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Religion, Healthcare and Social Media use in Urban Tanzania: Ethnographic study of New Faith Based Organisations in Urban Tanzania

In recent years, the relationship between religion and development has been contentious issues that are critically discussed from the point of potential benefits as well as detrimental opportunities that the work of faith-based organizations (FBOs) present in relation to the growing mass and social media technology. Using ethnographic approaches on new religious organisations (Pentecostal and Muslim Revivalist organisations) in urban Tanzania, I argue that religious actors use social and mass media in order to promote their healthcare activities and sharing their religious and social messages with the wider community. In particular, I argue that the use of media in the FBOs' healthcare activities serves the purpose of seeking and attracting both internal and external attention, which may have an impact on the public recognition of their work and in strengthening their influence in society, for instance with regard to attracting more beneficiaries to their religious ideologies, hence inspire and motivate their members in meeting their religious and public obligations. Furthermore, I argue that the media serves not only as an instrument of "popularizing" FBOs' healthcare activities and religious messages and agendas in Tanzania, but also of advising the government on healthcare and addressing other issues affecting the lives of people and the public sphere at large.

Keywords: Islamic Revivalism, Pentecostalism, faith-based organisations mass media, healthcare, Tanzania

