published guidelines on a faith-sensitive approach that were developed by the interviewee, among others. According to him, these guidelines should enable humanitarian NGOs to develop a "professional relationship with local faith communities" (*Interview with a global advocacy manager from IRW*, 2018). The aim of these guidelines is also to ensure that faith is included in psychosocial work, by every NGOs, and that these NGOs "understand the implication of faith" (*Interview with a global advocacy manager from IRW*, 2018). The

interviewee highlighted the importance of keeping in mind that there can be negative effects of faith. He gave the example of the Ebola crisis where the virus was spread through faith practices and rituals. Nonetheless, with "heavy level of counseling", they were able to adapt those rituals and practices in order to limit the spread of the disease while still providing "the same level of closure from a religious perspective" (*Interview with a global advocacy manager from IRW*, 2018).

The secular bias should not be as present in FBOs when delivering psychosocial support as it is in non-faith-based organizations. Indeed, the interviewee explained that FBOs are better able to relate to the conceptual framework of their beneficiaries of the same faith. If they are of a different faith, they would then be able to "better empathize" with the beneficiaries. Overall, FBOs would better understand how faith may help people who experienced a trauma. However, the possible advantages that FBOs could have depend on the training of their humanitarian workers, because more harm than good can be done by humanitarian workers without a proper training. It is particularly the case for local faith communities and leaders that usually do not have a training in psychosocial support. An exception to that is the Christian priests who are often trained in pastoral cares.

Moreover, the set of activities that FBOs are able to implement would, according to the interviewee, be different from the one of secular organizations. Indeed, where FBOs can implement activities having an impact on "specific faith practices and teachings", secular organizations have to base their activities on "generalized concept of (...) mindfulness and (...) gaining peace from your environment, positive thinking, all of those techniques" (*Interview with a global advocacy manager from IRW*, 2018). He however mentioned that even though faith teachings can help people to find closure in ways that secular teachings cannot, it is really faith- and context-specific (*Interview with a global advocacy manager from IRW*, 2018).

Finally, a last point he mentioned is the need for more religious literacy in the humanitarian world. Indeed, he thinks that the humanitarian actors need to better understand the effects of some faith practices on people affected by a trauma such as a humanitarian crisis, as well as the importance of faith counseling and the integration of faith leaders in such activities. He calls for the inclusion and consultation of these faith leaders in the design of psychosocial activities. To sum up, he argues in favor of

traditional psychosocial cares with religious literacy and humanitarian ethics (*Interview with a global advocacy manager from IRW*, 2018).

4.1.4. Interview with a regional program coordinator from the Lutheran World Federation

A regional program coordinator for the World Service of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) was interviewed through a Skype call on the 7th of June 2018.[8] He was the leader in the development of the faith-sensitive guidelines.

The World Service department of the Lutheran World Federation "responds to and challenges the causes and effects of human suffering and poverty" (Lutheran World Federation, 2018). It is the humanitarian, development and human rights branch of the LWF. They consider themselves as "inspired by God's love for humanity" and "rooted in Christian values of love, reconciliation and justice" (Lutheran World Federation, 2018). The LWF is a signatory of the Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Relief and insists on the fact that the organization "assists affected people - irrespective of ethnicity, gender, religion, race or political conviction. Assistance is provided in response and relative to need, without discrimination or favoritism" (Lutheran World Federation, 2018). In 2017, their total budget was of €155.5 millions. The LWF is a member of the ACT Alliance network.

The interviewee started by highlighting the fact that it is the people who matter, that a people-centered approach is needed in humanitarian aid. For this reason, humanitarian workers have to consider the full identity of their beneficiaries and for "the vast majority", faith is part of that identity. According to him, if humanitarian organizations want to "take people seriously and respond to them as people" (*Interview with a regional program coordinator from the LWF*, 2018), they have to understand and respond to their beneficiaries' faith identity because it is what enables them to cope and to interpret the crisis they are experiencing. Moreover, objectifying beneficiaries and treating them just as a number will reinforce the trauma of people who already went through a dehumanizing experience. The humanitarian organizations thus have to treat them as people and listen to them, including the faith part of their identity, in order to counter "some of the dehumanizing things they have been through" (*Interview with a regional program coordinator from the LWF*, 2018).

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[8] He agreed to be cited in this thesis and does not wish to be confidential. The transcript of this interview can be found in appendix 4.

However, he explained that the humanitarian community has had a difficult relationship with faith and faith-based organizations and has been silent about them. He thinks it is the result of the preconceptions regarding a hidden-agenda or proselytism from FBOs that the humanitarian community has. Consequently, FBOs and other organizations are not so different from each other and pursue the same approach because the humanitarian community has not yet been able to handle the faith, religion and spiritual aspects of their work. Moreover, FBOs have tended to overcompensate in their work and stick to standard humanitarian psychosocial activities (meaning without including religion and spirituality) in order to show that they do respect the humanitarian principles. He also mentioned that all organizations have "their own kind of internal creeds and mantras", not only the ones that are openly faith-based.

He explained that the guidelines for a faith-sensitive approach to humanitarian aid try to change the obscurity around the involvement of religion and spirituality in humanitarian aid by shifting the focus from the faith of organizations to the faith of the people themselves. It means that these guidelines are not only for faith actors, but for all humanitarian actors wishing to have a more holistic approach. Nonetheless, he also mentioned that there can be some negative sides in engaging with religion, faith and spirituality because they have different forms and vary depending on the people and the context. For instance, he pointed out that some forms can discriminate against women or be contrary to human rights principles. The guidelines also address this issue by explaining when humanitarian organizations should not engage with faith actors. It is interesting to note that psychosocial support was chosen as an entry point for religion and spirituality in humanitarian aid for the guidelines because of its cross-sectoral nature, enabling to touch upon all sectors of aid.

Finally, he explained that this approach of inclusion of faith in humanitarian aid means that organizations also have to include non-religious people. This is the reason why they use the concept of a 'faith-sensitive approach' in the guidelines rather than that of a 'faith-based' one. However, he wants to make sure that this is seen as a spectrum and not a dichotomy and that organizations are able to respond to all people within that spectrum. The organizations should do it while respecting some humanitarian ethics. For international FBOs willing to include a religious or spiritual component in their activities this is not a problem as long as they respect the humanitarian principles of

independence, neutrality, non-proselytization and "trade very carefully" (*Interview with a regional program coordinator from the LWF*, 2018). Other faith-based actors such as faith communities, including faith leaders, could also be involved in responding to the psychosocial needs of people who identify with a particular faith, religion or spirituality. These different faith actors could have an advantage in delivering psychosocial support to affected people because they "understand the people in their full identity" (*Interview with a regional program coordinator from the LWF*, 2018), meaning that they see them as "spiritual beings" and are consequently able to take the spiritual part of their beneficiaries' identity into consideration while responding to their psychosocial needs. Nevertheless, the interviewee insisted on the fact that FBOs are not the only or the best organizations to implement psychosocial support activities because other organizations also do an incredible job, but only that they could have an advantage.

4.1.5. Answers of a thematic advisor on community-based psychosocial support from the Church of Sweden

A thematic adviser on community-based psychosocial support for the Church of Sweden was questioned. As she was not available for an interview, she received the interview guide and answered in writing to the questions.[9]

The Church of Sweden is an Evangelical Lutheran Church in Sweden. Their aid department was created in 1947 as a local branch of the Lutheran World Federation. Today it is independent and is "co-branding with the ACT Alliance" (Church of Sweden, n.d.), as well as a member of the World Council of Churches. They are openly Christian as they declare that "We are supported by belief in the Trinity that creates, liberates and gives life and opportunities for reconciliation between people, God and the rest of the Creation" (Church of Sweden, n.d.). They are a signatory of the Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Relief. In 2016, they worked in 35 countries worldwide for a total budget of €46,8 millions (Church of Sweden, 2017).

The respondent mentioned that fulfilling the needs of affected people is essential in the healing process. Therefore, the way that those needs are met can impact the pre-existing social problems and inequalities positively or negatively. It is then important to properly answer to those needs in order to strengthen the affected population's capacity to deal with the crisis and the future ones that may occur. She explained that the Church of Sweden has a holistic view of wellbeing that is very similar to the one of Williamson and Robinson (2006), which was presented previously in this thesis. This is the reason why the Church of Sweden promotes community-based psychosocial support in order to improve the recovery and resilience of a community and consequently "reducing the need for more specialized support or treatment" (*Answers of a thematic advisor on community-based psychosocial support from Church of Sweden*, 2018).

She highlighted the importance of faith communities and faith leaders in the design and implementation of humanitarian aid as they can provide a certain access to people as well as ensure that the local communities participate in the activities. This is

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[9] She agreed to be cited in this thesis and does not wish to be confidential. Her answers can be found in appendix 5.

particularly true because "people may experience collective cultural, spiritual and religious stresses that may require immediate attention" (*Answers of a thematic advisor on community-based psychosocial support from Church of Sweden*, 2018). Nowadays, however, the humanitarian system largely thinks of the needs of affected people in terms of symptoms and reactions at the individual level (e.g. PTSD and depression), but she explained that in many "non-Western" societies, affected people also experience their trauma "in spiritual, religious, family or community terms" (*Answers of a thematic advisor on community-based psychosocial support from Church of Sweden*, 2018). To illustrate this, she mentioned the examples of the need for appropriate death and/or burial rituals that was previously explained in this thesis and the one of the conduct of "religious, spiritual and cultural practices" (*Answers of a thematic advisor on community-based psychosocial support from Church of Sweden*, 2018), including prayers. She also mentioned that cleansing and healing ceremonies can also be an appropriate contribution to the recovery and reintegration.

Understanding and enabling "cultural healing practices" can then support the wellbeing of affected people, whereas denying them "can prolong distress and potentially cause harm by marginalising helpful cultural ways of coping" (*Answers of a thematic advisor on community-based psychosocial support from Church of Sweden*, 2018). Even though it is challenging for non-local humanitarian workers, working in partnership with local religion and culture is "an essential part of psychosocial support" (*Answers of a thematic advisor on community-based psychosocial support from Church of Sweden*, 2018). Local religious and spiritual leaders thus have to be involved in order to help the humanitarian workers better understand the needs of the population and how to support them. This is particularly true if religious actors are very active at the local level. In addition to these elements, the respondent pointed out that many studies show that religious spaces can be used as "a key focal point for activities relevant to psychosocial recovery" (*Answers of a thematic advisor on community-based psychosocial support from Church of Sweden*, 2018) and that it would therefore be essential to enable the (re)construction of religious and spiritual facilities. She gave the example of the importance of discussing matters such as water with local religious actors of religious traditions as it could help the humanitarian organizations to design appropriate hygiene and sanitation systems.

Moreover, the respondent mentioned that religious actors can be an asset in the way that they are usually able to "leverage significant social, physical and spiritual assets for the benefit of communities" (*Answers of a thematic advisor on community-based psychosocial support from Church of Sweden*, 2018), stay in the long-term even though there is a decrease in funding and international attention and finally because they are present in wide areas thanks to their networks. These elements are often presented by scholarly writings about the possible comparative advantage of FBOs over secular organizations. She nonetheless pointed out that some local practices can be harmful, such as it is the case when they are politicized or when they do not respect human rights. Consequently, humanitarian workers have to "critically think" about their engagement with local practices and resources. This is what the guidelines for a faith sensitive humanitarian response try to do. She made it clear that impartiality and religious freedom are the driving force of the guidelines.

When it comes to the involvement of FBOs in responding to psychosocial needs, the respondent pointed out that it can be difficult to work with them. Indeed, according to her, not all of them "have an inclusive outlook" and "differences in religious beliefs and interpretations can be drivers of conflict and ethnic and social tensions" (*Answers of a thematic advisor on community-based psychosocial support from Church of Sweden*, 2018). When there is a positive relationship, trust and "shared identities and priorities", however, activities that are designed at the local level can be implemented. These activities could "perhaps be more effective in achieving the desired impact more quickly" (*Answers of a thematic advisor on community-based psychosocial support from Church of Sweden*, 2018).

4.1.6. Interview with a psychosocial support and staff wellbeing technical adviser

The interviewee is a psychosocial support and staff wellbeing technical adviser. The interview took place through a Skype call on the 26th of June 2018.[10] As the interviewee wished to be confidential, the organization will be called X.

The organization X is an international NGO that is openly Christian. They work in more than 100 countries worldwide thanks to their large network of church-affiliated organizations. They also are a signatory of the Code of Conduct.

The interviewee explained that religion and spirituality play a significant role in humanitarian aid but that it varies from context to context. She however insisted on the fact that, in terms of activities, religion and spirituality do not play a role, even though she recognized it is important to understand a community and its needs.

She explained that the connection between affected people and religious communities, faith and practices can be promoted as long as they "promote resilience and provide strength and opportunities, or social community connections" (*Interview with a psychosocial support and staff wellbeing technical adviser* 2018). Moreover, she pointed out that when there are different religions and spiritualties in a same space, the humanitarian organizations have to be more inclusive. She also mentioned that it is important to fix boundaries when "religious aspects (…) [are] intermixed with other types of structures of leadership which we want to stay impartial from" (*Interview with a psychosocial support and staff wellbeing technical adviser* 2018).

Furthermore, the interviewee does not think that it is important to integrate "religious elements" in psychosocial support activities. She explained that "spiritual elements" can be integrated but not religious ones because:

> we're not always experts in other people's faith and we're not always aware of how a person's, how a group's religion can be used within their community and so it can be a contentious activity for us to bring it in or it can even be (…) a bit dangerous (*Interview with a psychosocial support and staff wellbeing technical adviser* 2018).

According to her, it really depends on the context and the implementing method (direct or indirect). Nonetheless, she mentioned that beneficiaries can "bring in

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their own faith", but that she does not "believe that it's important to integrate spirituality or religion into psychosocial services that we as an agency are providing" (*Interview with a psychosocial support and staff wellbeing technical adviser* 2018).

She mentioned that for the organization X, their faith is not part of the activities they implement. She then highlighted the fact that they are impartial and work with people of other faiths and therefore do not wish to "take a role" in allowing beneficiaries "to bring in the strength of their own faith" (*Interview with a psychosocial support and staff wellbeing technical adviser* 2018). However, she pointed out that other FBOs can have a "deep connection" with their beneficiaries thanks to their pre-existing connections with the communities through faith and that they are therefore able to identify with them. It enables them to create a space in their activities in which faith can be brought. Some FBOs would thus be able to bridge the faith identity that "provides strength and healing" with social support.

The role of faith leaders and communities was also discussed. They would have "a strong (…) guiding presence (…) [and be] in a position of (…) providing a certain sense of safety (…) [that] faith can offer" (*Interview with a psychosocial support and staff wellbeing technical adviser* 2018). The interviewee explained that they can play a role in connecting the affected people of their communities with services provided by organizations, not specifically faith-based ones.

The interviewee recognized the multiplicity of faith-based organizations. She thinks that, ideally, it should not be harder for FBOs to provide psychosocial support to people in needs, but that is not always the case. She gave the example of providing psychosocial support to a group of a different faith than that of the organization and the fact that it can bring a lot of challenges regarding acceptance, trust and suspicion, even though the organization does not bring any "religious kind of concepts or approaches into your psychosocial activities or area of reach" (*Interview with a psychosocial support and staff wellbeing technical adviser* 2018). Finally, she discussed the fact that even though the organization X is often implementing through partner organizations, their work is still in line with international standards.

4.2. Discussion

The aim of this section is to discuss, interpret and analyze the different elements that were highlighted in the previous sections. This part will answer to the following research question and its three sub-questions: what is the role of faith-based organizations in providing psychosocial support activities to people affected by humanitarian crises? And the three sub-questions are the following: what is the relationship between religion and psychological wellbeing of people affected by humanitarian crises?; what are the effects of psychosocial support activities with a religious component on the psychological wellbeing of people affected by humanitarian crises?; How is religion integrated (or not) into psychosocial support activities by humanitarian organizations and specifically by faith-based organizations?

All of the interviewees highlighted the positive impacts that religion and spirituality can have on the psychological wellbeing of people affected by a humanitarian crisis. Indeed, even though they were not literally cited as religious coping mechanisms, most of the key functions of religion in coping were indirectly mentioned by most of the interviewees. The interpretation, comfort and social cohesiveness ones were the most mentioned.

Nevertheless, as in the literature, all the interviewees pointed out that religion and spirituality can also have a negative impact on the psychosocial wellbeing of people who experienced a trauma, either in exacerbating a pre-existing problem or in creating new ones. Different examples were given above, such as the use of only traditional methods to treat mental health conditions (e.g. schizophrenia) or the non-respect of human rights. The term "co-dependency" was used by an interviewee to describe the relationship of religion and spirituality with psychosocial wellbeing and it is more than appropriate to characterize this relation.

The positive effects of religious coping mechanisms on people affected by a trauma show that religion and spirituality can have their place in psychosocial support provided by humanitarian organizations. Obviously, the possible negative impacts have to be controlled and minimized as much as possible in order to respect the "Do No Harm" principle and other humanitarian principles. Integrating a religious and spiritual component might enable people to recover more easily by having a positive impact on their wellbeing because spirituality is one of the factor of wellbeing. This was reflected in the interviews, as all the interviewees but one found it important to

integrate religion and spirituality in psychosocial support activities for people affected by a humanitarian crisis. The reason why the interviewee does not agree with this is because she thinks that it is not the place of humanitarian organizations to engage in such activities. It is worth noting that this interviewee is the only one who did not take part in the creation of the guidelines for a faith-sensitive approach in humanitarian aid. It shows that religion and spirituality still are a sensitive topic in the humanitarian system.

What clearly stands out of the literature and the interviews is that the implementation of psychosocial activities with a religious and spiritual component can only be done in partnership with local religious and spiritual communities and leaders. A few reasons can be cited to justify this. Firstly, the specificity of the context in which the crisis is happening. As was demonstrated in the first part of this thesis, religion and spirituality are concepts which are not clearly identifiable or categorized. One of the reasons for this is that they vary depending on the context, culture and people. It is something that came out of the interviews a lot. This demonstrates that delivering psychosocial support with a religious or spiritual component can be really hard for humanitarian organizations. It is indeed difficult for humanitarian workers who come from abroad to understand the religious, spiritual and cultural complexities of people affected by a crisis and their communities. As mentioned by one of the interviewees, humanitarian workers understand it wrongly more often than rightly. The involvement of local people is therefore essential and more specifically that of affected religious and spiritual communities and leaders.

The second reason which can be given is the importance of religious and spiritual spaces. Many of the interviewees highlighted the importance of religious places for affected people, but also to implement activities. Those places are used as places of sanctuary and also as spaces where communities can meet and participate in activities implemented by humanitarian organizations. These activities range from psychosocial support groups to distribution points. One interviewee pointed out that they are often many religious locations and that they are usually well-known in the different communities. These are the reasons why another interviewee explained that it would be essential to enable the construction and reconstruction of religious and spiritual facilities in order to facilitate the recovery of affected people. However, the latter is highly controversial in the humanitarian sector because it could go against the

humanitarian principles and donors would usually not agree on their money being spent in such constructions. It was also mentioned by another interviewee who discussed the importance of these religious and spiritual spaces for the social dimension because they would enable the community to gather together.

Thirdly, as highlighted in the literature review, the social dimension after a humanitarian crisis is something important and this was also reflected in the different interviews. As explained in the literature review, the humanitarian actors usually use the term 'psychosocial support' because it highlights the social dimension. Indeed, people experience their trauma not only on the individual level, but also on the community level. A great example that was given by an interviewee is the fact that in some regions in Syria, if a family member of someone in the neighborhood dies, festivities that have been planned for a long-time still take place, but in a quiet manner and reduced size in order to be respectful to the neighbors who have lost a loved one. In the case of humanitarian crises, the social support system of affected people is usually damaged, making the situation even harder for them since they are not able to rely on their normal social support systems. These social support systems include, for many, religious and spiritual communities. It not only shows that, in addition to a psychological approach, a psychosocial approach is necessary as well, but also that faith communities can be a non-negligible source of strength for people. For humanitarian actors, it means that they have to work on the community level and not only on the individual level, but given as they are outsiders, non-local humanitarian actors then have to use the community leaders, who often happen to also be the religious and spiritual ones.

More than these three reasons, religious and spiritual leaders can be of great help in case of humanitarian emergencies. Indeed, it was mentioned by an interviewee that they are often a community's focal point. They can thus be used to spread messages and disseminate information. This is particularly true because, as mentioned by an interviewee, they usually meet many people on a regular basis and have large networks across communities/regions/countries. They can connect people with aid organizations and help the latter get access to people who may not be comfortable with dealing directly with humanitarian organizations or asking for help. Moreover, they can ensure the participation of their communities in psychosocial support activities. An interviewee also explained that faith leaders pull communities together, which is

quite important because, as mentioned earlier, the social system and network of a person affected by a humanitarian crisis is decisive.

Furthermore, religious and spiritual leaders can be really useful to affected population and to psychological wellbeing because they are usually the ones performing rituals. Indeed, the importance of burial and death rituals was highlighted by most of the interviewees as well as in the literature review since it helps the families who lost their loved ones to get closure and improve their psychological wellbeing over time. If communities cannot get that kind of closure, it will add additional pressure and distress on top of the trauma they already have because they experience a humanitarian crisis. Two interviewees gave the example of Ebola to illustrate that. Indeed, in many cases, the virus was passed through the performance of some death rituals and people were not willing to change these rituals as they thought that could affect what happens to the dead. Organizations had to work in close partnerships with religious and spiritual leaders in order to see how these rituals could be adapted and still performed while being safe for the people assisting and doing them.

The significance of local religious and spiritual leaders and communities is also due to the fact that they are usually the first ones to respond. Indeed, most humanitarian organizations responding to a crisis are not on the ground at the beginning of the crisis and have to gather their teams and equipment before being able to respond in the field. For instance, in the case of a natural disaster, the local organizations, including religious and spiritual communities, are usually the first ones to answer to the needs of the affected population because they are already there. It gives them a sort of special status in the eyes of the people they help. However, as mentioned by an interviewee, local religious and spiritual communities and leaders responding to the needs of the affected population do not always do it in respect of the humanitarian standards. It can create some issues as they might discriminate in selecting their beneficiaries for example. It raises the question of the respect of the humanitarian principles that will be discussed later on.

Another issue is that they do not always have the appropriate training in delivering humanitarian aid and especially in psychosocial support that demands very specific trainings. The only exception that was mentioned many times in the literature and by an interviewee is in the Christian tradition where many pastors and priests are trained in pastoral cares. Besides this example, the lack of training of local religious and

spiritual leaders and communities can result in greater harm to the affected population.

The general consensus among the interviewees was that faith communities and faith leaders should be involved in the design and implementation of psychosocial support activities, but more generally in all activities. They would help humanitarian organizations to better understand the needs of their beneficiaries and even the identity of their beneficiaries. This is also something that is reflected in the guidelines for a faith-sensitive approach in humanitarian response. Nonetheless, these guidelines give advice in order for humanitarian organizations to know how to appropriately engage with these kinds of communities and leaders and limit the possible damage they could do. Moreover, the guidelines give principles for partnering with faith leaders and set conditions where organizations should not engage with them.

An element that was brought up by an interviewee is that integrating a religious or spiritual component in psychosocial support activities make people feel like they are treated as people, it gives them humanity during a very dehumanizing experience. This can be related to the point of another interviewee who explained that local faith actors could have an advantage in delivering psychosocial support with or without a religious or spiritual component because they are able to understand people in their full identity, as spiritual beings. It highlights the need for a more people-centered approach.

Many interviewees did the distinction between local and international faith-based organizations. The local ones usually consist of religious and spiritual communities and leaders. As mentioned by an interviewee, the international faith-based organizations would have a strong advocacy power and could uniquely link the local faith-based organizations with international institutions such as donors. All faith-based organizations, be they international or local, would have an advantage in delivering psychosocial support with a religious or spiritual component because they would better understand the conceptual framework of their beneficiaries, how religion and spirituality can positively impact the psychological wellbeing of people and would therefore have a more holistic approach to psychosocial support. Moreover, when there is a deep and pre-existing connection with the beneficiaries, FBOs would be able to easily bring religious and spiritual elements in their activities. FBOs would then be the only ones able to implement psychosocial support activities directly linked to religious and spiritual teachings and practices.

However, it was also explained by an interviewee that because of their beliefs and principles on certain topics, it could be hard for donors and organizations to work with some FBOs. It seems appropriate to note that, as largely highlighted in the literature review but also by an interviewee, the so-called secular organizations also have their own identity and ideology. According to an interviewee, some positive partnerships could be established with FBOs if there are shared priorities and a shared identity. When this is the case, an interviewee suggested that FBOS could be more efficient and faster in achieving results, depending on the training of people implementing the activities.

Another point that was mentioned in the interviews and that was widely discussed in the literature review is the secular bias present in the humanitarian system, leading to a certain form of silence about the integration of religion and spirituality in humanitarian activities[11]. As a consequence, religious and spiritual communities and leaders are excluded from humanitarian aid, even though, as highlighted previously, they could have an important positive role. A couple of interviewees and the literature review pointed out that FBOs have also sidelined religion and spirituality because of the fear of being accused of not respecting the humanitarian principles, a presumed hidden-agenda and proselytizing their beneficiaries. It results in the absence of such components in psychosocial support activities, but more generally in all humanitarian work. Consequently, the approach to psychosocial support would not be much different between faith-based organizations and other organizations. According to a couple of interviewees, this approach would be secular and based on Western models. It would therefore be inadequate for religious and spiritual people affected by a humanitarian crisis because of the difference in perceptions between the affected people and the humanitarian organizations. It again highlights the positive contribution that psychosocial support activities with a religious or spiritual component could have on people affected by a humanitarian crisis.

As a result of this secular bias and this standardized approach to psychosocial support in humanitarian aid, it can be observed that most Western organizations, even the faith-based ones, are still not implementing many activities that have an openly

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[11] A thing that can be noted is that it was observed that the words religion, spirituality and faith are often used interchangeably. It seems that the difference between these concepts is not clear for the interviewees, but it is safe to say that the difference is generally not clear and acknowledge in the humanitarian system.

religious or spiritual component such as faith-based counseling for rape victims, even though they recognize that it could help their beneficiaries. This is where the religious and spiritual communities and leaders intervene. Nonetheless, the overall agreement among most of the interviewees is that humanitarian organizations and more precisely faith-based organizations can implement psychosocial support activities with a religious and spiritual component as long as they respect the humanitarian principles and are properly trained. If they do not implement such activities, they should at least be faith-sensitive, which is what the guidelines try to do by showing to all humanitarian organizations, no matter their faith, the way to go. They are a very good first step in the direction of greater faith-sensitivity and religious literacy.

It was clearly demonstrated previously that implementing psychosocial support activities with a religious or spiritual component can be beneficial for religious and spiritual people affected by a humanitarian crisis. Nevertheless, it raises the question regarding the people who may not feel religious or spiritual. As highlighted in the literature review and by an interviewee, it is clear that these people should not be forced to participate in any kind of activities that would make them feel uncomfortable and do not fit with their principles. Just as non-faith-based organizations should ideally offer activities that are faith-sensitive, faith-based organizations should also offer activities that correspond to the possible non-religiosity or spirituality of some beneficiaries. Unfortunately, it can be observed that it is not often the case. To be effective, psychosocial support has to be sensitive to the beliefs and feelings of affected people and humanitarian organizations have to think critically about their engagement and relation with religion and spirituality.

Another consensus is that if they do implement those kinds of activities, it has to be done in partnership with locals and more precisely religious and spiritual communities and leaders because they are better positioned to understand and know how to fill in the needs of their communities. However, this partnership must not be systematic but must be well thought beforehand because some may not have good intentions, resulting in greater harm than good. The engagement with spiritual and religious communities and leaders is particularly important in a context where humanitarian organizations barely dare to implement psychosocial support activities with a religious or spiritual component. The humanitarian system as it is now does not yet provide a space for religion and spirituality. Nonetheless, it seems that it is changing with the

growing publication of researches on FBOs and faith in development and humanitarian aid over the last two decades as well as with the publication of the guidelines for a faith-sensitive approach in humanitarian aid. The last point that this research has highlighted is the great need for religious literacy in the humanitarian system in order for them to be able to deliver aid fitting the needs of their beneficiaries better.

Finally, it is important to conclude this section with an important remark. A general consensus among the literature and the collected data regarding the positive role of religion and spirituality on psychological wellbeing and in psychosocial support activities was observed and demonstrated throughout this thesis. It is interesting to question this relation. Indeed, it could be due to the fact that there is a real positive effect and/or because voices against integration of religion and spirituality in activities are not widespread in academic literature and among FBO members. It is important to keep this in mind when reading the research. Indeed, despite the interview of someone working for an organization that is not considered as faith-based (the IFRC Psychosocial Centre), the others were workers from FBOs. Moreover, out of the six persons who participated in this research, five (except the one from the FBO X) were involved in the process from which the guidelines for a faith-sensitive approach in humanitarian aid resulted.

5. Conclusion

This research aimed to better understand the role of faith-based organizations in delivering psychosocial support to people affected by humanitarian crises by analyzing three elements. Firstly, the relation of religion and spirituality with psychological wellbeing of people affected by humanitarian crises was looked into. Secondly, the effects of psychosocial support activities with a religious or spiritual component on the psychological wellbeing were explored. Thirdly, the role of faith-based organizations in delivering psychosocial support to people affected by humanitarian crises was clarified.

Despite the fact that, as explained previously, most of the interviewees were involved in the process of creation of the guidelines for a faith-sensitive approach in humanitarian aid and that they all believed in this approach, the results are still interesting and meaningful. Indeed, this research indicated that religion and spirituality have a place in the psychosocial support activities for people affected by humanitarian crisis because a positive relation exists between religion and spirituality and psychological wellbeing. It was demonstrated that religion and spirituality, through religious coping mechanisms, can influence the psychological recovery of people affected by a humanitarian crisis positively. Nonetheless, it was also explained that religion and spirituality can have negative impacts in the healing process. Humanitarian organizations implementing such activities have thus to control and manage these possible negative effects.

Furthermore, this research also established that the best way to implement psychosocial support activities with a religious or spiritual component is to work in close collaboration with local religious and spiritual leaders and communities because they know the context and the needs of affected people better. They also usually have religious and spiritual spaces at their disposal, they usually hold a community together and they can perform greatly needed burial and death rituals in times of humanitarian crises. Additionally, they are usually the first responders when a humanitarian crisis strikes. However, some of them lack training or have not been trained at all which can lead to disastrous consequences on the psychological wellbeing of affected people. Moreover, some religious and spiritual communities and leaders have harmful practices that do not respect the dignity and human rights of people. In these cases, the

engagement of humanitarian organizations with such communities and leaders have to be meticulously thought or avoided.

The role of faith-based organizations in delivering psychosocial support activities with a religious or spiritual component was also discussed in this thesis. It was observed that they could be uniquely positioned to work with religious and spiritual communities and leaders, as well as with religious and spiritual leaders because they would have a more holistic approach. Nevertheless, this research has shown that the involvement of FBOs in psychosocial support could be negative if they do no respect the beliefs, the human rights or the dignity of their beneficiaries, although this could be said for every organization.

This leads to another point that was discussed in this thesis: the secular bias in humanitarian aid. Indeed, the research has shown that there is not yet a space for religion and spirituality in humanitarian aid. It results in a disconnection between the affected people and the 'standardized Western approach' to psychosocial support. In order to avoid this problem, the results pointed out that humanitarian organizations should at least be faith-sensitive in their approach to psychosocial support and humanitarian aid in general. Ultimately, humanitarian organizations have to think critically about their relation to religion and spirituality, as well as their engagement with religious and spiritual leaders and communities.

All the results of this thesis confirm what was explained in the literature review and the interviewees brought some more insight. Overall, it concludes that faith-based organizations play a role in providing psychosocial support activities to people affected by humanitarian crisis and that religion and spirituality have their place in psychosocial support activities. But in the end, it is all about understanding people in their full identity, including the religious and spiritual parts. It is about understanding their needs, whatever form they take, and being able to properly answer to these while doing no harm. It is about respect and dignity.

The recommendations for humanitarian organizations that could be derived from this thesis are that they should engage with religious and spiritual communities and leaders under certain conditions and use the newly published guidelines for a faith-sensitive approach in humanitarian aid to help them construct a positive relationship. Another recommendation that is more directed toward development actors is to train local religious and spiritual communities and leaders in responding to the psychosocial

needs of people in prevision of a humanitarian crisis while respecting humanitarian ethics.

Finally, in order to improve the knowledge and strengthen these results, it might be interesting to conduct another research in the field. It would indeed be highly interesting in future research to interview beneficiaries and humanitarian workers from many different organizations who are directly involved in the implementation of psychosocial support activities. This was not feasible due to time and budget constraints. Moreover, collecting more data and analyzing them through a psychological perspective, which is barely done in the literature at the moment, would give another type of understanding of the research problematic in the context of a humanitarian crisis.

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7. Appendixes

Appendix 1: Transcript of the interview with a technical advisor from the IFRC Psychosocial Centre

Transcript of the interview with Sarah Harrison (SH), technical advisor from the IFRC Psychosocial Centre in Denmark and Co-Chair for the Inter-Agency Standing Committee Mental Health and Psychosocial Support Reference Group, by Florine De Wolf (FD). The Skype call took place on the 24th of May 2018.

FD: So could you please describe yourself, tell me a bit more about your background and your role in the Centre please?

SH: Yes, so my name is Sarah Harrison, I have two jobs or I double-hat. One of them is I'm a technical advisor for the IFRC, the International Federation of Red Cross Red Crescent societies. And I work at the Reference Centre for psychosocial support. It's a global center but it's housed and administrated within the Danish Red Cross in Copenhagen. But it has an international function. So I'm a technical mental health and psychosocial support adviser with them. And then the other part of my job is … I co-chair on behalf of the IFRC the mental health and psychosocial support reference group which sit within the IASC, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee Secretariat. Hum which is a secretariat that's based in Geneva and that's where UN agencies, red Cross-red Crescent movements and international NGOs have kind of an equal platform. And the mental health and psychosocial support group there has an emergency focus. So it got a humanitarian mandate. Hum they also cover migration and refugees' settings in addition to IDPs or natural disasters.

FD: Okay, thank you. Hum so I would like to start with a more general, global question. According to you, what's the place of religion and spirituality in humanitarian action?

SH: So what's the first part of the question, I just heard spirituality and religion?

FD: What is the place of religion or spirituality in Humanitarian action?

SH: Ha okay, what I can talk about from the perspective of hum an HPSS and for [inaudible]. A lot of people understand or interpret hum distressing event that happened to them through the prism of spirituality or religions. So for example hum people blaming hum cyclone or a flood or something on something bad they have done or their community has done, hum so it's often to be said to be God's will. And for some people there is after a disaster has happened there is some form of comfort from the fact that they have survived it and they have been kind of accompanied by this spirituality through the event and it brings them closer to … to their god or Allah or to whoever their belief system is in. And for others, it turns people away from their belief system because they say with all this level of destruction hum and with all these sufferings that people are going through, they cannot possibly be a higher power or a god. And then also from the MHPSS perspective and some mental health disorders, for example schizophrenia and epilepsy, are often interpreted through the prism of persons being possessed, in terms of being possessed by the Djinn or the devil, or having a genie inside them. So a lot of hum the kind of social care side or the psychosocial support side of supporting people with epilepsy and schizophrenia, it is also educating their families that this is actually a medical disorder, it's a - some mental health problem, hum it's not they are possessed and it also means that they can be treated. And those treatments are so usually pharmaceutical, they usually should require medication. Hum so there is no hum …. there is no reason why we could stop someone from going to a shaman or to go to a traditional healer for them to be able to cure a person with epilepsy or schizophrenia. Hum but it's not, it isn't actually going to

cure them. Hum so often people will go to the traditional healer and the shaman and if they have also had some form of diagnosis from a psychiatrist would also be taking them medication as well. So there is a bit of a co-dependency there. And we also find it a lot the same with lost and grief. So if the person has lost hum another person, a family member or has lost property or even if a family member is missing hum there is the profound feeling of loss and in the case of lethal burial, there is obviously a burial ritual that goes around that whatever religion or spirituality you're looking at hum and for some if haven't given someone an appropriate burial or of they don't know where the remains of their loved ones are in the case of missing persons, then it can also cause them an additional level of grief on top of the physical separation and it is often because they feel their soul is not being laid to rest appropriately or they haven't been able to pass over to the next life or the afterlife. Hum so that's particularly the case when we see mass atrocities in mass graves or again when people are missing. Hum so it's a bit multifacetly intersectional. I think also for the basic understanding that religion can be an enormous social support after a crisis event hum and that religious leaders or spiritual leaders are the ... are often the community focal point, they are hum they're like a fulcrum that - they pull community members together. But also places of worship are often hum used as ... as places of sanctuary, a cyclone shelter as distribution points, as meeting points, as kind of ad-hoc community centers or information points hum in emergency settings because they are known, they often are essential locations in villages and town, hum there is often many of them. It is also the case that they hum in the case of mosque for example, they are often use to disseminate messages hum because they have loud speakers or to ask Imams or pastors in churches to also pass on key information to community members because they have a large number of people they meet on a regular basis during the week and they can pass on messages to people. For example, health promotion messages or message about disaster risk reduction or future aid distribution or this type of things.

FD: Okay, you already touch to most of my questions so thank you [laugh].

SH: You're welcome.

FD: Hum according to you, what's the importance of psychosocial support after a humanitarian crisis? How important is it to implement activities focused on psychosocial support?

SH: ... psychosocial support, in terms of why is it important?

FD: Yes.

SH: Yes hum I think there are two ... two branches of this. One is having a psychosocial approach to humanitarian aid which is often hum it is also the same as what's known as a protection mainstreaming approach. The ideas are the same and the outcomes are the same, which is where we are advocating for humanitarian aid to be provided in a way that supports a person's well-being, safety and dignity. Hum with that becomes ... is included issues to do with access, in terms of physical access to latrines or to water points or to being able to access a shelter or relief supplies distributions on a regular basis. Hum you know a disable person who is unable to physically access a latrine or is physically enables to build their own shelter because they haven't got the maneuverability, hum it's causen them additional distress on top of the fact that they have already survived an emergency. So one thing is called a psychosocial approach, it's also known as this protection mainstreaming or by others they simply call it good humanitarian programming because you have taken into account all these factors. Hum that is a bit different to a specific psychosocial intervention. And why a specific psychosocial intervention is important? It's because it looks at both or all levels, it looks at supporting an individual who might be in extreme distress or individuals who would have far more distress that needs to kind of heel and to recover and to manage to

function again, and get their day to day life after an emergency. And in order to do that they often need the support of family members around them and their friends, and their community at large. So psychosocial support is very much about working to rebuild individuals but the way you do it can be through individual work with a focus work with someone or it can be supporting family and community process in some networks.

FD: Okay hum thank you, and what are the effects of psychosocial support activities with a religious component on the psychosocial wellbeing of people affected by humanitarian crises?

SH: Yes this is a bit of a ... double-edge sword if I could use the acronym. I think hum ... this is a positive example where religion and psychosocial support have ... hum coincided and support each other very well. And there are examples where hum it ... hum religion has coopted psychosocial support in a negative way or has exacerbated a pre-existing problem. Hum examples where it works well is in things like communal burial or hum rituals around morning or grief, as well as rituals like marriage and birth that happened every day and also happen as a result of the emergency to a greater degree. And you know and spirituality are a great way of bringing people together because these are people who already have a common pre-existing connection to each other, a connection to a higher being hum and they already have a certain amount of trust between each other but also trust in the religious leaders of that particular group of faith. So for psychosocial work, it makes it a lot easier hum when try to do communal program if you are able to link up with religious leaders and use them as a resource and also to use convening power as a positive way of bringing people together to create that family and community support around a person. That's where it works very well. Where it works not very well is where religious leaders hum ... are either ignorant or they have their own particular agenda they wish to pursue. So the message they are giving to their congregation members or to their religious followers are negative or counter-productive or are actually in violation of someone's human rights. Hum and hum for example religious leaders can be inciting their congregations toward hating another person or toward people with hum hate towards homosexuals or people with LGBT, hum status and that because it runs counter to their faith. Hum and how these people should be treated is the same on a woman being raped or when a man is being raped for example. In some communities, this is hum how they threat that person can be religiously informed. Hum and then in some cases it can also be a violation of a person's human rights. So denying a female the right of having an abortion for example if she is carrying a child born as a result of rape, it is one such example of that. And in some countries that's because the law prohibits abortion but that's because it is a law that has been informed by religion. And in other times, for example with the Ebola outbreak, the most recent one in West Africa and now in Congo there is tensions between hum allowing people to come together in these congregations in groups, allowing them to do things like the communal washing or the washing of bodies, particularly in the Muslim faith for example, and hum ... how that needed to stop will be minimized because it was also encouraging the spread of Ebola or any other infectious disease such as cholera as well. So then it becomes problematic in that case. And then again it's very difficult, it's a difficult balance because you very much want people to have that closure that comes from being able to give someone appropriate burial or to do an appropriate ritual after someone has died, but at the same time, there is a public health concern here with the spread of a disease that is actually being exacerbated because people are coming together because they are washing dead bodies that are still carrying an infectious hum disease. And very much we've seen in lots of the conflicts that happen in the outworld, religion is being used as a divisive factor

between different groups and also being used as a mobilization factor. And some of that, if there is a big psychology element in it because people are feeling a sense of belonging hum to a particular religious group hum because of what's happening in their environment around them, so their identity and their kind of source of strength from a psychosocial perspective is derived from their religious identity. Hum but that's also paradoxly separating them from the wider community across religion or across faith. That is particularly the case we've seen with people that were associated or still associated with Islamic State or Daesh and people who were formally associated with it. And there are a lot of discussions now about kind of reeducating children that were former fighters with Islamic State, to try to reeducate them in terms of a more secular education actually, rather than having this hum religious education that has been boarding on doctrine, for some being used very much as a mobilization approach with them to find.

FD: Yes, okay. Hum for my thesis, I also research a bit about the role of faith-based organizations in psychosocial support.

SH: Yes.

FD: So my next question is: according to you, what is the role of faith-based organizations in providing psychosocial support activities?

SH: And are we talking about hum at any level, we're talking about national organizations, local CBOs or international NGOs that might have a faith-based perspective?

FD: All of them

SH: All of them yes okay. Hum I think the ... as I mentioned before I think the local community based organizations, churches or mosques for example, are an enormous set of support to people and they act both as a place, hum a physical structure but also the meaning and the emotions, things that are attached to that place as well, and the fact that they are often most people's friends and their relationships with other community members is informed through a particular religion or spirituality. Hum so absolutely at the local level, with your local mosque or your local community based organization got a faith-based perspective, is very strong. And I think a lot of them are also doing very local level charity work or traditionally called charity work in terms of hum you know soup kitchen or food distribution or during Ramadan or during Diwali festival or things like that. Hum and that's not to be underestimated because I think they are often the first line responders in any emergency. And there are people [inaudible] rightly or wrongly and they might not do it correctly or to necessarily humanitarian standards, but the reality is they are the first responders. And from international NGO perspective, there are some that are faith-based organizations. I think World Vision is one of the big one, Caritas - the catholic faith, and also the ACT Alliance - the Action by Churches Together network, as well as Islamic Relief and .. Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society from a Jewish based one. I think all of them have a very strong advocacy hum power at the international level hum because they have this unique bridging between very local level church, for example local level catholic church and the biggest structure Caritas. So they can set standards or guidelines with their particular organization or network members, and these kind of dos or do nots and work out where the red lines are. They can also, they have enormous advocacy power, kind of within the all humanitarian system as a all. So when there is like discussions or negotiations between like UNHCR and NGOs or with UN agencies and NGOs, for example the Sphere standards, there are a big network that has a right to sit at the table and kind of represent faith-based organizations' views on Sphere standards, how they can be implemented. Hum and that wouldn't happen if it was just an individual church for example like Christian Aid: it is not big enough on its own right but it is when it's

pooled together within the ACT Alliance network. Hum … and the same for smaller members of Caritas for example as well. And I think for UNHCR in particular, their third or fourth largest international partner, I think it's fourth largest international partner globally for refugees' operations is the Lutheran World Federation which is a faith-informed NGO, coming from the Lutheran faith tradition. So they are having plent- they receive a lot of money from UNHCR, they have a very strong network in refugee operations and both in countries that are hosting refugees for example in Amerique or in Europe, as well as managing refugees camps in places like Kenya or … or Ethiopia or other locations.

FD: But are they any disadvantages for faith-based organizations to be involved in psychosocial support?

SH: I think there is nothing, apart from this kind of fine line between them … the kind of psychological aspect, I think has been particularly well demonstrated with the Islamic State where they have taken vulnerable people, whether it's a vulnerable youth or a vulnerable child or a vulnerable female who has run away from her family and has gone to be an Islamic State, they have used their religion and their particular interpretations of the Sunni faith as a mobilizing cause for something that has actually been quite detrimental and has long-term negative implications within that region. And I think this is one of the stark examples of where it can go wrong, where you can use religion for psychological mean to kind of mobilize and really infuse your ideology in somebody consistently and to adapt or to warp education curriculum for children in schools to this particular way of thinking or this particular ideology, to kind of breed new fighters to insure you have a consistent supply of militants, and that's not necessarily different from any other ideologies hum from a strictly secular ideology in terms of communism for example, it did the same thing hum where you also had communist ideology going through schools and that was ultimately creating people that believed in the communist approach as a form of governance. Hum hist- no not historically, it's a well-known fact in the reality that the humanitarian aid system is inherently secular. Its set up, its approach, its kind of sensitivity to the work are very much in the secular, if it is on the continuum from a secular one to hum to … to religiously informed or religiously based at the other end, it's much more the secular end of the continuum because it's hum you know the basic fundamental principles are humanity, impartiality, independence, neutrality, all of these things kind of bow more towards a secular approach and it's just a bit more difficult to explain how you could be independent, how you could be neutral, how you could be impartial if you're sitting from the perspective of a particular religion hum in terms of you're working for a faith-based organization, or for a church, or a mosque or a temple. Having said that, the humanitarian standards and guidelines and discourse and all these principles that international organizations hold themselves accountable to, are very much developed from a Western perspective. I mean when you look things at the Red Cross Red Crescent, we've where I work hum you know it came out of hum the battle of Solferino, which is a battle that happened in Italy in the 19th century and it also very much come from the Swiss tradition where they have these principles of neutrality and religion wasn't really an issue then, it didn't come up as an issue. So it's not … it got a questionable global applicability because its very tradition, the same way the kind of human right tradition has come out of a more Western discourse. Having said that, the people who are the most affected by emergencies, by disasters are the people who don't believe in the Western world. These are people who are living in countries that have a very very strong tradition of a particular faith or multiple faiths or multiple spiritualties that have a very different prism or understanding at which they look at the world. So they don't have the same attachment to the kind of the Enlightenment ideals of

independence or neutrality. You know if it is a mosque given food to somebody because that person is also a Muslim and they are followers, and for them that's absolutely fine. It is opposed to them giving you know the food parcel to a Jewish person or to a Buddhist and I think the .. the humanitarian system underestimates the power or the importance of a person's spirituality or religion, hum in particularly in emergencies or crisis situations where you kind of feel your very being, your entity is under threat, hum and they don't have the same respect for or understanding or nuances that have come out of this kind of 200 years of Western thoughts towards humanitarian aid and you know the humanitarian principles as well. And it … a lot of the guidelines verging on the end of secular in the fact that, with the belief sorry that secular approach to humanitarian aid, whether it's like psychosocial support or any type of aid, is the neutral, the best way to go. And that is an implicit understanding and that is again coming out from this kind of Western tradition that I'm not convinced that that neutral position is actually the same for people that are affected by an emergency because they often have a much stronger connection to spirituality and faith than it's given credit for in Western tradition.

FD: Yes yes I agree, this is well said, thank you. Hum so I think we covered most of my questions. But would you like to add anything?

SH: Hum no I don't, what's your kind of working hypothesis? what's your … What are you looking into specifically in terms of religion and psychosocial support?

FD: So I have my main research question: what is the role of faith-based organizations in providing psychosocial support activities to people affected by humanitarian crises?

SH: Yes okay.

FD: But as I'm studying in the faculty of religious studies, it's … the methodology is different. We have like subquestions and my three subquestions are: what is the relationship between religion and psychological wellbeing of people affected by humanitarian crises?

SH: Yes.

FD: the second one is: what are the effects of psychosocial support activities with a religious component on the psychological wellbeing of people affected by humanitarian crises?

SH: Yes.

FD: And the last one is: how is religion integrated (or not) in psychosocial support activities by humanitarian organizations and specifically by faith-based organizations?

SH: Okay.

FD: So my thesis will try to answer to all those questions.

SH: Okay [laugh].

FD: [laugh]

SH: I think also for question two.

FD: Yes.

SH: The … hum I think for some … your sub-question two sorry. For some religions and faith-approaches I think and the understanding of the impact of an emergency are very communally felt rather than felt at the individual level. And someone's level of suffering, when it's an individual thing happening to them, I think in many communities around the world hum it's something that has an impact at the communal level, much more than what happens in Western societies. So … I mean different from an earthquake in Italy. So for a lot of Muslims hum in the outworld or in Asia for example, if hum I know that many of them won't celebrate hum for example won't publicly celebrate a marriage. Hum this happened in Syria hum if they know that their neighbors are suffering because they might have lost a child or a family member due to the conflict. So while still the wedding will still take place and the local community

wouldn't be the normal big celebration hum, it would be a normal time and they are doing that out of respect for their neighbors.

FD: Yes.

SH: because they know the neighbors are grieving or mourning. Hum so I think there is a certain ... and that part is there just because they regard as Haram, to use the Arabic term, they regard as something shameful that you're celebrating when your fellow neighbors or you fellow community members are suffering. Hum and that's something that's very very powerful in that part of the world and it is with other religions as well. Some of it is coming from a cultural perspective and some of it is coming from a religious perspective, there are not things you cannot necessarily separate the two. Hum but it also makes it quite challenging for ... for aid organizations to work in such contexts because you need to find that balance between helping people to get back to normal life again or even if the new normal is quite different because they're still living under a protracted conflict hum and also giving people the space to have the respect for someone that has died or for someone that's missing. And that really is a fine balance and I don't think we get it right, I think get it wrong more often than we get it right. Hum and I think it's quite difficult for an outsider to understand, and certainly for a Westerner side. It is quite difficult for me on a personal level to understand why shouldn't a person celebrate their wedding; why should they limit themselves. It's so [inaudible] point of happiness, it's a point of bringing people together in the community. It's a joyful thing. Why should that be lower, why shou- we should join happiness be subsume underneath suffering on negative things because another family is grieving or mourning. And that's been given an elevated attention in the community hum but that's again partly based on their religion and partly based also upon the cultural aspect as well. But it just makes it quite complicated to try to do the psychosocial activities in such a dynamic.

FD: Yes, I think that can be really difficult for aid workers to know how to react and how to act in fact and how to implement those activities

SH: Yes.

FD: without hurting the community and the individuals.

SH: yes, very much so very much so yes. And it makes it very difficult if you're doing, if you want to do these group activities or community/village level activities to bring people together hum because you kind of have to navigate this mines field of respecting these people who are mourning and grieving but at the same time needing to bring these people in their group to begin healing and rebuilding hum again. And it's just very challenging to do.

FD: yes yes yes. Hum anything else you would like to add?

SH: No I don't think so, I think that's it.

Transcript of the interview with Kathy Angi (KA), psychosocial specialist and co-chair of the ACT Alliance psychosocial community of practice, by Florine De Wolf (FD). The Skype call took place on the 29th of May.

FD: So could you please present yourself a bit please, because Maria Rosa didn't tell me what was your role
KA: Okay. I am Kathy Angi, and I am a psychosocial support specialist
FD: Mmh-mmh
KA: and [coughing] I am the co-chair of the ACT Alliance community of practice
FD: Oh okay
KA: in psychoso- in community-based psychosocial support.
FD: Okay yes thank you. Hum so I have more or less content questions, so it shouldn't take more than half an hour.
KA: Okay.
FD: So according to you, what is the place of religion and spirituality in humanitarian action on a more global level?
KA: Hum ... would you like me to speak on behalf of the ACT Alliance community of practice?
FD: Heu yes if you would like so.
KA: Okay hum ... religion and spirituality is a part of the all concept of well-being which is our hum our goal is to improve or stabilize people's well-being in emergency. And religion and spirituality is one part of that in something that needs to be recognized and supported.
FD: Yes ... Okay. And according to you, what's the importance of psychosocial support after a humanitarian crisis? How important is that and why is it important?
KA: I think that is essential. Hum ... for ... when I speak and think of psychosocial support, I think of the emotional internal side of helping a person but I also think of the social side. And ... when there has been an emergency of some kind, there is - the normal emotional reactions to what has happened and there is also the damage that has been done to social relationships or to hum normal support systems. You know in a natural emergency lie an earthquake, where people may be missing or families are separated or people have been moved away from the danger area and they might be separated from their normal support systems that allow them to process and function in difficult instances and helping to support people in the recovery process means both working with them to ... to deal with their thoughts and feelings but also to deal with their social systems that allow them to continue over time in an healthy kind of way.
FD: Yes. And according to you, what is the place of religion and spirituality in those psychosocial support activities?
KA: ... Religion and spirituality is a part of people's hum ... means of coping, it's a part of their identity, it's a part of social connections, it's being part of a faith community
FD: Mmh-mmh.
KA: Hum builds part of their social network as well. So religion and spirituality have both a personal interior hum ... part of the healing process but they also have the social and hum ... interactive part of being part of a worshipping community.
FD: Yes. And how can religion and spirituality be integrated in psychosocial support activities?
KA: Hum I think a part, an important part of psychosocial activities is to make it possible for people to continue to participate in their hum in their religion and in their spiritual life and so in a camp kind of setting, that may mean ... creating space for

people to gather, to worship and pray hum or it may mean helping hum … helping communities to have a place or repair their place or whatever they gather and worship. Hum it may mean working with religious leaders to be sure that the necessary .. .materials are there for people to practice their faith for instance hum prayer mats during Ramadan and headscarves and hum … so one, you know depending on the faith tradition of the people involved.

FD: Yes, okay. Hum and what do you think are the effects of psychosocial support sorry - what are the effects of psychosocial support activities with a religious or spiritual component on the psychological well-being of people affected by a humanitarian crisis?

KA: I think it strengthens hum the well-being and it strengthens the resilience of people to be able to practice their faith tradition as they choose. Often people have questions of where is God in the midst of all of what is happening or it helps to make meaning out of the event of what they have experienced.

FD: And what do you think are the advantages and disadvantages of integrating or not religion or spirituality in the activities?

KA: … you mean of the …

FD: the psychosocial support activities sorry

KA: Hum … what is the advantage or disadvantage of integrating religious activities into psychosocial programs?

FD: Yes, please.

KA: … I think that integrating such activities needs to be - that needs to be led by … hum religious leaders and so on. What psychosocial can do - what psychosocial programs can do, like an ACT Alliance program, is - we can make it possible for religious groups to practice their faith tradition but we would not lead it ourselves.

FD: Yes. Why that?

KA: Because we are not hum - we are not religious leaders and we are not local religious leaders.

FD: Mmh-mmh.

KA: Hum religion is practiced you- hum Christianity is practiced all over the world but it is very culture specific and hum the way it is practiced varies from community to community and even from Church to Church. Islam is practiced all over the world and but individual hum communities have their own hum … unique ways of practicing their religion. The religious leader that is leading religio- … the religious leader who is leading hum … religious services or practices should be a religious leader from that area, from that faith tradition, not an outsider.

FD: Yes. But so what could be the disadvantages hum regarding the integration of religion in psychosocial support activities?

KA: Hum the disadvantages … hum could be that people who do not practice that particular religion would feel coerced into practicing or following through. Or it could be that hum … it would not recognize the diversity of the local culture

FD: Mmh-mmh.

KA: and … it could be that the … if it was practices by the hum … by the NGO, like by ACT Alliance, it would not hum fits the needs and the culture of the local population.

FD: Yes, o**KA**y. Thank you. Hum, speaking of NGOs, according to you what is the role of faith-based organizations in providing psychosocial support activities?

KA: … I think psychosocial support is one of a range of core activities that … can be provided by a NGO hum … in my experience most NGOs have hum areas of expertise of areas that they know better than others. You know, I don't know anything about building systems, I could not do wash [laugh]

FD: [laugh]

KA: And there are other NGOs who might not know much about doing psychosocial but I think psychosocial is important in emergency response and should always be one of the activities that are inclu- that are offered by somebody, whether that's the hum … not every NGO is going to offer psychosocial but even NGOs that … do WASH

FD: Mmh-mmh.

KA: They- it should be psychosocial informed and by saying that I mean that they should be … the water engineers should be willing to talk to the community to find out hum their concerns, it should be sensitive to making sure that toilets are … are responsive to the needs of people hum so that women are not having to travel too far in the dark and making them more protection vulnerable or that hum toilets are handicapped accessible or that hum there is sufficient area for bathing and so on. You know, that's what I mean by psychosocial sensitive.

FD: Yes.

KA: They don't need to provide psychosocial, but they need to be sensitive to some of the psychosocial needs.

FD: And what do you think

KA: That can of information is in the Sphere handbook now.

FD: Yes, and why do you think it is important to be psychosocial informed for an NGO?

KA: Because it … it means that they will be … more responsive to the needs of the people that they are there to serve.

FD: Yes, okay. Thank you. Hum but do you think that faith-based organizations could have a disadvantage or an advantage in delivering psychosocial support?

KA: … Hum … International NGOs hire all kind of people so I don't see for the most part there being a … hum that they would have an advantage over other NGOs in providing psychosocial support. In local organizations, faith-based organizations might have some advantage, particularly if they are working, or if part of the people they are … using to deliver services are religious leaders who have experience in pastoral cares. Hum … if- you know if their direct service people have experience in pastoral cares, then I think they do have an advantage in … hum providing psychosocial support because they may have that experience already. But … beyond that, I don't think there is a strong advantage either way for religious organizations or secular organizations.

FD: Yes. Hum do you think that hum … being a faith-based organization heu can be an obstacle during heu psychosocial support activities?

KA: Yes. Hum a faith-based organization can be an obstacle if they do not hum follow the code of conduct, the IFRC hum code of conduct of impartiality and hum and freedom of access and not coercing people to participate in religious activities, that would certainly be an obstacle. There may be obstacle in terms of their hum … their decision to provide … hum services to people who are LGBTQI, hum there may be hum issues around hum providing psychosocial services and so on for women who have been raped.

FD: Mmh-mmh.

KA: You know some religious organizations hum … have been very helpful and some have been less helpful, depending on who is providing the services and their own particular opinions about hum … the issue involved.

FD: Yes.

KA: So it can be an obstacle and that's always something you need to be alert and aware of.

FD: But concerning the affected population or the local authorities, is it an obstacle to be a faith-based organization providing psychosocial support?

KA: … Hum would you repeat that?

FD: Hum for the affected population and local authorities for example, is it possible that being a faith-based organization is an obstacle because of the faith in delivering psychosocial support?

KA: Hum I think it depends on if this is a local faith-based organization or if it is a faith-based organization coming from the outside.

FD: Mmh-mmh.

KA: For instance, a Christian organization going into work in Pakistan, it might be an obstacle. Or hum a ... so that could be an obstacle in that way. hum ... it could be an obstacle for people hum ... people may choose- if they had a choice between a faith-based organization or a secular organization, people may choose one or the other, depending on their own experience with faith-based or with religion hum. It could either be an advantage or a disadvantage, depending on people's own experience.

FD: Yes ... But do you think they are differences in the psy-psychosocial support delivered by hum faith-based organizations or non-faith-based organizations?

KA: ...I would say there shouldn't be but sometimes there is. Hum and then again it goes back to whether the people and the organization choose to be hum ... part of the Code of conduct and following the IASC MHPSS guidelines or whether they choose to hum ... to what they think is best and hum ... marginalize some people or hum or preach to people, even though they- people may not be interested in ... in that particular message.

FD: Okay, yes. Hum I have been through most of my questions, so would you like to add anything?

KA: ... Not that I can think of. Hum ... no.

Appendix 3: Transcript of the interview with a global advocacy manager from Islamic Relief Worldwide

Transcript of the interview with Atallah FitzGibbon (AF), global advocacy manager from Islamic Relief Worldwide, by Florine De Wolf (FD). The Skype call took place on the 31st of May 2018.

AF: So I am the global advocacy manager hum and in my last role, I was the strategy and policy manager. That's it.

FD: Okay, thank you. So I have more or less ten content questions and it shouldn't take more than half an hour. Should we start?

AF: Okay.

FD: So first, a more general question: according to you, what's the importance of psychosocial support after a humanitarian crisis?

AF: Hum I think the reality is that most humanitarian crises involve a lot of trauma and we tend to focus heavily on things like shelter and food and that's all important from a psychosocial perspective but hum also particularly where there have been fatalities and there needs to be an element of support for ... for grieving, for closure and other use. Especially if there's been also there's been mass raped and violence.

FD: Okay. And what do you think is the place of religion and spirituality in psychosocial support activities?

AF: I think religion and spirituality is central to people of faith because most people of faith will turn to their religion for support hum in such crises. So hum and in some crises they will be asking for specific advice from religious leaders and informants to help make decisions.

FD: And hum what are the effects of psychosocial support activities with a religious component on the psychological well-being of people?

AF: Yes, so there can be a wide variety of activities, from reading the Coran to praying, taking part in directed prayers hum, to hum addressing teachings around particular areas hum ... so we normally find that Muslims for instance, they particularly ask for ... facilities to read the Coran and to pray and that sort of thing.

FD: And how can religion and spirituality can be integrated in activities in humanitarian crises?

AF: Well, I think they need to be and hum I think the model for that this sort of chaplaincy services that are available in other arenas such as in a national house services in Europe, in the army, in the police, hum emergency services, you will find-generally there will be a service provided of spiritual support.

FD: Yes.

AF: But we don't provide that in the humanitarian settings and that's as a result of sort of heavy secular bias where hum a lot of ... humanitarian action is being based on a secular perspective. Hum and so that's left out but it's an important element which may be they assume would be dealt with- by religion but in fact they don't provide that space for religion. So it is important that- this emerge particularly in crises like recently with the refugee crisis.

FD: Mmh-mmh.

AF: That hum agencies providing things like burial and for counseling and for sort of grieving and that sort of extreme trauma hum ... and there are intending from a psychosocial- from a secular perspective, they were perceiving as something that would be dealt by sort of more ... more formal psychosocial hum means hum but the reality is for many people of faith, it would be completely inadequate.

FD: Yes. And how do you think that religion and spirituality can be integrated by NGOs and FBOs?

AF: Well, I think there is two ways [coughing] my own view is NGOs should start to look at the delivery - [coughing] excuse me - of a sort of chaplaincy/pastoral care service in bad emergencies. Hum but if they don't do that then they should partner with faith leaders, faith communities to provide that and so those are the guidelines we developed, you know looking toward, trying to get a professional relationship with local faith communities, and to provide guidelines around how to do that, barring in mind there are also dangers hum to that.

FD: And does Islamic Relief do those kind of things?

AF: We have done quite a lot of psychosocial activities that involve religious activites such as reading the Coran, reflecting on Islamic teachings, we've done hum specific faith-based counseling for raped victims

FD: Mmh-mmh.

AF: to understand how to deal with the consequences of rape, you know the pregnancy or

FD: Yes.

AF: or such a trauma hum using this kind of counseling.

FD: And those activities, are they carried out by international staff or local staff or religious leaders?

AF: They are usually led by a mix of both, so we normally get- we might get an expert to come from our side and then train local people hum or hum ... they would be led by local people if it was more informal, such as provision of prayer and Coran reading facilities.

FD: Okay. Hum what do you think are the advantages and disadvantages of integrating religion and spirituality in activities, in psychosocial activities?

AF: I think the advantage is ... it would actually be more meaningful to those people of faith hum and hum and help them to get closure quicker.

FD: Mmh-mmh.

AF: And to feel supported. At the moment, religion is seen as something alien by many agencies, which is very much at odd with how religion is seen within the community they are dealing with. So it enables also the agencies working in those areas to be able to understand local perspectives around these themes.

FD: Okay. And according to you, what is the role of faith-based organization sin providing psychosocial support activities, with or without a religious component? ... Hello? Are you still here? ... Hello? [FD ends the call and calls AF back].

AF: Hello.

FD: Hello, I don't what happened, I couldn't hear you anymore.

AF: Hello, I don't know what happened yes. Can you hear me now?

FD: Yes, I can hear you.

AF: Okay.

FD: So I was

AF: Okay.

FD: I was asking my question, I don't know

AF: Yes, could you repeat?

FD: Yes, of course. Hum according to you

AF: the question because I didn't [there is obviously an interval because of the poor quality of the call]

FD: Yes, according to you, what is the role of faith-based organizations in providing psychosocial support, with or without a religious component?

AF: Okay. Faith-based organizations ... Hum ... Well I think the reality is that ... hum faith-based organizations can provide a very unique hum service if they are humanitarian agencies in relation to psychosocial care because they can - they are able

to relate to the sort of conceptual framework of who they are dealing with if they are of the same faith. And if they are of another faith, they can better empathize with their faith that might help support those people hum ... However, ... hum we discovered that ... [inaudible - the call keeps cutting] you know some faith organizations [inaudible - the call keeps cutting] This isn't a traditional activity for them. So it requires I think an area of growth and ... building expertise within an organization to understand how they could make a difference hum ... because ... often faith-based organizations think that the major needs are sort of either a food or shelter, one of these things where there is actually hum in many cases, they discover that trauma is one of the major need of local communities.

FD: And do you think that faith-based organizations have

AF: Hello?

FD: Hello! Can you hear me?

AF: ... Yes, I can hear you.

FD: Ho. Hum so my next question is: do you think that faith-based organizations have an advantage or a disadvantage in delivering psychosocial support?

AF: Hum ... I think that really depends on the training. I think ... You know ... potentially hum ... if they have the formal training

FD: Mmh-mmh.

AF: Hum ... in psychosocial support and in counseling, then I think they may have an advantage ...

FD: Hello?

AF: [inaudible]

FD: Can you hear me?

AF: Hello, yes. Can you hear me?

FD: Ho, yes, now I can hear you. Sorry I didn't hear the mast part of your sentence.

AF: Yes, there was this thing that if they have, I think the important thing is that they have proper training

FD: Yes.

AF: Because actually, you can do more harm than good.

FD: ... Yes. ... Are you still there?

AF: ... So if they have that, then I think they have an added advantage because they would be able to understand how faith might be specific to help those people.

FD: Okay, thank you. According to you, what are the main differences between secular and faith-based organizations in their approaches to psychosocial support?

AF: Hum I am not an expert really. But I think hum ... the faith-based organizations are able to call on the impact of specific faith practices and teachings, where secular ones have to rely on generalized concepts of sort of mindfulness and hum ... hum gaining peace from your environment, positive thinking, all of those techniques. But I think the other advantage is that in many cases ... specific faith teachings can help to provide closure hum to grief and to other things in a way that a secular approach can't. But that depends on the faith and circumstances.

FD: Yes, thank you. So you were part of the ... the development of the guidelines for a faith-sensitive humanitarian approach, could you tell me a bit more about those guid-guidelines - sorry - and what's the goal and how NGOs should use them?

AF: Yes, well the ... hum the guidelines emerged from a peered research, so we did some research in our own organization to see how we dealt with local faith communities hum and we found that very often our offices did not touch and engage with faith communities. And so we weren't able to bring that element of hum support hum. So we were also conscious that this was a problem in the wider NGO world that

generally, faith, faith leaders, faith groups were sidelined and alienated from humanitarian response.

FD: Mmh-mmh.

AF: So the guidelines were- are an attempt to ... to ensure that faith sensitivity and faith teaching and faith communities are inclusive - included within psychosocial work and ... and thus ensuring that the disaster victims actually have access to hum support from that faith community and ... so it looks at, you know, just ensuring that hum agencies seek to reach out to faith communities and understand the implication of faith. And that can have an enormous difference in an emergency. So for instance, the Ebola crisis, the whole - one of the main-major reasons the disease was being passed on - the virus was being passed on through faith practices and so it really required a heavy level of counseling with faith communities to show how they could do the burial and grieving procedures in a way which were much more safe, but also provided the same level of closure from a religious perspective.

FD: Mmh-mmh.

AF: And so it requires a great level of religious literacy

FD: Yes, that sounds very important because that's not something, as humanitarian actors, we can see often. So I think the guidelines are really a very good start for that.

AF: Yes, I mean what the guidelines don't really do so much is provide specific hum guidelines around how faith could be used and I think there is a lot of work needed to look at that, those elements, to look at how exercise of - how different faith practices can have a specific effect in a specific scenario or setting. Hum ... But also to understand more the role of faith counseling hum and why faith counseling can be particularly important in some cases and therefore to understand where it is appropriate to engage with faith leaders and ... but also to make faith leaders much more included in ... and consulted in the design of particular activities, of psychosocial activities.

FD: Mmh-mmh. Last question that comes to my mind: do you think it's harder for faith-based organizations to implement psychosocial support?

AF: Is it harder?

FD: Yes.

AF: Hum ... I ... I think the problem is that ... that faith communities are very often not trained in providing psychosocial support and faith leaders are often not trained - sometimes they are - it depends on the tradition. So in Christian tradition, you tend to find ... hum priests are trained better in pastoral work.

FD: Mmh-mmh.

AF: Where in the Muslim tradition, there is no particular training that is provided around pastoral work? So these skills aren't always there. The Imam or the faith leader is more seen as somebody who leads the prayer or provide advise but it doesn't have specific pastoral skills. So I think there are challenges in many faith communities to do. But there is also ethics - ethical challenges. So it is very important to ... address those ethical issues, which can be around proselytization.

FD: Yes.

AF: It can be around hum exploitation of vulnerability. Hum it can be around partiality, so you're partial to a particular religious group. Or it might be toward gender. Hum so there are challenges and agencies going into working with faith-based organizations I think have to have their eyes opened and not assume that it is going to be easy. Hum and be able to provide a level of support and advice. But yes I think that faith-based organizations who have the training ... you know, can potentially be able to respond as well or even better that it does. It does require a blending of both traditional psychosocial support and skills with specific faith literacy I think.

FD: Yes.

AF: ... And of humanitarian ethics

FD: Yes, of-

AF: as well.

FD: Hum ... I have been through most of my questions, so would you like to add anything?

AF: ... Hum ... No, no I don't think so, that's fine. I mean, one of the areas where the ... where ... would be, I think, very innovative and very effective, would be for agencies to start to provide specific chaplaincy services hum and we have only discovered one agency, the American Red Cross, that ever provided specific chaplaincy service.

FD: Yes.

AF: But we believe that actually this is appropriate in many settings and so it would be very interesting to do something like that.

FD: Yes, true. Maybe that's the next step.

AF: Yes, I think so. I think it needs a greater level of awareness among aid agencies and psychosocial work has tended to - tended to be ... hum excluded religion in aid work, where in other secular settings, it hasn't. So aid professionals need to understand the reasons why faith-based chaplaincy has been available in other settings such as health services and the army, police, emergency services, etc.

(...)

AF: And hum I think that would be interesting if you are able to do it, would be to look at American Red Cross experience.

FD: Yes.

AF: And to ... I mean I think they didn't use - they use multi-faith counseling probably.

FD: yes.

AF: And chaplaincy, so they probably hum were trained in multi-faith chaplaincy ... which is another challenge, you know, to know how to do that because if have a psychosocial service that provides support and you know how can you make it literate to different religions and that may be quite challenging.

(...)

FD: Yes, but I will definitely give a look at the American Red Cross because I didn't know about that case so that could be really interesting for my thesis.

AF: Yes, I think so because it's the only where we have come across, where a specific service like that - I mean, I think agencies, particularly Christian agencies may have tried using religious practice before ... but that's a case where it was actually built in - as a chaplaincy counseling so ... which is the first time I have heard it being provided.

FD: Mmh-mmh.

AF: And it just indicates how different cultures, might be America, where religion is viewed really differently, can result in a different result or a different practice, because they don't see religion as a threat. That's something that's very mainstreamed in part of their cultural society.

FD: Yes, but

AF: Where unfortunately most of the aid actors come from ... very secular perspectives.

MF: A little bit about myself. I am working with LWF - Lutheran World Federation - in the part which is called "World service", which is the humanitarian, development, human rights operational arm of the federation. Hum in my background hum, I've been an engineer, I've been an Anglican priest, I am working in hum the context outworld with different NGOs but faith-based and non-faith-based.

FD: Mmh-mmh.

MF: Hum so I think maybe that background is something which is given me some insights into both the humanitarian world and also the kind of the world of faith and spirituality ... hum the ... the ... yes I think the hum the interesting thing in this is ... that I find is looking at the whole area, some people look at it from within the faith community and it is very obviously that they are within the faith community speaking out to the rest of the world. Hum what I try to do and what we've tried to do is not do that but instead be just people or humanitarians looking at the phenomenon of faith and saying how do we, as humanitarians, respond? So I think that is kind of an important question of perspective and that says a little bit about who I am and where I am coming from. I just - I've got a broad portfolio in my work so part of that is that I am the contact point for hum a global relationship that LWF has with Islamic Relief.

FD: Mmh-mmh.

MF: So that's intended to be two kind of faith-based organizations coming together without any sort of - to demonstrate that we can work together. Hum in that respect ... I've been the person who has been driving that project on faith-sensitive humanitarian response with the focus on mental health and psychosocial support. So I've been leading that project hum and hopefully the way it has come out, the document that I sent you already

FD: Yes, thank you for that.

MF: I think hopefully reflect some of the emphasis we wanted to give.

FD: Yes. I actually interview hum someone from the Lutheran World Federation last year for my previous master thesis.

MF: Okay.

FD: Sorry for the mispronunciation of the name: Roland Schlott.

MF: Okay, yes that would be - he is my colleague who works on humanitarian response yes.

FD: Yes, yes, I interviewed him for my previous master thesis. So I am a bit aware of the work of LWF.

MF: Great.

FD: So I'm gonna start with a more general question: according to you, what's the place of religion and spirituality in humanitarian action?

MF: I think the first point is - the important point is that you start with people. This is a people-centered approach and that's something which is very current in humanitarian thinking. It's all about people. Hum and the point is that people in a humanitarian situation, affected by a humanitarian crisis, the vast majority of them have some kind of faith identity. So ... if we're going to take people seriously and respond to them as people, we've got to understand and respond to their faith identity, that's what enables them to cope or to interpret the situation they are living through. And the humanitarian community, because it's ... had a kind of strange relationship

with faith and faith-based organizations, has been silent about that. I think that hum it's partly being because they've seen faith-based organizations as having some kind of hidden agenda or

FD: Yes.

MF: they would be worried about their proselytization and so on. And that has meant that the humanitarian community simply has said very little about faith. So what we would like to try to do is make the focus on the faith identity of people themselves. Therefore, we would say, it's all being about faith-sensitive, not about being faith-based.

FD: Yes. ... Okay, hum thank you. And according to you, what's the importance of psychosocial support after a humanitarian crisis?

MF: It is crucial; it is part - it as a major part of what help people to cope. It is one of those underfunded, unrecognized part of humanitarian response. When everyone is rushing to provide water and shelter and food, of course because they are vital to survival, but the whole psychosocial component is very important, is often overlooked and is underfunded. If we can strengthen the psychosocial component, then we can make a lot of other areas of humanitarian response more effective.

FD: And what kind of psychosocial support activities do the LWF implement?

MF: I would say it's a focus on the psychosocial as opposed to the mental health. I mean I think it's just in this being careful to hum make the point that the internationally recognized part - sector you know hum is mental health and psychosocial support so it has those two aspects where mental health would be more focus on the- let's say the individual counseling and son on of people. psychosocial is obviously more in a community social context. I would say that LWF has been the ... has been the strongest on the more community psychosocial part, rather than the clinical-mental health part. So ... you know ... for example in Jordan, in refugee camps, we would be involved in activities which would be bringing the different communities within the refugees settings together to talk, that could be in the context of hum a center a small center where they are social activities or even vocational activities, all of which provides an opportunity to engage with people and then talk about hum the ... the psychosocial challenges that they are facing and how those impact their particular community. So in that refugee context, yes, it could be that they are different tensions between different parts of the community, which we've seen cases where ... that became ... real discontent, at the entrance of the camp, there were young people, young man throwing stones at the cars which were coming in as a way of protesting. So in order to actually address some of these - the psychosocial hum aspect of that, bringing communities together, talking with people, helping to address some of their frustrations which are coming from a very kind of real and emotional place, hum we would carry out those kind of activities. Also therapeutic activities. those who are being traumatized, hum having the chance to ... to express themselves, to talk about what has happened to them, to draw maybe - so working with children so that they can articulate what has happened, some of the horrors they have lived through.

FD: And what do you think is the place of religion and spirituality in those psychosocial support activities?

MF: Hum that I guess is what this manual we have provided is trying to address. I can see it is not an easy answer. There is ... let me answer that in two ways. For the individual who is affected, religion is really important - their faith identity. So for example, a young - a woman let's say who has suffered some kind of abuse in the ... the course of the humanitarian crisis she is experiencing and hum that makes her question her own self-worth and herself-worth includes questions like does God hate me now?

FD: Mmh.

MF: Hum and so of course that question of religion and spirituality and faith - I would use the word spirituality as well so that it's - we don't just fall into the trap of institutional religion hum so I would keep it broad - hum that whole area is highly important to the individual. The question then is how, as humanitarians, we can respond. Now there have been limits to that because of course humanitarians want to be very careful, to be neutral, non-proselytizing and so the question how much the neutral humanitarian can use the god word in talking with that young woman is very difficult. Hum so the work that we have done is trying to set out some kind of guidelines, some criteria for how you can do that hum ... One of the suggestions then is that humanitarians themselves need to be faith-sensitive, that hence again that word, but one the responses may be to find ways to involve other faith actors in responding to the needs of that women. So it could be they make contact with an appropriate hum member of her faith community who is able to provide support.

FD: And what are the effects of those psychosocial support activities with a religious component on the psychological wellbeing of people?

MF: Sorry, what are the

FD: effects of psychosocial support activities with a religions component on the psychological wellbeing

MF: Hum from what we've seen and you will see again in that we've tried to provide some example hum. i think it is that people suddenly feel that they are being treated as people. They are no longer being objectified. They are being listen to for the people that they are. And there is a huge worth in that because in a humanitarian context, they have been through a very dehumanizing situation. If the humanitarian system then responds to them and objectifying them, treating them just as a number or a thumb print, then that just reinforces the trauma

FD: Mmh.

MF: to an extent. So it is really important that by treating people in their faith identity as people, they are actually treated as human beings and that restores and counters some of the dehumanizing things they have been through.

FD: Yes. And what are the advantages and disadvantages of integrating or not religion and spirituality in the activities?

MF: Hum, well, the disadvantages are always that religion, faith, spirituality, it is not always good, benign. It can be negative. there are all sorts of forms of faith, religion, spirituality, which for example discr- discriminate against woman. There are forms which reinforce a sense of lack of self-worth. Hum and so and there are forms which are contrary to human rights principles.

FD: Mmh-mmh.

MF: So we have to be careful about those. But then again in that manual, there is a section, I think it's on some colored pages, which highlights some of the cases when one should not engage with that ... faith actors or that dimension. But I would say that the advantages of engaging far outweigh the disadvantages. And that is because people are ... spiritual beings with a faith identity. hum and so what you are doing is that you are addressing them not as we as humanitarians would like to see them by our own definition but you are addressing them by how they define themselves. And that is what gives them worth and gives them value and enables them to get back on their feet after a crisis or in a crisis.

FD: Yes. And how do you deal with people who are non-religious?

MF: Hum just in the same way you deal with people who are religious.

FD: Mmh-mmh.

MF: because you deal with them as people.

FD: Yes.

MF: It's that the whole point of this whole people as people-centered approach. Hum that if you try to include religious people, you also try to include non-religious people. Hum I wouldn't see as there is the case of two kinds of people: religious and non-religious. I think there is an all spectrum. That's part of the reasons why I would want to use the world spirituality hum because there are clearly people who are non-religious in the sense that they don't like institutional religion. I would be probably be one of those, even though I have been a priest

FD: [laugh]

MF: [laugh] and recognize the institutional religion. So people who are not religious but are nevertheless very spiritual. So this is a reason for making sure that we see the whole area of faith, religion, spirituality as a spectrum and respond to people within that spectrum.

FD: Hum according to you, what is the role of faith-based organizations in providing psychosocial support?

MF: Hum ... It's - well it depends again the definition we mean by faith-based organizations. If we take hum ... so faith-based organizations who have a clear faith identity can be part of providing hum ... psychosocial support of course. They have to be careful that they maintain their humanitarian principles of independence, neutrality, non-proselytization. And therefore they have to trade very carefully. And they have done so. I'm talking here about international faith-based organizations for example. The ... there are then other faith-based actors and those could be faith-communities, they could be a local church or a local Muslim community or Hindu or ... or Buddhist or Voodoo or whatever community which is in the vicinity and is able to be involved in responding. And then again it's what this manual is trying to point out but they could be individuals, they could be hum gathered groups communities hum representing a particular faith perspective who can be involved somehow or other in hum providing psychosocial support to people who identify with that particular faith or that particular religion or spirituality. Hum ... and within those communities there could be a recognized leader who could have that role. So it's important to be - to have some clear definition there about what we mean by faith-based organizations

FD: yes.

MF: and to recognize there is a huge range.

FD: Hum but do you think that hum faith-based organizations, accordingly to the definition we give them, have an advantage or disadvantage in delivering psychosocial support?

MF: Hum ... they have an advantage in as much as they understand the people in their full identity. So they understand that people are spiritual beings hum and they are prepared to take those into account. So I think that ... it's not to say the faith-based organizations are the only ones or the best ones at providing psychosocial support - of course there are many who are not faith-based who can do that - but I think that faith-based organizations have hum some advantages in the way I've just described.

FD: And for LWF, is the faith factor of the organization usually a help or an obstacle during relief efforts?

MF: It's a help. Hum ... it gives a basic definition of values. I would say that the distinctive value within the Lutheran tradition are ones that are progressive, they are socially engaged, they are very much about justice, they are once that, in summary, very strongly ... echo the all human rights based perspective. And therefore those values enable hum a kind of response which values people. Therefore, the faith basis of LWF, I always feel, is reflected in the fact that we are rights-based

FD: Mmh-mmh.

MF: and we are community-based. And because of those two things, that means that we are close to people and the communities and that enables us on many occasions to do the job effectively because people trust us.

FD: Yes. And according to you, what are the main differences between secular and faith-based NGOs in their approaches to psychosocial support? If there is any.

MF: I think that they are, in humanitarian psychosocial support, they have tended not to be so many differences, precisely because people have not known how to handle the faith, religion, spiritual aspect and therefore, the different organizations, whether they are faith-based or non-faith-based have tended to pursue the same approaches. Hum that is something which are our book, the faith-sensitive guidance, is trying to address. ... There will have been subtle differences but at time in the past, the faith-based organizations have tried to overcompensate. they are so anxious not to be seen to be using their hum their humanitarian work as a mean to proselytize that they overcompensate. And so that means that in many ways, they ... they would be sticking to a kind of standard form of psychoso- humanitarian psychosocial response, hum without getting into the nuances of faith and religion. So we would hope that we are able to move beyond that now by virtue of this manual, this guidance we are providing.

FD: Okay. Hum I have been through most of the questions of my interview guide. but now I would like to discuss a bit more the guidelines and how hum how you came with them and what do you think they will change.

MF: Yes. Okay. Well they came about because both Islamic Relief and LWF have an interest in this area in what is the role of faith in humanitarian response, and in particular hum in psychosocial support. Psychosocial support because that seems to provide an entry point to the whole area of humanitarian response. Hum we want to do some work on it. It might just have ended up as some interesting studies, some papers, some discussions, some conferences. Hum but some of us, myself in particular, were very keen to see that we could get some kind of useful tool that would speak not only to faith-based organizations

FD: yes

MF: who already speak religious language but would speak to humanitarians, whatever their background. In particular, maybe if they don't really understand religion, because that's not really their thing. So we wanted to be - to provide a useful tool. And we wanted to try to make that as visible as possible. We wanted to get for example some recognition of faith - some faith sensitivity into humanitarian publications such as the Sphere Handbooks

FD: Mmh-mmh.

MF: Which ... in its most recent form has had very almost little, almost no mention of faith at all.

FD: yes.

MF: Which is very strange given that faith is such a present factor. So we had given ourselves the target to actually influence some of these major publications and that looks as though it is going to be the case in the current revision of the Sphere Handbook which is due out later this year, there will be some mentions of this. In the course of that though the aim of that was to provide some kind of tool and the guidance manual you have there is that tool we've produced. Hum ... As we look at providing this, it was very useful in helping us to kind of uncover things that were really important and if you read I think the foreword, that is written by myself in fact, to the document, you will see some of those things. Hum the conviction that this is something which - it mustn't just be for the usual faith-based actors to try to articulate but it has to be for the whole humanitarian community. So it is important that our thinking on this is shaped by those who don't identify as being faith-based as much as it is shaped by those who do

identity as being faith-based. So that was one very important thing. The other, the key thing is this idea of faith-sensitivity rather than faith-based. I think that's kind of a major contribution really to how we see things because we don't want to fall into somethings which is faith-based and focusses on the faith allegiance or the non-faith allegiance of humanitarian organizations and agencies. What we want to do is to focus on people, so we have a people centered approach which is sensitive to their faith identity and seeks to respond accordingly. So the process has been important I think in highlighting some of those key hum aspects that are essential.

FD: Hum, okay, thank you. Just another question came to my mind: hum do you think - in general, do you think it's harder for faith-based organizations to implement psychosocial support activities with a spirituality component?

MF: Hum … yes it's a good question and it goes back to what I have been saying earlier. i think it has been at times because precisely they are faith-based.

FD: Mmh-mmh.

MF: they try to overcompensate.

FD: yes.

MF: So if I'm working - I used to work for Save the Children which is - doesn't declare itself to be faith-based, although all organizations really they have their own kind of internal creeds and mantras and so on. But hum but therefore … with such an organization - I can't think of examples but you feel less a constrain to overcompensate. Hum and hum where there is - yes, faith-based organizations sometimes do overcompensate. We noticed that when we were doing the … the kind of field evaluation, the field kind of questionnaires and the field piloting for this work. It was very clear that a number of our colleagues were very concerned about ensuring that kind of neutrality, ensuring that because they were - you know they were labelled "Lutheran" which is associated with a church, that nobody should suspect them of proselytizing. And that's a very good discipline because there are faith-based organizations who do proselytize and they do use humanitarian response as a mean to advance their own faith perspectives hum and that should not be the case. Therefore, it can be harder to get the balance right.

FD: Yes. That's something I felt last year when I researched about the respect of humanitarian principles by faith-based organizations

MF: yes.

FD: that people were really trying to demonstrate that they do respect the humanitarian principles and that's not because they are faith-based that they don't respect them and so on. That's really something I felt last year.

MF: Yes.

FD: Hum I have been through most of my questions hum, do you wanna add anything?

MF: No, I think I've said everything, really. What was the idea - the any other point is that hum obviously your work is focusing on psychosocial support and our finding was that in looking at psychosocial support, because that is defined in a cross-sectoral way

FD: yes

MF: within humanitarian response, hum psychosocial support touches on watery, touches on sheltery, touches on camp organization and everything. it meant that any insides were relevant to the psychosocial area were also relevant to wider humanitarian response. that's why our manual ended being called "Faith-sensitivity in humanitarian response" and then the subtitle was "Guidance on mental health and psychosocial programming".

FD: Yes.

MF: I think that's helpful because that means that your work is a useful contribution right across the humanitarian sector, not just psychosocial work.

Appendix 5: Written answers of a thematic advisor on community-based psychosocial support from Church of Sweden

According to you, what's the place of religion and spirituality in humanitarian action?

Focusing on the community's spiritual life enhances the prospects for cohesion among survivors. Spiritual leaders, when treated with respect and included in overall planning, can both provide access to key people and encourage cooperation from the local community. While ACT Alliance/Church of Sweden views spiritual needs as central to healing processes, ACT never ties the promise, delivery or distribution of assistance to the embracing or acceptance of a particular religious creed.

According to you, what's the importance of psychosocial support after humanitarian crisis?

The Church of Sweden believes that the way in which people's basic needs, safety, and security are met has an impact on their wellbeing and recovery. Emergencies erode the normal protective support systems and social fabric, increase the risks of diverse problems, and tend to amplify pre-existing problems of social justice and inequality. The manner in which humanitarian relief is provided can either intensify such problems or be a means to strengthen the affected community's collective capacity to deal with the current situation and those which may occur in the future.

The Church of Sweden takes a holistic view of wellbeing, where emotional, social and spiritual needs are addressed alongside those that are physical and biological. Promotion of Community Based Psychosocial Support (CBPS) by the Church of Sweden is grounded in the belief that applying the approach in humanitarian interventions, regardless of sector, will strengthen communities' own capacity for recovery and resilience. Furthermore, CBPS can enhance the wellbeing and coping ability of emergency-affected individuals and groups, thereby reducing the need for more specialized support or treatment.

What are the effects of psychosocial support activities with a religious component on the psychological wellbeing of people affected by humanitarian crisis?

In emergencies, people may experience collective cultural, spiritual and religious stresses that may require immediate attention. Providers of aid from outside a local culture commonly think in terms of individual symptoms and reactions, such as depression and traumatic stress, but many survivors, particularly in non-Western societies, experience suffering in spiritual, religious, family or community terms. Survivors might feel significant stress due to their inability to perform culturally appropriate burial rituals, in situations where the bodies of the deceased are not available for burial or where there is a lack of financial resources or private spaces needed to conduct such rituals. Similarly, people might experience intense stress if they are unable to engage in normal religious, spiritual or cultural practices.

Do your organization integrate religion or spirituality in psychosocial support activities? Why? /Why not?

Traditional care for individuals and families seeking help: Collective stresses of this nature can frequently be addressed by enabling the conduct of appropriate cultural, spiritual and religious practices. The conduct of death or burial rituals can ease distress and enable mourning and grief. In some settings, cleansing and healing ceremonies contribute to recovery and reintegration. For devout populations, faith or practices such as praying provide support and meaning in difficult circumstances. Understanding and, as appropriate, enabling or supporting cultural healing practices can increase psychosocial wellbeing for many survivors. Ignoring such healing practices, on the other hand, can prolong distress and potentially cause harm by marginalising helpful cultural ways of coping. In many contexts, working with religious leaders and resources is an essential part of emergency psychosocial support. Engaging with local religion or culture often challenges non-local relief workers to consider world views very different from their own. Because some local practices cause harm (for example, in contexts where spirituality and religion are politicised), humanitarian workers should think critically and support local practices and resources only if they fit with international standards of human rights. Facilitate conditions for appropriate communal cultural, spiritual and religious healing practices.

How can religion and spirituality be integrated in psychosocial support activities?

Please see attached document on ACT Alliance CBPS Principles

What are the advantages and disadvantages of integrating or not religion or spirituality in your activities?

Approach local religious and spiritual leaders and other cultural guides to learn their views on how people have been affected and on practices that would support the affected population.

- Review existing assessments to avoid the risk of repetitive questioning;
- Approach local religious and spiritual leaders, preferably by means of an interviewer of the same ethnic or religious group, to learn more about their views. Since different groups and orientations may be present in the affected population, it is important to approach all key religious groups or orientations. The act of asking helps to highlight spiritual and religious issues, and what is learned can guide the use of aid to support local resources that improve wellbeing.
  Exercise ethical sensitivity. Using a skilled translator if necessary, work in the local language, asking questions that a cultural guide (person knowledgeable about local culture) has indicated are appropriate. It may be difficult for survivors to share information about their religion or spirituality with outsiders, particularly in situations of genocide and armed conflict where their religious beliefs and/or ethnic identities have been assaulted. Experience indicates that it is possible for humanitarian workers to talk with religious and spiritual leaders if they demonstrate respect and communicate that their purpose is to

learn how best to support the affected people and avoid damaging practices. In many emergencies, religious and spiritual leaders have been key partners in educating humanitarian workers about how to support affected people. Ethical sensitivity is needed also because some spiritual, cultural and religious practices (e.g. the practice of widow immolation) cause harm. It is important to maintain a critical perspective, supporting cultural, religious and spiritual practices only if they fit with human rights standards. Media coverage of local practices can be problematic, and should be permitted only with the full consent of involved community members.

Associate with religious actors and their organisations as active members of civil society. Partnerships are especially relevant in cases where religious actors play an important role at local level and are actively engaged in meeting the needs of displaced populations. They can leverage significant social, physical and spiritual assets for the benefit of communities. They are widely present in all parts of a given country due to their vast networks. Their presence does not necessarily depend upon external or international funding. They often remain long after international attention has faded, and funding has declined. Strengthening partnerships with religious actors is a goal of the wider humanitarian reform process that aims to improve the effectiveness of humanitarian response.

Humanitarian programming is heavily shaped by what we choose to measure and collect information on. Involving religious actors in assessment, monitoring and evaluation is thus crucial if their perspectives and resources are to be drawn on to shape humanitarian response. Input from local faith leaders may provide triangulation of other data sources regarding vulnerability and capacity assessments that confirm findings or flag potential gaps. Given the influence of local religious actors on social norms and practices, their input is particularly crucial in planning interventions that address harmful practices or social tensions.

The IASC MHPSS Guidelines outlines the main information needed and this includes collecting information about religious beliefs as an existing source of psychosocial wellbeing and mental health; on religious structures and dynamics with regard to security and conflict; on cultural resources and practices such as mourning practices, attitudes towards mental disorder, etc; and in terms of programming needs and opportunities, for example, in referral systems between and within health, social, education community and religious sectors.

According to you, what is the role of faith-based organizations in providing psychosocial support activities to people affected by humanitarian crisis? (at all levels)

Recent research suggests that the personal belief and meaning provided by a faith tradition is a major source of psychosocial support in the context of crisis, as is the engagement in religious practices, often linked to the wider community. For many faith actors, spiritual faith is the motivation for action. But working with them can be complex because not all FBOs have an inclusive outlook. Differences in religious beliefs

and interpretations can be drivers of conflict and ethnic and social tensions. In addition, some religious practices and customs sanction various forms of discrimination and exclusion.

There are two major themes in the principles and laws that inform the guidance provided in the Faith Sensitive Humanitarian Response (to be launched shortly):

• First that a person's religion should never be a basis for their receiving lesser support than someone of another religion. This reflects the principle of impartiality. Humanitarian workers should seek to ensure that religion does not make a difference to how they work with someone.

• Second that there is freedom of religious conviction and practice. Humanitarian workers need to take into consideration how they can work in a way that promotes religious freedom.

Working with local religious actors can help facilitate development of new relationships with the local community and build upon the relationships already in place. These actors are often the primary interface with the communities. When there are shared identities and priorities, and when the relationships have been positive and based on trust, these relationships can become a conduit for locally shaped programmes that may perhaps be more effective in achieving the desired impact more quickly.

A number of studies have shown how communal religious spaces can serve as a key focal point for activities relevant to psychosocial recovery. This includes enabling prayer and worship, but also social activities, pastoral support and practical assistance. In camp settings explicit attention needs to be given to allocating land for these spaces, and enabling their development. In urban settings – or contexts affected by natural disaster – the focus may be more on reconstruction of existing facilities so that they can function effectively.

A practical example: "Linking faith with the construction of water facilities and toilets in schools does not sound like an obvious link, yet it is important. Water plays a central role in many religions and beliefs around the world: source of life, it represents (re)birth. Water cleans the body, and by extension purifies it, and these two main qualities confer a highly symbolic (even sacred) status to water. Water is therefore a key element in ceremonies and religious rites. This is reflected in the way people use water, in the way they design water systems and the need for accessibility of water for cleansing after toilet use or washing hands." Clean water is the foundation of good hygiene and sanitation, which many religious traditions promote with prescriptions about waste management and cleansing rituals before spiritual functions. Engaging with local religious actors to learn about the religious attitudes and corresponding behaviours regarding water, sanitation and hygiene practices such as hand washing is therefore appropriate in developing appropriate and utilized systems.

Is your organization's faith factor a help or an obstacle during relief efforts? How and Why?

Example: LWF in Kakuma:

The governance structures in Kakuma refugee camp, northern Kenya, include a Camp Coordination Team. This is made up of team of camp leaders who work in collaboration with UNHCR and NGO partners to design, implement, monitor and evaluate the activities in the community. Members of the Camp Coordination Team act as a 'bridge' between UNHCR/ NGOs and the community in terms of information sharing. They inform the community on any changes of activity or methods of delivery of programmes, and report back to organisations on issues raised by community members. LWF Kakuma already worked closely with religious leaders through their facilitation of the Religious Consortium, but religious leaders had not formally been part of the Camp Coordination Team. In order to explore the possibility of involving them, all religious leaders in the camp were invited for a meeting. The idea was positively received, and a process of negotiation took place to decide on which religious leaders should be nominated to join the Camp Coordination Team. The discussion included considerations such as the size of the population represented by each religious leader, and the nationalities represented by each leader, since most religious groups in Kakuma are closely associated with nationalities. Five leaders (Muslim and Christian; male and female) were selected. They will continue both as members of the Religious Consortium, which has a focus on conflict resolution and peace building, and members of the Camp Coordination Team, which is concerned with overall coordination of activities in the camps. A challenge faced during the selection process was that it was difficult to select only five leaders given that there are so many Christian denominations in Kakuma. Some complained that they were being left out on matters of coordination, and, with hindsight, it would have been better to spend longer on this process so that religious leaders could elect representatives to the Camp Coordination

Team and everybody would feel that they had an equal chance to be involved. Although it is early in the process of involving religious leaders in coordination systems, religious leaders from different faiths already see opportunities to start influencing how activities are carried out in the camp and are giving feedback to the community through their congregation on implementation, work plans and new activities. Other benefits we anticipate include the fact that the high level of trust people have in their faith leaders means they are likely to share with them more openly, and give more feedback than they would to other leaders. It is also hoped that the religious leaders, being very strong proponents of peace, will be able to strengthen the peace and conflict resolution mechanism components in the camp coordination team. No significant challenges have yet been experienced, but we foresee the possibility of a situation arising where different religious groups may not see the big picture of the community, but may have a narrow focus on their interest on their group. This will already be mitigated by ensuring that the mandate of the Camp Coordination Team is discussed repeatedly.

FD: Could you please present yourself a bit? So what you do, and so on.

AN: yeah hum so I work for the organization X. I work for the humanitarian response department, which is the emergency's court department. Hum and I am a psychosocial support and staff wellbeing technical adviser. So within that role I advise on all kind of touching activities around protection, child protection hum things like that and hum I've been with the organization for a year and a half now and hum and the only person on that team hum working in this hum in this area, sector and previously I was working with the United States in crisis response and in mental health hum domestically and also with an applied research group at the University of Denver [inaudible] humanitarian [inaudible] school.

FD: Okay

AN: And hum yeah so working on applied research in area of mental health and humanitarian response.

FD: Okay great. That's quite an impressive background.

AN: Thank you [laughs]

FD: Hum So that's the end of my data collection so I'm not gonna ask you all of my questions because I already have most of the answers I need. My first question would be: according to you, what's the place of religion and spirituality in psychosocial support activities?

AN: Hum well I would say that, that they play, they can play quite a significant role. I mean I think that it varies depending on the context that you're in and the community that you are in and that in, overall, at least you know for the organization X, and for me, that hum that it doesn't play a role in terms of activities that we provide but it plays a very significant role in how we come to understand the community, what the needs are or persons of concern, people who are affected. And so far as that we want to promote hum connection for people, connection with the religious communities or their faith, their practices, insofar as that they promote resilience and provide strength and opportunities, or social community connections hum that tend to be more inherent to a community. So activating those, you know, rather than providing our official support or you know, perhaps using those essential and then providing supplemental support that could be significant in an approach but only where that's, where that community is depending on their inaudible are very active with their religious practices and it's very much part of their structure and other communities, other affected groups, it's not very central hum where their commu, like a very, very big mix of spirituality, faiths hum in groups of affected people and so when that's the case we try to be very sensitive you know whether to be more inclusive or more kind of maybe not attending to it and the discussion being much more partial. So it can go either way, you know. We could use it as a strength but also providing some acknowledging our limitations and where our boundaries are because sometimes religious aspects can hum can be intermixed with other types of structures of leadership which we want to stay impartial from.

FD: Yeah. But so do you think it's important to integrate religion and spirituality in psychosocial support activities?

AN: Do I think it's important to?

FD: Yeah. To integrate religion and spirituality in psychosocial support activities?

AN: Hum no, no, I don't think so. Well I mean I guess I can relate it to my last answer. I think maybe there can be elements, spiritual elements that can be integrated hum but I think integrating religious elements hum can be you know, we're not always experts in other people's faith and we're not always aware of how a person's, how a group's religion can be used within their community and so it can be a contentious activity for us to bring it in or it can even be hum even a bit dangerous so I think it depends on where we are and so places where we are implementing directly hum you know we kind of have to be careful for that so I think to a question being "Is it important?" I mean I think it's important that we allow our beneficiaries to bring in their own faith but I don't believe that it's important to integrate spirituality or religion into psychosocial services that we as an agency are providing.

FD: Okay, thank you. Hum sorry I'm a bit confused because that's the the first time one interviewee tells me that so [laughs] but that's really interesting for my thesis so so thank you for that.

AN: It's a complicated question so

FD: Yeah yeah no but I mean that's a good answer hum the other answers are good too but so I'm a bit lost sorry [laughs]

AN: Okay

FD: Hum So according to you what is the role of faith-based organisation in providing psychosocial support activities?

AN: Hum well again I think I have to answer, I can answer on behalf of my own organization or I could answer more broadly. I mean I think. So for my organization we we don't hum we don't act on behalf of our own faith structure. So we're a Catholic organization but the fact of that doesn't enter into our activity. So all of our activities are impartial and we work with many many people who are not Catholic and so hum so we need our beneficiaries where they're at and that's what I was saying to you is that we invite people you know allowing them to bring in the strength of their own faith but it's not something that we take a role in, being impartial. That being said they are many organizations or plenty faith-based organizations that I know of that, because of their faith, that faith being aligned with the, those of their serving, are able to have you know a very deep connection and be able to support beneficiaries in a very different way because, because they, they, they can bring that into the space of the activities that they're providing and they can really draw on that. We do hum you know, for us we do bring in, we do try to connect with certain religious teachings that, you know, perhaps you know, working with children, maybe those are things that we can bring in hum to our activities to make it more, to give them something that they can connect with, you know around certain themes hum but yeah I think that hum can you reread, restate the question? I might be getting lost. [laughs]

FD: [laughs] Don't worry. According to you what is the role of faith-based organizations in providing psychosocial support?

AN: Yeah yeah so yes I mean so I think yeah for many organizations they really do, they are able to identify with with beneficiaries and their communities and in their faiths in a way that's quite different because they have existing connections hum with their communities through faith and and they're providing that additional kind of Caucasian and support that area where where many people really need and rely and feel supported by by their faith so I feel like they, many faith-based organizations can really be a bridge between the two, between the added side of social support, community strengthening and again also the way that faith provides strength and support and healing for people so, yeah so very strong connection and bridge, ideally.

FD: Yeah. Hum what do you think is the role of faith leaders and faith communities in delivering psychosocial support?

AN: Their role? I mean I think hum I think being, you know, a strong sort of a guiding presence in you know, in being in a position of of providing a certain sense of safety, you know, faith can offer. I think they play a role in that. But I think they also do hum hopefully more and more, play a role in connecting their communities that might not have access or or get connected to other types of supports and services, more randomly. So I think they do play an important role in connecting their communities to other organizations or services that maybe are not faith-based and that are providing other types of support.

FD: Okay, thank you. Hum do you think there is a difference between the approach to psychosocial support of secular and faith-based organizations?

AN: Hum I don't really know. Hum Do I think there's a difference in the psychosocial support. I mean I don't think I could really say overall because I don't, I wouldn't think that all faith-based organizations provide it in the same way, I'm sure there is very much a range so, I don't know. [laughs] I can't say.

FD: No it's okay. It's okay, thank you. It shows that hum this question is important because hum, side note, because it shows if people, how people envision faith-based organizations and secular organizations, if they really see a dichotomy or not, that's the reason of this question.

AN: Hum yeah, no, I wouldn't say, I wouldn't say that I see a dichotomy, I think there are many faith-based organizations, I mean churches even that reach out to and want to have additional knowledge and training from you know professional organizations so they can bring in the same kind of skills as extra support and added value to what they're already providing so, I wouldn't see it as a dicho, a real dichotomy.

FD: Yeah. One last question: do you think it's harder for faith-based organization to implement psychosocial support activities because of their faith part?

AN: Hum, that's another complicated question. I mean I think ideally no. However, there are plenty of situations, if you are providing psychosocial support to a group that comes from a different faith than your faith, then yes, you can definitely meet a lot of challenges in terms of acceptance and suspicion, even if you're not hum bringing religious, any religious kind of concepts or approaches into your psychosocial activities or area of reach, hum I think there can be a lot of suspicion [inaudible] if you're coming from a different faith. So yeah I would say there are so definite challenges.

FD: Okay, thank you. And which kind of psychosocial support activities do the organization X implement?

AN: Hum So we provide a lot of services through child [inaudible] spaces. And so on child-focused activities, like creative expression, things like that, you know, life skills, skills with children and caregiver support also. Hum we do some psychosocial support with youth groups, reaching into life skills and reaching into also hum integrating into [inaudible] programmes. We do psychosocial support hum we also integrate it into piece building and social cohesion and what, what we call trauma healing through a specific model that we use hum let's see, that's education and awareness that we do with creative arts methodologies and hum I don't know, probably some, you know, with all of our various programmes I'm sure there are some other things that I'm not aware of but

FD: Yeah.

AN: Hum but overall some of our programmes we provide psychosocial support and SGPE programmes hum yeah I think that's probably most of what we do in terms of psychosocial support.

FD: Okay great, thank you. And hum for psychosocial support activities, do the organization X work with, with local churches like members of the Caritas network?

AN: Yes we do very often, yes.

FD: And how this partnership works for psychosocial support?

AN: How does the partnership work? Hum well usually the partnership hum is one of capacity building so we usually come in for a partner like one of the Caritas organizations, where maybe this is a new area for them, we would provide some training and accompany them [inaudible] with assessments and evaluation just to provide guidance and training, things like this, to to build up the skill level and the capacity of their staff hum and helping, just providing [inaudible] to make sure that the programme the partner, the Caritas partner's providing is in line with with international standards hum sometimes we assist with coordination if it's a large emergency. So yeah it's usually just capacity building and support to the partner. Hum so that it's more sustainable, more sustainable for them.

FD: Yeah, okay great. Thank you. I think I've been through most of the questions I wanted to ask you. Hum Do you wanna add anything?

AN: Hum No I don't think I have anything to add.

Appendix 7: Interview guide

	Do you want to stay confidential?	1
General / introductive questions	Could you please present yourself and your work?	2
	According to you, what's the place of religion and spirituality in humanitarian action?	3
Psychosocial support activities	According to you, what's the importance of psychosocial support after humanitarian crisis?	4
	Which kind of psychosocial support activities do your organization implement? And why those ones?	5
Religion and psychosocial support	According to you, what's the place of religion and spirituality in psychosocial support activities?	6
	What are the effects of psychosocial support activities with a religious component on the psychological well-being of people affected by humanitarian crisis?	7
	Do your organization integrate religion or spirituality in psychosocial support activities? / How can religion and spirituality be integrated in psychosocial support activities? Why?/Why not?	8
	How can religion and spirituality be integrated in psychosocial support activities?	9
	What are the advantages and disadvantages of integrating or not religion or spirituality in your activities?	10
FBOs	According to you, what is the role of faith-based organizations in providing psychosocial support activities to people affected by humanitarian crisis? (at all levels)	11
	Do you think faith-based organizations have an advantage or disadvantage in delivering psychosocial support? Why?	12
	Do you think it is harder for FBOs to implement psychosocial activities with a religious and spiritual component?	13
	According to you, what are the main differences between secular and faith-based NGOs in their approaches to psychosocial support?	14
	Do you think it is harder for FBOs to implement psychosocial activities with a religious or spirituality component?	15
Formalities	Do you want to add anything? Do you have any useful documents to send me about your organisation's relief effort in terms of psychosocial support? Or any other useful documents?	16