Palestinian Civil Society

Foreign donors and the power to promote and exclude

Benoît Challand

Routledge studies on the Arab–Israeli conflict

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Palestinian Civil Society examines the development of civil society in the Arab Middle East and the impact of western donors, with particular reference to the Palestinian case. Looking at the evolution of Palestinian civil society organizations from sociological, historical, legal and institutional perspectives, the book sheds light on the involvement of donors in Palestine, and the effect that aid has had on Palestinian civil society at a social, political and ideological level.

Drawing on Arabic texts, political theory and a detailed survey of donors and local organizations, this book challenges culturalist views that there cannot be a 'vibrant civil society' in the Arab world and examines the issues of depoliticization of civil society, the rise of the Islamist sector, and the gradual defeat of the left in the Occupied Territories. The author looks at how the interaction between donors and NGOs is not only centred on a western model of civil society, but also evolves around institutional mechanisms and disciplinary discourses, affecting the ability of local NGOs to adapt to the institutional requirements set by international donors.

Accessible to non-specialists, this book will be of interest to students and scholars of sociology, Middle Eastern studies and development studies.

Benoît Challand is a research fellow at the European University Institute in Florence, and has taught at the Universities of Bologna, Bethlehem, Pavia and Fribourg.

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Abbreviations

AIDA	Association of International Development Agencies
AME	Arab Middle East(ern)
AMIDEAST	American Mid-East Education & Training Services Inc.
ANERA	American Near East Refugee Aid
ARD	Associates in Rural Development
avr.	Average
BTL	Between the Lines
CARE	Cooperative for American Remittances Everywhere
CBO	community-based organization
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CRS	Catholic Relief Services
DAC	Development Assistance Committee (OECD)
DfID	Department for International Development
DFLP	Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine
DoP	Declaration of Principles (September 1993)
ECHO	European Community Humanitarian Aid Department
EDC	Environment & Development Challenges
EU	European Union
Fatah	Movement for the Liberation of Palestine
FES	Friedrich Ebert Stiftung
Fida	Palestinian Democratic Movement
FNS	Friedrich-Naumann Stiftung
GCMHP	Gaza Community Mental Health Project
GINGO	Governmental NGO
Hamas	Islamic Resistance Movement
HBS	Heinrich Böll Stiftung
HDIP	Health Development Information and Policy Institute
ICG	International Crisis Group
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IDRC	International Development Research Centre
IGO	Inter-Governmental Organization
INGO	International non-governmental organization
IPHC	International People's Health Council

IRI	International Republican Institute
JMCC	Jerusalem Media and Communication Centre
JPS	*Journal of Palestine Studies*
KAS	Konrad Adenauer Stiftung
MAP	Medical Assistance to Palestine
MAS	Palestine Economic Policy Research Institute
MEND	Middle-East Non-Violence and Democracy
MEPS	Most expected public speech(es)
MERIP	*Middle East Report*
MdM	Médecins du Monde
MOPIC	Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation (PNA)
MSF	Médecins Sans Frontières
NDI	National Democratic Institute
NGO	non-governmental organization
NORAD	Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation
OCHA	Office for Humanitarian Affairs (UN)
ODI	Overseas Development Institute
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OPT	Occupied Palestinian Territories (West Bank and Gaza Strip)
OXFAM	Oxford Relief Committee for Famine Relief
PASSIA	Palestinian Academic Society for the Study of International Affairs
PCHR	Palestinian Centre for Human Rights
PCP	Palestinian Communist Party (later PPP)
PECDAR	Palestinian Economic Council for Development and Reconstruction
PFLP	Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine
PGUCS	Palestinian General Union of Charitable Societies
PHC	Primary Health Care
PHRIC	Palestinian Human Rights Information Centre
PICCR	Palestinian Independent Commission for the Citizens' Rights
PINGO	Palestinian NGO Network
PNGO	Palestinian NGO Project (World Bank project run by the Welfare Consortium)
PLC	Palestinian Legislative Council
PLO	Palestine Liberation Organization
PLO-EC	PLO-Executive Committee
PLO-CC	PLO-Central Committee
PM	Prime Minister
PMO	Programme Management Organisation
PNA	Palestinian National Authority
PPP	Palestine People's Party (former PCP)
PR	Public Relations
PRCS	Palestinian Red Crescent Society
QUANGO	Quasi non-governmental organization

SDC	Swiss Development and Cooperation [Agency]
SIDA	Swedish International Development Agency
TdH	Terre des Hommes
TIM	Temporary International Mechanism
UCS	Union of Charitable Societies
UHCC	Union of Health Care Committees
UHWC	Union of Health Work Committees
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNRWA	UN Relief and Work Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East
UNSCO	UN Special Coordinator in the Occupied Territories
UPMRC	Union of Palestinian Medical Relief Committees
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WBGS	West Bank and Gaza Strip
WFP	World Food Program
WHO	World Health Organization


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MEDITERRANEAN SEA
Jenin
WEST BANK
Tulkarm
Tubas
Qalqiliya
Nablus
Salfit
Ramallah
Jericho
JORDAN
Green Line
Jerusalem
ISRAEL
Green Line
Bethlehem
WEST BANK
DEAD SEA
Hebron
Gaza North
Gaza
Deir al Balah
GAZA STRIP
Khan Younis
Rafah
EGYPT
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1 Introduction

One civil society, two Palestines

> Liberal politics is based on cultural consensus and aims at human progress. It is the product of rational discourse as well as its precondition. It must dominate the unredeemed world – if not by reason then, alas, by force – in order to survive.
>
> Asad 2003a: 61

Cultures and civil society

Reflecting upon problematic Arab liberalizations and western efforts to 'democratize' Arab regimes Langhor claimed that there has been 'too much civil society, [but] too little politics' in the promotion by external actors of democratic oppositional forces (Langhor 2004). Another approach has been to refute the argument according to which the 'development of civil society' in the Arab Middle East has been 'retard[ed]' by 'deeply imbued cultural values and social structures' (Carapico 1998b: 1), and to stress instead that civil society in the Arab world can assume 'different forms under different circumstances' and that civil society is fluidly expanding where space for civic activism is granted in a context of largely authoritarian regimes and when resources are made available (ibid.: 12–17). Surely, the model of civil society studied in Yemen by Carapico is very different from a European embodiment of civil society, but nevertheless, varying forms of social activism can contribute to the 'emergence of a modern individual' taking over the status of the 'subject, though not yet endowed with full citizenship' (Hussein 1993: 14). Some now argue that the plurality of discussions about 'public Islam' can serve to define a 'common good' that can 'also encourage the gradual emergence of ever more abstract patterns of membership and citizenship' (Salvatore and Eickelman 2004: xvi).

This book aims precisely at exploring issues related to civil society in the Arab Middle East and in particular western promotion of civil society in the Palestinian context through non-governmental organization (NGO) support. Has there been also too much civil society and too little politics in the case of western support to civil society organizations there? How does Palestinian civil society differ, according to donors and local NGO activists, from the 'western'

or European model? What is constitutive of Palestinian civil society? What are the impacts of such an intensive promotion?

Another preliminary puzzle is given by the alleged problematic relationship between Arab-Muslim polities and democratization. A vast amount of literature has been produced in the last 20 years (starting with the Islamic revolution in Iran) about the alleged incompatibility of the two conceived worlds of autocratic Arab-Muslim regimes and democratic principles. This is often referred to the question of 'political Islam', as a catchphrase to express the tension between the main sources of authority (religious or political?) to rule Middle Eastern polities. Eventually, this translated into some reified reductions such as those of Huntington (1993, 1996) whereby the 'west'[1] is portrayed as an homogenous democratic bloc pitted against, among others, an illiberal Islamic enemy resisting democracy. One of the consequences of such views is that there is a *lack* of democracy within the Arab-Muslim world(s) that many western donors try to compensate through civil society promotion in the Arab Middle East (AME). Such view – also paralleled in the discourse of development, whereby one end (the 'under-developed' or 'developing' countries) is receiving aid from 'developed', or 'advanced' capitalist states – contributes to the problematic making of blocks opposed, when not in terms of values, through the presence (or not) of certain institutional arrangements and prevailing norms. In our case, civil society is promoted by western actors in Arab Middle Eastern societies considered in need of it. In the case of Palestine,[2] it is as though promoting civil society could be a beneficial cure for the decade-long conflict between Israelis and Palestinians.

Without a thorough investigation of both concepts (origins and meaning of civil society in its European historical context, as well as the disputed existence of an Arab civil society), no satisfying and receivable conclusions can be attained about the potential success of civil society promotion by international donors in the Arab Middle East. There must be first an investigation about the assumptions, preferences and shortcomings of the concept of civil society on both sides (assuming that one accepts the temporary opposition western versus Arab), and deconstruct the way by which (political) Islam and (western) civil society are represented, at worst, as enemies, and at best as rather exclusive characteristics. To do so, attention will be dedicated to epistemological, political and institutional dimensions of civil society promotion in the Arab Middle East.

Analogous *problématiques* have been raised for other regions of the world, and therefore the central question of this book is expanding beyond the mere borders of Palestine: Africanists debate the question of the exportability of the State (Bayart 1989; Badie 1992). Three decades ago, Latin America specialists also discussed the idea that the cultural substratum common to the Iberic peninsula and to Latin America was a reason for the resistance to democratization (Wiarda 1974). Eastern Europeanists have in recent years questioned the view of a 'western model' that would 'export' civil society to post-communists states (Hann and Dunn 1996; Hemment 1998). In a similar vein, some argue that there is an incompatibility between liberal democracy and 'Asian values', notably in Confucian cultures, that allegedly tend 'to focus on discipline over rights, on

loyalty rather than on entitlement' and that would be hostile to western individualism (Sen 1999: 231ff.; Harik 2003: 11).[3]

These examples are all elements of the same problematic view according to which different religious beliefs, mentalities or cultures are at the origin of the difficult or failed access to democracy of certain countries. Explanations of the kind are based on the assumptions that cultures, as a commonly cited explaining macro-variable, are closed entities with clear borders as well as with constant and immutable features. *Nolens volens*, authors relaying such explanations confine culture to a mechanistic role whereby cultures, like frozen entities, are meant to interact like billiard balls, that clash, push each other, but never mingle or evolve and are given as such in an immutable manner. In other words, values behind cultures, mentalities or religious principles are portrayed as fixed, homogenous and unbridgeable. On the contrary, democracy is seen in the discourse of most western actors as a universal feature that should 'penetrate' these non-porous entities or that should be exported there.

But the very notion of 'exporting' democracy also implies a corollary view that it has a specific origin – in which case, democracy would be defined as 'western' or European. On one hand, democracy is seen as a western product that can be exported everywhere, on the other, as a form of cultural particularism. But by doing so, one runs the risk of misinterpreting this geographical origin as an abstract cultural feature: such argument, eventually, reinforces the views that cultures are closed entities. Thus, one faces the classical deadlock of cultures, trapped between the two extremes of universalism and relativism/particularism.

There are usually three main types of solutions put forward about the question of the 'exportability' of democracy and related concepts such as civil society or about the existence of local forms of democracy/civil society.

The first approach is based on the dichotomy universalism/relativism. Though most of the authors would distinguish the two approaches, I believe that they participate both to a biased view on values positing actually and implicitly different blocks. Universalist literature in a large measure tries to persuade that there exist universal values which Rawls defends, for example, under the concept of 'overlapping consensus' (1996, 1999). Rawls' views stem from his conception of justice as fairness and of political liberalism that should serve as a minimal social contract.[4] His ideas have had a significant influence on many other authors (one thinks here about the issue of human rights) promoting political liberalism, as a form of distributive justice that needs to be shared with other 'non-decent' or 'non-liberal' societies. But these reflections have the starting point of existing differences that one needs to bridge under the heading of universalism (political liberalism being one such source of universalism). In this line, Rawls' approach is blind to other political models since he puts forward one that all should follow, rejecting potential counter-models. Another critique to this universalist creed is that it is not as universalist as it claims, but is the result instead of a contingent historical process (Baccelli 1999). Political liberalism, as one important matrix of liberal democracy, is not just made of abstract principles, but also born of a

precise historical context that owes to the geographic and socio-economic cradle in which it grew. Even more problematic is the fact that such concepts grew from theorization made in a specific historical and geographical zone (interlacing them even more so to a limited region).

A subset of this type of response is to stress not the universalistic features, but the particularities that are inherent to societies. It is best exemplified in the now successful and widespread views on multiculturalism. This holds that there are many different and discrete cultures that do in fact exist. These cultures should now be acknowledged as such, or, to use Taylor's phrase, be recognized (1992). His argument stems from the moral obligation not to do harm to the other, since 'misrecognition shows not just a lack of due respect. It can inflict a grievous wound, saddling its victims with a crippling self-hatred. Due recognition is not just a courtesy we owe people. It is a vital human need' (ibid.: 26). The problem with recognition of multiculturalism is twofold. On the one hand, the dialogical project of recognition is still based on a situation of asymmetry of one (Taylor's) identity over that of the 'others'[5] and implies a form of hierarchy. On the other hand, it encloses the other's identity or culture in new limits: its members are therefore trapped in a given identity, without knowing who decides for whom what the boundaries are. So, as in universalistic approaches, one faces logics of groups' homogeneity, and multiculturalism can serve as disguise for reifying and 'museumising' the others through the discourses of cultures (Werbner 1997). Even more dangerous is the fact that multiculturalism can serve to hide racist sentiments behind some minimal tolerations of a demeaning other (Harik 2003; Abrahamian 2003: 541; Lentin 2004). Thus, multiculturalism that tends to express its acceptance of diversity in terms of toleration,[6] or that compares by underlining the lacks of the 'others', can become another form of universalism with different guise.[7]

The second type of explanation puts the stress on the *domination* of a ruling 'north' over an under-developed and formerly colonized 'south'. The first subcategory of such view is that of dependency theory, best embodied in the works of Wallerstein (1979). In this account, discussions about cultural differences become the pretext to hide deeper structural imbalances in terms of power and resources between a ruling centre and the (semi-)peripheries.

Culture is much more important in the post-colonial approach (second sub-type of the domination approach), where the study of symbolic domination of Europe or the 'west' over post-colonial worlds through intellectual means is central. In this reading, Chakrabarty's *Provincializing Europe* (2000) is programmatic for the unpacking of the power of knowledge and in particular of social sciences. Knowledge, through categories such as democracy, civil society and secularism, just to name some of the contentious concepts one will face in this book, contributes to the further reproduction of the former colonial hegemony of Europe. But, even if democracy can be conceived as 'exportable', the result is not far from that described by Chakrabarty, whereby 'the European colonizer of the nineteenth century both preached this Enlightenment humanism at the colonized and at the same time denied [them] its practice' (2000: 4).

A post-modern response to this view of cultures against one another has been to put the stress on the fact that no pure essentialist identities exist, but only *hybrid* forms. This is a way to fight the widespread homogenizing tendency of modernist theories, but also to tackle much of the ethnocentrism implied in the vast majority of social sciences. But the problem with hybridity – as with multiculturalism – is that 'cultural difference has also become the basis for an exaggeration of difference and, with it, the incommensurability of cultures' (Werbner 1997: 17). Thus, discourses of hybridity do not counter the fact that there are *differences* between cultures. Moreover, even if entities or identities are indeed hybrid, they were probably not so before, implying some transformation of a pure origin. Similarly the vocabulary of 'cross-fertilization' falls into the same trap: despite the understandable aim to stress diversities and to forgo essentialisms, it nevertheless assumes that before the cross-fertilization, or hybridization, there were some 'pure' entities. Therefore one is facing a similar problem – though differently formulated, since at least it tackled the problematic issue of ethnocentrism in social science – of the universalist versus particularist approach.

A final problem with approaches stressing the domination relationship between 'north' and 'south' is that they unintendedly formalize the existence of two groups portrayed as homogenous of a dominant 'west' or 'north' (wherever these might end) over a poor and resource-free 'south' (wherever this might start), this time not in terms of cultural boundaries, but in terms of capacity of domination. Such views assume a sort of intentionality of domination in each level of the 'west' or of the 'north': international organizations, governments, policy-makers, intellectuals, workers, NGOs, etc. But unless one adopts far-fetching conspiration theories, it is difficult to accept such reductionist explanations, with a new form of Leviathan called 'Domination', with different arms, eyes and brain participating to the same exploitative end. This is nothing but a form of homogenizing explanation. Despite some positive deconstructive arguments about ethnnocentrism, post-colonial studies still need to come up with more convincing holistic arguments. Its strength probably remains on the individual level, namely by stressing on how single individuals serve(d) to perpetuate European domination[8] – some examples will be put forward in later parts of this book (Chapters 4 and 5).

A third and final way to cope with the aforementioned problem of spotting an exact origin to concepts, identities and cultures, is to stress the *similitude*, and commonalities within various cultures. In that line of thinking, 'world cultures' are not discrete entities, but may rather 'be ranged on a continuum with no disruptive hiatus separating them' (Harik 2003: 11). Therefore, what matters more is not the ascription of concepts to given cultures, but to stress the similitude, or commonalities within the various approaches to these concepts. Thus, local differences are acknowledged, but what is more important is the process of continuous interactions between universalizing references and particularist elements and bases that links these potential differences. Similitude, as the touchstone of the argument, can be defined as

> a condition which is encountered in a pluralist world, and the awareness of which prepares self-centred and self-important cultures to develop a sense of global community in the midst of great diversities. It stems from the fact that difference is real, but not a necessary source for estrangement.[9]

An applied approach of such view is that of the French anthropologist Amselle in his treatment of the topic of '*branchement*' (in English 'connection') that is a process in which various elements come together to produce a continuously redefined and evolving entity.

> Through the electric or computer-based metaphor of connection (tapping, or log in), that is a metaphor of a derivation/tapping of particularist meanings vis-à-vis a network of worldwide meanings, one can detach her/himself from the view that sees in our globalized world the product of a mixing or blending of cultures, the latter being conceived as impervious universes. Instead, what is at the centre of the thought process here is the idea of a triangulation, namely the use of a third element to ground her/his own identity.
>
> [. . .]
>
> Put differently, it would inverse the usual line of thinking which radically opposes universalism and relativism in order to demonstrate that universalism, far form thwarting differences, is the privileged means through which they are expressed.[10]

In this view, individuals or larger social groupings can connect with or 'click' on different *répertoires* according to the needs and situations of the actors. This is a move above the traditional identity process formation described by the Norwegian anthropologist Barth, where there are actually *two* elements or counter-forces playing in the definition or negotiation over an identity mostly defined on its boundaries (1969). However, one faces in Barth's seminal definition the same dichotomy of 'we' versus the 'other', which is again problematic.

The advantage of Amselle's model is that the references and *répertoires* can be changed according to the situation of some actors, and it introduces more flexibility about the changes and evolution of cultures, and allows taking previous historical encounters with some forms of universalizing cultures into consideration. It also allows one to avoid concepts and ideas of clearly delineated cultures which would be closed on themselves or self-containing, and the image of hybridization, or of 'cross-fertilization' since the latter two concepts share, unwillingly, their explanatory power to raciologist discourses of the nineteenth century based on the spurious view that there were once pure entities (Amselle 2001: chap. 1).

I have chosen to stick to the third type of epistemological enquiry for different reasons. First of all, the concept of civil society is too strongly enmeshed and embedded in European history to be simply considered as universalist. But it is also a form of reduction to hold the view that it is a western concept, or a European concept. Maybe the phrases and some constitutive parts around civil

society might well be indebted to its birthplace and therefore 'European', but it will be here argued that much of the *substance* of civil society is common to various cultures, including the Arab Middle East (Chapter 2). Therefore, there is a *continuum* of civil society – framed diversely, there is a *similitude* within different conceptions of civil society – with some minor cultural declinations, but without strong 'disruptive hiatus', despite many claims against such a view. This form of comparison (contrary to the previous critique to multiculturalism) is not stressing the 'lacks' of the 'other(s)', but stresses positive and similar elements, and goes against the frequent denunciatory mode of much of current critical work.[11]

In this line what matters is to study the context of interactions between international promoters of civil society and local agents of implementation and to stress that there is a strong common basis (or similitude) between the two types of actors in the promotion of civil society. What might turn out to be problematic is not the fact that civil society is alien to a given culture (in this case Arab-Muslim), but instead that the *visions* and *institutional* understanding about civil society by some influential actors are at the same time too limited and therefore limiting and that it is this problem that contributes to the simplified conclusion that civil society is lacking in Arab-Muslim polities (Chapters 4 and 5). However, such conclusion is somehow rendered difficult since many actors (international *and* local) explicitly make frequent references to *cultural* differences between their views on civil society. Thus, similitude must be searched on a deeper level and against the odds of the more accessible and easier discourses pointing out to cultural sources in order to explain variance (as much of the social science literature does, and in turn influences practitioners) (Chapter 5).

The advantage of such approach is, I believe, twofold. First, it allows for a re-questioning of the content of civil society both 'here' and 'there'[12] through the lenses of '*branchement*', namely the connection of a particular historical context under which civil society promotion takes place in Palestine with a set of external donors. One could argue that discourses of civil society serve not only the flourishing of an effective civil society, but also domestic actors in a political struggle against the local authority (Chapters 5 and 6). The *branchement* or connection to a universalizing element (civil society) is therefore more than a two-pronged dialogue, since the local context in which aid takes place is highly influential in its chances to succeed or to fail. Second, such a relational approach allows taking the role of discourse analysis and the production of social sciences into critical consideration: social science production about Arab-Muslim or European civil society also contributes to the problematic views that there are deep and unbridgeable cultural differences. So the problem is not 'only' in terms of empirical evidences of the existence of an Arab-Muslim civil society but also about the ways social research deals with such debated issues.

It is the task of this book to try to disentangle some of these points.

Why so much focus on these broader theoretical issues of cultures while the topic is about donors, civil society and Palestinian NGOs? Two reasons.

The first is that the problem of the rise of political Islam and return to much more conservative ideologies in the Middle East has been sometimes explained in terms of the longing by local populations for *endogenous* political responses to replace the fatiguing 'western' nationalist and socialist doctrines of the first seven decades of the twentieth century[13] (Ayubi 1991; Tripp 1996; Halliday 2003; Houston 2004). In this light, reference to Islam as a locally tailored response would be adapted to the broad layers of society deprived of political opportunities in what are mostly autocratic regimes in the region (Eickelman and Piscatori 1996; Burgat 2002: 106–110; Levine and Salvatore 2005). Even if political Islam is very often banned from public discourses, or controlled by ruling regimes, it can always remain successful and adapt on lower levels where regimes cannot really interfere, namely the level of individual faith, and through the networks of mosques and religious associations. To paraphrase Carapico, civil society is where autocratic regimes leave space for civic activism (1998b: 15–18), and religious worship venues will almost inevitably be used as a platform for such forms of activism.

In this context, aid can be a double-edged sword: for international actors, civil society promotion is seen as a solution to the lack of democratic life (lack generally portrayed in terms of cultural features of the Arab Middle East), but for local recipients who are longing for a decoupling and for a dissociation of western influence and ideologies, aid can be seen as both an imposition and an attempt to put aside endogenous and domestic resources for activism. In that sense, aid can reinforce the (perceived or not) contraposition of a universalizing concept (e.g. civil society promoted by donors) against local particularisms. It therefore makes sense to look at civil society promotion through the prism of cultures (at least in a first phase), since donors expect to promote a different *content* to civil society because of the perceived cultural differences, while local recipients tend to formulate the *message* of civil society through different cultural expedients (be they places for civic activism or different wording or symbols).

There is in both cases a sort of over-determination by *local* factors and features (in one case negative, and in the other positive), which potentially renders civil society promotion more difficult in this part of the world. Instead, donors and external actors ought to pay much more care to understand whether the local settings are different, and if so, if they are because of cultural traits, or because of other reasons (be they conjectural, structural, institutional or bureaucratic). This book will discuss at length some of these 'cultural' differences, through a preliminary theoretical chapter, but also through a careful analysis of practices and discourses both by donors and local NGOs. It will be argued that cultural differences tend to be exaggerated and that they tend to limit the capacity of civil society promotion in the region.

The way civil society promotion is understood, 're-packaged' by donor organizations and re-interpreted differently by local actors can produce elements of conflict with endogenous motivations for collective action. Civil society, embedded within a larger concept of democracy, becomes thus an important

locus towards autonomy and has to be also studied through these lenses of autonomy/heteronomy (Chapter 2). It is argued that civil society promotion can be a source of tension, because the flourishing of civil society (as well as to reach a satisfying degree of democracy) is intrinsically a *domestic* feature but at the same time, civil society promotion has taken in the last decade or so an increasingly *international* dimension (Whitehead 2004). In other words, there is a potential tension between civil society that normally works within a domestic setting, and its promotion by external actors. Are these dimensions compatible with one another? Civil society can be perceived domestically as a means to reach a condition of autonomy, but civil society promotion by external actors can lead to the definition of norms that are different or alien to the domestic norms and, therefore, contribute to a situation of heteronomy for the domestic society which benefits from this aid.

Hence the permanent focus throughout this work on international actors in their interactions with local NGOs, and the constant eye on civil society promotion as a critical factor that might interfere within the domestic arena of Palestinian politics. Needless to say, because of the large amounts of aid money dedicated to the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT), of the prominent role of external actors in the resolution of the Israeli–Palestinian conflict, and the significant number and involvement of international donors, the question of autonomy towards the definition of a common political project is even more important here.

The second reason for the insistence on culture stems from more general questions that arose in the literature over the last decade and a half. Civil society promotion and the 'aid industry' (Van Rooy 1998) have come under close scrutiny in recent years, unfortunately not always for the best. Despite millions of dollars poured into civil society promotion and NGO support in particular, little success has been noted in the difficult 'transitions', in particular in post-communist south-eastern European states (Mendelson 2002; Hemment 1998). This region is another example of the problematic international aid towards civil society promotion. Some scholars have also there tried to explain the failure of south-eastern European states to democratize in terms of the region's 'backwardness', of its 'primordialist' values or of a 'Balkanist' substratum that privileges a stronger role of families over individual secular emancipation (Chiodi 2007: 35). In this line of presentation as well, culture comes to the rescue to explain this resistance to a 'western model', but with the problematic view that it is seen as a reified explaining factor. Again, this 'western model' of civil society is presented as the panacea to all ills, but is never really questioned. A similar *problématique* was also spotted in a Muslim majority post-Soviet region, that of Central Asia, where Roy highlighted the danger of 'artificially importing values and institutions from a western model that might be both less universal and less democratic than it claims' (Roy 2002b: 126).

But actually in most of these cases, scholarly research tends to overlook 'here' the potentially negative (or problematic) role played by international donors, to privilege modes of explanations based on some lack, fallacies or shortcoming

'there'. Instead, there has been an over-celebration in the last decade of the benefits of constructivism and therefore a tendency to magnify only positive elements. Unfortunately, such literature often suffers from a lack of internal knowledge of the societies under which international aid operates. Hence the repeated and advocated necessity to operate a critical study of both recipient NGOs and donors (Chapters 3 and 4), as well as a double critical study of civil society in general and of civil society in the local context of Palestine and of the feeding loop of production of social science about the matter.

This work intends not to be another deconstructing piece of social sciences, though long parts of this work will be about critically studying the condition of emergence of civil society, its links with democratization, and development studies literature, because of the influence such approaches have on international aid for Palestinian NGOs. This book also intends to shed a *positive* light on the way the Arab-Muslim civil society can be approached. In particular, insistence will be given to Arab and local (Palestinian) interpretations and conceptions of civil society. A local civil society actually exists but not always according to the ways and criteria through which it has been conceptualized in its European cradle. Therefore one needs to take this local comprehension of the topic on board to offer a better chance to international civil society promotion to succeed (Chapters 2, 6 and 7).

Based on empirical evidence of the existence of local forms of civil society and on the discussion of some Arab intellectuals' views and definitions of civil society, this study also hopes to contribute to general and theoretical debates about civil society. The subtitle about the donor's power 'to promote and to exclude' should be understood not just as a *discretionary* application on the ground of civil society promotion, but also as a hint to the possible shortcomings of the discourse of civil society. On a theoretical level, it will be argued that one has to consider the genealogy of the concept to understand what it stands for, but also what such theories *hide*. On a discursive level, special attention will be dedicated to the evolution of a peculiar understanding of civil society by some local actors and how a limited vision of civil society is also transmitted by international donors into the Palestinian setting (Chapter 5). Eventually, it is not that civil society is intrinsically 'western' or 'European', but rather different visions and institutional interpretations of civil society are at the origin of the optical illusion that there is a lack of civil society in the Arab-Muslim region. Funding technicalities (type of aid, type of contracting), institutional practices, and different views on civil society generate isomorphic tendencies (that is, a form of pressure to accommodate with the outside world producing a similar outcome[14]) towards common institutional and discursive practices, at the expense of the substance of civil society. Hence, its exclusionary power must be seen on different levels, political, sociological, and ideological (Chapter 6).

Two Palestines

The long history of Palestinian NGOs offers an interesting case study for this book, because civil society activism started in the OPT well before the massive

international funding which gradually emerged from the second half of 1980s. Many argue that civil society activism has been vital to the creation of proto-national institutions and that for decades of occupation, associational life was a first step towards self-determination (Hilal 1998b; Robinson 1997; Abdel Shafi 2004). Most notably many small popular committees started from the 1970s onwards as local autonomous forms of socio-political organizations (away from the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) bureaucratic structures) which later evolved into larger entities. Many consider them as a laboratory for democratic life since they were a means for forbidden political parties to organize their social movements, and were thus contributing to some form of autonomy. Even if this model stemmed in particular from secular leftist parties, it was later emulated by mainstream nationalist groups (in particular Fatah (Movement for the Liberation of Palestine)), and even by Islamic and Islamist[15] groupings. Conscious references to the history of the three main political 'families' within the Territories (secular left, mainstream nationalist and Islamist groups) should serve to understand the intricacies of socio-political life as the backdrop against which civil society promotion takes place.

In other words: what impact does external aid towards civil society have on already existing, well established and firmly rooted civil society organizations? How does it differentiate between the various views of civil society embodied by these various forms of socio-political actors? Put in a nutshell, what does the (rather loose) affiliation of local organizations to Fatah, Hamas (Movement for the Islamic Resistance) and the secular left mean in terms of interpretation of civil society? Do institutionalized NGOs have similar views on civil society than charitable associations? Is the latter type of organizations also considered part of civil society by international donors?

But before embarking on some responses to these questions, one needs to understand the social fabrics of Palestinian politics that frame civil society work in the Territories. To do so, one needs to conduct a prior study of the socio-political environment framing Palestinian associational life in a historical perspective, but also question social science production and the historiography on the matter.

For this reason, it will be here spoken about two Palestines. This expression has a double purpose: on the one hand it aims at stressing the selective production of socio-political science literature about Palestine (dealing in particular with 'high' features of the conflict with Israel), and on the other hand, it highlights some other authors' tendency to simplify and apply monolithic descriptions to social phenomena in the Territories. In both cases, the phrase 'two Palestines' should be understood as a *call to take the diversity of Palestine into consideration but without pitting blocks in too simplistic terms*. Without this approach and an understanding of the two Palestines, any civil society promotion is doomed to failure since it relies either on a study of Palestinian political elites only (without further considerations for their links with the social bases) or on an ecological fallacy, according to which studies of a minor part of the Territories, e.g. of an urban minority around the central zones of Ramallah and

Jerusalem, is mistakenly extended to the whole of Palestine (without taking the variations of its regions or social strata into consideration).

This image aims at stressing the lack of differentiation of Palestinian society within a large share of the social science dealing with Palestine, which then might have a serious influence on how donors act in the Territories. The image of the two Palestines also aims at reframing the rather distorted account that the second *Intifada* took over the last years. Let us now see more concretely what are some of the shortcomings of social science production.

Misleading simplifications about two Palestines

First of all, there is a tendency for a lot of the literature dealing with Palestine to read local socio-political features uniquely through the lenses of the conflict with Israel. This runs a twofold danger. It can not only reduce internal social dynamics and political development to a mere backstage happening of the Palestinian–Israeli conflict with little importance, but also deterministically subordinate local developments to more macro-level negotiation issues. A frequent example of such dangers is embodied in the debate as whether the second *Intifada* was waged and led directly by the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) or whether it was a truly popular uprising.[16] The widely spread line that the late Yasser Arafat (then Chairman of the PLO and President of the PNA) and the PNA organized and staged the uprising against Israel in September 2000 to destroy all peace hopes does no justice to the fact that there is a strong *internal* dimension of the Palestinian population's uprising against corrupt segments of its leadership.

A related danger by this over-determination of the Israeli–Palestinian conflict is to simply put history aside of the nature of colonial occupation by the former on the latter. In other words, by applying methods and reading of 'post-conflict' analysis (such as confidence-building measures), one risks forgetting the substance of the conflict in order to privilege means and channels to solve it. A possible consequence is to forget to take the historical depth and composition of the Palestinian population in its diversity (refugees, displaced persons and residents) into consideration (Nabulsi 2004).

A second danger of social science literature is that, because of the symbolical importance that the Palestinian question has for much of western academia, it is partly determined by the hegemonic nature of western academic world. This translates into the framing of the 'Palestinian Question' not in terms of priorities defined by local social scientists, but by western academia, with all the problems that the intricacy between power and knowledge poses. In a paper written at the time of the Oslo Agreements, a Palestinian sociologist was stressing the structural bias in favour of western academia:

> Thus division of labour emerges in which visiting scholars, relatively well funded, and with access to publishing outlets abroad, often dictate the terms in which terms Palestinian discourse is packaged and presented to the

> external world, while Palestinian 'consultants' and informants act as the proletarian component in this scholarly multinationalism.
>
> (Tamari 1994: 80)

In other words, the 'packaging' of Palestine studies (or of only *parts* of Palestine) might have unintended effects upon the ways international donors and researchers conceive their object of study. Romani notes for example the large influence of international donors over the setting of the research agenda via a network of local research centres in the Territories, creating a situation of 'heteronomy' for local social scientists (Romani 2003).

Third, the last danger of an unfair or incorrect representation of Palestine stems from western media representation. International media have the tendency to concentrate most of their energy to central zones at the expense of forgotten and more remote zones covered only in certain cases of very violent confrontations (such as the demolition campaigns in Rafah in summer 2004, or the destruction of Jenin Refugee Camp in 2002). Thus, most western reader or TV viewer will by now be familiar with pictures of Ramallah or Jerusalem, but much less with Nablus, Qalqiliya, Rafah or Khan Younis, which are less covered by media reports. Again, this is probably due to the more general tendency to focus on the political elite and on issues related to the peace process. *A contrario*, this partial view might create an artificial divide between two zones separated by a chasm of 'civility': the first is that covered by media, where a cohort of local 'experts', cosmopolitan and well-off spokespersons concentrate around the more accessible Ramallah and Jerusalem; the second where one faces other types of individuals not keen on subtle analyses but stressing discourses of resistance and putting forward poorer towns such as the violence-ridden and unaccessible Rafah, Nablus and Jenin (incidentally, this is the side that Arab satellite-TVs tend to relay mostly). Eventually the risk is to simply oppose more peaceful zones (from which come elaborate intellectual discourses) to zones where conflicts reach daily peaks but whose image is amalgamated with armed actions framed within simple religious discourses or symbols of resistance. This leaves little space for thorough reflections on deprived and marginalized populations and tends to automatically equate social mobilization with less refined intellectual discourses and upon which more 'traditional' forms of solidarity allegedly prevail.[17] Moreover since resistance movements are stronger in these zones and that a majority of them mix nationalist and religious motivations, there is a reinforced image that the two Palestines are moved by different socio-cultural forces, where religion plays a decisive role mostly in the later setting. We are back to the over-determination by religion as cultural traits.

Blurred two Palestines

But the content of the two Palestines (and its representation in social sciences) should be more refined than that. As a matter of fact, it is no easy task to delineate the borders between the two Palestines. Earlier in the century one could have

drawn quite easily a border between an urban, educated and bourgeois Palestine as opposed to a rural, poor and conservative Palestine. The problem is that after decades of occupation, and waves of wars and uprisings, cleavages are not so clear anymore and they partially overlap in certain regions or periods, but not in others. For example, a new nationalist middle-class gradually emerged in the 1970s to replace traditional families (Sahliyeh 1988), but some of them made their way back to power through an alliance with the ruling PNA; the first *Intifada* contributed to the 'homogeneizing [of] the social base of the Palestinian communities' (Tamari 1990: 6), but there was a subsequent re-tribalization in certain zones of the Territories (Usher 1997); there was an intertwining of rural with urban ethos, through urbanization of large villages (such as Ramallah and al-Bireh) but also a spread of urban values to the *hinterland* (Tamari 1995: 287, 299; Legrain 1999a: 103). A new line of division is the opposition between PLO returnees and inside local population, but that has to be used very carefully since the category 'returnees' is different from that of the 'deportees' and the former are far from being an homogenous social group (Challand 2002, 2008c). Another difficult division is whether 'urban' and 'rural' should be considered as a dichotomy or as a continuum. A study on the *fellah* (peasant) and townsman noted 'that "rural" and "urban" are another pair of such megaconcepts badly in need, and nowhere more than in Middle Eastern Studies, of some kind of desegregation' (Baer 1982: 101). The issue, which actually depends on the assumptions made on the nature and functions of the two types of place, cannot be decided without paying attention to the historical moments and places where students of the urban and rural develop their thinking (ibid.: 105). The same can be said, *mutatis mutandis*, about the dichotomies suggested so far. The emergence of Islamism is not 'simply' the result of a resurgence of 'traditionalism': rather, 'religious fundamentalism' in the Palestinian case, 'is essentially an urban phenomenon', and more precisely in small cities, according to Tamari,[18] where leftist secular factions did not succeed in managing to transform and change totally Palestinian society (Tamari 1995: 300). So one has to study the historical evolutions of ideologies within the local context to understand why civil society promotion has a differentiated impact according to the zones and strata of Palestinian society.

The difficulty for the reader with the image of two Palestines is precisely to come up with a clear picture of what is what and where. Gaza City is a case in point where there are huge economic discrepancies between refugee camps and urban zones in terms of socio-economic revenues. A close look at the 1996 elections shows that popular votes did not express clear political or socio-economic cleavages, but rather a form of ethno-local solidarity dating back to the creation of small administrative districts (*nahiyya*) during the Ottoman period (Legrain 1999a: 100–106; 1999b: 84). There is a less tangible division represented by generations' difference.[19] The fact that half of the Palestinian population is under the age of 18 is also an important feature for Palestinian politics.[20] Polls and student council elections tend to show that the decrease of support for Islamist organizations was less pronounced in younger strata of the population (Hilal 1998b: 145n13) and this might explain the recent landslide victory of Hamas in

the 2006 legislative elections. This trend might be reinforced by the fact that this younger generation has not known the predominantly secular political rhetoric, which during the second *Intifada* lost even more ground to the performative language of resistance and nationalism, but drawing mostly its strength from Islamic vocabulary (Hamzah and Larzillière 2006).

The two Palestines of this book

So what makes the distinction between two Palestines still a necessity if none of the suggested characteristics gives enough grounding or has enough explanation strength to a division between two Palestines? In the precise case of civil society promotion, it can be sustained that one of the most active sectors of civil society, namely NGOs, has managed to have a strong power base and substantial influence in certain areas only. This will be the division line for the advocated distinction between two Palestines within this book.

Put simply, there is a first Palestine in which mainstream discourses about civil society promotion (such as those advocated by a majority of international donors) reasonably manage to make their way and influence the work of a certain type of NGOs, namely those later described (Chapter 3) as professional developmentalist NGOs. On the contrary, the second Palestine is that where civil society promotion is less successful. For example, western aid's discourse fails to substantially penetrate broad layers of the charitable NGO sector; the impact of aid in this sector is very small in terms of re-interpretation of international discourses by local charitable organizations, but it has to be stressed that funding to this type of organizations is also scarce (Challand 2008a). Finally, there is a whole sector of NGOs, those close to Islamist circles, which are totally impermeable to such civil society promotion efforts and discourses, because no funding is given by western donors, because the discourse of civil society promotion has no hold on the targeted population, or simply because such NGO leaders consciously refuse to make reference to the discourse of civil society.

To the contrary, there is an inverted relation between the three types of organizations and their local constituencies, namely the Palestinian demos. For the sake of the clarity of argumentation (which will be circumstantiated and refined in the subsequent chapters), one could sustain that there is a *political paradox in the success of civil society promotion* by western donors: if success of civil society promotion is measured in terms of institutional strength of the NGOs (understood as its developed capacity to deliver a service or to promote a cause *from above*), then NGOs that receive most of the international aid earmarked for civil society promotion tend to have actually less impact and influence upon their beneficiaries in terms of political mobilization (which would then be the counter-measure of the success of NGOs, in terms of its capacities to organize social mobilization through a bottom-up mobilization force). On the contrary, NGOs with greater popular support (*from below*) are the less successful in terms of financial support from western aid. So on one hand, there is a first Palestine that is massively targeted by international aid, where

some NGOs manage to deliver professional services but whose distance to their social base becomes looser from the early 1990s onwards (Abdel Shafi 2004: 11). On the other, there would be a second Palestine characterized by a more symbiotic relationship between NGOs and their local constituencies, but where western aid either does not really interact with or simply does not consider for funding. A guiding hypothesis for this book is that external aid that does not take consciously into consideration the internal differences of Palestine (and of its civil society) will fail to have positive impact on political and democratic participation.

The beginning process of such a chiasmus was already described in 1995 under the phrase suggested by Rema Hammami, namely that within the left factions' NGOs there was a 'professionalization' coupled with a 'depoliticization' increasing with the signing of Oslo. In her words, there was a 'transformation of the mass movements into an NGO community, of mass-based, voluntarist organizations into more elite, professional and politically autonomous institutions' (Hammami 1995: 56) which has many reasons (Chapters 3 and 5). Though it has to be said that the process described here is true for some NGOs only (in particular those around the decision centres of Gaza, Ramallah and Jerusalem), there are some nuances to bring to this discourse. However, a decade later, many other factors and elements converge to give credit that the discourse of civil society (introduced by the left, or within the 'first Palestine') 'amounts to a discourse of defeat' (ibid.: 52).

A few months after the outbreak of the second *Intifada*, wide criticism mounted against these NGOs (of the 'first Palestine'). Some spoke of an exaggerated 'NGO-ization' of Palestinian social life (regretting thereby the insistence on formal structures rather than the quality of the relationship with the population in need of basic help) (Kuttab 2001). Others contrasted the dynamic role of civil society during the first *Intifada*, but its absence and its incapacity 'of organizing at the mass level' (Hammami and Tamari 2001: 6, 18). Some lamented that many NGOs (read of the first Palestine) had become only a 'globalized elite' far from the masses (Hanafi and Tabar 2002, 2003). The women NGO sector, which was very strong and very close to the grass roots level until the early 1990s became professionalized, lost most of its constituency and ran many programmes that are very often divorced from real needs (Jamal 2005). Finally, others denounced the futility of 'privilege seeking' of various NGOs (along the PNA leadership and prominent academic figures) without noticing the growing 'confidence gap between the leadership and the masses from the start' [of the Oslo Process] (Heacock 2004: 15f.).

The other face of the coin is the second Palestine, characterized by a much more homogenous and close relationship (even symbiotic in some cases) between large segments of the Palestinian population and civil society associations. This is probably for two reasons. First, there has always been a form of self-management (Heacock 2004: 25) and engrained ethnolocalism within Palestinian society which led it to prefer a family solidarity network when in need of help (Legrain 1999a; Malki 2001, 1994). This translates into a high rating by the local population of the

services and support offered by charitable organizations, and in particular Islamic ones, well above UNRWA and other NGOs' services that score a bit better than the 'inefficient and corrupt' PNA.[21] Second, in this context of resilient primordial ties of the *hamula* (large family clans), and in some zones of tribal affiliation, charitable NGOs manage to offer a locally-tailored response covering real needs of the population, as opposed to grand schemes offered by large NGOs following the trends of the international aid industry. Even with scarce resources, these organizations whose work was in jeopardy around 2000 for the lack of financial support (Jamal 2000), managed to remain close to their constituencies of the second Palestine, whereas an 'NGO elite' of the first Palestine was often playing an 'ambiguous dual role' hesitating between a role in political or civil society (Abdel Shafi 2004: 8).

One of the problems is that civil society promotion does not really try to penetrate the sector of charitable organizations (and of Islamic ones), either because the latter is resistant to western aid sometimes perceived as a form of intrusion, but also because many of the western discourses on this second Palestine (in short portrayed as the 'traditional' Palestine) do not see in it the prerequisite for success of civil society promotion. Why? For the simplistic reason that it is precisely 'traditional' or too communal in its way of organizing itself, and therefore not yet ripe for 'modern' forms of civil society support (namely institutional capacity building and the like). This goes hand in hand with some of the views held by development actors (touched upon in the following chapter) which apply eurocentric methods without reflecting on the differences or commonalities that social movements have in the region. Thus, international aid considers that kinship-based associations and 'strong ties to family […] have often been received as an impediment to democratic forms of participation, and hence democratic development'. But the reality is different and there are no evidences that such communal ties affect civic engagement in a negative manner (Jamal 2004: 3, 21; Abu Sada 2007a: 16–17). Therefore the very exclusion of this second Palestine from western aid, it will be argued, is defeating the purpose of civil society, in its continuing struggle to improve democratic standards of the polity.

This translates, in terms of the two Palestines, in the differentiated capacity at the end of the Oslo years to respond to local needs in times of the emergency provoked at the outbreak of the second *Intifada*. The argument of the two Palestines could not be sustained without considering the circumstances and the very nature of the so-called peace process, and its end, through the military escalation from the Israeli side leading to the wide-scale popular uprising. This time was a period of intense criticism against larger and more successful NGOs for their failure to relate to the real needs of the population rather than responding to the shifting priorities of international donors. The first Palestine, in this reading is also made of, *grosso modo*, the PNA leadership whose very survival was linked, up to the outbreak of the second *Intifada*, to the success and continuation of the peace process. On the other side, the second Palestine was made of the large sectors that did not harvest any benefits from the peace dividends

(through PNA patronage or through the booming of the aid industry of which the leftist factions were the most beneficiary).

Therefore, a quick glance at the political economy of the Oslo years point to an increasing inequality between a 'VIP class', made of a 'co-opted Palestinian leadership' and a 'neutralized' Palestinian society that 'is resentful [and which] cannot satisfy their daily needs without the services of this elite group' (Bishara 1998: 221). It suffices to point to the fact that if some (very few) benefited tremendously from the Oslo years, Palestinian per capita GNP fell every year from 1993 to 1997 (Lasensky 2004: 223), and that by 2002, the average per capita real income was 30 per cent below what it was in 1994 (Le More 2004), instead of providing the usually excepted economic trickle-down effect in other 'post-conflict' or reconstruction cases. Rather, tax money handed back to the PNA (Kanaan 2002) and the far from transparent system of economic monopolies[22] on the import of cigarettes, gas, fuel and constructing materials contributed to the flourishing of a thin layer of increasingly rich and powerful Palestinians (most notably in security services), but probably unaware that they were pawns in the hands of economic interests guided by Israel, thus 'reinvesting a local, colonial genealogy of development as control' over the Palestinian masses (Lagerquist 2003).

If the latter were more or less 'neutralized' during the Oslo years, thus proving the success of co-optation put in place by the Israelis (Bishara 1998), it was done at the price of a growing alienation between the majority of the population and its ruling elites in the Territories. Things literally went out of the control of this elite with the second *Intifada*, when the 'disgruntled masses […] gave support to the initiatives of militants from every side who went into the battle' of the second *Intifada*, leaving space for the PNA leadership only to *follow* (and not *organize*) the uprising that started in September 2000. This is the same moment when 'civil society in the making was not as vibrant as one had expected a few years before, at the end of the 1987 *Intifada*' (Heacock 2004: 23, 17, his emphasis).

Part of this book will explore not only broader theoretical approaches to civil society in the Arab-Muslim world, but also this very specific question of Palestinian politics, as to know whether international aid to civil society promotion might have played a role in this growing alienation between the majority of the population and its leadership. Put differently, one has to explore the possibility that civil society promotion reinforced the divide between the two Palestines instead of providing means to suture the differences between the two areas in a bid to create a more democratic society at large.

To conclude this part, but also to move forward with the presentation of what a research of the differentiated impact that civil society promotion can have within the two Palestines, it will be assumed for the sake of the argument, that there are geographical limits to the two Palestines. Despite the inherent difficulties in pinning them down, the two Palestines will be taken as ideal-typical constructs to stress and explain the huge gap between the two Palestines and to understand what can be some of the impact of civil society promotion in the Territories.

On the first hand, there is a reality of profound socio-economic (some would argue political as well) differences between the two Palestines. The simple way to frame it is to oppose rich central and urban zones around Jerusalem, Ramallah and (at least until the beginning of this *Intifada*) Bethlehem, and Gaza City as well (at least up to 2005), to rural and poorer zones including Hebron, Nablus and the northern governorates (Tulkarem, Jenin, Salfit, Qalqiliya and Jericho) of the West Bank with the southern half of the Gaza Strip. It is partly a cleavage between refugee camp populations and urban populations, and partly a cleavage of access to an internationalized labour marked around Jerusalem and agricultural workers or day-labour into Israel through Erez border crossing in the Gaza Strip, or over the Green Line in the case of the West Bank.

So the image of the two Palestines would like to take various dynamics into account, such as the quickly evolving social and political characteristics of the Territories. The support of the peace process, for example, reached a very high proportion quickly after the signing of the Declaration of Principles (DoP). But inversely with the outbreak of the second *Intifada*, there was a quick radicalization in the streets of Palestine in support of armed struggle again. Four years of exhausting and extensive military campaign from the Israeli side, up to the passing away of Arafat in November 2004 meant a quick 'de-radicalization' of Palestinian public opinion. But the rift remains between two Palestines, as the earthquake of the 2006 elections showed.

Hopefully this distinction will help the reader to assess the differentiated impact of civil society promotion upon the two types of Palestine. One core argument of this book, beyond the exclusionary power of civil society, is that international aid to the Territories would have a greater chance of succeeding if civil society promotion were aiming at the whole of the two Palestines and if variances between the two parts were to be taken into account. Therefore constant reference will be dedicated to the various civil society voices of the two Palestines and an effort will be made to try to assess whether international donors applied preferential treatments according to the zone implied.

Overview of the book

This work is based on a discussion of some theoretical works as well as on a sample of interviews (international donors and local NGOs). It consists in two main parts. Part I ('Clearing the ground') is the theoretical discussion of civil society in general and in the Arab Middle East (Chapter 2), while Chapter 3 is the analysis of the historical evolution of local NGOs and international donors. Part II ('Civil society at work') consists of three empirical chapters (Chapters 4–6) analysing the visions of civil society by donors, and the evolution of the concept of civil society while at work in the two Palestines.

Chapter 2 will deal with a brief genealogy of the concept of 'civil society' and analyse the ways in which the concept has been taken over, modified and re-cast in two types of theoretical literature (studies dealing with democratization and development). It will also discuss the existence of an Arab Middle

Eastern (AME) civil society, shedding some light on the (neo-)Orientalist assumptions that favour the view of an incompatibility of AME politics with the 'emergence of a vibrant civil society' (to use a common eulogist phrase). We will propose three alternative views of Arab intellectuals on civil society in the region, before concluding with a renewed definition of civil society that will then be used in the second part of this book.

Chapter 3 provides a short historical account of the emergence of NGOs in the Palestinian territories, as well as that of international donors. It focuses on the evolution of the legal framework and the change of powers in the region. Against the background of the long battle with the emerging PNA to ensure a minimal freedom of association, the chapter will focus on the formal and informal constraints encountered by NGOs in their daily work. This chapter is also the occasion to make a short portray of the different types of NGOs active in the territories and the evolution of the NGO sectors in the two Palestines, as well as the evolution of historical involvement of international donors with local NGOs.

Chapter 4 will offer a typology of western donors' approach and definition of civil society, based on the interviews performed for this book. This typology will make the link with the axes of differentiation suggested in Chapter 2 to critically assess what type of civil society promotion is favoured by which type of international actors. A final part will look at the articulations of discourses produced by local NGOs (and most of the time commissioned by international donors) on civil society over the last 15 years.

Chapter 5 reconstructs the 'civil society at work' in the world of local NGOs. The two parts will be dedicated to the thorough study of two sectors of local NGOs: one is the *service-providing* health NGOs and the second is that of caused-oriented *advocacy* NGOs. We will try to assess the different ways discourses about civil society will influence the work of these two sectors, and how they are gradually intertwined and embedded within other local political narratives.

Chapter 6 will add further distinctions about the exclusionary power of civil society. It will focus on the political, sociological and ideological elements of such exclusionary power, and suggest alternative conclusions.

Conclusions (Chapter 7) reflects on the shortcomings of the imposition by external actors of dominant modes of framing social action. It argues that this places local civil society organizations in a situation of heteronomy where they do not contribute to establishing norms, values, institutions or even a language that responds to the aspirations of the local population (a basic function of civil society).

Data collection and sources

As always in social sciences, the danger is to search where there is light. NGOs are the most visible phenomenon of contemporary civil society, but it is probably only the tip of the iceberg. Since these associations are the ones funded by external donors, NGOs will be the focus of this research on civil society

promotion, although we will also look at smaller local and/or charitable associations. Two local sectors were chosen as case-studies, namely health-service provision NGOs and advocacy NGOs. For a selection of local organizations representative of the whole OPT, we first listed NGOs active in the northern half of the Gaza Strip (from Beit Hanoun to Gaza City) and from the southern half of the West Bank (from Hebron to Ramallah). Within this geography, we conducted two dozen interviews with Palestinian health NGOs and the same number with advocacy NGOs. The questionnaire used is a semi-structured topic-guide with semi-open questions.[23] There was a high insistence on NGO actors' subjective perception about the way aid is given and their involvement in the process of setting priorities. For the second fieldwork, I added a diagram on which NGO actors were asked to determine whether their distance between their organization and four different local actors (PNA/PLO, political parties, donors and local population) had increased or decreased over the years.[24] We gathered additional information about NGO activities from the organizations' annual reports and printed material in English and Arabic. There is no one exhaustive official source from which to determine the identity and number of Palestinian NGOs. I therefore created my own database which is a merger of different sources. I have counted about 900 NGOs active by 2004.[25]

To complete the picture, interviews were also done with donor organizations to have a better understanding of how they perceive and define civil society promotion in general and in the Palestinian context in particular. They were selected by establishing a list of the largest donors[26] and of governmental agencies active in the Territories.[27] An effort was made to have a good distribution of donors by their type (multilateral and bilateral for governmental donors, and for non-governmental entities, a balance between larger and smaller ones). Though it will be mostly spoken of as 'international donors' in the following text, it should be read actually as 'western donors', that is, funding bodies (either NGOs, INGOs,[28] international organizations such as UNDP, or governmental development agencies) that provide financial help to local NGOs. They can be labelled 'western' since most of them operate or are either based or guided from headquarters in Europe or in North America. Though some UN are formally *multilateral*, they can be considered part of this western group since their mode of governance and institutional practices are modelled on some of the larger western development agencies (see Chapters 2 and 5). But in no case should 'western' be understood as Christian, since a large Muslim charity (Islamic Relief, just to name one, based in the UK) is also part of this sample and operates through the same modalities as other donors.[29]

Fieldwork took place in three phases, in late March and April 2002 (where it was practically almost impossible to move because of the systematic military re-occupation of most of the West Bank (under the Israeli codename of 'Defensive Shield')), between January and March 2003, and finally between January and March 2004. The material was updated with annual visits to the OPT up to date.

Part I

Clearing the ground

2 Debating civil society

Internationally and in the Arab Middle East

> It is one thing to want civil society; It is another to understand what it is.
> (Kumar 2001: 168)

Debating civil society

Exploring the origins and the evolution of the concept 'civil society' is an essential first step to understand some of the assumptions that underpin, define and also motivate actors to invoke the (in appearance) widely accepted positive role of civil society. To do so, one needs to be wary of the normative expectations linked to the development of a concept that has its roots in modern western liberal history. Therefore, it is important to go back to the roots of the concept of civil society before discussing some of its problems when facing its application in contemporary settings. A second reason for this multiple historical and theoretical review is the increasingly transnational context in which civil society is invoked. Civil society is not only an object of scientific enquiry, but also the motivation of a large 'aid industry' (Van Rooy 1998). Therefore, one needs to put the concept under scrutiny not just for its historical evolution but also in terms of consequences these studies can have on the more concrete application of civil society promotion around the globe (Benthall 2000).

In order not to forget what is at stake with civil society promotion (the interaction donors-NGOs, the various interpretations of the concept, and the problem of cultural translation of the concept when applied in a non-western ambit), I will highlight some of the specific debates that arose in the last decade in the democratization and 'development studies' literature, and analyse how they related to the promotion of civil society in a non-western setting. This will lead us to a discussion of how the concept of 'civil society' has been developing in the Arab Middle East over the last 20 years. We will then conclude with an alternative definition of civil society that takes the local Arab specificities into consideration and that will then be applied in the second part of this book.

The origins of civil society

The notion of 'civil society' (that appeared in its modern form in the seventeenth century),[1] was widely disputed and used in the eighteenth and nineteenth

centuries, but almost disappeared for most of the twentieth century. It re-emerged in the 1970s, and invaded as a *topos* the field of political discourse and of political theory from the 1980s onwards, in particular because of the collapse of the Soviet Empire and of the political changes in the Iberic peninsula and in Latin America (Cohen and Arato 1992).

The idea of 'civil society' first appeared as a concept opposed to 'natural society' in the 'social contract' debates, and is best exemplified in texts of thinkers such as Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, Smith or Ferguson, and was then synonymous with the State. Civil society in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries meant socially and politically organized forms of life and government, and implied the notion of civility, and civilization (as opposed to the *bellum omnium contra omnes* depicted by Hobbes). For most of the thinkers of that time, it implied a positive development, a notion of necessary *progress* in reaching the phase of civil society. Only Rousseau, in his *Discours sur l'origine et les fondements de l'inégalité parmi les hommes* (1996) questioned this optimistic view of a transformation from *société naturelle* to *société civile*.

Nineteenth century thinkers introduced an element that now looks decisive to us, namely the distinction between civil society and the state (Bobbio 1995). This has to do with the gradual emergence of the modern state and the development of an increasing sphere of capitalist activities (Gallardo 1998: 85). The concept takes a significant and substantial turn with Hegel whose innovative conception posits for the first time 'civil society' as an element between the state and the patriarchal sphere of the family. Civil society no longer coincides with the state, or at least with all aspects of the state. In fact, civil society is for Hegel only one part of the state. By recovering the analysis of the first political economists (Smith and Ricardo), Hegel shows that the contractualist society described by natural law thinkers is just one sphere of the political life: that of the needs and the contractual relationship of the *do ut des* (1930: §182–256).

Elaborating on the private–public articulation, Tocqueville introduces a three-way distinction, with political society complementing the state and civil society. The distinction between civil and political societies distinguishes him from Hegel. According to Tocqueville, what distinguishes civil from political society is that the former deals (on a quite low-level) with private interests, economic activities, but also moral and intellectual activities, whereas the latter (on a higher level) is a sort of aggregate of civil associations for a larger common cause. The distinction is somehow an artificial one, since the author notes that they benefit from one another (1981 vol. 2: 147).[2]

As important for the development of the concept in the nineteenth century is Marx's usage of the term which derives from Hegel. Marx sees in civil society a diversion from the real question of that of economic class distinction. For him, civil society is part of the base, and is dissolved into the economic factors, expressed in the superstructure of ideology and judicial power. This view is partially challenged by Gramsci, the influential Italian Marxist of the early twentieth century, in the sense that civil society now is an important element of the superstructure, which becomes subordinating (Bobbio 1988: 87) and which

is necessary to impose and gain hegemony within a society. Civil society, as the sphere of voluntary acceptance, is here opposed to political society (the sphere of coercion), and to the oppressive state (Gramsci 2003).

After Gramsci, the concept of civil society gradually disappears, even though some authors explore the idea of state-society relations, but using a different vocabulary, such as the Habermasian 'public sphere' (Habermas 1990). In the 1970s and subsequent years, the notion of 'civil society' reappears as a main tool to conceptualize the state-society relations. A recent conceptualization of this opposition state–civil society has been to define civil society as the sphere where questions (inputs) are addressed to the political system which in turn has the duty to respond (outputs) (see Bobbio 1985: 26).

Its massive return to the front of the stage is strongly indebted to European history and more precisely to Polish history, with the well-described proto-example of *Solidarnosc*. The Polish trade union represented, in its efforts to resist the state's authoritarianism, an 'incarnated' form of civil society. The concept was made fashionable again by the new Left, in its search of theoretical background to attack Stalinist and bureaucratic degenerescence of the Soviet bloc and to undermine state coercion in the West. In another anti-statist understanding, the use of civil society can justify new social movements which emerged after the troubled last years of the 1960s. In that sense, Gramsci's view of civil society proved to be a valuable ally, because of the notion of voluntary and cultural hegemony bestowed upon civil society. It finally gained ground because of the so-called 'third wave of democratization' and the alleged role played by non-state actors, in the series of post-soviet and national liberation.

Beyond this brief genealogy, at least three problematic aspects with the general concept of civil society need to be discussed. These are the assumption of progress that discourses of civil society entail, the questionable autonomy or independence vis-à-vis the state, and the cultural rooted-ness of the concept in European history (which will be tackled towards the end of this chapter only).

First, the very idea that civil society is linked to the notion of progress stems from its first historical use, namely in the Scottish Enlightenment where civil was synonymous with 'civilized' and in the contractualistic thinkers who interpreted it as a way *out* of disorganized life in common. From Tocqueville onwards, civil society is attributed to a positive role, because it is so constitutive of the American democracy. This can be seen as the turning moment where the couple civil society–democracy has eclipsed the previous pair civil society–state of nature. Except from Marxist perspectives (for which civil society is *bürgerlich*), one can trace benevolent, if not outright positive connotations to the concept of civil society particularly because of this precise shift of the role of civil society with Tocqueville. Another element that contributed to the positive connotation of civil society is its intricacy with the emergence of the modern polity. A sociologist of the state has described the conceptual couple state and society as a protracted effort to characterize the advance of modernization (Poggi 2001). But this is also problematic since 'modernity' is never universally identifiable, or definitive. On top of being a process, there are also multiple

roads to modernities (Eisenstadt 2003). But this is not always acknowledged and the passed journey made on the path(s) of modernity should not become a norm that others have to follow in the same manner. This tension between the contingency and the necessity of civil society as a metonymy of modernity, is captured by Terrier and Wagner for whom 'much of social and political theory has assumed that there is a single model of "modern society", to which all societies will gradually converge because of the higher rationality of its institutional arrangements' (Terrier and Wagner 2006: 10; Taylor 2004: chap. 14). Nevertheless, this view of a single model explains the success of civil society since it is part of the success towards the attainment of modernity.

One just needs to look at the current debates and grand statements where notions of 'civilization', 'modernization' (of 'traditional' societies) have been re-instrumentalized towards shaping foreign policies nowadays.[3] In these circumstances, one can only be puzzled by the strong parallel with the seventeenth and eighteenth century's use of civil society in opposition to the state of nature and current talks of civilization and democratization. The parallel between the attainment of political modernity (through the contract of civil society and the idea of civility in the context of Scottish Enlightenment) and the panacea of civil society and democracy promotion nowadays merits being underlined and explored. If the parallel is valid, then civil society functions as a boundary, as an *identity marker*, as much as modernity seems to describe the level of advancement of legal-rationalization of the western liberal state. All this questioning is to stress some of the contentious elements deeply embedded within and rooted in the origins of civil society. Civil society becomes thus a problematic concept to use, since it refers to a certain history and 'exporting' it could lead to a problematic form of euro-centrism.

Second, it is debatable for many to say that civil society is independent from the state (or for the sake of discussion from the sphere of family – in the so-called 'dual autonomy' (Schmitter 1997)). Drawing clear cuts between the three levels (state, civil society and (re)production sphere) is all too artificial and simplistic. One just needs to take political parties as example of institutions that could have been put in both categories, either state or civil society (see for example Bobbio 1985: 26). A simplistic three-way division also tends to reify civil society as an instrument with the function to counter-balance state's privileged. Most of the authors agree that civil society remains a problematic concept, because it is not a set of given institutions, but is 'rather a process whereby the inhabitants of the sphere constantly monitor both the state and the monopoly of power in civil society' (Chandhoke 2001: 22). It takes various forms and contents according to the historical phase, to the societal features and to state development. A recent study of civil society organizations (CSOs) in the Middle East goes along that same line. Middle Eastern NGOs in particular are subject to intense pressures for the domestic regime and NGOs networking are granted a space on the basis that they would not properly threaten the state. This form of 'pact' prevents the outright emergence of counter-power centres and NGOs power struggle is eventually quite similar to the lines of state power

(Ben Nefissa 2002: 24–25). One just needs to take the cases of Jordan where most of the NGOs have a close link to the monarch's family (Brand 2001), or in Egypt where the state strictly limits CSOs' room of manoeuvring (Ben Nefissa 2002: 24), to see that autonomy from the state is far from being a given.

Let us now turn to how civil society has been envisaged mostly in the last decade as a contribution to democratization and how it can be seen as a source of autonomy for organized collectivities.

Civil society and democratization literature

It is because of the dominant neo-liberal paradigm of the 1980s and 1990s, that civil society appealed so much, in a period that saw the emergence of a new field of literature dealing with democratization (O'Donnell *et al.* 1986; Pridham 2000: 1). Civil society is based on a pluralist definition and understanding of society where individual action is constitutive of a space for control of the state. Good government and governance became an inevitable leitmotiv in the early years of the 1990s, because they involve civil society, informal economy, and an intermediary sphere of action.[4] All these make of civil society is an important entry point for the 'promotion of accountability, legitimacy, transparency and participation as it is these factors which empower civil society and reduce the power of the state' (Williams and Young 1994: 87f.). The problem is that in this context 'civil society' too often implies a rather narrow definition. It is not just a sphere of deliberation and of negotiation; it becomes a true agent of changes, in an anthropomorphic way, which includes in its definition the intervention of a benevolent newcomer on the scene of democracy, namely the NGOs and related advocacy groups (Guilhot 2005).

Another type of too benevolent assumption around civil society and democratization is expressed through the resilience of the economic development argument, first presented by Lipset in 1959. The level of economic development was then the best predicator for the chances of democracy to flourish (Lipset 1959). It was too simplistic to be true and the argument was later proved false or unsatisfying. Nevertheless, the idea that there must be an economic pre-requisite for the flourishing of civil society is well presented in the literature. Gellner's *Conditions of Liberty* is evaluating the chances to civil society to grow in terms of diffusion or concentration of economy and coercion (Gellner 1994: 205ff.). The later part on development studies also highlights some of the allegedly positive role of civil society (and in particular of NGOs) in terms of economic benefits (privatization) that then translate into political development.[5]

Many points of the assumptions of civil society as a contributor to democratization need to be questioned. First, one should question the automatically democratic, representative and accountable character of NGOs. As Halliday puts it, 'they are self-righteous at best, elitist at worst'. Despite their noble claims, NGOs can easily be re-baptized either BINGOs (business-influenced NGOs), RINGOs (reactionary NGOs or royal NGOs[6]), GINGOs (government-influenced NGOs), MANGOs (male-controlled NGOs) or even TINGOs (tribal NGOs). Are NGOs

really part of this allegedly autonomous sphere of civil society (Halliday 2001: 22–23)? As for an assessment of their impact, some authors take a very cynical stance calling the result of transnationalism 'wishful thinking' (Guilhot 2001). Others take a more pragmatic critical line in the case of external civil society assistance in Russia, stating 'neither assistance nor transnational networks alone make a state democratic' (Mendelson 2002: 233).

The main aspect underlined here is that NGOs have been often described in a benevolent manner, probably because of the teleological assumptions entailed in some of the democratization studies. But does civil society exist because of the existence of a modern liberal state, or, in a chicken-egg manner, does the modern state exist because of the existence of a civil society? This is the paradox formulated by Michael Walzer: 'a democratic civil society seems to require a democratic state, and a strong civil society seems to require a strong and responsive state' (quoted in Edwards *et al.* 2001: 13).

A study of western history tends to show that some forms of civil society existed well before the founding of a modern *democratic* state with the establishment of guilds, corporations and the like (see Black 1984: 239), and that the civil society we tend to refer to is the product of institutional democratic arrangements. Therefore the whole functionalist expectations bestowed on civil society are flawed from the beginning. This type of democracy-centric expectations about civil society can be found in the many articles in the beginning of the 1990s trying to decide for once whether there is a civil society, say, in a Muslim majority society. Of course, authors could not find the 'same' civil society as in the 'west'. The fact is that there is a civil society in many of the Middle Eastern states but western categories limit their perceptions.

A final, but small, analytical problem arises from the fact that advocacy NGOs – when not all NGOs – are too often equated with civil society (Carothers 1999: 342). This is true not only for the academic production (as in the case of transnational studies), but also for some NGO actors in democratizing countries, proving thus the impact and influence of dominant interpretations of democratization and civil society upon domestic actors. Therefore, one should adopt a vocabulary about NGOs that does not bring together under the same label the two things of civil society and of one of its proxy, namely NGOs.

Civil society and development studies

To bridge the external dimension of civil society promotion, we will discuss briefly the nesting of civil society within the literature of development studies. This field of academia has been at the forefront of the study of NGOs and of the interaction with donors. The developmentalist approach has produced many reports and guiding frameworks to deal with civil society and has an important role in the production of reflexive knowledge about the praxis of civil society promotion. Thus, many governmental institutions produce knowledge and reports on civil society and developmental projects, and some of the quoted works here are the by-product of research project financed by donor organizations.

Törnquist's *Politics and Development*, and Kumar's *Postconflict Elections, Democratization & International Assistance* are two examples of commissioned work for, respectively, the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA) and United States Agency for International Development (USAID). Other governmental institutes such as the Department for International Development (DfID, from the UK), the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD) and the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) regularly publish books with a much broader readership than their professional targets.[7] One can wonder whether the title *Too Close for Comfort?* (Edwards M. and Hulme 1997) could also apply, *mutatis mutandis*, for academic production and decision-taking circles, all acting in the name of the expectedly positive *bottom up* approach of civil society, while being rather elitist and *top down* in their final recommendations and ways of communicating.

The sense here is that much of this literature conveys the same message: civil society (in which NGOs play a leading role) is indeed important, if not essential, for the spread of democratization around the globe, in the *credo* of the last 20 years. Such a homogenous discourse posits the possible existence of an epistemic community (Haas 1992) around the topic of civil society. Although Haas developed his concept around the issue of international policy coordination, most of the conditions for an epistemic community are met in the case of civil society: there is a 'shared set of normative and principled belief […], a shared causal beliefs […], a shared notion of validity […] and a common policy enterprise' (Haas 1992: 3). Obviously, it is a difficult and impossible task to argue that all the (non-)governmental professionals have a common agenda vis-à-vis civil society. Differences do exist, but there are nevertheless strong commonalties in their approach to civil society assistance (Chapters 4 and 5 of this book will also demonstrate this point and some of its consequences).

The argument for the potential existence of an epistemic community is even more striking in the case of the World Bank with regards to civil society. The following excerpts illustrate the degree of instrumental porosity between social sciences and developmental agencies.

> What is Civil Society?
>
> Civil society consists of the groups and organizations, both formal and informal, which act independently of the state and market to promote diverse interests in society. Social capital, the informal relations and trust which bring people together to take action, is crucial to the success of any non-governmental organization because it provides opportunities for participation and gives voice to those who may be locked out of more formal avenues to affect change […].
>
> *Social Capital and Civil Society Can Promote Welfare and Economic Development*
>
> When the state is weak or not interested, civil society and the social capital it engenders can be a crucial provider of informal social insurance and can facilitate economic development.

> *Social Capital and Civil Society Can Strengthen Democracy or Promote Change*
>
> A strong civil society has the potential to hold government and the private sector accountable. Civil society can be a crucial provider of government legitimacy.
>
> Putnam's seminal work *Making Democracy Work* (1993) shows that citizens who are active in local organizations, even non-political ones, tend to take a greater interest in public affairs. This interest, coupled with interpersonal social capital between government officials and other citizens which is fostered when both belong to the same groups and associations, renders the government more accountable.
>
> Civil society gives a voice to the people, elicits participation and can pressure the state.[8]

Here, civil society can 'promote welfare' or democratization; it 'generates social capital' which in turn is a 'successful' component of 'economic development'; it can 'pressure the state' and almost 'substitute for the state'. The impression is now that, for the World Bank, civil society and its corollary (social capital, as defined by Putnam) are true agents of change and are bestowed an important mission. These concepts are intimately linked to the so-called Washington consensus,[9] where the shift from modernization to neo-liberalism is completed. The state, which was difficult to criticize under the paradigm of modernization, becomes the main target of neo-liberal practices and theories. With the 'End of History', there seemed to be no necessary justification – but to invoke its name – for the definitive success of the neo-liberal project, which had become *l'horizon indépassable*, appeared undisputed (Fukuyama 1992).

In this context, the pluralist dimension of civil society, and its opposition to the state, makes of the concept a very good entry point to implement neo-liberal (and anti-statist) policies. If the Washington consensus was best described as aggressive neo-liberal policies, pro-market-driven, and led by narrowly economists and monetarists, the so-called post-Washington consensus re-discovered political institutions, and incorporated more elaborate elements of civil society, into a

> single, coherent and marketable agenda, encapsulated in the notion of 'good governance'. Always a prescriptive institution, the Bank became a normative agency, involved in the promotion of political participation, transparency, accountability or the rule of law [...]. The promotion of economic liberalization was successfully converted into a struggle for freedom and rights.
>
> (Guilhot 2001: 232f.)

Social capital has made its way to the fore, as much as civil society did a decade ago. Putnam's *Making Democracy Work* (1993) has had a tremendous impact on the debate and was 'recycled', despite its shortcomings, in the developmental literature as an example of how important is the concept of social capital and civic participation for stability of and trust in government. In the

USA, this book and Putnam's *Bowling Alone* (2000) sparkled a wide debate on the alleged decrease of the civil and civic life in the United States, the cradle of the 'art of association' as described by Tocqueville.

There is a sense that the view adopted on civil society by the World Bank has been largely influential. Even southern NGOs are very familiar with the parlance of the World Bank, either through the necessity of speaking the same language (to receive funding), or because of the training courses given by large developmental organization in proposal writing or related topics. As we shall see in the Palestinian case, large and influential development institutions, thanks to their donor status, have a variety of means and resources to steer the course of the discourses of civil society. In particular, the differentiated capacity that some local actors (in that case Palestinian NGO activists) have to connect to (to use Amselle's idea of *branchement*)[10] or click upon the widely accessible *répertoire* of the World Bank, makes the work of propagation of such limiting definitions of civil society much easier (Chapter 4). The line of reasoning, or World Bank's parlance, is not *imposed* upon local actors, but is simply re-appropriated by different actors in another institutional setting. Funding then functions to grease the machinery.

Beyond the particular approach of the World Bank and its limited view on civil society, development studies have nevertheless managed to offer some more positive views on the question of civil society. There is a growing concern that the way of approaching civil society and NGO assistance is not satisfactory. In particular some authors have critically assessed how grand schemes of 'development' promoted by large financial development institutions contribute to a depoliticization within certain domestic contexts (Ferguson 1990). Other researchers have produced alarming reports on how the hegemonic discourse on civil society can have negative effects when taking a step back from the transnational context is which this discourse is defined. Brand (2001) and Chatelard (2004a) in Jordan (both anthropologists stressing how NGOs are rather GINGOs, governmental NGOs), Hudock (1999: northern–southern NGOs) are all examples of this growing literature, that has a rather anthropological grounding. Mendelson (2002) is another case in point, but with a wider international politics perspective. Some scholars dealing with democratization and transition studies are indeed also critical of some simple interpretation and straightforward positive views on civil society (Chatterjee 2001; Schmitter 1997; Kumar 2001), to name just a few.

Throughout the research, a distinction has been drawn between northern and southern NGOs. It is very important to make an analytical difference between the two, as suggested by Hudock (1999). She correctly points out that

> the way most NGOs seek and receive resources from their external environments subjects them to *external control* and leaves them unable to contribute to the process of civil society development by empowering people to voice their own needs and to make claims on government to meet those needs.[11]

Justifying elements behind this distinction stem from the different level of institutionalization (more advanced for northern NGOs), modes and patterns of

funding, a different relationship to their respective government (closer for northern NGOs).

The distorted and frequent result of external NGO assistance is that prominent southern organizations are a core group of elite NGOs with connections abroad, namely with northern NGOs (Hudock 1999: 3, 11). The problem with that (encapsulated in the subtitle of her book), is that only these few elite NGOs promote democracy because of/thanks to their proximity to the donors. But as she notes, it would take more than that to have a profound democratizing impact: 'Southern NGOs contribute to civil society only when they build organizational capacity at the community level, develop replicable service delivery models, and contribute to policy debates' (ibid.: 16). If only a few NGOs manage to exploit political opportunities and the framing process, and this at the expense of less experienced and often smaller NGOs, then external assistance will have only partly succeeded. Therefore, one needs to discover what makes people successful or not, through a study of personal trajectories.

Towards a new general definition: civil society as a source of autonomy

As the anthropologist Hann has suggested, civil society is 'riddled with contradictions and the current vogue predicated on a fundamental ethnocentricity'. Yet, the concept is so used that it would be difficult to get rid of it. Hann suggests working to make the 'concept more supple and serviceable in the context especially of non-Western cultures' (Hann and Dunn 1996). Eisenstadt and others (Hoexter *et al.* 2002) have indeed done this work, by stressing that the Hegel's conceptualizations of civil society might have been right for some parts of Europe but not for others for the reason that the state takes many forms and can have therefore different influence on civil society (Eisenstadt 2002: 139). Two alternative roads exist: that of Eisenstadt to stress the multiple roads to modernity/ies, or the one that stresses a political project aiming at democracy and autonomy that is common across time and space. In other words, the emphasis can be put on the *similitudes* rather than on the dividing lines (Chapter 1).

A solution to these shortcomings of civil society and of its inherent ethnocentrism is to search for *similitudes* within the concept that would be, as much as possible, liberated from the restrictions of a pre-determined historical or geographical limit. In that sense this gives way to a reinterpretation of civil society as an endeavour to organize collectively forms of socio-political mobilization towards autonomy and democracy. The notion 'was first proposed to explore the possibility and limits of collective self-determination on the eve of the "democratic revolutions"' (Terrier and Wagner 2006: 10) and the re-appearance of civil society in the 1980s coincided with a renewed focus on democracy.

To approach civil society through the lens of autonomy (here lies one novelty of this research) is a way to link it to the increasingly transnational context in which civil society promotion takes place. Notwithstanding the tensions arising from an external support for what is mostly a domestic process, one can come

up with few basic characteristics of what civil society should be about. A way to incorporate these two dimensions (internal construction and external push for civil society) is to tie the concept of civil society with that of autonomy.

Rousseau's *Contrat Social* (2001) lays the cornerstone of the notion political autonomy. By studying the models and modalities of political society, Geneva's famous thinker actually highlights both the strength of social contract and the limits of the 'general will'.[12] The voluntary gathering of individuals into a social contract is the best way to assure the preservation of (wo)mankind (ibid.: chap. VI). The ultimate test of human freedom resides in the fact that the group ('*l'état civil*') has the capacity to give and agree on its own laws. This capacity is nothing else than the concept of autonomy. In this process, the participation of each member of the social contract is the necessary component to this process of legislation. It is precisely this positive feature that determines, for Rousseau, whether there is a social pact, and not, as in Hobbes' view, whether a 'commonwealth' has been established to escape the state of nature in which men are at war with each other.

A further elaboration of the concept of autonomy which can promote crucial understanding to the possible link between autonomy and contemporary civil society is provided by Castoriadis. In his many writings, at the crossroads of political theory but also largely influenced by psychoanalytical tools, he defines autonomy of a society as its capacity of auto-institution, and not just in terms of giving its own laws (1986: 518). The process of auto-institution implies the capacity for societies to *openly* 'call into question their own institution, their representation of the world, their social imaginary significations' (ibid. 1997: 17). Closure and openness are key for Castoriadis's understanding of autonomy (envisaged as a radical project): closure means here the fact that a given society does not have the possibilities to choose the ways and means in which they reflect about themselves. Closure implies therefore a form of heteronomy, that is the law of others imposed on this society. On the contrary, openness is important not only in terms of choosing its institutional setting but also on an 'informational and cognitive' level (ibid. 1986: 513).[13]

In our study of civil society, such elements become important in order to grasp the fact that a (civil) society not only must have the possibility to choose and define its own laws, but in order to do so, it must also be free to imagine these laws according to its chosen cognitive and ideational means. In other words, promoting political autonomy can only be done if this is done in agreement with the chosen beliefs and institutions of a given society.

In the case of transnational civil society, there is no autonomy if this translates into the imposition of norms, values or institutions that do not fit the ways in which a given civil society would like to imagine itself. Language, in particular, is very important in the conception of Castoriadis to reach autonomy.[14] The attention paid therefore to language is not just about a question of 'translation', but also of semantic and how certain concepts are perceived within and by different social realms.[15]

Put in a nutshell, civil society promotion should be twice careful. On the one hand, it is an invitation for socio-political actors to participate in the definition

of a variety of political projects that can contribute to a democratic life. On the other hand, civil society promotion has to take the differences in which a society chooses to define itself into account, without which there can not be full autonomy. The work on *similitudes* is here again useful: one can stress the common interests of *any* society to choose and opt for a positive, pluralist and democratic political system, but one should not insist too much on imposing fixed approaches and definitions and on stressing dimensions of difference that eventually would result in some forms of estrangement by large sections of this society.

This excursus is to stress that autonomy has a dual nature. There must be an '*autonomy from*' in order to have the '*autonomy to*'. It is not thinkable to qualify as autonomous a polity or a social group that does not have the two dimensions of autonomy. It is essential for this research to assume that civil society (of any polity) has to be one of the places of the foundation for autonomy, and that it has to a role to play in this process.

Such an approach would allow taking the variety of cultural approaches and common re-definition of a substantial content to civil society into consideration. One would thus avoid putting aside too easily communal, parochial and/or 'traditional' forms of organizations as 'non-modern' and therefore not belonging to a too strict definition of civil society.[16] Communalism in various cultural contexts can be a means to obtain political legitimacy (Harik 2003: 30) and that should be considered even more if it is a basis for the definition of an *autonomous* political project.[17] Similarly, concepts such as individualism, secularism and egalitarianism[18] have not *always been* part of western societies and it would be wrong to assume that they must pre-exist in order to have a civil society. We now need to look at how the concept of civil society has emerged in the Arab world.

Debating civil society in the Middle East

Is civil society problematic in the Arab Middle East?

Civil society can be attributed to many different meanings, all based on different philosophical and/or theoretical grounds, as well as practical fields. This polysemy actually is one of the reasons for the difficulties to pin down a precise definition and delineate clear limits to the concept. Another problem is its intrinsic link and co-substance with the gradual emergence of modern democratic polities in the largely liberal western world. These difficulties later re-emerge when applying the concept in a non-Western context. The theoretical debates about Middle Eastern civil society illustrate these *aporias*. From the 1980s onwards a vast amount of literature was produced more specifically about the existence or not of an intersection between 'civil society' and 'Arab Middle Eastern[19] politics'. Is there an Arab civil society? Can there be a Muslim civil society?

The purpose of this section is not only to critically discuss this literature from a western perspective, but also to stress the local Middle Eastern perceptions of the debate and Arab Middle Eastern intellectuals' conception of civil society. Therefore we will deal at first with *western* knowledge about the *oriental*/Arab

civil society (and in particular a discussion of Orientalist and neo-Orientalist arguments) and the second with some Arab Middle Eastern authors conceptualizing civil society and offering cutting points to the limits of civil society/non-civil society.

According to Freedom House's surveys, Muslim countries lag way behind the rest of the world in terms of democratization (Karatnycky 2002). It is tempting to conclude, as many have done already, that there is a *cultural* origin for this deficit and that Islam is the likeliest troublemaker. Explanations for such 'backwardness' are, in this view, of 'traditional' and cultural origins and have found many supporters in the social and political sciences who like to think in simplifying blocks, à la Huntington, and who rely on simplistic Orientalist misrepresentations.

The need for such simplifications has two roots. First, there is the influence of Orientalism as defined by Said (1978), i.e. a process whereby the Orient is constructed, in writings of western intellectuals, as the mirror of what the Occident is not and vice versa. No Orient exists, even geographically, if not as a reflection of the Occident. Many authors, sometimes unwillingly, are falling into the trap of ethnocentrism and more particularly of eurocentrism, by assuming that what is the case here in Europe either *ought* to be there as well, or lacks as a consequence of supposed Oriental characters, ideas and norms.[20] Examples of such by *generalizations* or *essentializations* will be later given and deconstructed, but the main feature of Said's critique (and of the *corpus* out on which he organizes his argument) is the centrality of language, writings and discourse in the elaboration of Orientalist approaches. Said, who was professor of comparative literature, insisted probably too much on this aspect of language and did not look enough into empirical evidence or historical evolutions to attack western Orientalism (and as such, Said can be attacked as being 'occidentalist' since he tends to do himself, about western writing what he denounces about western description of the Orient).[21] Orientalism is a critique addressed to social sciences, literature, music and visual art. The three main themes of Orientalism in social sciences are the centrality of language,[22] the over-determination of Islam as the origin of formal causation, and the seemingly unchanging historical conditions in which the Orient lives in (Halliday 2003: 202–205). Said makes the distinction between latent and manifest Orientalism: the former deals with fantasies and dreams about the Orient whereas the latter (sometimes influenced by the former) makes explicit claims to essentialized differences between the West and the Orient. Such themes will re-emerge in the 1990s, but with slightly revised vocabulary and ideas. It is what Sadowski (1993) labelled neo-Orientalist, whose themes we will analyse later.

In a sense, the tendency to make simplifications and generalizations is a general feature of the human mind. As it has been stressed by psychology and anthropology, the mechanism of *complexity reduction* is a way for individuals to react and cope when confronted to an alien environment. According to Gehlen (1988), complexity reduction is one psychological mechanism through which human beings can obtain relief (*Entlastung*), from the burden represented by all the external impressions and stimulations that they receive when confronted with

the external world. For Gehlen, cultures are nothing else but a complex set of devices put in place precisely to provide with such *Entlastung* possibilities for human beings. Processes of differentiation due to inherent ethnocentrism can therefore also be explained in terms of psychological mechanism, but also probably in terms of institutional predispositions towards complexity reduction (we will demonstrate later how certain institutions take up some of the neo-Orientalist points of views in the case of civil society promotion).

On a different level, the need for implicit or explicit simplifications and comparisons between the first world and the Middle East stems from the hegemonic position of western production of knowledge and hegemony over cognitive means. Social sciences, as a case in point, are themselves part of the project of western modernity. Sociology and political sciences emerged in the nineteenth century along the creation of the modern western nation-state and contributed to its cognitive representation (Wagner 1994). Therefore, not only do sociology and political science have as an object of study the western state or society, but are inherently part of this project. From that reason stems the fundamental question: Can a system of knowledge having its roots in one specific world be used to decipher another one? Similarly, Asad (2003a) wonders whether it is realistic for western thinking to decode non-western thinking since it is not able itself to describe the totality of its world. Stauth, in an unpublished paper, stresses this difficulty:

> What is modernity? This is the most central issue of sociology. There exists a disturbing and unsatisfying entwinement of modernity and sociology: Sociology then is science of what modernity is and how modern society operates. Classical social theory claimed that modernity is rationalism and objectivism, and that modern society operates with rationally conceived concepts and gradually takes the place of the traditional societies.
>
> (2002: 19)

There seems to be a potential circular relationship between sociology and modernity, which leads to the process of *fixation* of the other non-modern under the concept of 'traditional'. As Balandier observes:

> In order to master in a better way sociological interpretation, many authors (in general North American) have reduced diversity within developing societies into one unique type: this type is what is defined as 'traditional society'. This model is based on differences, in opposition to the model offered by modern society which actually refers to the whole of advanced industrialized societies. Thus, 'traditional society' ends up being simply the mirrored figure of modern society.[23]
>
> (1981: 115)

Thus, if modernity is portrayed as evolving and dynamic, universalistic, functionally differentiated, 'traditional' societies will be static and unchanging,

particularistic, and segmented.[24] This tendency is not proper to modernity or 'western' thinking, but is almost as old as writing. In his study of Herodotus, Hartog (2001: 534) demonstrates how the so-called father of history represents the other(s) in function of (or relatively to) the Greeks and the Greek space of knowledge.[25] Herodotus' technique of double mirroring (ibid.: 484–498) for example calls upon the Scyths' *altérité* or otherness (as a nomad population adhering to Kingship rule) to stress the Athenian identity (living in a *polis*, resisting the Barbarian *basileus* – King, and adhering to *isonomia*, another way to say democracy). But the argument 'we'–'other' (so far classic in terms of identity formation in anthropology[26]) suggested by Hartog does not stop here. This demarcation of the other through narration is not just an ethnocentric process (in this case *hellenocentrism*), such as Thucydides who saw in today's Barbarians the Greeks of yesterday (1995: I, 6). Rather it highlights the prominent role of the *narrator*, the cognitive organizer, as the only figure who knows, sees and narrates, and the only figure who can order the Greek space of knowledge (Hartog 2001: 536f.).

The mechanisms of differentiation between groups, societies, culture, nations or related imagined 'others' through narration and social sciences texts are thus intrinsically problematic. Generally speaking, any production of knowledge is reductive of reality since it aims to provide a cognitive map. There is therefore necessarily a process of selection and exclusions, which takes place in three different levels: a) the psychological dimension (complex reduction and *Entlastung*); b) the epistemological dimension (inherent blind spots to social sciences as part of the project of modernity and subsequent limitations to other settings) and c) the political dimension. It is a political act to *select* events (for historical narratives), categories (such as ethnies), or limits (real borders or putative ones) to turn it into a precise map of reality. With regard to the study of the AME society, one should therefore have an eye on all three dimensions to come to truly conclusive responses. In Chapter 4 we will see concretely how certain institutions function as filter in the organization of the master narratives deployed around the theme of civil society.

To react and respond to the 'entwinement' (Stauth 2002) of social sciences with modernity and to the dominant position of western production of knowledge, one needs to look at the contingent situations in which a society, a culture, a religion or a polity has to evolve. This distinction between *necessity* and *contingency* is crucial in order to give less passion to the current debate about Islam and democracy,[27] or about the existence of an AME civil society. Asad also rightly insists that religion cannot be studied without a prior examination of the socio-political environment in which it evolves and by understanding its relation to power (1986: 11, 14).

A more compelling approach to the question of an AME civil society (or Islam and democracy/democratization) is to spell out assumptions, and go through some preliminary deconstruction of core concepts behind the study of the possibility of an AME civil society (or of Islam and democracy). This is what could be called *differentiation of a concept*. This work must be done on two distinct levels,

a horizontal axis and a vertical one. Let us attribute the horizontal axis to *general* characteristics of civil society, which, as demonstrated in the first chapter, has its origins, in western (pre-)liberal polities. This axis will also be the focus of attention for the deconstruction of concepts related to civil society, such as democracy, secularism, individualism and modernity. The axis is conceived as a continuum with on the left end a consistent differentiation of a concept (symbolized by a '+' on the graph) and, on the right end, a total lack of differentiation thereof (see Figure 2.1, with a '–'). The decisive factor to place one study about, e.g. civil society is the treatment (or not), or the deconstruction (or not) of a series of various elements that constitute the concept of civil society (such as its definition, discussion of its origins, assumptions outlined, etc.).

The vertical axis has the same characteristics (continuum, not a scale), but will deal with deconstructing concepts within the setting of the Arab Middle East, with a central focus on Islam, and Arab cultures and their interaction with elements of the horizontal axis. As Ghalioun puts it with regard to the interaction between Islam and laicity,

> even in countries belonging to the same culture and going through the same pitfalls of history as in the case for Muslim countries with their common struggle towards religious renovation and against European colonialism, the processes of modernization are not equally the same.[28]
>
> (2000: 25f. transl. mine)

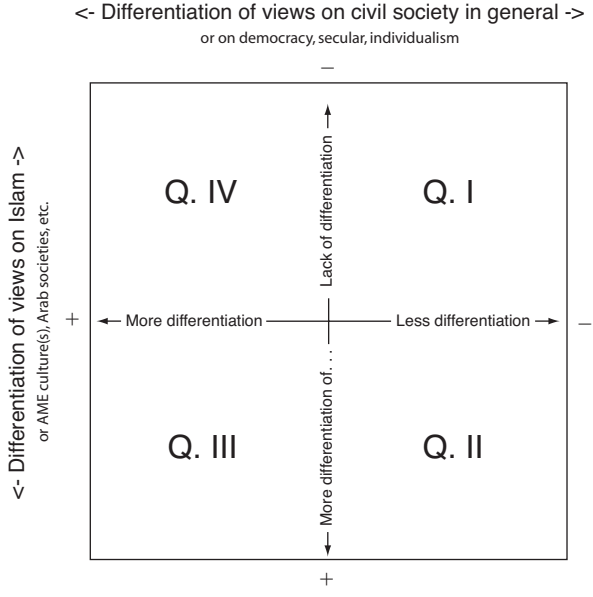


Figure 2.1 Model for the study of the 'Arab Middle Eastern civil society'.

Thus, one needs to apply a reading according to two axes, a horizontal one about, in this case, 'modernity', and a vertical one that would spell out the differences within the AME. On the top end (symbolized by a '–' on the graph), one will find studies that lack of differentiation of concepts related to Islam, the Arab culture, etc., and on the lower end (symbolized by a '+' on the graph),[29] works that look at historical differentiation and/or evolution of concepts, at geographical diversity or that assess intervening variables.

For example, if an author takes a definition of democracy based, say, on the mere existence of elections, then there will be an obvious lack of problematization, and will end up somewhere in the right end of the horizontal axis. The same will happen for someone who assumes, in the case of secularism, that there has *always* been a clear distinction of powers between the Christian Church and temporal powers. To the opposite end one will find studies that acknowledge the gradual evolution and emergence of secularism in western societies. The key questions to position a study along one of the axes would be: does it take the concept X for granted (historically, conceptually and/or epistemologically)? does it take Y for granted (historically, conceptually and/or epistemologically)?

Put in a nutshell, and taking cultural differences for granted for the sake of the ideal-typicity of the model, the horizontal axis is about the *conscious effort of differentiation* (or lack thereof) of the *west*, whereas the vertical axis is about the differentiation (or lack thereof) of the Arab Middle East and in particular Islam.

The purpose of this table and its cutting into four quadrants is not to produce clear-cut lines between 'norms' or 'values' that are either 'western' and 'Arab' or 'Islamic'. The anchors of the two axes are discussions of complexities of debatable concepts. The necessity stems from the fact that the lack of deconstruction and of differentiation of such concepts can be at the very origin of simplifying discourses about an alleged lack of civil society, or democracy in the Arab Middle East. In other words, such visualization aims at avoiding the idea that democracy, or civil society, can be simply cloned elsewhere without reflecting first on its nature and then on the place where it should be 'exported'.[30]

The following subsection will be about filling the following four quadrants with some examples taken from recent social science dealing with 'Muslim society', 'Islam and politics', 'Islam and modernity', 'Islam and secularism', 'Muslim liberties' and so on. I will argue that, as a rule of thumb, the more accurate works to study the plausibility of having a AME civil society *tend* to be located in the third quadrant (Q. III), and the less proper work and hence misleading works in Q. I. A later phase of this book will apply this reading grid to the interpretations that international donors have when working with local civil society actors, using more or less refined and differentiated views on key concepts. We will now unpack neo-Orientalist distortions about Islam and democracy.[31]

Let us identify, first, some of the traits attributed to Islam and Muslim societies under the revived form of hypostatizations and essentializations about Islam and AME societies, that have been labelled 'neo-Orientalism' (Sadowski 1993). But what is meant exactly by neo-Orientalism? What are its themes and how has it departed and evolved from Said's understanding of Orientalism? Though some

themes of Orientalism remain present (such as 'pervasiveness of Islam as a total ideology' offering not only a religious *credo* but also political and social responses, Islam seen 'as a disease',[32] etc.), neo-Orientalism presents in some cases themes that have diametrically changed. Put in a nutshell, neo-Orientalism emphasizes matters of political Islam (Zubaida 1993: xiii). We will dwell on two themes of (neo-)Orientalist literatures, namely the existence of an 'Islamic State' and 'strength of Muslim society' and see how their treatment has evolved in the last decade. These topics were chosen for the reasons that they are pillars of the (neo-)Orientalist battery with interesting changes over the last 20 years.

The idea of an Islamic state occupies many articles and books about the nature of the alternative form of power suggested by Islamic and Islamist writers. The model that is most often invoked is that of the Islamic State created during the period of the first four caliphs (the so-called rightly-guided caliphs or *rashidun*) portrayed as the Golden Age of Islam and seen as a model for a contemporary 'political Islam'. Islamic thinkers themselves very often mention this model, but it is also a topic discussed by western intellectuals. Neo-Orientalists (such as Crone (1980) and Pipes (1983)) draw lessons from the early centuries of Islam (and from the *rashidun*) to conclude that systems of power suggested by Islamists nowadays are directly inspired by that of the first 100 years of Islam. This view contends that *ulama* (clerics) have more than religious legal powers but actually go beyond the spiritual into the temporal by setting political rules as well for its community. In other words, this model stresses the total predominance of religion over politics, therefore making it impossible, in the conclusion of neo-Orientalists, to have a liberal democracy and a flourishing civil society.

A much subtler form of this type of argument is that portrayed by Gellner in his *Muslim Society* (1981), whose ideas about the problem between Islam and politics are reformulated in his theory of civil society presented in his *Conditions of Liberty* (1994). In the first book, Gellner exploited his ethnographical work in Morocco to generate a model of Muslim society – note the singular, despite the claim to cover all Muslim societies – that stresses a duality of sociological rules: rural *Hinterland* dominated by a tribal ethos, and performing heterodox forms of religious practices (saints and magic) as opposed to urban centres dominated by merchants and *ulamas* (guardians of scripture and pure religious practices). Ibn Khaldun (*c*.1340–1402), the father of sociology for many (Laroui 1987; Mahdi 1971) is invoked by Gellner precisely for having formulated a rather similar opposition topped with his famous cyclical model of dynasties and the role of religion in system maintenance (Ibn Khaldun 1997). The problem is that 600 years after Ibn Khaldun's description, Maghrebin societies have evolved and no longer follow the same exact dynamics. Moreover, Ibn Khaldun was writing in a very particular moment of Maghreb's history, which might have not been generalizable to other periods (Zubaida 2003: 35). In other words, one should question Gellner's conceptualization of the 'traditional' and the extendibility of his model across time and space.[33]

These Orientalist conceptions of Gellner then find their way in his later work that deals with civil society, in his *Conditions of Liberty. Civil Society and Its Rivals* (1994), a true *règlement de compte* with Marxism and Islam. Gellner here

boldly concludes that Muslim civil society will never be able to emerge because of the 'unique and exclusive sacralization of one faith [i.e. Islam] [which] makes pluralism impossible' (1994: 195). Pluralism (institutional and ideological) (3), modern conception of freedom (9), and the existence of a 'modular man'[34] (103ff.) are, for Gellner, conditions for liberty and for the emergence of a distinctively modern civil society. Leaving the validity of such theory aside, important for us is to stress the numerous generalizations – and un-discussed assumptions – with regard to Islam, and the predominant role of the *ummah* as an alleged 'doctrine which, in the name of abolishing the political and sacralizing and freeing the economic, in fact unified and centralized the political, the economic and the ideological' (ibid.: 196). We touch here on a *topos* of (neo-)Orientalism, i.e. the idea that Islam provides a total way of life.[35]

A contemporary response is to show that political Islam not only is constrained to use modern secular means of communication, but that its very struggle is about obtaining the rule over states that are secular and modern in their definitions and ways of working (Tripp 1996: 56). Zubaida, while scrutinizing the Iranian Islamic Republic also stresses that despite all its Islamic garb and rhetoric, the state set and ruled by Ayatollah Khomeini is nothing but a modern nation-state[36] (quoted in Ayubi 1991: 150), and whose preoccupation rapidly turned into 'normal' state, with for example anti-natalist policies being rapidly implemented (Ibrahim 1997: 42). Other sociological works go against the ideas of a class of *ulama* leaving no space for political participation; numerous counter-examples of religious clerics involved in civil society activities exist, most notably in the Tobacco and Constitutional revolts in Iran (Kamali 1998), or where *ulama* are instrumentalized by secular regimes in order to give the latter a moral approval (Tripp 1996).

Asad also emphasized that the Islamist idea of an Islamic State, which operates no distinction between state and religion, is not a product of the mainstream historical tradition of Islam. Rather, in his view, it is the product of the totalizing ambitions typically of *modern* politics and of the *modernizing* state. In the Islamic history 'there was no such thing as a state in the *modern sense*' (Asad 2003b: 352). This is not to say that the fact that many contemporary Islamist movements have endorsed the idea is irrelevant – which is obviously not the case. It simply means that the fact that many Islamic militants have accepted this perspective as their own, striving for the establishment of an Islamic state, does not make it essential to Islam.

The second neo-Orientalist theme under scrutiny deals with the shift from weak to strong societies. It was frequent in classical Orientalism to argue that Muslim societies were weak and quiescent as opposed to ruthless and despotic powers.

> Orientalist view of Asiatic society can be encapsulated in the notion that the social structure of the Oriental world was characterized by the absence of civil society, that is, by the absence of network of institutions mediating between the individual and the state.
>
> (Salamé 1987: 10)

Societal quietism was, in this line, explained by the meaning of Islam itself (which in Arabic means, among others, *submission*) and by the despotic type of rulers active in Muslim history (Sadowski 1993: 16). Turner links the concept of quietism and Oriental despotism to a *lieu commun* of the representation of Oriental societies under the mosaic theory. According to this theory, the diversity of the social, sectarian and geographical fabrics of the region is embodied in the picture of a mosaic. Thus, one faces a society highly fragmented, and with no middle-class (which, in a Weberian sociology is problematic).[37] Islam provides the main integrative function for this 'tattered mosaic' and is, in a Durkheimian view, a sort of 'social cement' (Turner 1978: 83, 40–47).[38] Therefore, Muslim society is stagnant and unchanging. This would also explain why, according to a view, there have never been any revolutions,[39] which, in Lewis' view, is the proof that the conception of 'revolution' is alien to Islam and its history (1988).

The *tour de force* of neo-Orientalism has been to topple and put on its head the previous pair of strong state/weak societies into a new one, that of weak state/strong societies.[40] This has to do with the accommodation of Middle Eastern theory to the general dissociation from modernization theories where states were seen as crucial actors of development (see Ayubi 1995: 13ff.) and for economic development. With the gradual retreat of the state in 1970s and early 1980s studies, discourses about civil society became *en vogue* in the second half of the 1980s.

But other political changes took place in the Middle East that were not exactly fitting the expected 'weak civil society' versus 'strong state' paradigm. Most important was the Iranian revolution (1979) where *bazaaris* [i.e. merchants] and Shi'ite clerics formed a civil society alliance to topple the Shah's regime (see Kamali 1998; Mottahedeh 2002). But the fact that religious forces came to power with an openly defiant Islamic rhetoric posed more than theoretical worries: there was fear that other states would fall to Islamic insurgencies elsewhere (which was problematic for US interests in the region). The states in the region turned out not to be as strong as they were portrayed and expected to be. The reason for this 'sudden' weakness lies in the drastic decrease of oil price and hence of state revenues (Sadowski 1993: 16), Egypt, Algeria and Saudi Arabia being obvious examples of internal Islamist violence. Gellner also speaks in these terms referring to the fact that there is, in the case of Muslim society, a weak state and a strong culture[41] (Gellner 1981: 55f.). Sadowski best captures the fluctuating mood of social sciences:

> This broad intellectual shift, which emphasized the virtues – even the necessity – of curbing the autonomy of social groups and the growth of their demands on the state, created a receptive audience for the neo-Orientalists. Their argument, that tribes, mullahs, and mamluks had demanded too much autonomy and created a crisis of governability in Islam, sounded plausible because Westerners could discern a trend toward the same ills in their own society.

> The irony of this conjuncture needs to be savored. When the consensus of social scientists held that democracy and development depended upon the actions of strong, assertive social groups, Orientalists held that such associations were absent in Islam. When the consensus evolved and social scientists thought a quiescent, undemanding society was essential to progress, the neo-Orientalists portrayed Islam as beaming with pushy, anarchic solidarities. Middle Eastern Muslims, it seems, were doomed to be eternally out of step with intellectual fashion.
>
> (1993: 19)

Practically it took an 'adjustment' of Middle Eastern civil society theories in the works of neo-Orientalists to justify that Islam provides a tribal organization of society and not an integrated one, as is the case of the western world, with full secular individualism as basis for the realization of the 'true' civil society. But this shift from a weak society into a strong society generates some paradoxes. Many authors claim that there have been no changes inside Muslim societies (in line with classical Orientalism, which portrays them as stagnant and quietist societies), but to justify the accommodation to the dominant paradigm of the need of a strong civil society to obtain a democratic polity, some tend to see positive developments (e.g. Kubba 2000), while others accommodate differently by stating that 'though civil society has been eroded in Islamic societies there is little call for its return' (Gellner 2003: 24). So civil society becomes more than a 'slogan' (ibid. 1994: 1ff.), it becomes a truly *telos* that orientates the flow of arguments according to the ideological position assumed by the writers.

Another paradox revealed by the shift from classical Orientalism to its revived form (neo-Orientalism) is that Muslim worlds equipped now with strong societies should be able to compete for more democratic politics, if we were to follow general assumptions about civil society where a strong associational life is a facilitator of democratization. Actually, neo-Orientalists argue that such strong societies do not qualify for civil society theories since the assembling and moving force is precisely Islam. Since the latter is seen as an atomizing force (Gellner 1994), secular-resistant (Gellner and others), and/or unchanging despite time and geographical scope of Islam, then we are not dealing with the proper individualistic secular liberal definition of civil society. We face the common tautology entailed in the Eurocentric critique of civil society: civil society in Middle East cannot be because it lacks its European characteristics. Middle East cannot and will never be Europe.

To conclude this section, there are three forms of immobilism implied in (neo-) Orientalist discourse. Islam (or in our case, the Arab Middle East) will be portrayed as immutable and unchanging in terms of time (Islam of Abbasid time is the same as present day Islam); geographical distribution (Islamic practices in Morocco are similar to those of Yemen or Oman); and language, or rather the idea that Quranic language articulates definitively Islam in its worldly evolutions. All three notions could be encapsulated in the following: *Islam, fixed in one scripturalist interpretation, is a total system, providing an unchanging blueprint*

through legal religious sanction (shari'a) *for social, political and economic order*.[42] Obviously such a sentence entails essentialization, hypostatization, simplification and misperception. As such, it hides the variety of Islams (in terms of religious practices and interpretations), of disputed interpretations of holy texts (Quran and *hadith* or tradition of the Prophet) through *ijtihad* (legal interpretation), of a partial source for cultural practices and leaving legal space for non-Muslims citizens,[43] changing across time and space, with differentiated *shari'ah* interpretations and enforcement.[44] As for social, political and economic order,

> Islamic forms of political expression and organization are better explained with reference to the material conditions of the people concerned that to anything specifically 'Islamic'. In this reading 'Islam' simply becomes a label used to convey mundane social grievances. The thesis here is that people have the capacity to choose their symbolic vocabulary according to their perception of their interests at the time.[45]
>
> (Tripp 1996: 51)

So, undoubtedly there is a 'misapprehension of the sources of authority of the native culture' (Said 1988: 34). Eisenstadt's project toward a 'Reconstruction of Religious Arenas in the Framework of "Multiple Modernities"' is an interesting effort to avoid the westernized references (2003). Following this approach, some authors have shown the potential vitality of a Muslim public sphere (Hoexter *et al.* 2002; Salvatore and Eickelman 2004; Levine and Salvatore 2005). Clearly many approaches to contemporary reforms of Islam exist (Rodenbeck 2004) and they all point out that one should differentiate between different types of Islamism.[46]

These approaches, though positive for evaluating without preconceptions as to the 'disease' of Islam, nevertheless, still tend to think in distinct blocks of a (Christian) western world as opposed to a Muslim Oriental block, or to conceive the 'west' endowed with a distinctive culture of that of the orient. As a consequence, there is a lack of discussion of the interplay between the two. Asad instead offers a problematizing approach. In his *Formations of Secular* starting from the methodological question of 'what would an anthropology of secular(ism) be?', he shows that secular should not be taken for granted in our western societies, that much of the grammar and discourses of our modern nation-states articulate and convoke religious narratives and reinterpret under different garbs the same religious ethos but with a new morality and legal forms. Secularization, in its study of Egyptian legal code reform, is linked to colonial experiences and so acquires a distinctive and negative taste to local populations (Asad 2003a).

Asad also problematizes Sadiki's pleas for a liminal approach of Islam (Sadiki 2004), and he does so not only in terms of mere discussions, but also pointing out the epistemological needs to think differently:

> For many Muslim minorities being Muslim is more than simply belonging to an individual faith whose private integrity needs to be publicly respected by the force of law, and being able to participate in the public domain as

> equal citizens. It is more, certainly, than a cultural identity recognized by the liberal democratic state. It is being able to live as autonomous individuals in a collective life that extends beyond national borders.
>
> [So] if Europe cannot be articulated in terms of complex space and complex time that allow for multiple ways of life (and not merely multiple identities) to flourish, it may be fated to be no more than the common market of an imperial civilization, always anxious about (Muslim) exiles with its gates and (Muslim) barbarians beyond.
>
> (Asad 2003a: 180)

To sum up, we can propose a table showing the positions of the various authors with regards to the discussion of the possibility of an AME democracy and civil society (see Figure 2.2).

Let us note that works in quadrant I are not automatically 'Orientalist', though they would tend to be, as demonstrated later. For example, the recent article of Tessler (2002) demonstrates that, based on a sample in four Arab countries, there is no causal relation between political Islam and non-adherence to democratic practices, at least on the individual level. Similarly works assigned to quadrant III might end up presenting a distorted vision of an AME civil society and/or being outright Orientalist, though the majority of work here reviewed are not suffering from such Orientalist bias.

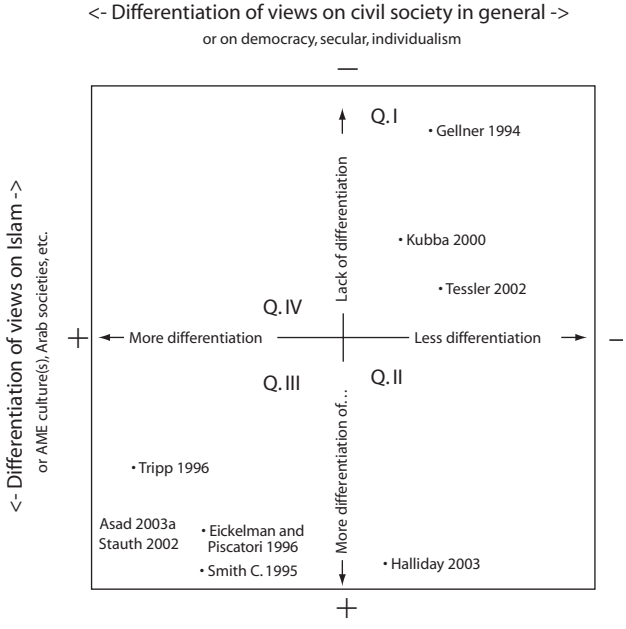


Figure 2.2 Illustration of the location of selected studies on the 'AME civil society'.

In the final analysis, this critical discussion points to the fact that the literature anyway had to deal with Islam as the central problem, whereas religion in the west does not really need to be problematized with regard to democracy (though it has sometimes been done but very few people would consider the argument valid). This benevolence should be scrutinized, as Smith aptly observes in his article for the *Encyclopedia of Islam* (1995). It may be the case, as he notes here, that far from a straightforward retreat of religious phenomena in the west, one should rather speak of *intensification* of religious features.

Locating Arab Middle Eastern civil society

Next to (neo-)Orientalist discourses, there are also some constructive views on civil society in the region. Such studies approach some of the conditions for its difficult growth, but also what is central in the emergence of a viable civil society. This part of the chapter discusses the emergence of the concept in the AME and three Arab intellectuals' view, definition and operationalization of civil society (Azmi Bishara's pessimistic conclusion about the existence of a civil society; Saad Ed-Din Ibrahim's limiting definition of it; and Burhan Ghalioun's optimistic approach). To better discuss the merit of their opinions, one must have a clear understanding of how the concept first emerged in the Arab world and what was at stake since then.

It is from 1990 onwards that the topic of civil society emerged massively both in academic circles and in public debates. The best evidence about the latter can be found in a series of discussions in the most important international Arabic newspaper, *Al-Hayāt*, a London-based daily. It published in August and September 1993 various articles demonstrating the need for the development of civil society in the region (Moussalli 1995: 79f.). The concept *al-mujtama' al-madanī* (civil society) is now a common topic and is widespread in day-to-day parlance, and not just in academic circles. With regard to academic publications in Arabic let us note a blossoming from the beginning of the 1990s.[47] Figure 2.3 gives an indication of the gradual emergence of the topic. This comes as no surprise, since it coincides with the re-emergence *en force* of the concept in social sciences in general. A further analysis of the emergence of the phrase in the Palestinian context confirms that the early 1990s were the watershed moment for its use (Chapters 4 and 5).

Let us now consider internal AME discussions and definitions of civil society and see how intellectuals from the region ('there') conceive it.[48] I will concentrate on three alternative conceptions and definitions of civil society. The first one will present a negative account about civil society based on the fact that individual rights are, according to this view, not guaranteed and therefore civil society cannot exist. The second rejects such a negative interpretation and argues that there is an AME civil society, though with certain limitations as to exclude some militant groups. The third opinion is more open and considers as false the exclusion of some groups from civil society: rather, all sorts of associations and organizations should be included under the label 'civil society'.[49]

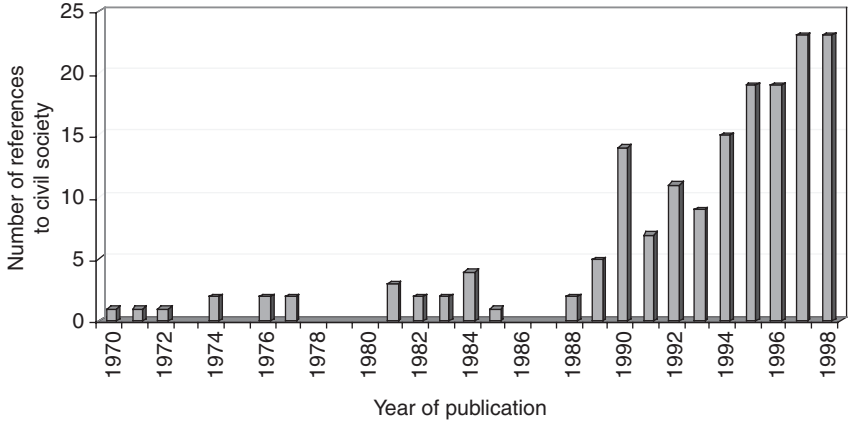


Figure 2.3 Occurrences of the phrase civil society in nine Middle Eastern Journals 1970–1998 (source: author's compilation through a search on J-STOR (a web search engine) of nine journals dealing with the Middle East and North Africa).

Azmi Bishara

Azmi Bishara is probably the best-known Israeli Palestinian (that is, a Palestinian not being from the Territories but full citizen of Israel – he is from a Christian family from Nazareth). From 1996 he was a member of the Israeli Knesset up to 2007 when he was forced to self-exile under accusation of high treason against Israel. He holds a PhD from the Humboldt University and is a specialist of political philosophy and history of thoughts. He used to teach in the department of philosophy and cultural studies at Bir Zeit University.

Bishara is very critical of the notion of civil society in the Arab world and develops the most critical and sceptical discourse of all. For him there is no and cannot be any civil society in the Arab nation (*al-watan al-'arabī*), for the simple reason that an individual lacks basic freedoms and autonomy (*al-tasyīr al-dātī*) both vis-à-vis the state and vis-à-vis the biological or primordial groups (such as family, clan, tribe). For Bishara the latter is the more worrying part of the alienation of individual rights: he goes as far as speaking of the tyranny (*istibdād*) of the clan (*hamūla*) and tribe (*'ashīrah*) as the main danger towards the fulfilment of a true form of citizenship and political activism (Bishara 1996: 10).

For him, civil society is based on the autonomy (*autūnūmīā*, or self-drive, self-impulsion, *al-tasyīr al-dātī*) of individual and the basic premise of pluralism, understood as 'the acceptance of the legitimacy of the differences of opinions and of the ways to express them' (Bishara in Ghalioun *et al.* 1993: 90, translation mine). In this reading, civil society has a precise and separate function which must be independent from the individual sphere (*hayyiz al-fardī*) and from the public sphere (*hayyiz al-'ām*). But the problem is that in the case of

traditional Arabic societies,[50] so argues Bishara, there are no individual rights that are fully guaranteed, and civil society cannot perform its precise function of acting independently of the individual sphere. Therefore, if civil society organizations (such as NGOs) are important elements for the emergence and consolidation of pluralism, they are not a sufficient condition to call it civil society (Bishara in Ghalioun *et al.* 1993: 91).

When discussing the question of Palestinian civil society, he makes a further argument that there is a political society but no civil society in Palestine for two different sets of reasons. First of all, he notes the difficulty to speak of one Palestinian society, because of the geographical fragmentation (West Bank, Gaza, Triangle, Naqab (Negev), Galilee, Jordan, Syria and Lebanon) and because of the many historical ruptures and traumatic experiences the latter has undergone (1948, 1967, 1982, 1987, etc.). Because of these, Palestinian society has lost its coherence (Bishara 1995), and it is difficult to speak of one society. The second set of arguments are related to the fact that there is no proper state in the case of the West Bank and Gaza Strip (WBGS) and since civil society is about counter-balancing the powers of the state, there cannot be any civil society.

He nevertheless acknowledges the existence of some forms of social activism and the important role played by NGOs against the Occupation from 1967 onwards, but would label such activism a form of 'political society'. He is still very critical of the view that accords NGOs *the* central place of civil society activism: 'NGOs: this is not the civil society in totality, God bless the very almighty.[51] NGOs are not the almighty civil society, as some researchers claim' (ibid.: 153). He invites us rather to conceive of NGOs as one element towards pluralism but denotes two further trends in NGOs, that of Islamic NGOs which manage to have an important impact on the social basis, as opposed to the other NGOs (read the secular ones) which fail 'to reproduce themselves socially' (ibid.: 152). For Bishara, this would explain why these secular NGOs needed, from 1989 onwards, to move towards external funding to assert their existence. This is also one of the reasons for the professionalization (*ihtirāf*) of some sectors of NGOs (ibid. 1996: 9).

To discuss critically Bishara's approach, let us quote another text by Bishara himself:

> Civil society comes from the word 'civil', that is 'citizen' (*muwāṭin*), and not from 'civilizing/civilization' (*madaniyyah* or *tamaddun*), as some believe. *Bürgerliche* – in German from the term *Bürger* ('citizen' in German) and citizenship (*muwāṭinah*), in the origin, is in a sense, citizenship in the city, of the *Gesellschaft* of the free city in Europe or late Middle Ages.
>
> (1995: 150n80, translation mine)

The centrality granted to citizenship goes partly in line with the previous priority given to individual autonomy and pluralism. But it indirectly hints at the problem of such conceptualization. First, one can obviously disagree with such a 'genealogy' making of citizenship the basis of civil society: this might be true in

the German tradition of *bürgerliche Gesellschaft*, but has little to do with the *jus naturalis* origin of the concept stressed before. Though Pufendorf wrote in the line of Hobbes, for Locke and Rousseau, speaking about civil society is a way to speak about the State, or the way to govern together. The precise reasoning of Bishara reflects a rather Hegelian conception of civil society where the State is the end of this process of organizing individuals into a polity. His subsequent disqualification of the existence of a Palestinian civil society on the reason that there is no real State also highlights the invisible primacy of the State in his (teleological) definition of civil society.

So one can object to Bishara a too fixed and ascriptive conception of civil society, that is trapped within Hegelian and Marxist approaches. But one should be careful in following too strictly theoretical models. It does not make sense at the end of the day to say that there is no civil society but there is only a political society, just because *one* of the conditions for civil society is missing. Rather, let us think first in terms of open and not exclusionary manners, as Kamali does when proposing five conditions for the existence of civil societies around the globe (and which we will expose in few pages). Such a view preserves us from an over-deterministic theory. A historical study of civil society shows that examples of civil society in the nineteenth century would find no place and grace in our current definitions of the concept (Bermeo and Nord 2000).

Also, while reading the negative comments of Bishara one cannot be fully satisfied, because one feels a prisoner of a *telos*, or of too clear conditions that are historically linked to the emergence of citizenship in a certain place (Europe, or German tradition) and at a certain time (from the Middle Ages onwards). Whatever certain conditions or criteria might be true in certain cases and precise circumstances, there should always be some space for flexibility. As pointed out by Olivier Roy in the case of western aid to Central Asian NGOs, it might be wrong to adopt a rather intransigent view towards the *Hizb al-Tahrir* (a trans-national and rather secretive movement calling for the re-Islamisation of Muslim society for the re-establishment of the Caliphate) because it seems to go against pluralism:

> However opposed the *Hizb* may be to pluralist, democratic values, the movement does represent a demand from the grass-roots level to resist authoritarian behaviour by state organs, and to create spaces of solidarity and autonomy, if not freedom. Even in this instance, it seems to me that ethnic, tribal and local identities[52] cannot be kept out of the activist agenda.
>
> (Roy 2002b: 136)

Thus, it is not so much the question 'Is there a civil society in the Arab world?' that counts, but rather 'which civil society are we talking about?' In both cases (Bishara referring to the German/European traditions, and people dismissing *Hizb al-Tahrir* from being part of civil society) there is an implicit model invoked to decide whether to be inclusive or exclusionary with regard to civil society.

Such calls for caution in excluding/including will also be valid for a subsequent model (that of Ibrahim), which also falls within such determinism, though claiming there is an AME civil society. This time the cutting-line, or excluding factors, will not be about the existence of a state or about the lack of individual liberties in the Arab world, but will deal with another element inherent of the European genealogy of civil society, namely that of 'civility' which is indirectly present in the very notion of civil society.

Sa'ad ed-Din Ibrahim

Sa'ad ed-Din Ibrahim is an Egyptian scholar and political activist, and holds a PhD in political sociology from the University of Washington. He is a well-known figure both at home and abroad for having founded and for running one of the most active and dynamic NGOs in Egypt, the *Ibn Khaldun Centre for Research and Development* publishing a monthly called *Civil Society*. He published many articles in western journals (*Journal of Democracy*, *International Political Science Review*) and in edited volumes about civil society and democratization in the Middle East. He was arrested in 2000 and sentenced in May 2001 to seven years in prison for financial mismanagement around a research project on elections, but later released in 2002.[53] He is a self-proclaimed defendant of civil society and a champion of democracy in Egypt.[54]

A striking fact in Ibrahim's writings is that his approach to civil society seems to be slightly different when written in English than those in Arabic, as we will now see. In his English writings on civil society, Ibrahim displays a rather commonly used definition of civil society as a sphere differentiated from family, economy and the state. 'Civil society', so writes Ibrahim,

> is the totality of self-initiating and self-regulating volitional social formations, peacefully pursuing a common interest, advocating a common cause, or expressing a common passion; respecting the rights of others to do the same, and maintaining their relative autonomy vis-à-vis the state, the family, the temple and the market.
>
> (2003a: 217)

He openly and rather un-problematically steps in Putnam's path by stressing that it is the level of civic association that makes the difference 'between development and under-development and between democratic and non-democratic practices' and speaks of the holy trinity composed of civil society, democracy and development (ibid.: 217f.).

He is keen in many places to stress that there are no incompatibilities between Arab political culture and democracy, or between Islam and secularism ('there are more Erbakans than there are Talibans' (Ibrahim 1997: 43)), and that one ought to consider Islamist populism in terms of a socio-economic gap between low and higher classes (Ibrahim 1996: 126) and in terms of international imbalances (Ibrahim 1997: 43).

Nevertheless, he shows clear limitation in his readiness to include Islamist groups within civil society, for two reasons. The first has to do with primordial allegiances: according to him 'traditional loyalties to ethnic, religious, sectarian, and tribal groups would take primacy over loyalty to modern formations of civil society or to the state itself' (ibid. 1995: 34). This argument is indeed close to that of Bishara. The second is about the confrontational and even violent actions of certain Islamist organizations, which disqualify them from being part of civil society, or even to be in 'intense confrontation' not only 'with the state' but also with 'civil society' in the case of Egypt (ibid. 2003a: 227).

In his Arabic texts, the Egyptian sociologist does not make such a distinction as regards violence. The cutting point is simply primordial identity:

> Civil society does not include traditional and inherited associations in society, which an individual is born to or from which he inherits membership compulsorily, such as tribe, clans, family and what is never included upon organizations that depend on religion, sectarianism of blood descent [*'irq*].[55]

This is in keeping with the effects of resistance by 'traditional' social affiliation upon 'modern' patterns of mobilization, in particular with individualism which, according to Ibrahim, possesses a stabilizing factor upon democracy (in Abu Amr 1995: 11, translation mine).

Ibrahim's rejection of Islamist groups from civil society and the limits placed by primordial links ought to remind the reader of the notion of an over-powering society. Though he criticizes and openly rejects Gellner's thesis, one should approach Ibrahim's view with care since he tends to put all Islamists in the same category. Certainly some groups are fomenting violent actions, but Islamists tend to distinguish in their activities between social charitable work and armed actions. It is therefore a limited view to put all Islamists in the same bag of violence-makers: In Egypt, for example, strands of political Islam are very varied and have evolved a lot throughout the years, with one centrist faction (the so-called *wasatyiin*) willing to enter parliamentary politics.

So the will in the English texts to re-habilitate Islamic principles with modernity and democracy (or to shortcomings of an excessively stark opposition 'traditional' versus 'modern'[56]) goes against his disqualification of traditional and inherited organizations (*al-tanzīmāt al-irthiyyah al-taqlīdiyyah*) (Abu Amr 1995: 9). How to explain such discrepancies and how to understand his rather negative approach to religious organizations in Arabic more than in English (which are actually hinted at under the label 'traditional')? Maybe this is a sign of the different *champs* (fields à la Bourdieu) in which he evolves, both as political sociologist writing about democracy and Muslim society to a western audience and as a social activist in Egypt. With the first hat of sociologist, Ibrahim plays a different role and uses a different vocabulary than the one he employs while wearing his second (Egyptian) hat that requires much more care about what he says about his polity, given the repressive nature of the Egyptian State.[57] Therefore his attacks against

religious groups can be a way to sing in the same tune as that of the State, i.e. repression against Islamist groups. There is no doubt that violent groups disqualify themselves from defining their activities as 'civil society activism', but there are probably some elements in Ibrahim's argument that are *pro domo*.

Whatever differences he can make between English and Arabic versions of his theories of civil society, Ibrahim partly subscribes to the view that civil society leads to democracy, and even development. As such his approach denotes a clear *transformative* function of civil society, which is far from granted and automatically correct. In any cases, his position of addressing a western audience and of acting for the deepening of civil society in Egypt shows that writing about such topics is not contingent-free: what Ibrahim has to say and even more how to say it probably also depend on his status, his position in various *champs*, and his various roles as activist and as scholar.

Burhan Ghalioun

The third Arab intellectual of interest here is Burhan Ghalioun, a Syrian scholar who studied in Paris (Sorbonne). He is now professor of Sociology in Sorbonne-Nouvelle in Paris and deals extensively with questions of political sociology. He is the author of a famous book (*Le Malaise Arabe. Etat contre Nation*) in which he rejects an all too stark opposition of state-society and invites one rather to conceive of the State as the emanation of socio-ethical principles guiding society[58] and to study the State through its transformation ('*son devenir*') and its adaptation to complex national, and international, civic and political, cultural and material relationships (1991: 9f.). As many Syrian intellectuals, he has acquired his intellectual tools in the Marxist school, though departing from strict orthodoxy.

Of the three authors, Ghalioun adopts the most inclusive approach towards civil society in the AME world. He distinguishes between the two concepts of *al-mujtama' al-ahlī* (civic[59] society) and *al-mujtama' al-madanī* (civil society), the former being a much more widespread and popular concept[60] and the latter a more recent introduction in the entry of Arabic political vocabulary. Nevertheless, he does not see good reasons to put some organizations in the latter category on the pretext that their work is different or more important. Therefore all organizations, whatever their nature and their orientation, should be included under the label 'civil society', since they all have a potential impact towards transforming society.[61]

For the Syrian sociologist, the 'concept of civil society includes these inherited organizations (*irthiyyah*) that Ibrahim excludes from his definition of civil society' (quoted from Abu Amr 1995: 9, translation mine): no matter if they are linked to family, clan or tribe, if they are of a sectarian nature, openly calling upon traditional forms of mobilization, social actions and morality, all organizations have their space within civil society.[62] So even if one is *born* (by real (or putative) descent) to a social grouping, the socio-political work undertaken by such a grouping nevertheless qualifies such work to be labelled civil

society work. Ibrahim and Bishara would refute such ideas because participation is not volitional participation and does not guarantee basic individual freedom. For Ghalioun, what matters is the intention behind the work of such organizations.

In his discussion of the usages of 'civil society' in the Arab world, Camau notes that in certain countries (in particular Algeria and to a certain extent Palestine), civil society does not refer anymore to an intermediate sphere of associations and social activism in general. Rather, through a *glissement sémantique* – or semantic evolution – the notion of civil society refers uniquely to certain organizations proclaiming their allegiance to pluralism, the rule of law and democracy and thus creating a front-line against Islamist associations that do not belong to this new understanding of civil society (Camau 2002: 221). In other words, civil society has acquired a reflexive dimension that makes its definition dependent on the assumptions made in the hegemonic interpretation. The fieldwork results will actually highlight the validity of this claim: very often civil society is not considered by international donors on the basis or on the type of work done by various organizations, but *recognition* by donors will mostly come to organizations making open and conscious reference to the phrase 'civil society'.

It is probably against such a reductive conception of civil society that Burhan Ghalioun's approach should be understood. His claim is that the criterion of inclusion into the category 'civil society' is the *mere social action for a positive common good*. In this reading, less (or not) attention is given to the 'civil' of civil society and it does not presuppose any particular form of polity (democracy or not, state present or not).

Towards a renewed definition of civil society

So why is it that Bishara's civil society seems to be an unreachable Holy Grail for Arab societies, for Ibrahim it is about a group of happy few and for Ghalioun it is open to every social group? The three authors here studied suggest different criteria of inclusion/exclusion. The rather extreme view of Bishara is too ideological and lacks flexibility to be operationalized. As Ibrahim points out, the matter of the existence of a civil society in the AME is rather, at the end of the day, a question of empirical evidences (Norton 1995). But what are the decisive criteria towards inclusion in or exclusion from civil society? Is it violence (and Islamists of Ibrahim)? Is it ideology (as in the case of *Hizb al-Tahrir*)? Is it primordial links (*irthiyyah*)? Is it the *reflexive* actualization of civil society according to western dominant assumptions?

For the first two elements (violence and ideological lack of toleration), one can quite easily spot the theoretical origin of the cutting point. I would argue that debates about the notion of violence and acceptation of pluralism stem from the very presence of the adjective 'civil' of civil society (Beckman 1997: 2). Diamond's 1995 article in which he stresses conditions for being 'civil' go in line with the more recent view that Jeffrey Alexander offers about definitions of civil society. For Alexander, solidarity should represent the motives for civil society,

but as long as they manifest in 'civic' manner (Alexander 1997). The problem in Alexander's view is that he never really defines what is civic or not and that he considers religious activism and solidarity as 'non-civic'.

Are we not facing here the consequence of one of the blind spots of modernity and enlightened rationality where religion is now (falsely, or too simply) considered as a fully privatized domain?[63] Is it not exaggerated to exclude religious-based movements from civil society? Certainly, Tocqueville's civil society was in many cases motivated if not directly hosted by religious organizations. According to a widely-held view, it has been argued that religion is the exclusive item that disqualifies a group from being part of civil society in the Middle East.[64] But many authors assume that 1) religion is simply a privatized matter in the west, though it is far from being the case (see Asad 2003a) and that 2) other religions (not to say straightforwardly Islam) are sources of violence. Arkoun warns about the blind spots inherent in labelling violence as linked to religion:

> When modern societies speak of violence as integral to religious traditions, they overlook the anthropology of violence in all types of societies, not least the most modernized and wealthy western societies. Violence cannot be linked exclusively with *others* – perceived, described, condemned as the barbarians, uncivilized and uneducated, ignorant of the true teachings provided solely by the religion, philosophy, and objective history taught in the public schools of modern *laïc* states.
>
> (2002: 40)

Let us finally note the possible limitation provoked by primordial links that pluralism and social action might be culturally defined and differentiated. In many instances activists of the third world call upon collective rights rather than individual rights. Western modern societies probably forget too quickly that they too had to struggle to obtain basic political rights before being able to benefit from individual rights and protection (see T.H. Marshall for a classical account (1992) see Hanafi H. 2002: 188, 181). Along the line of Hussein (1993), in which members of Arab Middle Eastern polities have to evolve from the status of *subject* into *citizens*, Harik notes:

> The practical wisdom of considering the political legitimacy of communal association in drawing up rules and policies are matters of great importance for the viability of democracy in culturally conservative societies of the Less Developed Countries. Nevertheless, such concepts as democratic consolidation and civil society tend to deprive communalism from the political legitimacy it deserves. In fact, democratic consolidation has become a reference to the gains made toward the realization of the standards one finds in conventional Western democracy of liberal persuasion. In short, something akin to contrived or forced assimilation.
>
> (2003: 30)

As a final response to the negative position of Bishara about the impossibility for civil society to exist in the AME, one should adopt a non-deterministic approach (like that suggested about 'communalism' in the previous quote). It is probably misleading to abandon civil society theories because one of the theoretical conditions (in that case individual liberty) is missing. Bermeo and Nord's rich study about the historical emergence of civil society in nineteenth century points to the limits of such definitional determinism: if we were to take the present-day definition of civil society to decide whether civil society existed in mid-nineteenth century Europe, we would be left with a bleak picture and would embarrassingly conclude that civil society did not really exist then (Bermeo and Nord 2000). *Mutatis mutandis*, such a critic can also be addressed to Bishara. As stressed by Ibrahim, it should be empirical evidence which determines at the end of the day whether or not some of the religious groups belong to civil society or not.

It is our contention that the previous theoretical discussions and later empirical evidences will generate firm grounds for the inclusion of some Islamic groups within civil society, both in terms of theory and of practical support to NGOs. Kamali's (2003) five criteria for the existence of civil society are a promising basis for a theoretical reformulation of this positive model of civil society (from the Arab worlds or not). These conditions are: a) Relative autonomy of a societal sphere from the state; b) Relative autonomous access of some societal actors to the state or its elite; c) Existence of a relatively independent public sphere; d) Legal and/or normative protection of societal agents and institutions; and e) Existence of a 'solidarity sphere' based on redistribution of resources.

Kamali stresses the importance of group and community belonging where Islam can provide integrative elements of social justice and social redistribution (as embodied by *zakāt* institutions)[65] (2003: 97ff.). Many authors have stressed this positive and optimistic capacity of Islam (Laroui 1987: 179; Salvatore and Eickelman 2004).

To come back to the previous model of civil society as a source of autonomy and democracy, the main decisive criteria should not be a more or less implicit comparison with a given model of civil society (as that of the western liberal polities), but the fact that it organizes a collectivity towards a better political participation, in accordance with shared open values. Autonomy is clearly outlined in Kamali's conditions and does not need to be further elaborated. As for democracy, as long as organizations claiming to be part of civil society do not resort to political violence and mutually accept the constructive projects of others, then they can be considered part of civil society. So, two more conditions of inclusion should be observed to be part of civil society:

– A positive vision of social participation based on the acceptance of certain rules of toleration and acceptance of basic rights;
– Self-imposed limitation upon resorting to political violence as a way to impose one specific project of autonomy.[66]

Finally, one should adopt a rather sceptical view about some authors' insistence on the 'civil' of the phrase civil society. Despite all the efforts to come up with

differentiated definitions of civil society, there are still leftovers (or very subtle hints) of the original contrast civil society versus state of nature, or put differently 'civilized' versus 'barbarians', but this latter dichotomy possesses a very strong normative power. The case of dismissing arguments presented by Bishara and Ibrahim indicates that this exclusion capacity is reproduced at a variety of levels and for a variety of reasons (some of which will appear clearer in the last two chapters).

Therefore one has to keep a constant eye on the tendency of some to argue about the existence of civil society not because there lacks a substance (that promotes autonomy and democracy), but because they dissociate the 'civil' from 'society'. Thus, civil society does not really let one forget its historical origins and is somehow trapped in one of its founding shortcomings.

3 Setting the historical framework on Palestinian NGOs and international donors

It is now time to look at the most important historical and legal phases for the development of a multi-layered Palestinian civil society and to assess how a mix of legal texts, remnants of previous occupations, still interact with the new Palestinian National Authority (PNA)'s legislation on the regulation of civil society activism. Thanks to an original longitudinal database, we will portray what are the most important subgroupings of civil society active by the year 2000. We will then shed light on the historical involvement of international donors around the globe and in Palestine. Overall, this chapter suggests that even if large amounts of monies are disbursed by non-governmental and professional bodies, there is an increasing division of labour and that the sources of funding are largely governmental ones. In the Palestinian case, regional Arab funding (dominant until the late 1980s) has been massively supplanted during the Oslo peace process by western governmental or multilateral aid. Parallel to this shift, voluntary and mass-based civil society activism in the Territories has gradually disappeared at the expense of newly founded professional elite organizations, leaving charitable organizations working with scarce western funding (though not forgotten by Islamist funding) in poorer and remoter zones of the Territories.

Palestinian civil society in historical perspective

It is often said that Palestinian civil society has a long historical record starting at the turn of twentieth century. It is similarly noted that NGOs have mushroomed since the early 1990s. What have been effectively the phases of development of the local civil society and what are the most important historical phases of its development?

NGOs before the establishment of the PNA

Palestinian NGOs need to be understood within (or as a result of) the historical context of the various occupations that took place in the south-eastern shores of the Mediterranean Sea. The legal and political framework set by the successive Ottoman (until 1918), British (until 1948), Jordanian (for the West Bank), Egyptian (for the Gaza Strip) and Israeli rules (from 1967 onwards) over the

Palestinian Territories have deeply influenced the course of local civil society and in particular NGO work. Some of the policies towards non-state actors taken by each of these rulers still have some influence on what NGOs resemble today. NGO activism reflects the difficult and often conflictual relation to the existing authority for much of the last century.

The Ottoman Law on Associations of 1907 guaranteed for the first time the right of association, but in a limited manner. Associations had to inform the government about their purpose and intention (art. 6); licensing was granted afterwards only (Curmi 2002: 96). This limitation has to be understood in the context where the Ottoman Sultan feared centrifugal forces generated by the nascent Arab nationalism of the late nineteenth–early twentieth centuries (the Arabic *Nahda*).[1] Targeted associations for the Ottoman Empire were nationalist ones (art. 19). Thus, organizations most likely to be created in Palestine in this period were (or had to be) a-political and traditional religious charitable associations. Some of these associations still exist today and are now affiliated with the Union of Charitable Societies.[2] They represent a by-product of this legal framework whereby associations were established and guided by traditional and land-owning notables.

When the *British* Mandate was established in Palestine in 1922, a Constitution delineated basic rights affecting also social activism. The law on private non-profit making companies (of 1922) laid the ground for the formation of many new associations that were willing to escape the rather strict control of Ottoman law. Until the promulgation of the recent Law on Civil and Charitable Associations (so-called NGO Law of April 2000) by the PNA, many NGOs were still registered under the regime of British law in order to avoid Israeli jurisdiction.[3] Of the NGOs active today 3.4 per cent were established before 1948.[4]

The Jordanian Kingdom administered the West Bank[5] from 1949 until 1967, but kept an important role in influencing NGOs until 1988 through the Joint Palestinian–Jordanian Committee. The two applicable laws (from 1956 and the Law of Charitable Organizations number 33 of 1966) were passed in Jordan, but were also regulating associational life in the West Bank. The Hashemite Royal House based its influence on a network of important notable families, which could, in their turn, entertain a clientelistic network, at the cost of later being accused of quiescence towards Jordan[6] after the dramatic defeat of 1967 (Sahliyeh 1988). Despite the Israeli occupation from 1967 onwards, the Jordanian government kept paying the salaries of many charitable organizations in the West Bank until 1988, but the traditional families gradually lost their patronizing role and a new urban nationalist (pro-PLO) leadership gradually emerged from the 1970s onwards (Sahliyeh 1988: 47ff.). When the Jordanians disengaged in 1988,[7] only 2,000 out of the 21,000 employees who were previously benefiting from Jordanian financial assistance continued to be paid for by the Hashemite government, but only the ones working for religious endowments (*awqaf*). This forced many NGOs to look for new donors to compensate for the loss of Jordanian funding. Around that period (which coincides with the first year of the first *Intifada*) European governmental funding gradually made its way towards

NGOs, setting new priorities, by which solidarity funding gave way to a more development-oriented type of funding (Curmi 2002). The conclusion of this chapter will deal more extensively with the meaning of this gradual shift.

Of the NGOs existing today 11.5 per cent were established between 1949 and 1967 (MAS 2001a). With the Israeli occupation (1967 onwards) and formation of the so-called civil (but of military nature) administration in the Territories, life was made even more difficult for the Palestinian NGOs. East Jerusalem organizations were forced to deal with the Israeli *amutot* law (non-profit organizations) because of the Israeli annexation policy in the Arab neighbourhoods of Jerusalem. Some of the small traditional charitable NGOs in East Jerusalem managed to remain under previous Jordanian legislation, but the largest ones were forced to register as *amutot*.[8] All other organizations of the West Bank and Gaza were forced to follow the Israeli Military Order 686 which is a tougher version of the Ottoman law of 1907: a formal registration application has to be submitted to the 'civil administration' before any activities could be undertaken by the association.[9] As in the case of the Ottoman time, any group with a nationalist orientation was thus forbidden to create its association.

Political parties (unless they were not openly nationalist[10]) were thus banned from the public life and significant political leaders were deported with the outbreak of the first *Intifada* (1987–1993). To palliate this interdiction, political parties organized local associations dealing with topical or professional issues to escape Israeli wrath. Thus, popular committees active in health, agriculture, women, or in trade union, started blossoming all over the Territories. This type of activity, originally linked to leftist factions (Communist party, Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) and Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine or DFLP), was later copied by the dominant PLO faction, that of Fatah, in order to reproduce a successful model of mobilization.[11] The crystallization of new organizations reflected a longer-term change in the composition of the leadership inside the West Bank, where an urban, nationalist background, from a new professional middle class[12] (willing to function, at least in the beginning, as a relay for the PLO fighting abroad) replaced the older traditional elites. Many authors point to these new organizations as the backbone of contemporary Palestinian civil society (Muslih 1993).

Let us just take the health sector as an example. The Union of Palestinian Medical Relief Committees (UPMRC), close to the Palestinian Communist Party (PCP, later renamed Palestinian People's Party or PPP), was the first to be created in 1979. It had a clear leftist agenda, but the strict affiliation to the communists became apparent when some physicians with another party orientation split from UPMRC to create two new medical associations. Thus the Union of Health Care Committees (UHCC, affiliated with the DFLP) and Union of Health Workers Committees (UHWC and affiliated with the PFLP) came in 1984 and 1985 respectively, following the model of UPMRC. Finally, Fatah came last and created its own Health Service Council (HSC) in 1989. All of these associations subsequently became formally institutionalized and some of them became the key NGOs in the 1990s. Similarly, a cluster of five to eight associations

differently affiliated existed in the fields of agriculture, education, as well as in women and trade-union activities. All of these programmes were intended not just as a means for political mobilization but also as a local response to the lack of institutional development under the Israeli Occupation. To illustrate the importance of NGOs as a means of resisting occupation, it is enough to state that 47.5 per cent of NGOs active in 2001 were created between 1968 and 1993 (MAS 2001a). Only during the six years of the first *Intifada* (1987–1993), 18.8 per cent of the active NGOs were created in this short period (MAS 2001a: 20). So, if in certain southern countries NGOs are very recent constructs with few links with the population, the Palestinian case is different, because many of these popular committees, resulting indirectly from long decades of civic activism, evolved into NGOs. It is therefore correct to insist on the vital role of NGOs as crucial social actors on the Palestinian scene, but historically as subordinates to political parties. The latter, under the umbrella of the PLO, were concentrating on organizing civil society politically in the form of mass movement and institutionalized NGOs.

It is important to highlight the social changes that took place inside the West Bank and Gaza associational life and which reflect the shift from *external* domination over Palestinian politics until 1967 (Ottoman, British, Egyptian and Jordanian rule) towards an *endogenous* nationalist movement (PLO abroad and popular committee inside), and from an internal social hierarchy dominated first by land-owning traditional families towards the emergence of new educated and urban middle-class. As I shall argue, the object of my study (NGOs active in the 1990s) cannot be understood *outside* this evolving socio-political context.

NGOs and the Palestinian National Authority (PNA)

When the Declaration of Principles was signed in September 1993, it was soon obvious that Palestinians would be given their chance to develop their own institutions, if not their own State. The legal framing of NGOs' work took a turn that was to a great extent shaped by the nature of the regime as embodied by the PNA.

The Cairo Agreements (May 1994) led to the establishment of the PNA in the Gaza Strip and Jericho, and Oslo II (Interim Agreements of September 1995) extended the Palestinian control to seven other Palestinian autonomous zones, the so-called Area A.[13] Rapidly the PNA emerged as the structure set by the PLO to deal with daily management of the autonomous Territories. This organic but blurred link between PLO and PNA[14] made it difficult to understand what were the exact strategies of the Palestinian leadership with regards to the new administration: should the leadership use the already existing PLO ministries (based abroad in Tunis) and 'import' them to the Territories, or should it create totally new ones using the skills and local knowledge developed by the embryonic public sphere bitterly fought for by the inside population, popular committees and NGOs? Or would it become a combination of the two? For many, and in particular for the NGOs, this was *the* crucial question concerning the PNA.[15]

The theory was that the PNA positions should be equally divided amongst PLO returnees and 'inside' Palestinians.[16] The practice turned out to be different: key positions inside the PNA were rapidly handed to a majority of PLO returnees; or when there was a fair division (on the basis of geographical origin) between minister and deputy minister, another mechanism was found to disrupt this 50–50 balance. Thus, for the health sector, Riad Za'noun, a Fatah returnee, was appointed a minister along with a vice-minister from inside (other prominent Fatah NGO members, like Anis al-Qaq from the Health Service Council, were integrated into various ministries (Rabe 2000: 85, 277ff.)), but a Higher Health Committee, under the PLO supervision, was created. Another Fatah returnee, Yousuf Awadallah,[17] headed this committee (Rabe 2000: 277ff.). Another striking example of PLO returnee control[18] was provided by Chairman Arafat, who cumulated key functions as elected president of the PNA (in January 1996), chairman of the PLO and president of Fatah, the dominant party in the PLO coalition. Only after his death were the three positions conferred to three different people.

By the late 1990s, about 100,000 PLO members had returned from exile to Palestine since 1994, providing the backbone and leadership of the Palestinian National Authority. The so-called returnees have been accused of monopolizing power and of controlling the allocation of resources, leaving the people who had been living inside the Occupied Territories (the 'insiders') with a scant portion of the pie. Of course, the claims are not clearly sustainable and groups cannot be considered as homogenous: in many cases returning PLO people used to be rather poor foot soldiers of the 'revolution' and were then employed in low-level public service positions. In other cases, people from inside managed to make their way into the core elite groups of the PNA. Also a line should be drawn between the PLO *returnees* (who spent most of the years abroad, or sometimes their whole life) and the *deportees* (who were activists inside the Territories expelled by the Israeli, mostly during the first *Intifada*). What can be asserted quite seriously is that the PNA has not been a very democratic and accountable structure. Rather it was characterized by the concentration of power in the hands of Arafat and by the setting of a largely clientelistic distribution of power, where the PNA became gradually synonymous with Fatah interests that blurred the line between insiders and returnees, and old guard versus a younger generation.[19] Parts of the future dividing lines (and in some cases conflicts) between NGOs and a Fatah-dominated PNA owe their origin to this institutional setting, as we will try to show, at least until Hamas' landslide victory in the 2006 legislative elections.[20]

In the cases of cooperation between NGOs and the emerging PNA, frictions quickly appeared as a result of the open will of the PNA to systematically assert its control over those segments of civil society inside the Territories which seemed too autonomous and not responsive enough to the PLO leadership based abroad. This trend began already during the Madrid negotiations (October 1991), where the PLO called each sector of NGOs to debate together the agenda, in 'technical' committees. Thus, the Women's Affair Technical Committee was created through the cooperation of three major political factions to prepare for the

negotiations (Curmi 2002: 106). To illustrate the independence of inside institutions and to show how NGOs already feared a centralized control of the PLO, it is worth noting that a group of NGOs still closely affiliated to leftist parties created the Palestinian Network of NGOs (PINGO)[21] in November 1993, well before the establishment of the PNA, but shortly after the signing of Oslo. Beside the Fatah and leftist blocs, there appeared a third informal block of NGOs, that was close to the Islamic organizations. It was born during the 1970s, and gained wide support during the 1980s and mostly the first *Intifada* (Legrain 1997: 165). As an opponent of the Oslo accords, the Islamist segment gradually appeared as the main threat to the PNA, if not to the PLO (to which it does not belong).[22]

When the PNA was established (July 1994), the already existing NGOs were called to merge with the new ministries, or at least to offer their service in the ministries. Many of the NGOs close to Fatah accepted the plea of the PNA (Rabe 2000: 264–265) all others refused. When the PNA elaborated a first draft of legislation on NGOs, the PNA's intentions became clear: in 1995, a questionnaire was circulated to NGO staff where the PNA asked very sensitive questions, such as political affiliation, time spent in jail, existence of spying records, name of friends: none of which is of any relevance to freedom of association, but much more useful for a *mukhabarat*[23] security apparatus willing to crack down on political opponents.

The response of the two opposing NGO blocks (leftist and Islamist) was conditioned by the attitude of the PNA itself. For the leftist NGOs, the attempt to control them was done through the introduction of tough legislation. A thorny legal battled ensued but the conflict remained in that sphere of actions. For the Islamist ones, a real crackdown on their charitable association took place as Hamas waged revenge suicide attacks in 1994 (after the Hebron massacre on 25 February of the same year) and even more in 1996 (when Yahya Ayyash, the 'Engineer', was assassinated by Israel in January 1996).[24] Legislative framework was therefore irrelevant for many Islamic NGOs at a time where the PNA simply shut down dozens of Hamas NGOs in periods of crisis, especially in 1996 and 1997, later in 2001 and again after the Hamas Coup in Gaza in June 2007 where the Emergency Government (led by S. Fayaad) tried to force all civil society organizations to re-register under the presidential authority.

The first draft of the NGO law that was presented in 1997 to the newly created Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC, elected in January 1996) reminded for many the very intrusive and restrictive Egyptian law on NGOs (Hammami *et al.* 2001: 7; Husseini 1995). All personal elements suggested in the 1995 questionnaire were later eliminated, but the PNA tried to centralize all sources of funding, either through PECDAR or through MOPIC[25] (Curmi 2002: 113, 116). The PNA also intended to control who should be allowed to establish a NGO. The former element was successfully removed from the law thanks to the serious efforts and lobbying of PINGO, but control of membership remained. Although freedom of association is guaranteed by art. 1 of the 'Law on Charitable Associations and Community Organisations', the registration procedures (and in particular the art. 4) gives the possibility to the Ministry of Interior (the leading

ministry for registration) to refuse the establishment of a new association, thereby negating the freedom of association. A leading human rights NGO at that time lobbied for the abolishment of such limitation, arguing that art. 4 reflect PNA's intention to *license* rather than to simply *register* new NGOs, which should be considered as a 'dangerous and tragic setback to the 1907 Ottoman law'.[26] Despite all efforts by advocacy groups (in particular PCHR and PNGO), this article remained in the final version of the law officially published in April 2000.

It took thus three years to pass the law. One of the major points of contention between the PLC and the Authority was to know which ministry should have the leading role in the registration process. For the legislator, it was obvious that the Ministry of Justice should be the guardian of legal registration. For Arafat, the role should be assumed by the Ministry of Interior (precisely headed by Arafat from 1994 until 2001 and in charge of the intelligence, *mukhabarat*). The law was passed by the PLC in its third reading in December 1998, but Arafat sent it back to the PLC with the amendment requiring registration by the Ministry of Interior. The quorum could not be reached in the PLC to overrule Arafat's decision and the PLC finally endorsed the law, in the form desired by the PNA, on 12 August 1999. The law came into force when posted in the Official Gazette on 1 April 2000, as the Law of Charitable Association and Community Organizations, which repeals the previous relevant Ottoman and Jordanian laws (art. 43).

Even though PINGO claimed to have successfully lobbied for a liberal NGO law, the fact is that the PNA has indeed the capacity to prevent registration because, as stipulated in art. 4, applying associations must *first* receive the approval of the Ministry of Interior before becoming active. During an interview with the deputy director of the Commission for NGO Affairs, I was informed that the registration process has been practically put on hold since early 2002, because 'the PNA prefer[red] to revive non-active but already existing NGOs than having new NGOs established'.[27] Thus, the fears expressed by the Palestinian Centre for Human Rights (PCHR) were well founded and there are indirect possibilities for the PNA to oppose the creation of new associations.[28]

Interestingly, PINGO was supported in its lobby by the World Bank which openly advocated for an open legislation and also financed some of the activities of PINGO, thanks to funds allocated in its NGO project ($200,000 specifically to the NGO law drafting, as part of $15 million disbursed to NGO projects).[29] It is apparently the first time that the World Bank (although doing it in a sub-contracting form) directly finances NGOs without any state intervention (Curmi 2002: 114; Sullivan 2001: 1). The situation is not so easy for the NGOs to operate as a form of counter-power to the Authority, especially for organizations not close to Fatah.[30] Maybe the fact that the first PLC and the NGOs themselves have backed off on Arafat's claims (to register with the Ministry of Interior) is due to the anti-NGO campaign that took place by mid-1999. At that time, the Minister of Justice accused certain NGOs of corruption by misinterpreting UNSCO figures about external funding for the promotion of the rule of law (UNSCO 1999b). He falsely claimed that NGOs active in the field of democracy

and human rights had received more than the Ministry of Justice. The allegation happened to be unfounded, but it was interpreted as a means to deflect attention away from corruption problems *inside* the PNA itself (see Hammami *et al.* 2001). These harsh attacks from the PNA can also be understood as a sign of irritation at the work of human rights NGOs which criticized law violations by the PNA itself.

Most of the NGOs were registered under the new law (approximately 80 per cent) in 2003; the ones that had not done so yet were the ones that were registered as a private non-profit company (which, in terms of organizational requirements, is very close to the NGO law). The law is certainly very progressive with regards to other similar laws elsewhere in the Middle East. Nevertheless, on top of the registration/licensing hurdle, there remain some indirect financial constraints set by the PNA on the work of NGOs (Curmi 2002: 114). Despite the requested financial and narrative reports due every year to the PNA, cases of corruption occur in the NGO sector. Thus, a leading human rights NGO (LAW) was caught in 2002 in an embarrassing situation where $4 out of the $10 million disbursed between September 1997 and August 2002 went unaccounted for (Ha'aretz 2003). This corruption scandal, whose effects will most certainly be bitterly felt by most advocacy NGOs, might provide further arguments for tighter control by the PNA on the work and activities of (opposition) NGOs.

Second Intifada *and NGOs*

As the years of the second *Intifada* went by, the situation became ever more uncomfortable for the PNA: it become the target of destruction and subject to tough international pressures to reform amidst large-scale re-occupation of and military operation in all of the autonomous zones. NGOs have thus become an object of less concern for the PNA, inasmuch as NGO work has been re-oriented towards relief rather than advocacy activities, some of which were previously aimed at reforming the PNA. Collaboration between the PNA and NGOs has increased in new sectors, since the emergency situation forces all actors to pull in the same directions and to forget about internal dissents. The second *Intifada* has created a new sense of unity, at least in the first three or four years of the Uprising. With a massive return of the reform agenda from 2004 onwards, advocacy issues re-gained some of its importance, as it was the case during the Oslo years.[31] With Hamas in power since 2006, external funding to the PNA was halted, although aid to civil society non-related to the Islamist sector continued, through the creation of the co-called Temporary International Mechanism (TIM) launched in June 2006.[32] In any case, the protracted debate about the creation of a government of national unity in the second half of 2006 aimed precisely at restoring a sort of normality in terms of western funding,[33] and in terms of collaboration between NGOs and the PNA for basic service-delivery, which saw good breakthroughs during the first years of the second *Intifada* (in particular in the health sector).

But not all NGOs might subscribe to this optimism. For example there are moments of tension with advocacy NGOs, more precisely with democracy

NGOs pressing for more reforms inside the PNA, and the human rights organizations opposing the appointment of the new Ministry of Justice in the last months of 2002. But the main reason for tension has to do with the new competition to have access to funding, since the PNA has been 'relegated to asserting itself as the Authority by battling with international donors over the right to be the conduit for emergency food aid to the destitute population' (Hammami 2002) during the first three years of the *Intifada*.

The sectors that suffered most are the ones linked to the Islamist groups. After a wave of suicide attacks in December 2001 and under strong international pressure to do so, the PNA decided, as it did in 1997, to crack down on Hamas affiliated institutions. Thus, *Al-Islah*, the largest charitable association of Hamas in the Gaza Strip, was conspicuously shut down in December 2001. Other associations of Hamas and Islamic Jihad were closely scrutinized by the PNA. As of January 2002, 50 various Islamic social welfare associations (close to Hamas) were shut down by the PNA[34] and the assets of 25 Islamic NGOs were frozen (ICG 2003a: 16). This move turned out to have a widely negative impact for all charitable associations, in particular the traditionally unaffiliated ones, which suffered from a lack of funding, because of the fear of international donors to indirectly finance armed operations of militant groups.

An analysis of the various NGO sectors will bring interesting information for our discussion. It must be stated that there exist many short presentations on Palestinian NGOs, giving thus many snapshot pictures of this sector of Palestinian activism, but no other systematic study would provide a dynamic overview of the changes. The following pages tries to palliate this problem by offering an innovative analysis of the evolution of NGOs sectors thanks to an original database comparing the numbers and sectors of NGOs active between 1990 and 2000.

If one counted around 2,000 associations during the first *Intifada* (Curmi 2002), the number seemed to have gradually but endlessly decreased in the 1990s, reaching about 1,000 by 2000.[35] This decline has many causes. During the first *Intifada*, many NGOs were working under-ground for fear of being closed down by the Israelis. Thus severe Israeli legislation might be a reason for the decrease in the number of NGOs. This can also be explained by the pulling out of Jordanian funding after 1988 and by the loss of credibility (and subsequent loss of funding and remittances) of the PLO in 1991 due to its support for Saddam Hussein in the first Gulf War.[36] According to two Palestinian sociologists, these two reasons (tight control of mass organizations by Israel and a drop in PLO funding) might well have been the key turning point in the decline of mass-based organization (Hammami and Tamari 2001: 17).

Figures tend to confirm this conclusion. From 2,000 NGOs during the first *Intifada* (1987–1993), the next number available on NGO is that of 1,400 organizations by 1994, the time when the PNA was established.[37] Funding levels dropped significantly as well since the PNA was now the main focal point of attention of the donor community. Thus, external funding to NGOs (which used to receive from $170 to $240 million per year around 1990) decreased to only $100 to $120 million in 1994 (Hammami 1995: 59). World Bank figures hint at

an even more drastic decrease of funding for NGOs: if between $150 million to $200 million was distributed in the early 1990s, only $90 million was donated in 1994 and a mere $60 million in 1996 (Sullivan 1998: 95).

Finally, the Oslo years were characterized by a turnover with the establishment of many new NGOs: 37.6 per cent of NGOs active in 2001 were created after the signing of Oslo (MAS 2001a: 20). On top of the already mentioned NGOs in the sectors of health, agriculture, women, education fields and trade unions, a new form of NGO appeared in this period: that of advocacy and research. By advocacy, one should understand NGOs active in the fields of human rights, democracy and peace promotion. If some of these organizations were founded before the 1990s (Al-Haq, the pioneer in human rights was established already in 1979), the majority of these advocacy NGOs is a by-product of the Oslo years (Chapter 5). The most recent advocacy NGOs are research centres on democracy, politics and public opinion, with a last strand of organizations dedicated to peace promotion and/or people-to-people programmes.

Despite the belief that the Oslo years were characterized by the 'mushrooming' of NGOs,[38] evidence suggests that the overall number of NGOs has decreased during the Oslo years and that many changes have taken place in the various sectors. Here are two tables illustrating that matter, one on the number of NGOs according to various sources dating from 1990 to 2006 (Table 3.1), and a second on the percentage of NGOs created in various historical phases (Table 3.2).

It is difficult to have official figures from the Ministry/Commission of NGO Affairs and therefore virtually impossible to decide which source is most accurate. In any case, it is correct to conclude that there have been important changes in the landscape and composition of NGOs after Oslo, with the apparition of many new NGOs (300 out of 1,000), and the disappearance of many more others (at least 1,000 out of the 2,000 existing as of 1990).

To know in which fields the different NGOs are active is a very difficult question, because of the lack of literature on the topic. Two exhaustive studies

Table 3.1 Number of NGOs in the OPT (1990–2006)

Date	*Number of NGOs*	*Source*
1990	2,000	Curmi 2002
1994	1,400	World Bank[1]
1996	1,850	PINGO[2]
1997	1,200	Huron[3]
1999	1,200	Curmi 2002[4]
2001	982	MAS 2001a: 20
2006	About 1,000	Author's database[5]

Notes
1 Quoted in Rabe (2000: 257ff.).
2 PINGO Newsletter n.6, August 1996. This is most probably a hyperbolic figure.
3 Stanley Huron. Conference at the School of Oriental and African Studies, London, November 1999.
4 Based on PINGO sources.
5 My database on Palestinian NGOs.

Table 3.2 Percentage of NGOs according to their period of establishment

Date of creation	*Source: MAS (2001a)*	*Source: MADAR (2000)*
Post Oslo (1994–…)	37.6	46
Before Oslo		54
1988–1993	18.8	
1987–1980	13.3	
1968–1979	15.4	
1949–1967	11.5	
Before 1948	3.4	

exist (from 1994 and 2001) but use different categories that do not overlap. According to the 1994 study done by the World Bank, there were 1,400 NGOs active that could be split into four categories.[39]

Two hundred NGOs constitute the *professional developmentalist* sub-type. They are the secular NGOs active in health, agriculture, education, advocacy and community service, as well as research organizations. Although many were historically linked to political parties, political affiliation has become very loose, to the point that they can sometimes be considered as independent. They are the most visible organizations for the international donors, even though they represent the smallest sub-type (14 per cent) of all of the NGOs at the time of the establishment of the PNA.

The second sub-type is formed by the 500 *charitable* organizations. They are traditional forms of associations (in the sense that they are led by traditional and/or notable leaders) and politically unaffiliated (36 per cent of all NGOs by 1994). The work done by the charitable organizations with, for example, orphans, deaf or blind children remains an important contribution to Palestinian welfare and in particular in zones that are less covered by other NGOs. This sector certainly did suffer from the professionalization affecting the secular NGOs, since donors turned their back to this more traditional forms of associations. This is not only due to less clear structures of management, but also due to the fear for external donors to fund militant Islamic organizations, although many of these are not linked at all with the latter type of organizations.[40]

The third sub-type is that of the *religious-based* organizations, which represent 400 NGOs (29 per cent). They can be either Christian or Muslim organizations but with a more overtly political agenda. Hamas, through a vast network of mosques, schools and medical clinics, controls the largest chunk of this sub-type. Their beneficiaries mostly receive its services free of charge. The Islamic Jihad also controlled dozens of these (Rabe 2000: 257–259).

The last sub-type is made of about 300 organizations (21 per cent of all NGOs by 1994) which are the *service- and consumer-oriented* NGOs. This sub-type was meant to gradually disappear with the establishment of the PNA, since they were part of the organizations set by the PLO and more specifically Fatah from the late 1970s onwards to counter-balance leftist and Islamic NGOs. Their orientation covered issues such as education, transportation, housing,

agriculture, and even credit assistance (Rabe 2000: 258). Trade unions and professional associations are other NGOs of this sub-type.

The next thorough study on NGOs was published in 2001 and was commissioned for the World Bank Project on NGOs. One part of the study dealt with the relations between NGOs, PNA and the donor community (MAS 2001b), while the second one was a mapping of NGOs (MAS 2001a). The World Bank and Welfare Association (running the PNGO project) mandated a research centre in Ramallah, the Palestine Economic Policy Research Institute (MAS), which published its very detailed results in two separate booklets.[41]

It is striking to see (Table 3.3) how important charitable organizations are in terms of the number of organizations counted, though figures are highly aggregated (many women, health and probably education associations are probably included under charitable). Of these organizations, 76.6 per cent of the NGOs are based in the West Bank and 23.4 per cent in Gaza (whereas the population of the West Bank represents roughly 66 per cent of the total population). Of these NGOs, 60.2 per cent are urban-based, 29.3 per cent are in rural communities and 10.6 per cent in refugee camps (the distribution of the population by place of living is as follows: 56.5 per cent in urban areas, 28.5 per cent in rural and 15 per cent in camps).[42] The problem with this first table is that it is now impossible to identify which NGOs come within the charities category, e.g. are there religious ones and non-religious ones? Of all NGOs, 96.4 per cent are legally registered.

The second table (Table 3.4) is indicative of the main field of activity of NGOs and the last column is about which percentage of funding goes to this main activity.

It is interesting to see the contrast between the variety of activities and the main purpose of each NGO. When it comes to funding, this second table shows that certain topics might occupy a lot of NGOs (culture, education, charities and youth – column 1) but that less have their main activities in these fields (column 2). The contrast is particularly striking for the youth and culture sectors that absorb very

Table 3.3 Number and percentage of NGOs according to the main type of activities

Type	*Number*	*Percentage*
Charitable organizations	374	40.4
Youth and sport	282	30.4
Culture	94	10.2
Relief	44	4.8
Development	45	4.9
Research	32	3.5
Training and rehabilitation	25	2.7
Human rights	24	2.6
Others	5	0.5
Total	926	100

Source: MAS 2001a.

Table 3.4 Topical activities of NGOs and proportion of funding to these activities

Type of activity	*% of NGOs active in any of these*	*% of NGOs with main activities being…*	*Percentage of funding to this main activity*
Children	40.2	20.4	16.6
Charitable and relief	39.2	13.3	13.3
Elderly people	4.8	1.6	1.2
Family organization	5.8	0.5	0.1
Culture, science, and humanity	56.2	10.2	2.4
Rural development	11.8	2.8	6.9
Environmental and water	3.9	0.9	0.3
Health services	25.7	4.9	32.3
Human rights	8.6	2.6	2.5
Handicapped	10.7	4.4	5.5
Rehabilitation	26.4	3.5	1.7
Women	17	1.8	1.3
Education and teaching	35.4	3.4	6.4
Religious activities	12.5	1.5	1
Research centres	9.2	2	4.1
Proselytism (*Da'wa*) activities	5.7	0.6	–
Youth	30	22.7	1.3
Other	6.7	3	3
		100	100

Source: see MAS (2001a: Statistics 4–2, p. 112, and 8–3, p. 120).

Note
The table is based on the response of 881 NGOs (out of 926) for a total expense of $112 million for the year 2000.

little funding (column 3). On the opposite side, few organizations deal with health as the main activity (4.9 per cent), rural development (i.e. agriculture, 2.8 per cent), education (3.4 per cent) and research (2 per cent), but these three sectors absorb much more funding per NGO than the rest (almost half of the funding – 32.3 per cent of all funding going to health, 6.9 per cent to agriculture, 6.4 per cent to education and 4.1 per cent for research).

The last table (Table 3.5) should finally help us to understand which sector employs most of the people working for NGOs, giving us an idea of the relative importance of each sector.

Again, the charitable sector is an important one, not only in mere numbers of NGOs, but also because it employs more than half of those paid for by NGOs. The previous table highlighted that youth activities are very popular but requiring little funding. This is also confirmed here, with only 3.4 per cent of all employees being in this sector. The final comment is about the developmental NGOs, which, despite the fact that they represent only 4.9 per cent of all NGOs, employ 25 per cent of those working in NGOs. This corroborates the fact that certain activities cost more than others (see previous contrast of health,

Table 3.5 Number and percentage of employees by type of NGO activity

Type of activity	*% of all NGOs*	*No. of employees*	*% of all employees*	*% of which female*	*No. of volunteers*	*% of which female*
Charitable	40.4	5,894	56.8	58.6	22,883	44.0
Relief	4.8	397	3.8	52.1	979	31.8
Youth clubs	30.4	348	3.4	23.6	21,740	7.5
Research	3.5	265	2.6	51.7	318	30.1
Development	4.9	2,605	25.1	50.4	4,510	39.8
Human rights	2.6	237	2.3	43.9	234	24.0
Culture	10.2	271	2.6	50.9	12,415	38.4
Rehabilitation	2.7	305	2.9	51.2	1,789	95.0
Other	0.5	57	0.5	57.9	68	34.6
Total	100	10,375	100	54	64,936	31.5

Source: see MAS 2001a.

agriculture and education versus 'cheap' activities such as youth and culture). A rival hypothesis would be to say that developmental NGOs are simply much better at fund raising from large foreign donors, therefore being able to spend more and thus pay for more (and better) salaries. Interestingly, a majority of NGO workers are female (54 per cent), something widespread in Middle Eastern societies, which give a large opportunity for job sharing to women, especially for a highly educated population as it is the case for Palestinians, and where an important role is given to pre-marriage women in income-generating for the extended family (Rosenberg 2002). The lower rate of female job share, as in the case of youth centres (only 23.6 per cent of women) is linked to the fact that in certain aspects of life a gender segregation happens and limits the type of work done (see later point in informal constraints).

I have discussed elsewhere in great details the motives that make charitable and Islamic organizations very important types of actors not only within civil society but also for broader Palestinian politics at large since there has been a true revival of the charitable sectors in the last decade (Challand 2008a, 2008c). Where the West tends[43] to blur the lines between Islamic and Islamist, the external Arab donor community precisely orientates funding on this basis.[44] Locally, the role of *zakaat* institutions are particularly important to organize the redistribution of resources to the needy population. In Chapter 5 we will contrast the ways in which this type of organization frames its work with large social groups and see how the political economy of aid has also helped shaping an alternative way of thinking the role of civil society within the second Palestine. To name an example of the impact of political economy, suffices to say that while the international community has been at times very slow to respond to the drastic humanitarian food crisis,[45] Hamas and other Islamist NGOs have been prompt in distributing food for free or offering basic services (health, school with boarding) and have successfully occupied this emergency niche.[46] With the PNA infrastructures increasingly targeted and initially incapable of delivering aid, and with

larger secular NGOs having difficulties getting out of the value-oriented activities developed during the Oslo years, Palestinians in dire economic situations can only turn towards the Islamists because they are the fastest to deliver. Hence the high rate of credibility of this type of NGO amongst the local population, according to a wide scale survey done in 2002[47] (Heacock 2004: 26).

Donors in historical perspective

Let us now turn to a brief historical account of the external donors' involvement with Palestinian civil society. This section aims to define more precisely who the donor organizations are in general and in the Palestinian context. One needs to be aware of the differences amongst them to understand the potential variety of approaches to support civil society organizations, in general as well as in the case of Palestine. Thus, we will outline some of the most important and general trends in the evolution of the category 'donors' over the last five or six decades before embarking upon a short discussion of the donors specializing in civil society support. We will finally sketch the history and typicality of the donors in Palestinian territories, and how they have been increasingly enmeshed with Palestinian development.[48]

The idea of international aid as an instrument of socio-political change dates back to the end of the Second World War. Economic development was then considered the best way to reconstruct a viable international system – Keynesian politics also being applied to domestic welfarist policies at that time (Senisolla 1999). Aid is intimately linked to the notion of development, and directly to the post-Second World War period, with the Marshall Plan as a leading market-driven developmental plan to prevent the further spread of communism[49] (Cooper and Packard 1997: 7f.).

In an effort to categorize international development organizations (governmental, IGOs or NGOs) according to their activities and functions, Senisolla argues that they can be organized into five generations (1999: 92–94). The first is the *welfarist* generation, created after 1945, but is mostly made of international institutions set up as a result of the Bretton Woods agreements. The second generation is *developmental* and has its roots around 1960, with the new independent post-colonial states in Africa as the main focus. The third model is that of *partnership* organizations in the South and *protest* organizations in the North, a typical result of the tormented early 1970s. The fourth generation is that of *empowerment* in the South and of *political pressure* in the North, which started around 1982. Obviously, there are overlaps between the first four generations, which are far from being clear-cut categories.

A further contribution of Senisolla's article is to suggest the emergence of a fifth generation of international development organizations. The latter rely increasingly on *public* funds, and tend to be *more specialized* in their action, with a strong focus on advocacy, communication and research (1999: 99f.). This fifth generation was clearly created under *neo-liberal* and *globalizing* skies.

This brings us to the fact that donors are not just institutions that make funding available to implementing organizations, but they are also the vehicles

of certain conceptions of development and of aid that vary across time. One key feature of the last few decades has been the increased professionalization and specialization of donor organizations. In particular, in the field of democracy promotion, there has been marketization of these interventions, in which NGOs, both northern and southern (Hudock 1999) have played a vital role.[50] A quick glance at Muslim charitable organizations operating at an international level leads to the same conclusions as regards professionalization and increased marketization of their actions (Benthall and Bellion-Jourdan 2003; Ghandour 2002; Karam 2000).

Without entering here in a description of what is constitutive of the various subgroups of donors (governmental, multilateral and non-governmental, which will make more explicit in the case of donors active in Palestine in the next chapter), we will say a few words on the distinction between bilateral versus multilateral funding and other technical definitions that actually impact the way aid is conceived and practiced on the ground and how civil society fits in this map of different activities.

By *bilateral* aid, one needs to understand the flows of funding that 'are provided directly by a donor [country or organization] to an aid recipient [country or not]', whereas *multilateral* aid is 'channelled via an international organization' and whose flows are 'pooled by other contributions and disbursed at the discretion of the agency' (OECD DAC 2003: 321–324).[51] To illustrate the difference, let us assume that DfID gives 50 per cent of its budget to multilateral aid and 50 per cent to bilateral aid. The former would include aid to UNICEF, UNRWA or the World Bank NGO Project, while in the latter scenario, budget support would be dedicated to the PNA, or to a British NGO (say MAP UK) or directly to a Palestinian NGO, such as the Palestinian Hydrology Group.

Tied funding aid refers to 'official grants or loans where procurement of the goods or services involved is limited by the donor country to a group of countries which does not include substantially all aid recipient countries' (OECD DAC 2003: 324). Some countries include conditions of tied funding for obvious national interest reasons (a certain amount of money will *have* to be spent in the country of origin or through various national agents). If one wants to assess how much funding actually goes to the recipient country, one will have to look into the existence or not of this condition.

The distinction between *long-term development* funding and *emergency* (also called humanitarian) aid is a very contentious issue. No clear line can be drawn either in the literature or on the field of practice. If one has in mind categories such as conflict-resolution, peace-building, peace-enforcement and post-conflict, there is no doubt that there will be little understanding as to where one category starts and where the other ends.[52]

In the words of the EU office for humanitarian intervention (ECHO),

> Humanitarian aid is aimed first and foremost at the people of the third world and covers not only short-term relief but also disaster prevention and reconstruction operations. Such operations last as long as is necessary and are

> targeted at the immediate requirements arising out of natural (e.g. flooding, earthquakes) or man-made disasters (e.g. outbreaks of war and fighting) and other exceptional comparable circumstances.[53]

For many decades, the International Red Cross was the only institution to intervene in emergency situations (Pouligny 2003: 548). Later on, UN multilateral agencies were also given leading roles in emergency situations (e.g. UNHCR, WFP (World Food Program)). Gradually, NGOs also emerged in this field of intervention, with the 'French doctors' (MSF and then MdM) as *figures de proue* of a new form of interventionism. Thus, there has been a professionalization of this field of intervention, not to say a mercantilization of these interventions (there are now regular international fairs taking place in Europe on issues of emergency intervention and development).[54]

The EU created a special body to deal with such emergencies: ECHO was set up in 1992 to replace the Emergency Unit of the DGVIII (Pouligny 2003: 547). But it is important to underline that ECHO disburses most of its funding to NGOs and that its by-laws require that projects have to be implemented by northern NGOs (in partnership or not with local NGOs or state institutions). An estimated 45 to 70 per cent of ECHO funding is now allocated through NGOs (Pouligny 2003: 547n7), highlighting the increasing role of NGOs in this field as well. Because of the importance of rapid and effective emergency response, a platform of international NGOs and of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) set up in 1997 a working group to define a 'Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards' in humanitarian interventions, the so-called SPHERE Project.[55]

A final distinction deals with the notion of *partnership* or direct implementation. *Implementing organizations* are those that realize their objectives directly with no (local) intermediary in their projects. If, say, Oxfam decides to implement on its own a micro-credit programme in Uganda, or a health education campaign with no local partners, this is a case of an *implementing* organization. If, on the contrary, it decides to run such programmes with, say, a local Ugandan organization, then it will be done in *partnership*.

ECHO funding cannot be granted directly to southern implementing organizations. It can only be given to a northern agency implementing directly or in partnership with a southern NGO. One can take this as an indirect form of tied funding (since a good percentage of the money and, more importantly, the design process of the intervention will remain in the hands of northern NGOs). This last element of partnership demonstrates that although a lot of the vocabulary of 'development' entails rather positive conceptions, the reality behind these words can be more complex. It is not enough to invoke 'partnership' to favour sustainable development in the south. Partnership, after all, can be real but also fictional.

Although there has been much talk in the last 20 years about partnership with the south, and about the need for a sustainable development, international aid is still partly given under the main idea of decisions taken in distant western capitals rather than on the spot itself,[56] and with still hundreds of 'expatriates' being sent to crisis zones rather than relying on domestic human resources.

Many authors have now described in detail the contentious notions of 'development' (Fine *et al.* 2001; Munck and O'Hearn 1999; Cooper and Packard 1997; Rist 1996), but a more recent trend in the literature has been to critically discuss humanitarian engagement and the services it can render certain aggressive policies of some powerful states or alliances. In particular this literature questions the neutrality of certain humanitarian actors and the fact that NGOs responding to emergencies very often must work under highly political conditions (Duffield 2004). The recent example of the humanitarian intervention of NGOs in Iraq is a case in point: international NGOs willing to work in post-Saddam Iraq had to register and be allowed in the country by the American Defense Department (ICG 2003b: 10f.). But as we will now see from the historical involvement of donors in Palestine, the term 'civil society' plays an important role covering all sorts of activities in a grey zone between formal political intervention and informal assistance

Talking of grey zone, it is interesting to note how most of the governmental agencies also publish so-called grey literature, at the crossroads of academic research and in-field assessment reports dealing frontally with civil society promotion.[57] Some large NGOs also have this capacity and have produced important books for practitioners.[58] Civil society promotion is thus performed by donor agencies (be they governmental, multilateral or non-governmental) which benefit from a vast array of information about the work done elsewhere and which are supplied on a daily basis with codes of best practice and lists of potential dangers to deal with while implementing projects. One can also conclude that there is apparently a rather high level of conscientization about the issue of aid impact, and in particular about the notion of civil society promotion. What is taking place is therefore a form of specialization, or increased division of labour amongst donors, development agencies, and implementing organizations. There is now a true 'aid industry' – to use the wording of Van Rooy (1998) – characterized by a professionalization of the work done by these agencies (Pouligny 2003: 548).

This short historical excursus demonstrates that the way NGOs are massively supported is actually quite a recent trend in its *ampleur*. The vocabulary used around concept of community participation, grass roots involvement and participatory appraisals are all new concepts that came during the 1990s and not before (see Chatelard 2004a; Brand 2001). Therefore one should question certain benevolent aspects of civil society promotion. Even if the current trend of the World Bank is to insist on project 'ownership' as a new way to stress the involvement of communities at low-levels, it might be more lip-service than reality. Similarly, recent documents about how civil society actors are selectively invited to promote US interests in post-Saddam Iraq reflects a rather crude instrumentalization of the discourses of civil society and democracy promotion (Docena 2004: 15–18).

International donors in Palestine

Let us now look at the precise case of international donors' involvement with NGO support in Palestine in a historical manner. The intrusion of foreign

funding coincides with the internationalization of the conflict in the Middle East after 1948 and even more so after the 1967 occupation of the West Bank and Gaza. No real figures or list of donors exist, to the best of our knowledge, about figures made available to (proto-)NGOs before the 1970s, despite the presence of some donors since the 1948 war. We will nevertheless try to sketch the presence and role of external donors in the OPT in the following sections.

As highlighted in the previous part on Palestinian NGOs, the legal framework and its evolution is highly important to understanding the establishment and evolution of civil society organizations. To a certain extent, the same applies for international donors. In fact, international donors' space for manoeuvring was always limited by Israeli legal and/or administrative impediments. This is particularly true from 1981 onwards when Israel imposed on the West Bank and Gaza the so-called 'Civil Administration', whose 'civilian' characters exist only in name and not in fact, since it was subordinated to the military chain of command (Chagnollaud 1990: 52). The Civil Administration was an indirect result of the first Camp David Accord between Egypt and Israel in 1978, according to which Israel was to grant autonomy to the Palestinians (the latter not being consulted for that matter) (Roy 2001: 108–110). It promoted military orders when Ottoman, Jordanian and Egyptian legal bases were not sufficient for the policing of the Territories (Milhem 1998). That impacted as well upon the work of international donors who had to report[59] and coordinate with the Israeli administration for the final green light before implementing their projects with local partners. Roy thus narrates the example of an operation of Save the Children whose funding proposal in partnership with a Gazan NGO was vetted by the Israeli military government from 1981 to 1989 because the local partner was considered potentially too close to the PLO (Roy 2001: 271).

A more detailed account about such Israeli limits upon international funding is given by Benvenisti (quoted in Nakhleh 1989: 120). According to the latter who studied 348 USAID-funded projects between 1977 and 1983 in the Occupied Territories: 'It was shown that Israeli intervention caused a major shift in the allocation of projects and budgets […]. The share of economic development-related budgets actually implemented is reduced from almost half of the original programme to less than one-third.'

In other words, Israel had a free hand in re-directing some of the funding according to its priorities and moods of 'development' plans. Hence, the title of the famous book of the American scholar, Sara Roy, *The Politics of De-Development* where she shows in a careful study of the political economy of the Gaza Strip since the beginning of the twentieth century that Israel led a politics of promoting its own economical development while constraining the Palestinian economy to a point where the latter was not only under-developed but was simply 'de-developing' (2001).[60]

Foreigners had also to comply with this rule by providing funding that would not go against Israeli plans. The same still applies now in the Territories, despite some elements of autonomy granted to the PNA since 1994: over the months and years of the second *Intifada*, Israel has practically re-installed total

military control over Palestinian civilian life. In 2004 it requested an entry permit for non-USA and non-UN international organizations into Nablus as well as for entry into the Gaza Strip. Palestinian staff of international organizations also needed to apply for a special Israeli permit to work in Area C. Foreign staff and volunteers have tremendous difficulties in getting a working visa required by the Israeli Ministry of Interior and any international organization willing to work openly in the Territories must be licensed by the Ministry of Social Affairs.[61]

Although constraints and reporting obligations have not, in the last ten years, been as high as during the 1967–1994 period, there are still serious limits and hurdles placed upon the work of international donors by the Israeli authorities.

The shift from regional funding…

There have been western donors in the region since the 1948 war with the presence of what are mostly religious organizations, such as the American Friends Services Committee (Quaker), Catholic Relief Services (CRS), and Cooperative for American Remittances Everywhere (CARE). Their work was that of relief and help to the hundreds of thousands of refugees forced to leave their homes during the Partition War. The UN, through its UNRWA arm, was the main international donor in the region, but has remained mostly an implementing organization. The massive presence of western donors working in partnership or funding local organizations only dates back to the mid-1980s and in particular from 1987 with the outbreak of the first *Intifada* (1987–1993).

Before then, the main donors were Arab regional actors. As for the emancipation of a truly national and independent (from other Arab countries) Palestinian leadership within the PLO, it took a long time for Palestinian NGOs to receive aid that was *not* tied to some political patronage from a neighbour country or from the Arab League. The shock of the 1967 defeat had long-lasting consequences for funding made available in the Territories. Once the Arab states acknowledged that the 'new PLO'[62] would be the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people in 1974 (Rabat Summit) and that the Occupation was now the main issue for the Palestinian question, responding strategies slowly emerged from regional actors. Thus, in 1978, at its Baghdad summit, the Arab league announced the creation of the so-called 'Jordanian–Palestinian Joint committee for the support of the steadfastness of the Palestinian people in the Occupied homeland' (Roy 2001: 151), in short, called the 'Joint Committee' or 'Steadfastness Committee'. Its aim was to make funding available for Palestinians of the 'inside' to provide basic infrastructures (water, electricity) and economic support to avoid out-migration, but also to indirectly provide some channels of political influence (Sayigh 1997: 479f.). The fund was started in 1979. Although $100 million was to be distributed annually with the agreement of both the PLO and the Jordanian government,[63] the total amount given between 1979 and 1986 reached between $417 million (Nakhleh 2002: 26) and $463 million (ibid.: 612). This remained the main source with about $60 million a year.

Although coming to less, internal PLO funds also poured into the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT). Most notably, the Palestinian National Fund was a mechanism whereby governments of the Gulf countries raised a 5 per cent income tax on the salary of their Palestinian *Gastarbeiter*; the money collected was then handed to the PLO, which then re-distributed it to its various factions (Karamé 1997: 75). It is estimated that Fatah provided about $50 million a year for its internal constituency (Sayigh 1997: 481). There was certainly also some Soviet funding for the Marxist factions of the PLO, but as in the case of Fatah, no exact figures are available. One important consequence for this period is that this relatively important amount of external aid contributed to the factionalization (in terms of the political parties) of Palestinian civil society,[64] a feature that western donors will try to undo later in the 1990s.

Palestinian philanthropists also channelled multi-million figures to the OPT on a yearly basis. The most prominent example is represented by the Welfare Association, a club of wealthy Palestinian businessmen that decided to provide an endowment fund after the shock of the 1982 invasion of Lebanon by Israel.[65] The Welfare Association provided a yearly average of $6 million for social organizations inside the Territories (Hanafi S. 1998: 64ff.). This is the main source of 'Diaspora Funding' channelled directly by a single organization to the OPT. Smaller amounts of remittances were (and are still) sent by individuals or solidarity groups as my interviews with local NGOs demonstrated.[66] It is worth noting here the solidarity groups based in the USA that send financial supports to the Territories. These include the United Palestinian Appeal (est. 1985 in New York (Nakhleh 1989:121)), the United Holy Land Fund (est. 1989), and the Arab Palestinian Fund (est. 1985) (Hanafi 1998: 67) and the Jerusalem Fund (Nakhleh 1989).

The final source of Arab institutional funding is that of the Arab/Islamic regional organizations. The Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development (AFESD, based in Kuwait), Student Aid International (Kuwait), OPEC Fund for International Development (Vienna), Arab Gulf Programme for UN Development Organisations (AGFUNDO, based in Riyadh) and the Islamic Development Bank have disbursed, according to Nakhleh (1989, 2002), between $80 and $120 million from 1977 to 1992.[67] The particularity of this funding is that these organizations are highly sensitive to political susceptibilities amongst Arab countries: the PLO support given to Saddam Hussein in the Gulf War in 1990–1991 proved to be a watershed for funding to the Territories: Gulf countries decided to immediately shut down the funding tap to Palestinian organizations. The parallel decision to expel thousands of Palestinian *Gastarbeiter* also meant the drying up of a substantial portion of remittances sent back to the OPT.[68]

Another crisis in the intra-Arab relations caused the rupture and collapse of the Joint Jordanian–Palestinian Committee in 1988. At that time (the *Intifada* had started a year before), the PLO declared a Palestinian State from Tunis. Jordan decided therefore to disengage from any form of control of the Territories and stopped providing funding to hundreds of charitable societies. From one day to the next, 21,000 salaries that used to be paid for by Jordan, were

now unpaid; the Jordanian government accepted only to continue paying for 2,000 staff taking care of religious and holy sites through its *awqaf* (religious endowment) fund (Curmi 2002: 102). This last point gives us the opportunity to touch on religious funding. An important mechanism of fund raising is that of *zakaat*, or almsgiving, one of the five pillars of Islam. Each Muslim should pay personally every year a local committee a certain amount of their salary (usually 2.5 per cent). *Zakaat* committees then re-distribute its funds to needy people. There is an important flow of *zakaat* money travelling from one end of the Muslim world to the other end.[69] In the case of Palestine, an estimated 40 per cent of *zakaat* spending comes from abroad.[70] Knowing that a *zakaat* committee in Hebron (with a population of 500,000 people) distributes an average of $1 million yearly,[71] the amount generated locally and sent from abroad to various *zakaat* committees are therefore not be neglected in our account of external donors.

We will discuss later the political significance of these changes in external sources of funding. But to conclude this section, two figures suffice to make the point that the main source of funding was, until the end of the 1980s a regional matter more than a western/international one. Using figures coming from various sources (Nakhleh 1989; Hanafi 1998; Curmi 2002; Nakhleh 2004), one can estimate the yearly contribution to the Territories from Arab regional institutions at about $60 to 80 million. Figures from western donors are much lower: USAID, for the period 1975–1987, disbursed only $6 million a year. Even if European consulates (as the main European donors until the end of the 1980s – see Curmi 2002) gave financial contributions to NGOs, western funding never matched that of regional origins in quantity.

. . . to international funding

This reality gradually changed over the years of the first *Intifada* (1987–1993). European donors starting to occupy the front lines by giving more and more funding to NGOs, thus replacing also Arab regional funding. According to Curmi, there were up to 2,000 Palestinian NGOs (many of which were popular local committees and which later disappeared during the Oslo years) that was supported 'with a great mix of solidarity, relief, professionalism and voluntary spirit at the same time'.[72] According to the administrative director of a very large health NGO, the first non-Arab funding to his organization came during the first years of the *Intifada* from Oxfam.[73] This was the beginning of more massive and systematic western support to Palestinian NGOs.

Western support came first from Consulates (none of the western governments were allowed to have an official representation in the Territories) and then from western NGOs. According to Karamé (1997: 76), western involvement with NGO support became more professionalized, with the beginning of a cohort of experts doing assessment needs and reports. From 1987 onwards it was also a time when European NGOs started to coordinate among themselves, fostering a model of coordination amongst international donors (ibid.: 76).[74]

By the time the Declaration of Principles was signed in Washington on 13 September 1993, there was an estimated 200 international NGOs active (either physically or through funding mechanisms) in the Territories (Curmi 2002). After Oslo, the number of UN agencies jumped from three to reach 29 after 2000 (Barsalou 2003: 51). The increase of western funding promises peaked with the signing of the Oslo Accords and in the subsequent donor-pledging conference in Washington (Brynen 2000). Obviously the larger share of funding (roughly an average of $500 million a year) was directed to the establishment of the PNA. It is usually accepted in the literature that the amount of funding earmarked for NGOs dropped from about $170 million around 1990 to $100 million in 1994[75] and subsequently to $60 million in 1996 (Sullivan 1998: 95). Hanafi estimates the flow of international aid to NGOs at around $63 million for 1998 (Hanafi S. 2002: 12). In comparison, the flow of regional Islamic institutions to sister organizations in the Territories is evaluated at around $35 million for 1999, though the figure is likely to be higher (ICG 2003a: 14).[76]

And the shift from small NGOs to larger and new types of donors

The number of western donors in the 1990 varies according to authors. For Curmi, there are about 200, for Hanafi 130 (Hanafi S. 2002: 126) and for the World Bank 150 (Rabe 2000: 257). I have gathered in my own database the list of 180 international donors (both western and Arab), of which about 20 physically disappeared from the Territories sometime during the Oslo years.[77] Often the presence of small NGOs was substituted by *governmental* offices in the Territories and specialized in development (Sweden, Britain, Austria, Italy, Switzerland and probably France as well). Interviews with the Swedish and Swiss governmental development body (SIDA and SDC) mentioned that they used to finance as early as the 1980s projects in the Territories but money was given to smaller NGOs.[78] The task was reversed with Oslo and the establishment of representative offices to the PNA: smaller NGOs retreated to an advisory role in their home country and let their government office deal directly with implementation in Palestine.[79]

Another phenomenon related to changes in the composition of the NGO field is the emergence of larger non-governmental funding organizations and/or specialized bodies.[80] This is particularly true for the North American NGOs. At the time the first *Intifada* broke out, there were only five American USAID grantees (Save the Children, CRS, ANERA, AMIDEAST and Holy Land Christian Mission) (Nakhleh 1989: 117), whereas there are now almost 20 US grantees from USAID funds.[81] Out of the 37 international funding bodies interviewed for this book, nine have an annual budget that is lower than $1 million, and out of the 28 going above the million-mark, 12 are NGOs, while 16 are governmental or multilateral donors. The four NGOs spending more than $5 million a year are all from the USA.

USAID money has also sparked off the creation of sub-contractors managing programmes on behalf of the governmental aid agency. For example, Tamkeen, Maram and Rafeed are all new entities created in the last five years, which manage annual budgets of $5 to $10 million on behalf of USAID. However, a

large chunk of this sum remains in the State through US-based implementing partners (Rafeed's implementing partner is ARD,[82] Maram works with IBM Global Services and Tamkeen with Chemonics).[83] The new institutional culture that has been introduced with such large entities is indeed noteworthy. For example, much of work done around civil society promotion takes the form and content of *managerial* consulting.

Two points are worth stressing here. One is that these implementing organizations set up their own affiliate institutions on the ground, providing relays and important networks. For example, Chemonics International's West Bank affiliate is Massar which is also a consulting body for Tamkeen. A list of Tamkeen and Massar clients[84] show that there are strong inter-connections between the two. The second point is that, although the work of NGOs tends to be specialized, the innovative element of such implementing organizations is that they specialize not in a topic, or a field of intervention, but rather in the management of projects. The end result is that an organization like ARD, 'Associates in Rural Development' based in Washington DC, manages a programme assisting the Palestinian Judicial System (Rule of Law) funded by USAID[85] between 1996 and 2004. At first glance, this may sound strange, but further research demonstrates that ARD is actually an associate in this project of a Californian firm called DPK Consulting, which is itself, an associate of Massar & Associates,[86] the same organization working with Tamkeen and Chemonics. Not only do they work in close network (or close circuits), but they also contribute to the spreading of a rather procedural approach to aid which has to be *managed* more than *built* in partnership with local organizations. This might, eventually, become detrimental to the setting of priorities responding to local needs.[87] In any case, the specialization and increased division of labour implied by these large US consultancy entities confirm the trends in the change of aid disbursement witnessed over the last decade.

Conclusions about these historical changes

Providing funding, from whatever sources, is never a politically neutral act. As Curmi states, 'the question of funding to Palestinian NGOs remains intimately political and must be read according to this yardstick to understand the nuances of the debates'.[88] The previous sections on the historical and institutional changes both of local civil society and of the increased presence of international donors gave lots of food-for-thought on this link between politics and aid.

One strong conclusion that one can draw from these changes is that the local/Arab source of funding has lost greatly in significance, both financially and politically. For many years the largest source of funding – the Joint Jordanian–Palestinian Committee – was actually a means to channel support to clusters of individuals and institutions willing to favour either a Jordanian patronage and potential resolution of the conflict or groups playing along the lines of Fatah. Practically, this translated into funds being granted to 'a notable class, with ties to Jordan and of the conservative wings of Fatah' as pointed out in the case of agricultural NGOs (Robinson 1997: 53). Many examples are there to prove the

point: external regional funding was a form of rent and a way to create patronage. Then NGO activists from left-wing associations Eileen Kuttab (1989: 134) and Mustafa Barghouthi were unhesitant to denounce the disappointment generated by the Joint Committee and the way it was handled (patronage, rent seeking and cronyism). In the words of Mustafa Barghouthi, such programmes 'did not in fact strengthen and reinforce steadfastness and the ability of Palestinians to confront the prevailing challenges. Rather, they fed individualistic and sometimes corrupting tendencies' (1989: 127). But, to make justice to pro-Jordanian and pro-Fatah supporters, it must be stressed that left groups themselves (and in particular the Communist Party) had their own forms of rent (Sayigh 1997: 613) and that factionalization was a systematic feature of the Palestinian NGO life.

Another important source of regional funding, namely that of the PLO and in particular of Fatah, is worth mentioning. If now Fatah has to deal with the Islamic bloc as the main domestic contender, back in the 1970s and 1980s, it was the turn of left-wing parties (PPP, PFLP and DFLP) to challenge Fatah's hegemonic position inside the PLO. The first years of the 1980s saw in particular the struggle around the control of an important component of civil society, namely trade union organizations, many of which were led by communists. Fatah created its own General Federation of Trade Unions in August 1981 to counter-attack communist influence in this milieu. This happened at a time where the Joint Committee was sending large flow of funding inside the Territories (ibid.: 476f., 480). Interestingly, since 1982 there have been no internal elections in the various national trade union federations. A related field of contention between Fatah and left-wing movements have been the student organizations, university trade unions and youth clubs, all vital places of recruitment for political factions (Sahliyeh 1988: 101). In these cases as well, the drying out of certain regional funding had a long-lasting impact in the political structuration of Palestinian civil society.

Muslim Brethren of neighbouring countries also had an impact on this process of structuration through new channels of funding. Palestinian Islamic groups, although parts of factionalist struggles over the control of civil society organizations from the 1970s onwards, gained prominence only after the outbreak of the first *Intifada* and the creation of Hamas in February 1988. Though they run important social services and charitable organizations (most notably in the Gaza Strip with Sheikh Yassin's Islamic Assembly (*al-mujamma' al-islami*), created from 1973 onwards), they were not taking part in the direct struggle against the Occupation in the first years of their existence. Rather they were instrumentalized by Jordanian conservative forces (through funding) to undermine communists' (seen as 'infidels') hegemony in Palestinian society by using its networks in mosques and in the Islamic university of Gaza (Legrain 1997: 163). Majdi al-Malki's interesting study of clan structures (*hamula*) in three villages during the first *Intifada* also shows that access to funding (from PLO and in particular from Fatah) or to an NGO-sponsored development activity were also at the origin of power struggles inside villages (Malki 1994: 119–126), highlighting the fact that international aid has real political consequences on the ground.

A second strand of conclusions about the increased presence of western donors, deals with political leverage or influence from the late 1980s onwards. Obvious doubts have been raised about the true intentions of US funding at certain crucial moments of negotiations. First when the Camp David agreements were signed between Egypt and Israel (1978), many Palestinians feared that funding would be tied to accepting the plan of autonomy for the Palestinians. Similarly, when Jordan promoted its Jordanian Development Plan, there was a strong sense amongst Palestinians that:

> US assistance [was] tied to nurturing Palestinian acceptance of a US 'negotiated solution', and that the improvement of the Palestinian quality of life under occupation is nothing more than an acceptable camouflage for the imposition of US-initiated solutions.
>
> (Nakhleh 1989: 119)

Many observers have expressed similar reservations about the massive aid given after 1994 to buttress the acceptance by Palestinians of the Oslo agreements, despite the serious problems and biases on the road to the promised peace (Hanafi and Tabar 2002; Le More 2004; Lasensky 2004). Similarly, the Road Map and post-Arafat talks seem to include the same carrot-and-stick approach to aid (Nabulsi 2004). The noted process of governmentalization of the sources of funding certainly increased the power of governments to influence the political negotiations of the Israeli–Palestinian conflict, or at least the broader developmental agenda.

Moreover, the tendency towards a specialization and/or professionalization in the types of donors involved (fewer and fewer solidarity groups, but thematically-oriented donors) was accompanied by an isomorphic pressure exerted (more or less openly) on local civil society organizations to adapt to the new environment and institutional 'best practices'. It is therefore not surprising that the number of local NGOs dropped during the Oslo years, not only as the result of the re-directing of funding to the PNA, but also as the consequence of the institutional necessity to adapt to new requirements relayed by these larger, more professionalized (and often more governmental) donors that replaced smaller and more solidarity-based donor organizations. The tendency towards a significant increase in terms of the volume of funding given by donors[89] also constrained local organizations to scramble for funding, and increased the marketization of aid through the survival of predominantly larger NGOs.

Palestinian scholars have noted a general shift from mass-based social movements into a more elite approach to civil society work done by Palestinians themselves (Kuttab 2001; Jamal 2005: 10). For all of the reasons noted above, it would surely be a mistake, or at least a reductionist view to consider this shift *outside* of the rapidly evolving context of a shift from regional to international origin of funding, and from the emergence of specialized/professionalized and governmentalized source of funding. As Part II will show, donors do have a real and important impact on local civil society. The degree to which this impact is positive or negative (in terms of an autonomous civil society) will be discussed in detail.

Part II

Civil society at work

4 International donors and the professionalization of civil society promotion

If international actors see in NGOs an important component to promote certain values and advance a form of political pluralism through civil society assistance, Palestinian NGOs must also address their local constituencies, or better respond to their demands and critiques. In that light, and after the previous considerations on civil society as a source of autonomy (Chapter 2), NGOs cannot be studied but through the lenses of socio-political mobilization in the domestic arena and through the discursive and organizational interaction with international donors. The task now resides in the analysis of the donors' view(s) on civil society promotion, how they treat differently the two Palestines depicted in Chapter 1, and how external support might influence the self-understanding of Palestinian civil society. We are not looking here at donors coordinating their efforts to broker a crippled peace deal – this has been done elsewhere and thoroughly by Le More (2008) – rather we will look at how donors' influence the structuration of the field and concept of civil society in the OPT. Civil society is now at work, so to say.

This chapter is based on three dozens interviews with international donors, as well as on the analysis of documents dealing directly with the topic of 'civil society' produced in Palestine. Thus the analysis of the interaction between donors and visions of civil society is articulated in three phases: a short presentation of who are the donors into consideration for this research will be followed by the analysis of donors' visions of civil society, and how funding mechanisms reinforce such visions, while the study of the 'production of knowledge' about civil society by Palestinian actors in close interaction with donors will occupy the end of this chapter.

Who are the donors and how do they operate?

Governmental bodies and multilateral organizations

By far, governmental and multilateral organizations are the most important donors for Palestinian NGOs, in terms of funding made available annually and of their massive presence with the start of the Oslo peace process. All 11 governmental representative offices of the interviewed sample were established after

the signing of the Declaration of Principles, but half of them were already providing aid since the mid-1980s (in the case of the Italian, Swedish, Austrian and Swiss development agencies).

The sample includes either representative offices that have direct responsibilities over development activities (Dutch, Austrian, Italian and Irish governments) or specialized development agencies active on the field (as is the case for the British DfID, Swedish SIDA, Canadian CIDA, Swiss SDC, Australian Aid, USAID and the Norwegian NORAD). Multilateral organizations had a small presence before Oslo but their visibility increased since the mid-1990s, in particular thanks to the important role played by the EU.

Solidarity groups

Included under 'solidarity' organizations that have, either from their way of working, or through the types of programmes they run in Palestine a very important grass roots dimension, or have clear and often declared political preferences in terms of partners chosen. It is the case of Norwegian People's Aid, Terre des Hommes International, Medico International and the two branches of Oxfam[1] (GB and Quebec). Finally, an NGO specialized for assisting Palestine such as Medical Assistance to Palestine (MAP UK) was also placed in this category.

Our sample entails six solidarity organizations. But there are many more organizations concerned by solidarity work: many Spanish and Italian solidarity NGOs are operating on the ground but were not interviewed. Similarly, many French, German, British and Scandinavian solidarity groups could have been included, but many of those are simply not established with an office in the Territories. Rather, they work through direct local partners on the ground. Let us finally underline that, as stressed in the historical change, many of the smaller solidarity NGOs disappeared during the Oslo years and have either ceased to fund or now operate from their home countries.

As for other Diaspora groups sending collective remittances, their efforts are difficult to measure since they do not operate as other 'visible' organizations do with a coordinator and an office on the ground. Interviews have stressed that they send usually small amounts of money but with a high impact on the ground since they can be used freely (e.g. as core funding).[2] An interesting approach deliberately taken by SIDA, the Swedish Development Agency, is to involve the largest Palestinian solidarity group in Sweden into the programme design and monitoring: thus the Palestinian Solidarity Group has been involved for now more than 15 years and operates as intermediary between SIDA, the governmental agency and its local partners, such as the Union of Palestinian Medical Relief Committees.[3]

Professional developmentalist organizations

Seven NGOs form the group of so-called professional developmentalist organizations. These include two 'mammoth' organizations (CARE International, Save

the Children, USA), with respectively a budget of $15 million and $8 million for 2003,[4] as well as the smaller American Development Foundation (active in internal governance). Two medical organizations, *Médecins Sans Frontières* (MSF), and Merlin (Health in Crisis) are included in this category: despite the fact that they tend to be emergency organizations, they also run long-term development projects, or couple emergency programmes with a vital long-term aspect (such as training of local staff). Finally, two specialized bodies geared for NGO support in Palestine complete our seven NGO samples of developmentalist organizations: the Welfare Association and the German Fund. Both were created specially for the Palestinian Territories during the Oslo years and aim at strengthening local structures to make them viable and strong interlocutors for the PNA. The Welfare Consortium is actually a conglomerate of three international NGOs (British Council, the UK-based Charity Aid Foundation, and the Geneva-based Welfare Association) managing a multi-million fund given in three successive phases (1997–2001, 2001–2004 and 2004–2008) by the World Bank (and described at the end of this chapter). The German Fund consists of financial support provided by the German government (GTZ) to support smaller NGOs in the Territories and is run jointly by the main German *Stiftungen* on the ground.

Faith-based organizations

There are four faith-based organizations in the sample, one Muslim (Islamic Relief UK) and three Christian (World Vision, Catholic Relief Services, and Diakonia). International Muslim organizations faced a hard time after 9/11 and some of the organizations that used to fund local NGOs were shut down not only in the USA (Holy Land Foundation being the most notorious case in December 2001), but also in France, UK, Germany (al-Aqsa Foundation) and Switzerland.[5] Many of these organizations have most probably no links whatsoever with 'terrorist' networks, but cannot work anymore freely to support local charitable organizations. More indirect roads must probably be taken now to send their funds, and some of them are beginning to send material such as hospital equipment to their local partners, as stressed by some Palestinian NGOs.[6]

Christian organizations do not, obviously, face the same problems. There are dozens of Christian organizations in the OPT, and – needless to say – Jerusalem is their heart. Though now only 2 or 3 per cent of the Palestinian population is of Christian faith, large amounts of money are given to the Christian Palestinians, not only to preserve the holy sites but also probably to stop the Christian out-migration haemorrhage.[7]

Though Christian organizations claim to work across religious distinction, there is a strong concentration of their organizations around predominantly Christian populated areas such as Jerusalem, Beit Lahem, and Ramallah (historically a Christian town, as opposed to its Siamese neighbour of al-Bireh largely Muslim by population), as well as some small villages near Jenin. Thus, a private American university was created not in Jenin itself, but just outside, in nearby Christian villages.

It should be noted that there is a very good level of coordination amongst Christian organizations. A 'Joint Emergency Relief of the Christian Organizations' was formed to respond to the most urgent needs during the second *Intifada*:[8] some special convoys of food were prepared under this umbrella. To stress the fact that, despite claims of non-discriminatory support across religious groups, there is a tendency to favour their Christian minorities which is demonstrated by some international NGOs which reported serious tensions about the goal of their first humanitarian convoys during the operation 'Defensive Shield' in April 2003.[9]

Political organizations

There are five political organizations in the sample of interviewed donors. Apart from three German foundations, *Stiftungen* (Konrad Adenauer Stiftung (KAS), Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES), and Heinrich Böll Stiftung (HBS)), and the Norwegian FAFO (Institute for Applied Social Science), the National Democratic Institute (NDI) is the only non-European political organization in Palestine. All are directly affiliated to political parties or trade unions (as is the case of FAFO), and as such, deploy activities in direct relation with the political process (such as inter-party dialogue in the case of NDI or election-oriented projects), welfare and human rights promotion. All of them are rather small organizations.

QUANGOs or GINGOs?

Two more interviewed donor organizations were not 'pigeon-holed' in one of the previous boxes. They are formally two international NGOs, but which are entirely dependent on USAID funding. Their strategy and plan of actions are decided directly by the US development agency. Though they both claim to have space for independent steering of their activities, the fact that they have to follow procedural guidelines of USAID (as in the case of the anti-terrorism waiver – see p. 104f.), and that they are flanked by US-based implementing and financial partners make of them not real NGOs, but 'quasi-NGOs' (QUANGOs) or even governmental NGOs (GINGOs). The two are Tamkeen, established in 2000 and is in charge of the civil society projects, and Maram (2001) running health activities.

Before the creation of these two GINGOs, USAID was distributing directly its funding to partner local NGOs. However at the end of the 1990s it was decided to confer on implementing agencies the tasks of managing the amounts dedicated to NGOs.[10] This form of outsourcing now has two layers: one in Washington (or elsewhere near decision centres in the USA) that provides global and strategic consultancy, and general reporting financial support; the second is another NGO based in the Territories and doing the interface work with applying local NGOs. It is probably not by coincidence that both QUANGOs adopted an Arabic name to give a local taste, but this almost backfired since the PNA tried to shut down Tamkeen in the early months of its existence.[11]

In the case of Tamkeen, the implementing partner is Chemonics International, based in Washington since 1975 and active in 50 different countries.[12] The implementing partner of Maram is a sub-branch of the multinational IBM, namely IBM Global Services.[13] More will be said on this outsourcing approach at the end of this chapter.

Latecomers (2001–2004): humanitarian assistance

It took almost two years after the outbreak of the *Intifada* to witness the arrival of a new type of international donors and actors: that of humanitarian assistance. In the first 18 months, NGOs already established adopted emergency measures and programmes. But with more ECHO funding and other emergency funding available after the 2002 massive destruction of Palestinian infrastructures by Israeli troops, new organizations arrived around 2003. For example, the French *Première Urgence* started its activities in the second half of 2002, but as an implementing organization (not in partnership with local NOGs) in the field of food security. The same applies for newcomers, such as the Spanish *Accion contra el Hambre* (since mid-2002 in food security), and the Canadian *Médecins du Monde* active only for a short period in the Territories.

It should be stressed here that humanitarian intervention tends not to take place with local partners, but emergency NGOs act directly as implementing actors. The case of Merlin-Health in Crisis who works with two local health NGOs, is probably an exception, but its strong partnership dimension is due to the fact that another British health organization (MAP-UK) worked as a guiding and intermediary agent between the two.[14]

To sum up the general presentation, Table 4.1 gives a short overview of the type of the 37 international donor organizations interviewed.

As we can see, solidarity and faith-based organizations have longer experience in funding with Palestinian NGOs since the two categories have been active since approximately 1979 and 1980. At the opposite end, governmental and political donor organizations became actively and personally involved in the territories only with the establishment of the PNA and the Oslo negotiations, these being the vital precondition for the establishment of a representative office in Palestine.

In terms of spending besides the much larger contribution of the two GINGOs and of the multilateral donors (UNDP and EU's contribution through ECHO), governmental donor agencies give NGOs an average of $4.7 million per year,[15] an amount very close to that of the large professional developmentalist organizations. In this latter category, the increase in CARE International's budget over the last six years is very impressive: from $800,000 of aid dedicated to Palestinian NGOs in 1998, its 2000 budget rose from $1.4 million to $4 million in 2001, $6 million in 2002, finally skyrocketing towards an incredible $15.5 million[16] in 2003. This single contribution made by CARE for 2003 is much larger than most individual bilateral governmental contributions to NGOs.

Faith-based organizations do not lag very far behind in terms of annual contributions, with an average of $3.6 million followed by solidarity donors

Table 4.1 Type of donors, years of work in the OPT and average budget

Type of organization	*Number of organizations*	*Established in … (average)*	*Funding in Palestine since (average)*	*Office open in Palestine since (average)*	*Number of staff (average)*	*Average budget for local NGOs*
Solidarity	6	1962	1979	1989	10	$1,875,000
Faith-based	4	1966	1980	1984	26	$3,625,000
Development	7	1972	1985	1987	28	$4,242,857
Governmental	11	1964	1989	1995	30	$4,775,000
Political	5	1971	1991	1995	4	$210,000
Multilateral	2	1979	1989	1989	105	$8,750,000
QUANGO	2	2000	2000	2000	43	$7,000,000

Source: information taken out of the author's interviews.

Notes
These are indicative sums, calculated on the basis of the information collected during fieldwork. The amount is an average of different fiscal years, with some indication from 2002 and for other organizations from the year 2003. All contributions in US$.
The sums range between $0.5 million and $3 million for solidarity organizations, between $2 million and $5.2 million for faith-based donors, between $0.5 million and $15.5 million for development organization, between $1 million and $10 million for governmental donors, between $0.1 million and $0.3 million for political donors, and finally between $6 million and $8 million for QUANGOs.

($1.9 million a year). Political organizations make a much more modest contribution (around $0.2 million a year), but it must be stated that they fund other types of organizations and projects, mostly smaller NGOs and specific research projects, thus requiring less funding than for large service-providing activities.

Table 4.1 gives only a short overview, a snapshot one could say, of what donors give and since when. Obviously the work of organizations based in Palestine for a long time has changed over the years. For example, a solidarity group such as Terre des Hommes, which has been working in the OPT since 1973, changed its modus operandi totally. After running its own centre for a decade, it localized so to say, by insisting on links with the local community, and helped create new institutions now run 100 per cent by local Palestinians.[17] Similarly, the work of other NGOs such as CARE (active since 1948), Oxfam GB (1950) and Catholic Relief Services (1961) have also evolved tremendously over the decades, and it is only recently with more funding available to northern NGOs of this type, that they are doing more 'professional developmentalist' work.[18]

The 37 international donor organizations interviewed belong probably to the most active ones in the field of advocacy and health support. Interviews were done in the early months of 2003 and 2004, at a time of deep humanitarian crisis throughout the Territories. This might explain why, according to information gathered during my interviews, there has been a spectacular increase of funding to Palestinian NGOs. Of the 37 organizations (probably one-third, or one-quarter of all NGO donors[19]) I have interviewed, I reached the approximate total amount of funding disbursed for NGOs of $160 million. The figure seems almost too high to be believed, knowing that there are many other large international donor organizations I have not contacted because they are active in fields unrelated to health and advocacy.

The figure should probably be reduced by 25 per cent because of the possibility that certain funds were counted twice (e.g. from DfID sources and then again in Oxfam GB). However, unfortunately, it is almost impossible to calculate the figures more precisely. Even taking 25 per cent off the total estimate, we are left with $125 million a year for Palestinian NGOs. Out of this, again one has to deduct administrative costs for funding organizations. So it is probably realistic to estimate that $100 million was given in 2002 and in 2003 for Palestinian NGOs active exclusively in the field of health and advocacy. These two fields of activities represent, according to our general database of 900 Palestinian NGOs, about 20 per cent of all NGO sectors. Other vital sectors such as agriculture, education and women's support are also likely to have attracted many millions of dollars of aid over the last three or four years.[20] By extrapolating from the interviews, the total amount of external aid to Palestinian NGOs could reach an amount as high as $300 to $400 million a year. This represents the current overall yearly average of international aid to Palestine for the Oslo years, but including multilateral aid *and* aid to the PNA.

At this point and thanks to the information so far gathered, it is certainly correct to state that Palestinian NGOs have again become major and very important actors in providing vital resources, knowledge and services to their

constituency. Similarly, the role of donors in such a situation can only increase due to the massive budget allocated to Palestinian NGOs. Therefore there is no doubt that the role and influence of external donors has significantly increased over the last five years. Let us now explore how this variety of donors actually conceives of civil society in their daily work and how this might enhance or impede local organizations in defining programmes aiming at enhancing democratic practices inside the Territories.

Donors' approaches to civil society

This section will offer a typology of the donors' view on civil society in general, and analyse how they conceive civil society promotion in the Palestinian setting. The analysis is based on the interviews made with international donors in the Palestinian Territories and the typology is defined through certain key elements of the interviews recoded so as to offer a spatially differentiated table on donors' views of civil society and Palestinian NGOs.

The idea behind the creation of such typologies or taxonomies is to link with the previous warnings made in the chapters dealing with civil society in general and in the Arab Middle Eastern (AME) context (Chapter 2). The contention is that the way discussions about AME civil society are shaped and informed might also have an influence upon the world of donors' praxis. Put differently, different theoretical conceptions, understanding and interpretations of civil could eventually influence the *Weltanschauung* and praxes of international doors while implementing civil society promotion activities in Palestine. It is as if the general discussions about civil society in general and in the AME would function as meta-framing, or as indirect framing for international donors. The purpose of such taxonomies is to assess how international donors conceive of civil society promotion and assess whether there is a link with previous theoretical discussions about the possibility for civil society to arise in the AME.

It is the backbone argument of this book that for concrete civil society promotion to have a positive effect towards the creation of spaces of democratic participation and the definition of collective autonomous projects, it needs:

- To insist on the varieties of forms and contents of civil society (rather than mere numbers of specialized NGOs);
- To instil a real participatory element in the activities promoted as much as possible. The more 'bottom up', the better;
- To take the evolution of the forms and contents of civil society into consideration;
- To discuss and realize the potential risks of civil society promotion.[21]

These general considerations (providing the horizontal axis – for a full list of the variables, see Appendix II) are backed up by previous general discussions and conclusions reached in this book. In particular, it was shown that civil society is a supple and evolving concept and that some of its thematic priorities are contingent

upon the historical situation in which the concept is defined and used. The part on democratization warned the reader about simplistic expectations that few NGOs (and in particular advocacy NGOs) can suffice to reach a democratic condition, and that economic development is not sufficient to reach democracy. Similarly, civil society should not be automatically considered benevolent.

On the second level of differentiation, namely civil society promotion in the Palestinian context (providing the vertical axis),[22] it has been argued that for civil society promotion to have a positive effect in Palestine, it needs:

- To insist on the social diversity (in terms of resources, population, education, access to labour market, movements, etc.) within the OPT;
- To insist on the diversity of local civil society organizations (working through smaller projects with a variety of local organizations, instead of working only with very large projects and mammoth local NGOs);
- To grant real space of decisions and partnership for local actors to define both the content and modalities of projects implemented;
- To give a chance for long-term funding in order to avoid frequent unrealistic objectives and changes due to fashions;
- To increase the chance for local actors to set priorities, even more so in cases of hardship and heightened conflict;
- Priority should be as much as possible that of the local population, and not that of the donor;
- To pay attention to the symbolic dimensions of donor-local NGO interaction, and in particular how the message and framing of civil society promotion take place.

The considerations about the Palestinian setting are drawn from previous discussions. First, there is a need to distinguish between the two Palestines (Introduction) and think the means and contents of civil society promotion according to the various local configurations. Second, the description of Palestinian civil society in a historical perspective pointed to the diversity of local organizations (such as the charitable organizations) that can potentially benefit from international aid and to the reflexive knowledge that Palestinian civil society can produce (Chapter 3).

As for the symbolic dimension, our new definition of civil society as a source of autonomy highlighted the fact that civil society should have the capacity to give and agree on its own laws and to do so in an open manner with regard to language and means. Therefore, it will be assumed that a variety of local civil society organizations should also be granted a space of decisions, instead of having an imposition by external actors of certain norms and of a given vocabulary.

These elements function as a rule of thumb, or as elements to assess how far international donors grant space for local civil society institutions as a locus towards democracy and autonomy. They were transformed into a set of questions asked to each donor of the sample. Donors were asked such questions either directly or unobtrusively, and information was also taken out of their annual reports, printed reports, and/or web site, for the cases where direct responses were

missing. The figures produced are a combination of quantitative methods (by scoring and aggregating various items) and qualitative methods (based on semi-structured interviews and discourse analysis). Scores were then added in two indexes to produce one single result on the (X) axis and the same was done for the vertical (Y) ordinate.

This attempt at creating typologies is also an application of the method suggested in Chapter 2, whereby the unpacking of 'civil society' ought to be done through the materialization of two axes of differentiation:

- The first axis, horizontal, serves to unpack the constitutive elements and qualities of civil society in general (and of the place and role of NGOs in this general approach); and
- The second, vertical, to unpack some of the Palestinian specificities, contexts and difficulties in the work of NGOs and local civil society.

Obviously, in making these claims, I invite the reader to consider the following models more as heuristic tools to 'visualize' very abstract notions, to start making sense out of individual cases, by positioning donors' views in relation to one another.

The figure should be read as follows:

- Each dot (which represents a single donor) expresses the relative position of the donor's view on civil society. The horizontal location symbolically expresses the donors' differentiation on civil society in general, and the vertical location, its capacity to differentiate NGO support within the Palestinian civil society environment.
- The *right* end of the horizontal axis indicates a *lack of differentiation* within the concept of civil society in general (symbolized by the minus mark '–'), while the *left* end of this same axis implies a *more elaborate and differentiated* approach to civil society in general (marked with a plus mark '+').
- The vertical axis differentiates the way donors approach aid to NGOs by taking various elements of differentiation of the local setting of civil society into consideration. The *top* end of the axis means that *little consideration will be paid to local specificities* and potential hurdles on the way to NGO work in Palestine (symbolized by the minus mark '–'). The bottom end of the vertical axis means, on the contrary, that more attention is paid to local aspects of NGO support general (marked with a plus mark '+').

We can see, in Figure 4.1, that donors are widely spread across the space, but that they are mostly in two quadrants. The 'south-western' one is that of the donors that adopt a differentiated view of both civil society in general *and* of the work and roles of local NGOs in the Palestinian context. The second most populated quadrant is the 'north-eastern' one, characterized by a lack of differentiation in relation to both civil society and the local setting. It is quite logical to have such a distribution since differentiation in one paradigm should also imply

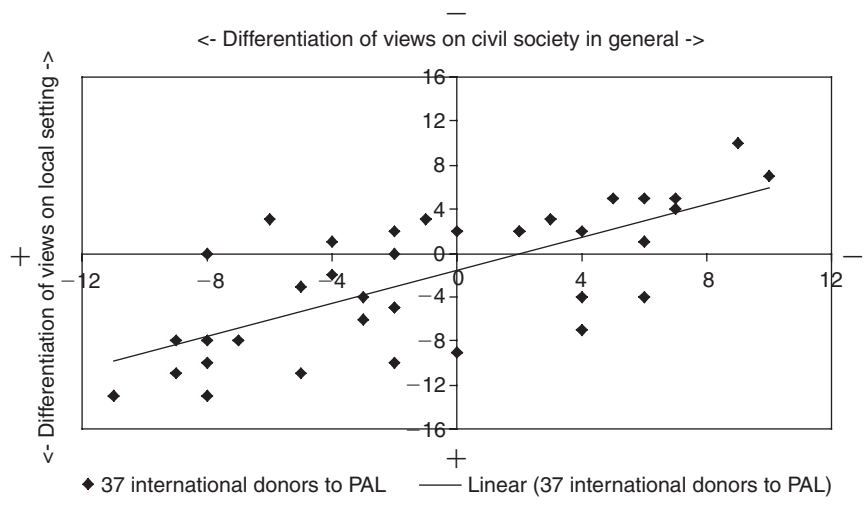


Figure 4.1 Spatial differentiation of donors' views on (Palestinian) civil society.

some effects and reflections for the other dimension. Inversely, it is not surprising that a lack of differentiation on one of the two axes will lead to a lack of reflection to the second aspect. A trend line was added to visualize the overall pattern of distribution.[23]

A finer reading of the first graph would lead us to see three cluster zones. The first one can be found in the bottom-left corner with six or seven donors having both a differentiated approach to civil society and to local NGO work. The second zone is that of the dozen donors placed close to the centre of the graph. A third cluster of about ten donors is located in the north-eastern quadrant, characterized by a lack of differentiation of both civil society in general and local specificities.

In an attempt to put forward explanatory variables, donors were split into two groups. The first one is composed of the larger donors (whose annual funding dedicated to local NGOs reaches $2 million or more, and which are represented by a triangle), and a second group of smaller donors (less than $2 million a year, symbolized by a shadowed square). Moreover, two trend lines were added, in order to make the comparison between the two groups easier. The result is now in Figure 4.2.

In the first place, despite some overlaps between the two groups, larger donors are mostly in the top half of the quadrant, when not in the north-eastern quadrant. Most of the smaller donors are instead located in the bottom-left corner, which seems to indicate that smaller donors tend to have a more refined approach to civil society support in general, but that they are also more conscious of the local settings and possible difficulties that might arise in the work

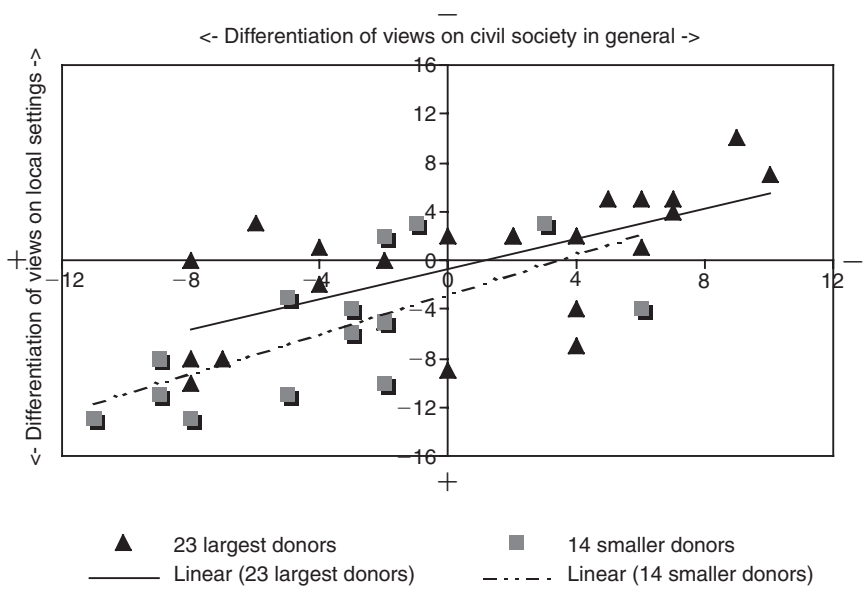


Figure 4.2 Large versus small donors and their views on (Palestinian) civil society.

of local NGOs. One possible conclusion regarding this 'sensitivity' about local hurdles would probably be that the programmes implemented have a better chance of succeeding since they are better tailored to local needs and specificities. The assumption is that this type of approach would give civil society promotion activities a better chance of succeeding and having a positive impact in the long run.

The two trend lines also confirm the differences between the two subgroups. For the largest donors, the intercept is almost at the centre of gravity and the slope is not steep, whereas for the smaller donors, the trend line has a much steeper slope. Its intercept also points to a more differentiated approach to civil society, reinforcing the potential validity of the size of donors as an explaining variable in this model.

A final distinction, regarding the donors' view, was based this time on the geographical origin of donors (Figure 4.3). The first group is composed of 14 non-European organizations (and represented by a diamond), made up of American, Canadian, Australian and multilateral donors. The second group (symbolized by a dash in the figure) is made up of 23 European donors. Each group has its own trend line.

Again, Figure 4.3 clearly shows that the two groups are differently located, with European donors much more evident in the bottom half, whereas non-European donors (US, Canadian, Australian and multilateral organizations)[24] are mostly located in the northern half, indicating a lack of consideration towards

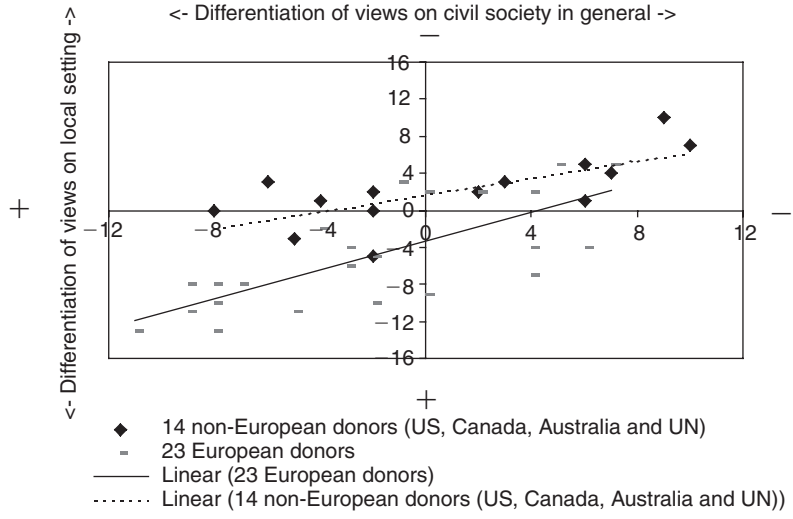


Figure 4.3 European versus non-European donors and their views on (Palestinian) civil society.

local specificities, even though they display a good level of diversity in terms of the conception of civil society in general. The difference in the trend line is here more pronounced, with a steeper slope and much lower intercept point in the case of European donors.

So what is it that internally distinguishes donors in their views? Let us first reflect on the general elements of civil society (horizontal axis). First of all, there is a tendency for some donors to conceive of civil society as a rather homogenous layer of organizations with clear and simple functions. They do not grant space to smaller organizations that would address only very local, not to say parochial issues. Second, and related to this, some donors tend to conceive of civil society as having a driving logic close to that of the private sector, where NGOs 'sell programmes' and are here to 'do business'.[25] This view holds that civil society also serves a privatization end where NGOs take over some of the roles of the state. Third, there are donors who want a multiplication of the type of NGOS, while others expect plurality in mere *numbers* of organizations, despite the risk of duplication of activities generated by such an approach.

As for the stumbling points of the local context, there are three main types of differentiations amongst donors. The first one deals with the problem of the existence of two Palestines. While some donors acknowledge the differences within the Palestinian territories and therefore adapt their programmes accordingly, others do not and consider Palestine as a homogenous block. In this latter view, there is no reason to distinguish between the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, between central zones and peripheries, between urban and rural regions and amongst refugees and non-refugee population. A sub-element is the aspect

of the historical evolution and changes that took and take place within the field of NGO activism in the Territories.

The second aspect deals with issues of partnership. Based on the assumption that it is eventually the Palestinian population which will have to work for a more democratic polity, donors were differentiated according to the level of partnership they developed with their local partners. In this light, some donors grant greater space of decision to local NGOs in the design and implementation of programmes, whereas other donors tend to decide most of the planning and actually 'outsource' only to their local partners for the implementation.

Finally, some of the technicalities of funding also contribute to distinguish donors in terms of how much to understand and try to respond to Palestinian needs. Tied funding, the existence of only short-term funding and the imposition of activities that do not receive general support (here, I am thinking of the controversial 'people-to-people' activities[26]) are all elements that make each donor unique in this approach to civil society promotion within the particular case of Palestine.

For all these reasons, donors are spread in the various scatter plots. We could certainly multiply the contrasting variables (governmental versus non-governmental funding, faith-based versus political donors, etc.). But the main point was stressed that donors do actually have very different approaches both to civil society in general and to the context in which Palestinian NGOs evolve and work. To make these distinctions clear but in another form, it suffices to give quotes of three ideal-typical approaches of donors.

On the very bottom-left, we can find *Terre des Hommes* (TdH), which has actually voluntarily bestowed part of its programmes to two Palestinian NGOs they have actually created through their policy of 'localization'. During the Oslo years – slightly quieter and more opportune for long-term planning – TdH decided to create, out of some of its regional offices, two autonomous Palestinian NGOs meant to run their own programmes. The localization process started around 1996 by giving gradual independence to its local staff, up to the points where two new Palestinian entities were created. Thus, since 1999, there is an '*Ardh al-Itfal*' in Hebron and an '*Ardh al-Insaan*' in Gaza. Both are now registered as local NGOs with the PNA, and although they still receive some funding from *Terre des Hommes*, their budget is covered by their own means and by their own fund raising activities. A quick look at the work of the two new local NGOs seem to indicate that their work is a very important one for covering topics and zones that are usually overlooked by most of the donors.[27] This is a good example of how international donors can help to build local strength and particular knowledge of the field to contribute to the definition and implementation of the local common good.[28]

The second case is taken out of the central cluster. CIDA adopts very different types of aid to NGOs with large programmes and smaller local initiative projects distributing funding to a variety of smaller NGOs. Despite the distinction within these programmes, CIDA's approach[29] tends to be rather monolithic. It put a strong emphasis of the success of peace agreements during the Oslo period

and in the last years on the reform issue, but all of which through a top-down approach and concentrated in the urban zones of the Territories. In a sense, smaller local initiatives are balanced by more 'mainstream' activities (hence its central position on the various graphs).

The third and final case consists of USAID Civil Society programme that we can identify as the point on the far right. In that case, the vocabulary adopted is that of business where NGOs should think in terms of contracts, managerial processes and reporting mechanisms. Also little attention is paid to local differences between rural and urban, central and peripheral zones. The fact that it does not leave much room for the Palestinian beneficiaries in the design process as well as the existence of large amounts of tied funding means that it is difficult to expect a high impact on the lower couches of Palestinian society.[30]

Now, that we have 'visualized' the difference of conceptions of civil society, we should look at the variety of funding technicalities to understand their implications on the ground. The devil is in the detail, as a popular maxim says. We will dwell on some of these details to understand some of the mechanisms that preside over the distribution of funding. Moreover, foreign involvement in attempts to solve the Palestinian–Israeli conflict is locally perceived as very important and a lot of resentment is felt and expressed by the local population. Therefore, anything that could be interpreted as a form of external control is very quickly over-interpreted by locals. And as we will see, many of the donor mechanisms are far from clear and transparent.[31]

Implementing organizations or partnership with Palestinian NGOs?

For most organizations 'giving aid' by sending international experts and expatriates who then do most of the work belongs to the past. Instead, along with the creation of a dogma of 'sustainable development', a larger share of participation has been granted to southern NGOs. There are now many cases of real partnership between northern donors and local NGOs. There is even an interesting case where partnership is reversed, since it is a Palestinian advocacy NGO that provides the training (the jargon would say 'capacity building') to northern NGOs.[32] But this is a notable exception rather than the norm.

Most of the northern NGOs working in Palestine work in partnership with local ones, and foreign governments rely either on local or northern NGOs to implement their projects. The humanitarian and emergency sector is probably the only one where the notion of partnership seems not to have been totally internalized: most of the international actors implement their own project themselves, at least in a first phase. Despite the fact that 'partnership' is on the lips of everybody (and more importantly provides a door to accessing international funding), it does not mean that it automatically occurs. It is safe to say that at this point most of the implementation is carried out by Palestinian actors, but the decision process (and strategy planning) still belongs largely to external donors. Which is not unproblematic.

Project and programme funding?

Another financial means to assess whether donors tend to leave more or less space for local civil society actors to decide upon their priorities is to contrast project with programme funding. Most of the funding is provided through *project* funding. This means that money is not used for the general administrative costs of the NGO, but will go towards financing the activity suggested and paying some staff to directly (and in theory uniquely) implement the activity proposed in agreement between the two parties. One key feature of the project is the short-term scope of funding. Most of the projects are usually one year long, which is the time frame set by the constraints of fiscal budgeting. Some projects are even shorter than that, with projects of six or nine months in the case of ECHO.

Only in the case of *programmes* can local NGOs develop a longer-term approach. Programmes usually run over two or three years and allow for a more systematic development of the NGOs' activities. Some international donors are now considering offering longer-term funding (up to five years). This obviously necessitates a different planning of activities, but would give NGOs a better chance to achieve their stated goals, especially in a sector like health and advocacy where it would be naïve to expect changes in terms of better health planning and larger popular participation to take place overnight.

While all 37 interviewed donors declared that they offer project funding, only 18 of them give programme funding. Some Palestinian NGOs lamented an indirect and perverse effect of project funding, that of fashions in projects at the expense of long-term needs. A small local NGO complained that project funding usually offered by donors are 'too short-lived' and that this leads to the mentality of 'the flavour of the year', whereby one donor might 'decide now to focus on that aspect' and then change its priorities the year after.[33]

It must be clearly stated that donors also feel the dangers of project funding. One small international donor actually condemned the attitude of Palestinian NGOs as more prone to surf on the waves of fashionable topics, the latest trend being the rule of law:

> Every day there is a new NGO wanting to work on the rule of law. Rule of Law is one of our main topics, many NGOs on that, but there is no concept behind. It is only project here, or project there. That is why I prefer to work with the Palestinian Legislative Council and work with the committees directly.[34]

But a counter-example taken from a Palestinian NGO, which felt that donors have in recent years tried to steer the work of advocacy NGOs away from certain hot political issues, brings us back to the *vexata quaestio* of what provokes what in the first place: who triggers whose reaction? In this case, a Palestinian NGO activist felt that donors were reluctant to fund certain types of advocacy campaigns. He wondered (very cynically) whether it would not be easier for his NGO:

> To get around that [problem] by creating some silly programmes to feed the serious programmes [that donors do not want to fund].
>
> *Like what?*
>
> Well like having something about […] hmm […] non-sense workshops here and there, you know, through that, maybe you can sustain other programmes by providing enough funding. It will be easier for you to get support for silly programmes.
>
> I know so many publications [done by advocacy NGOs] that pollute this environment without being discussed or even read by [anybody]. It is easier to get fund on that, to close the project circles. All these nice workshops in hotels, here and there, […]. When we start the week, we have so many invitations. If we would go [to all of them], we would not be working, but just going to workshops![35]

This quote illustrates the strange situation that some local NGOs face: a voluntary goal displacement must take place to ensure the sustainability of a local NGO, because of the indirect limits set up by donors. One can easily imagine that such practices might contribute to give a negative image of the organization to its local constituency.[36]

Core funding?

If project funding can symbolize one end of a continuum and programme funding a middle point, core funding would be at the other end. Core funding implies that funding can be used freely for any type of legitimate expenses of the NGOs. This means that part of (or all of) the core funding can be used to pay for electricity bills, furniture and staff salaries, as well as for its programme activities. Project funding limits the space of allocation of funding, while core funding gives a free reign over financial resources.

From the interviews, it comes out that 11 international donors (out of 37) declared that they give core funding to their local partners, while seven others would give small amounts for core funding on an infrequent basis. The rest (19) offer only project or programme funding. On the Palestinian side, ten interviewed NGOs acknowledged receiving regular core funding and six others to have some core funding under the form of small contributions of individuals and/or solidarity groups. The vast majority (36) declared not having any type of core funding at all.

Some Palestinian NGOs seem reluctant to accept core funding, fearing that it would in the long-term bind their activities to the will of the donor.[37] Interestingly, there are some northern European countries that are now introducing core-funding elements in their budget line (Holland, Sweden, Switzerland), while others have already done so for many years (Christian Aid, SIDA, Konrad Adenauer and Heinrich Böll Stiftung, Diakonia). Often this is linked to the creation of a donor consortium, i.e. a structure through which a group of 'like-minded' donors temporarily put their financial resources together to provide multi-year funding to Palestinian NGOs, considerably reducing the financial and narrative reporting requirements.[38]

Grants, contracts or loans?

Different types of legal binding agreements exist between donors and local NGOs. The most common is a grant, whereby a memorandum of understanding is signed between the two parts describing projects to be implemented and the time-frame in which money will be disbursed (by the donor) and spent by the NGO. Money does not have to be paid back by the NGO. In the case of loans, it is made temporarily available to a NGO which will have to pay back for (part or) the total amount. One problem arising with the grant is its limited time frame which implies a lack of flexibility and the capacity to foresee in advance what the financial needs ahead will be.

If *grants* are at one end of the spectrum of types of agreement between donors and NGOs, the other end consists of *contracts*. Contracts are very restrictive for implementing NGOs. Everything is carefully defined in a contract and the NGO has no freedom to change parts of the implementation (or the people implementing it). For a grant, what matters is the programme with its overall objectives. The way that the NGO implements the latter is of less importance for the donor. In-between, there is the *cooperative agreement*. This three-way distinction is mostly applied to USAID beneficiaries. The description given by the USAID civil society director is eloquent in terms of the space of freedom left to local actors:

> We have three mechanisms: One is the contract (which is highly restrictive). We define the service and we make sure the service is provided. Second, there is the grant where we tell the NGO: 'This is the programme, just let me know when you do it and how.' Finally, the cooperative agreement is somehow in-between. We buy the organisation's programme but we don't tell them 'We want you to do this and this!' At the same time, we have substantial involvement. Substantial involvement means clearance on the key personal, reporting requirements, certain aspects of their programmes, etc.[39]

The reason behind these very restrictive conditions is linked, to a large extent, to the question of support to armed groups in the Territories. To make sure that no US tax payers' money goes to what the State Department has defined as terrorist organizations, Palestinian NGOs must sign a waiver (the so-called 'Anti-Terrorism Waiver') stating that funding will not go to support terrorist infrastructures and that their services will not benefit 'terrorist individuals or organisations'.[40] Thus, all projects submitted to USAID funding are controlled and vetted by US officials. Project details include not only the type and location of activities, but also details of all the personnel involved. USAID can then vet the whole organization or the participation of certain Palestinian individuals.

Therefore, the various types of contracts provide an escape for not signing the waiver. By having a contract, this gives more legal guarantees to USAID that money will not be misused. This is a purely American technical question (so far). The interview with another American quasi-governmental organization also

stressed this legal technique to avoid signing the waiver. As its director put it bluntly:

> Our way to deal with the anti-terrorism waiver required by USAID is to split between grants and contracts. In our cases, we have an approximate 50–50 percentage of both. To put it simply: the advantage of the contract is that they do what *we* want. In grants, they do what *they* want.[41]

This can be interpreted simply as a way to bypass the very difficult question of signing or not USAID's waiver about terrorism. But, from the point of view of donors about whether they feel that *they* can chose whatever programmes and partners suit them, it gives a sense of the potential lack of autonomy left to Palestinian civil society partners. Were the US money a tiny and scant proportion of international aid, the issue would not be that important. But USAID is by far one of the largest single donors in the region with regard to civil society projects[42] and dozens of local and international NGOs depend on its funds, therefore rendering its way to 'do development' very influential for many years to come. This, again, gives a sense of how little space for manoeuvre the local NGOs have.

Tied funding

A similar problem arises in the cases of so-called 'tied funding' which demonstrates that though funding is earmarked for Palestine, part of it will actually remain either directly in the hands or under direct control of a given donor. There are a few cases of direct and openly tied funding to one specific national origin. Two main examples might reveal the reasons for such practices.

The first case is that of USAID funding, which involves giving large amounts of aid to NGOs. For example, the Tamkeen project ('Empowerment of Civil Society') was originally endowed with $33 million for a five-year period. However, only half ($16 million) will be given directly in the form of grants to NGOs; another $8 million is earmarked for 'capacity building' and 'institutional strengthening'. The final $9 million will go to the 'machinery', as this was described by USAID Civil Society Director, namely administrative costs for Chemonics International (based in Washington) and for Tamkeen's own administrative costs (25 staff). Though the head of USAID Civil Society excuses the large amount of money remaining in US hands, she is keen to stress that most of Tamkeen staff are Palestinians. However, she omits to say that most of the computers, vehicles and furniture paid for by the grants must be of American origin. At the end of the day, probably much more than $9 million will remain in the USA. This technique is probably a way to ensure that the American legislator votes in favour of such massive USAID credits to 'foreign aid'.

The second case of tied funding is the Italian contribution to the PNGO Project, a World Bank project to support Palestinian NGOs which is managed by the Welfare Consortium. In order to apply successfully to the project, the local NGO wanting to take Italian funding must apply in partnership with an

Italian NGO. This is most probably due to the fact that direct funding to Italian NGOs through their central government is scarce. Thus, the Italian government makes sure that its money will benefit their national NGOs. The problem, in the end, is that there are not so many Italian NGOs active in the field and peripheral smaller NGOs lack the direct contact and access to these capable of securing funding from the PNGO Project. This was stressed by a village-based charitable NGO in the Hebron district. The Tarqumia Charitable Society board member I interviewed was keen to underline this unequal access to international NGOs. When asked if they applied to the Welfare Association Trust Fund, he replied:

> Yes, of course, it is a dream for us [to get such funding]. But all [international] associations are in Ramallah! It is easier for them to be all in Jerusalem, to circulate. It is easier and more open in Jerusalem and Ramallah. […] You can apply to *Ta'awoun* [Welfare consortium that manages the grant] but under one condition: to bring in a partnership. But you have only two [Italian partnership] organisations here in the district. So they can't supervise all these activities. All submitted a proposal but you need a partnership. They have the money, the funds, but there are difficulties for us in finding the partners.[43]

Therefore the problem of tied funding is twofold: on the one hand, it gives the wrong impression that large amounts of funding are made available for Palestinian development whereas, in fact, this funding remains in western capitals; on the other hand, it limits the flexibility for funding to reach each single part of the Territories. In both cases, the result is a biased form of international aid, and in particular in the first instance, it means that strategic decision-making is not taken in accordance with local needs. According to Nakhleh, the problem not only lies in the amount of tied funding but with the type of projects put forward by certain donors, and – in particular – USAID. In his words,

> it is amply clear that US assistance is tied to nurturing Palestinian acceptance of a US 'negotiated solution', and that the improvement of the Palestinian quality of life under occupation is nothing more than an acceptable camouflage for the imposition of US-initiated solutions.
>
> (Nakhleh 1989: 118)

So tied funding would be also about a form of conditionality linked to the support of certain preferred approaches to the peace negotiations.

A true multilateralism?

A large amount of international monies earmarked for Palestine is channelled through multilateral instances. A large part of all funding to Palestine is dedicated to UNRWA, as a UN multilateral agency specialized in providing basic services to Palestinian refugees (in the Territories and neighbouring countries).

As for the other UN agencies, there are two newcomers with the second *Intifada* (OCHA and the WFP), but neither of them are donor agencies strictly speaking. The first is a coordinating platform for international organizations and the second implements most of its food distribution on its own.[44]

Two multilateral organizations do actually make funding available to Palestinian NGOs. The oldest one is UNDP, which channels and controls a yearly budget of $60 million. The vast majority is dedicated to the building of infrastructures and to the payment of the salaries the UNV (UN-volunteers) scheme. A maximum of 5 per cent goes to NGOs and civil society programmes. The Palestinian office of UNDP used to be mainly funded by the Japanese government until the beginning of the *Intifada*. The origin of UNDP's civil society funding now comes mostly from the USA.[45] A deeper scrutiny of the programmes funded stresses that most of the UNDP money goes to an already well favoured club of NGOs: MIFTAH, BISAN Centre, and AMAN (organizations whose ideological understanding of civil society will also be described in Chapter 5).

The second large multilateral organization giving funds to local NGOs is the World Bank formally involved in the Territories since 1993.[46] Since there is no sovereign Palestinian state, the World Bank works in the Territories through the so-called 'Trust Fund for Gaza and West Bank'. In ten years, an overall $460 million has been allocated to the Territories,[47] of which only circa $15 million were granted to the two successive Palestinian NGO Projects (not to confuse with PINGO a network of local NGOs). Phase I of the Project ran from 1997 until 2001 and the World Bank provided about $10 million out of the total $15.5 million spent (Sullivan 2001: 22); the Phase II (2001–2004) included a contribution of $8 million of the World Bank. Other contributors, such as the Italian, Saudi and British government, completed the funding in both cases. The management of the PNGO trust was awarded in 1997 to the Welfare consortium (see ibid.: 24ff.).

One of the problematic aspects of the PNGO Project (we will also deal with that in the following paragraphs) is that Italian funds dedicated to this multilateral PNGO Project must be spent mainly in partnership with Italian NGOs. There do not seem to be any similar forms of tied funding or national preferences in the case of Saudi Arabia, but such a practice sheds a different light on multilateral funding which is therefore rather bilateral (or nationally preferential) with a mere multilateral outlook. As the case of UNDP proves it, multilateralism does not exclude a very strict form of selectivity.[48]

Palestinian production of knowledge about civil society

The previous section highlighted how donors are active promoters of certain visions of civil society and how funding mechanisms limit the space of autonomous decisions by the diversity of local actors. Such interpretation might give the misleading impression that donors have a free and direct hand at influencing the work and interpretation of civil society and its local structuration. Actually, there is no need for direct and intrusive control by donors. Instead a few local intellectuals and some publication techniques contribute to the creation of

what Bourdieu called a *doxa*, namely a system of beliefs or social practices so well rehearsed and taken for granted up to a point where that the doxa becomes a sort of unchallenged norm (1997: 22–26; ibid. 1998). One could formulate the hypothesis that if such a doxa on civil society exists (and in a way reproduces a rather impoverished and managerial understanding of civil society)[49] it is because few but powerful international donors create inducive conditions for few actors to relay and re-articulate this type of interpretation. The following pages will explore this hypothesis and a sub-hypothesis, namely that even if the local political and cultural context also influences the local re-interpretation of civil society, international donors are also in part responsible for such interpretations.

The analysis suggests that donors do not necessarily have it their own way by imposing one single vision of 'civil society'. Rather, there is an articulation between donors' offers and the ways in which the offers are taken up, or not, or re-adapted in the local context. Thus, Palestinian production of knowledge about civil society reflects different socio-political agendas that are, at times, exploited by certain donors to favour the dispersion of an impoverished *vulgate* around 'civil society'. Let us now look more into detail how, when, and by whom the concept of 'civil society' has been ushered in, interpreted, and re-adapted in the arena of Palestinian NGOs. A discursive analysis of the concept of civil society itself might reveal as much as an analysis of the 'hard' features of civil society promotion (figures on aid, number of organizations, etc.). To do so, we will analyse the grey literature produced by NGOs and international donors on the question of civil society as a touchstone, after few words on the academic texts dealing with civil society.

It would be absolutely beyond the reach of this book to assess the academic teaching about the concept of civil society in all of the eight universities scattered across Palestine. I will therefore rely on a specific type of literature produced by intellectuals who often stand at the crossroads of academia and applied research in specialized research centres. Palestine, widely known in the Arab world for its high level of education, is probably quite a unique case. Dozens of research centres exist throughout the country.[50]

The literature covered through the study of Bishara, Ibrahim and Ghalioun's view on civil society (Chapter 2) is actually the result of such research centres, and in particular of the focal points of Bir Zeit and Ramallah, where MUWATIN plays a pivotal role.[51] Interestingly, most of the research centres were born at the end of the first *Intifada* at a time where large funding amounts were made available with the signing of the Oslo agreements. As a study about research and the teaching of sociology in the Palestinian Territories stresses, most of the agenda of such research centres is 'often defined and imposed by the vision of a variety of foreign donors'.[52]

Though one needs to qualify such statements (there are some examples of greater independence in research centres), it is a fact that most of the themes dealt with by such research centres very often cover predominantly external actors' interests in the region. This was already the claim of Tamari (1994) in his panorama on social research at the beginning of the Oslo euphoria. According to Romani, almost

a decade later, it is still the case with topics dealing principally with 'regional peace plans', 'conflict resolution', 'management of the refugee problem', 'better economic planification for a sustainable development' (Romani 2003).

The increased geographical separation between towns virtually shut down and hermetically sealed by the 'Israeli matrix of control' (Halper 2000; Larzillière and Leveau 2003: 26–36) adds to the impossibility of a unified research agenda. Moreover, the logic of project-based where good money can be made by social scientists in research centres reinforces the trend towards an 'academic space that is fragmentalized from within and paradoxically organized and polarized from without'.[53]

But again, one needs to qualify such statements. First, it is not always a clear-cut situation (in the sense that the boundaries are not always clear between the inside and the external actors, as we will show later), and, second, one needs to take a step back to the image of two Palestines. In this light, one should add that such analysis of the production of knowledge and its relation to power rather belongs to the *first Palestine*, that of an urban, highly educated milieu and close to policy-making circles. Such conclusions, I believe, could never be reached for the disenfranchized *second Palestine* where a strong resentment against external imposition of topics, agendas and vocabulary exists and has been exacerbated over the last years.

It is an understatement to say that there is a hiatus between externally influenced (if not determined) agenda of such research centres and the much more widespread popular references to the nationalist struggle and to the growing 'Islamization' of public *répertoire*[54] (Larzillière and Leveau 2003: 36ff.; see also Legrain 2001a, b; Hamzah and Larzillière 2006). There is an urgent need for the vast layers of disenfranchized Palestinians to refer to performative language of resistance and reform rather than elaborate critical and reflexive discourses (Hamza and Larzillière 2006). On the side of NGOs, there have been strong signs towards a re-centring of both activities and languages about the 'local' (Abu Sada 2005b).

This is why some observers interpret the current *Intifada* not just as a revolt against continuing Israeli occupation but as deeply shaped by an internal uprising against what are perceived as corrupt elites that are totally cut off from their social constituencies (Heacock 2004). This is surely not the best place to debate the reasons of the strength of the Islamic arguments within Palestinian politics. Nevertheless, this hiatus between the two Palestines and the strong external influence upon research centres can, in my view, be interpreted as potentially important source of heteronomy for the Palestinian population, which in turn translates into a preference for the Islamic *répertoire* rather than externally sponsored buzz words and related hot topics.

We will now look to whether international donors have the capacity to influence to the extent described by Romani (2003), the course and content of debates and production of knowledge about civil society by studying the 'grey literature'. Grey literature here refers to the type of documents intended to influence policy-making circles or the work of actors involved in very specific issues – in this case civil society. Out of the variety of items published on the topic, one of the most

visible and active in promoting its views has been the World Bank with large amounts dedicated to research and publications. We will concentrate on these publications.

The World Bank, thanks to its PNGO project managed by the Programme Management Organisations (PMO) of the Welfare Association Consortium (see Hanafi S. 2002; Sullivan 2001: 24f.), has been at the forefront of the battle for a strong NGO sector. Originally intended to 'make the PNA, various NGO Networks and local NGOs work better together',[55] it adopted a rather macro-approach to the question of NGOs. It puts together different networks of NGOs (PINGO, Union of Charitable Societies, Forum for NGO Union in Gaza Strip, and the Forum of NGO Unions in the Gaza Strip[56]) to coordinate as much as possible with the PNA. This is one of the reasons why so much of the focus of the World Bank literature with NGOs has to do with the question of the relationship between NGOs and the PNA, but hiding thus other vital elements of the topic. The World Bank and its PNGO project has funded three types of writings or reports on the issue of NGOs in Palestine that will have long-term resonance in the landscape of Palestinian NGOs. Let us now analyse each of these three publications.

Denis J. Sullivan's publications: managerial approach to civil society

Sullivan, an American scholar with great experience of the Middle East, was hired as a consultant by the World Bank to produce different reports on the PNGO project. He published in 1995 an article in which he developed the view that 'a Palestinian civil society, perhaps, [was] in the process of being developed' (99). Thus, he held the view that there is still a *lack* of that civil society or that it was absent until that point. Therefore, in his opinion, civil society, with a leading role devoted to NGOs, was still to be built. Such a view is a rather standard of the development and democratization literature at the beginning of the 1990s.

The first contribution of Sullivan about the World Bank PNGO Project was published under the auspices of the Palestinian Academic Society for the Study of International Affairs (PASSIA)[57] in 1998, at the time where the PNGO Project was finalized. There appears in a collection of papers of uneven quality on 'Policy Analysis' in PASSIA's series on Civil Society Empowerment (PASSIA 1998), a short manual designed to 'provide training seminars for Palestinian NGO professionals, practitioners and university graduates' (ibid.: ii). Though most of the papers explore either theoretical points, or the role of Palestinian NGOs in general, Sullivan's paper is the sole contribution that presents one international donor for NGOs.[58] The paper is a simple description of the origin of the World Bank's Trust Fund for Palestinian NGO (later called the PNGO Project), or, a sort of showcase for the PNGO Project.

Sullivan published again with PASSIA in 2001, but a whole book on the subject. It is a review of Phase I and its two temporary extensions (July 2000 until June 2001) and suggests changes for the Phase II of the PNGO Project (2001–2004). It is also flanked by comments of three Palestinian NGO activists. It highlights the uniqueness of the World Bank's approach to work directly with

NGOs and the key role put forward by this model: local NGOs have become, in the World Bank's eye, a vital 'mechanism for service delivery' in the 'deteriorating socio-economic situation for Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza coupled with the Palestinian Authority's unwillingness or inability to take on most social service delivery' (Sullivan 2001: 1, 5). The title (*From Service Delivery to Sustainable Development*) reflects the view that NGOs are substitutes and play a complementary role to that of the (proto-)State. As in the case of the conference (see *infra*), what is further suggested to deepen the role of NGOs is to increase the 'professional credentials of the Palestinian NGO movement' (ibid.: 49). No mention is made anywhere to the voluntary spirit of local organizations, and of much smaller local charitable organizations.

Though critical to the project in certain technical and political aspects,[59] Sullivan's contribution is positive concerning the PNGO Project. It is probably regrettable that no real alternative voices were taken into account in what seems to be a 'semi-official' review of such a large project for local NGOs. The vast majority of applicant NGOs (91 per cent) actually were refused PNGO funding and many organizations I interviewed expressed strong criticisms towards the project for being, according to some, very selective in its grant awarding phase.[60] Strong criticism is also absent from the three Palestinian comments following Sullivan's text: all of them are actually working in organizations receiving major funding from the PNGO Project itself. It would be self-defeating for them to shoot themselves in the foot, and illustrate the twofold problematic tendency of 'activity assessments': some focus only on some bureaucratic and quantitative measures (in terms of beneficiaries), rather than in terms of qualitative impact, and/or other reports are made by inner personal or individuals whose independence is not really affirmed.[61]

Proceedings of the 2000 International Conference: PNA versus NGOs

The Welfare Association Consortium organized in consultation with the World Bank in February 2000 a three-day conference in Ramallah entitled '*Palestinian Governmental/NGO Relations: Co-operation and Partnership*' (Shadid and Qutteneh 2000). It assembled eight different panels of important local and international figures, with a large number of PNA officials (Ministers and high civil servants), NGO practitioners (from Palestine and from other developing countries), local and international scholars as well as World Bank Headquarters officials.

Most of the debates and tones of the speakers indicate some serious tension between NGOs (or some of them) and the PNA. This is of no surprise in view of the title of the conference and of the time it took place namely when the NGO Law, though passed by the PLC, was still under revision by the President office, and when the Ministry of Justice launched an abusive campaign against NGOs for allegations of corruption and high spending (Hammami *et al.* 2001: 1–20). It is striking to see how the discussions actually are shaped along the simplistic lines of divisions between democratic NGOs versus the autocratic PNA, which,

in a nutshell, takes over the narrative of the NGOs loosely affiliated to left-wing parties (and we will come back to that later, in the 'narrative' debates). When not trapped by this view, then the discussion adopts a rather technical and cold view on the necessity towards sectoral coordination, increased professionalization of NGOs, enhanced service delivery and regulation framework or even 'the importance of maintaining a business-like approach in all aspects of development cooperation'.[62] None of the speakers talked about (nor mentioned) the second Palestine.

Despite very rare references to the variety of organizations concerned under 'civil society' and its potential role in democracy building,[63] there are almost no critical remarks on NGOs except that of an outsider underlining that 'there is no [automatically positive] correlation between the number of NGOs and democracy'.[64] Moreover, the question of the Palestinian population's needs and priorities is tragically absent, reflecting an elitistic (or top down) approach to the role of NGOs. The same happens on the panel session dealing with 'Donor's, Palestinian Government's and NGO's Perspectives on Funding for the NGO Sector': out of seven speakers, only one is Palestinian and he talks about the UN, the World Bank and PNA definitions of development. Again a Palestinian view on donors could have been helpful and, furthermore, a bottom up view is totally absent of the discussions.

The contributions to this meeting resonate with similar overtones in the conclusions of the studies of Sullivan (managerial approach to civil society) and of the 'Best Eastern mentality'. This expression was used by a Palestinian NGO activist to criticize some of the elite NGO leaders who spend a lot of their time in four- or five-star hotels, going to one conference after another, but having lost the sense of everyday life for Palestinians.[65] The list of conferences held in Palestine on topics related to civil society, democratization, NGOs, or good governance, is a very long one. As one NGO director said, 'if we were to respond to all conference invitations, we would spend our weeks only in touring hostels'.[66]

One can wonder whether all these conferences will actually meet the declared objective of disseminating positive views about NGOs to the largest Palestinian audience possible, and in particular to our second Palestine. Maybe they have another purpose, not that of communicating to the Palestinian population but rather communicating to an elite group of society leaders a very peculiar and limited comprehension of the role of NGOs as an 'innovative and frequently cost-effective [actor] in the delivery of services'.[67]

In other words, despite the positive intention of favouring a dialogue between the PNA and NGOs, such a conference shuts out wider popular participation in the debate and reinforces dominant views about issues of NGOs and civil society. Finally, it is worthwhile stressing how the international donor organizing the conference was actually reformulating the left-wing narrative, according to which NGOs are seen as the main source of democratic opposition. Except with a slight change – i.e. that NGOs are also seen as effective service delivery organizations and professional institutions.

BISAN: a way out of the 'state of nature'?

BISAN Center for Research and Development (established in 1989 and led since its foundation by Izzat Abdel Hadi) was commissioned by the PNGO Project to execute a thorough study of the 'Role of NGOs in Building of Civil Society' (in Arabic).[68] This very systematic study (Bisan 2002) with a questionnaire distributed to 207 NGOs provides interesting insights into the perceptions within NGOs of the difficulties encountered. It sometimes sheds a raw light on institutional weakness (such as total absence of financial and administrative procedures for about 25 per cent of the NGOs) (ibid.: exec. summary 6). Again, the report authored by Izzat Abdel Hadi[69] tends to concentrate mostly on managerial dimensions of NGO work.[70]

The part on the substance of 'building civil society' is a very strange one: it essentially argues that NGOs are 'essential to manage [the] transition from relief to development, and from natural society to civil society' (ibid.: exec. summary 6). It is quite surprising to read such statements on the eve of the twenty-first century, three or four centuries after its common usage in the contractualist literature. How can we explain such a stark and negative view on Palestinian NGOs?

Interviewed about this aspect, Izzat Abdel Hadi insisted that:

> We [Palestinians] don't use the concept of civil society as in the Western terminology because the socio-historical contexts are different.[…] I don't think we have a civil society in Palestine and even in the Arab world. I think we are managing transition from relief to development, from natural society notion (which means factionalist, clannish, familial) into more democratic, accountable and transparent sector.

Asked to elaborate on his distinction between civil society organizations (CSOs) and community-based organizations (CBOs), which are in his eye, part of the natural society, he responded:

> There are many criteria to do that [distinction]. CSOs have, if you want, more elements or aspects of civility. More than CBOs. CBOs are more factionalized, narrow geographical, individualistic, or tribal, family or clan-based. But actually, CSOs have the same characteristics to a certain extent, in Palestine. You know, we talk here about the *mujtama' al-ahli*. We don't call it civil society *al-mujtama al-madani*.[…]
>
> If I want to apply my model: their linkages (CBOs) are more familial than civil society's. I can't recognize them as civil society. This is based on my ideology: civility is democratization, tolerance, respecting the law, etc. This is my definition.
>
> […] Some [others] say we are a traditional society so we have to include charitable societies family groups, local authorities, etc. in civil society. For me: NO![71]

His kind of interpretation is actually a reminiscence of the restrictive views of Bishara on civil society in the Arab context, but with an almost harsher conclusion. We will explore later some of the reasons why he comes to present such a view (in the part about social agenda and different narratives). But it should be noted that this interpretation of a faulty or incomplete civil society fits the agenda of the World Bank in two ways.

First, the study highlights strong managerial shortcomings within NGOs. Portraying smaller NGOs (in Bisan's vocabulary 'CBOs') as stuck in natural society allows one to call for more help from 'civilized' actors. Not innocently, larger professional NGOs are described elsewhere in the study as helping to 'manage [this] transition towards civil society'. Therefore, clear and differentiated roles are granted to Promothean larger 'civilized' NGOs to help their smaller CBO counterparts.

Second, the very idea of an Arab world stuck in the transitional phase (not to say bluntly in a state of 'natural society') implies and reinforces cultural dichotomies not so unfamiliar with neo-liberal universalist values conveyed, for example, by the World Bank. 'We have a liberal, civil and modern world on one hand that must come to help out the autocratic, uncivil(ized) and traditional Arab society', so could be the line of larger donors to justify their aiding, which is even reinforced by the fact that it is local Palestinian actors themselves who claim that there are different cultures and that civil society does not exist either in Palestine or in the Arab world (Chapter 2). In both cases the solution goes through international aid and the implicit import of exogenous models and through the increasingly professionalized and managerial NGOs.

The World Bank and the PNGO Project are not the only institutions producing and commissioning research and publications on the topic. Some research centres publish their own studies (such as MUWATIN, Ramallah Centre for Human Rights Studies) and even a few NGOs not active formally in research or advocacy topics produce their own reports on the matter. Let us look, briefly, at this type of literature and see if they bring up new elements to the discussions on civil society, which have so far concentrated on managerial and rather elitist descriptions of the role of NGOs and on the conflictual relationship with the PNA, but omitted to talk at large of their link with the local population.

UNDP and BISAN: planning the future of civil society

BISAN was commissioned to do a position paper on civil society by another major multilateral donor in the Territories, UNDP. BISAN's involvement in various international networks dedicated to themes parallel to that of civil society might explain why it is constantly asked to produce such papers. Izzat Abdel Hadi (head of BISAN) is an active member of international networks active on the topic of social activism.[72] Probably because of this international visibility, BISAN was once again requested to publish a position paper on civil society. Certainly, the previous publication for the PNGO Project and Izzat Abdel Hadi's participation in the setting up phase of the PNGO Project did not

go unnoticed by UNDP's Palestinian office. In any case, the commissioned paper is part of a UNDP initiative to discuss in an international conference the question of development in Palestine. Three Palestinian institutions (Ministry of Planning for the public sector, PALTRADE with the Ministry of Economy for the private sector and BISAN for civil society institutions) produced position papers to discuss possible socio-economic improvement. Interviewed about the initiative, UNDP's representative presented it as follows:

> To improve socio-economic conditions, we will be conducting an Arab international forum in September 2004 with other UN agencies to help the Palestinians to come up with a socio-economic development plan that does not respond only to the emergency and relief but also to development for the three years [ahead] (2004–2007) and helping the Palestinians to cope and be prepared for the declaration of a Palestinian state. […] It is a socio-economic plan to help to achieve the goals. […] There will be workshops first locally and then in Dubai. The same [procedure will apply] for the civil society paper [which] will be presented in Kuwait.[73]

The tone denotes first of all a rather patronizing attitude, that of international organizations whose mission is to 'help' the Palestinians to come up with good ideas for long-term development. Second, the approach chosen to improve development will certainly be again at a macro-level and managerial one (in light of who were asked to contribute with position papers). The diagnosis posed by UNDP and other UN agencies is highly problematic because it does not really consider the overall situation of continuous colonial occupation on the one hand, and does not seem to be aware of other international reports stressing that the majority of the disenfranchised Palestinian population has very clear ideas about solutions to come back to real and long-term development, on the other. In the fifth report on *Palestinian Public Perceptions on their Living Conditions* to assess the impact of international and local aid, it is thus clearly stressed that:

> Job creation is not seen in itself as the most effective manner to reduce poverty as Palestinians seem to *realize very well* that there will be *no improvement in their living conditions without the ending of the military occupation* and the closures associated with it.
>
> Even increase humanitarian aid is not looked as a response (only 2% think it should increase), vs 28% for job creation, and 50% for ending occupation (Bocco *et al.* 2002: 43, emphasis mine).

In the light of such clarity from the Palestinian population, one can wonder what are the purpose and usefulness of such position papers? Much of these papers are probably not only about 'helping' Palestinians to come back to development plans but indirectly aim at creating an *habitus* of responsiveness to the new conception of civil society by major international organizations: that of a managerial, service-providing and very elitist class. Certain local NGOs serve as a relay

to bring within the Palestinian public sphere such new conceptions. Let us note that there is nothing intrinsically western or Arab about such values, but it is about favouring a managerial culture at the expense of more participatory and bottom up processes that civil society embodies in general. As for the other potential track of *habitus* (on 'preparing the Palestinians to cope') instilled in local NGOs through such papers and conferences, it could be interpreted as a means, through NGOs, to prepare the ground for the bulk of the population, and to get ready to swallow a bitter pill of an internationally-designed peace plan.[74]

Mustafa Barghouthi's many outlets

Another prolific NGO leader on the theme of civil society is Mustafa Barghouthi. Nevertheless, he presents a totally different line than that of Izzat Abdel Hadi. Mustafa Barghouthi is a founding member and the president of UPMRC (a very large health NGO), director of HDIP (Health, Development, Information and Policy Institute), former co-leader of the Palestinian People's Party (former PCP), and member of the PLC since 2006 under the banner of the party he created (the National Initiative). He is a shining and often quoted example of this younger generation of the Palestinian leadership from inside the Territories which emerged in the 1980s from a professional middle-class milieu. He made himself a name, along with hundreds of other activists, thanks to NGO and grass roots work in local popular committees (Hiltermann 1990; Robinson 1997).

Mustafa Barghouthi later became known to international actors for his outspoken position on the necessity of keeping alive the legacy of NGO activism born during the first *Intifada* (1989) in the Oslo period and to protect NGOs from the centralizing and autocratic tendencies of the nascent PNA after the signing of the Gaza–Jericho agreements (1994). He is thus at the forefront for the creation of an independent Palestinian NGO Network (later named 'PINGO') in 1993 and 1994 when the PNA was becoming reality. His vision of civil society and the role paid by NGOs in it greatly differs from those promoted by the publications of UNDP and the PNGO Project[75] for the simple reason that its aim is very different. Published in a different political context (emergence of the PNA, and definition of basic rules and principles of governance under a Palestinian authority), it lays stress on the importance of an independent NGO sector as a check and balance against the PNA. Mustafa Barghouthi draws on the popular legacy of resistance to Israeli occupation and the importance of service-delivery of NGOs for marginalized Palestinians to justify the deepening of NGOs' independence with the ideological justification of a need for a 'vibrant and creative civil society' (ibid. 1998: 9) for a more democratic polity.

While the 1994 document was written at a time where the PNA was in the making and presents the potential 'enemy' of NGOs under the traits of the PNA, the 1998 document points to two dangers for independent NGOs: the PNA is still in the front line, but the growing influence of Hamas and other 'traditional and fundamentalist forces' is stressed (ibid.: 6). Both texts are actually rich accounts of the diversity of civil society actions (and not just of the role of NGOs) and of

some of the dangers existing amongst NGOs where 'the support and endorsement for the values and principles of civil society is not automatic, spontaneous or guaranteed by all NGOs' (ibid. 1994: 4). Therefore, for him, NGOs are essential survival tools for democracy, in the wake of the dual risk of undemocratic forces embodied by the PNA and the 'fundamentalist forces'.

Finally, Mustafa Barghouthi is also behind a web-portal *palestinemonitor*, hosted by HDIP. Though previous texts offer quite subtle accounts on the diversity of civil society, the website is auto-proclaimed as 'the voice of [Palestinian] civil society'.[76] The same type of self-appointment does also exist in PINGO, the Palestinian NGO network in which Mustafa Barghouthi has been for years a leading figure. Many times, press releases or statements of PINGO have the problematic reputation for speaking on behalf of the entire civil society: statements such as 'we, Palestinian civil society, condemn' are very frequent. We will come back later to this phenomenon of the 'appropriation' of civil society, but let us note that this rather simplified account of NGOs as the unique guarantor of democracy within civil society has served and passed into some of the international donors (as in the case of the PNGO Project conference 2000).

PASSIA's seminars on 'civil society empowerment'

A final important source of texts about civil society is the Jerusalem-based PASSIA and founded in 1987 by Mahdi Abdel Hadi. PASSIA has acquired a solid reputation for the quality and variety of the research it publishes. It organizes highly regarded round-table discussions, news conferences and talks including speakers from all horizons (and certainly from the two Palestines). It provides also any students of Palestine and workers in the region with quality information and resources (diaries, maps, historical files, etc.).

Since 1997, it runs seminars and training courses about 'Civil Society Empowerment' with the purpose to provide specific 'training to key personnel in civil society organisations (CSOs)' and helps Palestine with 'institution building' and the 'establishment of an effective civil society'.[77] Looking at the content of the first textbook dedicated to 'Civil Society Empowerment',[78] one can notice that it covers very basic and important domains of democracy that are frequently violated by the PNA itself (separation of powers, accountability, basic freedoms), but actually remains very brief about the topic of civil society: only four pages are dedicated to the topic (PASSIA 1998: 17–21). It nevertheless manages to condense in such a limited space an array of four definitions proposed by Michael Walzer, Alexis de Tocqueville, John Keane and Adam Seligman.

Apart from the first seminar, the topics of the later seminars have been (in reverse chronological order, from 2004 to 1997: Management Skills, Communication Skills, Strategic Planning, Strategic Management, Train the Trainer, Monitoring & Evaluation, Advocacy and Lobbying, Fundraising & Public Relations, Project Management, Conflict Resolution & Negotiation in Organizations, Leadership Skills, Strategic Planning, Policy Analysis, Media and Communication Skills, Media and Communication Skills, Strategic Planning, Policy

Analysis.[79] As one can see, most of the topics raised are again of managerial content and dedicated to increasingly professionalized staff.

PASSIA has thus partly[80] become an NGO for NGOs, or multiplying NGOs by providing specific training for Palestinian NGO employees. How can we account for such a difference of approach within the same institution that on other topics provide very thorough and high-level studies, but remains stuck on technical and managerial dimensions of civil society? Maybe the response lies in the origin of funding for this series on civil society empowerment: USAID. The Civil Society section of USAID has been funding PASSIA since the inception of the programme in April 1996 for a total amount of $1.2 million[81] through an agreement, which, one will recall, is a type of understanding (between USAID and the partners) between a grant (where the NGO is free to chose its activities) and a contract (highly restrictive conditions decided by USAID). In the words of Martha Myers, in an agreement,

> We buy the organization's programme and don't tell them: 'We want you to do this and this'. At the same time, we have substantial involvement. Substantial involvement means clearance on the key personal. Reporting requirements, and a view on certain aspects of their programs.[82]

One can wonder whether this series of seminars on civil society cannot be considered as a form of outsourcing passed on by the international donor onto the shoulders and mouth of a local NGO. In any case, the conception of civil society promoted by USAID belonged to the furthest right and top corner of our scaling attempt (Figure 4.1). In the light of the context of the seminars and of the positioning of USAID with regard to civil society in the Palestinian context, this example of a civil society seminar can be considered as a concrete example of promotion of isomorphism in terms of values (in this case managerial ones) from a donor to a local NGO. The argument is not whether it is correct or not, or even a good thing to conceive of civil society in managerial terms, but that a donor succeed in promoting its views in the work of local NGOs. This case of isomorphism is later amplified through seminars, courses and lectures to Palestinian participants, who, in order to succeed, need to write 'a final assessment essay. The goal is to *incorporate what they have learned* and their practical experience into a coherent project' (PASSIA 1998: 2, emphasis mine). The stress indicates one possible way to promote a form of *habitus* about certain values and norms.

The point is not that local NGOs, while accepting this type of USAID-scheme, loose control at once. PASSIA (and other institutions from which we draw here some examples) resist in other settings the imposition by donors of certain views. PASSIA thus organize very critical debates and texts (some even simplistic critiques) on the issue of international aid and what is perceived as external steering intentions. The most obvious example is the book of Nakhleh on the *Myth of Palestinian Development: Political Aid and Sustainable Deceit*[83] where harsh criticism is addressed to two very important donors (the Welfare Association and the EU).

How can we interpret such a rebuke of international aid? Many observers interpret the current *Intifada* not only as an uprising against the lasting occupation, but also as an internal uprising, for the failure of the Palestinian leadership to improve significantly the situation on the ground. Therefore, one could read such critical publications as a way to vent anger at international actors (among which donors[84]) for having insisted too much on the survival of the peace process rather than providing a long-lasting and locally sustainable form of polity in the Territories. It gives an opportunity to many Palestinians to distance themselves (at least in words) from quite embarrassing international sponsors.[85] Each sector of the Palestinians has its own *Intifada* – each with a different target group. One can also read this coexistence of more *and* less critical programmes within the same institution as proof that donors do not simply *impose* (or cannot do it) their dominant views, but work on various levels to magnify and reach their objectives of 'framing the circle'.

The idea of 'framing the circle' is about offering a model of how certain limited visions of civil society are (re-)produced. Going into circles, instead, deals with how such views are sustained as leading interpretations. There is obviously some resistance to the imposition of dominant interpretations, and in some cases, alternatives manage to come across, expressing hereby different sociopolitical agendas.

Resisting the first step

We have seen that there is a transmission of certain views about civil society from donors down to local NGOs, but also that some local NGOs' views were also reformulated and re-utilized by international donors (as is the case for the 'left-wing narrative' about civil society). How can we now come up with a model for such exchanges?

The point is not that different values have to be inculcated. Instead, the interaction between different actors where little negotiation is done about the content of the programmes and based on the asymmetrical relation of donor–recipient, makes it much more likely for local NGOs to make a step towards the donors rather than the other way around. Once the first step has been taken, or put differently, once a relation of power has been defined, it is easier to go about by following the same mechanism: first the local partner is spotted and known (and hence the fact that it is pretty much always the same institution writing grey papers for international donors), and second, this agent has, in turn, its own source of power in the local community since it often redistributes down money to local partners (intermediary function of the 'NGO for NGOs', or multiplying NGO).

In the case of a transmission of vision about civil society from local actors to international donors, donors are in the comfortable situation of choosing the elements of narratives that would fit with the overarching explanation(s) required.

This 'first step' problem seems to be a real one (in the sense of consciously observed) in the case of Palestinian NGOs. Many have claimed and some still claim not to receive US funding (or more precisely USAID funding).[86] The

reality is different since many in fact take some USAID funding despite their claims to the contrary. Another means of getting away from what can be described as a sense of culpability, is to stress that money is not received directly from USAID but through intermediary organizations (such as Save the Children, CARE, World Vision, CRS, etc.), which are usually *non*-governmental ones. This is, for Palestinians, a way to save face vis-à-vis their local constituency.

Two more mechanisms exist to soften the first step crisis. The first is to go public against USAID and to harshly criticize the ambiguous nature of political aid from the US government. Thus, in the beginning of the second *Intifada*, PINGO (the Palestinian NGO Network) discussed the possibility to boycott and to stop taking USAID funding. Widespread publicity was given by PINGO to these internal debates. Eventually, few local NGOs were in a position to give up such a vital proportion of their funding (and here, the large envelope of American funding for local NGOs takes its importance by flooding and surpassing any other donors in the Territories). Many just continued with US monies. Similarly, with the Terrorism Waiver crisis in 2003 onwards, many NGOs went about denouncing publicly this form of conditionality and voluntary subordination required by the US government. Eventually most of the receiving NGOs ended up either signing or reaching a different agreement (contracts, grants, etc.), where signing the waiver was no longer necessary but which gave a more predominant voice to USAID in the definition of the project or programme.

The second method has to do with the end of direct USAID's funding: until 1999–2000, USAID was disbursing some of its contributions for civil society directly through local partners. After that it created its pseudo-Palestinian branches (Tamkeen, Rafeed, Maram), whose names could hint at local institutions and whose staff are mostly Palestinians, but with backstage direction through Washington-based consulting partners (Chapter 3).

Once the circle has been framed and once the first step has been taken, it is then easier to go into circles. Roca (2000) observes in general that large international conferences represent a very good opportunity to selectively choose which southern NGOs will be invited; therefore organizers (mostly northern ones) have the right of first selection. Once the smaller southern NGOs are in, they are often obliged – or feel obliged – to caution the inviting parties. The asymmetrical relationship is now formalized and can continue.

Some are recalcitrant and resist such an approach. However, institutions which do not take any form of US money (to name but one controversial source of funding for its ambiguous role in the Israeli–Palestinian conflict) are few, and those who have an internal funding rule (e.g. having 50 per cent of their budget through local funds or local voluntary contribution) to prevent important donors to steer indirectly the course of their work are even less. Of course there is a cognitive dissidence dimension where many claim not to take any US funding, though having in reality some. Another watering down technique is that described previously under the label of 'voluntary goal displacement', where local NGOs cynically take US funding but with the firm intention of diverting it

from US objectives. In that sense local NGOs tend to escape the structural asymmetry through conjectural opportunities. But in the long term it is not clear who is better off.

Setting the tone: texts, and training courses on civil society

Certainly, some key texts and driving views on civil society are important starters in the process of establishing a model of reproduction of views through interaction between donors and NGOs. This is not to say that one of the works previously mentioned set the tone at once for the rest of the production about civil society. Nevertheless, in the cases of commissioned writings about civil society and Palestinian NGOs, international donors can influence already the type and content of reports by selecting one precise author. Surely, a Ramallah-based research centre will probably reach different conclusions than a smaller organization based in a refugee camp of the periphery, or at least they would probably stress different priorities.

With a quick browsing of the type of consultancy work written about civil society, one notes that it is very often the same group of four or five individuals writing most of the reports. This is not to say that there is a single line shared by all of these consultants. There is space for divergence, but the point is that they present and relay visions that are over-emphatically those of central urban zones, lack a better and more profound anchorage in rural and peripheral zones of the Territories,[87] not to mention the fact that they are mostly male experts. Moreover a quick glance at some of the networks around USAID's funded partners also points to the fact that there are other contact points between some of these actors. The previous description of USAID's subcontractors with (semi-)local institutions also demonstrated how things were going into circles.

Another mechanism of pre-defining interactions between certain donors and NGOs is that of training courses given about proposal writing. In the last ten years, some international organizations have offered the possibilities to local personal to follow 'crash courses' on topics dealing with civil society promotion, role of NGOs and the more technical question of proposal writing. Thus, Tamkeen offers such courses in its Capacity Building Programmes.[88] AMIDEAST, one of the implementing partners for USAID Civil Society programmes, and specializing in education activities also runs courses on 'Proposal Writing', 'Business and Report Writing', and 'Project Management'.[89] Though the focus for such courses tends to be rather on the linguistic level, formulation and content are also approached in some of its courses.[90]

Most of these courses are done with USAID funding which has a rather limited and limiting view on civil society (as Figure 4.1 has suggested). It is also worthwhile pointing to this consultancy and managerial culture, much more widespread in North–American institutions. Chemonics provides the backstage machinery and networking back in Washington: its associate MASSAR[91] then relays and performs the job in the Territories and Tamkeen implements and selects grantees. It is therefore all about a form of 'expertise' and managerial

culture[92] implied to set the tone. What 'trickles down' might not be values about civil society going from local donors to the population, but rather a managerial culture, from Washington to a small club of local NGOs.

So eventually, the key aspect in the interaction donors-NGOs is not so much about a diffused western model that would be 'exported', but rather a whole mechanism of disciplinary institutional discourses (about a very restricted managerial approach to civil society) and of *habitus* teaching that takes place in these forums, courses, seminars and brochures. Local NGOs serving as multiplicators to replicate or redistribute this form of expertise, are also a vital part of this disciplinary process: knowing local tricks and social anchorages, they can give a slightly different twist to the content, but the core of the message (a managerial civil society) remains. Then gradually, these views will be dispatched further, through various institutional practices and settings, giving thus credit to the view of Mary Douglas that 'institutions think' (1987).

The role of the multiplicator NGOs becomes vital in this transmission process. Not only do they function as a relay between donors and the local arena, but they also serve as an indirect institutional bottom up filter. Though the very nature of these multiplicator organizations is precisely to be in touch with lower-level (some would say community-based organizations) and multiply the dissemination of key values or programmes, it does not mean that they are still representing them and that they express the same view. It is striking to see that in most of international conferences, or on roundtables hosted by large donors, it will pretty much be the same types of local organizations present: either some of these multiplicators, either some elite NGOs[93] going into circles in one of the many conferences held in the region.

Alternative views and interactions

Although the type of approach described above tends to be hegemonic, there are alternative ways for international donors to grant more space of decision to local organizations. We will discuss here the case of Norwegian People's Aid (NPA), a membership-based organization established in 1939 by Norwegian Labor Unions and working with Palestinian organizations (not only in the Territories) since 1985. Its annual budget (US$2 million) is quite large for this type of solidarity organization. Its funding policy in the Territories is to aid some larger organizations but also to provide smaller amounts to smaller, community-based organizations in remote zones. In that case, NPA does not apply fixed criteria on the conditions to receive funding,[94] nor does it request an extensive and complete proposal to consider financial support. These smaller local organizations just need to come up with a succinct concept paper (one or two pages) and then the project will be discussed with the Norwegian organization. Only then will a proper proposal be built, but in close collaboration. When a budget is agreed, a small element of core funding can be added with the purpose to offer training for the small organizations but in the direction it estimates most important. Therefore, the approach is different than the model offered by the PNGO project

where following the course *before* receiving any fund is a sort of pre-condition. NPA is fully aware of the difficulties and some of the dangers created by their way of doing:

> I don't think we have a very western strict definition of what is democratic organisation. What is more important to us is progress; more than what is democratic or not. If we have [a] partnership with an organisation that has and shows progress [as regards] that kind of values, then we consider this more important. If they give the impression to be really committed, then it is OK. It will be re-evaluated. What matters especially is their relation to their community.
>
> Take the *badawi* [Bedouin] community. They are all from one, or two tribes actually. We could say 'They are tribal, the head has two wives!' Still, we work with them. I don't think there are women on the board. It is important for us, but we will not decide not to work just because they don't have a woman on the board! If we see progress, then it is OK.
>
> So [this work with] very small community-based organisations has been very interesting for us. But we spent a lot of energy to find smaller ones. It would have been much easier to go to the big ones and they would have done it for us. We have been concerned with which types of organisations. So we did distribution with *badawi* villages. All of our partners are locally anchored.[95]

In terms of conceiving aid with local partners, this example (of giving much space of decision to a local partner) constitutes one end of the continuum, while on the other hand, one could find donors imposing a fixed model that a local NGO has then to implement. There are many more cases in the second type of interaction than in the first one. Very few donors actually make this effort of adapting to smaller organizations, except maybe the German Fund, the Canadian Local Initiative and Save the Children which give very small grants.

In a videoconference organized in February 2004 by the World Bank to discuss a position paper on the role of NGOs in the World Bank's activities and linking Washington with Cairo and Palestine, only five local organizations were actually present. Very few observers of local NGOs would claim that the presence at this videoconference of BISAN, Early Childhood Development Centre, Union of Agricultural Work Committees, MEND (a tiny democracy and non-violence oriented NGO) and a professor from Bir Zeit University would be representative of the whole of Palestine, although the intent was to have a true discussion between the World Bank and local population. Again, the second Palestine was conspicuously absent.

Conclusion: understanding various interpretations

How to make sense of the previous statements and evidence presented? The point is not about judging one view on civil society as better than another one.

Rather, it is a *relative* endeavour to stress internal differences in the models and views of civil society promoted by the variety of actors, and how international donors do have certain opportunities to set the tone for local actors to relay and promote some of these views. It would also be a mistake to consider that boundaries between 'international' donors and 'local' NGOs are clear-cut and tangible: some international donors have local Palestinians as head or country representative and inversely few local NGOs are run by non-Palestinian 'westerners'. This might explain why some donors have a vision of Palestinian civil society that is more detailed and subtler. But one needs to, again, resist generalization because some Palestinians sitting in international donors' seats tend to reproduce these views of separate and different cultures between a modern west and a traditional Arab Middle East. Thus, one Palestinian working for a very large international NGO totally dissociated himself from his Palestinian co-nationals by speaking as if he was a foreigner to the situation: 'We believe that the Palestinians fell short in communicating their cause outside, especially in the humanitarian dimension.' Also, he insisted that 'we [here at this international organization] brought a new development concept, which was missing here and which they did not have here before'.

The argument made here is not truly that of a constructivism paradigm: principled values might well indeed be transmitted through long-term and subtle mechanisms; yet, one of the problems with such constructivist views is that it often assumes a similarity of conditions in which international donors and local NGOs interact, tends to de-historicize the different contexts in which the two actors implied interact, and fails to take the different institutional settings into consideration.

So far from saying that there are good or bad ways of promoting civil society (but that there are only different *types of interpretations*), the following lines will consider the conditions and potential reasons for which some local actors have taken on them to relay similar values to that of some of the donors. In other words, one has to look at various agendas to make sense of these differences. According to the existing socio-political agendas, local actors will stress different *répertoires*. Let us now consider some of these reasons and agendas.

Which reasons can explain the positions of Izzat Abdel Hadi or PASSIA's seminars about a specific view on civil society? Their attitude might not automatically reflect their real views on the topic, nor that they are to be considered as 'westernized' intellectuals, having 'internalized' particular views and definitions on civil society. The first point is dismissed by the fact that PASSIA's seminars are not representative of all its academic interests and publications; rather the civil society empowerment series is just one element coexisting amongst other topics and publications dealing this time with more local priorities and defending the views of a large variety of actors (religious, political, governmental, etc.). The second argument is dismissed because, as argued in the first page of this book, the views of an internalization of values assumes different blocks and cultural entities that silently coexist next to each other, an assumption that has been so far avoided here. Simply, in the case of Izzat Abdel

Hadi, it is probable that BISAN's director simply and genuinely believes in what he writes.

But Bourdieu's notion of 'champ' (or field)[96] is of interest here to give more grounding to the reasons why PASSIA and BISAN might have actually hosted and promoted such limited (managerial) views on civil society. Bourdieu's emphasis on the variety of capitals (economic, cultural, social and symbolic) whose accumulation individuals compete for in a given field, provides interesting motivations to analyse the position of the two NGOs. Not only does writing a report or organizing a series of seminars on civil society provide a non-negligible economic capital, but it also enhances social and symbolic capital of the involved actors: socially, these NGOs are meant to play a leading role towards their sister organizations and fellow country(wo)men through courses and lectures given to other NGOs. In other words, such writing or course giving includes a strong element of networking with dozens of institutions. Symbolically as well, this enhances their social position since it gives them the chance to appear through podium discussions, lectures and conferences on the issues that matter to them.

But by competing in a rather exclusive manner within the field of international donors, some local NGOs tend to forget about their domestic role and anchorage: gradually, a position enhanced thanks to international 'trophies' might become a double-edged sword when claiming to fight more on the domestic field. This will be further discussed and circumstantiated in the last chapters.

Another actor under scrutiny is Mustafa Barghouthi. His account of civil society is rich and much more detailed than many texts about civil society produced in Palestine, and he is far from adopting a too benevolent view of civil society for he points at dangers of lack of representativity within NGOs, and loss of direction according to local needs (1994). He also insists on the need to include as much a variety of types of organizations within the civil society struggle to make it succeed. Yet, Mustafa Barghouthi's views are too deeply entrenched in internal narratives of Palestinian politics that he, it will be argued here, fails to be fully inclusive of most segments of the Palestinian population in this defence of civil society. In other words, his plea to include NGOs and a diversity of actors within civil society is mostly a *pro domo* argument, rather than a genuinely inclusive call. This is what we termed the 'left-wing narrative' of emancipation.

This phrase is a shortcut to express the dominant view in the left political spectrum of Palestinian parties (including the PFLP, DFLP and the communist PPP) and promoted from the late 1980s onwards. Prominent examples are found, among others, in texts of Mustafa Barghouthi (1989, 1994, 1998), Eileen Kuttab (1989) and Rita Giacaman (1995; Giacaman *et al.* 2003). The core of the argument is found also in many studies by foreign authors (Hiltermann 1990; Craissati 1996; Robinson 1997). Under this view, popular committees and more structured professional organizations around health, education, agricultural and women activities are the backbone of a civil society that not only resisted Israeli occupation until 1993 but also laid the ground for proto-national institutions on which the PNA was to lay its foundation from 1994 onwards. But one stumbling aspect of this historical evolution is that this model of popular committees and

professional associations mostly occurred within secular, left wing and broadly Marxist circles. It also entailed a strong emancipatory vision for women and individuals to stand up not only against the Israelis but also against the local landowning bourgeoisie and patriarchal conservative forces within Palestinian society (Robinson 1993, 1997). This mobilization model was later copied by Fatah, the dominant PLO faction, whose leadership concentrated most of its efforts outside the Territories but which realized that local support had to be fostered as well, not to lose political hegemony within the Palestinian territories (Sayigh 1997).

But one has to keep an eye on the fact that this narrative has so far been portrayed uniquely as a left-wing versus Fatah competition. In fact, these local organizations have also been involved in another constitutive and highly debated narrative of Palestinian identity: the question of the divide between an insider versus outsider[97] leadership (Tamari 1994; Abdel-Hadi 1999; Lindholm Schulz 1999; Hanafi 2001). Though the question is a burning one – for some it is a taboo, for others it is inherently part of the Palestinian predicament of being refugees and 'out of place', therefore not so important – it has served as a dividing in the territories since 1994 between those inside power circles and those outside of it (Challand 2002).

Since most of the PLO returnees provided the backbone of the PNA and that many insider activities (and in particular most of the left political spectrum) were not rewarded by positions within the nascent Authority, the left-wing narrative partly overlapped with that of the insiders whose say was denied in the domestic political scene. However one should note that the Palestinian political arena includes more than mainstream nationalists (Fatah) and the secular left. Therefore the narrative of the left hides as much as its highlights.

It comes therefore as no surprise that this narrative suggested by left-wing activists actually insists not on a purely political progressive-conservative axis of reasoning, but on the issue of democracy. Mustafa Barghouthi and consorts are, in this line, the only democratic forces in the Territories, and as civil society organizations continuing to deliver important services to the population, they should fight to preserve vital civic liberties against an increasingly authoritarian PNA. The counter-narrative put forward by Fatah and by the PNA (which absorbed most of the Fatah NGOs into its ministries and other national committees) is that NGOs did play a very important role as resisting occupation and 'de-development' (Roy 2001) but after the PNA was established, there were no reasons for these NGOs to continue existing and should therefore dissolve into the Palestinian Authority.[98]

Therefore the debates of the PNGO Project (whose conference proceedings were described above) enter in this clash of narratives between left-wing and Authority, or between a 'democratic' civil society and an autocratic PNA. The problem with such simple opposition is threefold. First, the political map has changed and there has been a dramatic popular disaffection for left-wing parties.[99] Second (and related to the first), the new duel now opposes the PNA (alias Fatah) to Hamas (and the Islamist nebulous). Third, the political left still

active within NGOs has not adapted its vocabulary and its narrative to the new situation and continues to refer to a situation which was true ten years ago.

Whatever the grounds for keeping such a narrative alive, it cannot deny the existence of elements of positive civil society *outside* the two spheres of left groups and PNA. There is a whole world out there in the Territories that would probably not identify with either of the two, and grave affairs of corruption like that of the LAW NGO which actually demonstrates that this narrative was probably somewhat benevolent: instead of accepting this narrative of 'heroic profile of NGOs', one should also stress some of the 'ambivalent profile of NGOs' to use the terms coined by Palestinian sociologists (Hammami *et al.* 2001: 11, 16).

Using this book's introduction and the distinction between two Palestines, if one can say that these over-represented NGOs (covered so far) could be said to belong to the first Palestine (for the location, and for their visibility in terms of constant and decisive interactions with donors), the second Palestine is conspicuously missing, and in particular smaller NGOs that do not benefit from the institutional backup to let them play in the larger entities' court. Smaller NGOs, charitable organizations and/or Islamic ones[100] are totally absent from the radar screen of larger interaction schemes so far described. However, in a view where democracy is power of the *demos*, indiscriminately of social, political, religious or economic backgrounds, and where civil society is seen as a source of autonomy, the 'voice' of the second Palestine is actually not relayed at all in the mechanisms described so far.

What views do they have on civil society? Do they not produce texts on the matter? Let us assume for a while that charitable societies are the voice of the second Palestine. This is a bit of a shortcut, certainly, because the leadership of many of these charitable organizations very often are associated with an urban educated class. Nevertheless, they often convey and relay messages from rural Palestine and many CBOs active in refugee camps and remote villages of the West Bank and Gaza are usually gathered under the banner of the charitable society unions.[101]

It is probably an understatement to say that these charitable societies and their peak associations have not fought the same battle as their urban secular and NGO partners. To the best of my knowledge, a production of texts, brochures, books and thorough studies comparable to these studies until now does not exist in as elaborate a form as other texts studied so far. But it does not mean that there are no opinions and views on civil society in this part of the checkers. The following chapter will demonstrate that a very articulate view actually exists in many charitable organizations, but they are simply not very often relayed or spread, because of faulty or scarce means of communication with donors, or because of the lack of reflexive communication of other NGOs. In a nutshell, although some of the charitable organizations speak the *content* of civil society, they do not use the (catch) *phrases* of civil society.

Instead, charitable organizations concentrate mostly on local help and their efforts have been highly appreciated during the current *Intifada*. In a period when

the *local* becomes the most important resource, both in terms of economic network (see Heacock 2004; Malki 1994), and political ideology by an over-determination by national references (Hamzah and Larzillière 2006), this form of self-help is highly appreciated and its different rhetoric resonates with the local population. Despite this, it would be a mistake to conceive of charitable organizations as trapped only in 'the local'. When interviewed about their conception of civil society, most of them came up with some textbook definition of civil society, highlighting, among others, the relay-role they should play for better democratic governance, and the structuring role they have for their constituency, even at a micro-level. Indeed, even smaller organizations (like charitable ones) have the capacity to articulate sound and clear concepts. It all depends on who are their interlocutors. When needed they can 'click' or 'connect' to the *répertoire* required by the situation. But international donors have little interactions with them (if so, it is often through larger and/or multiplicator organizations), and do not think of them as potential resource partners or as input-givers to publish grey literature on issue of civil society.

One can therefore conclude by noting how most international donors have overlooked the peripheries and how they have tended to systematically draw on a tiny group of privileged NGOs from the first Palestine to infer or instil a strategic mapping of civil society action. This can be detrimental to the large majority of NGOs, which are much smaller but also active in rural and more deprived zones, therefore serving a different type of actions, as we will illustrate in the coming pages.

This chapter has finally shown that many changes took place under the label of 'donors' and 'aid' (increased professionalization and specialization; less solidarity funding but more governmental funding; imposition of strict rules of funding mechanisms; privileged short-term funding through *projects*, rather than long-term programmes and core funding; limits of tied funding, etc.). These changes can be seen as a source for the gradually limited *space of manoeuvring* of local NGOs, whereby *priorities* are defined through technocratic means, in particular through the donors' apparatus that contribute to a form of division of labour that eventually limits the capacity of local NGOs to give a decisive impetus in defining priorities for their communities.

5 Managing the discourse of civil society

> In an interdependent modern world, traditional cultures' do not spontaneously grow or develop into 'modern cultures'. People are pushed, seduced, coerced, or persuaded into trying to change themselves into something else, something that allows them to be redeemed.
>
> Asad 2003a: 154

Civil society is not a fixed and clearly defined concept, neither in its Euro-Atlantic cradle, nor amongst AME intellectuals. It is a disputed concept that has been and is constantly re-interpreted in a variety of ways, but with an increasingly managerial approach at the expense of the diversity of civil societies existing in the OPT. Let us now look more into detail how, when, and by whom the concept of 'civil society' has been ushered in, interpreted, and re-adapted in the arena of two sectors of Palestinian NGOs, namely that of health and advocacy NGOs.

The first part of this chapter will study NGOs providing services in the field of primary health care. This is a sector where NGOs have a longer existence and experience and where they are historically closer to political parties. To contrast, the second half of the chapter will deal with cause-oriented or advocacy NGOs. These are younger institutions and they very often focus on specific causes, such as human rights protection, civic participation and democratization. In both service-providing and advocacy NGOs, we will use elements of the interviews to stress, as in the case of international donors, a typology of views on civil society, its main important elements and problems. Attention will also be paid to how local actors perceive international aid and to the perceived problems arising in the course of interaction between international donors and local NGOs.

Despite a formal variety of views, there tends to be only one version of civil society privileged by some of the local NGOs and international donors. This reduced and reductive version, though discussed in a variety of ways, actually becomes a sort of fixed dogma. We will explore how this can be the case, and how the historical context under which local NGOs evolve actually shape(d) and influence(d) the discourse about civil society.

Service-providing NGOs: the case of health

We will assess the historical evolution and the differentiated socio-geographical conditions under which actors from the health organization work, in order to understand better some of the characteristics of the sector and some of the trajectories taken by a variety of its NGOs, since 'the structure, function and capacity of the health system [of the Palestinian territories] has been shaped largely by the country's complex political history' (Giacaman *et al.* 2003: 59).

Let us address first the complex history of different types of health organizations. There are about 200 such organizations in the Territories. But health is a far-reaching concept that includes many aspects, such as primary, secondary and tertiary health care,[1] physical, mental and psycho-social well-being, that can also include rehabilitation for handicapped, health education and prevention (smoking, drugs, etc.), and pharmaceutical cares.

The research concentrated on organizations offering primary health care (PHC), or a combination of primary health care with another health component. Nevertheless, a small sample of organizations not doing primary health care were selected to provide further and deeper information about the sector. Therefore few hospitals and research centers dealing with health where also interviewed.[2] We will then stress three different visions of health and how it can relate to our main *problématique* of civil society and civil society promotion in the Territories, and to understand how this discourse of 'civil society' at work might enhance, or to the contrary, impede health service provision to local populations.

Over the past 50 years, there have been three main types of health providers in the OPT. The first (and oldest) is the United Nations Relief and Work Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), which has provided health and education to registered Palestinian refugees since its creation in the aftermath of the 1948 war. The second type of health actor is embodied by governmental services run by the PNA since 1994. The third type of health service comes from the nongovernmental sector, be it non-profit or for-profit (private treatment centres, labs, or hospitals). Since our paper concerns competing models of social mobilization, we limit our study to the third sector.

The development of health NGOs has two historical roots. First, the recognition by Arab countries of the PLO as the sole legitimate representative organization for the Palestinians in 1974 paved the way for PLO patronage of organizations inside the Occupied Territories, but meaning also factionalism within the Palestinian communities along the lines of political parties. In the same swing, a Palestinian National Fund (also established in 1974, to which Palestinians from outside were handing over 5 per cent of their salaries) provided financial resources for the inside population (Curmi 2002: 99ff.).

The second root is the signing of the Camp David Accords in 1978 between Egypt and Israel, which shook many Palestinians fearing that any just and long-lasting solution would not be supported from Arab brethren countries, but rather that large international actors would impose a solution on the Palestinians or that

the Israelis, under Likud PM Begin, would force some fake 'autonomy plans' upon Palestinians (Roy 2001: 108f.). As one health activist retrospectively put it: 'Disillusionment [about the 1978 Accords] spread throughout the West Bank and Gaza: there would be no military overthrow of Israel, the occupation would continue, and community resistance to survive this occupation must be intensified' (UPMRC 2003: 7).

Three years later, the so-called Civil Administration was extended to the whole of the Territories and meant the direct Israeli control; in the case of health, the whole health care system was not placed under the direction of the Ministry of Health but under the command of the Ministry of Defence (Giacaman *et al.* 2003: 61). Besides the fact that Palestinians had no say in the running of governmental hospitals, Israel did actually little to develop health infrastructures (Odeh 1989: 71). On the contrary, the number of governmental hospitals under Israeli rule dropped from 20 in 1968 to 14 by 1992. Three of the six hospitals closed down were converted into a police station, a military HQ and a prison (Haq 1993: 12). In terms of investments in the health sector, if Israel was spending $306 per capita on its citizens, it had a per capita expenditure on health of $30 in the West Bank in the late 1980s, which even decreased further in 1991 to a mere $20 (Mash'al 1995: 90).

These various examples show that Israeli military rule actually did nothing to develop health infrastructures in the Territories. Instead, local popular initiatives, gathered around the logic of political parties, started from the late 1970s to organize basic health services to the local population. This is the origin of the so-called popular committees spread throughout the West Bank and Gaza and divided along sectoral or professional activities. Put in a nutshell, what the Israelis were 'de-developing' (Roy 2001) and undoing in the Territories, popular and professional Palestinians committees were re-doing and trying their best to develop with their own means and visions.[3] It is estimated that by the time the DoP was signed in 1993 and around the period when the PNA was established, NGOs were providing 60 per cent of primary health care services and about 49 per cent of secondary and tertiary care (Barghouthi 1994: 6) and the totality of disability care in the Territories (Shawa 2001: 16).

With the advent of the PNA many organizations actually closed down some of their clinics, either because other health infrastructures were set up by the PNA, or because funding was diverted towards the PNA, and this meant the closing down of the tap for local NGOs. UPMRC, the health NGO linked to the communist party, had 31 PHC clinics in 1992, 28 in 1995 (Jeppson and Lindahl 1995: 2) and only 25 by the end of the decade (UPMRC [2001]: 6). UHWC, linked to the PFLP, also shut down some of its clinics. The UHCC, affiliated with the DFLP, seems to have suffered most with 15 clinics closed at the beginning of the Oslo years, down 'from 32 in 1992 to 3 in 1999' (Rabe 2000: 277ff.). Health organizations closely affiliated with Fatah literally merged with the nascent PNA and many of its staff gained a job in the PNA administration: Anis Al-Qaq, former head of the Health Service Council, became active in the Health Ministry (Rabe 2000: 85, 265). With the emergence of the PNA, according to a health

NGOs, 'over 70 percent of non-governmental primary health clinics[4] and 1,000 kindergartens were shut down in the West Bank and Gaza Strip' (UPMRC 2003: 32). Another source reveals that 99 NGOs (out of 1,011) were closed down between 1993 and 1997 (Shawa 2001: 46).

The emergency situation born out of the second *Intifada* intensified the number of closures, and increased territorialization (in particular after the massive Israeli operations of 2002 onwards). The Territories have now become a chaplet of small islands, or Bantustans, with little possibility to move, even for medical staff, despite protection in theory guaranteed to the latter by the Geneva Conventions. Therefore it has become even more vital to decentralize as much as possible health care centres in order to be able to respond to each of these pockets of sanitary needs. Many efforts went in this direction and on all echelons of the health care services. In terms of hospitals, there was a 30 per cent increase in terms of number of beds available between 1999 and 2003 (see Table 5.1).

An overall increase might however not be sufficient, since not all governorates are equally equipped in terms of hospital (secondary and tertiary health care). Lack of mobility meant that hospitals which used to refer certain cases to larger or more specialized centres could not do so anymore. Just to cite two examples: a small private hospital just outside of Beit Lahem received many cases of trauma injuries which had to be treated immediately, though many times patients were either not covered by health insurance, or had no money to pay for the treatment expenses. A few kilometres away, a rather rich hospital but specialized in early childhood care would not take casualties above the age of five, even if they were children. A hospital from the Beit Lahem's region has also observed that if before the second *Intifada*, 40 per cent of its patients were from Beit Lahem's governorate (40 per cent from Hebron and the rest from the West Bank), it jumped to 83 per cent (with a mere 17 per cent from other governorates).[5]

The same applies for NGOs: those with national reach were able to use their various PHC centres to provide direct care. Another solution was to organize mobile clinics whereby a local NGO would organize day visits in remote villages, which gives the opportunity to provide basic care and to move to villages whenever it is possible. Field hospitals were also organized during the most intense Israeli operations, most notably in Nablus where local NGOs established a care point in one of the central mosque. Decentralized and rather informal

Table 5.1 Comparison of number of beds by health providers (1999–2003)

	Governmental		*UNRWA*		*NGOs*		*Private*		*Total*		
	Gaza	*WB*	*Gaza*	*WB*	*Gaza*	*WB*	*Gaza*	WB	*Gaza*	*WB*	*Total*
1999	896	1,009	0	38	314	1,094	36	258	1,246	2,399	3,645
2003	1,462	1,152	0	58	416	1,073	39	479	1,917	2,762	4,679

Source: Ministry of Health's web site. Available at www.moh.gov.ps/annual/2003/5_hospitals/2003_Hospitals_W.pdf (accessed 12 October 2004).

networks of health specialists were also occasionally mobilized thanks to a telephone hotline whereby, e.g. midwives and nursing staff would be called upon to help mothers to deliver in case there was a curfew or strict travel ban imposed in some of the villages.[6]

But smaller NGOs were simply trapped in their constituency and could no longer reach as far as they did before. Thus, one small Jerusalem-based organization very active in breast cancer screening, deplored a tragic fall-out in terms of the long-term efforts to provide screening and prophylaxis campaigns throughout the West Bank: 75 per cent of the targeted women before 2000 were from all over the West Bank, but the number dropped to 25 per cent with the second *Intifada*.[7]

The PNA has the lead over health policies since 1994, but its work has to be supplemented by NGOs for many reasons, one being that it cannot really operate freely in Zone C and in East Jerusalem.[8] As for many other activities, the health sector has been largely guided from outside, through various donor coordination mechanisms and in particular by the World Bank, which published in collaboration with the Ministry of health various developmental plans (World Bank 1997a, 1997b, 1998).

One of the consequences of such health sector reform has been the increasingly privatized approach favoured by international donors. It certainly aims at improving 'the efficiency and the quality of [health] services, the sustainability of present financial arrangements and equity and accessibility to services' (World Bank 1998: 1). But for some, such outside-driven health sector reforms have 'missed the forest for the trees' (Giacaman *et al.* 2003: 60), by offering often only 'quick fixes' and too much of 'technical assistance' which is a sort of tied funding with 20 per cent remaining in the country of origin (ibid.: 65). The main reproach is that it failed to apply a broader systemic analysis and was divorced from the socio-political context of Palestine (ibid.: 60, 66).

One key example is the question of health insurance coverage. The main system is the governmental which is compulsory for PNA employees, but large segments of the population are without insurance. Around 1998, it was estimated that 48 per cent of the population was covered by some health insurance,[9] but '40% of total health expenditure on medical care' came directly from individuals' pockets (ibid.: 62).

With the current *Intifada* and the dramatically worsening socio-economic situation, the insurance question has become an even more important and burning issue. A study of Palestinian needs in the second *Intifada* notes that despite the fact that now 35 per cent of the population (slightly more than in 1998) covers by its own means the costs of health care services, 'half of those who cover their own expenses are under the poverty line' (Bocco *et al.* 2002: 76).

This kind of situation certainly supports those who argue that privatized health services should be introduced only with the utmost care, and even more so not in difficult times such as those prevalent now in the Territories. But linking to the question of the visions of civil society, surely a rather *managerial* vision of civil society could help in implementing such privatized projects.

But before going into a deeper look and deeper study of the views that various types of health organizations have about civil society, let us say a few words about the types of organizations providing health services in the non-governmental sector in the current times. Out of the approximatively 900 NGOs included in our database, 129 (14 per cent) are active in the health sector. Many other organizations actually provide some health, but only as a secondary activity (and therefore do not appear in this analysis). The average year of establishment of a 'typical' health organization is 1983, which confirms the fact that service-oriented NGOs are older than the PNA. Their dates of creation range from 1882 (in the case of two hospitals, one in Jerusalem and one in Gaza), 1905 (another Christian hospital in Beit Lahem), to 1999 for the most recent ones. In the last decade 29 new health NGOs (22 per cent of all health NGOs) were founded (1994–onwards). In terms of geographical distribution of health NGOs, Table 5.2 indicates a rather good proportion between the number of organizations in the West Bank and in the Gaza Strip (60–40 per cent) considering the population balance (65–35 per cent).[10]

In terms of activities, Table 5.3 indicates that rehabilitation work and primary health care are by far the most important priorities inside the sector. As for affiliation to larger unions and networks, five institutions (4 per cent) are part of PINGO, and 33 (26 per cent) are members to one of the regional Union of Charitable Societies.

We will now split these 129 into three subtypes (Table 5.4) according to the outreach they have. The first subgroup will be made of the larger NGOs with a national range of actions, the second subgroup is constituted by medium-size NGOs which in general do not have a national outreach. Finally, smaller health organizations based only in one location will form the third subgroup.

Out of the 'larger health NGOs', the main health organization, that is officially a non-governmental one, is the Palestinian Red Crescent Society, which has branches in all of the main populated areas. It was established, as a national entity in 1968[11] under the auspices of the PLO and has health infrastructures in five countries.[12] For many years it was led by Fathi Arafat, the brother of Yasser Arafat, but was replaced recently by Younis al-Khatib who took over as

Table 5.2 Geographical distribution of 129 health NGOs

Geographical distribution	*Total number*	*% of total*	*Average year of foundation*
West Bank	77	60	1980
Gaza Strip	52	40	1988*
Total – average	129	100	1983

Source: author's databases on Palestinian NGOs.

Note

* Gazan NGOs were registered in average later because of the difficult Egyptian procedures. Except for the Arab Hospital (established in 1882), all other health organizations in the Gaza Strip were founded after 1967. About 80 per cent were established from the time of the first *Intifada* onwards.

Table 5.3 Main type of activities of 129 health NGOs

Main type of activities	*Number*	*Percentage*
Rehabilitation and handicap	51	40
PHC	40	31
Hospital*	12	9
Women and child health**	11	9
Psycho-social	5	4
Other	10	8
Total	129	100

Source: author's databases on Palestinian NGOs.

Notes
* These are hospitals which are registered officially as NGOs.
** This includes only organizations specialized in health dedicated to women and/or children. Many more women organizations which might have a health component, but not as their main activities, are not included in this list.

Table 5.4 Relative size of health NGOs

	Total number	*% of total*	*No. in West Bank*	*No. in Gaza Strip*
Large ones	15	12	11	4
Medium ones	14	11	11	3
Smaller ones	100	78	55	45
Total	129	100	77	52

Source: author's database on Palestinian NGOs.

president. It is a national society of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. The PRCS operates inside the Territories 20 branches active in 26 localities and has a staff of 2,400 people, running 26 PHC centres and more than 100 ambulances.

Other big NGOs include UHWC, UPMRC and UHCC. Though some of them are formally registered under a different name in the West Bank (compared to their name in the Gaza Strip), they are originally from the same matrix, that of the popular committees and originally affiliated to political parties. All three organizations insist that they are now formally independent from the political parties, but it is a fact that they have remained in a very close orbit.

Other organizations were included in this category for the large number of employees they have. The Gaza Community Mental Health Project (GCMHP) and Health Development Information and Policy Institute (HDIP) are good examples. None of them is formally working in the whole of the WB and GS, but their programmes are those of fully professionalized entities, whose work is meant to influence (through report publications and/or formation) on a national basis.

A short survey of their number of staff[13] indicates that these big NGOs were founded on average in 1976, and employ each on average 175 persons on top of

a few hundred of voluntary workers. All of them are urban-based (though they have some branches and centres in rural areas), and benefit from highly structured organizations with a number of staff now taking care of purely administrative staff. Some of these larger NGOs even produce high-quality books and publications or in some cases films on video, and offer some of this information management as services to other organizations.[14]

Second, the medium-size health NGOs employ on average about 80 staff and are rather large institutions. Nevertheless their reach is only regional. They are older than the big ones, with an average year of foundation in 1970. Some prominent cases are the Red Crescent Society for the Gaza Strip (headed by Dr Haydar Abdel-Shafi), Ardh al-Itfal (Gaza City), Ardh Al-Insan (Khalil), the Bethlehem Arab Society for Rehabilitation and some of the Patients Friend Societies. The various Patients Friends Societies are not part of a unified movement and each of them is totally independent and shares no common resources except their name. Their *Weltanschauungen* also vary a lot from place to place. Finally, some hospitals registered as NGOs are included here because they are draining from a basin bigger than a single locality. This is also the case of al-Ihsan Charitable Society (in Hebron), since it has a training function for other rehabilitation NGO from the West Bank.[15]

Some of them have a more or less refined administrative apparatus, but less developed than the big ones. For example, if the NGOs Ardh al-Itfal and Ardh al-Insan are the authors of important reports on the question of malnutrition, the diffusion of such texts will be limited to professional circles and with a simple text format presentation, whereas the larger NGOs would probably make a book, a videoconference and brochures about it, at least they would seek conscious visibility through such publications. This small example of the publication strategy serve to contrast the means at disposition of the different organizations.

Finally, the third category of health NGOs are included under the heading ‘smaller ones’, though this could be slightly misleading, since some might employ up to 50 staff, even though their vocation is a local one. In terms of year of foundation, this category is the most recent since the average year is 1986, though, as it will be pointed out later, this needs to be assessed in the light of the differences amongst the types of location.

They represent more than three quarters of the health organizations (78 per cent) and are therefore very important for certain types of actions. They are more diffused in Gaza (45 NGOs) than in the West Bank (55 of them), and they are much more active in the non-urban setting than the previous two categories: all 37 health NGOs based[16] in refugee camps (RC) or villages are actually ‘smaller NGOs’.[17] The profile of activities is also different: 77 per cent of the 30 NGOs based in RC have rehabilitation/handicap as their main priority.

According to the database gathered, at least 21 per cent of health organizations are benevolent societies, affiliated with one of the Unions of Charitable Societies.[18] That means that they are rather small entities, dispersed throughout the communities (also in villages). One of the key characteristics – an actual requirement of the by-law on NGOs – is that charitable organization’s board of

Table 5.5 Compared average year of foundation by type of affiliation and location

Year of foundation (by type of affiliation)		*Year of foundation (by type of location)*	
Charitable unions	1977	Refugee camps	1992
PINGO	1987	Village	1990
Others	1985	Urban	1979
Average	1983	Average	1983

Source: author's databases on Palestinian NGOs.

directors should be voluntary. This line of separation professionalized NGOs versus voluntary charitable organizations is only indicative, since there are some exceptions to the rule.[19] Charitable organizations are older than PINGO affiliated health NGOs (in terms of average year of establishment), but this is mostly the case for urban charities, since the ones established in villages and refugee camps were, in average, established from 1990 onwards (see Table 5.5).

Let us note that some of the *zakaat* (almsgiving) committees include health activities. The Hebron *zakaat* committee I interviewed was keen to present its work in the field of health. Not only do they cover insurance fees and certain hospitalization expenses for needy people, but also they run their own small medical laboratory, which allows to diminish the costs of treatments for some patients. *Zakaat* provide therefore vital resources in the middle of local communities. On average between 1992 and 2000, the Hebron *Zakaat* Committee disbursed yearly $1.05 million, which is a very important sum that is well beyond what any of the larger health NGOs would spend in the Hebron district.[20]

Linking health with civil society: Alma-Ata Declaration and the emergence of 'civil society'

Let us now move to the analysis of health organizations and their usage of the concept 'civil society', in particular, how the latter appeared in a historical continuity. It might appear at first sight awkward to associate civil society with the provision of health services. Of course there is the 'obvious' link between NGOs and civil society (but that is a matter of 'evidence' only in the last ten years), but there is a much stronger link which depends on the definition given to the concept of 'health'.

As health activists like to put it, health is more that just physical well-being or the absence of disease. Since the Declaration of Alma-Ata and the UN conference dedicated to the question of Primary Health Care in September 1978, it is common to include in the concept of health (as a short cut for primary health care) the fact that it is 'a state of complete physical, mental and social wellbeing' and is

> a fundamental human right and that the attainment of the highest possible level of health is a most important word-wide social goal whose realization requires the action of many other social and economic sectors in addition to the health sector.[21]

However, the 1978 Alma-Ata Declaration did not mention civil society, for some rather clear reasons. First, the concept of civil society was not yet 'reborn' and was not in the parlance of a time when the Cold War was at its height. Second, this international conference of the World Health Organization (WHO) was pushed forward by the Soviet Union, at a period when it became clear that the US-led efforts to eradicate malaria were doomed to failure. Instead, pushing for a conference on PHC was a 'natural forum in which they [the Soviets] might demonstrate to the underdeveloped world that their form of socialism could accomplish what other political systems could not' (Litsios 2002: 716). This was translated into some abstract call for 'economic and social development, based on a New International Economic Order'[22] (§ 2), but in much more practical terms, 'primary health care is the key to attaining this target as part of development in the spirit of social justice' (§ 5 of the Alma-Ata Declaration). In its final article (§ 10) which set the year 2000 to attain an 'acceptable level of health for all the people for the world', civil society is not mentioned, but is around the corner, so to say:

> It urges governments, WHO and UNICEF, and other international organizations, as well as multilateral and bilateral agencies, non-governmental organizations, funding agencies, all health workers and the whole world community to support national and international commitment to primary health care ad to channel increased technical and financial support to it, particularly in developing countries.

This call of Alma-Ata will have an important impact upon various health activists in Palestine as well, as a universal effort that concerns each single individual. Some of these activists have actually linked the Alma-Ata call with their national call for Palestinian autonomy. The discourse of civil society has served as a useful entry-point in that process.

'Civil society' is actually a recent concept in the narrative of Palestinian NGOs. Chapters 2 and 4 demonstrated that the concept of civil society actually appeared in Palestine between 1992 and 1994. But the more interesting discovery is that it is only the phrase 'civil society' itself which is new, since the notions and the substance included under 'civil society' are actually present well before the emergence of the phrase.

The timing of both Alma-Ata (1978) and of the introduction of civil society (1992–1994) coincides with a turning point in the history of health NGOs. The first moment coincides with the birth of various popular committees, and the second with the arrival on the horizon of the PNA. Put in a nutshell, the idea is that the way local popular committees and later some of the NGOs have portrayed themselves has evolved from one narrative into another. Both spirits of Alma-Ata and of civil society were invoked as universalizing *répertoires* on which local NGOs could draw to project their particular stance. The connection, or to use Amselle's (2001) term of '*branchement*' to civil society is particularly interesting for our demonstration, since it took place at the same moment where

'civil society' was becoming popular throughout the world (and not just in Palestine), and because it offers a good framework for considering the changes taking place within the health sector itself with the creation of the PNA.

Let us make the various narratives clearer. First, there are two successive moments for these NGOs using explicitly the concept of civil society from the mid 1990s: a) when NGOs that were providing services (in health, agriculture, education, and the like) were also serving political purposes (since parties were forbidden under Israeli occupation), they portrayed themselves as popular movements resisting colonial occupation; b) NGOs later portrayed themselves as popular-based movements (hence endowed with a strong legitimacy) and resisting, on top of the leftovers of the Israeli occupation, the autocratic tendencies of the nascent PNA. So by their '*branchement*' or connection to this new international rhetoric of democracy from below associated with civil society, NGOs expressed their new particular political position by projecting it onto the universalistic *répertoire* of 'civil society'.

The current stress on the manners through which local organizations portray themselves does not intend to assess whether they were or were not what they claim to be (or to have been). Of concern to us here is what this gradual shift in narrative reflects, namely a change in the overall political context (end of Occupation and creation of the PNA) but also the beginning of the intrusion of international donors into Palestinian forms of collective action. The purpose is to unpack and shed light upon the moment where *répertoires* invoked by local organizations started changing and what this critical juncture meant for various socio-political actors. It is argued that the *branchement* to the rhetoric of civil society reveals the increasing impact of external aid upon local civil society organizations. In this watershed period, there are elements of continuities, a key turning point, and finally, the emergence of a new vocabulary.

The problem is that the increased reference to civil society as a means of reinforcing their position in terms of domestic politics, will gradually and surreptitiously draw NGOs using such vocabulary away from their original mission, namely serving their grass roots constituency (see Figures 5.1 to 5.3). But before that, let us see what are the elements of continuity, of connection, and of renewal.

A corpus of documents and articles[23] produced between 1988 and 1993 demonstrate that, although the phrase 'civil society' never appears formally, the ideas and notions it embodies were actually part of the narrative of certain Palestinian NGOs. Here are some examples of narratives proposed by Palestinians, which do not entail 'civil society' but many elements of its substance. For example, Mustafa Barghouthi (1989: 128):

> These [mass-based] organizations [are] the entry point – as actors – into society for those sectors of society that were most oppressed and disadvantaged. It is worth noting that while popular/mass-based activities have proved a success, it is difficult to envisage the development of a genuine popular movement without democratic principles being applied and

> practiced. It is precisely these democratic principles that impart to our popular movement its special characteristics.

Here mass-based organizations (implied are a certain sector of NGOs) are agents of collective actions, as long as they stick to democratic principles. Undoubtedly these are vital elements of civil society. Eileen Kuttab (1989: 135):

> From the start the emphasis was on 'development from the bottom up' and 'from the bases' through the recognition of values and human potential and a democratic process which is participatory and decentralized. […] Some of the key elements in this social process are the development of self-respect, increased self-confidence amongst the co-operative members through group identity, and solidarity.

Collective action, decentralized, and development: Putnam would probably like to make this sentence his. Civil society is not mentioned but one can recognize various elements usually tied to the concept nowadays. Another passage of the same author proves to have a view of what could be Hegel's description of civil society and of the sphere of needs (*Bedürfnisse*):

> With the help of the grassroots organizations, people are managing to establish an infrastructure that is aiding them to survive. In this respect the society itself is shifting from a society based in individualism to one where collective activity is the primary concern and is exemplified in the activities of the grass-roots organizations.[24]
>
> (Kuttab 1989: 137)

In another source, Rita Giacaman (1995: 13) adds to the substance of civil society but without citing it: 'In the Palestinian context, the national struggle was instrumental in giving rise to, and fueling, various types of social movement, including student movements, a voluntary work movement, women's, health, and agricultural movements' (p. 10). Community and grassroots activity, solidarity and community action, began to appear on the agenda in ideological terms, and voluntary, grassroots activities began to characterize the late 1970s.

Here the project becomes that of a nation under occupation. Finally, for Jihad Mash'al (1995: 89): 'The resultant deterioration of health conditions and health services created a situation where the responsibility for caring for the health of Palestinian has shifted to the Palestinians themselves, through the creation of non-governmental, independent, Palestinian organizations.' In other words, though 'civil society' is never formally mentioned, many of its elements (grass roots participation, social responsibility, self-reliable population, community action, etc.) were already invoked by Palestinians. It is just a matter of wording, or of packaging. The spirit of Alma-Ata (captured by the shortcut 'Health for All') has strongly influenced the imaginary and actions of the first health activists in the Territories. As the first medical popular committee, the role of UPMRC has

been and remains important.[25] The Union of Palestinian Medical Relief Committees were the historical pioneers in that matter, when few physicians decided in 1979 to join their efforts and started voluntary medical work in Palestinian villages during their free time. Most of them were close to the Communist Party and many of the founding fathers of UPMRC studied in the USSR, Rumania, Czechoslovakia or elsewhere in the Soviet Bloc. The two other left wing health NGOs (UHWC and UHCC) are actually groups of physicians who were part of UPMRC and later split to create their own movements, close to two other Marxist parties, namely the PFLP and DFLP. Their leaders were also marked by the socialist rhetoric of that time. This common matrix will have an important consequence on these three large health NGOs. Although UPMRC seems to have the lead on the production of this emancipating narrative of a 'health as entry point',[26] the historical monopoly of UPMRC will fire back. Political rivals of UPMRC who were part of the same narrative of socio-political emancipation through NGOs until the end of the first *Intifada* but affiliated to other political parties, will actually use the same argument of civil society to attack UPMRC and in particular its leader, Dr Mustafa Barghouthi, in the years to come.

Through the short overview of the previous texts, the turning point for the emergence of civil society is 1993. This comes actually as no surprise for two reasons. First, this is a time where the first *Intifada* is coming to an end, not just because retrospectively we know it ended in 1993, but because many authors point out that there was a moment of reflux after 1991, in particular with the beginning of the multilateral peace negotiations in Madrid (October 1991). The year 1993 coincides with the signing of the DoP, and the pledging conference towards the establishment of a nascent PNA. This all meant an *internationalization* of the Palestinian question with an even greater variety of actors involved. Most notably, large IGOs such as the World Bank and IMF took a preponderant role in shaping and leading some of the flows towards the Palestinian Territories.

Second, the question and the phrase of 'civil society' became very popular in the Arab world and debated beginning in 1992. The list of texts discussed in the chapter on the Arab-Muslim Civil society (Chapter 2) were from the same period: the books published in Palestine about civil society all date from 1993 onwards (Ghalioun *et al.* 1993; Abu Amr 1995; Bishara 1996; Muslih 1993).[27] The book published by the International People's Health Council (IPHC 1995) is a case in point: this collection of articles is the proceeding of a conference held in 1992 where UPMRC hosted international health activists from around the globe. In *none* of the nine keynote speeches[28] and 12 country analyses,[29] is the phrase 'civil society' explicitly mentioned, though many times the spirit of civil society was invoked. Thus, grassroots, community-based organizations, call for greater NGO influence in national policy-making, as well as invoking the democratic mission of mass-based organizations as opposed to state-led centralization, but no occurrence of the phrase 'civil society' can be found. The only place where it appears is in the editor's note[30] and in the small introduction on 'The Palestinian Context', written two years after the conference (IPHC 1995: x, xii). So if in its final form (the book was eventually published in

February 1995), its two-page introduction manages to use three times the phrase 'civil society' in half a page, it never appears in 120 pages of text produced by various speakers. It could be concluded that this very book is a witness to the process of '*branchement*' or connection that took place in these years. The introduction to the book under scrutiny now expressly mentions civil society:

> In spite of the emerging Palestinian Authority, NGOs, including those working in health, have an important role in the building of civil society in Palestine – whilst resisting Israeli occupation. […] Health NGOs are actively involved in this work. In addition to their efforts to build civil society in Palestine, they are making sure that all those working in health play a major part in the policy making process.
>
> (IPHC 1995: xii)

Let us note that at the same time – i.e. at the time where the PNA was active only in Gaza and Jericho (1994) – Mustafa Barghouthi was publishing a short pamphlet about *Palestinian NGOs and their Role in Building a Civil Society* (1994). The step was then not just the fact of a foreigner editing the conference proceedings, but rather a documented case of the sudden apparition and lasting invasion of the new entry in the political vocabulary of Palestine: civil society.

So now, there is a whole set of vocabulary and expressions that emerged around 1994, exactly at the time when new challenges emerged on the road to building an autonomous Palestinian state. Civil society is the leading example, but other concepts became as important in the following years. 'Empowerment', 'participatory schemes', 'civil society organizations', 'democratization', etc., are all examples of this new paradigm.

'Civil society' has made different paths in the parlance of Palestinian NGOs. Some adopted the concept very early in the Oslo years, some later, and some simply do not use it. But in the mouth of a public health researcher, the occurrence of the concept of 'civil society' provided a unique opportunity for NGOs which were facing (at least in the left-wing narrative) severe cuts in their budgets since priority was now given to the PNA:

> On one hand, some needed to survive. Some co-opted the discourse but did not change. Some [others] co-opted the discourse and were co-opted by the discourse itself. It is true! […] We need to remember that it was an inevitability. If they had not scrambled [for funding], they would have closed![31]

But let us detail now what are these different paths taken by civil society in the field of health NGOs. We will now offer a typology of views on civil society expressed by about two dozen health NGOs. These views must be seen as part of a wider context, involving the narratives of political activism that unites as much as it divides Palestinian factions and Palestinian NGOs in the Territories.[32]

First model: 'health as entry point' as an explicit message

The first model is that of an explicit alliance of civil society within health agenda. This means that the broad agenda of civil society is expressly mingled and 'married' with the issue of health programmes. Health organizations (like other professionally-based popular committees) can be an 'entry point – as actors – into society for those sectors of society that were most oppressed and disadvantaged' (Barghouthi 1989: 128). This intends to stress the usefulness of the health agenda to promote changes beyond physical well-being. Again, the spirit of the Declaration of Alma-Ata (1978) and the 'socialist' efforts to redeem poor underdeveloped societies, among others, by providing adequate health care, can serve to explain the popularity of this mingling of discourse of civil society with health service provision. It is not just about curative technical medicine, but about a larger and alternative vision of primary health care which takes the socio-political context of occupation into account (Barghouthi and Giacaman 1990: 80n27, 84).

As an example, the following excerpt of an interview should give a better understanding of what is meant by 'marriage' of civil society with the health agenda. This NGO, specialized in mental health and in particular psycho-traumas as consequence of torture, runs a programme for Palestinian police forces:

> On top of our regular *Community Mental Health Department* (which oversees the clinics, the work of professionals and the issues of treatment (medical)), we have a *Training and Educational Department*. It covers all the training courses (short-term training courses). We [also] offer training courses to police and intelligence officers (on human rights and mental health: namely the impact of torture on prisoners). […] I think civil society has two roles to play: 1) to provide professional needed services for/in the community, and 2) [it has a] role in the democratization of the society. By democratization, I mean also the political level.[33]

In this case, the idea is a straightforward case of *spill-over*. By raising awareness amongst police forces (accused of torturing prisoners), this health NGO hopes to contribute towards a stronger dedication of all parts of the Palestinian polity to human rights issues, and democracy.

Within this first category of *civil society as a spill-over mechanism* (that allows one to pass from a specific health agenda into a broader agenda of individual's empowerment and therefore potential socio-political changes), one needs to distinguish between those who use it with an *underlying political agenda* (read, political party agenda), and those who make only general reference to socio-political change without implying a political agenda.

In this first subcategory, one can find unsurprisingly the main health NGOs that were historically affiliated to leftist political parties but whose links might have become rather loose over the years. This is the case of UPMRC (Gaza and West Bank), of the UHWC (West Bank and Gaza), HDIP, and Bir Zeit Public

Health Department.[34] In the case of UPMRC and UHWC, this is no surprise, since they are both close to the PPP and to the PFLP: in the first case Dr Mustafa Barghouthi was a member of the politburo of the PPP until April 2003 and Dr Rabah Muhana is both president of the UHWC and a member of the Central Committee of PFLP. HDIP is another outlet of Dr M. Barghouthi, and the person interviewed for the Bir Zeit Public Health Department is Rita Giacaman, a well known left-wing activist.

To move away from the individuals, but within the content of this political agenda, here are two quotes to illustrate this phenomenon:

> We care about […] giving good health care to people who need it, under-privileged, marginalized. […] We believe in social justice, that is why are in non-profit and non-governmental sector. Otherwise, we would be in private sector. […] If you look carefully, the ones involved in UPMRC, especially the founders, the volunteers, the leaders and those who work in it, have come from a certain group of the society: the under-privileged groups. They are mostly sons of villagers, of refugee camps. They are not from the same group that produced nurses and doctors in the 1950s and 1960s, the privileged groups in the society. They come with this strong sense of responsibility. […] So the issue of social justice, with the coming of the PNA, became linked to the issue of civil society, democracy, democratic needs, and democratic governance. […] Being an instrument of change in a broad sense for democratic reform is acceptable.[35]

In this line of thinking, the establishment of the PNA stopped the further emergence of this new professional middle-class (Robinson 1997). It is therefore the duty, in the vision of Mustafa Barghouthi, and of some other health organizations, to continue this social change. Hence so much of the focus put by such an organization on youth programmes, as embodiment of this new (lower) middle-class that still needs to arrive into power one day. Youth activities were also the focus of this part of the interview with a leader of the UHWC in the West Bank:

> Yes, they [youth activities] are part of the social work. That is why we have developmental components and work in rural areas, in west of Beit Lahem and in the Old City of Jerusalem. We have our centres like Nidhal and Juzour Centre in Beit Sahour, working inside the community. It is an important component to keep the link with the community. Not necessarily out of factionalism, but to serve the community.[36]

Let us note that all of these NGOs with a rather open political agenda are large NGOs, established in 1979, 1985, 1989 and 1993. UPMRC and UHWC's annual reports[37] in their Mission/Vision statements both cite goals of 'holistic health care' to promote 'the personal and collective maturity necessary to build a civil society in Palestine' (HWC 2002).

In the second sub-category ('neutral agenda'), we find three NGOs belonging to medium-size organizations (Ardh al-Itfal and Juzoor) and a large one (the Gaza Community Mental Health Programme, GCMHP). They are also much younger organizations (established in 1991 for GCMHP, 1996 for Juzoor and 1999 for Ardh al-Itfal). This goes hand-in-hand with the logic of the Oslo years where NGOs became 'professionalized', to use the expression of Hammami (1995).

The political agenda of certain health NGOs is watered down, if not attacked by these three organizations for undermining common work and better-coordinated efforts on the ground where quality-health intervention is highly demanded in the context of the second *Intifada*.[38] Another interviewee, joking on the fact that his organization used to be part of a Swiss NGO and therefore 'neutral', insisted that:

> Of course, we perceive health not only as maintaining [a] basic health service, but it is [also] the people's right to receive affordable services. It should not be only in a one-way [manner where] technicians are giving. No! [instead] people should be part of the plans, of the prioritizing of the needs. […] People have to fight for a better health system. This is what we could do. We are fighting for that. We are now pushing, for example, Yatta Disabled Society to push for their rights. We gave $10,000 for them to structure [their demands] and push for their rights.[39]

In this case, it is not about supporting overt political change, but to favour a sector-wide approach (in this case disabled groups) to have a greater say in the political process. In other words, it is not about the emergence of a younger layer of the population, or favouring people with a given political agenda (or identity), but rather to stress the need for just mechanisms of representation and deliberation amongst Palestinians.

Another example is that of the health NGO whose full name is already hinting at this implied message: Juzoor Health Foundation for Social Development is based in the West Bank and was established in 1996. Finally, the very large GCMHP of the Gaza Strip was founded in 1991 by Dr Eyad Saraj whose political activism during the Oslo years was not a partisan one, but is known for his independence (he was thus jailed once by the PNA for having criticized it too). His aim and that of his organization (now led by Salah Abdel Shafi) is to improve the rule of law and the respect of human health integrity, both physical and psychical.

Second model: indirect civil society, with a hint of paternalism

The second type of vision and usage of 'civil society' in the parlance of Palestinian NGOs is that of the organizations where the notion of 'civil society' is either absent from the professional health work, or where it is only mentioned as a general motivation, but not directly inserted in the context of health work.

This is the case of Red Crescent Society for the Gaza Strip (led Dr Haydar Abdel-Shafi, a physician and well-respected independent political figure of the

Gaza Strip until his death in 2007).[40] When questioned whether the concept of 'civil society' was not used too much in a top-down manner to serve to control, he responded:

> No. It should be a bottom-up process. Civil society is concerned with civil affairs pertaining [to] the welfare of the community. This is civil society. In essence it is political because its objective is safeguard the interest of the population. But there is no active and direct involvement in politics. In its activity, towards welfare, it can really become political. But it does not engage itself in political activities.[41]

His vision of civil society is therefore that of a civic engagement towards the welfare of the community. Having been for decades close to the Communist party, this comes as no surprise for Dr Abdel Shafi.

More interesting is the case of a small NGO, representing refugees originally from the same town and organized as a community-based organization in the Gaza Strip. The Family Association of Majdal (*jami'iyah ahaaliyyah majdal*) started in 1976 as a cultural centre (to feed the collective memory about Majdal[42]) and from 1994 onwards, it began offering a variety of education activities as well as basic medical care through voluntary work. After the return of PLO members in 1994, the association reorganized itself with a board of 13 members, belonging to different political factions, and with a mix of three 'returnees' along with ten 'insiders', with elections held every two years. When I asked him what was the 'philosophy' of the association, its secretary general responded:

> [This] reformed alliance was based in order to reform civil society. It is not just about politics, but also to develop social life and recuperate the loss of education during the Israeli direct occupation. […] We must concentrate on social dimension of education, on how watching TV, on the relations with groups, how to speak with one another, how to be open to others, to be open and loyal to the society at large, how to be positive with one another. All in all, it is about teaching how to be positive social being. It is like Pavlov: it is a kind of reflex to train to become calmly positive person, *shakhs* [Arabic for 'individual', 'person'], and *muwatin* ['citizen' in Arabic].[43]

Of course, beyond the paternalist assumption that the association has to *teach* its members how to behave, the definition of the overarching role of the association is rather close to the definition of civil society put forward by certain left-wing secular activists (in terms of social change, and leading role assumed by NGOs). This evidence reinforces the idea that civil society does not *need* to be explicitly stated, but in some cases, it is only the expression which is missing, not the concepts or substance behind it.

This model of Family Associations is well spread in the Gaza Strip and in the West Bank. Such organizations perform important roles of mediation between the community and the PNA.[44] The two family organizations I interviewed each

gather at least 10,000 members and are therefore very important to serve as relays of local interests. They might not be professional in their structures, but at least they have a strong membership-basis. Moreover they are usually based in peripheral zones, which are much less covered by international aid, although supporting such organizations could help to cut the grass from under the feet of militant religious groups, as argued expressly by one interviewee.

The burning question of the rivalry of certain smaller NGOs with those belonging to militant Islamist groups was also addressed by a Board member of the Palestinian General Union of Charitable Societies (PGUCS). For her, many of the charitable organizations in the Territories fell into lethargy after the disengagement of the Jordanians in 1988 (and because of the sudden drop of financial assistance from Amman). The second *Intifada* has forced them to react and to respond to the challenges, which are two-pronged: on the one hand, the work of some charitable organization stopped properly after 1988, and even more so after the arrival of the PNA. On the other hand, the dynamic involvement of both large secular NGOs and of the Islamic (in some cases Islamist NGOs) forced charitable organizations to react. This led to what she describes as an 'awakening' ('*nahdhah*') of a sector of the charitable sector.[45] While she regrets that charitable organizations are overlooked by a large majority of international donors (despite their longer historical involvement amongst civil society organizations and the fact that important sectors of activities are almost exclusively covered by the charitable associations – as in the case of elderly care), she is also very keen to criticize the attitudes of Palestinian NGOs to follow certain fashions:

> It looks like the global terminology [of civil society] is impacting even the local organisations and local scene. People always try to follow and jump on the bandwagon, as they say, in order to make hey where the sunshine!
>
> I know many organisations that came to existence because [of the themes] of democracy and civil society. Can you convince me that there can be democracy in this part of the world overnight? This is ridiculous! But some people wanted to try. If you look at the numbers of these organisations doing conflict-resolutions, civil society, and this and that. It is not out of conviction only: it is because donors have money. It is opportunity! People are opportunists! People want to make hey while the sunshine! But this is impacting, you know.[46]

Without negating vices of the charitable sector (e.g. clientelism and political patronage), Nora Qort notices that some charitable organizations are renewing their activities and their way of working, which very often means getting specialized in a specific field of intervention and potentially professionalize part of the staff. Still, they are very active and important in rural setting and could serve as a *cordon sanitaire* vis-à-vis the Islamist organizations recruiting in the same turf of marginalized areas.[47]

Finally, another small health organization can be included in this subgroup. The Patients' Friends Society of Jerusalem is specialized in breast cancer

screening. It does not use the concept of civil society in any parts of the interview or anywhere in its presentation material.[48] However, there are few elements that related to the issue of civil society. When asked about the vision of health being more than physical well-being, the director insisted that:

> Over the year, working with breast cancer and screening, it was my dream to start a support group. It is not just health, you have to address other issues. Women would come here, as a major center. See all the books we have. We did research as well. So there is a real need for psychosocial need. So we created the first support group in 2000. That is just an example of how to change people's life, change their empowerment possibilities. Empower women and get them to go out as advocate. So as a small way, yes![49]

Health is therefore more than physical and the vocabulary ('empowerment', 'advocacy') is very close to that of the previous category (explicit use of civil society but with a politically neutral agenda), except that civil society does not appear at all.

Third model: no 'civil society', but another strong message

The final approach to the issue of civil society in the health sector is characterized by the total absence of the concept 'civil society' but by the presence of a very different type of message. In this third subgroup, we find a variety of health actors, ranging from the pious *Zakaat* Committee of Hebron and Ihsan Charitable organization, to the very small village-based Tarqumia Benevolent Society, passing by the PNA-linked Maqassed Hospital and Palestinian Red Crescent Society of Hebron. Following the need to assess the impact of external aid, they will be split into two groups, one who resources are mostly locally generated and the other whose resources are coming from international donors.

In the first subgroup (externally-generated income), we find organizations such as Al-Ihsan Charitable Society. Established in 1983, it is based in Hebron and is specialized in care to disabled people. It is a member of the International Cerebral Palsy Society and trains health professionals for the rest of the West Bank on such disabilities. It also runs an emergency primary health care centre with four doctors and five nurses (about 60 other staff work in the disability unit). When asked about how the organization views the role of the organization vis-à-vis the population and its needs, Ihsan's PR officer responded that: 'We give rules and help them form a society. We are the lighthouse that guides the people according to our proper model. We are the candle lighting the path for the people.'[50]

Behind this very colourful phrase lies a totally different philosophy: no more secular discourse about people's empowerment through pluralism or civil society, but very pious invitations to follow religious models of activism. Far from being a militant religious Muslim association, this NGO (like others in the Hebron region) insists on religious obligations in general. Thus, the annual reports of al-Ihsan and of al-Ahli Hospital (run by the Patients' Friends Society

of Hebron) both start with three pages full of *hadiths*, excerpts of the *Qur'an*, pictures of the Ibrahimi Holy Mosque and of the inevitable *fatiha*.[51] Unsurprisingly, most of the international donors of these two organizations are Arab or Muslim organizations. However, they also collect funding from non-religious western organizations (such as ANERA, CARE, Red Cross, various Consulates, etc.) because of the good quality of their work.[52] Obviously the likely target audience of such bilingual reports will be other pious organizations, explaining thus the totally different orientation of the content of such reports.[53]

I also visited another pious organization of Hebron, the Islamic Charitable Society, but despite the fact that an interview was formally set, I was shown the door without any answer to my questions about the role of the organization with regard to socio-political work. A cursory glance at the Society's website indicates that schooling, orphan care, health and housing projects are vital aspects of this association established in 1962 and running branches in four other large urban centre of the Hebron district, revealing a deep anchorage in the region. In this case, the religious message is even more important than for the two other Hebron organizations visited.[54]

But religion is not a must in this category: this third approach where civil society is not mentioned but where sources of funding are externally located is also conveyed by secular organizations: the Palestinian Red Crescent Society of Hebron, as well as the Union of the Charitable Societies (UCS) of Hebron District, along with the Maqassed Hospital in Jerusalem are examples of this orientation. All three are very close to the dominant political faction, that of Fatah, and of the PNA. Both the director of Maqassed Hospital and the Vice-President of the UCS-Hebron District were putting forward the importance of PNA's work and prompt to attack certain secular NGOs for being too 'business-oriented' and 'undemocratic'.[55]

This second subgroup (internally-generated income) is made of organizations insisting on involving as much as possible local residents whose voluntary contribution represents the major part of the NGO work. The first case is that of the *zakaat* committees. *Zakaat* is an obligatory form of almsgiving and is locally organized. In the case of the *zakaat* committee I encountered, Hebron's *zakaat* committee disbursed between 1988 and 2000, an average annual amount of $930,000, with a peak in 2000 with $1.3 million.[56] Ten thousand people benefited from its small clinic. Special financial contributions for people not covered by health insurance were also made regularly by the *zakaat* committee during this *Intifada*.

The Tarqumiya Benevolent Society is a small NGO in a town west of Hebron, and whose catchments area is of 70,000 people, caught between Hebron and the Green Line. The organization also relies financially on local contributions, in-kind or cash. It extended its primary health care centre (originally donated by Hebron's Patients Friends Society) on a piece of land donated by a local resident, and receives only rare and small contributions of international organizations (like CARE, Canadian Development Fund and Oxfam GB).[57] As for the final organization of this category, the Union of Charitable Societies of Jerusalem, the stress is put on local resources and on the necessity for Palestinians to do themselves developmental work.[58]

In all three cases, very little discourses are made about civil society in general. Rather, interviewees insist on the vital capacity that Palestinians have to organize themselves their priorities, but by working directly, and also *thanks* to local contributions. This is, for them, the best guarantee that social work will be done in the best interests of all and with the minimum costs involved.[59]

The meaning of these different interpretations

What is the purpose of this excursus on the different visions of civil society held by health actors? Two reasons should by now become clear.

First, the use of 'civil society' and reference to some of its key contents are not the unique resource of few larger 'modern' and professional secular NGOs. On the contrary, many organizations that do not have extensive staff to write fine presentation materials, also resort to notions of civil society.[60] The use of 'civil society' is not the unique domain of people who were trained and educated abroad. Many physicians, whom I interviewed and who studied abroad, do not automatically use the concept of civil society as an overarching justification for the work done in the health sector.[61] In short: there is no monopoly of 'civil society' by a given type of organizations or by a certain profile of individuals running NGOs. To the contrary, the concept is a widespread one.

Second, in addition to the *service* provided by health NGOs, what also matters is the *message* that is transmitted through or along the service.[62] Some chose to link a strong message about socio-political change, some about the necessity to enhance the rule of law; some entertain a paternalist model of NGO-communities; while still others prefer to instil conservative religious values into their health work. The question is which message is more successful and more popular amongst Palestinians? Is civil society as a panacea the message to provide to the population? Can it compete with more conservative ones?

'Civil society' has been intimately linked to the narrative of left-wing political parties. It is no surprise if the PNA and intellectuals close to (or members of) Fatah, the dominant faction of the PNA (and PLO), have on many occasions attacked the concept of civil society and the physical entity 'hiding' behind it, namely NGOs (the irony is that after Hamas won the elections in 2006, Fatah switched its discourse in support of civil society). There have been many campaigns led by PNA officials against the '*dakakeen*', a word meaning in Arabic 'boutiques' to denote the business-like approach of some of the NGOs that are prone to represent themselves as watchdogs of the corrupt PNA. Intellectuals close to Fatah have also produced various texts showing outright scepticism about the concept of 'civil society'.[63] In the case of health, the director of Maqassed Hospital in East Jerusalem was keen to stress that when the PNA decided to take over and to replace by force (security people broke into the office of the previous director) the previous board (composed of a coalition of health professionals whose political credentials were rather on the left of the spectrum), it was nothing but a normal historical return of the PLO (through the PNA) into East Jerusalem. The previous board, it should be observed, had not

performed elections in the previous 15 years.[64] But there is nothing new here, a group on the left hand using civil society to justify its campaign for a more democratic PNA and on the right hand a defensive PNA mirroring black spots of the 'civil society' champions (e.g. corruption scandal in the LAW NGO).

The new point I would like to stress here is the dimension internal to the left-wing groups in the narrative about civil society. The latter is actually one of the organizing and structuring elements of the clashing narratives amongst left-wing NGOs. In other words, the use of 'civil society' has become the discursive corner stone of the internal 'feuds' between left-wing NGOs.[65]

For example, Mustafa Barghouthi's tendency to speak on behalf of the whole of civil society organizations is reproached by one rival health organization, the UHWC, close to the PFLP. Its West Bank vice-director attacked, without naming anyone, the tendency of some 'prominent figures within the NGO movement to say "WE are the civil society, a bit like *la France c'est moi!*" '. He also pointed to the fact that PINGO (the NGO Network) had become a place for 'the hegemony of one or two persons' only.[66] On the same issue of PINGO, the smaller partner of what was a broad left-wing coalition in 1993, the UHCC (close to the DFLP) also lamented that the PINGO network served dominantly the interests of two political factions at the expenses of other smaller ones.[67]

These excerpts should make clear what is meant by an internal left-wing feature. Let us note that this is not only the case of health: the same factional struggle exists in the field of agriculture (Abu Sada 2007b), women and advocacy: each political factions and 'their' NGOs try to compete in what is more a struggle over a constituency than an effort towards uniquely professional developmental goals.

To come back to the question of the message attached to service delivery, different overtones are used by NGOs. A segment of the health NGOs has tied its services to the message of civil society in response to two levels of engagement: On the first tier, 'civil society' was a natural response to the evolving *Zeitgeist*, where the concept became fashionable, and meant an easier form of recognition from the donors, all pretty much formatted to the international developmental parlance. On the second tier, a domestic one, 'civil society' became the ideological cover to attack an increasingly autocratic PNA. But the problem is that this message of civil society has been gradually diverted from its primary target (PNA) towards internal chicanes and feuds amongst different left-wing groups, though remaining the normative or framing interface between certain NGOs and donors.

Because of this loss of focus on the PNA and because of its overuse by international and local advocacy organizations, *the message of civil society has lost its impact as a gathering force* amongst a large share of the population.[68] The focus amongst secular health NGOs has been on which organization would hold the totem of civil society, or on which person would be the most important civil society figure. Other messages put forward by other health NGOs, in the context of a return to conservative religious values, have become more powerful in capturing people's imagination in the wider 'battle' of fostering social support through local NGOs.

Palestinian NGOs have been caught in a two-tier negotiation process. The upper part involves interaction (and in some best-case scenarios, deliberation) with international donors to get funding and the lower part involves interaction between the NGOs and their local populations/constituencies. NGOs have been trapped in a time warp with international donors; whereas, the local population, because of the increased economic difficulties of the Oslo and post-Oslo years, has moved towards different (in general much more conservative) ideologies. This hiatus or distance that grew between local NGOs and their bases, would help to explain why there are attempts on the side of NGOs of repoliticizing their actions, or at least, returning to local forms of assistance and political justification (Abu Sada 2005b).[69]

If we assume that the various popular committees and mass movements were the ancestors and frontrunners of nowadays NGOs (which represent anyway only a part of civil society), then we could modelize the impact of international aid, and in particular that of civil society promotion upon the evolution of civil society formation in Palestine. As stressed in various sections of Chapter 2, the concept of civil society can already apply to describe the type of collective actions of the 1970s and 1980s, providing that we stay away from strictly fixed definitions of civil society based on a Euro-centric model and on a late twentieth century institutional definition. Instead, considering civil society in its diversity, *en devenir*, and as venue to reach autonomy thanks to its capacity of auto-institution allows to take these forms of collective organizations into consideration in our analysis of the impact of external aid of local civil society.

We could portray what happened over the years in the form of three figures. On the first one (Figure 5.1), two local NGOs and their constituencies are *lined up* in the same vertical space, expressing thereby the fact that they are having the same interests, or areas of priority, although somehow engaged in a relationship of power. This would correspond to the period of the 1980s, where NGOs were active as popular committees, with no international donors really influencing the rules of the game. We put here two sets of local constituency and NGOs to stress the diversity of needs, or population, and of type of NGOs. They are linked by arrows symbolizing the fact that in a way NGOs *represent* and *serve* local interests, while the local population provides with voluntary and grassroots support to 'their' NGOs.

In Figure 5.2,[70] we can see that the international donors, local NGOs and populations are *lined up* in the same vertical space, expressing a relation of power (donors–NGOs and NGOs–constituency), but also the fact that they are working, *grosso modo*, along the same lines (or with the same interests). The various arrows indicate that they have a different relationship of financial dependency and accountability with one another. This type of relationship would be the one at the time of the first *Intifada*, until the early 1990s, before the implementation of the Oslo agreements.

In the third figure (5.3), we can see that NGOs are still vertically lined up with international donors, but not with their constituency anymore (hence the question marks towards the missing constituency). Thus, they have lost most of

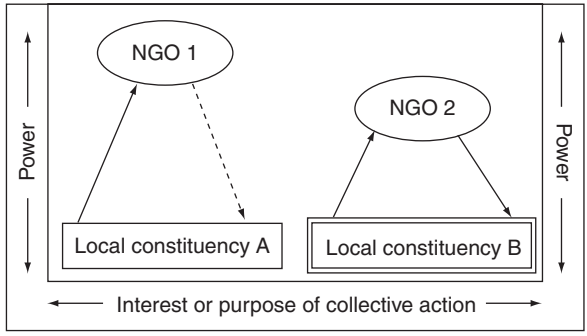


Figure 5.1 Model of relations between NGOs and constituencies in the 1980s.

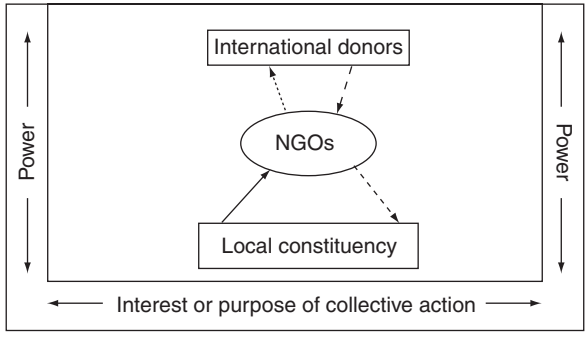


Figure 5.2 Model of relations between donors, NGOs and constituencies by 1990.

their contact points with the local populations, in order to remain in a funding relationship with donor organizations. Local population and NGOs do not have the same interest(s), or priority of intervention. This situation would reflect distorted changes that took place during the Oslo years and in some cases, during the second *Intifada*.[71]

Such situations, it will be argued, can be modelled as a situation of autonomy and heteronomy, as we will further explore in the following chapter. Let us now turn to another sector of NGOs, namely those which are cause-oriented (advocacy NGOs) and see whether the same phenomena and transformations occurred.

Advocacy NGOs

We listed about 50 NGOs active in cause-oriented organizations activities (a little less than 5 per cent of the total NGOs in Palestine). Such advocacy activities range from legal protection, human rights protection and awareness raising, civic education, democratization information, peace promotion activities, as well

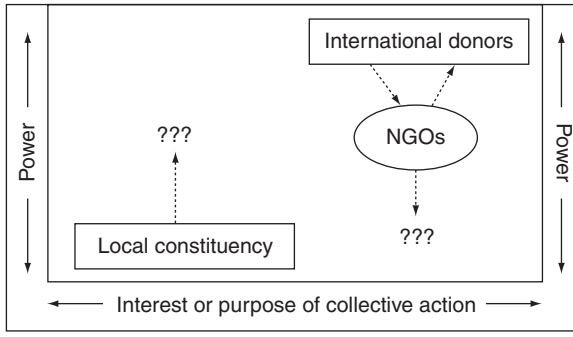


Figure 5.3 Model of relations between donors, NGOs and constituencies by mid-2000s.

as few advocacy research centres. They were founded in average around 1992, reinforcing the divide between older service-oriented NGOs and more recent advocacy ones.

In terms of the geographical distribution, if there is a very good proportion between the West Bank and the Gaza Strip with regard to the total population (62 per cent of the advocacy NGOs are in the WB which has 63 per cent of the population, and 38 per cent of NGOs are in Gaza where 37 per cent of the population live), the distribution by city and governorate displays a huge imbalance. Gaza City has the lead with 36 per cent of the advocacy NGOs based within its boundaries (17 NGOs), slightly more than Ramallah (14 NGOs for 30 per cent of the total number) and about twice as much as East Jerusalem (with ten NGOs, or 19 per cent of the total number). Nablus and Beit Lahem with three each, Jenin with one, and North Gaza one, are far behind. Central regions (around Ramallah and Gaza City) are therefore over-represented in this sector of activities. This striking geographical imbalance will be discussed later.[72] NGOs of this sector employ ten staff on average. Six of the 47 NGOs are part of PINGO and only two are affiliated with the Union of Charitable Societies. Of these NGOs 18 per cent are run by women (slightly more than in the health sector where 12 per cent of NGO leaders are women). The political composition of advocacy NGOs also reflects the predominant role played by left-wing political organizations: 44 per cent of them are (or were at least initially) close to left-wing political parties. Within these, PFLP seems to have the lead, followed by the PPP. Thirty-nine per cent are independent and 17 per cent close to the government,[73] not to say simply Fatah-outlets as in some of the cases we will present later.

The first advocacy organization created in the Territories is the Arab Thought Forum. It was launched in 1977 around socio-economic issues in Jerusalem. Though it claims to be politically independent on its website, it was established by Ibrahim Daqqaq and other people close to the communist orbit.[74] In a way it corresponds to the 'partisan clubs' that emerged from the late 1970s onwards.

Departing from usual political affiliations, al-Haq was founded in 1979 by a group of lawyers who decided to legally challenge Israeli Occupation and to analyse its military orders and legal ruling of the Territories through 'civilian administration'. Al-Haq is the first human rights organization not only in the Territories but also in the Middle East and its model was emulated by the PLO, which decided, through its Arab Studies Society (founded in 1980 and based for many years in the controversial Orient House in East Jerusalem) to establish the 'Palestinian Human Rights Information Centre' (PHRIC, now closed). Though al-Haq was accused by certain nationalist milieus of spying,[75] the quality of its work and its readiness to work in collaboration with PHRIC reinforced its credentials. Al-Haq, by training many human rights workers in the Territories, had a crucial role in shaping other advocacy organizations. Many heads of other NGOs I interviewed actually started their training in the field of advocacy thanks to al-Haq. Another human rights organization started working in the Gaza Strip in 1985 to monitor Israeli violations there (Gaza Centre for Rights and Law).

All other advocacy organizations were established after 1988: at least 20 were created between 1988 and 1993, that is during the first *Intifada*; 20 others were established during the Oslo years (1994–2000). Many of the organizations launched during the first *Intifada* were a direct response to imprisonment of thousands of Palestinians (Mandela Institute for Prisoners 1989, Ad-Dhameer Prisoners Support Association 1992), repeated human rights violations (LAW Palestinian Society for the Protection of Human Rights and the Environment 1990), and to the beginning of systematic closure of the Territories by Israel impacting on Palestinians working in Israel (Democracy and Workers' Rights Centre 1993). A new type of organization saw the light during the same years, only to become more important during the Oslo years, namely advocacy NGOs promoting peace activities, and common work with Israeli partners (Palestinian Centre for Rapprochement between People 1988, Search for Common Ground 1991, Palestine Centre for Peace and Democracy 1992). Finally, let us note that research centres also stem from this period (PASSIA, 1987; Ramallah Centre for Human Rights Studies 1990; MUWATIN 1992; and the Nablus-based Centre for Palestinian Research and Studies 1993).

As self-government became tangible in the OPT around 1994, advocacy NGOs literally mushroomed in the Oslo years, as in the case of other sectors. Nearly half of all advocacy NGOs (23) were established after 1993. They can be subdivided into four main fields of activities. Eight 'democracy' NGOs, running civic education activities, promoting democracy values and monitor the rule of law on a higher level than individual rights (such as the Citizens' Rights ombudsman, PICCR set up in 1994, or the Coalition For Transparency And Accountability (AMAN)). Seven human rights organizations dedicated mostly to individual rights violations. Four NGOs are specialized in peace promotion activities. Finally, four more are specialized in collective rights dealing with refugee questions and expropriations (in particular because of Jewish settlement expansion).

In sum, many of these new NGOs were surfing on two large consensus waves: a) the consensus around Oslo that the peace process was *the* goal to

support: NGOs responded to the international donors' readiness to support democracy and peace promotion (such as the 'people-to-people' programmes, later described); b) the Washington-consensus (with priority given to sound governance, a vibrant civil society, and informal economy) was also echoed with many NGOs devoted to questions of the rule of law and democracy.

Except for the last four, all of the most recent NGOs reflected the *Zeitgeist*, which implies the necessity for new organizations to 'build' a civil society, to 'construct' democracy, 'promote' human rights values and 'reinforce' the rule of law. In other words, this mushrooming of advocacy NGOs hints at the belief of those who funded them that there was a lack, an absence of democracy, civil society and rule of law. In that, this line of thinking reproduces the previously discussed (neo-)Orientalist arguments that there were *no* civil society actors and that it was the mission of donors to build them *ex nihilo*. An alternative explanation is that the civil society active before Oslo was not the one desired by international donors. Therefore, a new type of advocacy organizations had to be favoured, if not created. In both hypotheses, such form of funding for these sectors of interventions has been overlooking previous forms of local organizations informed with such themes.

Many authors have unduly concentrated their attention on the particularly thorny relation between NGOs and the PNA, but hereby missing the point of the question of the relations between the NGOs and the local population. Surely, the PNA has not always had a smooth and easygoing relationship with the advocacy sector. It is worthwhile illustrating two kinds of reactions that the PNA had vis-à-vis the advocacy NGOs, since the PNA's tendency to take over the sector was much more conspicuous than in other sectors of NGO work.

The first type of reaction has been to occupy the field of advocacy as Fatah did in the 1980s by responding to the hegemonic mobilization around leftist parties' popular committees. Pro-PNA organizations were set up in the Territories, as is the case with the Palestinian Association for Human Rights (PAHR). The latter, actually established in 1985 in Cyprus, came back with other PLO returnees in 1994 and established its office in Gaza City. Its director, Khalil az-Zibn, was also Director General in the President' Office and a personal advisor for NGOs to President Arafat.[76] Khalil az-Zibn did not even try to hide that his money was from Arafat, though insisting it was from his 'private funds and not from the PLO'.[77] To prove the character of Arafat's *homme de paille*, let us note that Khalil az-Zibn was also the head the Gazan Bar Association and the leader of one of the fake NGO networks in Gaza to counterbalance PINGO and the Palestinian General Union of Charitable Societies in the World Bank NGO Project.[78]

Another advocacy group, the Palestinian Association for Legal Science (PALS) was established in 1997 in Gaza at the instigation of Nahed ar-Rayyes.[79] The latter is another PLO returnee elected in 1996 to the PLC on a Fatah list and a later Minister of Justice (appointed in November 2003). Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazen) also established an NGO in Ramallah running people-to-people programs, the Palestinian Centre for Peace (PCP). A final example of physical occupation of the advocacy terrain by people close or in favour of the PNA,

happened when the director of the Gaza Centre for Law and Human Rights, Raji Sourani, was arrested in 1995 for having been too vocal in his criticism of the PNA. Not only was he put in jail, but he was even replaced by a manager who was less critical of the authorities! Raji Sourani moved on to establish his own centre, the Palestinian Centre for Human Rights, which he still heads today.

The second way of the PNA to scratch its political opponents is through intimidation. On some occasions, the PNA did not hesitate to jail and beat up Palestinian human rights activists, just as it intimidated other political opponents (e.g. in the case of the Petition of the Twenty in 1999).[80] Another method, much more efficient in terms of impact upon the collective opinion, consisted in a massive campaign of mud-throwing by the Ministry of Justice against human rights organizations. In 1999, misreading a report from the UN Special Coordinator in the Occupied Territories (UNSCO 1999b) on the *Rule Of Law Development*, the PNA attacked advocacy NGOs for receiving more aid than the Ministry of Justice for the promotion of the rule of law and human rights awareness (Hammami *et al.* 2001).

To spot the types of vision about civil society generated by organizations active in the field, the 22 interviews were separated in two subgroups, distinguished by the content of the message produced by these advocacy NGOs. To highlight the role of donors, such analysis will focus on the priorities set by some international donors, and the impact that such priorities can have on the long term for local advocacy NGOs.

The dilemma of individual or collective rights? Donors' hiding chiasmus

The divide between individual-collective rights stresses the type of solution envisaged by donors and by local NGOs with regard to the Palestinian issue. On the one hand, it is about a continuous struggle for self-determination and full autonomy from the Israelis (which would be a *collective* right issue), while, on the other hand, it is about the struggle of citizens for the establishment of a democratic Palestinian polity (this rather reflects a quest for *individual* rights).[81] By *hiding chiasmus*, I mean that in the course of a moribund peace process, some donors might have favoured one aspect of the struggle at one very moment and switch to another approach later (this is the idea of chiasmus, or inversion). In other words, funding might not have always aimed at the same target (collective or individual rights) and priorities were switched in order to insure the survival of the peace process itself,[82] as opposed to strengthening the democratic credentials of the Palestinian polity first. Donors, although many of their programmes openly aimed at reinforcing internal democratic principles, and at strengthening Palestinian civil society, were actually pursuing another goal, that of the success of the peace process, which actually meant overall the attainment of security for Israel at any costs.[83]

This latter aspect of shifting the level of intervention is what is meant by 'hiding', since donors themselves were not consistent in helping Palestinians

in building a democratic and accountable political system. An example is that of the State Security Courts which were created in the mid-1990s with the full support of some key international actors – despite the fact that they constitute an exceptional jurisdiction and are therefore highly problematic in terms of accountability[84] – in order to fight against Hamas and other militant organizations working through violence against the realization of the Oslo Accords (and the attainment of Israeli security). In that case, the preference for donors was for collective rights at the expense of individual rights, whereas in other moments of the peace process, donors preferred to insist on domestic individual rights (say PNA violation of human rights against its citizens during the 1990s, and pushing for the reform agenda during the second *Intifada*), while hiding burning collective issues (such as the extension of settlements and land expropriation by Israel in the OPT).

Tocci (2005) speaks also about 'the widening gap between rhetoric and reality in EU policy' in the case of the Israeli–Palestinian conflict and stresses the ambiguities in some of the EU's decisions. The phrase 'hiding chiasmus' is another way of referring to some of the inconsistent shifts of donors during the last decade. It is important here to stress that the local population is very conscious of the erratic attitude and programmes pushed by certain donors. A survey conducted in 1997 revealed that about 40 per cent of the population believed that 'foreign funding had a […] negative or very negative' effect in the Territories (Kassis 2001: 44).

Some went even further in their accusations against donors by arguing that funding was exclusively conditional upon full support of the peace process (Hanafi and Tabar 2002). Since some political factions openly opposed the Oslo accords, the question was not just rhetorical. The PFLP and DFLP were most likely to be concerned since Hamas probably did not figure on the map of most international donors. NGOs close to PFLP were keen to stress that they felt the sudden lack of support from donors after the signing of the Oslo Agreements.[85] Examples given also by the recent research on this question stresses that this was not just a problem for DFLP and PFLP but a much broader one (Nakhleh 2004). Independent NGOs have experienced difficulties in receiving funding for projects that were not clearly and directly oriented towards peace. Dr Iyaad Barghouthi, professor of sociology at an-Najah university (Nablus) and head of a small research NGO specializing in questions of Islamism, expressed his profound difficulty in getting funding for his human rights training within Islamic milieus and felt many times that donors would prefer him to work on peace issues.[86]

In other words, what donors might have wanted at certain moments of the last decade might have been out of touch with the priorities of local populations. Thus, the projects baptized 'people-to-people' refer to joint activities (such as workshops, conferences, youth camps, students exchanges, etc.) between groups of Israelis and Palestinians. Much in vogue during the first three or four years after the foundation of the PNA, these programmes started to experience real difficulties from 1998 onwards. PINGO invited its members to boycott all people-to-people projects in 1998.[87] The main reproaches expressed by Palestinians

are twofold. First, people-to-people projects gave the image to the outside world that normalization was on the way between Israelis and Palestinians, although Palestinian autonomy actually existed only on paper.[88] Second, many Palestinians are convinced that the people-to-people programmes were not promoting full equality and that often Israelis had the larger share in terms of say and funding.

Other NGOs stressed another worrisome type of intrusion by international donors in the work of advocacy organizations. Because of the growing economic hardship with the closures and military operations of the last five years, some advocacy NGOs have felt the need to link service-provision to the cause they want to defend. This idea of linking the two elements also stemmed in the mind of one NGO director from the fact that:

> For the society, much of our work is not understandable, especially when it is related to monitoring for example. People want tangible things that contribute to improve, or to make changes in their life. Sometimes we have some problems with donors. We don't understand that, but we see that on the local level, there is a kind of danger, when all organizations, in a specific sector, just follow the trend: whether it is the trend of funders, or global trends but they tend to *forget about real needs of the population.*[89]

But when trying to get funding to respond to local needs and to provide service on top of the cause advocated by its organizations, this NGO was met with a blank face instead of a blank check by one of its regular partners:

> One of the international NGOs stopped funding our organization because they told us we are providing only services. Although we clarified [immediately that we do] not only services! Service is *one* of our strategies to build awareness in our local level, to continue to have our roots and our connections with our people, otherwise we will be in a different area, we will be misunderstood by our people and we will create a vacuum that will be filled by others. And no one wants to hear about it. Unfortunately![90]

A similar uncomfortable experience happened to the same NGO for wanting to promote a campaign of information for Palestinians about issues related to settlement expansion, but again some donors refused to fund this project.

The point here is not to stress that donors in some occasions have the capacity to vet local projects (which is certainly a rather unfortunate exception), but that in the name of certain conceptions of 'civil society' promotion or in the interest of the peace process, international donors actually only pay lip service to local advocacy priorities. For one of the most active human rights organizations this is really disturbing:

> We are wondering and feeling sorry that the western style of democracy is claiming democracy but practicing a conspiracy of silence. Those who are practicing or those who are *claiming* to practice and asking for democracy

> (either Europeans, from governments, or their guardians of human rights) are all intentionally practicing the conspiracy of silence about what is going on here.
>
> What are they waiting [to denounce Israel] for? massacres? genocide? ethnic cleansing? [We do] not [ask them to act] according to our descriptions, but according to the international concepts: the ICRC […] is speaking about war crimes in the case of settlements. So, we are not asking to be in favour of the Palestinians, we ask them to be committed to the rules they work for, for the conventions that were ratified, to the principles which they invoke.[91]

On that account, advocacy activities are very sensitive to international donors' interference. In the case of service providing NGOs, the work is usually demanded by the lack of given infrastructures, or by a lack of coverage in certain zones (all which can be often quantified). Advocacy activities require much more scrutiny on local subjective perceptions. It is not sure that all international donors consider full partnership with advocacy NGOs as a necessity. That can have negative outcomes since local organizations are not given full credit for their initiatives. Such top-down priority setting (from donors to local NGOs) reinforces the notion that advocacy priorities must come from abroad. Again, local organizations are the receiving end, or the empty recipient accepting a message to promote.

These contradictions, both in the priorities of donors, and those raised by Palestinians – be they NGO leaders and simple citizens – stressed the need to articulate and study the interviews of advocacy NGOs in the light of their need to respond to *internally-generated* or to *externally-oriented* questions. This was done for two reasons. First, it responds to the overarching question of the interaction of donors with local NGOs in the definitions and setting of priorities with regard to 'civil society' and, second, it enables us to survey such a large quantity of material (activity reports, course textbooks, conference proceedings, interviews, and the like) through an analytical prism.

Inward-oriented NGOs

The first type of approach is that of local advocacy NGOs which mostly grant priority to local issues and which tailor their work to the needs of beneficiaries in a close-range and in rather direct contact with the NGO. The work is perceived and conceived[92] by NGO actors as mostly linking with their local constituency. Some elements of the interviews hinted unobtrusively to such model of orientations.

A first revealing ingredient was the capacity to link general advocacy items to specific issues of the Palestinian context. For example, for one interviewee, the focus had not only to be on building a democratic society through lobbying and awareness raising, but also by actually placing the focus on 'democratic struggle as much against the autocratic PNA as against the intolerance of the Islamists'.[93]

For another, it was about bringing 'internal discussions back to the grassroots [level]. Internal democracy is the key',[94] while for still another it was about creating a stronger tie with the population, 'through service providing. Many of our volunteers are people whom we served [in cases of] land confiscated, or house demolished, etc. They are more ready to do voluntary work and assist others [later]'.[95]

Another way to frame this model is that lower strata of the populations are preferred to elites and a particular effort is done towards that direction. For example, a project can aim at 'empowering people by teaching [them how] to speaking in public', or assist 'a variety of smaller organizations, such as handicapped organizations, to better convey their messages' into the public agenda.[96] What matters is that the projects or programmes in question respond to pressing local needs and not just to fashions relayed by donors.

Similar to this idea of working directly upon the lower levels of society, the issue of language is also very important. Some actors were aware of the difficult work of advocacy NGOs. As an interviewee put it, service-providing NGOs

> are working on tangible issues, like UPMRC, and others. You feed directly with something. But in [advocacy] NGOs like us, we are teaching, lecturing, doing some training. You cannot feel directly the results. We are suffering more from the critical point that people think that *we are selling words* and nothing concrete! […] Instead, we should look more at priority and burning questions [of the population].[97]

A second response to the risk of 'selling only words' is to promote concrete activities that give a grounding to the very abstract concepts of democracy, governance, and transparency: for example, one NGO invited the union of handicapped people to push for the real implementation of measures rehabilitating public infrastructures that would become more user-friendly, or by forcing the PNA to respect very concrete implementations of environmental laws (by translating pesticides labels and warnings into Arabic),[98] as a first step towards a more substantial involvement of various layers of the population into democratic practices.

Outward-mediated NGOs

On the other end of the dichotomy, one finds NGOs that tend to give priority to international preferences or that conceive of their task as serving relays between international donors and the local. This preference (hence 'outward-mediated') can be expressed both in terms of programmes and language. It also denotes a rather elitist approach of doing and conceiving of NGO advocacy work.

For obvious reasons, few NGOs would actually reveal openly elitist preferences or admit that their work was deeply influenced by international fashions. Therefore, quotes or hints at such practices always referred to other NGOs doing the same. Everybody seems to know that these outward-mediated

practices exist amongst Palestinian NGOs, but no one acknowledges the fact for him/herself.[99]

One could imagine spreading new models and norms into the domestic arena is just another way of doing advocacy work. The fact is that many accused some of the local NGOs of being trapped in this model that engulfs them in a space warp far away from local realities. This is best translated by the idea that these outside-mediated NGOs 'want to fight not on the ground, but in the American Colony', referring to the five-star Hotel in East Jerusalem where high profile visitors usually visit while in the West Bank.

But why would there be such a preference for fighting in a cosy atmosphere rather than on the ground? Some think it is a matter of simple comfort because it is simpler to discuss problems of advocacy than to confront them in the remote zones. But for the majority, it is due to the abundance of monies dedicated to advocacy issues. The result is a form of 'opportunism' on the side of Palestinian NGOs 'making hay while the sun shines' but at the expense of 'rural zones which are less covered' since most of the organizations doing this type of activities are city-based.[100] Another negative impact of surfing on the waves of foreign fashion is that local NGOs adapted to the idea that there is a 'flavour of the month' and therefore long-term efforts will be in vain because funding will not last for more than a few years (at best).

The end result is that all this money has 'made the NGOs lose contact with their own people'.[101] Finally, for two smaller NGOs, the risk of losing contact with the bases was also due to the imposed language and formulation required in order to succeed in proposal writing. It is not an exaggeration to say that it takes professional proposal writers to survive in the scrambling of funding, and this means that many NGOs actually hire foreigners more fluent in English – the *lingua franca* of development nowadays – to do the job of the reporting and fund-raising.

NGOs as a locus for creating a habitus?

Taking a step back from the 'inward-outward' schemes, one could reformulate the questions of the Introduction and Chapter 2, whereby one tries to assess whether civil society is alien or not to Palestine, or to the Arab Middle East. In the case of advocacy programmes, the question is not about individuals who *internalize* or *instrumentalize* certain values. Rather it is about a systemic, indirect and unintended imposition of language, about an isomorphic pressure to adapt structures, ways of working, or reporting on local NGOs that is at the origin of the decoupling of local organizations from the bases. In this gradual and lengthy process, some of the Palestinian NGOs lost a finer sense of the local problems and of the population's needs, leading certain NGOs to a form of heteronomy (understood as the respect of or the conforming to someone else's law). Put differently, the fact that civil society promotion must be funded means that the concept becomes a commodification. The latter implies a change in production relations that owes its driving more to the market than to constructivists

views according to which principled beliefs acquire strength through their diffusion in the international system and by international actors.

To give further strength to this idea of an imprint left over by external actors (or by their preferred programmes), one should underline that if advocacy means 'public support for or recommendation of a particular cause of policy',[102] there is no reason that the flow of recommendations goes only one way. The presentations of five generations of NGOs (Senisolla 1999) actually demonstrated that with the third and fourth generation NGOs there was supposed to be a true partnership between northern and southern NGOs since the 1970s (see p. 73). The fact is that only one advocacy NGO interviewed actively promotes such advocacy from 'southern' to 'northern' NGOs.[103] This is not to downplay the very important role of other NGOs in reaching northern partners through information dissemination, but, in the latter cases, this tends to be done passively only.[104]

But this is the exception rather than the norm. The dominant apprehension amongst donors of local (advocacy) NGOs is that of organizations which are *less* developed (in terms of structures), with *less* capacities, in *need* of other tools, and trapped with a 'backward' or 'traditional' society. Is not that a mere process of complexity reduction? Is that not a way to intellectually reinforce a prevalent dichotomy of 'traditional' versus 'modern'?

One can wonder whether Talal Asad's view is not correct when stressing that categories such as 'traditional', 'modern', 'secular' and the like serve hegemonic trends:

> In an interdependent modern world, 'traditional cultures' do not spontaneously grow or develop into 'modern cultures'. People are pushed, seduced, coerced, or persuaded into trying to change themselves into something else, something that allows them to be redeemed. It may not be possible to stop this process. [But such changes, though not directly forced] are not possible without the exercise of political power that often presents itself as a force for redeeming 'humanity' from 'traditional cultures'. Or – and this comes down in the end to the same thing – as the force for reclaiming rights that belong inalienably to man in a state of nature.[105]
>
> (Asad 2003a: 154)

This relentless manner of promoting advocacy uniquely from 'north to south' and imagining southern NGOs uniquely as the *receiving* end contributes to the resilience of the 'traditional-modern' dichotomy. Thus, local advocacy NGOs become a privileged vehicle to 'redeem' the less democratic polity, to 'seduce' or 'coerce' to think in terms of a vibrant civil society, all of which defined according to the priorities of external donors. In that line, some NGOs (more exposed to interaction with donors) become the body in which the *habitus* of external inputs are transmitted and imprinted. Then these multiplicator NGOs (or what some have termed 'development brokers'[106]) redirect such *habitus* to another body (that of the Palestinian society) through workshops, conference and awareness raising activities. Thus, imposition of certain values can take the form of a disciplining process.

Faced with the argument that 'civil society' has been overstated (Shawa 2001), one can adopt a two-pronged approach vis-à-vis the problems with advocacy programmes. On one hand, it would be interesting to investigate the degree of legitimacy that the various types of NGOs enjoy at the ground level. Unfortunately, this is a difficult research to perform, although some new researches hint at the fact that some of the largest secular NGOs have recently suffered from a serious lack of popular legitimacy (Abu Sada 2005a). Instead, it is the contention of this book that the overuse of civil society and its subtle imposition by external actors might become a source of heteronomy for the Palestinians since the discourse of civil society does not refer enough anymore to locally dominant rhetoric, the advocacy sector being a case in point.

It would be too far fetched to put all the blame on international donors' shoulders. Another way to apprehend this problem of legitimacy is to acknowledge the harsh criticism addressed to NGOs at the beginning of the *Intifada* (see Kuttab 2001; Abdel Shafi 2004) or shortly before (Haddad 1999) and to try to make sense out of more visible problematic aspects of NGO work. In other words: to what extent are the blames addressed to NGOs due to their own responsibility? Let us now go quickly through some of these critiques.

Over-representation in the central zones

Figure 5.4 is a visualization of the stark imbalance between certain zones of the Territories. Ramallah, Jerusalem and Gaza display by far an over-concentration of advocacy organizations in comparison with the percentage of NGOs and in terms of the population harboured in these governorates. The already noticed imbalance (percentage of population much higher than the percentage of advocacy NGOs) in Nablus, Hebron, North Gaza, Khan Younis and Rafah is even more visible with regards the percentage of advocacy NGOs.

Does that mean that there is no need for democracy, human rights and other advocacy NGOs in the peripheral zones? Many have argued during the interviews that it is due to the presence of universities in Ramallah, Jerusalem and Gaza City and the larger percentage of the population with third-level education. This provides only a partial explanation: what about the two universities of Hebron? Why would Beit Lahem with its important university have a lower percentage than Ramallah for example? The second explanation put forward was that Ramallah and Gaza officiate as governmental centres (until such time as East Jerusalem becomes the real capital). This is already a more convincing argument because of the unavoidable centrality of Ramallah and Gaza for governmental matters.

However, one should also bear in mind the over-concentration of donors themselves in central zones. Only two international donors interviewed have their main bases in Gaza City, ten others in Ramallah and the vast majority (30) in East Jerusalem. This trend has been reinforced with the intense closure imposed on all Palestinian cities that provoked a true exodus from international organizations into East Jerusalem. Moreover, donors do not seem to make extra efforts to reach out for remote advocacy organizations.

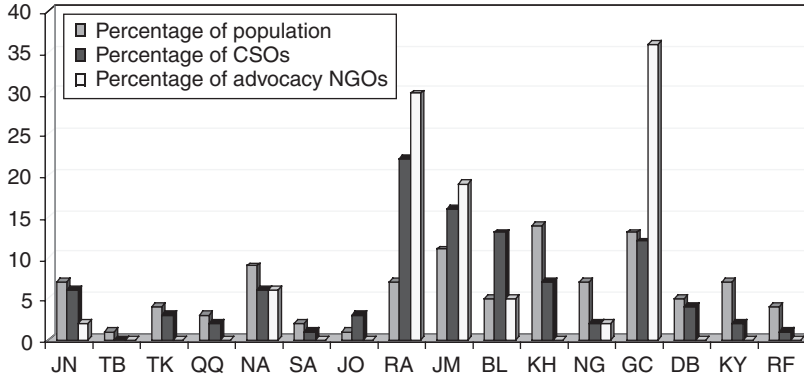


Figure 5.4 Concentration of advocacy NGOs in the Palestinian Governorates (source: the percentage of civil society organizations (CSOs) per governorate is taken from Kassis (2001: 39), of the population from PCBS data (PASSIA 2004: 274). Figures about advocacy NGOs taken from the author's database).

Note
No data available in Kassis about Tubas. The Governorates are listed from north to south: Jenin (JN), Tubas (TB), Tulkarm (TK), Qalqiliya (QQ), Nablus (NA), Salfit (SA), Jericho (JO), Ramallah (RA), Jerusalem (JM), Beit Lahem (BL), Hebron (KH for Khalil), North-Gaza (NG), Gaza City (GC), Deir al-Balah (DB), Khan Younis (KY) and Rafah (RF).

Palestinian NGOs also suffered from intense closure, especially cities where Israeli troops operate for longer periods than in Ramallah for example. Beit Lahem (with Nablus) was placed under curfew much more than other cities in the West Bank in the years 2002–2004, though totally sporadically, as to render any normal life impossible. Nablus, the scene of very violent and frequent military incursions, also suffered tremendously and at times was not accessible to foreigners, unless they were working for US organizations or for NGOs registered with Israel. In the light of the difficulty for certain Palestinians to reach Ramallah and East Jerusalem and for foreign donors to reach Nablus, the director of a Nablus-based advocacy NGO decided to move back to Ramallah during the years of the *Intifada* because, 'nobody could see [us] in Nablus!'[107] The second *Intifada* therefore reinforced the trend of over-centralization of the advocacy organizations.

Kingdoms with little governance: 'Al-iskafi hafi'

If there is an irrefutable geographical concentration of advocacy NGOs, the same can probably be argued about the way few individuals concentrate much of the power of advocacy in their own hands and in their own organization. Many observers, international and Palestinian alike, highlight and denounce the tendency of few NGO leaders to run one-(wo)man shows. The problem is so serious and well-known that a US NGO has tailored a programme to tackle this lack of

internal governance and democracy under the heading of 'technical assistance for intermediary organizations': by promoting clear and shared rules about internal governance and financial management,[108] the American organization tried to offer internal keys to stop the one-man show approach.

The ombudsman for citizens' rights protection in the Gaza Strip also dwelled at length on the matter. For him, there is too much of 'cosmetical networking' amongst human rights NGOs: all working in their own corner, fearing for the 'identity of their organizations' and for their 'reputation'. He stressed that some of the advocacy NGO work:

> is not community-based, but it is elite work. Here organisations are sometimes known by the head of the organisation, not the organisation itself. If this chairperson were to move, die or resign, the situation of the NGO will be shaky. Because it is a well known person, well connected, an elite person, internationally known. […] So it is not pure grassroots.[109]

According to a French saying, '*Ce sont les coordonniers les plus mal chaussés*', or in Arabic, '*Al-iskafi hafi*' (literally 'The shoemaker is barefoot'). This is definitively the case for Palestinian advocacy NGOs. Beyond the elitist tendencies and the pronounced lack of internal governance, it looks like some of the conflict resolution NGOs also have a deficiency of know-how when it comes to themselves: if we believe observers and the harsh comments gathered during the interviews about their sister organizations, peace and conflict management organizations are also in need of some solutions towards non-violent and peaceful healing inside the sector.

The advocacy sector harbours a true star-system that international donors actually sustain in two manners. First, there is a rush towards some high-profile figures such as Hanan Ashrawi, Raji Sourani, Mustafa Barghouthi, Azmi Shu'aibi, Riad Malki, etc., all of whom already benefit from a large visibility thanks to the mediatization of the conflict. There is nothing intrinsically negative in that, except that it reinforces organizations that have already seven-digit budgets instead of sustaining the efforts of smaller organizations and the diversity of civil society and to contribute to the risk of multiple-funding scandal such as the one that destroyed the largest human rights NGO in the West Bank (LAW) in 2003.

Does the language implied speak to the majority?

Finally, and to link to the overall question of whether international donors contribute to the lack of legitimacy of local NGOs, or whether international donors by their insistence on civil society promotion contribute to a form of heteronomy for the Palestinian society, one needs to say a few words about the vocabulary and formulations used by advocacy NGOs in their activities. Does the vocabulary used by advocacy NGOs speak to the population? If not, what are the alternatives to make it more successful? Does it really try to speak to the masses? Or does it *fail* to speak to them?

In the first place, there is little doubt that most of the 50 advocacy organizations listed in our database used the concept of 'civil society'. In all, of the 22 advocacy NGOs interviewed, the concept of 'civil society' was abundantly used in their material and there were strong similarities in the type of projects and programmes offered by these organizations. So we cannot use the same three typologies about civil society as we did for the health sector.[110] Instead, particular attention will be dedicated to the question of translations of certain problematic concepts around the notion of civil society. How have culturally contentious issues such as 'secular' that donors have favoured been used and presented by local organizations?

Broadly speaking, there are two types of approaches. The first one is to fail to differentiate between concepts put forward in proposals (in English) to receive funding and the ones actively promoted (in Arabic) for local beneficiaries.[111] The second is to consciously ban certain entries, like 'secularism' because they are badly perceived by the dominant local mentality. In the words of Mustafa Barghouthi, 'that does not mean you cannot promote things that lead to secularism'.[112]

In that line, some have openly admitted to playing with certain concepts and to adapting to their fashionable use amongst donors, but with the sole intent of securing funding, though remaining committed to the same bottom-line when defining their work with the local beneficiaries.[113] A quick browse at presentation materials (such as annual reports, leaflets, etc.) produced by NGOs in Arabic and English reveals that there exist differences between Arabic and English texts. Beyond the domestic context of the last four years where there has been a sustained return to nationalist discourse, it is easy to understand why the Arabic texts lay more stress on domestic issues than on international buzzwords. Nevertheless, it would be interesting to study this point and understand the exact origins and motivations for not translating certain words and concepts into Arabic. What would this 'lost in translation' tell us about the way donors promote civil society in the Territories?

Maybe a third approach, favoured by some could be an honest account to remain faithful both to its commitments and visions towards a democratic civil society working for a better, more transparent and representative way of doing politics. The Ramallah Centre for Human Rights Studies is doing a lot of work within Islamic milieus to promote an overture and sensibilization to the question of human rights, tolerance and pluralism among Islamic practitioners.[114] Its leader prefers to use frankly and openly the concept of 'secularism':

> Well, I use it! Even when I speak with them. I speak with them as I speak with you now! We are trying to make them familiar with this concept that is not automatically negative, I believe. […] The problem is: how, or what do they expect from you? Or who do they think that you are? When I say 'I am secular', they consider that as a step forward, because they started thinking I am atheist and I came to say no! I am secular, which is 'oh, it is fantastic!'.
>
> The problem is that most of the academics and politicians pretend to be religious. But [they do that only] for marketing themselves. After that, the

> religious people discover that they are not so religious as expected, so they are backwards [i.e. disappointed, or a step back]. Better to begin from zero [and show what is meant by secularism]![115]

Thus clichés over the West need also to be deconstructed and to be restated within the Palestinian context. Therefore to lay stress on the need for international donors to take more the *local* setting and vocabulary into consideration does not mean to *abandon* visions of democracy, civil society or governance. Rather it is about giving a better chance for complex concepts to be (re-)elaborated in a different cultural setting. Again, this new cultural terrain should not be considered as close on itself, but rather already containing seeds and substance favourable to the emergence of democratic polities. By insisting also on local vocabularies and rhetoric, one probably gives more chance to a better *branchement* or connection, and to the blossoming of married concepts reflecting local needs framed in international wording.

6 The exclusionary dimensions of civil society

Unanswered questions

By putting the initial stress on the ambiguity and shortcomings of civil society promotion in the Middle East, two main questions were to be solved in this book. First: was the focus on cultural variables justified to explain the shortcomings of 'civil society' promotion in the region? Second: was there an over-emphasis of civil society at the expense of the political factors in the region (along the argument of Langhor 2004), and if so, how could that be explained? Rather than studying local NGOs in their domestic setting, the book argued for the necessity to study local NGOs in their interaction with international donors whose power in shaping and deciding which programmes and projects will be effectively run, are much more important than usually acknowledged in much of the literature dealing with civil society, where the role of donors is assumed to be equally benevolent across time and space.

We have seen that theories of civil society are very diverse in their approaches and that they often overlook certain issues, in particular the conditions through which civil society can become a space to reach autonomy thanks to its capacity of auto-institution (à la Castoriadis). The thorough analysis of the emergence of 'civil society' within Arab Middle Eastern intellectual fields demonstrated that civil society certainly does exist in the region, but that local specificities must be taken into consideration in order that it plays a constructive and variegated role. Adopting excessively dogmatic and fixed interpretations without acknowledging the historical context in which 'civil society' was born, i.e. modern western liberal politics, and the particularities of the Arab Middle East where it becomes (re-)interpreted, would be a mistake. Instead, by giving importance to the *local framing* of civil society, one can expect that civil society à la Middle East will have more chance to flourish in the region, since it is formulated according to local expectations and therefore sensitive to local specificities. On the epistemological level, the stress laid on *similitudes* rather than differences, and the careful observation of the moments in which local actors have *connected* in a variety of ways to universal *répertoires*, (‘*branchement*’ à la Amselle), have opened new interpretations of Palestinian civil society. Thus, civil society can be seen as an internal identity marker of the Palestinian political field, and the

rejection of the phrase 'civil society' with a simultaneous stress on another kind of message by other actors have revealed that the discourse of civil society is deeply enmeshed with local particularisms, more than a universalizing banner that gathers all under one same roof.

The part on international donors gave more substance to the ground argument that donors ought not to be considered as a single and homogenous actor. Rather, international donors are evolving over time, with an increased degree of professionalization and specialization in the field of intervention. In the precise case of Palestine, it was demonstrated that different geographical origins and longer historical involvement with local NGOs generate different approaches to and models of civil society. Larger actors that have been involved only for less than a decade tend to adopt a rather limited managerial and top-down view of civil society, while smaller donors privilege approaches that are sensitive to internal NGO diversity, bottom up process, and local particularities. The latter points are even more important since the historical presentation of local NGOs and international donors in Palestine sheds light on the many groups of NGOs, representing historically and socially differentiated populations.

The visions of civil society by international donors later find a larger echo in the domestic scene and rhetoric thanks to the study of 'civil society at work'. The production of grey literature by local NGOs reflected two dominant views concerning civil society: on the one hand, a managerial view tends to impose its models through a variety of actors, means and programmes, and on the other hand, another mode to accommodate locally the concept of civil society is that of the Palestinian secular left which adapted the concept in the initial moments of its opposition to the nascent PNA to create a different narrative of 'civil society' as a sort of identity marker. The study of the health service-provision sector demonstrated how the discourse of civil society was deeply entangled in the evolution of left-wing political parties whose influence over health popular committees (later institutionalized into professional NGOs) remains up to this date a moving force of their activities. It was argued that the *substance* of 'civil society' also existed outside the camp of the secular left NGOs, as for example, in the parlance of smaller (charitable) NGOs, though without the *phrase*, and that in a third subgroup of health NGOs, neither the substance nor the phrase of 'civil society' were to be found.

In the sector of advocacy NGOs, civil society is directly relevant and there the role of international donors in 'building a civil society' is much more obvious and transparent, but at the same time more problematic and controversial. Donors' shifting of priorities have probably been detrimental to the development of a sound advocacy sector that would really respond to local needs ('hiding chiasmus'), and as a result some of the local NGOs have paid too much attention to fashions imposed by international donors at the expense of their links with the local population (outward-mediated versus inwards-oriented). Large amounts of money did not help to build a sound and sustainable NGO sector. Instead, the mushrooming of this sector, and the rather large amounts of money led to some personal empires and over-centralization tendencies. These

elements grew at the expense of building a legitimacy through strong ties to the local constituencies (preferably in the two Palestines).

The image of 'two Palestines' has served so far as a heuristic tool to stress the importance of internal differentiations within Palestinian society. The same image will provide us now with the opportunity to identify implications and changes spotted on three levels: a) International donors (professionalization, specialization, types of views on civil society, trends); b) Local NGOs (and pressure towards service-providing, professionalization, use (or not) of fashionable concepts, re-appropriation of 'civil society'); and c) Change of 'mood' of the populations of the two Palestines paying a heavy price to the failure of peace and state-building.

How have these three groups changed in the last ten years? Have they moved along in the same direction or in opposite ones? Can one link the arrival of massive amounts of funding to the popular discontent expressed against large sectors of the NGOs at the beginning of the second *Intifada*?

The following figures (Figures 6.1 to 6.3) offer a modelized attempt to describe a situation where civil society organizations can contribute to a situation of autonomy and of heteronomy (as defined in Chapter 2). However, unlike previous studies dealing exclusively with Palestinian NGOs acting within the national arena (Craissati 1996; Abu Sada 2005a), the graphs try to take the influence and role of international donors into consideration. Generally, studies on Palestinian NGOs focus on its relations with the PNA, or on its relation to the masses, but little work has been done on the three elements at the same time.[1]

It will be here argued that some NGOs have experienced a gradual dislocation of their previous alignment with their local constituencies, resulting in certain sectors of civil society (and in particular NGOs) being cut off from their popular bases. Elements highlighted previously, such as the harsh criticism against NGOs in the beginning of the *Intifada* (Kuttab 2001; Hanafi and Tabar 2003; Brown 2003: 190; Samara 2003; Nabulsi 2004; Abu Sada 2007b) and the insistence of many NGOs leaders who, during interviews, stressed the need to come back to more grass roots and voluntary work all indicate that some NGOs have been uprooted from their bases.

It still remains to spot the origins of such a hiatus between NGOs and the population. Is it due to international donors' policies and views on civil society? Or is it, as put it by one leading health activist, a 'purely internal defeat of the NGO scene'[2] which lost direct contact with the population? Is it a combination of the two? What are the other elements that could explain this dislocation?

Part of the problem lies in the concept of 'civil society' itself and in the way it is envisioned and embodied in a variety of programmes and narratives, both international and local. Plus, the fact that Oslo did not deliver the expected dividends for the majority of the population exacerbated the previous problems. Rather than 'putting the blame' exclusively on international actors, who, in keeping with the dependency theory, would make of NGOs a 'transmission-belt' between world centres and the Palestinian (semi-)periphery, or on blaming Palestinian NGOs only, we argue that though some of the force for heteronomy stems from the way international donors promote certain limited vision of civil

society, the concept of 'civil society' itself has, within the Palestinian field, three dimensions of exclusionary power.

The first dimension is ideological, for its disputed definitions of civil society promoted by local actors reinforced abstract divides within Palestinian society for being 'civil' or not, and over all, maintains – if not increases – the artificial divide between Arab Middle Eastern societies and their western liberal counterparts. The second is a political exclusionary power, because 'civil society' is not only deeply embedded within the narratives of Palestinian factions, and because of this, there is a confusion between political work and developmental work that is not always playing into the hands of NGOs (since some can attack them on having a hidden agenda). Third and finally, 'civil society' entails a sociological exclusionary dimension because it presides over the logic of specialization, networking and internal dependency of large groups upon the specialization of few NGOs. In other words, NGO activities contribute to a system of increased class differentiation, with NGOs adding weight to the middle class and serving beneficiaries of the lower classes (rather than being an emanation of these classes as was the case until the early 1990s).

Before embarking on the three levels (political, sociological and ideological), let us note again that 'civil society' should not be read *stricto sensu* as only the activities labelled under this heading: civil society promotion takes many forms and addresses many related questions, such as democracy promotion, development, and other concepts that are implemented and realized by NGOs in the last 15 years. In other words, one could say that many programmes and projects are realized broadly *in the name of civil society*.

So let us now look at the two modelized contradictory evolutions that took place under the umbrella of civil society promotion in the Palestinian territories, one leading to a situation of heteronomy (Figure 6.2) and the other to a situation of autonomy for local civil society despite the possible influence of international donors (Figure 6.3). The first illustration (Figure 6.1 which mirrors Figure 5.2) symbolizes the starting point of donor–NGOs relations. The interaction between donors, NGOs and population is ideally lined in the same vertical space, hereby signifying their sharing common purposes, or same interest, despite the inherent relationship of power between the three levels. It assumes that this model represents the interaction between donors and Palestinian NGOs in the early 1990s.

Figures 6.2 and 6.3 represent the evolution after ten years of the relationship between local NGOs and international donors. To symbolize the changes that took place in the field of donors (more actors, specialization, more governmental funding, larger donors, and described in Chapters 3 and 4) and their shift of interests over the years, they have shifted position. Local constituency has also changed, and therefore moved from its original position. These changes are due to the subtle shift in ideological values that permeated Palestinian society,[3] and to the hardship context created by the second *Intifada*.

Figure 6.2 represents a situation of heteronomy for Palestinian civil society. In such a case, NGOs came to respond not to the needs or the perceptions of their local constituencies, but to the areas of interests and priorities of the

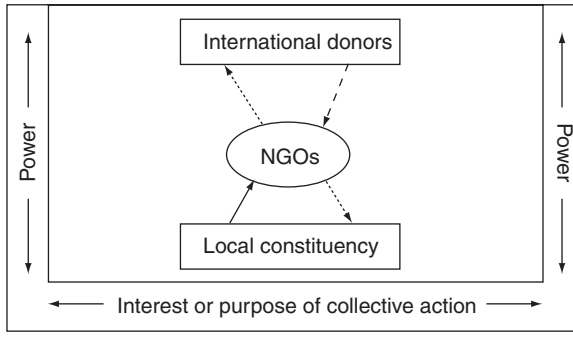


Figure 6.1 Model of relations between donors, NGOs and constituencies by 1990–1995.

Note
Same remarks apply as for Figures 5.1 to 5.3.

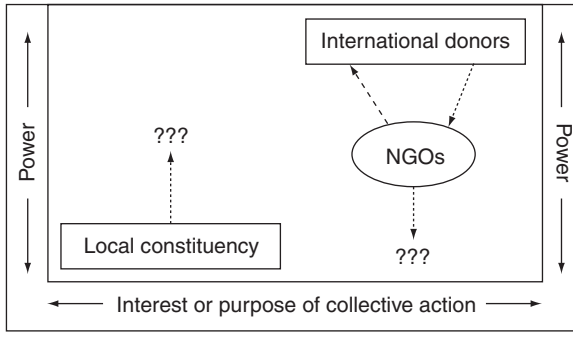


Figure 6.2 Model of heteronomy for civil society.

donors. This can be termed heteronomy, since civil society organizations do not contribute to establishing norms, values, institutions or even language that responds to the aspirations of the local population. On the contrary, international donors pushing for the success of the peace process, but sometimes at the expense of substantial democratic progresses inside the Palestinian territories (along what was termed 'hiding chiasmus'), have dragged some NGOs behind them, and promoted views, norms and/or projects that do not really respond to the population's aspirations. Over time, such NGOs which were sitting between two seats, had to either choose between remaining aligned with the population's demands and following trends and values set by international donors. In the latter case, their survival was guaranteed by donors' funding, but they eventually became cut off from their bases. In the figure, NGOs and donors are in the same vertical line. Some NGOs followed international donors by opportunism, in order to access funding or to gain international legitimacy in their internal

struggle against the PNA. In any case, these NGOs have to re-build their own constituency, and as such, they can be described as being cut off of their bases.

The final figure (Figure 6.3) represents a situation of autonomy for Palestinian society and civil society organizations. NGOs are now still in line with their original local constituency (at least in part), and function as intermediary with international donors. They adapted partly to donors, but still defending the same interests as the population. The link with the constituency is preserved. This last model stresses the need for both NGOs *and* donors to analyse the circumstances under which civil society promotion takes place, in order to remain close to the populations' priorities. This does not mean that NGOs should promote more conservative messages, as it is the case of the NGOs being part of the Islamist constellation. Instead, they should carefully adapt their programmes and language when working with smaller organizations that are closer to the bases, or that are on the same wavelength as the population.

Therefore, to remain in a situation of autonomy and thus to avoid a hiatus or growing distance between the population and the NGOs, a double marriage is necessary. The first is linked to the *wording*, or the packaging of civil society promotion that must be done with care and sensitivity according to the population served. The second dimension is about promoting *programmes* that respond to the true demands of the population rather than responding only to the donors' interests (e.g. the success of the peace process at any cost). In brief, it is about keeping the balance between the right service-provision with a message adapted to the population's needs.[4] Formulated on a more theoretical level, this is about the capacity of societies towards auto-institution, namely being able to 'call into question their own institution, their representation of the world, their social imaginary significations' (Castoriadis 1997: 17).

The crucial point is that these models are not static. A situation of heteronomy between NGOs and the populations tend to further increase the hiatus and distance between the two groups. Therefore, daily and practical aspects of civil society ought to be taken into account with great attention since they can sometimes

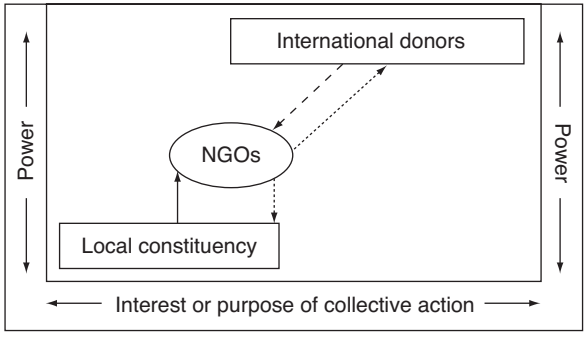


Figure 6.3 Model of autonomy for international civil society promotion.

enlarge the rift existing between NGOs and the population. In other words, this is an on-going process and, as recently highlighted by Nabulsi, the issue of conditional support to the acceptation to an externally-sponsored peace solution is again a reality with the discussion of the Road Map or the Geneva Initiative (Nabulsi 2004: 227). But both lack a genuine involvement of wider Palestinian opinion, and the 'accepted wisdom [about such plans] is so radically – and dangerously – divorced from the obvious realities [of the Palestinian street]' (ibid.: 228).

The argument about the potential situation of heteronomy for the PNA could certainly be duplicated here as well (since the PNA is also caught between donors and the local populations). This would be in keeping with the view that the current *Intifada* is as much an uprising against the continuing Israeli occupation, as well as an internal popular revolt against the political class which made many painful concessions during a peace process steered from outside. Observers of the PNA also note that the latter had a dual discourse, one that aims at appeasing the international community and another one dedicated to its population (Abu Sada 2007b). For obvious reasons, this could not be further researched here and we will now move back to the field NGOs to illustrate further the three dimensions of the exclusionary power of civil society.

The exclusionary power of civil society: political dimensions

By political, I understand first the question of factionalism that divides and leads political parties to have close (but sometimes conflictual) relationships with NGOs; second, the struggle that opposes the PNA with NGOs in the cat-and-mouse game of control for the PNA and checks-and-balances for NGOs and, third, the competitive relationship amongst NGOs themselves. In other words, it is about politics as having the *power* to *influence* others (and not a Weberian definition of struggle over the legitimate means of coercion). For obvious reasons, the focus will deal with aspects involving NGOs and the implication of the discourse of civil society and/or civil society promotion, rather than general aspects of institutional political life, which, anyway, have been better studied elsewhere (Giacaman 1998; Hilal 1998a, b). But it will be argued that because the nature of the political system in the Territories is increasingly that of a one-party system with neo-patrimonial features (Hilal 1998b: 121), where opposition parties are 'not merely outside the political process, but outside politics altogether' (Giacaman 1998: 8), it is even more important for civil society to play a role in offering counter-models to autocratic tendencies, in shaping and projecting pluralistic opinions into the public sphere.[5]

Historically political parties were the original matrixes of professional committees later turned into NGOs and which, during the 1990s, gained a life of their own. The history of NGOs is oscillates like a pendulum: the original swing and momentum was given by political parties and, at least for the left-wing factions, NGOs were to become very important for the identification and action of political parties in the late 1990s and years of the second *Intifada*.

In the first place, political parties (secular and Islamist alike) created their own set of NGOs as 'political shops' for their programmes (Muslih 1993: 262).

This is well known and already documented. The collapse of the Soviet Empire (coinciding with the emergence of a strong Islamist movement) provided another moment of critical juncture to renew the discourses of the left factions, with the renunciation of open references to Marxism and Leninism in both DFLP and PCP/PPP which actually coincided with the divorce of Yasser Abed Rabbo' Fida from DFLP mainstream (Tamari 1992: 17, 20). This had serious consequences for the survival of the Union of Health Care Committees (the health NGO that was originally affiliated with the DFLP) which was 'extremely weakened' by the 1990 split (Craissati 1996: 129n35, 123). Similarly, segmentation of trade unions was also due to attempts by political parties to gain hegemonic control of this sector of civil society (Muslih 1993: 264). The list of evidence showing that political parties had the lead in the work and orientation of NGOs could be longer.

The interesting point is that during the 1990s there was a gradual 'depoliticization' to follow the argument of Hammami (1995) coupled with a professionalization of NGO work.[6] However this is only partially true. This is probably the case for the larger secular NGOs that managed to adapt to the new situation put forward with Oslo. Smaller NGOs did not all turn into professional bodies with a specialized administrative apparatus. Moreover, the vast majority of NGOs kept a link to political parties despite nomination of cross-factional boards of directors. Nevertheless, most active NGO actors watered down their political affiliation. Many other newly created organizations might well have become less partisan, along with the general trend for Palestinians to become less and less affiliated to political parties. Thus, a real partisan and 'social demobilization' took place during the Oslo years when the percentage of persons without political affiliation soared between 1994 and 2000 to reach an incredible 35 per cent by mid-2000 (Picaudou 2003: 187f.), compared to just 11.7 per cent[7] in December 1994 (Hilal 1998b: 138).

So the political dimension in this exclusionary power is best described as a paradox: despite being depoliticized (Hammami 1995: 55–57), the political entered again through the back windows of certain NGOs. It is argued here that the outbreak of the second *Intifada* reinforced this tendency of a repoliticization of NGOs.

How can this be possible? First of all, donors' requirements about transparency, long-term planning and calls to abandon factionalist recruitment, might have led to the professionalization (to use the phrases of Hammami), but favoured the emergence of new types of factionalism. This new form is not based on strict affiliation to a given political party, but rather on loose affiliation to three neighbour political families (secular left, mainstream nationalists and religious-conservative). The emergence of PINGO illustrates this dynamics of loosely leftist organizations presenting themselves as a professional and independent network. A thorough study of the compositions of boards of direction would probably reinforce the argument that there were mutual support within left NGOs and mainstream nationalist NGOs, but not across these two large groups. Second, not all NGOs were really depoliticized, or, because of the attempt by the PNA to foster support to the regimes by creating its own governmental NGOs, some NGOs took again an even more political outlook as a reaction.

When knowing more about Palestinian political life, it is almost impossible to sustain that the largest NGOs have become depoliticized: Hanan Ashrawi (head of MIFTAH) is a member of the PLC, Ghassan al-Khatib (ex-leader of JMCC, a research centre in Jerusalem) was Minister of Labour between 2003 and 2005, Dr Rabah Muhanna (President of the UHWC in Gaza) is a member of the Politburo of the PFLP, Dr Mustafa Barghouthi (president of UPMRC and head of HDIP) was a member of the Politburo of the PPP, later founder of a new party (National Initiative), candidate to the 2005 presidential elections and now a PLC member, Khadr Shqirat (former head of LAW) announced, after the corruption scandal, that he would openly run for the PPP, Ibrahim Daqqaq (founder of Arab Though Forum) is a co-founder of the National Initiative with Haydar Abdel-Shafi (President of the Gaza Red Crescent Society). This confusion is not only a left-wing feature, given that Fatah prominent figures also play on the NGO court: Hussam Khader (head of a NGO dealing with refugee rights) is a Fatah-elected member in the PLC, Mahmoud Abbas (founder of the Palestinian Centre for Peace – People-to-people) was Prime Minister and is now President of the PNA, and some say that even Mohammad Dahlan, former head of the Preventive Security forces in Gaza and ex-Minister for Civil Affairs, has established an advocacy NGO in Gaza.

All these examples, not to mention the late Khalil az-Zibn, prove that a full depoliticization of NGOs is anything but an unsubstantiated claim, both in terms of non-partisan engagement, and in terms of abstention of NGO activists to be part of political institutions (such as the Palestinian Legislative Council). Instead one should apply this label of 'depoliticization' with caution: it might be true for some NGOs, but it is also the result of a lack of an institutionalized opposition party system (Giacaman 1998), and of the apparent disinterest of the masses for political factions (Picaudou 2003). One way to read it is that because of the conditionality imposed by some western donors, aid to NGOs was not meant to favour discrete political parties or factions.

But again, the attitude of international donors is in that regard very paradoxical, since it pretends to contribute to the growth (or the emergence) of a 'vibrant civil society' in order to build democratic polities, though through non-political means. The further difficulty of not having the same patterns of political parties, or the same dividing lines amongst them as in Europe provides a partial source of explanation for this ambiguity, or lack of know-how of international donors when dealing with Palestinian parties (where are the Christian Democrats? Where are the socialists and the liberals in contemporary Arab political systems?). Another reason for this paradox might stem from the fact that theories of civil society are far from clear about the inclusion or exclusion of political parties from its very definition.

In any case, two things result from this description. First, more thought ought to be dedicated to the necessity (or not) of having 'depoliticized' aid to civil society (and what exactly it meant by that in the first place). Second, despite the implicit prohibition of engaging in politics by a majority of international aid donors/bodies (since solidarity funding would not have to care about such

issues), and because most of them are originally social movements, Palestinian NGOs found other ways to cope and continue to do politics but through other means. Forced to pledge allegiance to non-factional/non-political work, NGOs originally attached to political parties could resort to two types of strategy, one dealing with internal features of Palestinian civil society, and the other with structural features involving other socio-political actors (external features).

By internal, we mean the motivations and activities born inside NGOs and organized from within the NGOs that propel activities aiming at *replacing* normal political party work.[8] In other words, when NGOs have as an objective not just the provision of services (or an advocacy project) but also to use their institution for political purposes and/or garner political mobilization, then this would be an example of the exclusionary power of civil society. This is, in our view, the case since this is normally the work of political parties, maybe also trade unions, but not that of NGOs. It becomes 'exclusionary' because it might be done without the formal consent of the party and, therefore, create tensions between the two bodies, and because it is done 'in the name of civil society' and hence leads to undeclared strategies. Such intentions that are not clearly stated might lead other actors (NGOs or local population) to question the true intentions of NGOs. Since such activities take place in this case from within the NGO, then it is an 'internal' motive.

What are these kinds of activities that are geared towards political work and socio-political mobilization? One leading example is done through youth programmes. Many NGOs have, in recent years, targeted younger generations. Many medical organizations run workshops dedicated to teenagers, and host youth clubs. Why is that? There are surely important advances to make, for example, in relation to prevention in the case of health, but there is certainly some political interest in politicizing, or, (to put it less bluntly) in making young people aware of issues of democracy, and of the necessity of their participation as future citizens. But there is probably a hidden twofold objective. On the one hand, this is a sure way to create and build a political constituency, since 46 per cent of the population of West Bank and Gaza were aged between 0 and 14 in 2003. Second, there is the concurrence embodied by Islamist groups who are extremely strong in the field of orphanages, kindergartens, schools and (religious) education, through various organizations and community clubs.[9] Political activism, or at least developing a consciousness of the existence of conflicting factions, starts very early for Palestinian children (e.g. Larzillière 2004): it is urgently needed for all factions to start political work as early as possible with Palestinian youths.

Religious affiliation does not only refer to militant groups, but also, in certain zones of the Territories, to the issue of intra-faith relations. Christians represent an increasingly declining minority of the Palestinian Territories' population, roughly 2 to 3 per cent (Sabella 2004) and coexistence between Christians and Muslims groups is in general smooth. International aid, such as 'civil society promotion' is, in theory, blind to religious preferences. In other words, civil society promotion should be the same for Christian and Muslim target groups and aid should be

given indiscriminately to both Muslims and Christians. Thus, the UK-based Islamic Relief provides help without religious prejudice to both Muslim and Christian beneficiaries.[10] As do many Christian international NGOs.

Nevertheless, both youth activities and non-discrimination of religious identities seem to provoke some backlash on the image of NGOs. In the first type of activities, the line between awareness raising and building a political patronage seems to be very tenuous. The documented case of a service-providing NGO (in the field of agriculture) forcing potential beneficiaries to join their own professional unions if they wanted to receive some aid (Abu Sada 2007b) is an example of how NGOs can use their work for political conditionality. Such conditionality is not imposed by donors, but by NGOs in their own political perspectives and objectives. As for the religious target groups, one cannot but have the sense that despite declarations of non-preferential support, a lot of the money of large Christian NGOs goes to where Palestinian Christian minorities are based. According to some off-records observations, these donors have also been giving some money under the table to local NGOs who historically or geographically, are staffed predominantly by Christians. The point here is not to dispute the rights of religious groups to help preserve a religious heritage and presence in certain zones. Rather, the fact that this aid can use hidden and indirect means is probably more problematic since it is eventually discriminating contrary to the declared objectives of the programmes (such as civil society promotion).

By opposition to the previous model of political exclusion, 'external features' covers the political motivations that include one NGO in relation to other actors, be they other NGOs or other institutions. The focus will be again in terms of potential political consequences. Two elements will be discussed (networking and civil society as an identity marker).

The most apparent phenomenon of political exclusion related to NGOs is that of the sometimes awkward politics of networking. Very shortly after its foundation, Rema Hammami pointed out the fact that PINGO was more a 'lobby' than a 'movement' and that the only constituency some NGOs could find at the beginning of the Oslo era were other NGOs (Hammami 1995: 59). Again, there is nothing intrinsically negative about the fact that NGOs combine their efforts, especially that PINGO was extremely important in the lobby for a positive law concerning NGOs. The problem arises when this same network, which claims to base its membership criteria on professional aspects of internal governance and adherence to certain visions of principles,[11] refuses membership to organizations because of their different political orientations.[12] Other NGOs prefer deliberately to stay out of PINGO because of the obvious political orientation of the network,[13] reinforcing the interpretation that PINGO is more than a simple coordinating body for the professional development of NGOs. Some of PINGO's members who did not hesitate to denounce the attempts by some two or three NGO leaders to monopolize the network for their own personal (or political) prestige, hint at political use of the network. Furthermore one NGO which refused to join PINGO for political reasons denounced the selective instrumentalization of PINGO on certain occasions.

Networking problems are not limited to PINGO. There are some thematically-oriented or geographically informal networks. For example, one observer of the advocacy scene noticed how three large human rights NGOs split geographically (one covering the West Bank, another Gaza, and Israeli-based Palestinian NGOs based in Nazareth) would refer exclusively to one another at the expense of a better and more open and integrated coordination with other NGOs active in different places and different fields as well. Coordination is mentioned by everyone, but with little result. For the Palestinian ombudsman for citizens' rights, there is too much of 'cosmetical networking' amongst Palestinian NGOs, and the end result is useless duplication of activities:

> It is a question of identity for each organisation. Take the press release about the appointment of Attorney General.[14] There are three or four press releases, but it is only a copy. There is just a different logo and sometimes different vocabulary, but with the same substance. It is a matter of reputation. […] Here the NGOs are a little bit different than in other parts of the world. I would not say it is community-based organisation: it is elite work. The organisations here are sometimes known by the head of the organisation, not because of the organisation itself. If this chairperson were to move, die or resign, the situation of the NGO would be shaky. Because it is a well known person, well connected, elite, person, international known. So it is not pure grassroots, or community-based organisation. So that is why you have a certain competition amongst certain of them, amongst their heads.[15]

At then end of the day, coordination is about power, and donors as local NGOs are keen to speak about the necessity of coordinating, but little is done effectively towards that purpose.[16]

More interesting about the issue of networking would be to study the composition of the board of directors of the most successful NGOs: not enough evidence could be gathered on that point, but for the Ramallah-based NGOs it is pretty much the same personalities appointing one another in their own NGOs' board. Formally, this means that boards will be cross-factional, but that also implies a risk of neutralizing criticism and creative feedbacks since everybody is running into the same problems in her/his own organization. More reflections on the composition of boards to include a variety of actors of different socio-professional backgrounds would not hurt the image of NGOs at large. This could also contribute to a form of checks and balances that NGOs often lack and are criticized for.

The narrative of 'civil society' is deeply entangled with the history of the various leftist groups and serves as *an identity marker*. It reflects their vision of political work, and even more so after the emergence of the PNA. The imposition of the phrase 'civil society' reflects a gradual shift over who would have the lead in the secular left-wing spectrum, and serves at the same time as the exclusionary boundary of who belongs to this politicized (if not straightforwardly political) left-wing camp, as seen in the discussion about the health sector.

It is striking to see how the discourse of 'civil society' is widely spread amongst NGOs close to leftist factions and much less to other NGOs. Thus, the idea of 'civil society' serves as an identity marker for internal left 'feuds' and rivalries, and it can also serve to draw the boundaries of the leftist blocks vis-à-vis other political groups. Two observations are to be made.

First, in terms of domestic politics, the leftist platform is attacked on two sides. There is obviously the mainstream nationalist faction (Fatah), which has been vocal in its attacks against NGOs and clear in its efforts to control them (Rabe 2000). It comes as no surprise that there is little sympathy within PNA's and Fatah's intelligentsia for the phrase and concept of 'civil society'. A recent book, published by a *Fatahwi* intellectual, argues that civil society played against the emergence of a consolidated Palestinian State, which is, in his view, paramount to the national struggle (Abu Saif 2005).[17]

Hamas and Islamist groups are not keen to promote either the substance or the phrase of civil society, since they rely on another type of ready-made discourse that is also greatly constrained by nationalist rhetoric. When speaking about NGO work they would click on the phrase of *al-'aml al-ahli* (civic work), a version that is more widespread in daily Arabic parlance. A recent article by a declared Islamist exponent was even proposing the new phrase of '*al-jihad al-madani*' (literally the 'civil struggle') (Madhoun 2004). Such expression is highly interesting for our argument, because it marries the concept of *jihad* (understood as a 'struggle', an 'effort', either spiritual or physical), with that of *madani*, or 'civil'. '*Jihad*' is a very popular concept amongst religious and conservative strata, and the phrase is a way to refer to open political struggle within the sphere of social mobilization. In keeping with this line of argument, this rebuke of 'civil society' (*mujtama' madani* in Arabic) is further evidence of how the concept is extremely loaded with internal political connotations to serve as a gathering banner for a variety of political forces.[18] The fact that the Islamist writer preferred not to use 'civil society' but to collocate 'civil' to 'jihad', hints at how badly the concept of civil society is now understood amongst strata of the population.

Civil society serves to articulate attacks against larger secular NGOs not only from the right (Fatah and Hamas), but also from the far-left, such as the attacks from Adel Samara (2001, 2003). In Samara's view, the 'NGO-ized Palestinian left' becomes an anthropomorphized tool and vehicle for the corruption of intellectuals and thereby of the entire community, since it is spreading corruption and has practically abandoned the fight against the 'Zionist enemy' (2001: 170, 179). In another pamphlet, Samara (2003) even questions the loyalty of NGOs by asking if they have not simply become the 'Bases For Others' rather than serving the Palestinian struggle, meaning that NGOs were doing more harm to the national cause than good.

The end results of these various attacks against a certain left and 'civil society', was that the discourse of civil society has lost some of its meaning over the years. It is as if civil society is not anymore a concept *in itself* (*an sich*, namely a form of activism that promotes popular participation or a place for the

definition of autonomy) but has also become *for itself* (*für sich*, namely a rhetoric convention that insists uniquely on certain words and concepts without, though, any substantial grounding to these).[19] By this, I mean that civil society has acquired a new dimension, or meaning, by and through its invocation. The discourse of civil society has become a vehicle for the conscientization of political action of certain groups of the Palestinian political spectrum. So the argument is more that the one produced by Hammami almost a decade ago, when she stated that:

> the discussion of civil society amounts to a discourse of defeat. It has become the central term through which a demoralised and de-mobilised grassroots movement has been coming to terms with its powerlessness in the face of the transformation of the once distant PLO into a local authoritarian reality.
>
> (Hammami 1995: 52)

This is not the proper place to assess whether the left has been defeated, but the careful study of the discourse of civil society and of the actors who use this discourse leads the reader to conclude that civil society has become the gathering banner of a group of precise NGOs and that within this group, there is a struggle over who have the prestige to hold this totem, or the banner of 'civil society'.

Finally, one can find hints at the function of civil society as a boundary marker in the production of studies about the concept of 'civil society' and NGOs in Palestine. Literally, there have been dozens of analyses on the issues and most of them are, as with civil society around the globe, rather apologetic and optimistic accounts of civil society.[20] Not to forget that all NGOs represent only a small fraction of civil society at large, many (if not all) of these studies tend to focus on only the larger professional NGOs which are the most active, the most funded ones.[21] In brief, such studies concentrate on the tip of the iceberg. But this is so widespread that this form of reductionism has come to influence both donors who look exclusively for this type of NGOs, but also local actors who 'sell' their work through this positive line.

In other words, there is a reflexive dimension of this shrinking of civil society that is further reinforced by much of the literature assuming that – like Russian dolls – few NGOs represent all NGOs, which in turn, represent the whole of civil society.[22] Surely there is a serious problem with this view and both donors and students of civil society should look beyond the pale of this self-proclaimed civil society section.

There remains one very difficult (but legitimate) question about the exclusion of politics: should it be the role of NGOs to take over a political role? Using Kriesi' typology on the organizational structure of new social movements (1996), Figure 6.4 allows one to visualize the evolution of the different types of NGOs. If the larger secular NGOs originally were both in A and D quadrants, they have tended to move towards C, where service is provided but with a certain loss of direct participation of the base (through voluntary work, or popular committees).

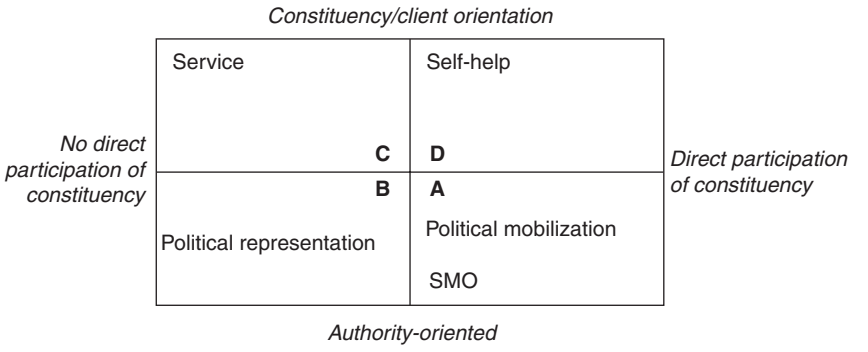


Figure 6.4 Organizational structure of social movements (source: Kriesi (1996: 152–184)).

Thus, moving from the right half of the table these NGOs come to also 'occupy' the 'territory' of political representation. Charitable organizations and some of the Islamic NGOs remained (or were established) in the quadrant D.

During the interviews, various responses were given about whose role it was to play a political role. First, some argued that this was the role of the PNA to organize the work of civil society and that larger NGOs should adopt a lower profile and give more space to charitable organizations.[23] Second, others thought that NGOs should simply not engage in political work, even more so that a lack of a clearly institutionalized party system does not really help in defining the role of who is leading.[24] A third view stressed the impossibility to dissociate NGO work from politics. The second *Intifada* gave the chance to many NGOs to do even more political work and to react against the rise of Islamist groups, by tying 'a message of pluralism, of tolerance' to the service provided by NGOs.[25] A fourth and final view was to say that NGOs can be formally detached from political parties, but NGO work serves in any case to give more credit to political parties.[26] In conclusion, it can be said that the different approaches depends on the political faction to which the person interviewed belongs. But it is very interesting to notice how actors have re-affirmed in the last years a more openly political and militant tone, acknowledging the need to do more political work. After de-politicization, a return to re-politicization? There is probably good ground enough by now to make the argument.

Let us conclude on the political exclusionary power, by looking at the potential role, or contribution of international donors in this regard. There is a broad consensus amongst left-wing NGOs that there has been an impact of the peace process in terms of political conditionality towards NGOs which had to comply, *nolens volens*, with some of the rules imposed by donors (most notably to support Oslo). As for the depoliticization, there has been a minimal acceptance through the promotion of non-factional board composition and through the re-direction of political works through other means.

Shortly after the death of Arafat (November 2004) and the elections of Mahmoud Abbas (January 2005), when substantial political negotiations were on the horizon, it was not a surprise that the carrot and stick argument of increased aid to the PNA was heard again. The *New York Times* reported, in December 2004, that aid to the PNA could reach $2 billion a year (against an average of $500 million during the Oslo years) in the following four years, provided that there was a 'Palestinians' push for peace' and that there was 'a crackdown on terror' (Ha'aretz 2004). So if donors, thanks to the vast amount of money poured into the Territories (which soared again to reach probably about $300 or $400 million a year for NGOs during this *Intifada*), have a powerful leverage on NGOs in terms of the *macro-political* conditions (acceptance of a negotiated-treaty),[27] their capacity to influence political work (providing that this is their will) is very limited on the *micro-level*.

Distinguishing between these two types of political pressures on the part of donors can be one of the reasons for the divergence of views amongst local actors. Some think that international donors have a responsibility in the loss of contacts between NGOs and local population, while others see this failure of NGOs as a purely internal defeat. But most of the NGOs also stressed the 'depoliticized' attitude on the donors' side (or the lack of will of donors to express political disagreement about the continuing occupation). Again, the figure of the chiasmus is useful. On both sides (donors and local NGOs), there are wishes for each other to be political, but not always the ways each other would expect. The fact that NGOs and PNA are the privileged interlocutors of donors is a mixed blessing: both are taken in a two-tier negotiation where the local population does not (and cannot) perceive all the motivations of these interactions with donors. Eventually, this can lead to a form of distrust on the side of the population from donors. The Islamist opposition had the easy part, since it did not have to enter into relationships with western donors, and could portray itself as resorting only on local resources (at least until its 2006 victory).

The problem is the lack of understanding by many donors about the political context of NGO work in the Territories. Thus, about a fifth of the international donors interviewed did not seem to know about the historical links of local NGOs with political parties. The vast majority would simply consider them on the basis of criteria of 'professionalism', while others developed clear strategies to have a balance between the political factions. Solidarity organizations, in turn, would actually choose openly their partners in function of political preferences. Another reason for the lack of knowledge about NGOs is the high turnover of the personnel on the international donors side. Nearly half of the figures interviewed were present in the Territories for less than two years, which would explain a lack of institutional memory contributing to this short-sightedness in terms of political involvement of NGOs.[28]

Another type of attitude from donors is not that of a lack of knowledge, but of deliberate political support. On the one hand, it calls publicly for non-political work, but on the other, it provides political support but as if NGOs were not political. The case of the Maqassed Hospital illustrates this type of attitude. The

hospital was a historical stronghold of independent and left-wing health activists but was unofficially and rather violently taken over by the PNA in 1997 (Curmi 2002: 112, 2003). Though everybody knows about this affiliation with the PNA (its director is the brother of the former PM Abu Ala), the issue does not raise an eyebrow on international donors' faces, despite the fact that this NGO has a high political profile (ibid.: 112) and that there was a substantial drop in the quality offered after this take over.

Finally, a third type of contribution by donors in the process of political exclusion is the aspect of preferred advocacy activities over service-providing. Some international donors have contributed to a slow shift during the Oslo years of the NGO work from service-delivery to cause-oriented or advocacy activities. If, until 1990, the majority of active NGOs that were leftist ones were providing mostly services, the 1990s saw the powerful growth of advocacy and cause-oriented NGOs. Hamas and Islamist NGOs occupied the ground of service-providing – but with a clear religious message – whereas some secular NGOs gradually abandoned service-providing organizations, like in the case of women's organizations (Jamal 2005), and some of the health and education NGOs.[29] In the latter cases, even if their message (aiming at enhancing the level of democracy within the Territories) was an important one, the abandonment of some service-delivery activities at the expenses of very abstract concepts fired back, even more so that the peace process failed to deliver. It was as if the priority was about strengthening and solidifying abstract concepts, before having a firm ground. On the other end, the success of Islamist organizations was due to the quality of its services, but also to the popularity of religious messages (Abdel Shafi 2004: 12–15).

In other words, it is extremely important that donors reflect on the consequences that the imposition of a given model can have. Though the idea to promote advocacy activities was important since PNA's performances were undemocratic, the socio-political context (no economic growth, continuous 'de-development' (Roy 2001), and benefits of the peace process going in the pockets of a happy few[30]) should have hinted at the necessity to continue service-provision in deprived areas, rather than totally reorient the work to advocacy and lobby activities.

Thus, much of the work done under the banner of 'civil society' during the Oslo years contributed to the exclusion of 'the political' in the work of NGOs. Not sure this is the case everywhere, but, since in Palestine factions were very much divided in their support of the Oslo agreements, becoming 'depoliticized' was a pre-condition to access funding. Thus, because of short-sightedness, or misreading Palestinian politics, many donors aimed at the wrong target.

The exclusionary power of civil society: sociological dimensions

Civil society at work can also produce social exclusion. The most obvious impact of aid is the transformation of the class structure in Palestine. By class,

one should understand clusters of individuals who share, along fictitious horizontal lines, common properties in terms of access to the means of production, or broad economic and market capacities and whose positions are antagonistic to other groups.

Hilal's work is the main source about this gradual process of class formation in the Palestinian territories. He promptly notes that beyond the formation of a new class of entrepreneurs and businessmen, a rather large and diversified middle class developed during the PNA years. Right after the top PA civil servants, Hilal lists top NGO employees as part of this class (2003: 169), while others also point to the important contribution of some NGO leaders to the growth of a 'globalized elite' (Hanafi and Tabar 2003: 209). But if NGOs contributed to the growth of the middle-class, they did not contribute to creating a class consciousness. They rather contributed to a further fragmentation of Palestinian society (Hilal and Khan 2004: 95ff.). Nabulsi also documented how certain NGOs 'began to make up an entirely new tier within Palestinian society, cut off from the grassroots and democratic structures that existed to represent the plurality of views in Palestinian civil society' (2005: 124).

Transnational links put certain NGOs in a position of advantage within the domestic context (and, hence, contribute to the impression of a 'globalized' elite). What deserves attention are the mechanisms of consultancy (partly touched upon in the case of the 'grey literature' on civil society) and of individual consultants established in connection with large USAID-funded programmes that reinforce each other's role. The interesting point is that these large international entities (but often staffed and run in their local offices by members of prominent business families) function as focal or contact points for only some NGOs.[31]

Some local NGOs are beneficiaries or clients of their services, which in a way surely enhances their market position with regard to other donors. Interestingly, some of the most prominent multiplicator NGOs (namely, NGOs working and/or offering training courses for other NGOs) are often the ones that have gravitated not very far from these economic consultancy firms. In this precise case, it is correct to speak of 'globalized' elites as Tabar and Hanafi do (2003). Not only do these few NGOs contribute to the growth of a well-off Palestinian middle-class, but if they do so, it is certainly because of the amount of capital, both real and symbolic, that working with international organizations can grant. In these cases, there does not seem to be a political instrumentalization of networking, but rather the prevalent factor is that of enhancing one's social position within the field of Palestinian NGOs.

Beyond the concentration by large NGOs of a variety of networks and preferential ties with international donors, it is noteworthy to underline how networking is generally put forward as a positive element of civil society promotion. The rather straightforward idea is that NGOs should cooperate with one another to enhance the quality of public discussions through horizontal links and eventually to improve the quality of civil society. The problem is that these forms of networking can lead to reinforce the dominant position of multiplicator NGOs, that is, large NGOs whose role has precisely been to be specialized in the funnelling of funds and expertise

into smaller organizations. The end result is the creation of large NGOs with specialized administrative apparatus to manage such sub-grantees.

In such setting, elements of political patronage could certainly be found, in terms of which smaller organizations get the chance to benefit from a sub-grant from larger NGOs. This is the case of the PNGO Project (run by the Welfare Consortium). There were complaints by large NGOs which did not succeed in receiving funding to become such a multiplicator NGO, that the conditions for lead partner were tailored in advance to allow predetermined organizations to become the multiplicator NGOs.[32] Slightly more than a one-third of the NGOs interviewed (38 per cent) were functioning, to various degrees, as multiplicator NGOs, be it through the re-distribution of sub-grants to smaller organizations, or by providing training activities to other ones, or simply by proposing small projects in partnership with other organizations.

Such practices pose the question of who are the most active actors within civil society. NGOs, as the most visible ones, all too often are synonymous with large organizations at the expense of smaller and less experienced organizations. This in turn, reinforces the predominant positions of a few elite organizations which can then re-distribute some money, or provide courses or training to smaller organizations. On the internal level, this problem is also reflected in terms of the turnover within NGOs. The latter have often been accused of being the locus for a one-(wo)man-show and Palestine is a crude example of that. Our database on local NGOs points to the fact that at least 56 per cent of the local organizations interviewed for this book have had the same person as director since its foundation.

Many organizations have lost their voluntary and participatory spirit.[33] The trend is increasingly that of the private sector, where what matters are salaries and a good position. Successful NGOs became more elitist in their modus operandi. This tendency is reinforced by the Best Eastern or American Colony mentality[34] of the part of donors who are keen to organize conferences in 5-star hotels rather than go into the field.

Although some of the exclusionary dimensions of civil society are quite unique to the Palestinian scene (the historical politicization of NGOs is undoubtedly unique), other social features of exclusion are, unfortunately, more universal and have been studied elsewhere in the literature. One example is the issue of the local brain drain of highly qualified persons who abandon domestic institutions to take a position with an international NGO or in the multilateral sector, or who prefer working for an important local NGO than serving in the public sector.

Because of the above-noted features of successful NGO life – and multiplied by the current hardship within the Territories – NGOs have become a major source of social prestige because of the good level of salaries, and both academia and public services suffered from a brain drain. The winning end was that of the various UN agencies and NGOs, both local and international ones. This has a potential incidence on the impoverishment of the political sphere since working with UN or other international organizations hinders Palestinian activists from

voicing their political views because of the reserve imposed by their work or position. Nevertheless, the end result, beyond the formation of a middle-class, is the exclusion from politics of a vital sector of the intelligentsia. But this is not just the result of civil society promotion but of the impact of a large quantity of development aid given to a country, as reported elsewhere in the literature (Hann and Dunn 1996; Strazzari 2002).

The exclusionary power of civil society: ideological dimensions

The final section of the exclusionary power of civil society involved the ideological dimension. Here, ideology should be understood as a set of ideas informing and guiding social action.

The foremost ideological dimension of the exclusionary power of civil society is that of the enacted and (by some) reinforced idea that the two spheres of 'Civil Society' and 'Arab Middle East World' are mutually incompatible. It is striking to see how some of the (neo-)Orientalist arguments (in the meaning of Said of an abstract negative portraying of the Orient in reflection to the West) have permeated the ideas of some local actors.

The stark statements by one of the large and very successful NGOs in Ramallah that there is 'no civil society in Palestine' (or in the Arab world for that matter), but only a phase of 'transition from the state of nature'[35] is the best embodiment of such views. It is one thing to claim that one cannot speak of a full-fledged civil society because of some inherited links (*irthiyah*) or because of the lack of individual autonomy[36] in the region, it is a totally different matter to claim that there is *no* civil society and that the 'state of nature' is still the norm in the Territories and in the rest of the Arab world.

One can discuss the first statement, which might have some elements of truth, and which might evolve over time,[37] but the second statement reinforces ideas that there is an intrinsic 'lack of civility'[38] in Palestine and the Arab world. In that case one does not speak fully about 'civil society', but stops at the 'civil' and the argument becomes one of the twisted kind for the strong ethnocentric dimensions that any discussion of 'civil', 'civility', 'civilisation' entails (Arnason 2001).

Instead of uselessly debating the 'civility' of the 'Other', I would argue that the bottom line, or the decisive factor about the research for the existence of civil society is an empirical matter. Even if one is born to a Family Association in Palestine, it is a matter of fact that this type of organization has empirically performed the role of a civil society organization in recent years. It has done so by functioning as a relay of complaints between individuals and the PNA, or by inculcating the basics of citizen participation to large segments of poorer and/or less educated elements of the Palestinian population of the second Palestine. Therefore, as the second statement implies ('being in the state of nature'), the enquiry about the civility of a given group takes precedent over the function that this civil society organization can have. Instead, one now faces sweeping assumptions about the civility of some actors, rather than assessing the various forms that civil society can take in different con-

texts. Using the theoretical discussions of Chapter 1, the first approach underlines the differences, whereby the second puts the stress on *similitude*.

The kind of argument might well have another explanation, touched upon briefly in terms of fields involving advocacy NGOs whereby only certain actors became the privileged interlocutors of international donors. As seen, being commissioned to produce a report on NGOs might open the door to many different funding sources or role of advisors. Therefore, holding such a view put its author above the scrum of 'normal' NGOs. But the (probably) unintended consequence of the image of Palestine being in a 'state of nature' was that it depicted local organizations in negative terms and neglected some of the potential they have. Therefore, it does not make any sense to investigate which one of civil society organizations or community-based organizations have 'more aspects of civility', or which ones are less 'clannish' or 'tribal'. Moreover, by holding the view that Palestinians are 'managing transition from relief to development, from natural society aspects (which means factionalism, clannish or familial [relationships]) into more democratic, accountable and transparent sector',[39] it makes Palestinian NGOs fall nicely into the pigeon-holes of 'development' or 'transition'. It finally reinforces the (very spurious) idea that local NGOs are empty recipients in need of Promethean assistance, and in need of the light of democracy that can be brought and 'imported' by foreign donors.

With regard to previous theoretical discussions of civil society in the Arab-Muslim world, such views that there is no civil society in the region seem to go hand in hand with that of Azmi Bishara (that there is no individual autonomy). But the argument actually developed by Izzat Abdel Hadi is broader and openly refers to western authors and western conceptions of civil society.[40] Beyond the quotation of Weber in Izzat Abdel Hadi's reformulation of the problematic dichotomy of 'traditional' versus 'modern' society, there is another element hinting at a neo-Orientalist argument, namely that of a strong society. This view – and by discussing so much about the 'civility' of various social groupings in Palestine, Izzat Abdel Hadi's views are close to Gellner's – contends that Muslim societies are actually too strong to become a truly civil society (Chapter 2). Izzat Abdel-Hadi (and Gellner) see(s) the problem in the fact that local associations are resisting 'modern' norms of behaviour, but he overlooked the vivid tradition of associational life in Palestine and the positive role it has had so far and the one it can have in the future. We again are going into circles. 'Local' views on civil society are influenced by the previously discussed neo-'Orientalist' debates, which, in turn, are fed and fuelled by such views that there is no Arab-Muslim civil society.

A final element of exclusion in terms of ideology comes from the legitimacy granted by international donors to local organizations, and in particular to multiplicator NGOs. The multiplicator NGOs actually play the role of ideologues, of the shepherds, providing the 'technical' knowledge that is re-distributed either through publications commissioned by some donors, or through training courses offered to smaller local NGOs. But the problem is that this type of knowledge is carefully selected or co-opted by donors.

This 'technical' discursive legitimacy implies a relationship of proximity with donors, instead of one of representativeness of and accountability to the local population. This type of legitimacy bestowed by international donors reinforces the elitist work of NGOs, instead of promoting a popular type of legitimacy. This argument is illustrated by the case of a Palestinian NGO fighting against the PNA to obtain funding for agricultural programmes from the World Food Programme. The struggle between the NGO and the PNA is not only the distribution of food, but also the prestige and credibility that such joint programmes confer on local actors (Abu Sada 2007a, b). But even if some legitimacy can be gained from working with an international organization, the fundamental question will be that of the local political legitimacy.[41]

This tension between the interest of donors and of locals is a *topos* of developmental literature. For many this is simply Achilles' heel. Anheier and Themudo noticed that the increased division of labour for northern NGOs to concentrate on fund rising, capacity building and advocacy, might create a uniformization of the agenda. This in turn translates into pressure towards isomorphic tendencies about the issues dealt with, but also on increased bureaucratization. Eventually, the risk is that southern NGOs, in order to gain funding and this type of legitimacy, will be forced to 'mimetic isomorphism stemming from increased competition for scarce resource' (Anheier and Themudo 2002: 205–212).

But the issue of legitimacy is not only provided by the discourse, by the 'technicity' of the jargon, or even by the bureaucratization implied by funding. It also depends on the way it is formulated and how it is practically implemented as a response to local needs or not. For example, one cannot but have the feeling that some of the funding made available by USAID is meant to alleviate the consequences of the harsh closure imposed in the last years by the Israeli military forces. As if it was about making sure that minimum services can be delivered *despite* the closure and bantustanization of the Territories. For example, in the case of delivery facilities developed recently in villages, one could wonder whether 'sustainability' is possible in the long run. Is there really a need to have delivery rooms in each village when in 'normal times' each villager can reach an urban centre in less than 30 minutes? One cannot help but feel that there is a form of guilty consciousness on the side of some donors, but the consequence is that these donors subsidize and indirectly support the occupation and colonial regime put in place and increased by Israel over the years. The consequence for local NGOs benefiting from this financial manna can be perceived by the population as working for somebody else's interests rather than the local common good.

Another similar danger concerns certain projects dealing with peace and non-violence. If the content promoted by such courses or activities are not context-sensitive or negate some of the basic dimensions of the Israeli–Palestinian conflict,[42] or falsely favour the view that there is a normalization or a symmetric balance in the Palestinian–Israeli relations, then bitterness might grow and jeopardize – or even alienate – the future work of the local NGOs implementing on behalf of international donors. Two examples might be worthwhile to expose here.

I had the occasion to speak at the beginning of 2003, shortly before the Iraq invasion (and fear that Israel might launch a massive military campaign in the Territories) with a Gazan schoolteacher who had to follow a multi-session course on non-violence and democracy organized by an Anglo-Saxon organization which was totally oblivious to the historical context and origins of the occupation. He told me that most of his colleagues simply refused to keep following the course since its content was so obviously biased.

A second example, related to service-provision studied in this book, is about the rather fashionable programmes for tackling mental health issues. Based on the positive assumption that health is more than physical well-being, many international donors have developed during the Oslo years, and during the second *Intifada* on a more intensive scale, programmes meant to alleviate psychological suffering due to long-term exposure to violence or traumatic experiences. Without denigrating the positive aspect of such programmes, they are often perceived by Palestinians as a way for donors to avoid facing their responsibility to put pressure on ending the occupation, the real origin of psychosocial trauma rather than repeatedly curing patients who will unfortunately all too often experience further violence and trauma.[43]

In other words, some of the programmes and activities favoured by some donors might end up being mixed blessings for the local organizations running them. On the one hand, they provide activities and salaries to local employees (which is not to be underestimated in the current situation of hardship experienced by a majority of Palestinians), while, on the other, the image of local NGOs can suffer from the fact the programmes are undertaken purely for opportunist reasons (then backfiring on the reputation of the organization and possibly on the whole sector). Future projects and messages from the same organization might be therefore ruined or at least altered and lessened to the detriment of the organization and the people running it. Therefore, it can be said that this type of activity entails an ideologically exclusionary power since it is done with the purpose of enhancing the very ideas of civil society through an ideological support for the success of peace, but at the expense of the respect for day-to-day realities of the population.

7 Conclusions

Looking 'beyond the pale'

Forced framings and the creation of heteronomy

After having studied the return to prominence of the concept of 'civil society' in Part I of this book, Part II showed some of the shortcomings of 'civil society at work'. This chapter draws some conclusions about the most salient problematic features of the impact of international aid. Undoubtedly the situation of heteronomy that is facing large sections of Palestinian civil society is the most severe problem, not so much for the donors (who hold the knife), as for the population itself which needs a sense of domestic cohesion in critical periods. Civil strife that has characterized so much of the political life in Palestine since Hamas came into power in January 2006 and the coup in Gaza in June 2007 is a sad illustration of the incapacity of Palestinian elites (of any faction) to relate to the most urgent needs of the population. Some of the elites are challenged by popular discontents and protests emanate, for parts, from the scene of civil society that we have described at length here.[1]

Let us now look at the most direct contributions of donors in creating a potential situation of heteronomy. I will argue that there are three main aspects for which one could point her/his finger to the promotion of civil society as a source of problem. The first deals, on a general level, with the dubious theoretical foundations of the current vulgate of civil society seen as the panacea to political evils. The second illustrates the creation of a discursive heteronomy that an unobtrusive indicator can reveal to social science (the so-called 'most expected public speeches' (MEPS)). Third, the waves and phases of aid articulated in terms of conflict and post-conflict also entail their normative loads which can be detrimental to the development of an autonomous civil society.

Throughout this book, civil society has been presented as more than a theoretical construct. The concept has so many strong implications in the world of praxis, of which some are potentially negative, and should therefore be studied with critical attention and, especially, promoted with great care. Furthermore, theoretical discussions of civil society should lean more on empirical evidence. Too many papers and studies exclude certain social or religious groups from civil society on the basis that they do not qualify on rather limited theoretical grounds. But such a conscious (or unconscious) refusal to recognize

the variety of civil societies has two implications. First, it reinforces mainstream discussions that remain confined to its emergence in western countries and its re-emergence at the end of the Cold War. Second, it increases the artificial distance that exists between theory and practice.

This distance, or better, this hiatus, is very similar to the limited conception of civil society used by most international donors and appropriated by a few powerful local recipient NGOs. Both outside donors and inside recipient NGOs rely on a rather exclusive definition of civil society that is constantly infused into the parlance of large international donor institutions. The role of Putnam is an apposite example of the recycling of social-political theories into the priorities of multilateral agencies such as the World Bank. Selective theoretical discussions can definitively make a difference since they largely influence donors and NGOs' practice. To be concrete, we have tried to demonstrate that, first, civil society promotion tends to limit itself to a particular range of NGOs (shortcomings of the theories of civil society by proxy). Second, few NGOs tend to become the privileged partners of international donors at the expense of a much larger number and broader range of civil society organizations (shortcomings of the process of implementation between donors and recipients NGOs). Finally, the (neo-)Orientalist claims that there cannot be a civil society in the Arab-Muslim world have had an influence on donors (for being selective and discriminating against Islamic – as opposed to Islamist – organizations), and on key local intellectuals who reinforce the view that there is *no* civil society in the region (shortcomings in the conception of civil society in a transcultural setting).[2]

All of these three shortcomings can be summed up as follows: programmes and projects concerning the promotion of civil society, as implemented through the interaction between western donors and local NGOs, tend to have a differentiated and hence exclusionary impact upon the civil societies of receiving countries, especially in the Arab-Muslim worlds. This exclusion embodies a version of civil society which is not about intrinsic political participation (civil society in itself, or *an sich*), but about a reflexive appropriation of the discourse about key civil society organization (civil society for itself, or *für sich*). In a catchphrase, only these civil society organizations having the institutional and discursive means to sell themselves under the accepted label of 'NGOs' will be successful in their bureaucratic interaction with international donors and their quest to receive funding for their activities.[3]

Ways to get away from these exclusionary tendencies would be for international donors to acknowledge the diversity of local forms of civil society organizations and to be less fixed in their notion of what a proper 'civil society' should eventually look like. Civil society can be found under a variety of *phrases* and manifestations, without altering its *substance*, i.e. its possible contribution towards the definition of a project of political autonomy. By allowing a greater variety of views to flourish, international donors could contribute to the fostering of a pluralism of content (rather than a mere pluralism of number). By providing more long-term funding, and/or by helping to put in place endowments for NGOs, they could contribute to a re-focusing of local NGOs towards more programmes (as opposed to projects that

correspond to the momentary fashion of donors) that respond to the needs of the population. Last but not least, all of these would support the blossoming of accountability between local populations and their civil society organizations (such as NGOs).

If not, 'civil society at work' will remain what it has become in the last ten years or so: an empty ideology with a bureaucratic life of its own. Because of the divorce that took place between theory and praxis, and the particular appropriation of the concept by some left-wing actors, this ideology has lost, at least in the Palestinian case, much of its gathering force, namely its impact on the political and social imaginary. In many places in this book, we have alluded to the importance of a message that ought to be tied to the work of civil society organizations. We have also shown how certain organizations, not only the secular ones but also some of the more militantly religious ones, have managed to remain in close connection with their basis. Thus, they have not become a source of heteronomy for the local populations because they had been following too much the trends set by donors. International donors have sometimes had a detrimental role in imposing or pushing for a certain type of message that was not beneficial for the civil society organizations' historical constituencies (Figures 6.1 and 6.2). Let us illustrate now the ways in which one can perceive the existence of such heteronymous situations.

During the interview with NGO activists, a subjective survey was added to assess (over the last 15 years) the evolution of the relations between their NGOs and some key actors. Thus, local respondents were asked to describe, on a vertical line, the distance between their organization and two types of actors, i.e. a) its relation to local constituencies, and b) the distance separating it from donors. They were also asked to subjectively measure, on a horizontal fictitious line, the distance between the NGO and the PNA/PLO as well as the distance to political parties (see Appendix III). They had to respond twice to the questions, in order to assess the evolution after the end of first *Intifada* and also after the outbreak of the second *Intifada* (the purpose being to see how the Oslo years influenced the distance between the NGO and the actors under scrutiny, and then also to compare the situation between the Oslo years and the second *Intifada*).[4]

Concerning the evolution of the distance between their organization and the local population, 75 per cent of NGOs (eight out of 12) declared that the distance diminished (this means, the NGO felt closer to the population) while 25 per cent (three respondents) said that the distance remained the same (and that the relation between the NGO and the population was not affected by the second *Intifada*). This rather homogenous result hints at the *declared* intention of NGOs to respond not only to the increased need born of the harsh military politics of Israel, but also to the intrinsic need of NGOs to get closer to the masses. On the contrary, 50 per cent only hinted at improved distance with donors during the second *Intifada*, whereas, 17 per cent said the distance with donors was stable.

Interestingly, the only distance (out of the four dimension suggested, i.e. PNA/PLO, political parties, donors and local constituencies), where there is a

homogenous response is about the diminished distance to their local bases during the second *Intifada*. *A contrario*, this result suggests that the distance between NGOs and local population must have previously grown wider.

But such homogenous statements on the side of NGOs constitute a form of 'official' response, or what I will term 'most expected public speeches' or MEPS.[5] By MEPS, I mean the type of answers that are commonly expected in a public setting by actors in the same field.[6] A closer interpretation of such expected (or publicly 'official') answers allows students to understand, *en creux*, some of the contentious issues, and constitute, I would argue, a deictic or a revealing element of heteronomy. Such a statement would not take place in the case of autonomy, because there is an inherent (but undeclared) tension between what is expected from the speaker and the inner beliefs of this person.[7]

Another case of such 'MEPS' concerns receiving funding from the USA and, in particular, from USAID. Given the context of rather unequivocal American support for the Israeli side of the conflict, it is badly considered in the Palestinian community to be the recipient of USAID financial support. Contrasting the results of the question put to NGOs whether they receive American aid with a list of Palestinian NGOs who actually receive aid, one can see that there is also a discrepancy: in at least four cases (out of 28 NGOs which declared not to receive USAID money), those who declared not to take USAID money, were actually doing so. But because of the significant unpopularity of USAID money (e.g. local NGOs and population refused the entry of USAID's food and medicine into Jenin after the 2002 invasion and destruction of one third of its refugee camps), NGOs prefer to position themselves as non-recipients of American aid.[8] So, drawing on this example, the fact that there was a very homogenous answer by NGOs in favour of a closer link to their local masses suggested that the distance was probably greater. If not, respondents would have said the distance to the population remained constant.

Another element adding weight to the idea of MEPS is the sometimes-mentioned tensions between some concepts that translate differently from Arabic to English and vice versa. In addition to the rather problematic 'secular' (*'ilamaniyy*), the very phrase 'civil society' is used differently in Arabic. Some usually refer to '*mujtama' madani*' (a literal translation), while others (according to political views, as argued before) prefer the expression *mujtama' ahli* ('civic society'). Interestingly, the Palestinian NGO Network (PINGO) which is fiercely secular and at the vanguard of left-wing NGOs, plays a lot on its usage of 'civil society' in its English newsletters and various websites. In the monthly supplement published in one of the main daily newspapers in the Territories (*al-ayyaam*), PINGO chose the more popular '*al-'aml al-ahli*' ('the civic work') to present its activities. Thus, PINGO chooses and adapts its vocabulary and rhetoric according to the context and milieus the network addresses. In other words, connections are different and actors click on different *répertoires*: in English they speak the language of a 'modern' civil society, while in Arabic, they prefer the more popular (but also conservatively tainted) 'civic work'.

A final element hinting at the existence of a regime of heteronomy that arose during the Oslo years (the period where large donors started their work in the

Territories) comes from some of the political positions during the campaign for the presidential elections of early January 2005. Marwan Barghouthi, the jailed West Bank leader of Fatah, many times called upon the PNA and Fatah's only candidate Mahmoud Abbas, not to betray the decisions of the Palestinian majority. Using the image of the two Palestines, one could say that he begged the first Palestine (led and symbolized by Abu Mazen) to respect the will of the second Palestine of which he is more representative. Another candidate and yet another Barghouthi (Mustafa, the leader of the National Initiative, a coalition of secular left politicians) also pointed to the existence of sources of heteronomy among the Palestinian masses. In an article published in the *International Herald Tribune* (and serving as an announcement of his running for the presidential seat) in late November 2004, Mustafa Barghouthi developed the view that:

> a democratically elected leadership that respects the rule of law cannot avoid being accountable for its decisions, nor can it be manipulated into accepting arrangements that dissatisfy those it purports to represent to the extent of creating revolt or another *Intifada* (2004).

Reading between the lines, Mustafa Barghouthi held the view (rather common in the Territories), that one of the reasons for the large support from the Palestinians for the *Intifada* was that it was also an *internal* uprising against a leadership that accepted too many external *diktats* during the Oslo years.

The same line of thinking is developed by Karma Nabulsi under the heading of 'de-democratization' that the Oslo process, in her eye, provoked (2005: 122ff.). She contends the belief that international donors 'created' a Palestinian civil society, although there was already one existing well before the arrival of the Oslo peace brokers. The insistence of influential donors to support the peace process, to promote a forced dialogue on the illusion of equal footing with Israeli partners, on top of economic and social development, had a negative impact:

> yet the consequence of this new direction in funding was both to interfere with and to undermine democratic processes in already existing structures of associational networks. By entirely neglecting local party, grassroots and union platforms and committees, donors contributed to a de-democratization of civil society in the West Bank and Gaza instead of increasing the capacity of civil society for democratization.
>
> (ibid.: 123)

While Nabulsi speaks of de-democratization, we would prefer the idea of heteronomy. After all, even if certain NGOs bandwagoned on the train of fake normalization with Israel, they still could play a role in democratizing their own constituency. What is more problematic is that NGOs had their liberty of choosing the themes, modalities and vocabulary of their interventions confiscated so to say and imposed by the influential donors. In other words, segments of the

local civil society lost their autonomy, politically and symbolically, and were forced into some most expected public speeches (MEPS) and most expected (from the donors' perspective) public actions.

The third source of the problem with aid can stem from expectations or distortions deriving from a too normative approach. As 2005 started, refreshed discussions of peace negotiations, and a possible return to the creation of a Palestinian State made daily appearance in news and articles. Many features of the discussion of 'civil society' were evolving against a new background of state-building and post-conflict peace building. The latter point of view is actually not without problems, as highlighted in various parts of this book, since it implies 'confidence-building' measures, and gradual steps to end a violent conflict between the two sides. The years 2005 and 2006 did not deliver the fruits of a peace negotiation. To the contrary the victory of Hamas and then ensuing internal strife in the Territories between Hamas and Fatah removed the perspective of an imminent round of post-conflict transformation, at least until the vain promises of the Annapolis summit (November 2007).

But, as correctly stressed by Nabulsi, applying the normative post-conflict framework to the Palestinian case might actually obstruct and hide many historical features of the Palestinian–Israeli puzzle. The two sides are not equal in force and resources, and the type of 'conflict' is not that of a war between two armed combatants, but more like an anti-colonial national emancipation struggle. Therefore, some of the measures usually taken in post-conflict situations should not be applied in the Palestinian case, even more so since the UN and its Security Council have passed quite a number of resolutions that should serve as the legal basis for the resolution of any issue in the negotiations. Therefore, negotiations should start head on with these premises and not on the usual confidence-measures, unless they really address topics inherently part of these resolutions (Nabulsi 2004).

This short detour by 'post-conflict' is meant to stress that NGOs, and civil society, will again be the focus, or the privileged vehicle of international aid, in particular of advocacy issues (as often the case in post-conflict situations). Moreover, the embargo placed on aid to the PNA after the arrival of Hamas into power in 2006 put large professional NGOs in a position of strength to deliver services that the PNA could not pay anymore. Therefore the shift back to service-delivery on the part of NGOs that one witnessed during the second *Intifada* (as a means both to alleviate hardship and to compensate for an on-the-brink-of-the-collapse PNA) will probably decrease in a renewed post-conflict setting. We will probably come back to the 1994 situation, where donors will operate a distinction of the basis of the roles of the PNA towards state-building measures and of the NGOs whose role will be to serve advocacy purposes and complement service-provision with the PNA.

Some of the difficulties that NGOs faced around 1994 might well return in the coming years. The more political role undertaken by NGOs during the second *Intifada* and the efforts to come closer to their bases will probably disappear gradually with the return to a more stable situation. Many NGO activists have spotted this potential difficulty. Their fears have also been fuelled

by the fact that they had re-acquired (or sought to re-acquire) a new legitimacy, thanks to re-directed programmes made possible by a larger amount of funding during the *Intifada*.

Whether this new phase will reproduce and reinforce tensions between PNA and NGOs remains to be seen, but the outcome will be contingent on whether real progress is made on the PNA's commitment to reforms and the results of the future elections, and the overall success of comprehensive negotiations pertaining to the well-being of the two Palestines.

Some other signs suggest that Palestine is on the brink of a new era in the development of its narrative about NGOs, in particular, and 'civil society', in general. The candidacy of Mustafa Barghouthi for the 2005 presidential elections materialized the drive of certain NGOs to become openly and massively re-politicized. An article published in late December 2004 by a scholar who has written on issues of NGOs' depoliticization during the Oslo years, supported the view of a speculation about repoliticization. Islah Jad pointed out that the local municipal candidates under the banner of Mustafa Barghouthi's National Initiative in the Hebron district were trying to do nothing more than provide services to the local communities by articulating a strong message. Interestingly, this message was not based on abstract notions like the 'emancipatory power of civil society', but rather on the very concrete and day-to-day issues generated by the Apartheid Wall being erected in the West Bank.[9] In other words, the 'local' has powerfully re-entered political parlance and became a priority amongst secular left-wing politicians.

But as revealing as this return to the 'local' may be, the return to a narrative about NGOs as striving to reach down to the towns and local constituencies, is worthwhile mentioning:

> Mustapha Barghouti portrays himself as the representative of a '*third way*', neither political Islam nor Fateh's mainstream nationalism. […] Understanding also the importance of the role of international public opinion, Barghouti has highlighted his ability to address that sector, on the formal and informal levels, as a way to boost his domestic standing and in an attempt at building a power base among the 'silent independents' and the youth, as well as those dissatisfied with Fateh or Hamas' policies, whether they be in the business sector or professionals.
>
> Barghouti is also taking a leaf out of Hamas' book. By *utilizing* networks he developed from his work in the Medical Relief Committees, an influential NGO in the health provision sector, Barghouti hopes to transform his *erstwhile service recipients* into an organized constituency. It is important to note that the bureaucracy, networks, leadership and strategy needed to run an NGO are different than those needed to build a political movement or organization. The latter is based on shared goals, voluntarism, sustainable commitments and well-coordinated collective action. If he is successful in this project, Barghouti's example might set an important precedent for the many NGOs in the Arab world to transform themselves *from urban elite NGOs* into *popular movements*, whether social or political ones. In doing so, they may be

> finally able to obtain some *real political power* and compete with both the Islamic movements and ruling parties.
>
> (Jad 2004, emphasis mine)

This quote illustrates many of the topics and themes of this book, and shows how the 'political' was expelled artificially from the work of NGOs during the 1990s but later re-entered through the backdoor, i.e. youth as a constituency, service-provision as way to reach out politically to the community, the fight against Hamas and not just Fatah. Many of these elements could be read as a confirmation of our hypothesis that 'civil society' and more precisely NGOs under the influence of their external promoters tended to exclude the 'political' in their work. But also noteworthy is the fact that NGOs are here being portrayed as 'erstwhile service' providers rather than popular self-organized committees, which, as demonstrated originally, were *political* organizations with a concrete mission in the field of health, or agriculture, etc. The new narrative is that these service-providing NGOs can become the means to politically mobilize a constituency. So we are back to square one: NGOs as socio-political movements (1970–1980s), becoming depoliticized service-provision under the dominant Washington-consensus (1990s) to returning to socio-political movements towards at this point of the second *Intifada*. Whether this last step will work is a question of time and of future empirical research.[10]

Of the necessity of looking 'beyond the pale'

This last question marks hints at the fact that aid is not only political on the international level (namely fostering support for a certain vision of peace with Israel and for a certain type of political institutions), but also political in terms of the consequences that the structuration of aid has on the composition of political factions in the Territories. It is therefore vital for donors to look 'beyond the pale' and to stop working exclusively with secular professional NGOs and with the same dominant discourses that offer a limited understanding of civil society. Far from being an 'anti-politics' vehicle (Ferguson 1990), the work of donors can push the local population further into the arms of Islamic militant groups. Therefore the reading of the existence of two Palestines should be taken into consideration if donors do not want to accelerate the unintended consequences of Islamist extremists riping the fruits of popular discontents ushered in by faulty aid policies around the promotion of civil society.

This set of observations bring to the fore again the importance of cognitive means through which one wants to support civil society organizations. It is a necessity to keep a good balance between the *message* and the *action* or service delivered. So, does the 'well-thought out ideological packaging' (Tamari 1995: 294, translation mine) explain the success of certain NGOs and political actors in their quest to gain popular support from the two Palestines? Why are some messages – or 'ideological wrappings/packagings' – more successful than others, and, if they are better, is it because they are endogenous/local or exogenous/extern? This remains the question of endless debates[11] and future research.

Some see in the widespread Islamist rhetoric an ideology that owes its success to the fact that it draws on local or domestic experiences and knowledge, as opposed to the externally imposed ideologies that have been ruling in the last decades in the Middle East, such as socialism and secular nationalisms (Burgat 2002: 106ff.). But this view might be only partially correct because Islam is not 'local' to Palestine. However, the international context in which Islam is projected as a solution makes it appear here as a local resource.

This also leads the reader to consider the important role of language, be it in terms of translation, or of semantic subtleties. The long excursus in the chapter of the AME civil society highlighted the high emotional charge of certain concepts in Arabic ('secular' being one of the most conspicuous). In the line of Castoriadis, language is a social institution (1999: 171ff., in part. 174) that is essential for the realization of the autonomy of a given society. Ghalioun precisely underlines the importance of language with the question of secularism in Arab societies. Rapid modernization, he observed, 'remains therefore alien [to Arab societies] and has not succeeded, until now, to produce its own symbolic universe'.[12]

We are here again in the very core idea of the connection, or *branchement* (Amselle 2001). An application of Amselle's model would provide a key to reading or, at least, partially understanding the success of Islam in the collective political imaginary of many AME societies. According to such a view, Islam is not simply reduced to a form of relativist cultural strength, but rather functions as a universalizing force for many local societies to frame their differences (in our cases even disagreements). Local societies connect to Islam as a *répertoire* that gives credentials to their differences (ibid.: in part. 49). Language and symbols become therefore very important in this process.

Messages (or meanings) such as the ones put forward by Islamist groups are perceived as 'local' largely because they are projected against the background of a modern liberalism and of western democracy that do not hesitate to resort to war to promote and impose their institutions and message. Surely, in such a period of intense military confrontation throughout the Middle East, civil society, as one of the measures put forward by the US and allied governments as its solution for the alleged building of democratic regimes, might pay the price of the broad unpopularity of US plans and intentions. But because it was mostly deployed in Palestine during the Oslo years where very few dividends 'trickled down' to most of the population, the message of civil society runs the risk of being 'polluted' and of being inherently linked to external political conditionality and, therefore, badly perceived by some strands of the population. *Mutatis mutandis*, the same risks are probably true for any civil society promotion by the USA, in particular in the rest of the region in the coming years. So the *main* problem of civil society is *not* that it is a concept that is embedded in the historical context of Western history, but rather the contemporary context and the manner in which it is promoted and 'exported' abroad.

Similarly, it would be a huge mistake to consider that Islamist messages are successful simply because of a given, fixed and immutable culture in which the

Arab-Muslims live. Rather, as convincingly argued by Tamari, the success of Islamic rhetoric and politics is the result of the incapacity of left-wing political discourses and measures that failed to transform Palestinian society (1995: in part. 299f.). Muslih also notes that Hamas not only rejects Israel but also 'the system of secular ideas and institutions prevalent among the Palestinians and Arabs in general' (1993: 268f.).

Therefore, to understand why the second Palestine is not 'buying' the arguments of civil society (or, for that matter, those of western modernity), it will not suffice to demonstrate that there is a 'traditional culture', or that Islam *is* a blueprint for socio-political order, or that 'civil society' is inherently Eurocentric and, therefore, not applicable elsewhere. Rather, one has to re-analyse continuously the context, local and international, in which this ideological wrapping operates and which connection allows it to manifest itself as the local solution.[13] Therefore, in the case of the problematic marriage between secularism and modernity, Islamism 'embodies the rejection by large segments of the Muslim and Arab population of a model of modernity that did not keep its promises. It [this rejection] reflects the crisis of this lumpen-modernity which does not produce meaning anymore'.[14]

One secular NGO activist openly acknowledged the failure of certain NGOs over the Oslo years, and observed that if the question of message was the reason for this failure, it was also the reason for the success of Islamist NGOs:

> The [second] *Intifada* was a shock for everyone of us. Everyone is complaining about the anarchy, that we lost direction. We cannot influence the society and the people. We cannot bring our message to the people. Who has been able to deliver their message? Only the Islamic parties! The PNA collapsed, completely, or – if not – it lost its credibility. It has been seen as a corrupt, incapable Authority, at best helpless. Who has been able to influence people? The Islamists! Not only because their political message is attractive to the people, but also because they have institutions themselves for this.
>
> If you look, the vast majority of NGOs are more or less secular, but their impact, their political impact is very minimal. That's why NGOs are thinking: 'What the hell is going on? Why aren't we influencing the people to bring the message of tolerance, of pluralism, etc?' This is because, since 1994, we always say [that] we are professionals, [that] we provide services, [and that] this is our role. But at the end of the day, what is the difference between you and private mental health clinics? Nothing![15]

It seems as though some of the larger and more secular NGOs have taken a more active stance in generating local political support through to their work. It is a kind of return to the principle of mobilization through the popular committees of the pre-Oslo era. The success of Mustafa Barghouthi's new movement (National Initiative launched in July 2002) might stem more from the campaign dealing with the Segregation Wall in some zones that are harshly suffering from its erection, than from the internal political messages of the movement.[16] But there is a

bit of irony to have a political party/movement owing its success not to its own political programmes but to capitalizing on a negative issue on which Palestinians unfortunately have little to say.

But what might appear as a rather bleak picture about the risks of civil society promotion and the difficulties that the historically strong secular NGO camp has been facing over the last decade, should not mean that the issue of civil society promotion by foreigners must be abandoned once and for all. Adopting the view that there are two main competing 'tribes' in Palestine (Fatah/PNA versus Islamist groups),[17] one can see that secular NGOs are placed between a rock and a hard place, even more so after the arrival of Hamas into power, thus reinforcing the main dividing political lines between Fatah and the Islamists.

For secular NGOs, as well as for more traditional civil society organizations using the content but not the phrase of civil society, their success will depend on their capacity to (re-)mobilize strong constituencies. But this mobilization (or remobilization for the older organizations), if it wants to be successful, has to be accomplished more through locally acknowledged vocabulary and by mingling locally accepted forms of collective action mobilization[18] with universal concepts leading to more democratic practices within the Palestinian polity, rather than pushing for ready-made concepts which might not be well perceived locally, as it was too often the case in the Oslo years. That is certainly the price they will have to pay to re-acquire autonomy over the means of defining their socio-political development for future Palestinian generations. Wiping the slate clean cannot be an impossible task for many local NGOs, even for those which have been tremendously helped by foreign donors – provided the latter are able to look 'beyond the pale' of too narrow a conception of civil society.

To conclude and to close the circle of this book that started with a reflection on cultures and on the modes of representations of two Palestines, one should address the ways through which research on the field of civil society is performed and how epistemologically one has to do research in this field.

To paraphrase McLuhan (1964), the focus of research on 'civil society' should not only be its discourses, but it also the medium itself ('the medium is the message'). Civil society promotion implies a whole apparatus of aid that contributes to a profound re-structuring of political life in the Palestinian Territories. An analysis in terms of the sociology of 'development' institutions also hints at discrepancies between the avowed objectives of civil society promotion and its shortcomings on the ground.

This is not to say that the content of civil society promotion is not important: we have shown that civil society serves as a political identity marker, and that it is heavily loaded in terms of political, social and ideological agenda. So a study of the content of civil society is useful within a given context.

To say, as McLuhan invites us to do when reflecting on the medium itself, is to try to conceptualize and operationalize a research dealing with civil society promotion at a higher level, namely that of the institutions. Civil society promotion implies such an amount of institutional structures (communication, management, relation with donors, differentiated functions, etc.) that to get substantial

funding from large donors, any civil society organization *must* have a capacity to adapt to the isomorphic pressure. Thus, one is also forced to re-think about the blind spots of institutions, namely the fact that institutions have a certain way of working and thinking (Douglas 1987) and that a student of aid must take this level of analysis into consideration.

We have tried to take this factor into consideration through the study of the history of aid, the evolution of the modalities through which aid is and has been disbursed, through the detailed analysis of the formation and transformation of a limited understanding of civil society in the Palestinian setting and through the study of the local perception that NGO activities have about this international aid. This was all part of an interdisciplinary effort to grasp the multifaceted consequences of aid. Much more could be searched, said and written about the topic of aid in Palestine. However the rise of a model of the managerial civil society starts provoking new types of reflections, on the link between knowledge management, knowledge sharing and knowledge-based aid (Bocco 2006: 81). But knowledge, as well known, is not free floating and independent. Rather, by pointing to the necessity to keep a double eye open on the nature of the message, but also on the medium of such messages, one will have probably more nuanced results, and will be able to see results on the two levels where aid is playing: an international scene where donors are increasingly larger, governmentalized and institutionalized, and a local one, where actors have to adapt to the institutional and discursive isomorphic pressure in order to survive. But sometimes at the expense of the population that local actors should preserve and fight to defend.

Appendix I

Full list of interviews

List of Palestinian NGOs interviewed (by sector of intervention, and chronologically ordered)

Note: * indicates informative interviews only. In order, name of the organization, name of the person interviewed (function), place and date of interview

Advocacy NGOs

1 Ad-Dhameer Association for Human Rights, Khalil Abu SHAMMALAH, Executive Director, Gaza City, 30 January 2003.
2 Palestinian Centre For Human Rights, Jabr WISHAH, Deputy Director, Gaza City, 30 January 2003.
3 Palestinian Independent Commission for the Citizens' Rights – Gaza Head, Mazen SHAQURA, Director of Gaza Branch, Gaza City, 1 February 2003.
4 Gaza Center for Law and Human Rights, Amin DABOUR, Director, Gaza City, 1 February 2003.
5 Democracy and Workers' Rights Center – GAZA, Nidhaal GHABAN, Head of Training Unit, Gaza City, 1 February 2003.
6 Al-Mezan Center for Human Rights, Issam YOUNIS, Director, Jabaaliya, 2 February 2003.
7 Palestinian Association for Human Rights, Khalil Az-ZIBN, Director, Gaza City, 2 February 2003.
8 Al-Haq, Sha'wan JABAARIN, Head of Legal Unit, Ramallah, 7 February 2003.
*9 MUWATIN, George GIACAMAN, Director, Ramallah, 8 February 2003.
10 Mandela Institute for Political Prisoners, Khaled BATRAWI, Board Member, Ramallah, 9 February 2003.
11 Palestinian Center for Peace, People-to-People, Aysha ABU AWAD, Programme Manager, Ramallah, 17 February 2003.
12 MATTIN Group, Salwa DUAIBIS and Susan ROCKWELL, Partners, Ramallah, 17 February 2003.
13 Democracy and Workers Rights Association, Hassan BARGHOUTHI, General Director, Ramallah, 22 February 2003.

14 AMAN – Coalition for Accountability and Integrity, Dr Azmi SHU'AIBI, Founder and Coordinator, Ramallah, 22 February 2003.
15 Ad-Dhameer Institute – West Bank, Khaleeda JARRAAR, Executive Director, Ramallah, 24 February 2003.
16 Palestinian Centre for Rapprochement, George RISHMAWI, Coordinator, Beit Sahour, 20 January 2004.
17 Palestinian Conflict Resolution Centre WI'AM, Zoughbi ZOUGHBI, Founding Director, Beit Lahem, 20 January 2004.
18 Palestinian Centre for Peace and Democracy, Nassif MU'ALLEM, Director, Ramallah, 21 January 2004.
19 Ramallah Centre for Human Rights Studies, Iyaad BARGHOUTHI, Director, Nablus, 22 February 2004.
20 Jerusalem Centre for Legal Aid and Human Rights, Issam 'AROURI, General Manager, Ramallah, 14 February 2004.
21 MIFTAH, Dr Lily FEIDY, Vice-Secretary General, Jerusalem, 16 February 2004.
22 Civic Forum, Aref JAFFAL, Executive Director, Jerusalem, 17 February 2004.
23 MEND, Lucy NUSSEIBEH, Director, Jerusalem, 18 February 2004.
24 Centre for Conflict Resolution and Reconciliation, Noah SALAMEH, Director, Beit Lahem, 24 February 2004.
25 BISAN Centre for Research and Development, Izzat ABDUL-HADI, General Director, Ramallah, 28 February 2004.

Health NGOs

26 Union of Health Care Committees – Gaza Branch, Dr Ra'eb SABAH, Dir. of Gaza Branch, Gaza City, 30 January 2003.
27 Union of Health Work Committees, Dr Rabah MUHANA and Dr Mouna Al-FARRA, President and Health Activist, Gaza City, 30 January 2003.
28 Medical Relief and Development (UPMRC Gaza Branch), Abdelhadi ABU KHOUSA, Head of Gaza Branch, Gaza City, 30 January 2003.
29 Union of Palestinian Medical Relief Committees HQ, Jack KHANO, Head of External Relation, Beit Haninia, 19 February 2003.
30 Gaza Community Mental Health Programme, Salah ABDEL SHAFI, Director, Gaza City, 2 February 2003.
31 Red Crescent Society for the Gaza Strip, Dr Haydar ABDEL SHAFI, President, Gaza City, 2 February 2003.
32 Health Development Information and Policy Institute, Dr Mustafa BARGHOUTHI, Director, Ramallah, 22 February 2003.
33 Union of Health Work Committees – WB, Dr Majeed NASSAR, Deputy Director, Beit Sahour, 20 January 2004.
34 Patient Friends Charitable Society, Baasem NATSHEH, Public Relations Officer, Hebron, 10 February 2004.
35 Ardh al-Itfal, Mohamed Mahmoud JABR, Executive Director, Hebron, 10 February 2004.

36 Tarqumiah Charitable Society, Izzo GHRAYB, Board Member, Tarqumia, 10 February 2004.
37 Ihsan Charitable Society, Iyaad SUROUR, Public Relations Officer, Hebron, 11 February 2004.
38 Islamic Charitable Society – Hebron, Nizhar SHEHADEH, General Director, Hebron, 12 February 2004.
39 Palestinian Red Crescent Society – Khalil, Samih ABU 'AYSHA and Haroun JOULANI, President and Admin. Director, Hebron, 12 February 2004.
40 Zakaat Committee Hebron, Majeed NASSR Ed-DIIN, Board Member, Hebron, 12 February 2004.
41 JUZOUR, Dina NASSER, Executive Director, Jerusalem, 16 February 2004.
42 Patients Friends Society Jerusalem, Caroline JA'BARI, Director, Jerusalem, 21 February 2004.
*43 Bir Zeit Uni Public Health Department, Rita GIACAMAN, Head of Environmental Health Unit, Ramallah, 25 February 2004.
44 Maqassed Charitable Hospital, Dr Khaled QUREI'A, General Hospital Director, Jerusalem, 26 February 2004.

Mixed NGOs

45 Family Association of Majdal, Zakaria Al-BA'LOUSHA, Secretary General, Beit Lahiya, 1 February 2003.
46 Family Association of Yafa, Khamees Al-BATTRAN, Chairman of North Gaza Branch, Jabaaliya, 1 February 2003.
47 Union of Charitable Societies, Maajed 'ALOUSH, Board Member, Jerusalem, 28 January 2003.
48 Commission of NGO affairs, Khamis ROK, Deputy Director, Gaza City, 2 February 2003.
49 MOPIC – Aid Coordination Unit, Dr Emad SHA'ATH (and Yasser NAJJAR), DG Aid Coordinator (and DG W. Europe), Gaza City, 3 February 2003.
50 PINGO Network, Rana BISHARA, Coordinator, Ramallah, 22 January 2004.
*51 Palestinian General Union of Charitable Societies, Nora QORT, Board Member, Jerusalem, 23 January 2004.
52 Union of Charitable Societies – Hebron District, Samih ABU 'AYASH, Vice-President, Hebron, 12 February 2004.

List of international organizations interviewed (by type)

Non-governmental funding bodies

1 Norvegian People's Aid, Gudrun BERTINUSSEN, Resident Representative, Gaza City, 3 February 2003.

2 Islamic Relief (UK), Adel QADOUM, Country Director, Gaza City, 3 February 2003.
3 Médecins Sans Frontières, Olivier MAIZOUÉ, Chef de Mission, Beit Hanina, 16 February 2003.
4 TAMKEEN (USAid subcontractor), Mohammed Al-MBAID, Chief of Party, Ramallah, 23 February 2003.
5 MAP UK, Stuard SHEPHERD, Field Co-ordinator, Ramallah, 21 February 2003.
6 National Democratic Institute, Rebecca HAESSIG, Programme Officer, Beit Hanina, 20 February 2003.
7 Welfare Association-PNGO Project, Dr Rafiq HUSSEINI, Deputy Director General, Beit Hanina, 6 February 2003.
8 World Vision, Nassim NOUR, Operation Director, Jerusalem, 11 February 2003.
9 Catholic Relief Services, Donald RODGERS, Country Representative, Jerusalem, 13 February 2003.
10 Care International, Earl WALL, Country Director, Beit Hanina, 17 February 2003.
11 Save the Children USA, Jennifer MOREHEAD, Manager of Information Unit, Ar-Ram, 13 February 2003.
12 Oxfam Quebec, André FORTIN, Middle East Representative, Beit Hanina, 12 February 2003.
13 Oxfam GB, Ton BERG, Senior Programme Manager, Beit Hanina, 18 February 2003.
14 Merlin – Health in Crisis, Natalie HOGG, Project Coordinator, Ramallah, 10 February 2003.
15 Terre des Hommes, Khalil MAROUF, Country Representative, Ar-Ram, 10 February 2003.
16 Diakonia, Christian LAGERLÖF and Safa' Abu ASSAB, Regional Representative, Jerusalem, 18 February 2003.
17 American Development Foundation, Hanna W. THEODORIE, Chief of Party, Jerusalem, 18 February 2003.
*18 CARITAS Baby Hospital, Edward DABDOUB, Administrative Director, Beit Lahem, 20 January 2004.
19 Medico International, Sabine ECKART, Emergency Coordinator, Beit Hanina, 21 February 2004.
20 MARAM – Health USAID, Dr Umaiyeh KHAMMASH, Chief of Party, Ramallah, 25 February 2004.

(Semi-)governmental funding bodies

21 USAid – West Bank and Gaza Mission, Martha MYERS, Civil Society Project Manager, Jerusalem, 11 February 2003.
22 DFID, Peter CARDY, Environmental Engineering Manager, Jerusalem, 13 February 2003.

23 Australian Aid, Tawfiq RA'AD, Programme Manager, AusAID, Ramallah, 17 February 2003.
24 Austrian Aid, Leonhard MOLL, Country Representative, Ramallah, 20 February 2003.
25 SIDA, Anne BRUZELIUS, Consul, Jerusalem, 24 February 2003.
26 CIDA, Ra'id MALKI, Deputy Head, Ramallah, 24 February 2003.
27 Swiss Development and Cooperation, Fritz FROEHLICH, Deputy Head, Jerusalem, 18 February 2003.
28 Dutch Development Representative, Jeannette SEPPEN, Deputy Head, Jerusalem, 11 February 2003.
29 Ireland Representative Office, Ann MURPHY, Deputy Representative, Ramallah, 17 February 2003.
30 Italian Cooperation, Marco GRAZIA and Maesa IRFAEYA, NGOs Consultant and Local Health Consultant, Jerusalem, 21 February 2003.
31 Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, Dr Canan ATILGAN, Resident Representative, Ramallah, 21 February 2003.
32 Fredrich Ebert Stiftung, Felix EIKENBERG, Project Coordinator, Jerusalem, 12 February 2003.
33 German Fund, Andreas DESCHLER, Consultant, Jerusalem, 13 February 2003.
34 Heinrich Boell Stiftung, Hadil QAZZAZ, Programme Coordinator, Ramallah, 23 February 2003.
*35 OCHA, Andrea RECCHIA, Humanitarian Affairs Officer, Jerusalem, 13 February 2004.
*36 ICRC Food Emergency Programme, Gwyn LEWIS, UVP Manager, Jerusalem, 16 February 2004.
*37 EU Health Department, Juan TELLO, Health Expert – Task Manager, Jerusalem, 17 February 2004.
38 EU ECHO, Alberto OGGERO, ECHO Expert, Jerusalem, 17 February 2004.
39 World BANK, Sima KANA'AN, Deputy Head of Office, Jerusalem, 18 February 2004.
40 UNDP, Mounir KLEIBO, Governance Programme Analyst, Jerusalem, 19 February 2004.
41 FAFO, Hakram HATTALAH, People-to-People Program Coordinator, Shu'fat, 19 February 2004.
42 Norwegian Representative Office, Hind KHOURY, Program Advisor, Jerusalem, 1 March 2004.

Appendix II
Building graphs

Methodology used for the Figures 4.1 to 4.3

Donors were asked questions related to civil society in general and then to the problem of civil society promotion in the case of Palestine.

The first set of questions served to define the Horizontal axis of the graphs. The following six variables (formulated as a continuum) were used to distinguish donors' views about civil society in general.

Various elements of interviews were used to code the donors' answers. When one of the given issues was not sufficiently dealt with during the interviews, elements of coding were taken out of the donor's presentation material and/or web presentation on their activities.

For each of the six previous variables (representing the horizontal dimension of the graph), points were given ranging according to the possibilities described below. For example, if a donor considered civil society to be homogenous a +2

Appendix Table 1

Item #	*Description*	*Coding possibilities*
1	Civil society is rather homogenous or is it instead multilayered?	[+2, +1, 0, –1, –2]
2	Civil society is characterized by a plurality in *numbers* of organizations or instead in *types* (or quality) of organizations?	[+2, +1, 0, –1, –2]
3	Civil society is rather characterized by top-down decisions or instead by bottom-up forms of participation?	[+2, +1, 0, –1, –2]
4	Civil society is rather static in its form and composition or is it instead evolving and changing with time?	Yes/No [+1, –1]
5	Civil society is expressed through a vocabulary denoting a managerial approach or instead by themes denoting a subtle quality work?	[+2, +1, 0, –1, –2]
6	Civil society is automatically benevolent or can it also be problematic?	[+2, +1, 0, –1, –2]

was given. If it believed it was rather homogenous, then a +1 was attributed, a 0 in case of mixed answers, a –1 for the case where the donor believed civil society to be rather multilayered, and a –2 if s/he thought it is really multilayered. In the case of Yes/No possibility, only two coding possibilities were given (+1 or –1). The result for the six horizontal items were added to give an X value, used to situate the donor on the graphs.

As regards working with Palestinian NGOs and with civil society promotion in the Palestinian setting (Vertical axis), the variables used were found in the following questions. The same remarks about coding and aggregation (as in the first set of variables) apply for this vertical dimension of the graph.

Appendix Table 2

Item #	*Description*	*Coding possibilities*
I	Do donors consider the socio-economic conditions to be equal across the Territories or do their programmes have to be adapted to various zones?	Yes/No [+1, –1]
II	Do donors tend to impose the themes of the programmes or do they leave space for local partners to shape their own programmes?	[+2, +1, 0, –1, –2]
III	Do donors realize rather standard programmes (done in other countries) or do they accept local modalities and/or adaptation to given programmes?	[+2, +1, 0, –1, –2]
IV	Do donors tend to impose their ways of working or do they work in a spirit of true partnership with local NGO?	[+2, +1, 0, –1, –2]
V	Do donors provide mostly short-term funding or do they allow for long-term funding?	[+2, +1, 0, –1, –2]
VI	Do donors provide only large funding schemes or do they provide mostly small grants?	[+2, +1, 0, –1, –2]
VII	Do donors have tied funding or is it untied funding?	Yes/No [+1, –1]
VIII	Do donors tend to impose normalization[1] programmes independently of the circumstances or not?	[+2, +1, 0, –1, –2]
IX	Do donors apply strict funding procedures or do they allow flexibility for local partners to re-direct some funding according to new emerging needs?	Yes/No [+1, –1]
X	Do donors come up with ready-made emergency programmes or do they define them with local partners or according to local needs?	Yes–NA–No [+1, 0, –1][2]

Appendix III

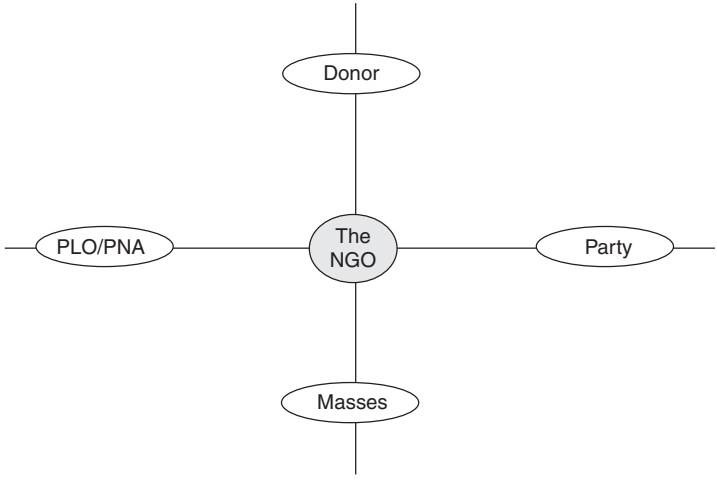
Subjective perception

Questionnaire used for the Most Expected Public Speeches ('MEPS')

During the interviews, Palestinian NGO activists were asked to subjectively describe how the distance that exists between their organization and four sets of actors (1) the PLO or PNA (after 1994), (2) political party (or parties), (3) local population, and (4) international donors, has evolved first with the Oslo years (part 1) and then from the Oslo years into the second *intifada.*

Part 1: from the first INTIFADA to the OSLO years

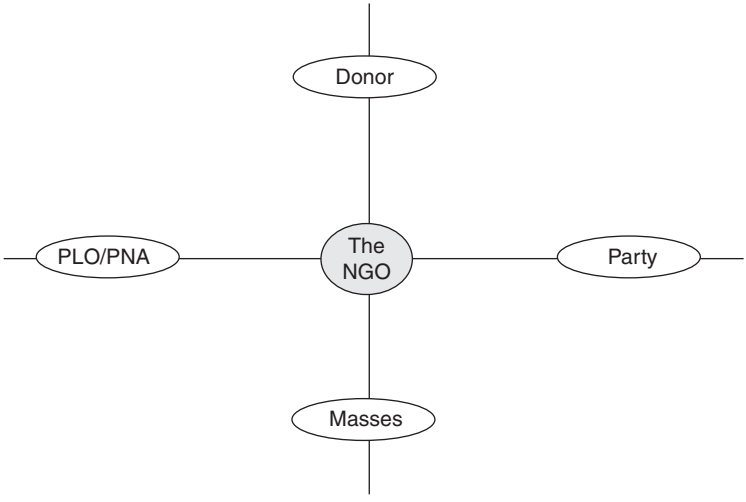
Instruction given to the interview person: If the DISTANCE to these four partners were at the current position at the end of the first Intifada, what was the distance, in your view, to each of these partners by, say 1998?



Note
For example, if the NGO felt that it became closer to the local population (MASSES), then the person interviewed would put a cross (X) between 'the NGO' and 'MASSES', to symbolize the closer relationship. If the distance remained equal, no change was marked, but if the distance grew, the X was put further down the line to express the growing distance between the NGO and the population.

Part 2: from the OSLO years to the second *Intifada*

If the DISTANCE to these four partners were at the current position towards the end of the Oslo years (1994–2000), what was the distance, in your view, to each of these partners by 2004?



Notes

1 Introduction: one civil society, two Palestines

1 For a critique of the concept 'western', with a good historical depth, see Bessis (2001). Despite the potentially negative charges of the words of 'west' or 'western', I will use them in a limited way referring to the geographic regions including western Europe and North America.

2 By Palestine, we mean the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT), as opposed to Mandatory Palestine (or 1948 Palestine), and is made of the West Bank (including East Jerusalem) and the Gaza Strip.

3 Pye (1985) is one key exponent of such thesis. The two other authors mentioned here (Sen 1999; and Harik 2003) are arguing *against* such views.

4 On the bases for the 'overlapping consensus', see Rawls (1996: 10ff. and in part. 15).

5 For a discussion of Taylor's 'recognition of difference as a moral imperative', see Harik (2003).

6 For a critical genealogy of tolerance and toleration, see Asad (2003a).

7 Another critique of multiculturalism is raised by Amselle who notes that multiculturalist discourses convey the idea that human groups are the care-takers of traditions, or of a cultural *acquis*, at the expenses of an interactive and dialogical relationship between various cultures. See Amselle (2001: 230). With an eye on Arab societies, see Ghalioun (2000: 25).

8 As Chakrabarty puts it:

> first, the recognition that Europe's acquisition of the adjective 'modern' for itself is an integral part of the story of European imperialism within global history: and second, the understanding that this equating of a certain version of Europe with 'modernity' is not the work of Europeans alone; third-world nationalisms, as modernizing ideologies *par excellence*, have been equal partners in the process.
>
> (Chakrabarty 2000: 43)

9 This definition is from Iliya Harik. Personal communication with the author about the *Paradoxes of Cultural Diversity* (Harik 2003). I am grateful and indebted to him for sharing his views.

10 Translation mine. The original reads:

> 'En recourant à la métaphore électrique ou informatique du branchement, c'est-à-dire à celle d'une dérivation de signifiés particularistes par rapport à un réseau de signifiants planétaires, on parvient à se démarquer de l'approche qui consiste à voir dans notre monde globalisé le produit d'un mélange de cultures vues elle-mêmes comme des univers étanches, et à mettre au centre de la réflection l'idée de triangulation, c'est-à-dire de recours a un élément tiers pour fonder sa propre identité.

> En d'autres termes, il s'agirait d'inverser le raisonnement habituel qui consiste à opposer radicalement universalisme et relativisme afin de montrer que l'universalisme, loin de contrarier la manifestation des différences, est le moyen privilégié de leur expression'.
>
> (Amselle 2001: 7 and 49)

11 For a discussion of this tendency, see Wagner (2007).
12 I will use throughout the book this pair 'here' versus 'there', as shorthand for western or northern donors' sphere as opposed to the regions where aid is disbursed. I am aware of the risk of including this research in 'here', but this is a way to stress the limit of objectivity vis-à-vis the topic, since, as a western-born and educated scholar, I will always remain an outsider to Palestinian civil society.
13 Needless to say, the worldwide resurgence of religious conservative discourses also help in this over-determination of the 'religious' as an element of response for political problems. See Berger (2000) or Casanova (1994). For a critique of this view, see Burgat (2002: 107).
14 DiMaggio and Powell (1991: Introduction, 66).
15 'Islamic' will be understood as a qualification for structures referring *generally* to the ethos of Islam, but which refrain to actively impose its views. 'Islamist', on the contrary, refers to open and publicly acknowledged struggle to spread the ethos of Islam as the main source of social norms upon its constituencies.
16 On this issue, see Challand (2008c).
17 For examples of media analysis in the Palestinian case, see Carey (2001), Tuastad (2003), and in general in Asad (2003b), and Geisser (2003).
18 See also Legrain (1999a: 103).
19 For a discussion see Shikaki (2002) and an opposite view in Tamari (2002) and Legrain (2003a).
20 Figures of the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS) indicate that by mid-2003, the population aged 0–14 represents 46 per cent of the overall population (PASSIA 2004: 274).
21 Heacock (2004: 26) quotes results of the Participatory Poverty Assessment done in 2002 by the Palestinian Ministry of Planning and International Coordination.
22 On these monopolies, see Bucaille (1998); Roy (2001: 371ff.); Asseburg (2002); and Khan *et al.* (2004: Chap. 5).
23 The interviews were done in English for the most part, with four in Arabic. See full list of interviews in Appendix I.
24 For a description of this self-anchoring mechanism (to stress subjective perceptions), see Roche (1999, in particular 141ff.). See also Appendix III.
25 This figure, which corresponds to the number advanced in MAS (2001a), is likely to be lower than the actual figure. Nonetheless, the database is large enough to offer general insights into the whole NGO sector, including the relative weight of the charitable institutions. Lists of NGOs consulted were UNSCO (1998, 1999a, 2003), Said and Abdul-Majeed (2000), UCS Hebron (1990) and an unpublished mimeo of the Union of Charitable Societies (Jerusalem), *Activities and Services of the Societies* (Jerusalem: mimeo, 2003).
26 The Association of International Development Agencies (AIDA) provided a very useful list of about 50 non-governmental donors meeting monthly in Jerusalem.
27 A list of them can be found in PASSIA (2004).
28 According to UN standards, a NGO becomes 'international NGO (INGOs)' if it is operative in three countries or more.
29 On the ways other Islamic NGOs based in the Arab world work, see Ghandour (2002), and Benthall and Bellion-Jourdan (2003).

2 Debating civil society: internationally and in the Arab Middle East

1 For a discussion about the origins of the concept in Aristotle and its transformation into *societas civilis*, see Hallberg and Wittrock (2006).
2 'Les associations civiles facilitent donc les associations politiques; mais d'autre part, l'association politique développe et perfectionne singulièrement l'association civile.' See Tocqueville (1981 vol. 2: 147).
3 Huntington's writings (1968, 1996 in particular) epitomize this trend.
4 On good governance and governmentality see Ferguson (1990: 64ff.).
5 Chambers and Kopstein (2001) are amongst the few who explored the 'Bad Civil Society'.
6 As in the case of Jordan, see Brand (2001). On the variety of NGOs, see also Carapico (2000).
7 Here is a brief list of books produced in such setting: Carothers (1999); Carothers and Ottaway (2000); Edwards and Hulme (1996, 1997); Clayton (1994, 1996).
8 Original links de-activated, now available at: http://web.archive.org/web/20020320210741/www.worldbank.org/wbp/scapital/sources/civil2.htm (accessed 7 May 2008).
9 For a brief overview of the content and context of the Washington consensus, see Fine (2001: 132) or Dezalay and Garth (1998).
10 See Chapter 1.
11 See Hudock (1999: 2, emphasis mine).
12 Best encapsulated in the opening sentence: '*L'hommes est né libre, et partout il est dans les fers*' (Rousseau 2001: 46).
13 I am fully aware that Castoriadis believes that such a process of auto-institution is not possible in what he terms archaic and traditional societies, precisely because they are, in his view, closed (Castoriadis 1986: 514). However, I believe that, along the lines of Houston (2004), there is too much of determinism in defining a society 'traditional' or 'archaic', and in particular by defining it so because of the heteronomy imposed by religion.
14 See, e.g. Castoriadis (1999: 171ff., in particular 174).
15 On the role of language as a source of estrangement, see Ghalioun (2000: 26f.).
16 Indeed, Abu Sada aptly notes that traditional forms of mobilization around the *mukhtar* or the *hamula* do not prevent affiliation to modern institutions such as NGOs (Abu Sada 2007a: 16–18).
17 See some examples of this argument in Salvatore and Eickelmann (2004), and in Hoexter *et al.* (2002).
18 I am indebted to the text of Harik (2003: 11) for this selection of 'dominant ideological principles in western cultures'.
19 I will follow Sadiki (2004: 3ff.) in his usage of the phrase 'Arab Middle Eastern' (AME), more precise that 'Muslim civil society' or 'Middle Eastern' which put under the same roof a huge diversity of social contexts. Though I intend to limit my discussion to the Arab Middle East, I might also invoke examples of other Muslim majority polities such as Iran (Kamali 1998; 2003), Turkey (Mardin 1995), or Indonesia (Hefner 2000).
20 For a discussion of Said's arguments and weakness, as well as other pre-1978 writings on Orientalism, not as a discipline, but as a critique, see (Halliday 2003: chap. 7).
21 See in particular Sadiki (2004: 132f.). For other critiques to Said, see in particular Ahmad (1992); and McLeod (2000: 39–50, and in part 47–49).
22 The 'Orientalist' method refers originally to anyone studying Arabic and other oriental (mostly Semitic) languages. There, Greek and Roman philology was the emulator and main model to follow.
23 Translation mine. The original reads: 'Afin de mieux maîtriser l'interprétation sociologique, de nombreux auteurs (en général nord-américains) ont réduit la diversité

des sociétés accédant au développement à un seul type, défini en tant que modèle de la «société traditionelle». Ce modèle est construit par différence, par opposition au modèle de la société moderne qui réfère à l'ensemble des sociétés industrielles à techniques avancées: si bien que la «société traditionnelle» finit par apparaître comme la simple *figure inversée* de la société moderne' (Balandier 1981: 115).

24 The list could be longer. For some dichotomies see Balandier (1981: 115). See also Stauth (2002: 11), quoting Luhmann. Bayart also questions these dichotomies in many places (1989).

25 'L'espace grec du savoir qui, implicitement, loge toujours un observateur (grec) en lui-même.'

26 See also the foundational article of Barth who stresses that the 'continuity of ethnic units depends clearly on the maintenance of a boundary' (1969: 14–15).

27 I include in this approach the couple 'Islam and Democracy' and not just AME civil society because much of the literature related to the question of civil society is either explicitly framed in those terms, or they are labelled in very close terms (like modernity, secularism, etc.).

28 'Même dans les pays appartenant à la même culture et traversant les mêmes avatars de l'histoire comme les pays musulmans avec leur combat commun pour la rénovation religieuse et contre la colonisation européenne, les processus de modernisation ne sont pas les mêmes.'

29 I consciously reversed the convention of + and – on the right and left of the axis to force us to re-think arbitrary categories and avoid ethnocentric reasoning.

30 For a discussion on the limits of framing Middle Eastern politics in terms of democratization, see Schlumberger (2000).

31 For a longer elaboration, see Challand (2005a: chap. III).

32 For recent examples of books with such an approach and a critique, see Rodenbeck (2004) and Abu Khalil (2004).

33 On that aspect, Zubaida (2003: 32ff.) demonstrates how Gellner's contraposition of a rural tribal ethos versus an urban civilization (for example see Gellner 1981: 54–56) actually fits his other models of High and Low Cultures and function as 'mirror-image of traditional Christendom' (Gellner 1981: 54), and of Durkheimian sociology (for the tribe) versus Weberian one (in the case of urban life) (Zubaida 2003: 35).

34 Not only are his arguments fraught with generalizations about Islam, but his conception of a modular *man* is quite reactionary: undeclared primacy of masculinity, belief in a necessary cultural homogeneity of modern society, nationalism as end history, etc. Apparently decades of critiques to Popper's *open society*, disasters provoked by shallow nationalisms, and 30 years of very important feminist studies have not permeated into the modern modular Gellner.

35 For a critic, see Zubaida (1993, 2003).

36 For a discussion of how Khomeiny's rhetoric changed from an Islamic universalism into mere nationalism, see also Halliday (2003: 62–63).

37 Islam is portrayed by some as a system that is resistant to capitalist development. For a rebuke of such views, see Rodinson (1966).

38 For a critique of the metaphor of the mosaic, see Chatelard (2004b).

39 Turner (1978: 67, 73) disputes this interpretation of the non-existence of revolution.

40 This is the very core of Sadowski's argument (1993) which will be presented in the following paragraphs but adding other epistemological elements.

41 For a critique of such a view, see Zubaida (2003: 37ff.).

42 For a close statement, see Gellner (1994: 17).

43 See the century-old differentiated religious courts during the Ottoman time, see Asad (2003a), and for contemporary practices see Chatelard (2003).

44 See Burgat (2001: 84).

45 See also Ismail (2001).

46 For one such taxonomy, see Ayubi (1991: 67–68).

47 Here is a short list of titles referring to our topic that are not listed in our bibliography: Sa'id Bensaid al-'Alawi *et al.*, 1992. *Civil Society in the Arab Nation, its Role in the Realisation of Democracy*, Beirut; Sa'ad Ed-Din Ibrahim, 1993. *Civil Society and the Democratic Transformation in the Arab Nation*, Ibn Khaldoun Center for Study and Research, Cairo; and Mohammed Abed al-Jaabari, 1993. 'Ambiguities of democracy and civil society in the Arab nation', *al-mustaqbal al-arabi*, n197.
48 I owe the idea of distinguishing among various Arab authors from an article by Botiveau (2002), though I will depart from his threefold distinction (Ibrahim, Ghalioun and Jaabari), by actually positing Azmi Bishara as representing the idea that there is no civil society against the two views of Ibrahim (restricted civil society) and Ghalioun (unrestrictive civil society).
49 Other views exist and can be found elsewhere in the analytical literature (most notably in Moussalli 1995), or in more programmatic literature, where Islamist militants define their own view of what is civil society for them (see Ghannouchi 2000).
50 Which he simply defines as society before modernity (Bishara in Gahlioun *et al.* 1993: 89).
51 *'julla julallahu!'* Very ironical, because usually this expression is used only when speaking about God, but here follows 'civil society'.
52 Azmi Bishara would add clan (*hamula*) to this list.
53 See his appeal in Ibrahim (2003b). See also Camau (2002: 213n1).
54 Original link de-activated, now available at: http://web.archive.org/web/*/www.democracy-egypt.org (accessed 7 May 2008).
55 This quote is taken from Abu Amr's study on Palestinian civil society. See Abu Amr (1995: 9, translation mine).
56 See, e.g. Ibrahim (1997: 42f).
57 Since Sadat's assassination (1981), Egypt has been under emergency law.
58 'Mais, plus qu'un simple appareil, l'Etat est pris, ici, comme l'incarnation des principes éthiques et sociaux en fonction desquels la société est organisée' (Ghalioun 1991: 9).
59 Literally the root '*ahl*' means family, people and as adjective (*ahlī*) can mean familiar, but in our case, civic, local. On the tension between *madanī* and *ahlī*, see Carapico (1998b: 4–8). On the political consequences born out of these differences, see Challand (2008a: 240).
60 For example, the Ministry (now Commission) for NGO Affairs is called in Arabic 'Ministry/Commission for civic affairs' (*shu'un al-munazamaat al- ahliyyah*).
61 'Distinguer de celle-ci [*mujtama' al-ahli*] une société « civile »' (*mujtama' madani*) reviendrait à adopter une attitude discriminante, du moins sélective, qui n'accorderait qu'à certaines institutions seulement le droit de faire partie de cette société civile. Pour Ghalioun, cette distinction est erronée, car « elle empêche de comprendre la nature des forces agissantes qui font bouger la société »' (Botiveau 2002: 235).
62 Taken from Abu Amr (1995: 10) where he draws (see n4) from an article by Ghalioun Burhan (1992). *Binā' al-mujtama' al-madani: dawr al-awamil al-dākhiliyyah wa al-khārijiyyah* [*The construction of civil society: the role of internal and external factors*]: *al-mustaqbal al-arabī*, n158, *nīsān*, 109.
63 Although the trend in the literature is to re-include religion into the public sphere or in civil society. On Habermas and the *post-secular* society, see Ungureanu (2008).
64 For a counter-view, i.e. religious organizations as means of inclusion, see Levine and Salvatore (2005).
65 See Benthall and Bellion-Jourdan (2003) and Ghandour (2002) for a general presentation of *zakaat.* In the Palestinian case, see Challand (2008a).
66 In the case of Algeria, the leading Islamist party contending in the 1991/1992 elections, the FIS, promoted the view that democracy was '*kufr*' ('blasphemous', 'atheist'). In that case such groups would not be part of civil society, since it does not respect the vision supported by a large segment of the population.

3 Setting the historical framework on Palestinian NGOs and international donors

1 See Yapp (1987, 1996).
2 The oldest NGO still active in the OPT was established in 1907 (MAS 2001a: 20).
3 There still exist some ambiguities with this non-profit making company law. The new NGO law (1 April 2000) addresses membership organizations. Some 'non-governmental' institutions might not qualify as charitable or community organizations and hence take advantage of the British law. Some organizations have registered under the new law, although without being a *membership* organization. This is a way to ensure funding, since requirements on transparency and accountability are higher for associations registered under the new law (interview with MATTIN Group, Ramallah, 17 February 2003).
4 See MADAR (2000) and the following tables.
5 The Egyptians administered the Gaza Strip. No specific law applies there. Therefore the legal framework for Gazan associations is provided by the Ottoman and British laws.
6 On this problem, see Sahliyeh (1988: 10–20, 43). On the Jordanian law (NGO Law April 2000) and its effects in terms of control by the Hashemite Government, see Amawi (2005).
7 This disengagement coincides with the PLO Declaration of Independence (Algiers, November 1988), and with the abandonment by the Jordanian King Hussein to rule over the future of Palestine. See Sayigh (1997: chap. 4).
8 Interview with Majeed 'ALOUSH, Board Member, Union of Charitable Societies, East Jerusalem, 28 January 2003.
9 See PHCR comments on the second draft of the NGO Law. Available at: www.pchrgaza.org/files/S&r/English/study13/Article%20.html (accessed 8 May 2008).
10 This explains why Hamas was first indirectly supported by Israel, as a way to divide the population and having defection for PLO support. Israel tried to encourage in some occasions the emergence of new political groups that would be resistant to the occupying force. One of these attempts, known as the League of Villages, was led by Ariel Sharon in the 1980s (Brynen 1995: 27).
11 See Robinson (1997) and Sayigh (1997: 618f.).
12 The role of higher (secondary and university level) education is here also very important. The fact that private universities were opened in the 1970s in the territories and that (mostly) communist countries offered scholarships to Palestinian students for university degrees paved the way for a heightened degree of national consciousness and political activism (Rosenberg 2002).
13 Area A represent 17.2 per cent of Occupied Territories. In Area B (23.8 per cent), there is a mixed control (full Palestinian jurisdiction, joint Israeli–Palestinian internal security), whereas on Area C (59 per cent), Israel has full civil and security control. See PASSIA (2003: 258 and 274).
14 The blurred line between PLO and PNA is partly due to the Declaration of Principles. The PNA is meant to be the *gestionnaire* of the autonomous zones, but political negotiation is the unique resort of the PLO. For a recent reading of the PLO–PNA problem, see Hilal (2007: 5–8).
15 For a sound reflection on the interplay between NGOs and state-building, see Abu Sada (2007a) discussing the case of agriculture in Palestine.
16 See Baron (2000: 624f.). 'Returnee' will be used to refer to the PLO leadership which came back to the Territories with the Oslo process. They are different from the Gulf returnees (in 1991), deportees and economic deportees. For a discussion of the differences, see Challand (2002, 2008c) and Romani (2006).
17 Interestingly, Yousuf Awadallah later became part of the Ministry/Commission of NGO Affairs, in charge of the strategic registration process for Health NGOs

(PASSIA 2002). The creation of 'Higher Committee' is a typical Arafatist technique to exert control over a variety of clienteles. See Haddad (2000: 8–9).

18 According to Aburish (1998: 268), what matters to be appointed in key functions is simply closeness to Arafat.

19 This is still a burning question in the reforms that currently take place. Some saw around Arafat an old guard, mostly made of returnees and founding fathers of Fatah, with a younger generation that fought the first *Intifada* claiming more responsibility and political power. See Challand (2002: 8–11). Things evolved rather quickly during the second *Intifada*, when it became increasingly difficult to see clear generational divisions. See also Legrain (2003a, 2006), Tamari (2002) and Challand (2008c).

20 With the second *Intifada*, things evolved dramatically and it is hard to see where the 'insiders' are and where the 'returnees' are, at least in terms of the suggested articulation NGOs versus PNA. Interestingly, once Fatah lost the elections in 2006, it started investing massively in the theme of civil society, as the left did in the Oslo years.

21 To describe this Network, we will use the acronym PINGO, instead of PNGO which will be used to refer to the Palestinian NGO Project, initiated by the World Bank.

22 Legrain (1997: 163) described how Hamas organizations, among others, benefited first from Israeli indirect support to undermine PLO support in the Territories and then how Fatah left the Islamic sector attack the 'impious' leftist bloc. This double (but failed) instrumentalization backfired since Islamist social and charitable networks arguably proved to be the most serious argument for wider enrolment in and support for Hamas. See also Legrain (1990).

23 This Arabic term refers to security intelligence. The *mukhabarat* structures are sadly famous throughout the Middle East and according to the leader of the Palestinian delegation in Madrid, this model seemed to have deeply influenced the Palestinian Authority (personal interview with Dr Haydar Abdel Shafi, Head of the Palestinian Delegation to Madrid and former PLC member, Gaza City, 11 July 2000).

24 See Legrain (1997: 165–169).

25 PECDAR stands for 'Palestinian Economic Council for Development and Reconstruction'. It was created at the time of the Oslo signing and was meant to be abolished when a real Ministry of Finance was to be established but it still exists (Curmi 2002: 113n42). The World Bank pushed for its creation and relies on PECDAR for donor assistance coordination. MOPIC is the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation (the equivalent of a Foreign Ministry).

26 See PHCR comments. Available at: www.pchrgaza.org/files/S&r/English/study13/Article%20.html (accessed 8 May 2008).

27 Or how to create the famous GINGOs, or governmental NGOs. Interview with Khamis Rok, Deputy-Director, Commission for NGO Affairs, Gaza City (2 February 2003).

28 Let us note that one of the founders of the PHCR, Raji Sourani, was himself active in another human rights NGO (Gaza Centre for Human Rights and Law, GCHRL, created in 1985), which turned out to be too anti-PNA for Chairman Arafat. Raji Sourani was arrested in 1995 and the GCHRL was put in the hands of allies of Fatah. Personal discussions with young civil society activists in Gaza City (who wanted to create a cultural NGO) also stressed the very difficult registration procedures (February 2003).

29 This is a very small amount in comparison to the $15 million disbursed in the first phase of the project (1997–2001). In a second phase (2001–2004) $16 million were allocated (with $1.5 million for a 'NGO sector support programme'). See PNGO (2001).

30 The PNA created its own network to counter-balance the growing role taken over by PNGO. See Brown (2003: 113).

31 On the pressure to reform the PNA since 2002 onwards, see Le More (2008).

32 See the EU description of these activities through this mechanism, available at: www.delwbg.ec.europa.eu/en/tim/tim_in.htm (accessed 12 December 2007).

33 For a bleak picture of the dual game played by certain donors since Hamas victory, see Sayigh (2007); and Le More (2008).

34 The International Crisis Group goes so far as saying that these concerted measures to shut down such institutions cannot really harm Hamas, because of the quality of its social services in comparison to the PNA's weakness (ICG 2003a: 25).
35 Our database includes about 900 NGOs, to which at least 100 charitable NGOs from the northern West Bank should be added. One thousand NGOs seems a realistic figure.
36 Many Palestinians were employed in the Gulf region, mostly in Kuwait. This meant a first wave of returning Palestinians and the end of valuable remittances to local communities.
37 World Bank figures, quoted in Rabe (2000: 257ff.).
38 One research centre even spoke of 'thousands' of new NGOs recently created (Bisan 2001: Executive Summary), though this opinion is obviously out of touch.
39 All figures and categories of this section are taken out of World Bank, 1996, *Report No 16696 GZ*, Annex 4, 1–3, quoted in Rabe (2000: 257ff.).
40 On the evolution of the charitable organizations and the impact of aid, see Challand (2008a).
41 Another research on 'NGO mapping' was published in 2000 by MADAR and commissioned by the Heinrich Böll Stiftung. However, results are less transparent than the MAS study which gives all the details of the questionnaire and extensive statistics (in Arabic only), whereas the MADAR produced a very simple booklet, with few figures. If MAS counted 926 NGOs, MADAR came up with the meagre figure of 575 NGOs, but it excluded 'sports clubs, trade unions, cooperatives, professional unions' (MADAR 2000: 4).
42 For figures on Palestinian population from the Palestinian Central Bureau for Statistics (PCBS), see PASSIA (2003: 267ff.).
43 This is not true for all international donors. The UK-based Islamic Relief, which receives a large share of funding from the EU is very keen to check on the recipient's record to make sure money will not go to Islamist groups. According to Benthall and Bellion-Jourdan (2003: 106), the ICRC's programme of 'smart aid' (through vouchers) seemed 'to be deliberately aimed at providing an alternative source of effective support' to that of Islamists circles.
44 As suggests Ghandour (2002).
45 For a document example of the repeated call from UNRWA to stock up food in the Territories, see ICG (2003a: 25).
46 Bocco *et al.* (in their following reports from 2003 onwards) provide interesting data on the topic.
47 Done in cooperation between MOPIC and UNCP.
48 For a detailed genealogy of the category 'donors' in historical and sociological perspective, see Challand (2005a: 159–175). For a short overview, see Challand (2006: 3–5).
49 For a classical account of how economic development was a pre-requisite for democracy in the context of the Cold War, see Lipset (1959).
50 According to OECD DAC (Development Assistance Committee), there were only 30 projects directed to support civil society in 1991, for a total amount of $113 million. By 1995, the increase, though sharp in number of projects (440), remains moderate in the amount of funding ($391 million) (Van Rooy 1998: 58).

    The share of funding to NGOs from OECD countries and NGO aid jumped from nearly 15 per cent by 1988 to more than 20 per cent by the end of the 1990s (Kaldor *et al.* 2003: 12).
51 Let us first note that most of the following definitions come from large international donor organizations such as the OECD or World Bank, reinforcing thus their indirect (at least in this case) influential role in setting benchmarks and decisive criteria.
52 For a discussion, see Strazzari (2002).
53 http://europa.eu.int/scadplus/leg/en/lvb/r10001.htm (accessed 8 May 2008).
54 See e.g. www.collectif-asah.org/salon_humanitaire/salon_humanitaire.php (accessed 15 January 2004).

55 For a presentation, see www.sphereproject.org (accessed 8 May 2008).
56 One just needs to look at ECHOs guideline to realize that. See 'Eligible Expenditure', available at: http://europa.eu.int/comm/echo/pdf_files/partnership/expenditures_en.pdf (accessed 8 May 2008).
57 See for example the Overseas Development Institute (ODI) for the UK, Environment & Development Challenges (EDC) for Sweden and the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) in Canada.
58 See for example Carothers (1999); Carother and Ottaway (2000); Edwards and Hulme (1996, 1997); Clayton (1994, 1996).
59 This reporting duty was perceived locally as a form of spying activity. For an example of bad reputation from one of the American NGO, see Nakhleh (2002: 59).
60 Khan sustains that the trend was actually reinforced with the Oslo process whereby 'the Israeli asymmetric containment led probably to the *intended* consequence of de-development' (Khan *et al.* 2004: 50, his emphasis).
61 The latter must get a green light from the Israeli Ministry of Interior, which sometimes does not give its approval before the approval of the work by the Ministry of Social Affairs. This formal licensing procedure really impedes the work of international donors, and in particular Arab donors to work inside the Territories.
62 By 'new PLO', I mean the post-Shuqeiry PLO, whereby a new generation of activists around Fatah and its leader Yasser Arafat took over after the failure of the older generation embodied by Shuqeiry to get rid of the other Arab states' patronage to resolve the 'Palestinian question'. See Sayigh (1997).
63 The Jordanian government initiated another funding scheme in 1987, called 'Jordanian Development Plan'. For a critique, see Barghouthi (1989: 127) and Nakhleh (1989: 118).
64 I am grateful to one of the reviewers for underlining this important feature of aid in the 1980s.
65 For a description of the circumstances of the foundation of the Welfare Association and a list of the members, see Nakhleh (2002, 2004).
66 See for example interviews with UHWC, UHCC and UPRMC. This is particularly true for the service-providing NGOs.
67 Nakhleh (2002). For 1977–1992, this included $42 million from AF, about $40 million from OPEC and $40 million from Welfare association. Complete figures with details on *who* receives and the technical limitations put on such donations: i.e. being recognized and officially registered organizations.
68 According to Sayigh, the 'flow of funds to the OPT plummeted from $120 million in 1990 to $45 million in 1992 (US reports) or from $360 million to $84 million according to the secretary of the *Intifada* committee' (quoted from *Al-Quds al-Arabi* 23 August 1993) (Sayigh 1997: 657).
69 For a very detailed account on *zakaat* and Islamic fund raising 'industry', see Ghandour (2002); and Benthall and Bellion-Jourdan (2003).
70 This is according to a 1997 study of Majdi al-Malki and Salim Tamari, mentioned in Hanafi (1998: 64).
71 Interview with Majeed Nasser ed-Din, Board Member, Hebron *Zakaat* Committee, Hebron, 21 February 2004. See also Challand (2008a).
72 Curmi (2002: 102, translation mine).
73 Interview in East Jerusalem, 28 January 2003.
74 In the early 1990s there existed three international NGO networks active in the Territories: The European Coordinating Committee for NGOs on the Question of Palestine, a North American Coordinating Committee for NGOs on the Question of Palestine and finally, an International Coordinating Committee for NGOs on the Question of Palestine. The most active was the European one which organized an important conference in 1992, under the umbrella of the Network of European NGOs in the Occupied Territories (NENGOOT). For a list of participant and overview,

available at http://domino.un.org/unispal.nsf/0/0902dbab68f0d73d85256109006a85af?OpenDocument. (accessed 8 May 2008). See Brown *et al.* (1993).

75 Figures here differ. For Sullivan (1998: 95), funding in 1990 reached between $150 to $200 million, and according to Hammami, dropped from $170 to $240 million in 1990 to circa $100 million in 1994 (Hammami 1995: 59).

76 It is very difficult to get exact figures on *Hamas* funding for example. Some estimation refers to $100 million yearly for the whole of the *Hamas* structure, with a good 75 per cent going to its charitable social network (see Finkelstein quoted in ICG 2003a). Benthall and Bellion-Jourdan (2003: 106) also speak of $100 million of yearly budget, with 90 per cent going to its social service sector.

77 This does not automatically mean that they stopped funding projects. Some have indeed stopped their funding activities, while others are working as 'invisible' organizations, that is, from their home country with some field visit every now and then.

78 This is also the case of the Austrian Development Cooperation: Austrian-Arab society and North–South institute were present on the field before Oslo. Interview with Leo MOLL, Country Representative, Ramallah, 20 February 2003.

79 Interview with Anne BRUZELIUS, Swedish Consul, East Jerusalem, 24 February 2003. She actually explained that in Sweden local NGOs and solidarity groups (such as the Palestine Solidarity Group – PSG) have a very important role in defining priorities and potential implementing Palestinian partners. In the Swiss case, there is no such advisory body; rather, Swiss NGOs applying for funding for a project in Palestine do it in Bern and not through the local representative office (interview with Fritz FRÖHLICH, Deputy Director, Swiss Development and Cooperation Agency (SDC), East Jerusalem, 18 February 2003).

80 Brown (2003: 165) notes about this period (early 1990s) that 'grassroots organizations faced an entirely new set of opportunities: international donors flush with enthusiasm for all sorts of NGOs, suddenly discovered that Palestinian society was rich with organizations speaking in the prose of civil society'.

81 Source: Author's database on donors.

82 ARD stands for 'Associates in Rural Development', see their web description now available at http://web.archive.org/web/20040604092908/www.ardinc.com/htm/about_us/about.htm (accessed 8 May 2008).

83 Available at: www.chemonics.com/aboutus (accessed 8 May 2008).

84 Original link de-activated, available now at: http://web.archive.org/web/20050405231831/www.massar.com/clist.htm (accessed 8 May 2008).

85 Original link de-activated, available now at http://web.archive.org/web/20040815142646/www.ardinc.com/htm/projects/p_wbrol.htm (accessed 8 May 2008).

86 Original link de-activated, now available at: http://web.archive.org/web/20041210140026/www.dpkconsulting.com/p_wbg.htm (accessed 8 May 2008).

87 Assuming again that development around questions of democracy has to be defined mostly locally, in a drive towards autonomy. See Chapter 2.

88 See Curmi (2002: 113, translation mine).

89 The average funding from the 37 interviewed funding bodies reaches $3,7 million a year.

4 International donors and the professionalization of civil society promotion

1 Though Oxfam is professionalized as any other development organizations, they were placed in the 'solidarity' category for two reasons: first, the type of programmes run are very often innovative and not reproduced by other donors (e.g. assistance to the Bedouin population), and second, the constant commitment to critical assessment on the ground makes it a very particular case.

2 See for example, the interview with Dr Rabah MUHANA, President of the Unions of Health Work Committees (UHWC), Gaza Branch, Gaza City, 30 January 2003.

3 See interview with Ann BRUZELIUS, Consul, SIDA, Jerusalem, 24 February 2003. See also Jeppson and Lindhal (1995).
4 Interview with Earl WALL, Country Director, CARE International, Beit Hanina 17 February 2003 and with Jennifer MOREHEAD, Manager of Information Unit, Save the Children US, Ar-Ram, 13 February 2003.
5 In Europe, some of the organizations were not formally shut down but their assets were frozen. It is believed that the US-based Holy Land Foundation raised up to $13 million of funding in 2000. See ICG (2003a: 1–6).
6 See interviews in Hebron with the Patient Friends Society (10 February 2004) and with Ihsan Charitable Society (11 February 2004).
7 On the issue of Palestinian Christians and out-migration, see Sabella (2004).
8 This includes Caritas, the Pontifical Mission for Palestine, World Vision, Catholic Relief Services, the Lutheran World Federation and the Mennonite Central Committee.
9 Private communications with international actors present in the various convoys around that time.
10 This seems to be a general USAID policy. The local civil society Officer seemed to regret this state of affairs. Interview with Martha MEYERS, Civil Society Project Manager, USAID, East Jerusalem, 11 February 2003.
11 'Tamkeen' means 'empowerment' and 'Maram' means 'positive efforts', 'endeavour'. The fact that they had adopted an Arabic name can maybe explain the strong reaction of the (then still) Ministry (now Commission) for NGO Affairs in June 2001. At that time, the Ministry threatened to shut down TAMKEEN because it felt excluded from the decision process of who would get funding among Palestinian NGOs. On that affair, see Brown (2003: 253, n.29).
12 See more on : www.chemonics.com (accessed 28 May 2008).
13 Available at: http://web.archive.org/web/20040925124648/www.maram.info/ (accessed as of September 2004), and www.usaid.gov/wbg/partners.htm (accessed 20 May 2008).
14 See interview with Nathalie HOGG, Project Coordinator, MERLIN – Health in Crisis, Ramallah, 10 February 2003.
15 The sums (indicative) are calculated on the basis of the information collected during my interviews. The amounts are an average of different fiscal years, with some indication for 2002 and for other organizations from the year 2003. Nevertheless, it should give a sense of the proportion of each donor's contribution. All contributions were converted in US dollars.
16 Interview with Earl WALL, Country Director, CARE International, Beit Hanina, 17 February 2003. The number of its staff has increased by 35 units because of the second *Intifada* and 75 per cent of the 2003 budget was dedicated to emergency, the rest being devoted to development funding.
17 Interview with Khalil MAROUF, Director, Terre des Hommes, Ar-Ram, 19 February 2003.
18 This is also why the categories we suggested before are not fixed but rather fluid and changing over time.
19 According to our own database on donors, our sample represents roughly one-quarter of international donors. Here is a short overview of the geographical provenance of the larger database on international donors (for a total of 172 donors). The numbers listed in parenthesis represent for each place of origin, its number and the valid percentage: North America (39 institutions, for 23.8 per cent), Europe (102, for 62.2 per cent), Multilateral (18 for 11 per cent), Oceania (two for 1.2 per cent) and Arab Countries (three for 1.8 per cent).
20 Here is a short overview of the topical distribution of Palestinian NGOs (in per cent): Agriculture 3.5 per cent, Culture 10.2 per cent, Economy 3.8 per cent, Education 14.8 per cent, Health 14.6 per cent, Advocacy 4.6 per cent, Social services 31.6 per cent, and Women 16.9 per cent (source: author's database on Palestinian NGOs).

21 These elements are addressed by the variables 1–6 listed and described in Appendix II.
22 These elements are addressed by the variables I–X listed and described in Appendix II.
23 It is a simple trend line, not a regression analysis, since the aim is only to highlight how donors' views on civil society are different.
24 I have included the Welfare Consortium in the non-European group. Even if it is a consortium made of a Swiss-based Palestinian NGO and two British organizations, the World Bank actually has the lead of the project.
25 All phrases in quotation marks are actually taken from my interviews.
26 These are joint Israeli-Palestinian activities bringing simple citizens or adolescents together. The programs were boycotted in the late 1990s by the Palestinians because the latter perceived such activities as promoting the false notion that there was a real equality and normalization between the two sides. More in Chapter 7.
27 See, for example, the widely recognized capacity of the two institutions to produce good local need assessments. Thus, the nutrition report from the Gaza entity was highly influential amongst donors to re-orientate their work during the second *Intifada*.
28 Let us note that the two local NGOs of *Terre des Hommes* are also very active in policy definition and are involved with various ministries to enhance public health for children. Interview with Khalil MAROUF, Country Representative, Terre Des Hommes, Ar-Ram, 10 February 2003.
29 CIDA's approach needs to be distinguished from some of the Canadian donors active in the Territories: Oxfam Quebec, for example, adopted a much more diversified and bottom-up approach to civil society promotion.
30 Let us note that Tamkeen, USAID subcontractor for civil society projects, has a more differentiated approach and ends up being close to the centre, even if in the north-eastern quadrant.
31 A more detailed version of what follows can be found in Challand (2006).
32 This is the case of the MATTIN group, specialized in international humanitarian law and monitoring of, a.o., Israeli violations of trade regulations with the EU.
33 Interview in East Jerusalem, 21 February 2004.
34 Interview in Ramallah, 21 February 2003.
35 Interview in Ramallah, 14 February 2004.
36 This would reinforce the widespread critiques in the Palestinian streets against NGOs which are often labelled *dakakeen*, or 'boutiques', to mock their business-like approaches.
37 This is for example the opinion of Rita GIACAMAN, Bir Zeit Public Health Department, Ramallah, 25 February 2004.
38 One of the first consortia in the OPT was created after the LAW scandal: This human rights NGO benefited from double (in some cases triple) funding from international donors for the same programmes. Thus it is estimated that 40 per cent of the funds granted from 1997 until 2002 were unsupported. See Haaretz (2003). Information also from Hind KHOURY, Programme Advisor, NORAD, Jerusalem, 1 March 2004.
39 Interview with Martha MYERS, Civil Society Project Manager, USAID, East Jerusalem, 11 February 2003.
40 The formulation about what consisted 'terrorism' and who should not benefit from services was so loose and ambiguous that Palestinian NGOs refused to sign the waiver (at least in the first months of its circulation).
41 Interview in al-Bireh, 25 February 2004.
42 The EU is the largest donor for all the money disbursed in the Territories. With regard to civil society activities only, USAID is more important than the EU because the latter funnels its funding for civil society activities through smaller international NGOs.
43 Interview with Izzo Al-GHRAYIB, Head of Administrative Board, Tarqumia Charitable Society, Tarqumiya, 10 February 2004.

44 The WFP does actually mobilize local NGOs for food distribution, and has initiated governance programs tied with food distribution. See Abu Sada (2005b).
45 Interview with Munir KLEIBO, Governance Programme Analyst at UNDP, Jerusalem, 19 February 2004.
46 For more on the origin and history of the World Bank in the Territories, see http://lnweb18.worldbank.org/mna/mena.nsf/0/CAC30AD46403EE2D85256943004A4C35?OpenDocument.
47 Available at: http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/COUNTRIES/MENAEXT/WESTBANKGAZAEXTN/0,,menuPK:294372~pagePK:141132~piPK:141121~theSitePK:294365,00.html (accessed 29 May 2008).
48 Le More (2008) also underlines the selectivity and inconsistencies of large donors' policies towards the PNA.
49 See Challand (2005b, 2006).
50 Romani counts about 40 of them (Romani 2003). My database includes 29 of them.
51 The NGO Muwatin ('Citizen' in Arabic) was established in 1992. See the website, available at: www.muwatin.org/about/about.html (accessed 28 April 2008).
52 See Romani (2003: 112–115, translation mine). Romani adds the example of Nablus' Center for Palestine Research and Surveys (established in 1993 and specialized in polling) was funded up to 80 per cent by the Ford and Rockfeller Foundations (Romani 2003: n.7).
53 The original French reads: 'L'absense d'instance nationale d'organisation de la recherche scientifique laisse alors conclure à un *espace académique éclaté à l'intérieur, et paradoxalement organisé, polarisé, de l'extérieur*. Les centres de recherche existant, fonctionnant, et recrutant essentiellement sur la base de projets ou programmes de recherche à court ou moyen terme, les chercheurs entrent dans une logique de chasse aux primes, où les mieux positionnés et pourvus en ressources cumulent de nombreuses activités et salaires' (Romani 2003, his emphasis).
54 Let us note that this feature is not just an epiphenomenon linked to the current *Intifada*, but is the result of much more profound and long-lasting change within Palestinian society. See in particular various articles of Legrain (2001a, b; 2003b).
55 Informal interview with Sima KANA'AN, Deputy Head of Office, World Bank, Ar-Ram, April 2002.
56 For a list see Walid Salem's intervention in Shadid and Qutteneh (2000: 59). The Palestinian Union of NGOs in Gaza is actually non-operative since 1998. It was established in 1996 and initially received funding from the Ministry of Finance. See Abdel Shafi (2002).
57 PASSIA is a Jerusalem-based NGO dedicated to research, training and public debates. More on this organization in the following pages.
58 One could have expected other donors' intervention. One of the reasons of this unique presentation might be the fact that at that time the financial contributor to PASSIA's series of seminars on civil society empowerment was USAID. See Acknowledgements, page ix.
59 Thus, Sullivan mocks PNA's attempts to control as much as possible NGOs' work when the Ministry of NGO Affairs made a 'strong case that it should be in charge [of a Resource Center for NGOs]. Imagine the irony, a governmental body seeking to direct and manage a center for non-governmental activity!' (Sullivan 2001: 59).
60 Most frequently, NGO activists who did not receive funding from the PNGO Project had the impression that the dices were loaded and that many application conditions were tailored so that the identity of those NGOs which would receive greater funding seemed to be determined in advance.
61 Often 'external' assessment persons are suggested by both donors and local NGOs which then have to agree on the individuals. They are not truly independent of or alien to the organizations.

62 Peter Bacuk, Deputy Head of the Representative Office of Norway, in Shadid and Qutteneh (2000: 77).
63 See Mustafa Barghouthi, in Shadid and Qutteneh (2000: 7, 40).
64 See Jala Abdel Latif, Inter-African Group (Ethiopia), in Shadid and Qutteneh (2000: 47).
65 Interview with Nassif MU'ALLEM, Director, Palestinian Centre for Peace and Democracy, Ramallah, 21 January 2004. On the same occasion he also scorned the sense of 'superiority' of Palestinian 'elites living in the disgusting central zones around Ramallah and Jerusalem'.
66 Interview with Issam AROURI, General Manager, Jerusalem Center for Legal Aid and Human Rights, Ramallah, 14 February 2004.
67 Quote from Rex Brynen at the 2000 Conference, in Shadid and Qutteneh (2000: 79).
68 Original link de-activated, now available at: http://web.archive.org/web/20041210152934/www.pngo-project.org/research/pdf/bisan/index.html (accessed 20 May 2008).
69 Izzat Abdel Hadi was also one of the three Palestinian contributors to Sullivan's 2001 review book. Incidentally, he was the only Palestinian speaker at the PNGO Conference in the panel on donors and local NGOs.
70 The World Bank also commissioned two more reports for its PNGO project to MAS (Palestinians Economic Policy Research Institute) to perform of Mapping of NGOs, see MAS (2001a, b).
71 Interview with Izzat ABDEL-HADI, General Director, BISAN Centre for Research and Development, Ramallah, 28 February 2004.
72 On BISAN's activities see its 2004 link available now at: http://web.archive.org/web/20041021045522/www.bisan.org/index/units/Advocacy.htm (accessed 28 May 2008).
73 Interview with Mounir KLEIBO, Governance Programme Analyst, UNDP, Jerusalem, 19 February 2004.
74 On such a possibility, see Nabulsi (2004).
75 He acknowledges the parallel and very important role played by political parties, trade unions and other representation bodies within civil society (Barghouthi 1994: 1; 1998: 7).
76 Available at: www.palestinemonitor.org/spip/ (accessed 21 May 2008).
77 Available at: www.passia.org/seminars/intro.htm (accessed 21 May 2008).
78 This booklet entails two parts: I) Concepts of pluralism, democracy, civil society and policy-making, and II) Policy analysis.
79 For a presentation of the seminars, available at: www.passia.org/seminars/intro.htm (accessed 21 May 2008).
80 It thus kept its leading role as a debating place for many intellectuals.
81 Interview with Martha MYERS, Civil Society Project Manager, USAID, East Jerusalem, 11 February 2003.
82 Ibid.
83 First published in Arabic by MUWATIN and then in English by PASSIA. Both editions appeared in 2004.
84 Adel Samara's (2003) vitriolic pamphlet against NGOs is another example of such criticism.
85 I have come across many examples of the dual attitude of NGO activists: harsh (and populistic) denunciations (in Arabic) of the Geneva Initiative, but softer (English) reactions; the heavy-loaded debate around the petition calling for the end of suicide attacks within the Green Line in June 2003 is also a case in point: the petition was attacked by many because it was funded by the EU and some saw willingness to sign it as a sign of giving in to external pressure or temporary opportunism. See Larzillière (2003).

86 See the discussion of most expected public speeches (MEPS) as a source of heteronomy in Chapter 7, pp. 195ff.

87 There might be an excellent knowledge of the second Palestine, but sometimes it is the usage of examples of this second Palestine which can be problematic because they are paternalist, or slightly contemptuous with their regard.

88

> In addition to tailored assistance, Tamkeen conducted a series of workshops on grant proposal development, including how to create financial plans. From December 2003 to March 2004, our team delivered workshops in five locations throughout the West Bank and Gaza to more than 100 CSO representatives.
>
> (www.tamkeen.org/tamkeen1/resource_center/index.asp (accessed 12 Octobre 2004))

89 Available at: www.amideast.org/programs_services/institutional_dev/civil_society_strengthening/default.htm#TAMKEEN (accessed 28 May 2008).

90 Information received from one person temporarily in charge of such training at AMIDEAST.

91 Let us note that MASSAR is also involved in PECDAR, one of the three authors of the position for UNDP.

92 It would be interesting studying the profiles of the higher echelons personnel in such organizations. TAMKEEN's head is a Palestinian American holding a PhD in Management.

93 On the transformation of civil society activism into an NGO elite, see Abdel Shafi (2004).

94 There are preferences based on, e.g. priority to membership-based organizations and community-based organizations which gear most of their activities towards activities concentrating on women and children. For longer-term partnership and larger budget envelopes, NPA has in this case some criteria about the organizations: it must have an elected board, regular elections, internal functioning rules, etc.

95 Interview with Gudrun BERTINUSSEN, Resident Representative, Norwegian People's Aid, Gaza City, 3 February 2003.

96 For a thorough discussions of Bourdieu's *champs*, see Bourdieu (1980: 113f.):

> Les champs peuvent donc se définir comme des espaces structurés de positions (ou de postes) dont les propriétés dépendent de leur position dans ces espaces et qui peuvent être analysées indépendemment des caractéristiques de leurs occupants (en partie déterminée par elles).
>
> (Bourdieu 1980: 113)

For comments see Lahire (1999).

97 Interestingly the insider-outsider debate lost much of this strength as an explanatory device to understand Palestinian politics during the Oslo years, but after a year or two of the second *Intifada*, it re-gained much importance, though sometimes in a caricatured manner (e.g. Shikaki 2002). For a critical discussion of the 1990s, see Challand (2002, 2008c) and during the second *Intifada* see Legrain (2003a, 2006), and about the concept of 'returnees' in general, Romani (2006).

98 See the discussion about the absorption of the Health Services Council into the Ministry of Health around 1994. See Craissati's (rather simplified Hirschmanian) model of inclusion/integration (Craissati 1996: 115, 123).

99 See the polls conducted by the Jerusalem Media and Communication Centre from 1994 onwards, available at: www.jmcc.org (accessed 21 April 2008). See also Bishara (1996).

100 I exclude the Islamist NGOs which would have anyway no interest in having interactions with the donors we are dealing here with.

101 Interview with Nora QORT, Board Member, Palestinian General Union of the Charitable Societies, Jerusalem, 21 January 2004.

5 Managing the discourse of civil society

1 Primary Health Care (PHC)'s definition is generally that given in the Alma-Ata Declaration. PHC

> is essential health care based on practical, scientifically sound and socially acceptable methods and technology, made universally accessible to individuals and families in the community through their full participation and at a cost that the community and country can afford to maintain at every stage of their development in the spirit of self-reliance and self-determination.

Secondary Health Care is interlinked with PHC, but involves a 'more advanced diagnostic and therapeutic means' (like labs, small surgery, beds for in-patients, etc.). Finally, Tertiary Health Care (THC) covers more complex treatments, training of health staff. Hospital treatment is typical of the THC level. See Eade and Williams (1995: 631–636).

2 Though they were included in the full list of interviewed organizations, the questionnaire was adapted to their profiles. They are marked with a (*) in the list of interviews (Appendix I).

3 On this sector, see Robinson (1993).

4 There are no figures to confirm such a high proportion of closures of primary health care centres. It is probably overstated, in order to reinforce the role of NGOs. Let us bear in mind that the current *Intifada* is a time of re-growth of some NGOs and sooner or later, peace negotiations will resume and again, priority will be given to building state-infrastructures.

5 Interview with Edward DABDOUB, Administrative Director, Caritas Baby Hospital, Beit Lahem, 20 January 2004.

6 Interview with Dina NASSER, Executive Director, JUZOOR Foundation For Health And Social Development, Ar-Ram, 16 February 2004.

7 Interview with Carole JA'BARI, Director, Patients Friend Society in Jerusalem, Mount of Olive, 21 February 2004.

8 It partially does so since 1997 when it took over the Maqassed Hospital. See Curmi (2002).

9 This figure does not include registered refugees who benefit anyway from free basic health care services from UNRWA.

10 Figures taken from PASSIA 2004, which quotes the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics.

11 Some local branches existed before that, as was the case since 1948 in Jenin. See Benthall and Bellion-Jourdan (2003: 65ff.).

12 Despite its re-centring upon the OPT after 1995, the PRCS still has health infrastructures in Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, Egypt and Iraq. It also has offices in France, Italy and Canada, available at: www.palestinercs.org/ (accessed 28 may 2008).

13 Information taken partly from UNSCO's various NGO directories (UNSCO 1998, 1999a, 2003) and partly completed by interviews with individual organizations.

14 UPMRC has thus its own video-unit and since 1999, as a 'Media Production Unit (MADA)' (Mada [2003]).

15 Interview with Iyaad SUROUR, Public Relations Officer, Ihsan Charitable Society, Hebron, 11 February 2004.

16 We are speaking here of the type of locations where the organizations were registered.

17 This is not to say that none of the 'big ones' or medium-size NGOs is not active in villages or refugee camps. Source: Author's database on Palestinian NGOs. See previous footnote.

18 There are four regional Unions of charitable societies, three in the West Bank (Nablus, Jerusalem and Hebron), and one in Gaza. At the summit of these regional unions, there is the Palestinian General Union of Charitable Societies, based in Jerusalem.

19 Interview with Nora QORT, Board Member, Palestinian General Union of the Charitable Societies, Jerusalem, 21 January 2004.
20 Interview with Majeed NASSER Ed-DIN, Board Member, Zakaat Committee al-Khalil, Hebron, 12 February 2004. The figures, available on their brochure (Zakaat 2001), were confirmed during the interview. Another source mentions that Tulkarem *Zakaat* Committee (a city north of the West Bank) disbursed $1.3 million in 1998. See Curmi (2002) and Challand (2008a).
21 §1, Declaration of Alma-Ata (1978). Full text available at www.who.int/hpr/NPH/docs/declaration_almaata.pdf (accessed 22 May 2008).
22 A vague enough formulation to satisfy 'East' and 'West', but that was in vogue in the 1970s in international parlance.
23 The corpus includes Barghouthi (1989); Kuttab (1989); Nakhleh (1989); Odeh (1989); Haq (1993); IPHC (1995); Barghouthi and Giacaman (1990); and Mash'al (1995).
24 Such view, interestingly, goes against Bishara's statement that there are no and can be no individual liberties in Palestinian society (Chapter 2).
25 With regard to Alma-Ata, the objective of 'Health for All' is frequently quoted in UPMRC work and publication. See, e.g. UPMRC (2001), or *The People's Charter for Health* (that UPMRC translated and distributed in its Arabic version), available at: www.phmovement.org/pdf/charter/phm-pch-arabic.pdf (accessed 22 May 2008).
26 It was striking that during my interviews, most of health NGO I questioned used the example of Mustafa Barghouthi when speaking of civil society activism.
27 There are two counter-examples pre-dating 1993: Tamari (1990, 1992) uses the concept analytically in two short articles in the Middle-East Report (MERIP).
28 Speakers from South Africa, Palestine (2), USA, Canada, Zimbabwe, India, England and Belgium.
29 Analyses from India, Namibia, Latin America, Philippines, Palestine, Nigeria, Nicaragua, South Africa, Bangladesh, United States, United Kingdom and El Salvador.
30 The editor is Jean Lennock.
31 Interview with Rita GIACAMAN, Head of Environmental Health Unit, Bir Zeit Public Health Department, Ramallah, 25 February 2004.
32 For a specific analysis of the divergences of interpretation around civil society between charitable organizations and professional ones, see Challand (2008a).
33 Interview with Salah ABDEL SHAFI, Director, Gaza Community Mental Health Programme, Gaza City, 2 February 2003.
34 Unfortunately, the interview with the representative of the UHCC, the other large left-wing health NGO, did not offer enough substantial insights into the possible links between civil society and health. A quick look at UHCC website indicates that civil society is also mentioned, but maybe less systematically as the other two, UPMRC and UHWC.
35 Interview with Dr Mustafa BARGHOUTHI, Director, HDIP (and President of UPMRC), Ramallah, 22 February 2003.
36 Interview with Dr Majeed NASSAR, Deputy Director, Union of Health Work Committees, Beit Sahour, 20 January 2004.
37 HWC 2002 Annual Report (HWC 2002) and UPMRC 2000 Annual Report (UPMRC 2001).
38 Interview with Dina NASSER, Executive Director, JUZOOR Foundation For Health And Social Development, Ar-Ram, 16 February 2004. Note how the name of the NGO itself if not just about health, but also about social development.
39 Interview with Mohammed Mahmoud JABR, Executive Director, Ardh al-Itfal, Hebron, 10 February 2004.
40 Dr Haydar Abdel Shafi was Head of the Palestinian delegation in Madrid (1991). He was elected in the PLC in 1996, but resigned in 1998 because of the corruption within

the PNA. His organization, the Red Crescent Society for the Gaza Strip, has nothing to do with the Palestinian Red Crescent Society.

41 Interview with Dr Haydar ABDEL SHAFI, President, Red Crescent Society for the Gaza Strip, Gaza City, 2 February 2003.

42 Majdal is the name of a Palestinian town now inside Israel, and whose inhabitants had to leave in large numbers during the 1948 War.

43 Interview with Zakaria al-BA'LOUSHA, Secretary General, Family Association of Majda, Beit Lahiya, 1 February 2003.

44 Interview with Khamees al-BATTRAN, Chairman of the North Gaza Branch, Family Association of Jaffa, Jabaaliya Refugee Camp, 1 February 2003.

45 Interview with Nora QORT, Board Member, Palestinian General Union of Charitable Societies, Beit Hanina, 23 January 2004.

46 Ibid. Emphases are hers.

47 Ibid.

48 This NGO plays with a rather conservative symbolic, namely, the Dome of the Rock.

49 Interview with Carole JA'BARI, Director, Patients Friend Society in Jerusalem, Mount of Olive, 21 February 2004.

50 Interview with Iyaad SUROUR, PR Officer, Ihsan Charitable Society, Hebron, 11 February 2004.

51 The opening verse of the Qur'an.

52 Interview with Iyaad SUROUR (ibid.) and with Baasem NATSHEH, Public Relations Officer, Patients' Friends Society (running al-Ahli Hospital), Hebron, 11 February 2004.

53 We will come back later to the comparison of Arabic-English presentation material.

54 The orientation of many of the Islamic organizations in Hebron is, according to a local observer, close to that of the *Ikhwan* (Muslim Brethren), rather than militant Palestinian groups. The Islamic Charitable Organisation is probably closer to more openly militant groups. Hence, probably, the refusal to answer any of my questions. The original webpage has been deactivated. See the 2004 version available at http://web.archive.org/web/20040807054630/www.icshebron.org/projects_e.htm (Accessed 22 May 2008).

55 Interview with Samih ABU 'AYASH, Vice-President, Union of Charitable Societies in the Hebron District, Hebron, 12 February 2004 and Interview with Dr Khaled QUREIA, General Hospital Director, Maqassed Hospital, East-Jerusalem, 26 February 2004.

56 Interview with Majeed NASSER ed-DIN, Board Member, Zakaat Committee Hebron, Hebron, 12 February 2004. See also the presentation flyer of the organizations where exact figures are available. The figure, however surprising for its importance, matches the amount spent by Tulkarm *Zakaat* Committee: $1.3 million in 1997. See Curmi (2002: 107).

57 Interview with Izzo GHRAYB, Board Member, Tarqumiya Benevolent Society, Tarqumiya, 10 February 2004.

58 Interview with Maajed 'ALOUSH, Board Member, Union of Charitable Societies of Jerusalem, 28 January 2003.

59 Various interviews.

60 Let us note that other organizations with a highly developed administrative apparatus (such as the Patients Friends Society or Ihsan Charitable Society in Hebron) do not automatically use concepts related to civil society at all.

61 Thus, Caroline Ja'bari, from Jerusalem's Patients Friends Society, was born in the USA.

62 In this, I follow with the view of Salah ABDEL SHAFI, Director, Gaza Community Mental Health Programme. Interview in Gaza City, 2 February 2003. See also his article (2004).

63 The latest example can be found in Abu Saif (2005).

64 Interview with Dr Khaled QUREIA, General Hospital Director, Maqassed Hospital, East-Jerusalem, 26 February 2004. Dr Qureia also happens to be the brother of PM Ahmed Qureia.

65 Our argument is different from Hammami's view that civil society 'has become the central term through which a demoralised and de-mobilised grassroots movement has been coming to terms with its powerlessness in the face of the transformation of the once distant PLO into a local authoritarian reality' (Hammami 1995: 52). Here, we argue, there is also an internal (leftist) dimension to the use of 'civil society'. See also the next chapter with the part on political exclusion.

66 Interview with Dr Majeed NASSAR, Deputy Director, Union of Health Work Committees, Beit Sahour, 20 January 2004.

67 Interview with Dr Ra'eb SABAH, Director of the Gaza Branch, Union of Health Care Committees, Gaza City, 30 January 2003.

68 Of course, the question of the general de-politicization of the population at large might have also contributed to this disinterest in the topic of civil society. See Picaudou (2003: 187f.).

69 Caroline Abu Sada even speaks of NGOs suffering from a lack of legitimacy (Abu Sada 2005a). In her final chapter, Abu Sada provides fascinating material on how certain NGOs are tapping into local networks and forms of authority to redeploy their activities (ibid.: chap. 6).

70 For the sake of clarity, we put only one set of constituencies, NGOs and donors. The same remark applies to Figure 5.3.

71 The division Oslo versus second *Intifada* years is rather fictional. The 'sliding' process (whereby donors, NGOs and local constituencies are not lined up anymore) is a longer-term and multi-faceted one. Certainly the hardship which a majority of the population has to suffer during the second *Intifada* has increased the gap and accelerated the trend. See also Le More (2008).

72 See Figure 5.4.

73 Political affiliation was decided upon a variety of factors: other public role(s) of NGO leaders, statements of NGOs on certain issues, given preference on their website for links to sister organization, etc. Legrain's Web Guide also offered very useful comments on and insights into the issues of political affiliation. See Legrain (1999c).

Percentages presented before are calculated on the known cases. Otherwise, it would be 34 per cent for the left, 30 per cent for independent organizations, 13 per cent for Fatah, and 20 per cent unknown.

74 See Legrain (1999c), available at: www.mom.fr/guides/palestine/palestine-Palestin-4.html#Heading212 (accessed 28 May 2008).

75 Interview with Sha'wan JABAARIN, Head of Legal Unit, al-Haq, Ramallah, 7 February 2003.

76 Khalil az-Zibn was shot dead by Palestinian gunmen in Gaza in March 2004. See http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/3524415.stm.

77 Interview with Khalil az-ZIBN, Director, Palestinian Association for Human Rights, Gaza City, 2 February 2003.

78 On the establishment in August 1994 of the Office of National Organizations, see Brown (2003: 154).

79 See Legrain (1999c), available at: www.mom.fr/guides/palestine/palestine-Palestin-7.html#Heading508 (accessed 28 May 2008).

80 A Petition signed by 20 prominent figures of the Territories, calling for the end to the privileged class and less corruption in Palestine. See NFW (1999); and Challand (2002: 18ff.).

81 The division operated here between collective and individual rights serves symbolically to illustrate the tension between the two levels of Palestinian politics. There are issues related to the end of Occupation that are also question of individual rights, and problems internal to Palestinian which are matters of collective rights.

82 On the general preference for the peace process, see Le More (2004, 2008).
83 On the asymmetrical containment pushed forward by Israel through the Oslo Accords, see Khan *et al.* (2004).
84 Many were right to denounce the legitimacy of such State Security Courts during the second *Intifada* and their expedient procedures leading to the execution of alleged 'collaborators', but few recalled that these Courts were pushed by the USA and Israel in order to deal efficiently with Hamas during the Oslo years.
85 Interview with George RISHMAWI, Coordinator, Palestinian Centre for Rapprochement Beit Sahour, 21 January 2004 and with Dr Rabah MUHANA, President, Union of Health Work Committee, Gaza City, 30 January 2003.
86 Interview with Iyaad BARGHOUTHI, Director, Ramallah Centre for Human Rights Studies, Ramallah, 22 January 2004.
87 Interview with Rana BISHARA, Coordinator, PINGO Network, Ramallah, 22 January 2004.
88 Palestinians could thus not travel freely between zones A; their lands were still expropriated for 'security reasons' and their vital space shrunk because of the doubling of settler populations from 1993 until 2000.
89 Interview with Issam AROURI, General Manager, Jerusalem Center for Legal Aid and Human Rights, Ramallah, 14 February 2004. The emphasis is mine.
90 Ibid.
91 Interview with Jabr WISHAH, Deputy Director, Palestinian Centre for Human Rights, Gaza City, 30 January 2004.
92 We insist on this subjective aspect: obviously if one asks local NGO leaders whether they want to relate their work to the local population or to large-scale international debates, surely the vast majority of answers will be about the local population. Even more so in the very difficult case of the Palestinian Territories. See the analysis of the most expected public speeches (MEPS) in Chapter 7 (in part, pp. 195f.).
93 Interview with Nassif MU'ALLEM, Director, Palestinian Centre for Peace and Democracy, Ramallah, 21 January 2004.
94 Interview with Aref JAFFAL, Executive Director, Civic Forum Institute, Ar-Ram, 17 February 2004.
95 Interview with Issam AROURI, General Manager, Jerusalem Center for Legal Aid and Human Rights, Ramallah, 14 February 2004.
96 Interview with Noah SALAMEH, Director, Centre for Conflict Resolution and Reconciliation, Beit Lahem, 24 February 2004.
97 Interview with Iyaad BARGHOUTHI, Director, Ramallah Centre for Human Rights Studies, Ramallah, 22 January 2004. Emphasis is mine.
98 Interview with Issam AROURI, General Manager, Jerusalem Center for Legal Aid and Human Rights, Ramallah, 14 February 2004.
99 Therefore some of the quotes here will be cited anonymously. What matters are the practices, not who is doing what.
100 Interview with Nora QORT, Board Member, Palestinian General Union of the Charitable Societies, East Jerusalem, 21 January 2004.
101 Interview with Aref JAFFAL, Executive Director, Civic Forum Institute, Ar-Ram, 17 February 2004.
102 The definition is from the *New Oxford Dictionary of English* (2003).
103 Interview with Salwa DUAIBIS and Susan ROCKWELL, Partners, MATTIN Group, Ramallah, 17 February 2003.
104 This is done through Internet or through sending publications. One could instead imagine or expect active programmes of Palestinian advocacy NGOs touring and lecturing northern organizations and doing 'capacity building' in their turn, as many northern NGOs do when they go 'south'.
105 Note the striking parallel with the quote on the role of key NGOs to help Palestinian society to get out of the 'state of nature' (Chapter 4).

106 See Bierschenk *et al.* (2000). The difference with their approach, inspired by African cases, is that the whole disciplining process at work in the OPT is not centrally thematized.
107 The NGO was originally based in Ramallah, but then moved to Nablus. Information from Iyaad BARGHOUTHI, Director, Ramallah Centre for Human Rights Studies, Ramallah, 22 January 2004.
108 Interview with Hanna W. THEODORIE, Chief of Party, American Development Foundation, East Jerusalem, 18 February 2003.
109 Interview with Mazen SHAQURA, Director of Gaza Branch, Palestinian Independent Commission for the Citizens' Rights, Gaza City, 1 February 2003.
110 These were: (1) the substance *and* the phrase of civil society are used, (2) its substance but without the phrase, or (3) a totally different substance than 'civil society' (Chapter 5).
111 Interview with Dr Lily FEIDY, Vice-Secretary General, MIFTAH, East-Jerusalem, 16 February 2004.
112 Interview with Dr Mustafa BARGHOUTHI, Director, HDIP (and President of UPMRC), Ramallah, 22 February 2003.
113 Remarks made on condition of anonymity.
114 This work forms part of the curriculum itself of Islamic studies at an-Najah-University.
115 Interview with Iyaad BARGHOUTHI, Director, Ramallah Centre for Human Rights Studies, Ramallah, 22 January 2004.

6 The exclusionary dimensions of civil society

1 Abdel Shafi (2004) does so, but in a very brief article.
2 Interview with Dr Majeed NASSAR, Deputy Director, Union of Health Work Committees, Beit Sahour, 20 January 2004.
3 On the shift towards more conservative forms of ideologies, see Legrain (2001a, b), and Hamzah and Larzillière (2006).
4 For a similar conclusion, see Abdel Shafi (2004).
5 I follow here George Giacaman to say that political parties were losing their basis before the Oslo period (interview with George GIACAMAN, Director, MUWATIN, Ramallah, 8 February 2003), and that this weakening should not be read in terms of brain-drain to the NGOs as suggested by Hammami (1995).
6 Jamal (2005) sustains that this is also what happened in the women's sector.
7 The figures are from two different sources, but are nevertheless indicative of a growing trend of depoliticization. On the issue of depolitization, see the reflections of Hilal (1998b) and Bishara (1998).
8 Assuming that political parties are the most important place to foster political activism. Obviously trade unions are another locus of such mobilization. But NGOs, given the professional turn they took, should not be considered as the prime place for such activities.
9 Interview with George GIACAMAN, Director, MUWATIN, Ramallah, 8 February 2003. He believes that leftist parties have abdicated their responsibilities and left the field free for 'Hamas' indoctrination of the young' in the Territories.
10 Interview with Adel QADOUM, Country Director, Islamic Relief, Gaza City, 3 February 2003.
11 Interview with Rana BISHARA, Coordinator, PINGO Network, Ramallah 22 January 2004.
12 Interview with Caroline JA'BARI, Director, Patients Friends Society of Jerusalem, Jerusalem, 21 February 2004.
13 This came out in many interviews. For some PINGO is uniquely communist, for others it is a coalition of PFLP and PPP.

14 Which provoked at the end of 2002 a serious malaise because of the lack of independence of the judicial system.
15 Interview with Mazen SHAQURA, Director of Gaza Branch, Palestinian Independent Commission for the Citizens' Rights, Gaza City, 1 February 2003.
16 Senior foreign representatives and heads of development agencies with years of experience throughout the world all agreed that they have never seen such a quantity of coordination *fora*, but doubted the usefulness of these. On the donors' multiple efforts of coordination, see Brynen (2000) and Le More (2004, 2008).
17 Further evidence that the discourse of 'civil society' can serve as a boundary marker stems from the rather limited attention that leftist groups receive in the work of Sayigh (1997). For example, there are exaggerations about the funds available to leftist NGOs. For example, he speaks of a volume of international assistance for leftist NGOs between $170 and $240 million by the early 1990s. These figures, taken from Sullivan (1995) actually concern all NGOs (Sayigh 1997: 612). He also makes of left-wing NGO leaders a group of well-off middle class individuals who are western-trained (Sayigh 1997: 613), which is also highly disputable, since many come from poorer backgrounds (Robinson 1997).
18 For an in-depth analysis of this type of rhetoric, see Challand (2008a).
19 See Camau (2002: 221).
20 See, a.o. Sullivan (1995, 1998, 2001); Craissati (1996); Shawa (2001); Brynen (2000).
21 In the wording of a local observer, '80% of the funding goes to 20% of the NGOs'. Interview with Dr Rafiq HUSSEINI, Deputy Director General, Welfare Association PNGO Project, Beit Hanina, 6 February 2003.
22 This can be seen in the case of Palestine when certain institutions (like Palestine Monitor, hosted in one of Mustapha Barghouthi's NGOs) claim to speak on behalf of the whole of Palestinian civil society.
23 Interview with Sameeh Hashem ABU AYSHEH, Vice-President of the Union of Charitable Societies (Southern Branch), Hebron, 12 February 2004. In his view, these 'large NGOs' are not democratic at all and pursue only their financial interests.
24 Interview with Dr Majeed NASSAR, Deputy Director, Union of Health Work Committees, Beit Sahour, 20 January 2004.
25 Interview with Salah ABDEL-SHAFI, Director, Gaza Community Mental Health Project, Gaza City, 2 February 2003.
26 Interview with Dr Rabah MUHANA, Director of the Union of Health Work Committees (Gaza Brach), Gaza City, 30 January 2003. Interview with Dr Mustafa BARGHOUTHI, Director, Health Development, Information and Policy Institute (HDIP) and president of the Union of Palestinian Medical Relief Committees, Ramallah, 22 February 2003.
27 On the donors' political conditionality during the Oslo years, see Hanafi and Tabar (2002). For a reflection on the last years' development in terms of donors' pledges and political disbursement, see Le More (2008).
28 In average, 41 per cent of the person heading an international donors' mission have been in the OPT for less than two years (15 cases), 22 per cent have spent between two and four years (eight cases), and 22 per cent more than five years (eight cases, while six cases or 16 per cent are unknown figures). Source: author's database on donors.
29 On the retreat of women's organizations, see Hilal (1998b: 140) and Curmi (2002: 106). The problem was also highlighted by Issam AROURI, General Manager, Jerusalem Centre for Legal Aid and Human Rights, Ramallah, 14 February 2004. He makes a strong argument that it is international donors who diverted the many women associations from service-delivery towards advocacy, with the consequence that the field was quickly occupied by Hamas.
30 On these issues, see (Roy 2001: 371ff.); Bishara (1998); Lagerquist (2003); and Khan *et al.* (2004).
31 For a full description, see Chapter 3 and Challand (2005a: 321–322).

32 This is obviously not always the case, and even disputable in the PNGO case, although some criteria were rather intriguing. The German Fund for example, (a joint German government and *Stiftungen* endowment for Palestinian NGOs) did its best to avoid the 'big fish' trap by setting a very low ceiling to the grants given in collaboration with smaller NGOs, available at: http://web.archive.org/web/20041126124332/www.german-fund.org/ (accessed 28 May 2008).
33 For a similar conclusion in the women sector, see Jamal M. 2005.
34 Interview with Nassif MU'ALLEM, Director, Palestinian Centre for Peace and Democracy, Ramallah, 21 January 2004.
35 Interview with Izzat ABDEL-HADI, General Director, BISAN Center for Research and Development, Ramallah, 28 February 2004.
36 For a critique of the simple view that individualism is an *acquis* in western modern societies, see Kalupner (2003).
37 We tend to forget that the civil society from which Tocqueville spoke is very much different in its quality than the one modern western democracies host nowadays. For a discussion, see Bermeo and Nord (2000).
38 This phrase was expressively used up to five times in the interview.
39 All quotes are from the interview with Izzat ABDEL-HADI, General Director, BISAN Center for Research and Development, Ramallah, 28 February 2004.
40 Interview with Izzat ABDEL-HADI, General Director, BISAN Center for Research and Development, Ramallah, 28 February 2004.
41 I follow the reasoning steps of Abu Sada (2007b) who refers to Pouligny (2001).
42 As is the case frequently with the question of refugees' inalienable right of return. See Nabulsi (2004) on that matter.
43 Le More (2008) lists many other instantiations of donors' political guilt and wasted money in the OPT in the last years.

7 Conclusions: looking 'beyond the pale'

1 We could have dwelt at length on different types of material to confront our claims, in particular by looking at the vast amount of surveys and polls about aid in Palestine. We chose not to do so systematically either because such material has been analysed in a rigorous way elsewhere (Bocco 2006), or because the polls produced in the OPT do not produce easily comparable material on the theme of civil society across time, although this could be an interesting trail of study. Legrain (2001b: 78–81, 87f.) demonstrated the significant differences between the polls produced in the OPT, hinting thus at the limit of a study based exclusively on this type of material.
2 The reality is that some ideological/ideational cleavages expressed in terms of culture serve some political purpose (civil society as a political identity marker within the Palestinian scene and as an identity marker of civilizations on the international level). Such views are then relayed and amplified by some institutional features (technique of consultancy, key reports setting the tone, conferences, etc.) flanked by a series of bureaucratic hurdles (capacity to adapt to formal reporting requirements, multiplicator NGOs, training sessions, etc.).
3 There are notable exceptions to this general trend. The so-called German Fund for small NGOs, Norwegian People's Aid, or Terre des Hommes actively seek to help smaller local organizations and regenerate the type of activities usually done in the OPT.
4 Unfortunately, only 12 NGOs responded to the questions. So these findings are only indicative.
5 This is different from 'conventional wisdom', since the latter implies undisputed general acceptance. On the contrary, the most-expected public speech (or 'better socially accepted speech') entails a tension between what one *expects* to hear in a given context, and what the person author of such statement actually *thinks* deep inside.

6 The concept somehow overlaps with 'cultural complicity' put forward by Harik (1997: 181). For him,

> cultural complicity is a reticent social accord that takes the form of general acquiescence in a certain idea of pattern of behaviours as if it were a given. It is problematic in that it often contravenes an explicit principle, also professed and accepted by the same community. Cultural complicity conceals an inconsistency in moral or intellectual positions – in effect – blind spots in a community, a cultural instinct that may be characterized as collective delusion.

7 This goes somewhat in the direction of Bakhtin criticizing Freud's approach by stressing that there is an 'official' but also an 'unofficial' consciousness and that one should not take certain public statements at face value. See Bakhtin (1994: 9).
8 On similar remarks on the refusal of USAID monies in the 1980s and those who actually take them later, see Curmi (2002: 113 and n30).
9 'Instead, [Mustafa] Barghouti, aware of the importance of the discourse of resistance and sacrifice, seeks to build his source of legitimacy on non-violent popular resistance as manifested in the mobilization against the Israeli separation wall' (Jad 2004).
10 Mustafa Barghouthi, according to Jad, portrays himself as the leader of a 'third way'. Are we facing here an example of the 'repackaging' of NGOs, as happened in 1994? Is this a new source of connection, or *branchement*, done by the secular left, 'clicking' in a privileged *topos* of the political socio-democrats of western Europe?
11 On that matter, see the interesting article of Zolberg (1985).
12 Translation mine. The original reads: 'la modernisation rapide qui s'est imposée depuis la découverte et l'exploitation du pétrole à la fin de Deuxième Guerre mondiale revêt un caractère purement technique. Elle reste donc extérieure et ne parvient pas, jusqu'à maintenant, à sécréter un univers symbolique correspondant' (Ghalioun 2000: 30).
13 As a slogan commonly spread by Islamists says '*Islam al-hal*', that is, 'Islam is the solution'.
14 Translation mine. The original reads: 'Cet islamisme n'a pas son origine dans le dogme de l'Islam ou même de la pensée islamique moderne, mais dans les processus bloqués de la modernisation, c'est-à-dire dans les conditions d'une sous-modernité sans contenu moral ni avenir. Il incarne le rejet par de larges couches de la population musulmane et arabe d'un modèle de modernité qui n'a pu réaliser ses promesses. Il manifeste la crise de cette lumpen-modernité qui ne produit plus de sens et dont la première victime est l'homme même qu'elle n'a cessé d'exalter' (Ghalioun 2000: 31f.).
15 Interview with Salah ABDEL SHAFI, Director, Gaza Community Mental Health Project, Gaza City, 2 February 2003.
16 In spring 2004 all posters of the National Initiative that one could find in Ramallah (its stronghold) were reproducing maps of the wall, pictures of it and emphasizing its actions in this field, rather than pictures of *shahid* (martyr) or political mottos, as the other political factions do.
17 Such view is advanced by Mahdi Abdel Hadi, President of PASSIA.
18 Abu Sada in her thesis (2007a: chap. 6) argues that some large NGOs in the field of agriculture have done so during the second *intifada*, using local figures such as *mukhtars* to bolster their case.

Appendices

1 Such as People-to-People programmes or initiatives aiming at solving the refugee questions without taking the historical roots into consideration.
2 Since not all donors realize emergency programmes, a '0' was added in the possible coding.

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