

Hidden Agents: Faith-Based Organizations (FBOs) in the Palestinian Territories

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Abstract

Hidden Agents: Faith-Based Organizations (FBOs) in the Palestinian Territories

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Recently, there has been a great deal of scholarly and popular interest in the activities of faith-based organizations (FBOs) in the Middle East. In particular, socio-economic services provided by FBOs have generated a heated debate in which advocates and opponents of these organizations have locked heads together in an attempt to advance their own arguments and advocate for policies harboring their views. While there has not been any absolute winner in the debate both camps, to an extent, agree that the service activities of FBOs have an implicit political component as the later seek to influence and modify the societal relations extending among the public, private and the not-for-profit spheres.

Understanding the role of FBOs in Islamic societies is further complicated by a relative absence

of empirical research or even accessible descriptive data either within a single country or across countries. In an effort to limit this complexity, the research design underlying this dissertation focuses upon one case: the Palestinian Territories (PT). I examine the advocacy behavior of FBOs in the Palestinian territories and how they influence local level social policies. Using qualitative and quantitative methods, I specifically study correlations between several organizational and environmental characteristics and the tendency for FBOs to: (a) form collaborative links with other civil society agents, as well as, governmental agencies and private businesses; and (b) get involved in advocacy-related activities. This research describes, as well, the scope of the FBO sector in the PT and differentiates between direct and indirect advocacy. It further presents two successful case studies to demonstrate how FBOs manage to influence social policies.

I argue that FBOs are far from being an apolitical agent with a limited ideological and social agenda. On the contrary, they are active participants in the local policy process and they achieve their objectives through multiple strategies in which collaborative networks with other actors in society and religious framing are considered the most prominent.

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Chapter One: Introduction

1.1 Introduction and Description of the Problem

Recently, there has been a great deal of scholarly and popular interest in the activities of faith-based organizations in the Middle East. In particular, socio-economic services provided by Islamic FBOs have generated a heated debate in which advocates and opponents of these organizations have locked heads together in an attempt to advance their own arguments and advocate for policies harboring their views. While there has not been any absolute winner in the debate both camps, to an extent, agree that the service activities of Islamic FBOs have an implicit political component as the later seek to influence and modify the societal relations extending among the public, private and the not-for-profit spheres.

A large body of research has explored the impact and role of the Islamic religion in the social and political spheres in Middle Eastern states. For example, studies documenting the lack of democratization and persistence of authoritarianism, the flourishing of terrorist groups, the skewed patriarchal relations among genders, the abysmal standards of education and production of knowledge, and the backwardness of economic institutions have all utilized Islamic religion as a backdrop in which Islamic societies (especially those located in the Middle East) are destined to linger in their own destitution as long as religion constituted the bedrock of their moral, financial, and legislative behavior. What has not been systematically explored is the role of faith-based organizations in the provision of public services and how this role can infiltrate into political action. Particularly, FBOs influence does not solely stem from their efforts to actively seek the adoption of certain policies or altering existing laws. Their ability to do so is also reinforced by their unique position in society. FBOs' social messages and the articulation of their

‘moral vision’ of society and how different individuals should function within the society, which is heavily based on religious dogma, constitute a powerful force for FBOs that can be used to present their proposals in a religious framework which is shared by the majority in society. This position, to claim the representation of the majority’s moral vision, provides a convincing rationale for any given policy proposal because FBOs are not simply arguing that the proposal should be adopted because they are in favor of it, but also it is the right thing to do since it reflects the majority’s vision. It is within this distinctive status that FBOs can sometimes trump other secular organizations or even the government, despite the apparent lack of political power to do so. As Wood rightly argues, such an articulate moral vision with the majority in society “does not replace the political power needed to change society but rather provides an ethical critique that can open up the status quo to alternatives promoted politically (Wood 2002)”.

To the extent that public service provision – be it health care, education, or housing – involves public funding, harnesses voluntary contributions, substitutes for part of the state’s role, and implies decisions about who gets what services and how services are allocated, it too deserves to be taken seriously as an integral contribution of the social and political role for faith-based organizations. In this dissertation I argue that FBOs are far from being an apolitical agent with a limited ideological and social agenda. On the contrary, they are an active participant in the local policy process and they achieve their objectives through multiple strategies in which collaborative networks with other actors in society and religious framing are considered the most prominent.

Understanding the role of FBOs in Islamic societies is further complicated by a relative absence of empirical research or even accessible descriptive data either within a single country or across countries. In an effort to limit this complexity, the research design underlying this

dissertation focuses upon one case: the Palestinian Territories (PT). The provision of welfare services in the PT is comprised of an autonomous cadre of participants that include government ministries, United Nations agencies, and nonprofit organizations. Although describing the activities of the first two are to an extent straightforward given the relative available documentation of these activities, describing the role of nonprofit organizations is difficult for a number of reasons. First, many grassroots nonprofit organizations work on a very narrow scale with a well-defined target population or a minimal resource base, or in most cases both. Second, funding for such organizations can appear to be chaotic and in many times unstable. Donations, for example, can depend on the current political atmosphere, personal relations among the community, or even whether the organization's director is perceived to be an honest person or not. Third, given that several NGOs (especially FBOs) have witnessed the confiscation of their assets by the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) or the Israeli army and received orders to seize their activities in the PT (mainly for political reasons), many organizations; going along with a preemptive strategy; have decided to shift their operations underground. That is, rather than waiting their clienteles to approach them for help the organization's volunteers and employees are now the agent responsible for locating the needy.

1.2 Research Questions, Hypotheses, and Study Overview

Faith-based nonprofits have been providing social services for decades and were receiving funding long before the terrorist acts of 9/11 or the ensuing 'War on Terror'. Yet, the implications of this role and the integration of faith-based organizations in the governing fabric of communities has not been the target of current research. This topic gained even more importance given the current political schism between the two Palestinian governments in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. For example, FBOs accused of supporting Hamas have been forced

to close their doors and seize their operations in the West Bank. Likewise, FBOs with no direct links to any political party are facing, as well, continuous harassments from the PNA.

If FBOs are struggling, cutting back on services, or trying to change their operations to reduce pressure upon them, the consequences could be severe. In light of current political conditions, there is an urgent need to understand how FBOs may respond to these environmental changes, and how they may use adaptive tactics as strategic behaviors to control their environment so that they can survive and achieve their objectives. This dissertation employs multiple methods of analysis to explore the relationship between FBOs' activity and public policy outcomes across different contexts of responsiveness and crisis in the Palestinian territories. Although there is a great deal of interest in the role of FBOs in developing countries in general and Islamic ones in particular from both academics and policy makers, there have been few attempts to systematically evaluate the impact of FBOs on political participation. The major reason for this shortage stems from the fact that data on FBO activities is hard to come by. And even when some data sources are obtained, there is hardly any reliable cross-sectorial dataset of both FBOs and secular NGO activities. Therefore, the current dissertation seeks to answer the following question:

To what extent do FBOs seek to influence the policy process in the Palestinian Territories and by what means do they facilitate political action?

To answer the above question one needs first to provide a contextual understanding of the activities and structure of faith-based organizations. Therefore, the dissertation will also tackle the following questions:

- What types of organizations are considered faith-based in the Palestinian territories (how to define them)?
- Where are they located, what are the services and goods being provided, and who benefits from them?
- What types of interaction / collaboration take place between faith-based and other organizations and what determines that collaboration?
- What are the organizational factors that enhance or detract from the advocacy behavior of FBOs?

1.2.1 Research Hypotheses

The main research hypotheses directing this study are:

- I. FBOs under pressure from both the Palestinian Authority and/or the Israeli army, will collaborate with other partners that are more immune to government provocations.
- II. FBOs under pressure but wish to be involved in advocacy-related activities will engage in indirect activities (e.g. funding programs to raise political awareness).
- III. Seeking a platform that cannot be criticized by their adversaries, FBOs advocating for certain opinions and policies will frame their message with religious significance.

1.2.2 Study Overview

It has been claimed that faith-based organizations in the Middle East have no role in the lives of their constituents beyond their involvement in enhancing the popularity of Islamic political parties and other Islamic '*jihadi*' groups (Bayman 2003, Sageman, 2005). These claims

rest on the assumption that Islamic FBOs are a homogenous group with similar ideologies, goals, missions, backgrounds, and tactics. A more profound examination of Islamic FBOs provides a totally different conclusion. Like any other groups of nonprofits, Islamic FBOs comprise a wide set of organizations with heterogamous (and sometimes conflicting) missions. They share; however; a hostile environment within which host Middle Eastern countries view them with a suspicious discernment. To ensure organizational stability and minimize the threat of obstacles--that includes arbitrary regulations, assets confiscations, and indistinct detentions--FBOs must maneuver their environment to gain some control over their future and autonomy. Research on nonprofits identified several strategies to achieve this, such as to diversify funding sources, strengthen governance structure, and collaborate with multiple partners. Influencing the policy environment is just another way to limit risk and reduce uncertainty (Mosley 2010; 2009). Yet, little attention has been paid to policy-related activities on behalf of FBOs, what they do, how they do it, and with whom. These questions aim to offer a more comprehensive understanding of FBOs in the field and provide a robust analysis of the differences between secular and faith-based nonprofits, big and small FBOs, and local; regional; and international FBOs.

Other organizational factors are expected as well to either enhance to detract FBOs form engaging in policy related activities. For example, FBOs that receive governmental funding may offer less contentious political activities compared to organizations with in-house funding. Likewise, FBOs, which rely on volunteers, may lack the technical and professional skills needed to nudge government policies, while those with several collaboration networks are in a better position to influence the policy process.

Regardless of the unique environmental or organizational characteristics, organizations involved with the provision of social or economic goods and services do not usually operate as

solitary agents in vacuum seal environments. Instead, these organizations comprise a link in a multi-linked network, which can include governmental agencies, nonprofits and private businesses. In these joint efforts and partnerships organizations jointly address several challenges such as economic development, education, health, and poverty alleviation. FBOs are further linked to one another and to secular organizations through cooperative service programs, interest groups, foundations and supply linkages. All of this makes it impossible to understand the role of religion in service provision, let alone in civil society more broadly, without paying attention to these social connections (Wuthnow 2004). Collaboration network influences, as well, the type of services provided and the extent of focus on each service. In addition, collaboration allows a cohort of organizations to join efforts, creating what could potentially lead to a significant political participant (Elmoore, Hula and Reese 2011).

This dissertation examines the advocacy behavior of FBOs in the Palestinian territories and how they influence local level social policies. Using qualitative and quantitative methods, it specifically studies correlations between several organizational and environmental characteristics and the tendency for FBOs to: (a) form collaborative links with other civil society agents, as well as, governmental agencies and private businesses; and (b) get involved in advocacy-related activities. This research describes, as well, the scope of the FBO sector in the PT and differentiates between direct and indirect advocacy. It further presents two successful case studies to demonstrate how FBOs manage to influence social policies.

1.3 Dissertation Outline

- 1) Introduction: This chapter provides a short primer to the whole dissertation. It briefly introduces the topic of FBOs in the Palestinian territories and how current research failed

to appreciate their influence in local policy processes. It further presents the research questions and hypotheses.

- 2) *Islamic Civil Institutions- Background and Historical Development*: This chapter aims to shed a light on the concept of civil society in Arabic and Islamic contexts. It scrutinizes the hope that civil society, as a concept and a program, can help Arab societies out of their current authoritarian gridlock and economic misery. It also examines the applicability of the concept of civil society in Islamic settings, where religion is seen to dictate every aspect of daily life, and whether there is any Islamic version of civil society. It then goes to examine the role of Islamic social movements, charitable societies and religious aid agencies in building a local version of civil society that forms a parallel to the one advocated by Western aid agencies and their local agents in the field; the NGOs.
- 3) *Formation and Evolution of Islamic Philanthropy in the Palestinian Territories*: Chapter three sets out to establish a classification of Islamic social organizations operating in the Palestinian Territories (PT), challenging assumptions that such organizations constitute a homogeneous category that pursue a uniform mission. Examining the formation and evolution of Islamic faith-based service provision in the PT, this chapter delineates three classifications of Islamic FBOs: grassroots charitable societies, modern and professional FBOs, and semi-governmental religious agencies. It further seeks to explain how Islamic faith-based organizations differ from one another in their orientation, structure, and operations, and whether or how they are distinct from secular organizations. In a nutshell, chapter three demonstrates the importance of distinguishing not simply between faith-based and secular organizations, but among FBOs themselves.

4) *The Organization and Structure of Faith-Based Organizations in the Palestinian*

Territories: Funding, Location, Services, and Beneficiaries? This chapter presents an initial evaluation of the status, characteristics and activities of FBOs in the Palestinian Territories. Using data gathered during field research in the West Bank during 2010 and 2011 and results from the Palestinian Civil Society Organizations' 2010 survey, chapter four investigates the role played by FBOs in providing social services to the Palestinian communities and how they manage to fund their programs. Additionally, it presents new findings about FBOs in the PT that differ from the established general perception, which conceives Islamic FBOs as 'holistic' enterprises providing services that cover all types of needs. It also shows that faith-based service providers are not solitary organizations with limited interaction with other players in the Palestinian civil society, and demonstrates that even though FBOs do not participate largely in outright advocacy related programs, their objectives reflect an awareness of their political role in society.

- 5) *Not in a Vacuum: Collaboration Networks Among Faith-Based Organizations:* Drawing on field interviews with FBOs' leadership and results from the 2010 survey, this chapter focuses on inter-organizational activities among FBOs as a response to the political changes being experienced by the sector. Specifically, using qualitative and quantitative methods I develop a model that presents the predisposition towards forming collaborative networks with multiple partners as a function of environmental pressures, religious tendencies, and organizational characteristics. Understanding why FBOs enter into collaborative networks, chapter five allows for a better understanding to the full impact of those collaborations on services, the organizations engaged in collaborations, and how they may influence the policy process in the future.

- 6) *A New Form of FBOs: Service-Oriented Combined with Indirect Tactics*: Chapter six is about successful grassroots organizing that aims to reshape public policy around prominent issues in the PT and how FBOs pursue the interests of many populations that lack the political or financial capital to influence public policy in a direct manner. In particular, the chapter aims to describe how faith-based organizations use both (a) their widespread social networks, and (b) the arguments of religious faith to nudge public policy towards promoting their interests. The faith-based organizations discussed in this chapter represent a growing breed of entities in the Middle East that adapted to the lack of serious opposition politics and the proliferation of oppressive regime tactics by situating their operations and activities on the intersection between social welfare provision, religion, and politics. In contrast to the essentially advocacy-focused nonprofits or the traditional charitable societies, in chapter six I explain how many modern FBOs have charted a new path for themselves in which the funding of socioeconomic programs goes hand in hand with an active social policy agenda, and how by cooperating with other civil society institutions and for-profit businesses FBOs work to reshape government policies.
- 7) *Are they Foes or Friends? FBOs and Pragmatic Networks*: chapter seven presents two cases in which FBOs have been successful in influencing public policy in the PT. Mainly, I identify two important pathways for political participation: collaboration with other civil society members and private businesses, and the successful framing of issues in a religious wrap. I argue that when FBOs build collaborative networks with other partners in the society and arrange their ideas to cohere with Islamic teachings and values, they increase their chances of influencing policy formulation and adoption. These two

strategies help in explaining not only how FBOs manage to survive in a hostile environment, but it also shed a light on how civil society organizations participate in policy making decisions in non-democratic contexts.

8) *The New Role of Faith-Based Organizations in Civil Society and Future Policy*

Implications: The final and eighth chapter is a modest attempt in trying to understand how the rampant political and social changes taking place in the Arab world can change the environment within which Palestinian FBOs are operating in. What came to be called as the “Arab Spring” has produced a new set of opportunities and threats to all civil society agents, including FBOs. How the latter will react to this environment can define the shape and politics of civil society in the PT, as well as, the whole region.

Chapter Two:

Islamic Civil Institutions: Background and Historical Development

Civil society, represented by non-governmental organizations (NGOs), has been on the agenda of many Western international aid agencies and Muslim intellectuals in the Arab world. The hope is that civil society, as a concept and a program, will help Arab societies out of their current authoritarian gridlock and economic misery. How feasible a hope is that? How useful can a concept developed in a Christian-Judeo setting be to a conservative Islamic environment? Is there any Islamic version of civil society, and can it play the same positive role in advancing democracy and public accountability as in Western and Eastern Europe? This chapter examines the applicability of the concept of civil society in Islamic settings, where religion is seen to dictate every aspect of daily life. It then goes to examine the role of Islamic social movements, charitable societies and religious aid agencies in building a local version of civil society that forms a parallel to the one advocated by Western aid agencies and their local agents in the field; the NGOs.

2.1 Is there any Civil Society in the Arab World?

In an ironic remark, the political scientist Sheila Carapico asked “what is the role of civil in the mostly authoritarian polities of the Middle East? (Carapico 2010)”. Her frustration with the current status of politics and societies in the region is well founded. After all, it has been argued that civil society and democracy are not only absent from the Arab world, but also “conceptually absent” and “categorically foreign” given that “Arab political thought does not possess the linguistic, intellectual or, material context necessary to sustain such concepts (Browsers 2006)”.

In the face of these pessimistic opinions civil society in the Arab world, according to the Egyptian sociologist Saad Eddin Ibrhaim, has revitalized itself in the last two decades due to internal, regional, and international factors. Internally, new socio-economic formations have been growing steadily, as the autocratic regimes have no longer been able to accommodate or

completely suppress them. Regionally, protracted armed conflicts have weakened the state, exposed its impotence in managing such conflicts, and drained its resources (Ibrahim 1998). Internationally, the proliferation of NGOs and the structural reforms advocated by aid agencies have forced many Arab governments to loosen their grip over local civil society members, and offered the latter with a golden opportunity to advance their cause.

The paradox of these events however is that instead of more transparent economies and forms of governance, the economic and political reform policies attached to aid transfers and necessary for its delivery appear to be creating the conditions for resistance and economic and political autonomy. What is evident among many citizens in recipient countries in the Arab region is the trend toward rejecting the policies advocated by donor states and joining instead the ranks of social movements, which aim basically to provide their constituents with basic public goods and other social and welfare services which are in short supply. One of the most influential movements to rise in the region that is seen as a serious contender with a spectacle that could challenge the status quo is the Islamic movement.

2.1.1 More than one Civil Society

Considering the contrasting views of the term ‘civil society’ in academic debates, two important questions are brought to the forefront that need to be clarified for the term to be fully grasped (Hamzawy 2002). First, is civil society a secular arena that can only be constructed according to modern ideas of civility and political pluralism, or can we consider religious organizations and movements as legitimate actors due to their “societal functionality” and cultural acceptability? Second, should civil society be only occupied by intermediary groups that strive to tighten the communication links between the nation-state, the market, and the citizens

without aspiring to seize political influence, or can organizations that have clear (or ambiguous) political ambitions be considered as part of civil society?

Concerning the first question, there is no universal agreement on how civil society and Islamic teachings can be compatible. On one side of the debate there is Sayyed Qutb; the leading intellectual of the Muslim Brotherhood; who clearly wrote that a society can only be Muslim if it abides and lives in accordance with God's law as revealed in His Book 'The Qur'an' (Zubaida 2000, p.60). Yet, on the other side there are the pragmatists such as the Egyptian activist and sociologist Saad Eddin Ibrahim who believed that under the right democratic conditions, Islamic societies might evolve into something akin to the Christian Democrats in Europe or the religious political parties in Israel (Ibrahim, 1998). As such, Ibrahim's notion of civil society does not differ in substance from the one promoted by Western governments and aid agencies. To him, a healthy civil society requires first the growth of a better educated middle class which will lay the foundation for a highly skilled set of NGOs capable of offering their constituents with a firm podium to face an authoritarian state apparatus and push it towards adopting more liberal reforms. That is why he shows his discontent to the rise of Islamic activism in many parts of the Arab world where states are no longer competent of restraining non-state actors, which in his opinion poses a risk for the future development of civil society that is being squeezed from both autocratic regimes and Islamic activists. Ibrahim's analysis echoes the view, which argues that the majority of Islamic activists and members of Islamic social organizations regard the concept of civil society as part of a Western conspiracy theory to reinforce "the West's political and economic supremacy over the people of Muslim countries (Abdelrahman, 2005, p. 186)". Namely, rather than sending their Christian missionaries or imperial military (as they did in the past), Western governments are now eager to spread NGOs with their 'glossy' concepts to

destabilize the social and economic foundations on which Muslim countries have always functioned, hoping eventually to smooth the way for Western hegemony.

Even though the above arguments received significant attention from many researchers interested in the formation and development of a civil society in an Islamic context, they are based on the assumption that there is only a single, unproblematic, and a normative version of civil society (Howell and Pearce, 2002:6), one that is already being promoted by aid and international development agencies. Adopting this view simply stigmatizes the cultural practices and traditions for many societies around the world, which could antagonize them eventually to undertake the defender position.

A more instructive approach to rise above the normative version of civil society is to acknowledge that there is more than one adaptation. According to Masoud Kamali (2001), in contemporary Muslim countries - including the Arab world – two different civil societies can be identified: “an indigenous civil society based on a core of quasi-traditional and quasi-modern influential groups”, and a second “modern civil society constructed on a core of westernized intellectuals and modern social groups (p. 478-9)”. This somewhat fresh depiction of the status quo allow us to break from previous rationalization and argue instead that civil society is not directly conditioned by the existence of ‘sovereign’ and ‘free’ individuals, “but by groups or communities and their institutions enjoying a significant degree of autonomy from the state. The autonomy of these civic society groups is based on social authority and legitimacy as well as socioeconomic institutions (*Ibid*: 459)”.

The above definition may shed a light on the role of political agents in civil society and explain why this concept; as both a theoretical and an empirical one; is still a hot topic in the Arab countries, when it has already received much scrutiny in almost all developing as well as

the developed corners of the world. Even before the recent events, which unexpectedly stormed Arab streets and transformed a situation that was cemented in place more than four decades ago, the concept and practical application of the term ‘civil society’ used up a lot of space in the lively discussions among academics, practitioners, and activists about the state and the relative importance of civil society in the Arab world. According to Cavatorta (2008) the seeming incongruity is a direct result of the incessant contestation between four different peculiar players in their attempt to claim civil society as their own territory. First, there are the opposition groups to ruling regimes who are trying to compensate for their political weaknesses through being more active in the civil society. Second, having gained considerable popularity as a result of their charitable activities and social programs, the diverse Islamic movements are increasingly dominating civil society in many parts of the Arabic communities. The third player is the international aid community with its patron, the Western governments, and the major international financial organizations who are trying to promote a bottom-up approach of democracy through the funding of civil society activism and an ‘empowerment’ curriculum. Finally, the ruling elites have found that going with the tide vis-à-vis civil society can be both a lucrative industry and a focal apparatus that can be flashed to keep internal and external accusations of lack of freedom and authoritarian governance at arm’s length.

It is utterly fundamental to appreciate the role of each of the above different players to have a comprehensive view about the current status of civil society; because ignoring any of them will produce a skewed image of the current status of civil society in the Arab world. For instance, an observer viewing civil society from a normative perspective where liberal individuals and associations strive to push the state to adopt more democratic measures, will end up thinking of civil society as an unfortunate hostage hijacked by the ruling elites and their

cronies given that many civil society organizations in the Arab world are either created by the state itself or are co-opted by it (Cavatorta, 2008). However, conceptualizing civil society in neutral terms and presenting Islamic movements with their charities and welfare work as the only viable definition of a dynamic civil society will also overlook the fact that many of these welfare organizations are functioning only because they have the full blessing of the state, not to mention that a large number of them are directly cooperating with existing governmental agencies as the next chapters will demonstrate.

The political insignificance of liberal and secular social movements in several parts of the developing world, renders the two views of civil society short of providing a capacious structure that may explain the importance of civil society and how it can be related to democracy or economic growth. For instance, since the beginning of the 1980s, the concept (and term) of ‘civil society’ has taken on a central role in the political and intellectual discussions of a wide variety of social groups throughout the Arab world (Hamzawy, 2002). Religious activists working with both social movements and political parties, secular local and international NGOs, semi-governmental organizations funded by the ruling elites or their families, and liberal-oriented human rights groups have all discovered ‘civil society’ “as a major instrument in the context of their efforts to democratically transform the political landscape (*ibid*: 10)”. Nevertheless, it was only the first group – i.e. Islamic activists – that managed successfully and efficiently to provide the Arab citizens with a robust alternative to the one advocated by the rest.

2.1.2 Islamic Activism as a Parallel Civil Society

The articulation of Islamism in the political and social sphere, alongside the state’s attempts at disciplining it, shapes key aspects of state–society relations and of the civil–uncivil debate in the Arab world (Volpi, 2011). The rise of Islamic activism in the domain of civil

society posed a puzzle for students of collective action. As Wickham (2004) notes, under the shadow of most Arab authoritarian states, Islamic groups such as the Muslim brotherhood were deemed illegal and subject to continual surveillance and perceptible harassment by security forces. Any ostensible suspicion that an individual is affiliated with an Islamic group, even if it was involved in the domain of social action, can cause real risks. Yet, despite such seemingly unpropitious conditions, Islamic groups managed to infiltrate important sectors of societies and attract substantial loyal followers.

Nowadays, many Islamic social organizations are not organized as charitable societies or endowments but still structure their programs to adhere to Islamic teachings and values. Such organizations may have been founded by religious people who saw an urgent need in their society for certain basic services. They may receive funding from religious organizations or foundations, attract volunteers looking for a spiritual enhancement, call for a religious awakening in their community, or seek partnership with the religious leadership in society. These are what practitioners and scholars have in recent years come to refer to as “faith-based organizations (FBOs)”. A FBO can be generally understood as an organization “where faith is embedded into the organizational structures producing a diversity of approaches to development practice (Bradley, 2009: 103)”. In many cases, faith acts as a common denominator that induces collaboration between a FBO and the community.

The purpose for creating an Islamic version of NGOs can be thought of as the means for at least three different ends: First, to show that an alternative approach “based upon Islamist interpretations of Islamic values, offers real solutions to socio-economic problems (Harmsen, 2008: 76)”. Second, by addressing socio-economic issues within an Islamic framework, Islamic activists hoped that the provision of goods and services will lead to an expanded “networks of

shared meaning” among Muslims so they can organize “their lives in accordance with Islamic percepts, rather than Western values and norms (Wiktorowicz and Farouki, 2000: 687)”. And finally, by relieving some of the socio-economic aggravations bedeviling the Muslim communities, Islamic social organizations send a strong message to these communities that their programs is a superior alternative to those of the government which are anyway considered to be an insufficient, low quality welfare services supplied by a corrupted army of bureaucrats. When all the above three ends are combined together; we end up with an inclusive reflection of civil society institutions where historically and religiously rooted values are being transmuted into visible set of organizations, programs, and initiatives brought together by a recognizable and organized framework (Harmsen, 2008). Adding to this wide popular base their independence from state and Western donor agencies, the ability to access scarce financial resources from locals, international Islamic NGOs, or governments of Islamic countries, and the capacity to recruit large numbers of qualified volunteers in a short period of time (Abdelrahman, 2005), one should not be surprised to know that Islamic social organizations are being perceived as the most active and successful of all NGOs operating in the Arab world.

Even though, Islamic social institutions are providing basic public goods, financial aid, and welfare services to millions of citizen in the Arab world, as well as other Islamic countries, there has been little research scrutinizing the structure and functioning of these institutions, the makeup of their network, and their political and social outcomes (Clark, 2004). The debates over Islamic fundamentalism and the role social organizations play in facilitating terrorist acts carried out by Islamic groups have underscored the critical need for a new perspective that more accurately reflects the complex realities in contention. Broadly accusing all Islamic social organizations to work for the benefits of insurgency groups (Flanigan 2006, Levitt 2006)

confounds the original role of these organizations in Islamic communities. This lack of clarity creates problems for studying, funding, and making policies regarding socio-economic service entities with a connection to Islam. Failure to recognize verities of Islamic FBOs can lead first to unreasoned treatments of these organizations by Islamic and Western states; and second it causes inconsistent funding decisions in the local private sector and international foundations and aid agencies. Without understanding these critical issues it is hard to imagine how one can advance the field of social movements and public policy, in particular the types of participants, how people participate, and the extensiveness of that participation.

This dissertation is an attempt to just achieve this. Specifically, by studying Islamic faith-based organizations in the Palestinian territories I aim to understand how these entities manage to use their unique position in the Palestinian civil society to influence public policy. Yet, in order to fully grasp the complex background within which they operate which in turn dictates the strategies they employ, I seek in this chapter to first chart and analyze the different views that looked at the tangled relation between Islamic movements, Arab governments and democracy. To address these claims I begin with a short summary about the heated discussions on modern notions of civil society among Islamic scholars and how this debate is enriching the field of civil society and advancing new avenues to discuss democracy. Drawing upon previous work on NGOs and foreign aid I argue that the rise of Islamic movements can be understood as an unintended consequence of the structural reforms advocated by international aid agencies and embraced by Arab governments. The allure of Islamic movements is next discussed followed by a brief description of Islamic social and faith-based organizations.

2.1.3 FBOs Vs. Secular NGOs

The development trajectory of FBOs is not that different from the path taken by other secular NGOs. For example, while the later were going through a swift process of specialization and re-specialization as a result of unprecedented amounts of funds which were being channeled for them to work in the health and education sectors, microfinance schemes, and small-scale infrastructure projects, FBOs were moving from traditional forms of charity (e.g. soup kitchens and temporary shelters) into other forms of social service provision including job training, permanent low-income housing, and small business loans (Chaves, 1999, Cnaan and Boddie, 2002; Ammerman, 2005). To accomplish the expanded goals and programs, many religious institutions (e.g. churches, mosques) started establishing separate non-profit entities apart from the worship places where the programs originated (Monsma, 2004). This restructuring of the Church/Mosque based nonprofit sector has created new opportunities for leaders in faith-based community development organizations similar to the expanding opportunities foreseen by civil society leaders when the ‘New Policy Agenda’ was dominating the discussion on foreign aid delivery.

One might imagine many different ways that an organization’s religiousness might plausibly influence its functioning. Mark Chaves lists at least three of many possibilities. First, a religious affiliation might affect organizational behavior and performance either positively or negatively even if the organization’s internal functioning is completely secular, perhaps by opening or closing certain funding streams or by appealing to different populations of potential employees, clients, or donors. A religious affiliation also might be consequential because it generates different performance expectations on the part of employees or clients. Any of these mechanisms might, in turn, produce differences in organizational performance and effectiveness.

A second possibility is that religious content is indeed manifested in a religious organization's internal practice or programming—staff use explicit religious language, clients are encouraged to pray or go to church, bible reading occurs as a matter of course, and so on—but the religious content has no other consequences on the daily functions of the organization or its clients. A third possibility is that religious nonprofit organizations are different from functionally similar secular nonprofits and that those differences are produced by the exhibition of religious content and purposes of these organizations (Chaves, 2002).

Despite the broad discussion of the utilization of faith-based organizations in providing social welfare services, only little research has been undertaken which has systematically investigated the distinctive attributes of faith-based organizations and their impact on clients, especially as it pertains to important goals of public policy such as effectiveness and efficiency (Sosin and Smith, 2006). These questions become even more important when one takes into consideration the underlying assumption shared by several influential actors within the non-profit sector that faith-based organizations, despite being embedded in similar social structures and forced to face similar external – and sometimes internal – pressures as secular NGOs, possess distinctive and unique characteristics that may prove to be beneficial and advantageous for socio-economic projects (Green and Sherman, 2002), which I aim to examine in this research.

Certainly, faith-based institutions have many unique resources that may serve to explain why faith-based efforts *appear* to be succeeding where other civil society actors, governmental, and private sector initiatives have fallen short. These unique resources can be summarized as follows (Castelli and McCarthy, 1997; Cnaan and Boddie, 2002; De Vita and Wilson, 2001; Gibelman and Gelman, 2003; Gilman, 2006):

- A focus on lasting or long-term solutions to personal welfare problems (e.g. poverty, drug addiction, and the lack of minimum levels of education): given the religious identity of FBOs they are more willing to make a long-term commitment to a service recipient, continuing to provide service until changes occur.
- A stress on the relational aspects of care with an accompanying focus on personal transformation: the effectiveness of FBOs could be owed to the fact they work closely to their constituents, and are especially sensitive to situations where a sense of hopelessness and cynicism has taken hold, much like how people feel when they are in crisis or a war-torn environment.
- FBOs are usually part of an extensive network of community resources and support systems that constitute a different donor base when compared with secular NGOs. This distinction allows FBOs to respond differently and comprehensively to community needs¹. The community connections of FBOs also allow them to offer reinforcement to the programs offered by the agency. Service is not simply perceived as a contact between an agency and a client but instead a community response to client needs with the agency at the center. In that sense, front-line workers in FBOs and volunteers are more likely to see the “whole person” and thus address people in the context of all of their human, spiritual, and social needs.

¹ The distinction in funding resources between secular NGOs and FBOs may prove crucial to the absolute outcomes of these organizations. Unlike secular NGOs, most FBOs (especially those active in Islamic societies) are not funded by Western aid agencies, they tend instead to rely more on local and regional individual donors. With less strings attached to their donations, individual donors give FBOs more discretion in what services to provide and how to provide them (Benthal, 2007).

- Given this existing infrastructure and network relationships between the FBO and the community one would expect that the former would have a large pool of volunteers to tap into whenever the need arises. This special characteristic might also explain why FBOs could have a better ability in customizing their services to different beneficiaries since the availability of somewhat ‘free’ human resources provide them with the capacity to do so.
- The leadership factor: Not only do FBOs enjoy community-centered service provision strategies but also most of their leadership and workforce come from within the same community in which they are mostly active. This extra dimension of locality and closeness between an FBO and its beneficiaries provide a more customized service to the client given that the latter’s needs and concerns will not be alien to those working in the FBO.
- The historical existence of FBOs relative to the new phenomenon of NGOs: in many parts of the world, FBOs were an important agent in service provision for at least two hundred years (and even more in some Islamic communities). This impressive historical record has given FBOs a crucial trustworthy component in many societies with important roles to engage in.

2.2 Civil Society from an Islamic Perspective

Recent years have seen an increased interest in Arab civil societies (Norton 1997; 2001, Kandil 1995, Hefner 2005) paralleling the growth in organizations such as human rights movements, women’s organizations and development NGOs in the region (Sparre and Petersen, 2007). Multiple studies have focused primarily on the importance and role of these civil society organizations in the promotion of democracy, interpreting their proliferation as a positive sign of

heightened democratic awareness (McFaul, 2004). Among the cohort of international aid agencies, this argument is reflected in the focus on strengthening precisely these new actors through development and democracy assistance programs in the Middle East. However, there are several problems with this approach (Sparre and Petersen, 2007). First, the relationship between civil society and democracy is not one of straightforward causality (Tessler 2006, Jawad 2009). Second, human rights movements, women's organizations and development NGOs are not the only relevant actors in Arab civil societies. In fact, they might not even be the most relevant ones. In recent years, other new actors, such as Muslim social organizations and movements, have come to play an increasingly visible role in discourses, symbols and social practices in Muslim societies, and it could be argued that they belong to the most vibrant parts of civil societies in the Muslim world today (Sparre and Peterson, 2007). Traditionally, social scientists and practitioners often tend to either disregard these actors on the basis of their anti-modernization discourses, or look only at their marginal role in supporting terrorist activities. Fortunately, during the last decade there has been a significant revival among Arabic and Western social scientists to acknowledge the increasing influence of Islam and Islamic social organizations in Middle Eastern societies.

Islamic religion has too often been viewed by many activists in civil society as the only source that can add meaning and purpose for human life. For example, the proliferation of FBOs rests on the assumption that their goal is to fill the widening gap between the needs of citizens and the resources available from government and the private sector. FBOs also play another key role in societies. If and when nonprofits become involved in the political process, they are representing a set of constituents that are among the most economically vulnerable and politically inefficacious groups in society (Berry, 2005). These groups do not usually have the

required skills or knowledge to understand their political options or the power to influence lawmakers directly. Scholars suggest that this representation function may be one of the most important, but least well understood, roles played by FBOs and the third sector in general.

Despite the rich historical, intellectual and religious heritage in the Arab world, Middle Eastern polities, like most developing polities, are perceived to have either a civility deficit or the ‘wrong’ kind of civility (Volpi, 2011). Coming to grips with the current status of civil society in the region, not to mention any attempts to further the concept, requires first serious efforts to acknowledge the multiple views contesting the application of civil society. Mainly, as a result of structural changes and political reforms in several parts of the Arab world many social movements found themselves in a unique position vis-à-vis the state that allows them to offer their constituents with an alternative view of civil society derived from cultural traditions and based on the community’s welfare rather than that of the individual. Although I am mainly interested in Islamic social movement in the Palestinian Authority, especially the social and voluntary organizations they established to aid the underprivileged, this process of civil society reinvention was and still going on in many parts of the world as distinct as Mexico, India, Cambodia, Turkey and Indonesia. In these regions, civil society is used in some form or another to legitimize certain agendas and express discontent and opposition, whether to the ruling caste of a given country, or to agents of international intervention in the form of NGOs and development agencies (Howell and Pearce, 2001: 33-36).

Due to their societal roots and the authenticity of their ideas, the Islamists have been able to provide efficient structures, social institutions and voluntary organizations in many Arabic countries that are performing economic, political, social, and cultural services for the populations (Izzat, 2001). This and other examples, compels us to appreciate the remark made by the Syrian

sociologist Burhan Ghalioun when he argued for a new definition of civil society that accounts for the historical particularities for the Arab-Islamic world (Ghalioun, cf. Hamzawy, 2002: 39). Particularly, given the established strong social base for Islamic social movements and their capability to carry the burdens of an authentic understanding of civil society both intellectually and politically, there has to be a new understanding of civil society that seriously incorporates the role of religious institutions in constructing a viable social consensus in the same way as the role of other secular institutions are being incorporated (e.g. trade unions, environmental movements, women movements).

Incorporating the role of Islamic activists into civil society may even serve as a first step to a larger idea: democracy. As Al-Sayyed noted in his analysis of the Arabic political arena “[If] Arab countries are to experience a genuine transition toward political democracy, autonomous Islamist political organizations must be integrated into their systems of government (Al-Sayyed, 2003: 6)”. In that case, rather than lamenting the increasing popularity of Islamists, Cavatorta (2006) argues that the existence of Islamic movements can be a potential force for democratic change. He attributes this conclusion to four variables. Most of all, the contemporary political discourse of most of the Islamic movements “is often couched in the language of democratic procedures” and the need to structure society on legitimate and accountable political institutions, which is in opposite of what the current authoritarian regimes are contending. Second, these movements are translating the above political rhetoric into action by assuring that their internal structures are reliant on “democratic procedures, with a considerable role played by ordinary members”. Third, through disseminating their polarizing ideology in the society, and in the process invigorating many social groups who do not agree with them, Islamic movements play an indirect ‘beneficial’ role in generalizing and energizing activism among otherwise

passive groups. Finally, compared to the existing regimes or other opposition groups, most of the Islamic associations “have a rather precise understanding of social pluralism, and are increasingly tolerant of groups and associations that do not necessarily share their societal outlook (p.205)”.

This discussion leads to a highlight of the fact that there are multiple ideological and social directions of Islamic movements. Sami Zubadia (2000) for example identified three “ideal types” that any given movement may exhibit in different combinations: (1) Conservative Islam (e.g. the Saudi model); which aims to impose Islamic values on all aspects of the social life through government and law. (2) Radical Islam (as exemplified by the Muslim brotherhood in Egypt): which seeks to transform society “by direct action” through the illumination of any secular ruler. (3) Political Islam: which adopts a more nationalist goal rather than the ‘large Muslim community’ model (*Ummah*) advocated by the previous two directions.

The level of power in controlling Arabic societies is not the only criteria that differentiate among the diverse Islamic establishments in the Arab world. There are scores of social and political issues to which Islamic movements with the same level of power – and even members within the same movement – have disagreed in how to deal with. Brown et al (2000) identified six broad subjects in the thinking and policies of Islamic movements that set them apart from each other. The stance from these subjects or ‘grey zones’ as the authors call them - the application of Islamic law (*shari’a*); violence as a legitimate tactic; the degree of civil and political rights; women’s rights; and the future of religious minorities - are still being developed in most of the movements, which may explain the ambiguity in the way Islamic activists talk about them. According to the authors, the ultimate position within any movement from each of the above issues will be shaped in reaction to several arguments taking place within the

movements, above all the internal deliberation among the different generations of activists. Older activists who entered politics during the socialist era between the 1950s-70s faced extreme brutal repression from their governments whom mainly were pushing for a nationalist project and rendered the Islamists as a real threat to that aim. As a result, members of this generation tend to view open political participation with a suspicious discernment. Younger generations on the other hand who became active during the age of structural reforms that took place between 1980s and 90s have witnessed a rather open political atmosphere, which not surprisingly induced them to undertake a direct and an open political opposition to the ruling regime as the recent events in the Arab world proved.

Another factor that has an important consequence on how the diverse Islamic movements will develop in the future is their political ambitions given that many of them are already partaking a political agenda in parallel to their social and religious ones (Zubaida 2000, Bayat, 2002). This multi-handed approach produces a complex institutional structure, which sometimes leads to the creation of conflicting messages on behalf of the movement. For example, the social arm of some of the Islamic movements provides their services to Muslim citizens only. Yet, it is common to hear political activists in the same movement arguing for an equitable treatment to all religious minorities. For that reason and in an attempt to avoid any conflicting agendas, the Muslim brotherhood in Jordan has created a purely separate political organization – The Islamic Action Front – from other social or religious activities (Brown et al, 2000). A final factor that is worth taking into consideration while imagining the future path for Islamic movements is the broader social and political contexts within which these movements are embedded. This factor places certain boundaries on the publicized discourse of the movements as the direction to which the social and political settings are headed will determine to

a large extent the expansion course pursued by Islamic movements (Munson, 2001).

Understandably, in contexts where the ruling regime is known for its oppressive aptitude against any opposition group, members of Islamic movements have to show a higher degree of flexibility in their agenda, strategies, and message. In contrast, with any political opening one would expect that they will seize the opportunity by offering their constituents a more comprehensive model to how society should look like in case they managed to have a full political control.

The wide nonconformity in these views indicates that civil society had a significant share of debate amongst Islamic scholars and theologians. Although it is almost impossible for one view to dominate the others given the diverse intricacies that govern different communities, what is more important is to understand how the mix between religious views and recent politics in the Middle East might affect the structure of future civil society. Islam's emphasis on the complementarity of religion and politics creates a number of possibilities for the relationship between the religious communities and state authorities; or more generally, between civil society and government (Kelsay, 2002). In the Islamic worldview, a vibrant society needs the state in order to allow for full participation in public life (Kazemi, 2002: 41). It is the state that dictates order, protect individuals, and ensure rights. This assumption, then, assumes that the existence of an effective functioning civil society requires the existence of the state (*Ibid*).

There are several classical Islamic concepts that have traditionally acted as a medium between state and society. As Farhad Kazemi (2002) explains, '*shura*' or the need for the ruler to consult with the elders of the community is considered one of the building blocks for a maintainable community. Adherence to the consensus within the community on relevant issues; or '*ijma*'; is another concept that is widely respected and applied in many communities. During

the 1950s and 60s, however, states in the postcolonial Middle East reached the “high-water mark of the mass-mobilizing state ... with its all-pervasive bureaucracy, mass production factory system and official culture (Sivan, 1990: 353)”. This process brought significant changes to the age-old boundaries between state and civil society. Rulers of the young Arab states felt that civil society activists do not support the nationalist agenda they were trying to push. On the contrary, the later were deemed ‘imperialist’ and ‘collaborationist’ with the enemies of the state and thus they should be quenched. Religious institutions did not escape the interventionist state as well: *shari'a* courts were either abolished and merged with the civil courts system or put under its aegis and control as a mere first instance (with appeals going to the former), ‘*waqf*’ endowments were tightly supervised, *ulama* training integrated into the state educational system and the *ulama* on their rostrums used as propagandists for the regime (Sivan, 1990).

By the early 1980s, it was obvious that Arab states failed miserably in their duties towards their citizens (Jawad, 2009). The provision of basic social services was particularly in a dreadful condition for several factors such as: (1) the misallocation of resources and the prioritization of military spending over key social sectors such as health and education; (2) the narrow economic focus of public policy, which hinges social progress on economic prosperity; (3) the dominance of minority factions in Middle Eastern countries dating back to the colonial era; (4) political insecurity and military conflict, with the protraction of the Arab–Israeli conflict; (5) high levels of state indebtedness, which have taken away funds from social welfare services; and (6) the introduction of structural adjustment programs and the increasing privatization programs, which have reduced the role of the state further as provider of social services and public sector jobs.

The states' failure to live up to the dreams they promised their citizens combined with the deteriorating economic measures, rampant corruption, authoritarian rule, and failed societies weakened the allure of the nationalist agenda and provided civil society activists with an opportunity to push backwards the newly established borders between state and civil society. The newly acquired energy by civil society activists was not generated totally from within local communities. The proliferation of international NGOs and aid agencies with their billions of dollars of foreign aid to the region pressured state apparatuses to relent some of their power to the 'third sector'.

2.3 Foreign Aid, Modernization and Islamic Social Activism

While the end of the Cold War witnessed a triumph for those voices calling for a broader and wider role for aid transfers, it also witnessed large areas around the globe effectively uncoupling themselves from the Western and liberal forms of regulation (Duffield, 2002) and opting instead for a localized forms of regulation derived from their ideology, history, or culture within which they managed to transform and refashion the opportunities of illiberal globalization "into new forms of autonomy, protection, and social regulation (*Ibid*: 312)". Despite the varied contexts of imperatives and the multi-conceptions of initiatives, Islamic social movements managed successfully to mobilize support and attract millions of followers and sympathizers around the world by supporting their ideology with a significant network of social and welfare services. The Islamic social movements, which are considered a considerable phenomenon in the post-colonial Arab world, can be considered a stark example for the process of how certain activists directed the outcomes of the modernization policies into what can be called 'a pluralization of modernity' (Beck, 1999). Instead of adopting a Western ideological framework as the proponents of modernization theory have predicted, the Islamists leadership in the Arab

world took advantage of their secular education and the reform agenda advocated by aid agencies and multinational financial organizations to develop an ideological framework that can address concerns of social justice, political, and the distribution of resources without adopting a secular tone (Robinson, 2004:119). And since opposition was not allowed to take place in the public sphere, Islamic movements became innovative in utilizing the private and semi-private realms (*ibid*: 126).

Islamic social movements, such as the Muslim Brotherhood movement which started in Egypt in 1928, are gaining an apparent success in many parts of the Arab world because of the way in which its Islamic message was tied to its organizational structure, activities, strategies, and the everyday lives of citizens (Munson, 2001). Most of these movements, including the Muslim Brotherhood, were established as an apolitical religious reform and mutual aid societies. Their aim was to recruit members, provide a platform for private discussions of religion and moral reform, and build a social service organization (*ibid*). Even though, existing theories of Islamic social action have highlighted the role of religion in everyday activities, one should not ignore the fact that economic hardship and social injustices are what triggered most of them in the first place. The Islamic movements are widely supported, not because they express an Islamic spirit or advocate strategic framing, but because they are straightforwardly able “to reflect and refract the dialogic religious field produced by the interactions between the residents, the state, and Islamism, in comparison to the secularizing and ritualizing interventions by the state, which are widely resisted (Tugal, 2006)”.

2.3.1 The Rise of Islamic Social Movements

It is unpretentious to fall for the ‘culturist’ claim concerning the popular support of religious movements, in particular the Islamic one, on assumptions about the persistence of

traditional religions (Huntington, 1996), the distinctiveness of religious traditions (Lewis, 1996), the anti-cosmopolitan trends prevalent among the poor (Hefner 2001), the instinctiveness of popular religiosity (Nasr, 1998), or even the tactics used by Islamic activists in mobilizing the people (Wiktorowicz 2004). Likewise, others view the current Islamic movements in the region as a model of urban social movements (Bayat, 2000). According to this view, social Islam articulates the concerns and struggles of underprivileged urban Arabs. Finally, others accept a pure socioeconomic explanation to the current proliferation of Islamic movements (Keddie 1998; Zubaida 2000). While, the last two arguments have noteworthy empirical evidence to support them, they still underestimate the role of belief and ritual in these movements (Tugal, 2006). For example, the success of the Muslim Brotherhood cannot be attributed to a single message effectively framed to attract the public opinion. Instead, it managed to mobilize a wide variety of different segments of the Egyptian society by easing “the divide between membership and non-membership, the requirements of the organization, and the regular lives of its members (Munson, 2001)”.

Characterizations of Islamism have typically been based upon emotions, economic desperation or cultural anger (Gole 1997, Berman 2003). To overcome this bias Michael Robbins (2009) identified five explanations for the swift rise of Islamic movements throughout the Arab world. In accordance with classical reasoning, Robbins first argued that support for Islamist movements stems from the fact that Islam and politics are inherently intertwined in Muslim society more strongly than in other religious traditions. Traditional adherents to this explanation include the influential writings of Gellner (1983) and Lewis (2003). Despite a growing mass of profiles demonstrating Islamists as non-traditional, involved in the most modern sectors, upwardly mobile, and actively re-interpreting Islamic doctrine, the dominant approaches remain

focused on economic deprivation and interpretation of religious texts (Kuran, 2004). This school of thought implies that Muslim communities do not state boundaries between religion and politics, since the former dictates the later. Even though this explanation gained significant momentum during the last two decades and many political commentators in the West used its premises to explain recent events in the Middle East, the experiences of Turkey, Malaysia and Indonesia with their substantial Islamic populations offer a stark rebuke to this approach of thinking. Attributing the rise of Islamic movements only to the theological development in Islam underestimates the complex network of relations that govern the workings of Islamic societies.

The second explanation in Robbins reasoning is attributed to the strong network of social services provided by Islamist social activists. As will be discussed in further details throughout the next chapters, Islamic social organizations have successfully managed to construct an efficient web of service providers that reach almost all communities in the Arab world (Tugal, 2006). Their success of doing so is not only evident within poor populations, but also middle class and professional groups are increasingly relying on these services as well (Clark, 2004). These activities played an important role in motivating new individuals to join the rising movements. For example, Muslim Brotherhood service provision initiatives brought millions of Egyptians to the realm of the organization and its ideology. They helped overcome potential “free-rider problems within the organization, as resources such as schools and clinics served as selective incentives for Muslim Brotherhood members and potential recruits (Munson, 2001: 491)”. Perhaps most importantly, as Ziad Munson explains, the Brotherhood early founders and leaders created an institutional infrastructure in which the Society could efficiently prove its ability, unlike the state enterprises, to deliver on promises of social and economic change to the

Egyptian population. This extraordinary feat gave material legitimacy to the Society's message that "Islam is the true path to development (*Ibid*, 2001: 492)".

A third school thought of the rise of Islamic movements as a positive token towards their ability to challenge the existing authoritarian regimes. Supporters to this explanation highlight the increasing levels of resentment throughout the Arab world (Al-Suwaidi, 1995), and how the dearth and weakness of opposition groups in the region leaves Islamic activists with the challenging task to face and change Arab regimes. Religious movements have distinct advantages in authoritarian contexts. Islam provides a frame for solidarity, particularly when other organizing is forbidden. Under a regime that circumscribes political participation and represses opposition, the legitimate frames and mobilizing resources created by a state's assumption of religious function are even more relevant (Beck, 2008). It is no surprise, then, that the most closed and repressive Middle Eastern states seem to have primarily Islamic oppositions. According to this view, the mosque was the primary venue in which explicit recruitment to the movement took place (Munson, 2001). Other than sporting events, mosques were the only forum in which the government would permit large congregations of people. Mosques were also relatively safe from police raids or even obvious government intervention in the conduct of the services (*Ibid*). While this argument seemed to hold some truth especially after Hamas's unexpected victory in the Palestinian legislative elections in 2006, the current—and also unexpected—events in the region had diminished some of the allure of the previous argument. What especially happened in Tunisia and Egypt showed that Islamic activists cannot be relied upon to stand against the state, even when there is an opportunity to do so.

A fourth explanation placed a greater emphasis on socioeconomic factors in accounting for support for Islamic movements and political Islam. Ayubi (1991), for example, argues that

support for Islamic movements stems mainly from urban, educated and fairly young individuals who lack any venue to participate in political discussions and seek the shelter of Islamic social and political organizations to engage in such participation. Although it has links to diverse classes, this view posits that Islamism in the Middle East is primarily the movement of not the disenfranchised but the marginalized middle classes (Bayat, 2000). In turn, middle-class agitators tend to activate youth and educated unemployed people, as well as the socially well-to-do and politically marginalized groups; it is these groups that are considered the main agents of social change. In short, religion is seen as a practical and legitimate answer to social problems. According to this view, Islamic political organizations are more likely to thrive in an environment where a regime has already promoted religion as part of the government's response to social and political issues. Thus, the potential population of movement supporters and the resonance of religious claims are greater in societies that have a large public role for Islam (Beck, 2008).

The final and fifth explanation has to do with anti-Western sentiment to explain support for Islamic movements (Robbins, 2009). With many Muslims aware of their inferior economic and political status among other states, they yearn for a power that can lift them from this misery and reaffirm the historical might of the Muslim empire. The argument is that the strains of modernization, and especially Westernization, led to problems that some believed could be solved by turning to Islamic ideals rather than to normal, institutional means (Munson, 2001). Supporters of this claim, such as François Burgat and William Dowell, argue that political Islam seeks "cultural differentiation from the West and reconnection with the pre-colonial symbolic universe (Burgat and Dowell, 1993)". Groups such as the Muslim Brotherhood are seen as offering a reaffirmation of traditional beliefs and an outlet for the frustrations of anomic social

conditions brought on by rapid population expansion, urbanization, and industrialization (Munson, 2001). Yet, if theories of strain are applicable to the study of Islamic movements; such as the Muslim Brotherhood; we would expect the period of the organization's highest popularity to correspond with the period of most rapid urbanization in its country of origin—Egypt—as this is when the strains and social dislocations would be most acutely felt. But as Munson (2001) discovered, the opposite was the case. The 1927–1947 period, in which the Muslim Brotherhood emerged and saw its greatest popularity, has a lower rate of urbanization than either of the twenty-year periods that precede and follow it.

If there is any lesson from discussing the diverse explanations it would be that focusing on religion or religiosity to identify Islamists is misguided (Harik, 1996). Religiosity and political Islam are not directly correlated; Islamists and their supporters are not more religious than non-Islamists. As shown above, support for Islamist movements diverges sharply among different social classes. Similarly, a swift comparison to the goals purported by Islamic groups will demonstrate as well the stark differences between them. In fact, culture and economics are only indirectly related to Islamist mobilizing for violent and moderate groups alike (Harik, 1996). Besides, resistance to Western forms of living does not create a movement, not to mention a fervent one. At most nostalgia to a pure Islamic and prosperous way of life is but one element that activists can exploit to bring in new members. Likewise, religion plays a key role in Islamist movements, but not due to doctrinal specifics or theological elucidations. Islam in practice has been shown to be malleable, adopting aspects of nationalism and leftist or Leninist mobilization often deemed antithetical to the religious doctrine itself (Harik, 2006).

One explanation the previous interpretations failed to take into consideration to understand the rise of Islamic movements has to do with the recent geostrategic choices of Arab

leaders. Particularly, many post-colonialist Arab regimes sought to legitimize their rule by gaining support from American and European governments, which in turn de-legitimizes their authority amongst their own populations, since the majority of Arabs deem Western governments a close ally and a protector of the Israeli state. Islamic movements on the other hand, are seen as a real representative of the people given that they seek their legitimacy from local constituents. This view is even amplified by the actions of certain Islamic movements to utilize what Snow and Marshal (1984) call “cultural imperialism” in organizing social movement activity. Obviously, the success of this frame alignment process owes much to the fact that Islam has a significant public role in the lives of most Arabs. As a result, religion is seen as a practical and legitimate answer to social problems. When a regime tightens its grip on political participation or represses opposition, the only left legitimate frame to mobilize resources and participate in collective activities is through the religious identity (Beck, 2008). This fact when combined with the productive, constructive, and noble behaviors (e.g. acts of piety, charity and self-sacrifice) produces efficient providers of valuable public goods (Berman and Laitin, 2008) that are either poorly provided by government or absent most of the times.

The apparent successes of the Islamic movements in the realm of civil society have prompted some observers to argue that beneath this success there is an unrevealed tendency to reshape civil society. In discussing the rise of Islamists in Egypt, Sheri Berman (2003) argued that not only has the Islamist movement used its network of civil society organizations to put together what is essentially a counter-society that spreads the movement’s ideas, create support networks, and demonstrate that Islamic values and traditions can be implemented in the modern world, but it has also reshaped everyday life. To Berman, Islamic social activism is not only about the provision of welfare services or the call for more democratic governance; it is also

about religious observance, the building of mosques and ‘Quranic’ schools, the marketing of religious programming on state radio and television, introducing the ‘sharia’ as the regulating principle for the community, and the closing of bars and night clubs. Berman’s premise, however, lacks any understanding of the heterogeneity of interests and discourses within the Islamist movement, regardless of the commonality of the references (e.g. Islamic principles, sources) that they apply (Duran and Yildirim, 2005). Activism can take different forms depending on the social, economic and political variables in the given arena. Particular historical developments and the post-colonial involvement of international powers can as well shape state-society interactions and the chosen discourse of Islamic activists.

Ironically, though, part of the foundation for the resurgence of piety and public religious activity that Berman reported had been laid back in the 1950s and early 1960s not by Islamic social activists, but by the secular nationalist leaders who came to power after the end of the colonial rule (Hefner, 2005: 18). As discussed earlier, the failure of the nationalist leaders to reach their citizens’ popular expectations, populations were left with a shallow vision of a state and a dearth of hope. It was through the resurgence of Islamic activism that “a great reservoir of social capital, comprised of networks and solidarities dedicated above all else to public piety and expressions of Islamic identity (Hefner, 2005: 20)” in which Arab populations found their solace. Generally speaking, the process of human and economic development is never a politically neutral, technologically procedure, but a process of social and economic change. It is influenced by the economic realities of an international capitalist market, and by trends and fashions among economists and international development agencies. The work of religious organizations is shaped and mediated by such forces, in addition to their own spiritual and philosophical traditions (Occhipinti, 2005: xv).

2.3.2 The State is fighting back

Not surprisingly, Arab governments did not simply concede all their control to civil society activists and organizations. Even though, it may seem as if Islamic social organizations or FBOs were helping the state in its attempt to cover the needs of its population, governments in both the Arab world and in many countries--where there is a Muslim majority (e.g. Turkey, Malaysia, Indonesia)--were wary of FBOs which appeared to enjoy a substantial grassroots goodwill among their communities (Bayat 2003). The state was concerned that this social acceptance and satisfaction could be translated into political power harnessed by Islamic political parties.

Apart from their internal problems (paternalism and administrative inadequacy), government surveillance poses a real obstacle to the autonomous and healthy operation of civil society. In general, states in the region express a contradictory position toward civil society organizations. They lend them support on the condition that they reduce some of the states' burdens of social service provisioning and poverty alleviation. Indeed, the late 1990s witnessed growing recognition by the states of the voluntary sector's contributions to social development. This recognition is manifested in new and more favorable NGO laws and in public expression of support for NGOs (as in Egypt, Iran and Jordan). Yet, the governments also fear losing political space, especially when NGOs turn oppositional. The professional associations (in Egypt, Iran, Jordan and Palestine) are often drawn into politics, compensating for the absence of inadequacy of political parties. Consequently, the governments, while permitting associational life, impose strict legal control by screening initiators, monitoring fundraising, and unilaterally outlawing non-conformist NGOs. In a sense, then, a state's economic weakness encourages voluntarism, while its political weakness discourages it (Bayat, 2000). Arab regimes managed to utilize

several strategies designed to foster the growth of NGOs without promoting independent centers of power capable of influencing public policy or the political sphere. Most of these instruments are embedded in legal codes and bureaucratic regulations (Wiktorowicz, 2001).

This fear to concede power to civil society groups is not totally the result of a conspiratorial imagination. While Islamic social organizations are prevented from mobilizing communities to agitate for an Islamic state, they are producing a religious discourse that encourages people to change their values, behavior, and views toward governance (Wiktorowicz and Taji-Farouki, 2000). Welfare activities, after all, are entwined in complex webs of political interests and maneuverings. In the words of Naguib and Okkenhaug (2008) “[Welfare] increases the quantity of miscellaneous interests, relations and regulatory frameworks that are registered as each welfare activity makes its way from benefactor to beneficiary. As such, the possibilities for welfare and relive interest to be caught up in the complexities of official politics and come into conflict also grow (Naguib and Okkenhaug, 2008: 2-3)”. It is worthwhile to note as well that support for Islamism in the Arab world do not diminish the major support for democracy in the region. In many parts of the Arab world, in fact, citizens express simultaneous support for democracy and Islamism (Jamal, 2006). As multiple field studies reported, the discourse on the compatibility of Islam and democracy is quite vibrant and nuanced (*Ibid*).

Overall, the logic of civil society operations certainly contributes in promoting participatory democracy, generally in terms of their relation with the State and society, albeit in mostly indirect ways. Whether they might become promising political institutions for democratization would depend on the quality of participation they impart, and the level of democracy they practice among themselves (Ghosh, 2009), which in turn may not produce a rosy future. For instance, in her study about Egypt, Maha Abdelrahman (2004) concluded that civil

society “constitutes a politically contested terrain characterized by authoritarian and repressive tendencies ... [and] its organizations, such as NGOs, are often actively engaged in reproducing unequal relations and unjust status quo rather than providing alternatives to existing systems of power (1)”.

Aside from any critiques, the experience of Islamic social movements in transferring their substantial social services into political achievements did not only prevail in the Arab or Muslim world. For instance, Nicole Marwell (2004) documented how public supportive services in the U.S, which are distributed via competitive state and local level allocative processes that send government contracts to specific non-profit community based organizations (CBOs), can generate political influence to these CBOs on top of their more traditional roles of providing services, generating what she calls: the machine politics CBO. According to her model:

“By reciprocally distributing services to residents and binding them to the organization, machine politics CBO create reliable voting constituencies for local elected officials. The officials in turn steer government human service contracts to favored CBOs. This is where the triadic exchange among CBOs, client/voter, and elected officials is realized, producing what is in essence a new version of machine politics.”

Keeping this process in mind, it is interesting to notice the similarities between American CBOs and other organizations in different geographical areas. For example, when examining Islamic social institutions, Zubaida (1992) argues that the criteria for enjoying the opportunities and benefits in Islamic social welfare institutions are “adherence to Islam, but also networks of patronage and clientship, communal membership and loyalty, and possibly political allegiance (p. 9)”. In that sense, studying Islamic social movements and the operations of their social organizations will not only advance our understanding of their workings, structure, and network, it will as well serve in extending the social movement field to include other forms of collective civic action that are already established in Western and Eastern societies, but did not receive

their share of scrutiny and analysis. As Janine Clark remarked, scholars of Islamist movements tend to focus on the political significance of these movements, and specifically their political parties, making reference at best to the recruitment function of the charities (Clark 2004a, 2004b; Wickham 2002; Wiktorowicz 2001; Wiktorowicz and Farouki-Taji 2000; Sullivan 1994). Yet, charities affiliated with Islamist movements or those that receive funding from Islamic aid organizations are “integral to the movements within which they are situated and their presence and activities have implications for the movement’s relations to the population at large, the internal politics of the movement, and the movement’s relationship with the regime and state (Clark, 2008: 163)”. The socio-political nature of FBOs, furthermore, has numerous implications for development.

With regards to the Arab world, the nature of the interaction between Islam and the state, and not just the struggle between them, shapes civil/uncivil outcomes in secular parts of the Muslim world. Accordingly, as Turam (2004) suggest, the exploration of civil society in the Muslim context has to shift its exclusive focus from opposition and confrontation to the less visible sites of engagement between Islam and the state. The context of Islamic faith-based organizations (FBOs) and their interactions with the state is an important, but overlooked, site to start with.

2.4 Islamic Philanthropy in the Arab World

Charitable giving (*sadaqa*) has existed since the birth of Islam, just like the obligatory alms tax – *zakat*- and the religious endowment, the *waqf*. The combined influence of these three sources helped in creating a network of social welfare institutions that covered most parts of Muslim societies including the PT. *Waqf* remains a substantial source of charity, so much so that most Muslim majority states now include a Ministry of *Awqaf* (plural of *waqf*) to oversee the

management of *waqf* donations (Abuarqub and Phillips, 2009). Similarly following renewed interest in *zakat* in the twentieth century, a number of Muslim governments including those of Jordan, Libya, Malaysia, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Sudan and Yemen have reclaimed responsibility for collecting *zakat* and the practice has once again become a regulated system of collecting money from the wealthy and distributing it to the poor. However, unlike in early Islam, the practice is not obligatory and *zakat* does not constitute a public tax. Governments rather facilitate the collection and distribution of *zakat* funds from individuals wishing to pay them.

A review of the literature on Islamic philanthropy and FBOs in Arab countries show that the topic has been of interest to social scientists but has rarely attracted in-depth scholarship. There exists a broad range of Muslim organizations in Islamic and Middle Eastern civil societies today that tend to escape our attention. These organizations comprise a puzzling variety of charity associations, development NGOs, youth clubs, health clinics and schools, which are primarily engaged in social and cultural activities. These Muslim civil society organizations represent a much broader and possibly more important dimension of public religious engagement in Middle Eastern societies than their (in)famous political counterparts. Historically and before the establishment of any professional independent Islamic NGOs, it was the mosque and the religious leaders who were responsible for providing some of the needed social services for their communities.

Mosques have come to perform multilayer functions at the same time, acting as a springboard, bringing people together to discuss community problems, find solutions, foster civic skills, formulate human and social capital, collect funds, and provide social network programs. They mediate between traditional Islamic values and modern norms, “show[ing] that Islamic

values can be fully implemented in the contemporary world (Sivan, 1998: 1). However, the ongoing complication of human needs coupled with a significant increase in population in the Middle East limited the historically dominant ability of mosques to satisfy the social requirements of their constituents. To this end, there was a need for professional, organized, and funded entities that could provide the expertise lacked by religious leaders. Islamic social organizations were increasingly seen as one of the options - in addition to public agencies, secular NGOs, and for-profit organizations – that could function as pulpits for the provision of socio-economic services. Many Islamic social organizations started providing emergency and developmental assistance to individuals and families. Some of these social services represent short term immediate assistance. Examples of these include emergency food, financial, and clothing assistance. Other social services represent more long term developmental assistance. Examples of this form of social service include child care, individual and family counseling, employment assistance and training, youth mentoring, and after school programs (Wiktorowicz, 2001).

There are no reliable figures for the magnitude of philanthropic giving in Muslim communities, but it is estimated to total between \$250 billion and \$1 trillion annually (Alterman et al, 2005: 1). Although, these figures do seem to be overstated since they have probably been calculated on the basis of a theoretical average annual donation multiplied by the number of Muslims in the world (De Cordier, 2009), still it gives an indication about the significance of aid coming from Muslim countries and individual philanthropists. A more conservative estimate leaves the Islamic philanthropic sector at \$3 billion annually representing as much as one-fifth of the world's humanitarian NGOs (Looney, 2006; quoted in Alterman and von Hippe, 2007: viii). What is more interesting though than the absolute number is the proliferation of ways in which

private giving is taking on new institutional forms (Ibrahim and Sherif, 2008: 2). Like the development and institutionalization of Western foreign aid, Islamic traditions of philanthropy witnessed dramatic transformations during the last 30 years. Modern accounts of Islamic philanthropy created a more diversified and complex institutions that resemble large secular aid agencies rather than their narrow-focused predecessors. Several factors have contributed to the emergence, development, and proliferation of today's Islamic FBOs: (1) the founding of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, (2) the cash-rich pan-Islamic movements of the Gulf countries, (3) the increase of Muslim diaspora in Europe and North America, (4) the rise of Ngo in general, and (5) the Islamic resurgence, going back to the time of the Arab defeat in 1967.

In a nutshell, while contemporary philanthropy remains strongly grounded in religious frameworks, in some cases it is becoming “more strategic in its aims, utilizing resources effectively to address the underlying causes of social problems, and ultimately to resolve them (Ibrahim, 2008: 2)”. This interplay between more traditional forms of giving and ‘new philanthropy’ in the Arab region is creating a dynamic and rapidly changing field.

2.5 Islamic FBOs and the Future Civil Society

The arguments presented above have significant implications for how the role of FBOs can be perceived in Muslim societies in general and the PT in particular. There are at least four areas, which this new perception can directly influence: (1) funding for religious organizations; (2) the role of FBOs in public policy; (3) the prospect of political Islam; and (4) the shape of future civil society.

2.5.1 Funding for Religious Organizations

The increasing distrust between Muslim communities and the West since 9/11 and the ensuing ‘War on Terror’ have made it increasingly difficult for Western and Islamic donor agencies to operate effectively in many areas. Aid coming from Western agencies is opposed by many Muslim activists based on old suspicions that aid is a thinly veiled cover for neo-colonial economic penetration or for efforts to encourage Christian proselytization in Muslim lands (Bruinessen, 2007). Even at times of acute need or natural disasters, these anxieties have stood in the way of effective help. Christian charities sending relief to Aceh after the December 2004 Tsunami found that the best way to overcome the suspicions and deliver aid to the targeted population was by partnering with Indonesian Muslim associations to channel the assigned funds (*ibid*).

The problems faced by Islamic charities and international foundations are of a different nature. Historically organized to collect zakat and ‘sadaqa’ from affluent and able Muslims and channel them to the less privileged in the same community, many of today’s charities and foundations have managed to build enterprises with activities that span more than a dozen countries. Long were the days that zakat is spent in the same neighborhood in which it is collected. With advancements in financial services, supply chain logistics, and communication technologies, Islamic charities are able to collect the zakat from one country and channel it to different regions around the world. These international transactions proved to resemble a double-edge sword. On one hand, it allowed Islamic philanthropy to reach several devastated regions that escaped the attention of mainstream international aid agencies such as Somalia and Chechnya. Yet, it gave Islamic charities a bad image when several of them were accused of employing their activities to proselytize beneficiaries in Bosnia during the Balkan conflict in the

early 1990s, or when a handful of them were accused of funding terrorists a decade later. This unfortunate emblem led to many frozen bank accounts and blocked financial transfers, causing much genuine charitable work to suffer.

Wider acceptance of the varieties of Islamic FBOs and a better understanding of their role in civil society might lead to more nuanced treatment and funding decisions. Governments and security departments may better sort out which if any religious organization is directly involved with illegal activities or shabby financing. Similarly, international mainstream aid agencies may discern what type of faith-based organizations are compatible with their style, vision, and approach rather than assume that interaction with all religious organizations pose the same risks.

2.5.2 The role of FBOs in Public Policy

Without doubt, the least understood or even discussed topic surrounding the widespread engagement of Islamic FBOs in the provision of public good and services is how their role may affect public policy implementation within the states they are active in, and what long-term unanticipated consequences might exist for the policy process itself. This lack of attention could be attributed to the usual short-term outlook politicians are known for, and to the complex indirect causal pathways linking the activities of FBOs to policy outcomes.

Although the traditional role of FBOs was mainly concentrated in providing emergency relief, straightforward food parcels during the holy month of ‘Ramadan’, and religious education, many now have morphed into multi-million enterprises with complex initiatives and programs that include infrastructure development and the building of large hospitals (Jensen 2011, De Cordier 2009). Recent studies have examined the current status of FBOs in Arab societies and how services funded by them led to the establishment of a loyal and an educated network of

supporters and volunteers that trumpeted the foundations of political Islam, but little is known about more focused political advocacy programs of FBOs (Clark 2004). In particular, details about how the production and distribution of particular goods by FBOs can restructure, and even alter, policy choices by government, or the strategies that FBOs utilize to influence public policy did not receive much attention. It could be argued that modern sophisticated FBOs in Arab societies are a recent phenomenon and they did not develop yet the skills or resources needed to influence public policy. But, as I argue in this dissertation, the provision of public services and the decisions regarding which services to provide and who should receive them are public acts in themselves. Even if Palestinian FBOs do not deliberately recognize their influence on public policy, their role is widely seen as such by many spectators in the region. It is hard not to argue, as Cnaan and Boddie (2006) did, that in almost all public issues, ideology and beliefs drive a large share of rhetoric, and “without conviction and an army of believers, no policy or societal change would be legislated and accepted (p.10)”. After all, we cannot just attribute the activities of FBOs to a mere evangelical motive and ignore their influence on policy process. Instead, there need to be somewhat a clear answer to the question Hula et al succinctly put forward: “What does it mean if faith-based service provision is an inherently political act as opposed to a theological or evangelical act? (2007: 70)”.

2.5.3 The Prospect of Political Islam

Focusing on the political aspects of Islamic faith-based social service provision raises interesting questions about the future of political Islam and the general position of religion in the region. Over the past forty years there have been dramatic transformations in the way policy processes in the Middle East operate. The changes have been slow, and have occurred on a number of different sectors. One particularly crucial structural change is the tendency for religion

to cast a shade over a broad array of social, economic and political debates in the region As it is evident from recent events in Egypt, Islamic social institutions appear increasingly willing to move beyond their social forms of action to straightforwardly cooperate with Islamic political parties to influence the voting behavior of their beneficiaries (The Sydney Morning Herald, November 7th, 2011²). This incident reinforces the debate over whether Islamic social organizations are simply tools unitized by Islamic political parties to advance their agenda. The popularity of Islamic parties among Muslim voters in the Arab world, Turkey, Indonesia, and Malaysia and the unprecedented success that some of these parties achieved in local elections have reinforced this perception. As Janine Clark remarked, scholars of Islamist movements tend to focus on the political significance of these movements, and specifically their political parties, making reference at best to the recruitment function of the charities (Clark 2004a, 2004b, Wickham 2002; Wiktorowicz 2001; Wiktorowicz and Farouki-Taji 2000; Kandil 1995; Sullivan 1994). Yet, charities affiliated with Islamist movements or those that receive funding from Islamic aid organizations are “integral to the movements within which they are situated and their presence and activities have implications for the movement’s relations to the population at large, the internal politics of the movement, and the movement’s relationship with the regime and state (Clark, 2008: 163)”.

However, Islamic social organizations also appear increasingly willing to move beyond electoral and protest forms of political participation to include direct cooperation with local governments in the provision of services and the development of communities (Roy 2011, Bano 2011, Petersen 2009). As will be discussed in the next chapters, Islamic FBOs in the PT, for example, are aware that any direct political connection with Hamas may lead to their

² <http://www.smh.com.au/world/brotherhood-lures-voters-with-charity-20111106-1n1xc.html>

termination. Instead of pushing the agenda of one political party over the other, many FBOs prefer to adopt an apolitical position and work with any kind of government in control.

2.5.4 The Shape of Future Civil Society

Over the last decade, scholars have had great difficulty in agreeing on the relationship between Islamic movements and civil society. There is not a clear consensus as to whether contemporary Islamic movements undermine civil society or enhance it (Turam, 2004). On one hand, Islam-and any activists associated with it-are accused of diminishing the dominion of civil society by pushing political Islam to be the dominant version of politics in their communities. Adherents to this argument cite the irrevocable relation between Islamic societies and democracy (Huntington 1996, Gellner 1983), or that FBOs' call for more open and democratic societies is just a façade for a more sinister outcome in which Islamic parties have full monopoly over government through a one man, one vote, one time arrangement (Blaydes and Lo, 2012). On the other hand, Islamic movements have demonstrated their ability to amplify the voices of the poor and the marginal. They basically proved to be a power capable of forcing authoritarian states in the Arab region to lessen their repressive tactics and offer more opportunities to their population (Hefner, 2001).

In principle, Islamic FBOs are in a unique position to influence civil society. They exist in almost all communities and provide public goods and services to the middle classes (Bayat 2003, Clark 2004) as well as slum dwellers (De Cordier, 2009). They adopt values that locals can associate with (Jawad and Yakut-Cakar 2010, Jawad 2009), and pitch their message in a language that is culturally acceptable and socially desirable (Sparre and Petersen, 2007). Historically, Islamic social institutions and soup kitchens were the only service providers in communities rampaged by poverty and malnutrition (Benthall and Bellion-Jourdan, 2003). Such

exceptional position has also withstood the test of time with the spread of several multinational Islamic FBOs that provide their services to millions of Muslims—and non-Muslims—around the world. In short, they offer a compelling combination of organizational and spiritual resources to occupy an influential position in the welfare systems of their civil societies.

2.6 Conclusion

The development of civil society is certainly not a linear evolution from a primordial civic realm of traditional religious endowments ‘*waqf*’ and charitable tithe ‘*zakat*’ into a modern civil society of women activists and advocacy lobbyists. Colonial rulers and post-colonial state leaders have shown ample contempt to civic institutions and social movements and many of them have even come up with innovative (and sometimes brutal) methods to constrain civic activities and programs (Carapico, 2010, 94). Faith-based communities; where religion cannot be separated from the daily activities of the populace do not usually discard the arguments or tools promoted by aid agencies or NGOs funded by them. These communities are yearning for economic development initiatives and civic freedom. The recent events in the Arab world, or what came to be called the “Arab Spring”, are a witness to that yearning. Nevertheless, rather than simply accede with the messages advocated by NGOs that revere individual entrepreneurship and material wealth, they point that economic development will not work without other dimensions of life; such as the social and cultural (Tyndale, 2003: 23). These groups are not resistant to the modernization projects in general, yet they oppose the modernization programs prompted through the global economic system (*ibid*). The lack of cooperation from local communities that NGOs’ executives lament every once awhile (Bayat, 2000) is not directed towards science and technology per se, it has to do with attitudes and values that NGOs’ practices are perceived to embody. Having said that, the ascendance in the popularity

of religious organizations / FBOs / RNGOs; can be understood as a local solution on behalf of religious communities to provide their societies with alternative discourses and practices of development without downplaying local traditions and values.

There exists a broad range of Muslim organizations in the Palestinian civil society today that tend to escape our attention. These organizations comprise a wide variety of charitable associations, development NGOs, youth clubs, health clinics and schools, which are primarily engaged in social, cultural and political activities. Although they may be less conspicuous, these Muslim civil society organizations represent a much broader and possibly more important dimension of public religious engagement than their (in)famous political counterparts. Looking at religious civil society organizations in the Palestinian territories, the aim of this dissertation is to enhance our understanding of the role of Islam in the region beyond the sphere of directly visible political contention. Islamic social organizations, as the next chapters argue, are active participants in what can be dubbed a ‘parallel civil society’. Islamic charity organizations and FBOs use social welfare to challenge the basis of the secular Palestinian National Authority, and/or to protect the political status of the professional classes through the establishment of social networks and the swaying of public policy. In this way, I also hope to make a contribution to a more nuanced understanding of Islam and Muslim actors in the region. The dissertation has a descriptive aim as well; to map sectors of civil society in the PT and present some concrete examples of the role religion plays in this multiplicity of different organizations.

Without question, one of the least understood issues surrounding the heated debate about the role of Islamic FBOs in civil society is what long-term and unanticipated consequences might occur in the policy process and how in turn this will affect the society. Given the current widespread changes taking place in the Arab world this question is of utmost concern. The lack

of any previous interest in this topic can be explained by “the failure of existing theory used to examine faith-based institutions to even conceptualize what sort of long-term impacts may exist (Hula et al, 2007: 74)”. The fact that in modern history none of the Islamic political parties in the Arab world managed to have a complete monopoly over any government in the region, made it even more challenging to decipher how such case might change the role of FBOs—and all nonprofits in general—in the civil society. The combination of authoritarian regimes, phony rigged elections and oppressive states diminished the emergency to view FBOs as an influential contributor to the policy process in the region. Moreover, given the contesting views about the relation between Islam and Democracy, practitioners and scholars tended to be submerged with theological arguments rather than more direct public policy matters.

Robert Hefner (2005) argued persuasively that any study of Muslim politics and society ought “to look beyond the categories of Western liberal history and recognize several distinctive concerns of Muslim politics (5)”. Hefner identified two particular principles in which Muslim politics diverge from the traditional Western one. First, Muslim politics is informed by the conviction that religious scholars, the *ulama*, have a significant duty to insure that major developments in politics and society do not contradict God’s commands. It is not that Muslim societies are dictatorially ruled by clerics and Islamic theology dictates every aspect of life. Instead, this principle “makes it difficult for public political delineation to lapse into laissez-faireism (p.9)”. Second, in the case of Muslim societies, the outcome of the any participation initiatives between the state and civil society will depend upon a third feature of contemporary Muslim politics: the efforts of rival groupings to “scale up” their influence by strengthening their organizations in society and forgings pacts or alliances with influential actors and agencies in the state. Mobilizational initiatives like these usually begin at the local level, with efforts to bring

together like-minded actors in associations dedicated to some social, religious, or welfare task (Hefner, 2005: 9-10). However, if they to have a lasting impact in society as a whole, at some points these activities and networks must be drawn into what Peter Evans (1996) has described as collaborations “across the state-society divide’. In the competition that ensues, Muslim parties and organizations sometime enjoy a distinctive advantage over their secular rivals. As Jenny White (2002) has demonstrated in Turkey and Carrie Rosefsky Wickham (2002) in Egypt, some of the most successful of today’s Islamic mobilizations owe their success not to formal ideology or top-down party organizations, but to the local networks and relationships from which they draw their membership. Muslim mobilizations often take preexisting religious networks built around neighborhood mosques and religious schools and weave them together into a parallel Islamic sector (Hefner, 2005: 10). Islamist activists learned early that generating effective power from below is in part a matter of building networks of solidarity within society. This includes, as in other part of the world, solidarity among those who least enjoy the benefits of contemporary affluence, as well as solidarity between them and inclined people holding positions of influence in more elite institutions (Wood, 2002).

The concepts of democracy and human rights, which Islamic activists used to perceive suspiciously for their Western appeal and insensitivity for the Arabic culture and Islamic traditions, are becoming increasingly the dominant oratory in speeches and messages broadcasted by Islamic organizations. Likewise, many Islamic movements have balked at their previous political strategies that refused any kind of political participation, especially in elections, and decided instead to adopt the political rhetoric of other secular political parties (Brown et al, 2007: 5).

It can be argued that this change does not reflect an ideological shift on behalf of Islamic movements to introduce a more religiously based approach to govern Arabic societies. Instead, the apparent transformation in the tactics of Islamic movements is an attest to their impressive abilities to undertake today's rhetoric to push for yesterday's agenda. That is, rather than introducing a full-blown change and risk governments' retribution and the populations' repudiation, Islamic activists became preoccupied with incremental changes in the society through the deliberate process of political participation at the national level, as well as within the students and professional unions. For example, in countries where it is allowed to form a legal Islamic party (e.g. Kuwait, Morocco and Jordan), such parties have already established a strong presence in the parliaments. Whereas, in countries where it is still illegal to form an Islamic political party (Algeria), or where Islamic activists were forced to leave the country (e.g. Syria), Islamic movements are showing relentless efforts in their attempt to advocate for democracy and political participation (Brown et al, 2007). To put it differently, the abiding transformation in the messages and strategies of Islamic movements have driven them a long way from their earlier rhetoric about an 'Islamic revolution' in the shape of an Iranian-model. Instead, as mentioned earlier, leaders belonging to younger generations have embarked on a full range of engagements; whenever possible; "ranging from contestation and negotiations to co-operation (Turam, 2004: 259)". Obviously, this change of affairs has a lot to do with the state, as well as Islamic movements. Although it may seem as if the authoritarian Arabic regimes became addicted to liberalization in their dealing with oppositions groups in general and the Islamists in particular, the necessary preconditions for the prevalent interaction between the state and Islamic movements (and the rise in their popularity) is attributed to the declining efficacy and legitimacy of the state itself (Berman, 2003). So, rather than depicting any change as a successful

application for revolutionary ideas, the current situation is more of a “peculiar stalemate in which the existing regime retains political power while ceding substantial control over the societal and cultural spheres to the revolutionary challenger (Berman, 2003: 257)”, which is an Islamic movement in our case.

Discussions of civil society organizations in general and FBOs in particular are valuable, therefore, because they require us to consider activities that cut across class lines. Some of these discussions, however, require us to look even more carefully at how FBOs deliver services and what are the future consequences on civil society as a result of FBOs’ involvement. Bringing questions about religion together with questions about service provision also means extending our view of FBOs beyond that of how effective they had helped the poor to whether they can mobilize more effectively to make claim on public policy.

Chapter Three:

Formation and Evolution of Islamic Philanthropy in the Palestinian Territories

Abstract

This chapter sets out to establish a taxonomy of Islamic social organizations operating in the Palestinian territories (PT), challenging assumptions that such organizations constitute a homogeneous category and pursue a uniform mission. Islamic small charitable societies and large international aid agencies became recently a significant contributor to welfare services and development initiative in the PT, as well as most Islamic countries. Little, however, is known about how Islamic faith-based organizations differ from one another in their orientation, structure, and operations, and whether or how they are distinct from secular organizations. Examining the formation and evolution of Islamic faith-based service provision in the PT, this chapter delineates three classifications of Islamic FBOs: grassroots charitable societies, modern and professional FBOs, and semi-governmental religious agencies. The chapter demonstrates the importance of distinguishing not simply between faith-based and secular organizations, but among FBOs themselves.

3.1 Introduction

The Palestinian Territories (PT) are home to diverse nonprofit organizations constituting multiple sectors of organizational activity and ideological adherence. This chapter provides an overview of religiously related social service organizations, generally defined as faith-based organizations (FBOs), within the PT. Its purpose is three-fold: (1) to present the current status and role of FBOs in the Palestinian civil society with regards to the public services and goods they provide; (2) to trace the growth and development of Islamic philanthropy from the traditional small charitable societies to the multi-national FBOs, with a focus on identifying the social and economic changes that stimulated that growth; and (3) to document the existence of what may be considered a parallel Palestinian civil society that is more locally appreciated compared to the other civil society created and funded by Western aid agencies. The chapter also tries to reflect on the debate on defining FBOs, and provides a brief explanation of the diverse types of FBOs active in the region.

This chapter begins with a brief description of the Palestinian civil society and explains the uniqueness of the Palestinian case by clarifying how the mechanisms of civil society under conflict could differ from normal environments. In it I describe the roles of the Palestinian National authority, the socioeconomic situation, and international community in influencing the structure of Palestinian civil society, which in turn influenced the development of FBOs in the region. Faith-based service-provision in the Palestinian territories and the development of traditional religious charitable societies into modern day FBOs is further presented in part three. The proliferation of Islamic FBOs and how this may affect the civil society is the focus of part four. I outline, as well, four areas in which FBOs could have a significant sway in Palestine as well as the rest of the Arab world. Finally, part five concludes

3.2 The Civil Society in the Palestinian Territories

It is difficult to understand the current diversity or roles of faith-related service provision in the PT without first understanding the historical development of the Palestinian civil society and how it managed to withstand colonial pressures (during the British mandate and Israeli occupation) or the oppressive tendencies of the Palestinian National Authority (PNA). Although this chapter will not provide a detailed historical background on Islamic philanthropy in the region, a short review of the development of Palestinian civil society will add a significant contribution to understanding to the current status of FBOs in society, which the next paragraphs aim to achieve.

3.2.1 Civil Society under Conflict

The political significance of civil society is far more prominent in contexts marked by conflict (Marchetti and Tocci, 2009). This notion gains even more prominence when the topic of

discussion revolves around Islamic FBO in Palestine. To fully understand how Islamic social institutions function within the civil society and influence policy process, there need to be first a clear understanding of how the Palestinian civil society operates. Marchetti and Tocci (2009) argue that we need to delineate four general contextual categories to qualify and better understand the specific contexts in which civil society in conflict operates. These categories are: (1) state vs. non-state context; (2) the nature of the state; (3) the socio-economic situation; and (4) the nature of the international community. The next paragraphs present a more detailed discussion for each of these categories.

3.2.1.1 State vs. Non-state Context

The first basic general contextual distinction specifies whether “civil society operates in a state or non-state context, or more widely in failing or failed state context (*ibid*: p.202)”.

Although the PNA is not a fully-fledged state, it resembles a one in most aspects of societal life. There is no doubt that the PNA has exercised most state functions from the perspective of most organizations, providing the legal framework and undertaking policing and licensing functions (Brown, 2003:144). The recent successful admittance to UNESCO and the ‘failed’ application to be recognized as a state by the United Nations is a proof to where the PNA reached in its attempt to become a state. From the perception of local civil society actors however, the establishment of the Palestinian National Authority created new challenges and opportunities. Whereas before the Oslo peace agreements, such actors operated under the Israeli civil administrative authorities with multiple restrictive orders and an occupation rendered mentality, the formation of the PNA and the subsequent institutionalization of new Palestinian agencies and ministries created an environment where civil society actors can operate for the first time within a framework of Palestinian state legitimacy (Jamal, 2005). Further, the increased level of access to Gaza and the West Bank--which the Interim agreement with Israel granted to the newly established Palestinian

authority--significantly, changed the social network of society (*ibid*). The sudden opening of the Palestinian society to the rest of the world and the return of many Palestinians from abroad changed the structural features that governed the society since the 1967 war.

3.2.1.2 The nature of the State

The years after the establishment of the PNA witnessed many tumultuous periods in the relation between the PNA and the civil non-governmental sector, which bring us to the second contextual condition shaping civil society in conflict: the actual nature of the state in question. Even though the PNA relied on various civil society actors to provide services for the local population and enhance the authority's external credibility in front of the international community, PNA officials viewed the operations of many civil society actors with discontent, and many nonprofits experienced the 'heavy-handedness' that usually accompanied such view (Brown, 2003). This somewhat schizophrenic environment produced a situation in which civil society actors, particularly NGOs, and the PNA became interdependent on each other, but both also had strong sources of independent support that prevented it from being captured by the other (*ibid*).

The PNA has persistently pushed to widen its role in recognizing and coordinating the work of NGOs. This new political entity basically changed the field of action for most Palestinian civil society organizations. For the first time, Palestinian nonprofits have to deal with a Palestinian quasi-government and abide by its rules and regulations rather than an Israeli military administrative unit. This abrupt reality brought with it several complications to the ensuing relation between the PNA and civil society groups. For a starter, the PNA felt responsible for controlling all activities within its boundaries even those corresponding to the civil society domain. Several NGOs, however, rejected this interference and called for a more hands-off

approach. This early clash was soon to develop into a more widespread confrontation after the PNA proposed a new draft for a civil law.

These efforts started early after the official establishment of the PNA when it produced in mid-1995 a draft NGO law that many civil society leaders found restrictive (Brown, 2003). The new law sought several demands from NGOs (Jamal, 2005: 49):

- NGOs must be legally registered;
- The activities of NGOs must be officially supervised;
- NGO spending must be properly monitored;
- NGO funds must be audited on a regular basis;
- NGO sources of income must be made public;
- NGOs must publicly declare their loyalty to the Palestinian cause

Although these restrictions may seem normal and fair for any NGO operating in a fully democratic setting, Palestinian NGOs perceived them with a suspicious attitude at best, and that is for a good reason. During its early months (July 1994), the PNA called the existing NGOs to merge their activities with that of the new established ministries, or at least to offer their services in the ministries (Challand, 2009). Even though a small number of organizations heeded this call (Rabe, 2000; in Challand, 2006), the subsequent proposed NGO law was not seen as an innocent attempt to regulate NGOs' activities, it was identified more as an initiative—in a wide-ranging attempt—to absorb the civil society sector to a centralized control of the PNA. NGOs reactions to these attempts have ranged from a collective-action initiative through the formation of the Palestinian NGO Network (PNGO), which quickly emerged as an effective lobbying organization for NGOs (Brown, 2003), to more legal discourses that sought to challenge the

PNA's centralizing motives. Religious NGOs were also part of this struggle, and like their secular counterparts, some of them joined the PNA's efforts while others chose to stay independent.

3.2.1.3 The Socioeconomic Situation

The societal foundation of the Palestinian society went through fundamental changes during the early stages of the formation of the PNA. The return of thousands of Palestinians from diaspora to occupy leading political, military and civil positions has produced multiple schisms between many groups within the Palestinian society. The result of these changes in the political, resource and social environments was a dramatic shift in the available organizational tactics marked by the expansion of advocacy as a new form of social and political change activity in the PT as will be discussed in the fourth chapter. There was a rapid expansion in national advocacy organizations after 1995. At about the same time, the number of service organizations that claimed to provide cash, healthcare, orphanages and other types of relief declined (statistics in chapter four).

Even with this decline, the civil sector runs 62 percent of primary health services and operates some 123 clinics in the West bank and Gaza strip, comprising 35 percent of the total number of clinics in the PT, serving approximately 250,000 patients (Jamal, 2005). The civil sector also provides 90 percent of the professional education services in which 100 organizations are engaged and more than 3,000 people are employed. The sector is even more involved in pre-school education providing nearly 100 percent of the services given in some 1,200 kindergartens in which 40,000 children are taught. In the field of rehabilitation for disabled and released prisoners, the civil sector runs five programs that give services to 25,000 persons at 200 different locations. There is also extensive activity in the agricultural sector, with 13 civil organizations active in this field providing aid across 433 different sites.

According to the World Bank, Palestinian NGOs are not only the sole providers of services in sectors such as early childhood education, specialized health care, and agriculture, but they are especially effective at reaching the poor and marginalized³. Like other countries, ‘non-governmental organizations’ in the PT is a stretchy category that includes: human service organizations, charitable societies, United Nations welfare agencies, civic association, community centers, farmers’ unions, relief committees, religious endowments, mosque or church-based commissions, and faith-based organizations. There is not, however, a clear-cut knowledge about the contributions of each of the above groups to service provision, or how their traditional roles might have varied with the changes in the political arena. Likewise, there is a common misperception among practitioners and politicians on the current level of involvement of faith-based groups in the welfare sector. Unfortunately, the PNA is reinforcing this misperception by ignoring to register NGOs based on their faith or ideology. For example, the Palestinian Ministry of Interior (MoI), which is responsible for registering and monitoring all functioning NGOs in the PT, does not have a separate entry in their registration forms that distinguishes between religious and secular organizations. The recent political clashes between the Fatah government in the West Bank and Hamas’ in Gaza have further added to the overblown confusion regarding the stance of religious-based groups in the Palestinian society.

3.2.1.4 The nature of the International Community

The poverty of many opposition parties contrasts sharply with the propitious financial environment for Arab nongovernmental organizations, particularly advocacy organizations, in the 1990s. The conviction in western policy circles that advocacy nongovernmental

³ World Bank, Improving the quality and Sustainability of NGO Social Service Delivery (<http://go.worldbank.org/NOQSI5EWN0>).

organizations can play central roles in democratization has made associations such as human rights and environmental groups the single most favored area of US civil society assistance, European and Canadian governments, and international nonprofit organization (Langohr, 2004). The clearest example of how this funding facilitates the proliferation of nongovernmental organizations is found in the PT. While many voluntary associations existed well before establishment of the PNA, the trend toward the creation of nongovernmental organizations was significantly strengthened by the post-Oslo deluge of donor funds. By 1996 the amount of per capita aid for Palestine exceeded all other war-to-peace transitions, including Bosnia, Rwanda, and El Salvador (Brynen, 2000). Aid for democratization, much of which went to nongovernmental organizations, was particularly popular; donor officials in a 1997 survey argued that democracy and human rights had been comparatively overfunded in contrast to such areas as economic development (Brynen, 2000). By 1995 the West Bank and Gaza, with a population of two million, had 1,200 to 1,500 nongovernmental organizations employing 20-30,000 people, while Egypt, a country of 68 million, had approximately 1,400 such organizations (Brynen, 2000).

This financial context helps to explain why some Palestinian secular opposition groups have acted largely through nongovernmental organizations rather than parties. Palestinian leftist factions developed associations and sought foreign funding for them because of Fatah's refusal to support them. Opportunities for associational activity abounded, but it was deemed ideologically unacceptable to run for parliament. Thus, these groups turned factional nongovernmental organizations into vehicles for secular left opposition (Langohr, 2004). In a sense, there was a diversion from their local grassroots beginning in the hope of attracting a global constituency (and funding).

3.2.2 Private and Religious Philanthropy in the Palestinian Territories

Like almost all Arab countries, private philanthropy in the Palestinian territories is not a developed arena (Ibrahim and Sherif, 2008). There are at least three reasons that can explain this insubstantial role of private philanthropy. First, the lack of any meaningful development in the Palestinian economic sectors during the last four decades (Roy, 1999) has made it very difficult for Palestinian entrepreneurs to prosper financially. The marked deterioration in Palestinian economic life and the accelerated de-development process that gained pace during the post-Oslo period have created an environment characterized by the physical separation of the West Bank and Gaza; the weakening economic relations between the Palestinian and Israeli economies; and growing divisions within the Palestinian labor market (*ibid*). Understandably, the absence of any sustained economic development has casted its long shadow on the development of a local private philanthropy sector. Second, the proliferation of foreign donors in the West Bank and Gaza strip after the creation of the PNA dominated the development scene and provided perverse incentives to local grassroots activists and philanthropists. The initiation of the ‘Oslo Process’ and the commencement of state-building initiatives supported by international and bilateral aid agencies consolidated a space for the growth of Palestinian NGOs and other civic institutions. Yet, setting off this space “was accompanied by a dis-embedding of local organizations from within the society and their base in popular movements (Hanafi and Tabar, 2005: 19)”. In particular, Western aid agencies did not see in most traditional or communal organizations the prerequisite for success in civil society promotion (Challand, 2010). Thus, lacking meaningful foreign funding and shrinking local donations many grassroots organizations were forced to discontinue their activities and close their doors.

The third reason for the lackluster condition of local Palestinian philanthropy is self-inflicted and it has to do with the PNA's unfriendly stance to private, homegrown institutionalized giving. As will be discussed in more details in the next two chapters, the PNA; as part of its comprehensive national reconstruction and the building of the foundations of the future state plan; began to limit the space of maneuverability for existing civil organizations. The newly established Palestinian bureaucracy sought to control most aspects of social reality in areas under its control and to meet 'expectations' set by the different clauses in the peace treaty (Jamal, 2005). A number of these expectations had to do with the Islamic movement in the PT. Israel, Arab, and Western backers of the peace process wanted the new Palestinian security forces to limit the space in which Hamas and other Islamic activists can function. For example, in September 1997, shortly after the PNA established a trained security force, Palestinian security agents searched the offices of many charitable organizations accused of being affiliated with Hamas. For security reasons several of these NGOs were ultimately closed (Jamal, 2005). The attack was not only directed at Hamas-affiliated organizations. One year later security forces broke into Fateh-affiliated NGOs and confiscated their assets creating a wide protest movement. This intimidating attitude towards NGOs created a situation where local donors, out of fear of persecution, avoided direct links with NGOs, which in turn led to lower financial contributions⁴.

It is interesting to note that the attacks on Islamic NGOs and political parties have created a situation in which Islamic activists were torn between two strategies/paths. The hostile attitude that the PNA used to deal with Islamic political activists pushed many of them to divert their activism from an overt political agenda to a more subtle socio-economic program that emphasizes the provision of welfare services upon outright demonstration. Like their brothers in

⁴ Several interviewees with the author referred to this topic.

other Arab countries, Islamic activists in the PT have juggled with two different strategies in their attempt to face the ruling regime: getting involved in electoral politics with the hope to bring change from within the government, or through creating their own socio-cultural presence within civil society (Sivan, 2003). Depending on the changing local circumstances and governmental repressive tactics, Islamic activists alternated between these options often combining the two at the same time. In periods of heightened repression, direct educational and welfare action have the added merit of serving as a refuge for persecuted political activists. The key merits of NGO activities were seen as a medium to change the nature of society by molding hearts and minds, especially the young, to counteract oppressive governmental efforts. Providing welfare services has proved to be a guaranteed way to create a network of grateful and loyal clients with a potential social and political power base oriented towards re-islamization (*ibid*)⁵. Moreover, unlike the methods employed by the PNA to gain loyalty, which were based on absorbing the youth into the security apparatus “as a source of employment and identity”, Islamic activists followed a more holistic approach that stressed “creating a religious and cultural framework for community development within which young people could participate and find meaningful identity, belonging and connection (Roy, 2011: 5)”. By participating in activities supported by religious organizations, individuals enhance their well being by openly express their religious values and identity, fulfill religious duties, and build and enhance social networks.

3.3 Faith-Related Social Institutions in the Palestinian Territories

3.3.1 A Short Contextualized History of FBOs in the Palestinian Territories

In theory, both NGOs and FBOs are supposed to be not-for-profit organizations that were established on the basis of altruistic motives to help people in need. The collective action that

⁵ Sara Roy (2011) offers an excellent account of how Hamas managed to reinvent itself after the establishment of the PNA.

brought a certain NGO or FBO into existence is supposed to be the urge to provide a good or a service for a certain sector of the population that the local government or the market failed to provide. However, with the case of FBOs there is at least one extra element that is basically nonexistent in a secular NGO and that is 'faith'.

Within the Palestinian context, grassroots organizing (both faith-based and secular) was comprised of non-factional women's, students' and workers' groups, loosely organized in voluntary-based structures that stressed both national resistance and self-help. However, by the end of the 1970s most of the movements had broken into faction based political groups. Processes of institutionalization emerged once the organizations became factionalized and funding became available for activities. In the early 1980s the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) provided funding to organizations through their allied factions; at the same time, a number of organizations began to form contacts with European donor NGOs. The Communist Party, not being part of the PLO, spearheaded these links out of necessity. Other left organizations followed suit and began to subsidize their factional funding with donor money (Hammami, 2000).

The outbreak of the first intifada in 1987 initially reaffirmed the original popular and mass nature of these organizations. The popular committee structures that served as the successful front line of the intifada in its first two years were only possible due to the organizing and mobilizing skills and experiences of the grassroots organizations. This heady period was short-lived, however. By 1991 many of these popular initiatives transformed themselves into professionally based, foreign-funded and development-oriented centers (Hammami, 2000). Nevertheless, several charitable organizations, and in particular Islamic FBOs, have concentrated

mostly on local help and sometimes at a lower scale of intervention, with redistribution of locally collected alms and funding (Challand, 2008).

With the increasing encroachment of the Palestinian Authority in the affairs of nonprofits working in the Palestinian territories in general, and FBOs in particular (especially after the events of 9/11) the latter group abandoned most of their direct political activities and focused instead on development issues and cultural awareness. Their aim was to show that “Islam can solve problems” unlike other imported ‘Western’ systems (Harmsen, 2008). These developments, however, are more than charity re-entering through the backdoor. The role of FBOs in combating social problems in the Palestinian territories – not to mention other contemporary cities- seems different from that of the past in that they clearly are not exclusively of the charitable kind. Although legal conditions and government oversight prohibit direct political activities through Islamic NGOs, Islamists utilize these institutions to combat the intrusion of Western values and cultural codes. It is this struggle at the level of discourse and culture that imbues Islamic NGOs with political import, even if these activities are outside the boundaries of traditional politics (Wiktorowicz, and Taji Farouki, 2000).

To illustrate the work of Islamic social organizations as being an instrumental political tactic on behalf of Islamic movements to win the hearts and minds of the locals would be a complete prejudice against the longstanding Islamic teachings that called for solidarity with and care for the underprivileged. Nevertheless, as the next paragraphs reveal, there are significant differences in the ways that the various faith-based organizations in the Palestinian territories use religious language and include faith-based messages in their programming. My fieldwork suggested that organizations could strongly rely on their religious traditions without exhibiting any of the open expressions of faith that most typologies use to identify an organization as faith-

based. In fact, several of the organizations that clearly follow religious teachings in their programming declared that they “were not faith based” because they associated being a faith based organization with being a clearly religious organization that uses theological language and practices proselytization. Keeping that in mind, Islamic FBOs in the PT can take at least five forms some of which overlap. These forms are:

1. The unequivocal religious organization: this welfare organization is part of a religious body, such as a mosque or a religious order.
2. The Elite Family: is directly linked to the elite families of particular communities
3. The Popular Political Movement: is the most politicized. It is the one founded and funded by Hamas.
4. The International Humanitarian Relief Organizations (e.g. Islamic Relief & Islamic Aid)
5. The Para-State Organization represented by the new organizational structure of zakat committees.

Within this context, one can argue that Islamic FBOs in the Palestinian territories make political participation easier by providing resources that can be used for political organizing and by providing opportunities for association, which helps facilitate collective action in a number of ways. How people choose to translate their increased potential for participation into political action depends on the larger political context – not primarily on the activities of the FBO (Boulding, 2010). Given that elections in the Palestinian territories are seen as real and meaningful mechanisms for communicating preferences to the state, one can expect a strong relationship between FBOs and political related activities. Yet, given that most FBOs avoided straightforward political activities, I assume that they will focus their efforts on:

- (1) Collaborating with other partners which are more immune to government provocation

- (2) Engaging in indirect political activities (e.g. funding programs to raise political awareness).
- (3) Advocating for certain opinions and policies by framing their message with religious significance.

These issues will form the basis for the next chapter.

3.3.2 Traditional Islamic Philanthropy

The Palestinian territories have historically possessed a multitude of Islamic social welfare organizations. These organizations mostly take the form of either charitable institutions or service enterprises. Charitable institutions are primarily engaged in the provision of alms, typically in the form of financial subsidies and food support, but also other items such as clothing and shelter. Service enterprises by contrast provide benefits such as education, vocational training and medical relief (International Crisis Group - ICG, 2003). Such distinctions, however, are not absolute, as organizations primarily engaged in one field will also work in the other – a pattern that has become more evident since September 2000 after the start of the second uprising or '*Intifada*'.

Since the outbreak of the second *Intifada* against the Israeli occupation, there has been a pronounced shift towards the provision of emergency food and cash assistance in particular. In 2001, Islamic social welfare organizations were collectively the largest food donor in the occupied Palestinian territories after UNRWA – The United Nations Relief and Work Agency (ICG, 2003). Moreover, a recent United Nations study that compiled statistics from the four largest Islamic social welfare organizations found that they were providing food assistance to 145,450 households (UNSCO-OCHA, 2002). At about the same time, the International Crisis Group estimated that the Islamic organizations were providing, directly or indirectly, emergency

cash/food assistance and medical and psychological care to at least one out of six Palestinians (ICG, 2003: ii).

Taking into consideration the previous statistics about the activities of Islamic FBOs, one can safely assume that the 570% increase in the number of registered NGOs in the West Bank between the years 2001-2009 [from 370 to 2126 (Devoir and Tartir, 2009: 31)] comprise a significant figure of Islamic FBOs. What is more impressive though than the absolute number is their role in providing services to local communities. According to Sara Roy, in 1999 Islamic institutions “comprise[d] anywhere from 10-40 percent of all social institutions in the Gaza Strip and West Bank” and “directly reach[ed] tens of thousands of people and impact[ed] hundreds of thousands more (Roy, 2000)”. In 1997, for example, 22,615 families comprising 278,348 individuals received assistance from such institutions (Palestine Poverty Report, 1998: 70).

It is almost impossible to count how many FBOs operate in the PT. First, there is the problem regarding the accurate definition of faith-based service providers and the specific characteristics that may differentiate them from other secular organizations. Real organizations and programs rarely fit perfectly into ideal types (Sider and Unruh, 2004). Many organizations will share characteristics that fall within more than one category. Further, with the passage of time, the same organization can acquire (or lose) certain characteristics forcing the researchers to change his categorization. To add to this complexity, classifying an entity as a faith-based or secular entails looking at the overall pattern of religious characteristics, which leaves room for variation in how individual characteristics are to be weighted in discerning this pattern (*ibid*: 128-129). Second, FBOs, like other social institutions’ go through stages of birth, death, and mergers (McGrew and Cnaan, 2006). This constant cycle of transformations produces a field that

is always changing. Third, given the PNA's hostility towards Hamas, many religious social organizations are reluctant to provide any information about them.

As a whole, these small-scale FBOs form a blanket of services and market a culture of local responsibility. Although on their own they may not be able to offer sustainable services, but combined they could be considered the closest thing to a social safety net for their Palestinian beneficiaries. Because they can be found everywhere in the PT and they are involved in diverse sectors; they are perceived by many as the destination of last resort⁶. They function conservatively and often work at the crossroads of multiple activities based on the local community's needs (Challand, 2008: 231. Although this approach to service delivery offers a contrasting model to the one advocated by modern NGOs, yet as Carl Milofsky observed, community-based groups "are intriguing because though we think of them as systems that are purposively inspired, semi-permanent social inventions, many lack the characteristics of formal, rational organizations [thus posing] a challenge to organizational analysis because there is little theory to guide our studies of them as organizations (1988: 188)". This challenge is particularly pronounced with regard to religiously based groups, which rely on informal devotional networks; face-to-face contact; tradition-structured identity frameworks; and imagined integration through common values, rituals, and shared discourse (Byrd, 1997: 122). Unlike large professional NGOs that respond to donor preferences or the availability of funding grants to come up with their social service delivery mechanism, small religious organizations, on the other hand, often rely on the available internal community resources, members' desires, volunteers' skills, and available space as the cornerstone of their service (Cnaan et al, 2004). This unpredictable course of action often creates a field caught up with informality and the lack of any protocol, which creates many

⁶ Friedman, Gil.2000. Analysis of Palestinian Public Opinion on Politics: Popular Trust in Palestinian Islamist Factions. Jerusalem Media & Communication Center, East Jerusalem.

difficulties for prospective researchers but the more involved dedicated anthropologist. The Palestinian zakat committees provide an excellent example of how far faith-based service provision is prevalent in the PT and how precarious this issue is.

3.3.3 The Palestinian Zakat Committees

For centuries, mosques in the West Bank and Gaza have been running informal voluntary committees charged with the administration of donations from local communities. During the 1970s, the Jordanian Ministry of *Awqaf* (religious endowment) which was also in charge of the PT, started to formally establish some of these voluntary committees as ‘zakat committees’ under Jordanian zakat law (Schaublin, 2009). Zakat (almsgiving) committees are located in all Palestinian regions to distribute charitable funds and provide other services to the poor and needy. Zakat is one of the five pillars of Islam, in which able Muslims are obligated to donate one-fortieth (2.5%) of the value of their assets, over the basic property (e.g. their house and working tools) to charity. Payment of the zakat is however a voluntary act of philanthropy from the perspective of the PNA. Zakat committees behave like an intermediary between those who are fortunate enough and the more numerous unfortunate needy. There are more than 90 zakat committees around the West Bank and Gaza (Benthall, 2008) devoted to providing major services to local communities that include: health, food distribution, income generating projects, orphan sponsorship, education, and summer camps for the youth. Zakat committees enjoy a great amount of legitimacy among Palestinians, and they remain one of the most trusted institutions in Palestinian society (Brown, 2003). The annual budgets of these committees range from seven million U.S. dollars to 500, 000 U.S dollars (Benthall, 2008).

The origins of zakat committees are attributed to grassroots; community-based local FBOs that were a meeting-point for politically inspired Islamists and the devout middle class

(Benthall, 2008: 6). They have evolved in a changing socio-political context under Israeli occupation and successive Jordanian and Palestinian authority (Schaublin, 2009). Their local success and effectiveness in gathering and distributing millions of dollar per year has led them to seek international sources of funding from Muslim communities in the West and in Gulf states as well—bypassing the major development agencies--and would have continued to develop in that direction assuming that certain geopolitical events and local policy issues did not coalesce to change that direction (Benthall, 2008).

New-style Western Islamic aid agencies, such as ‘Islamic Relief Worldwide’, have adapted the teaching of *zakat* as an opportunity for professional fund-raising on an impressive scale, relying on modern readings of the Qur’anic prescriptions that enable *zakat* funds to be disbursed for the benefit of those most in need, regardless of whether or not they are Muslims (Benthall and Bellion-Jourdan 2003: 7–28). In the Palestinian Territories *zakat* are not collected by the government, instead the donor either gives it individually to needy people or to one of the *zakat* committees located in all the cities and major towns.

In recent years, the nature of *zakat* committees became an extremely contentious issue for the Israeli, the United States, and some European governments. Some *zakat* committees were accused of facilitating the activities of Islamic militants targeting Western and Israeli cities (Levitt, 2006). As a result, several lawsuits were raised against Islamic foundations in the U.S. and Europe that were donating funds to *zakat* committees. The case of Al-Aqsa foundation demonstrates plainly the difficult position the *zakat* committees found themselves in during the last decade. Al-Aqsa foundation is an international charity located in Germany with multiple branch offices in the Netherlands, Denmark, Belgium, Sweden, Pakistan, South Africa and elsewhere. In a press statement issued by the U.S. Department of Treasury in May 29th 2003, the

foundation was described as a “crucial part of Hamas’ transnational terrorist support infrastructure” and it was accused of using humanitarian relief “as cover to provide support to the Hamas terrorist organization⁷”. As a result of this designation, the foundation’s assets were seized and any transactions with it became illegal. Other governments in Europe have also taken action against Al-Aqsa foundation⁸.

Hamas’ triumph in the legislative elections in 2006, and the ensuing takeover of Gaza by Hamas in 2007, which resulted in a complicated political schism between the Palestinian leadership in Gaza and the West Bank, provided the Fatah-dominated Palestinian authority in the West Bank the pretext to radically organize the West Bank zakat committees under a new central control (Benthall, 2008). As a result of this new arrangement the existing directors of the committees were fired and new ones were assigned; handpicked by the PNA⁹. Their organizational independence was further deteriorated in November 2007 when the Ministry of Awqaf and Religious Affairs with the cooperation of the Ministry of Finance decreed the termination of all zakat committees in the West bank and ordered the establishment of eleven new central committees--one for each governorate—coordinated and organized by a central zakat fund, which in turn will be supervised by the Ministries of Finance and Interior (Schaublin, 2009).

3.3.4 Modern Islamic FBOs

Muslim FBOs have given renewed impetus to the practice of *waqf and zakat*, particularly for Muslims living in secular or predominantly Christian countries in the West where such forms of charity are not common practice (Abuarqub and Phillips, 2009). Since the 1990s, organizations

⁷ <http://www.treasury.gov/press-center/media-advisories/Pages/js438.aspx>

⁸ <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/2950314.stm>

⁹ Interview with a Palestinian official- Ministry of Interior.

such as ‘Islamic Relief’ and ‘Muslim Aid’ have managed to integrate *waqf* and *zakat* into western style fundraising mechanisms (Benthall, 2003: 36). Donors can purchase *waqf bonds*, which are invested in property or monetary instruments, and the profits are then used to fund projects in the developing world. Similarly by allowing donors to specify the source of the funds they are donating for the cause they wish to support, these organizations have also made it easier for Muslims to donate their *zakat* money to the poor all over the world.

As I mentioned above, throughout most of the recent Palestinian history, religious charitable societies and endowments were small institutions operating mainly to satisfy the needs of a limited geographic area or neighborhood. This changed during the last two decades of the twentieth century. While many charitable societies in small villages and refugee camps remained small, those in urban areas often grew to the point that they became capable of organizing and staffing specialized offices. Service programs, such as health and education became to be an important part of these organizations. The Islamic Charitable Society in Hebron illustrates this new trend in religious philanthropy. Founded in 1962 by a number of local elites to care for orphans and provide them with the essential housing, health and education services, the Society today is one of the largest nonprofits in the PT. Over the years, the Society built and funded schools, orphanage houses, public libraries, farms, bakeries, dairy and clothing factories among other numerous projects. Their services cover the needs of more than 3000 orphans and 5000 families¹⁰.

After the creation of the PNA, the Islamic Charitable Society in Hebron with other religious Societies and NGOs reacted swiftly to the new political reality. Particularly, they perceived the new situation as an opportunity to resume normal social life without any constraints brought by a nationalist agenda established by political leaders. More importantly,

¹⁰ The Society’s website, accessed on January 3rd, 2012: <http://www.ics-hebron.org/portal/pdf/kotaieb.pdf>

this new reality provided them with the impetus to reorient toward a larger donor pool that stretches beyond Palestinian cities towards regional and Western international FBOs. Aid arriving from these new sources, with attached expectations, differs from traditional sources of funding. Unlike the traditional paternalistic and centered approach to service provision, new modules of Islamic philanthropy and aid is part of a larger sector that includes elite international NGOs (Benthall, 2007). The requirements of such funders are more likely to include stringent accounting and reporting expectations, more complex application procedures, and a non-partisan stance. Understandably, not all charitable institutions had the required skills to tap into this larger pool, but the one that did were rewarded generously and a new larger breed of local FBOs was born.

The developments that the new FBOs introduced to the field of Islamic philanthropy go beyond traditional approaches to charity. The role of FBOs in combating social problems in Palestinian societies seems different from the past in that they clearly diverge from the charitable kind that exclusively were dependent on local sources. Optimism about the potential of these organizations to engage in community development is based in part on the active role many of them play in providing large-scale social services. There is as well strong support for implementing projects that promote self-employment and encourage self-reliance among the poor. Several Islamic international aid agencies have even called local FBOs to become “the voice of the poor” by supporting advocacy initiatives on behalf of the poor on social and economic issues that most clearly impact their lives (Khan et al, 2009).

3.3.5 FBOs and the Ascendancy of Islamic Political Parties

The alleged attachment between FBOs and other Islamic parties (mainly Hamas) has forced many Islamic organizations into proving their extrication from any direct or indirect

political acts. However, because Islamic social welfare organizations and NGOs are formally independent entities, their political affiliations are not immediately apparent. While some are politically as well as legally independent, others are affiliated with a political entity, such as Hamas, Fatah or the Palestinian Authority itself (Benthall, 2008). Affiliation is often a matter of degree (ICG Report, 2003). It is not a straightforward process to differentiate between Islamic NGOs affiliated with political parties and those that are independent. Where shall we exactly draw the contour to claim that this NGO is independent or not?

Some observers have claimed that financial support is the key to judge whether an NGO is affiliated with a political party, but what if the directors and employees of a certain NGO do not receive any financial support from political parties but they are very loyal and supportive to the ideology and politics of a specified political party. Can we still claim that this NGO is affiliated with the party or not? As it is already clear by now there is no clear division line between politically affiliated and independent NGOs regardless if they were religious or not. My own fieldwork on FBOs in the PT revealed that many FBOs are still operating under tight scrutiny from the Palestinian Authority. For instance, in its attempt to limit the power (and popularity) of Hamas in the West Bank the PNA is issuing foreclosure notes to any FBO suspected to be either a front shop for Hamas or directed by individuals deemed to be Hamas members. This effort has resulted so far in the closing of more than 150 organizations according to the estimates of the Ministry of Interior¹¹.

Regardless of these recent hostilities between Islamic FBOs and the Palestinian authority, their strong roots among the Palestinian communities and the wide range of services they consistently deliver to hundreds of thousands of beneficiaries have rendered Islamic FBOs important actors in the political process through their traditional role as producers and

¹¹ Interview with Government official, PA Ministry of Interior, Ramallah, West Bank, July 2010.

distributors of goods and services even if they are not directly involved in the governing process. The role of FBOs received increased emphasis after the unexpected gain of Hamas in the Palestinian Legislative Council during the 2006 elections. Hamas's victory produced a quagmire for Fatah, the Palestinian authority, Israel, and the Western world in general. To them, Hamas does not deserve to govern since it does not support the Oslo peace accords, or recognize the state of Israel, or even refrain from violence against Israeli targets. Yet, there was a sense of realization (supported by opinion polls in the Palestinian territories) that Hamas's victory is not just a direct result to the Palestinians' reaction to the corrupted PNA (as the worldwide media reported). Voting for Hamas, gave voters the opportunity to show their appreciation for the diverse services and goods provided by Hamas through their social arm, and acknowledge Hamas's effort to adopt policies that are coherent with the society's aspirations and moral values¹².

The ascendancy of Islamic political parties cannot be explained through the sole actions of these same parties. The triumphalism of Islamic politics owes much of its success to religious socio-economic institutions that have in theory no direct relations to political agendas. As Carrie Rosefsky Wickham observed in her influential study about Islamic social movements, struggling for power in the Palestinian political system remained largely concentrated among the '*Fatah*' echelons of the Palestinian leadership. Outside the sphere of party politics however, there emerged a newly reinvigorated and substantially financed networks of Islamic institutions that spread from the highly concentrated neighborhoods in Gaza to the rest of the Palestinian territories. These 'nonpolitical' institutions became important sites for Islamist activists and volunteers to educate the youth and provide the needy with crucial social services. Similar to what happened in Egypt during the 1980s and 90s, this political opening gave rise to a new kind

¹² Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research: <http://pcpsr.org/survey/polls/2007/p24epressrelease.html>

of political participation that is detached from the formal political institutions and elites (Wickham, 2002). Having realized that they do not have a full monopoly on Palestinian politics, the Palestinian authority offered some opportunities for Hamas and the other Islamic organizations active in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. According to Nathan Brown and Amer Hamzawy, the new arrangement in the territories made the oversight of civil affairs a Palestinian responsibility, giving Islamic organizations more freedom to maneuver, especially in nonpolitical affairs. In particular, “Hamas’s standing in Palestinian society sometimes placed limits on what [PNA] security officials felt comfortable in doing. Indeed, local branches of Fatah and Hamas sometimes joined with smaller factions in a series of ad hoc consultative bodies known as the national and Islamic forces (Brown and Hamzawy, 2010: 166-167)”.

The loyalty to Islamic political parties is not a unique case ascribed only to Palestinian state of affairs. In most parts of the Middle East Islamic political parties have witnessed significant ascendance to the ruling offices whenever fair and transparent elections took place. In Turkey, for example, Islamic political parties exemplified by the ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) owed much of their success to their “ability to incorporate hybrid populations and to build on local community networks. To gain access to these community networks, the party itself had to become ‘intimate’... situating its political message within the community’s cultural codes and norms (White, 2002: 7)”.

3.4 Conclusion

The argument made in this chapter states that significant variation in foundation, expertise, and practice exists among FBOs. This variation must be acknowledged more critically in order to distinguish organizations that could have influential input in political outcomes from those that are simply socially minded. To portray Islamic FBOs as tools utilized by political players would

be a severe injustice to the historical Islamic tradition to care for the underprivileged and the needy. Social practices pertaining to this tradition have for centuries been underpinned by numerous passages in the Quran and hadiths (the sayings of the prophet), according to which believers are to give generously and to help those in need. This is not to say that the activities of Islamic FBOs are solely determined by a religious dogma and the urge to spread religious teachings to everyone in need. Specific constraints and opportunities in separate communities have as well shaped the structure, motivation, and rationale of FBOs.

Generally, religious social organizations in Muslim communities appear to be uniquely well-positioned to offer a sustainable version of economic development. First, they managed to establish networks of service provision in areas where neither the government nor other secular nonprofits exist. Second, not only do they offer a physical organizational presence, they are as well supported by widely accepted Islamic values that emphasize human dignity, moral life styles, equality, and honest work. In short, they offer an interesting and compelling combination of organizational and spiritual resources for both distressed and oppressed communities. However, the perception of success remains more a matter of “faith, anecdote, or case study (Reese, 2000: 86)”. The efforts and contributions of Islamic FBOs remain largely a disputed topic that is flooded with exaggerated claims and counterclaims.

The arguments and historical background presented in this chapter suggests that Islamic charitable societies, religious endowments, and modern day FBOs contribute in a number of ways to the provision of social services in the PT. Many religious organizations help to provide formal service programs, either by directly funding and administering these programs, or by contributing financial support to other organizations. The arguments also hint to the limits of faith-based service provision. Islamic social organizations are more likely, it appears, to provide

help in the shape of basic, but essential services than to invest in long-term developmental projects. Travelling in Palestine, it is very common to witness schools, hospitals, mosques, and orphanage houses with signs referring to their religious funding, but it is scarcer to see large development projects bearing the same mark. Making sense of such arguments requires stepping away from the various facts and figures presented here and reflecting more broadly on the roles that FBOs and religious charitable societies play in the Palestinian society. It is more pertinent to understand the widespread contributions of religious philanthropy when one takes into consideration the whole sector rather than individual cases. Most of the studies that looked at NGOs or FBOs in the Middle East were mainly based on larger and well-established organizations at the expense of smaller and narrowly focused organizations. This is an unfortunate outcome given that many FBOs in the PT are considered small organizations with budgets less than \$50,000/year (more on this topic in the next chapter).

This lack of attention to FBOs is a direct consequence to the trajectory in the study of political Islam. In the space of two decades, political Islam moved from being viewed as an anachronism to being considered one of the leading features of political life and institutional change in the region. From the mid-1980s onward, there has been an exponential growth of two comparatively new bodies of literature attempting to explain political change in the Muslim world: democratization studies and studies of Islamism (Volpi, 2009). The growing effort of religious groups to pursue political goals in the Middle East has attracted scholarly attention to the role of Islam in civil society and democracy (Roy, 2001). In the Palestinian territories, much of this attention has focused on Hamas, which has proven capable of igniting people's desires to be active in political participation, but has often been intolerant of legitimate pluralism in public life (as the increasing reports from Gaza show). This new tenor of religious-based political

participation raised important questions and provided illuminating analysis about the role of Islam in public life and the future Muslim communities. As a result, the fields of political Islam and Arab civil society were significantly enriched due to the contributions of multiple scholars who keenly poured over the complex nuances that shade that region of the world. This newly developed attraction to the role of Islam in political life, as the Palestinian case demonstrates, was mainly fixated on the role of politically affiliated religious groups, organizations and movements. For example, we now know much about how Islamic social movements influence individuals' social involvement, as well as, the reasons behind the resurgence of Islamic oppositional parties. But, we still know very little about the ways in which nonpolitically affiliated religious organizations are politically engaged.

Any attempt to empirically examine the political role of FBOs and the strategies they use to influence policy processes must first offer a descriptive portrait to distinguish between them and other secular service providers. To date, there has been no empirical work that directly compares Islamic FBOs working in the Arab region with secular NGOs, thereby clarifying the field for researchers to investigate more complex issues related to FBOs. Particularly, what do FBOs actually do? How many of them sponsor service programs? Why do these programs serve and how are they organized? In the next chapter, using data gathered from all NGOs operating in the PT, I offer answers to these and other questions.

Chapter Four:

The Organization and Structure of Faith-Based Organizations in the Palestinian Territories: Funding, Location, Services, and Beneficiaries?

Abstract

The presence of faith-based organizations (FBOs) in the Middle East delivering social goods and services to deprived individuals has been known to exist for the last seven centuries at least. Yet, in today's Middle Eastern intricate politics and changing world affairs, the topic of FBOs tends to create more debate than consensus. This chapter presents an initial evaluation of the status, characteristics and activities of FBOs in the Palestinian Territories (PT). Using both data gathered during field research in the West Bank during 2010 and 2011 and results from the Palestinian Civil Society Organizations' 2010 survey this study investigates the role played by FBOs in providing social services to the Palestinian communities and how they manage to fund their programs. The findings of this study identify that FBOs operating in the PT differ from the general perception, which conceives Islamic FBOs as 'holistic' enterprises providing services that cover all types of needs. It also shows that faith-based service providers are not solitary organizations with limited interaction with other players in the Palestinian civil society. Finally, even though they do not participate largely in outright advocacy related programs, FBOs' objectives reflect an awareness of their political role in society.

4.1 Introduction

In the Arab world, policy makers and practitioners have started to show recently an increasing interest in religious forms of philanthropy and faith-based organizations. The contribution that faith-based organizations (FBOs) can and might produce an increasing loyalty for religious political parties has been of particular interest (Roy 2011, Jawad 2009, Clarke 2006, Clark 2004, Wickham 2002). Accompanying this trend in public policy is a growing body of research-based literature that examines aspects of service provision by Islamic FBOs and how this may affect the future of political Islam (Harmsen 2008, Bayat 2003, Zubaida 2002, Roy 2001). Some of this research is anchored in public policy, sociology, and anthropology

traditions. It focuses on the contribution that FBOs and the wide network of smaller charitable societies can and do make to public policy formulation and implementation. Carrie Wickham (2002), for example, provides a compelling analysis of how moderate Islamist activists “captured the hearts and minds of many of Egypt’s educated youth” making the Muslim Brotherhoods the largest oppositional block during the reign of Egypt’s previous president Hosni Mubarak. Janine Clark (2004), using case studies from Egypt; Yemen; and Jordan, revealed the role played by Islamic social institutions in inducing a larger Islamist movement. Sara Roy (2011) demonstrated how Hamas’ funded social institutions in the West Bank and Gaza advocate a moderate approach to change that valued order and stability, not disorder and instability; were less dogmatically Islamic than is often assumed; and served people who have a range of political outlooks and no history of acting collectively in support of radical Islam.

Most of these studies of faith-based service provision have in common a focus on individual organizations. The relationship between an individual welfare institution or FBO and its tightly knitted relation with the surrounding community is occasionally mentioned, especially in studies of Islamic social movements (Petersen 2012, Jawad 2009, Harmsen 2008, Ibrahim and Sherif 2008, Jawad 2005, Wiktorowicz and Taji Farouki 2000). There have been, also, some studies about ‘intermediary’ large, religious foundations that act as mediators between donors and smaller organizations or that seek to function outside the faith boundaries (De Cordier 2009, Benthall 2008, Alterman and Von Hippel 2007). But even in these studies, the focus was essentially on individual organizations.

The emphasis on individualized conceptualization of FBOs and the description of how single organizations were successful in changing their environment has proved to be informative given the lack of any previous attention. Yet, with the rapid political and social changes taking

place in the Arab world, and confronted with environmental turbulence and resource decline FBOs, like other human service organizations, are more likely to form network relationships in which participants are engaged in reciprocal, preferential and mutually supportive actions. After all, reputation, interdependence, and altruism are the foundations of a network and the basis of collective action (Powell, 1990). Empirical evidence from research on human service sector corroborates this view (Alexander 2000, Salamon et al 2008, Huang and Chenier 2011).

Studying FBOs as individual organizations is, therefore, no longer sufficient for more informed policy decisions. First, it does not deliberately reflect the fact that FBOs represent only a single participant in a complex civil society, and as such they are prone to pressures not only from the state apparatus but from other players in the civil society into which they are organizationally embedded. Second, a focus on individual religious organizations does not acknowledge the collaborative networks with other secular partners that FBOs many times rely on for survival. Third, framing a study from an individual FBO's perspective does not fully reflect the new policy pressures (Harris et al, 2005). For if religious social institutions are to expand their role in civil society by providing more varied services to wider geographical locations through more sophisticated projects, they, like any other nonprofit, will have to consider the ensuing managerial, organizational, and funding challenges. This new position may force a FBO to behave and function more like a secular organization. Finally, individual conceptualization of FBOs may lead to overestimating their role in the society. After all, the majority of Arab societies are conservative and the nature of Islam as a religion colors many aspects of daily life with a religious shade. Any special status attributed to FBOs may be thus a reflection of their ideology rather than their services. Hence, the need for careful consideration for collaborations across FBOs and other partners in civil society becomes particularly apparent.

This chapter takes a step forward toward responding to these new conceptual challenges by providing a description and analysis to the current status, capacity, and objectives of FBOs operating in the PT. In light of the gap in the provision of social welfare services in the PT that, at least rhetorically, has supported a substantial role for FBOs in community development and service provision, there is a need to constructively show the current nature of FBOs away from any political or ideological rhetoric. Given the modest number of studies in the Middle East in general and the PT in particular that had previously looked at the role of FBOs and their social service delivery mechanisms, this chapter seeks to answer the following questions: (1) To what extent are community services in the Palestinian territories delivered by faith-based nonprofit organizations? (2) Who are the people served by FBOs and what is their role within the organization? (3) Are FBOs more prevalent in certain types of community services? (4) Do FBOs see their role growing or shrinking? And (5) are faith-based service providers solitary organizations or do they form collaborative networks with other civil society actors?

The descriptive arguments and analysis I provide by answering these questions would be interesting regardless the future political situation, but its significance is heightened by the reinvigorated policy debates sparked by the events of the ‘Arab Spring’ and the triumph of Islamic parties in recent elections at multiple countries in the Arab world. Participants in this debate have offered many claims and counterclaims about the role of Islamic FBOs and charitable societies in hindering or facilitating the development of civil society and the general political settings, and in this chapter I will use evidence from a new data source about secular NGOs and FBOs operating in the PT to address three of the most common, and important of these claims.

The first claim to which I pay special attention to is the notion that Islamic FBOs are a special breed because they are not structured to provide a narrowly-focused service to a limited targeted population, rather, their adherence to true Islamic values position them to be sponsors for a more inclusive socio-economic and spiritual model in which both the worldly and heavenly needs are met. Supporters of this claim argue that faith-based service delivery is more compelling because of FBOs' perceived accessibility to clients, trustworthiness, flexibility, constant community presence, holistic treatment of clients, and ability to deliver services with a personal touch and caring attitude (Ebaugh, Pipes, Chafetz, and Daniels 2003; Lockhart 2005; Sherman 2003). This assumption is evident in the publications and PR campaigns of international Islamic aid agencies. For example, a recent report by Islamic Relief, one of the largest FBOs in the world, asserts that:

“charity in Islam is not only about alleviating material poverty in the short-term through individual acts; rather, Islamic teachings focus on broader concepts of social and economic development as part of a holistic approach to human development (Veen, 2009)”.

Or as one of the attendees to the Center for the Study of Islam and Democracy's (CSID) annual conference summarized the benefits of Islamic charitable institutions:

“The function of [Islamic] charitable and civil society institutions thus goes beyond meeting the seemingly eternal needs of low-income groups for assistance with life's daily requirements. These institutions function as well as oil on the wheel of change, taking some of the friction out of difficult and societal and political transitions by helping to meet newly emerging needs, assisting populations displaced or dispossessed by change, and creating new connection linking emerging interest groups to the broader policy (Bremer, 2004: 6)”

The ensuing notion of Islamic FBOs here is a group of organizations fully immersed in religious teachings and values, and in which Islamic traditions dictate their vision, mission, and future discourse. They are holistic in their service by trying to address all of their clients' needs rather than just focusing on emerging necessities. Principally, this last notion envisages FBOs as

multi-service institutions in which services are not concentrated in certain specialties, but instead they cater for multiple classes of beneficiaries (e.g. children, adults, elderly) with multiple kinds of services (e.g. education, health, housing).

A second common claim is related to their position in civil society: Islamic FBOs are perceived as an isolated bunch that distrust the state and are skeptic to cooperating with other secular organizations. Adherents to this argument like to cite the tendency of international aid agencies in choosing secular NGOs as their local partners in developing countries to Islamic organizations (Bruinessen, 2007), or that employees and managers in FBOs are always exposed to unfair police treatment (Harmsen 2008, Wiktorowicz 2001). This claim is usually offered by anthropologists who spend a long stretch of time with a number of individual organizations (Wickham 2002, Clark 2004). Practitioners also offer it as an explanation for the lack of any cooperation between their organizations and local grassroots FBOs (Benedetti, 2006).

Although claims of this sort depict Islamic FBOs as outcasts and on the fringe of welfare provision in their communities, the underlying logic for the meager collaborative initiatives between aid agencies and local FBOs is more related to the risk of being involved in ‘terrorist’ related activities. Islamic charities already had a bad image in much of the non-Muslim world as a result of dubious activities on behalf of a number of them during the Afghan war in the 1980s and the Balkan conflict in the 1990s (Benthall, 2007), and that is even before their image was tarnished after 9/11/2001. The skeptic perception in which Western governments conceive Islamic FBOs caused the latter group to be a persona non grata to other civil society members who were afraid to be associated with a ‘terrorist’ organization. Accusing some Islamic charities to be just a front for political parties did not advance their image as well.

The final and third claim is related to the second: Because FBOs are perceived with suspicion from both their local and international governments they choose to refrain from supporting or funding any political agendas. Likewise, to thrive in authoritarian environments, FBOs had to have a well-defined arrangement with the ruling regime stating that their operations will only be allowed as long as they do not criticize the state or call for a different governance structure (Wiktorowicz, 2001). Claims of this sort usually emphasize the placidity towards the state. As Janine Clark (2004) concluded, Islamic FBOs reflect the desires and outlooks of those sections of the middle class who are relatively excluded in socio-economic and political life. The latter do not seek to start a revolution to topple the upper classes, but of having a larger “piece of the state pie” and share power with those upper classes. Consequently, Clark notes that, while Islamist social activism “has brought about significant changes in the civil society,” it has also failed “to alter the political structure (2004: 52)”.

In this chapter, I examine these three claims—FBOs are organized to provide a complete portfolio of services that covers social; economic and spiritual needs, they shun cooperation with secular partners, and they avoid getting involved in any initiatives that could be deemed political by the state—using data from both field work and a new survey exploring civil society organizations in the PT, to present findings on the organizational characteristics of FBOs, services they are involved in, sources of revenues and expenses, obstacles inhibiting their advancement, and partners and collaborators. By this I aim to draw attention to an important player in the Palestinian civil society that has been consistently sidelined by international aid agencies and the consecutive Palestinian governments.

The second part in this chapter introduces the case study and explains why a single case may offer a better methodology in the study of Islamic social organizations. The treacherous

topic of ‘Islamic political parties’ and their ‘partners’ in social organizations is further explained and refuted in part three. Part four discuss the data and methods used. Results from fieldwork and a new survey that collected information from almost all nonprofits registered in the PT are used. Limitations to the methodology used are also explained in part four. Findings that compare the organizational characteristics, goals, funding, expenses, targeted beneficiaries, and partners among faith-based organizations and their secular counterparts is presented in part five. Part six discuss the findings and part seven concludes.

4.2 A Threat vs. an Opportunity: The Role of FBOs in the Palestinian Territories

FBOs represent only one major dimension of a larger complex network of actors and organizations within the Palestinian civil society. Yet, little is known about how FBOs organize and finance their activities. This issue is particularly important in light of the reinvigorated public debate on religious philanthropy and the newly accumulated political power of religious political parties. The FBOs sector is comprised of a complex network of small and large nonprofits, religious institutions, semi-governmental agencies, international aid agencies, and the social arms of political factions. Although the majority of FBOs are small, a number of them have managed to build large enterprises with programs and activities that span the whole West Bank and Gaza. This network is further complicated by the fact that many FBOs work on a very narrow scale among a small target of beneficiaries with a limited resource base creating what may appear to be a chaotic and sometimes unstable system.

Undersigning their role in public policy and the strategies they deploy to influence the policy process within their domain is further complicated by a relative absence of any previous empirical research or even accessible, trusted descriptive data. In an effort to limit this

complexity, the research design underlying this dissertation focuses upon one case: the Palestinian Territories (PT). In discussing the local-level nonprofit sector, Lester Salamon (1995) notes, “the only way to get a reliable profile of even the national nonprofit sector [religious and secular] is to focus on the local level and examine a reasonable cross section of local areas (p.59)”. This study follows Salamon’s recommendation to study a local-level population of institutions.

There are several advantages to a single-case approach (Jackson-Elmoore et al 2011: 76). First, examining the role of faith-based institutions within a single domain controls for local legislation regarding the activities and registration for nonprofit organizations. There is a widespread difference among governments in the Arab world in the way they deal with and regulate their civil society institutions. While in Saudi Arabia it is almost impossible to have an independent nonprofit organization without the harsh hand of the state interfering with its daily activities, NGOs in Lebanon and the PT are given a wider margin to function and execute their programs. In addition, the development and proliferation of FBOs in the Middle East reflect: (1) the nature of post-colonial governments and their sensitivity to the role of civil society and (2) the major theological traditions for each region. By combining the effects of these two distinctive historical traits a stronger narrative can be constructed to explain the proliferation of FBOs in Egypt, for example, or their scarcity in Syria.

Second, focusing on the PT allows for an in-depth understanding of the methods and outcomes of faith-based service provision. As explained in the previous chapter, an intense (and in many times violent) national debate on the role of Islamic FBOs in the provision of public services has been raging ever since the establishment of the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) in 1994 and culminating in Hamas’s unexpected victory at the Palestinian Legislative

Council elections in early 2006. In a tweaked political rhetoric, this debate echoed a more international one about the role of Islamic social institutions in funding terrorist activities in Western countries, which in itself peaked after the events of September 11th, 2001. Participants in these debates have offered many claims and counterclaims about religious organizations' social services. This debate will not come to an end anytime soon. Yet, the existence of FBOs is real and their role is expected to broaden with the escalating financial troubles of the PNA and the cutbacks in future pledged foreign aid. Without embracing the reality and understanding the opportunities or threats attributed to FBOs we are ignoring the contributions of a significant contributor in the Palestinian civil society.

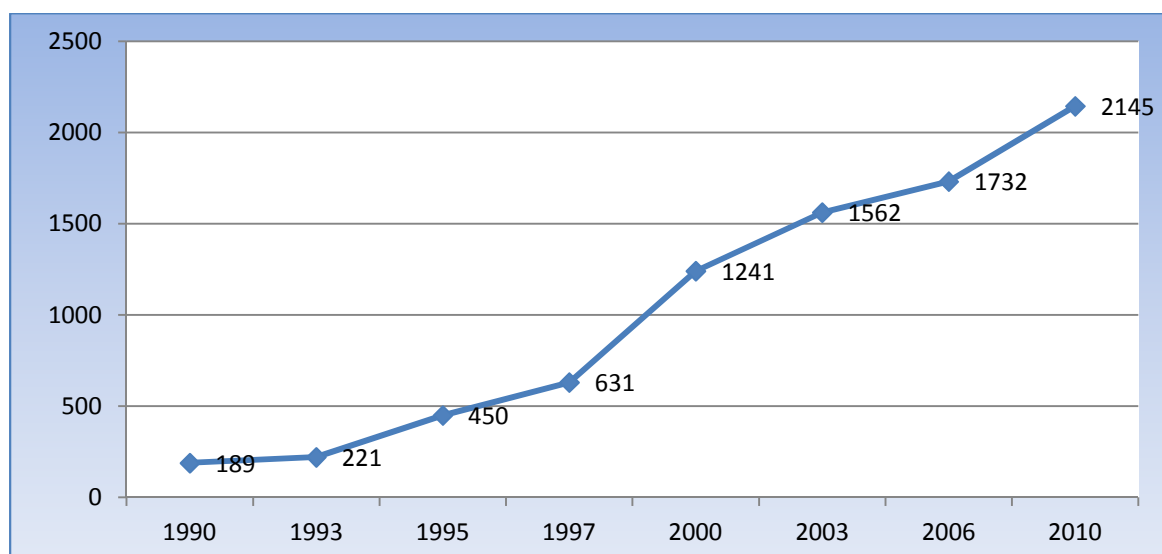
4.3 Faith-Based Organizations: A Consistent Misperception?

A range of social, political, economic, and geostrategic issues have altered the organizational and institutional landscapes of the Palestinian territories during the last two decades. Their cumulative impact had wide consequences on almost every aspect of life for the average Palestinian individual. It not only altered the governing structure under which the Palestinians have been living since 1967, but it also created extensive changes in market dynamics, urban sprawl, agricultural production, academic curricula, and social values just to name a few. The undercurrents of the Palestinian civil society have also gone through a broad makeover, which resulted in the creation of a new civil society structure with minimum resemblance to its predecessor (more about that in chapter 5).

After signing the Oslo Peace agreements between the Israeli government and the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) in 1993, the Palestinians living in the West Bank and Gaza Strip became the recipients of large amounts of foreign aid. Although, the majority of this

aid was donated to support the new institutions of the recently established Palestinian Authority, billions of U.S. Dollars in aid still found its way to an expanding sector in the Palestinian Territories: the NGO sector (Brynen 2000; 2004, Keating et al 2005, Challand 2008, Le More 2008, DeVoir and Tartir 2009). Thousands of NGOs appeared on the scene after 1993 (Devoir and Tartir, 2009). Their services ranged from providing essential welfare and social services to more professional ones that deal with human rights and corruption in the PA (advocacy NGOs) [see Figure 4.1 for the number of NGOs registered in PT].

Figure 4.1: The Number of Registered NGOs in the Palestinian Territories between 1990 and 2010



Source: Ministry of Interior (MoI), the Palestinian Non-Governmental Originations Network (PNGO), and the Union for Palestinian Charities.

4.4 Data and Methods: Identifying a Faith-Based Organization

When it comes to social service institutions or charitable societies, “knowing the name of the organization, its purpose or its public persona may be insufficient to identify it as faith-based (Ebaugh et al, 2003: 412)”. In a study that took place in the United States and included only

Christian religious institutions, Unruh and Sider (2001) conceptualized FBOs by acknowledging the following two dimensions of religiosity: (1) environmental elements that include affiliation with a religious institution (e.g. Church, Mosque), physical display of religious symbols, or a mission statement that includes explicit references to religious traditions; and (2) active religious elements, such as, the call to join a certain religious congregation or supporting one or more religious activities. Smith and Sosin developed a different conceptualization (2001) to differentiate FBOs from secular ones. They argue that the former group has to: (1) be dependent on religious sources for funding; (2) be affiliated or controlled by a religious group; and (3) adopt a religious culture that creates a niche for organizations to pursue their religious values. Although attempts to clarify the concept of faith-based service provision offer researchers a simpler mechanism to study FBOs, what these attempts lack, however, is a clear understanding of the unlimited manifestations which religion can assume in the daily operations of an organization.

Clearly, there are many perspectives from which one might approach the study of religious organizations and many ways to assess the extent to which data on religious organizations are adequate to the task of answering important questions about those organizations (Chaves, 2002:1523). Lack of data about FBOs in the Middle East deems the task even more complicated. The discussion, debate and accusations about the role of faith based organizations in providing humanitarian assistance, initiating developmental projects, or even mingling with the treacherous political processes in this region has mainly took place in the absence of data that can accurately demonstrate how FBOs embark on their daily operations. Part of this ensuing gap has to do first with the current nature of FBOs in this region. Rather than enjoying a distinctive category within the large sector of non-governmental organizations the

organizational structure, funding, management, and programs of most Middle Eastern FBOs blur the line between a traditional secular NGO and that of a faith-based or religious one. For example, as has been the case in most countries around the world there is no legal or regulatory definition of a faith based organization in the PT. This official obscurity allowed many organizations to acquire a certain religious esteem from its beneficiaries and donors while at the same time avoid the fury of the Palestinian Authority, which is troubled, with the rise of religious actors. Although some organizations, for instance, receive funding from local religious institutions and their goals are based on religious teachings the directors of these organizations claim that they are far from being a faith-based one.

The second hindrance that limited research on FBOs in the Middle East has to do with the fragile political situations in most countries in the region. In particular, the close relationship between Islamic movements and Islamic political parties and many FBOs has made it almost impossible to build a descriptive database about FBOs in the region. As Romano put it “research addressing politically sensitive matters [in the Middle East], remains qualitative rather than quantitative in nature. The data simply is not there, or not credible, for politically sensitive issues (Romano, 2006: 440)”. Within that domain, the actual data on FBOs operating in the PT is limited. To overcome these obstacles and provide multi-faceted exploration into this topic, I incorporate analysis from two separate sets of data: 1) field work in the West Bank which included interviews with leaders of FBOs, and 2) the Palestinian Civil Society Organizations 2010 Survey.

4.4.1 Qualitative Data: Interviews

To provide a vintage point on the non-profit sector in the PT in general and FBOs in particular, I draw on interviews I conducted during two field trips to the West Bank between June and September 2010 and again in January and March 2011. 47 interviews have been conducted with the directors of FBOs and 15 with the directors of secular NGOs in an effort to understand how FBOs structure and distribute their service delivery. Another eight interviews have been conducted with government officials to work out how the new rules and laws governing the sector of non-for-profit organizations, which took place in 2007, are affecting the work of NGOs in the PT.

A list of all operating NGOs in the PT was first compiled from data supplied by the Ministry of Interior in Ramallah, the Palestinian Non-Governmental Originations Network (PNGO) and the Union for Palestinian Charities. These lists were combined and crosschecked to yield a total of 2,345 NGOs operating in the PT. The primary listing of organizations was refined following a series of iterative steps, including neighborhood canvassing, phone calls, and referrals. This process was undertaken to identify defunct or nonoperational organizations and to uncover any organizations that were not represented in the initial list.

Using the telephone directory and personal visits to verify the existence of some of these organizations revealed that the list included a number of organizations that cease to exist anymore. Overall, 254 organizations were removed and sixty-three were added producing a final list with 2,154 organizations. According to the classifications assigned by the Ministry of Interior, the majority of these organizations operate in the following sectors:

- Rural development
- Charity and Relief
- Health services

- Children's Activities
- Liberal Arts Education
- Vocational training
- Human rights
- Youth and Sports

These sectors in particular constitute more than 75% of funding coming from external donors to the Palestinian NGOs between the years 1999-2006 (DeVoor and Tartir, 2009). The list of 2,154 organizations was used as the initial contact list of FBOs and NGOs in the West Bank. The challenge then was to determine which organizations are religiously based and which are secular? The most straightforward operationalization of an organization's religiousness probably is that it self-identifies as such by having a religious marker in its formal name, and/or religious language in its formal mission statement (Chaves, 2002). Given that the compiled list lacks any category distinguishing among faith-based and secular organizations, I used the name of the organization as a proxy for its status. All NGOs that contains (1) the word Islam or any of its derivatives such as Muslim, Islamic, etc., and (2) NGOs with a name that contains one or more words that are generally associated with Islamic heritage, culture, thought, or history were labeled as FBOs. Of the total number in the list, 396 (%18.4) were labeled as such. To double check their status, I examined the available mission statements and program descriptions reported by these organizations – either by checking their website or reading their registration application at the Ministry of Interior – looking for statements (e.g. “our objectives are based in Islam”, or “we main to satisfy God”) that may confirm their status as an FBO. Locating such a statement was not a requirement to be included in the faith-based category but offered validation for their inclusion. All of the 396 organizations were contacted by phone and email (whenever it was provided) and asked to participate in the study. Only 54 organizations provided their initial acceptance to take part. Data were collected during a face-to-face, semi-structured interview with

the organization's general manager. The interviews took place during the summer of 2010 and winter and summer of 2011. The self-identification of the organization as a faith-based or secular was further confirmed again orally during the interview process. As previously assumed, all organizations with a faith-based term in their names considered themselves to be FBOs.

All interviewed organizations were located in the West Bank. The interviews lasted between 45-100 minutes. The questionnaire contained questions that included the following components:

- Organizational information
- Motivation for work
- Dependence on employees vs. volunteers
- Characteristics of beneficiaries
- Geographical range of services
- Connections with religious institutions
- Relations with the government
- Funding sources
- Obstacles and constraints
- Future plans

I did not present a list of characteristics that define the type of organizations in which I was interested in as a screening question because, in the absence of prior research on such organizations, I was not sure what is the range of traits that might be empirically available. Generally speaking, the 54 organizations that replied positively to my interview request have similar organizational characteristics to the general populations of FBOs (Tables 4.1 & 4.2). What sets the interviewed FBOs from the general population, however, is their ability to talk publically about their work. Although I cannot confirm to the status of the other FBOs, but the organizations I interviewed were generally prepared to present themselves to the public. Many of

them have even an appointed person whose responsibility was to communicate with any interest from the outside world. One may assume that these organizations have established good relations with the PNA and hence they have no motive to hide their work or sources of finance. But as the next chapters will demonstrate clearly, many of them are involved with legal battles with the PNA and the Israeli military courts, and at least five organizations have seen their assets confiscated by the Israeli army.

Table4.1: Organizational Characteristics (in Percentages)

	Faith-Based (n= 324) *	Secular (n= 1536) *	Interviewed (n=54)
<u><i>Age of Organization:</i></u>			
0-5 years	19%	28%	20%
6-10 years	28	35	26
11-15 years	16	18	12
15-20 years	21	11	25
More than 20 years	16	8	17
<u><i>Population Areas Served</i></u>			
Urban	56	61	58
Rural	23	28	22
Refugee Camps	41	11	38
<u><i>Volunteers vs. Employees:</i></u>			
Volunteers	63	42	65
Employees	37	58	35
<i>*Source: Palestinian Civil Societies 2009 Survey, MAS, Ramallah, West Bank</i>			

Table4.2: Budget Size/Year for Interviewed FBOs vs. the Larger Population of FBOs

	All Faith-Based (n=324)	Interviewed FBOs (n=54)
Budget Category		
\$0- \$40,000	31%	29%
\$40,001- \$80,000	24	25
\$80,001- \$150,000	21	24
\$150,001- \$250,000	15	14
Over \$250,000	9	8

While in the field I used the term “religious organizations” to refer to FBOs rather than the commonly cited term “Islamic social institutions”, noting that these organizations provide a wide range of services to the community at large. Thus, diverting from prior research on FBOs that concentrated primarily on welfare organizations, I opted to include a wide range of FBOs to observe their extent of involvement beyond traditional human services and, therefore, develop a broader notion of “community services” (Kearns et al, 2005). I excluded all organizations whose mission is exclusively or primarily the promotion of religious beliefs or values through religious services, publications, and so on. This criterion excluded all organizations that raise the flag of ‘*D’awwa*’ or proselytization. Simply stated, all of the organizations described in this research are founded to provide some type of public services and goods to the community.

It should be clear that there is no way to be certain that the ultimate list includes every element of the potential population, which may explain why random or systematic sampling was difficult at the outset. Identifying all FBOs active in the PT is almost an impossible task given: (1) the problematic nature of faith within organizations (not to mention the political sensitivity of the topic), (2) sources used to compile the list were either incomplete or dated, and (3) many small FBOs are short-lived endeavors reflecting the fact that research relying on existing or newly created lists is likely to underrepresent new, smaller FBOs (Reese, 2004). Even more confusing is the methodological challenge presented by the fact that the charitable society sector

in the PT has attracted many individuals whose work ethics and motivation is influenced by their religious beliefs even though they may not work for a religious organization¹³. Yet, after employing a variety of methods to attain as accurate a list as possible for all active NGOs and differentiate among faith-based and secular organizations, I am confident that most organizations with any significant role in civil society are included in the original list of 2,154 organizations.

4.4.2 The Palestinian Civil Society Organizations 2010 Survey (2010 MAS Survey)

The Palestine Economic Policy Research Institute (MAS) in cooperation with the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics conducted three surveys in 2002, 2007 and 2010 to map all the Palestinian NGOs working in the PT. The surveys are part of a comprehensive project to understand what population areas Palestinian NGOs serve, their sector of work, funding sources, local and international partners, obstacles faced, and to examine the rules of administrative work and existing practices in order to understand the organizations' administrative structure. The 2010 survey contained more components that were missing in the previous two, such as relationship with the government, assets owned, and changes in sector of work since incorporation. The 1860 organizations included in the survey are the ones "which met the international definition of a 'civil society' organization and a charity (MAS, 2010). According to the researchers responsible for the three surveys, the organizations that met the classification standards were determined during the data collection period (Mas, 2007). Although the researchers reached more than 1860 organizations, the final results showed that some organizations were under preparation, had a branch that is not allowed to release information, or stopped functioning temporarily. The 2010 MAS survey contained 94 items that asked for

¹³ During fieldwork I interviewed several managers at secular NGOs who claimed that their motivation to join the nonprofit sector (as volunteers or paid employee's) is based on the conviction that their efforts will be rewarded in Heaven.

information and judgments from respondents regarding mission and programs, organizational capacity, funding sources, collaborative initiatives, obstacles and challenges, internal governance, evaluation mechanisms, and targeted populations.

Given that the 2010 survey does not distinguish among faith-based and secular organizations the classification for the purposes of this dissertation was conducted through a twofold process. First, all NGOs with key faith-based terms in their name or those that mention ‘religious activities’ as part of their funded projects were labeled as FBOs. Second, a content analysis of the available mission statements and registration forms was conducted by examining each to see whether—regardless the organization’s name—it mentions any of the following: (1) “Allah” or “God”; (2) mentions or uses verses from The Quran; (3) mentions The Prophet or quotes any of his sayings (*Hadith*); (4) defines service delivery as a religious calling; (5) lists satisfying spiritual needs as one of their aims; and (6) identifies a certain Mosque as the physical location where service delivery will take place. Among the available 962 registration forms and mission statement, 213 (%22) of them had words or phrases that fit one or more of the six content analysis categories, of which 178 organizations (%83.5) had a religious name.

Although there are both Islamic and Christian FBOs functioning in the PT this chapter focuses mainly on the former. My interest does not in any way underestimate the role played by Christian FBOs in delivering social services to the Palestinian communities, however given that a majority of them are branches of either large international organizations (e.g. World Vision; Catholic Relief; Caritas) or local arms for overseas churches (e.g. the Lutheran Welfare Organization; the Papal Mission; the International Greek Orthodox Organization)¹⁴ I decided to

¹⁴ In fact, the list I compiled has only seven organizations with Christian faith-based terms in their name.

exclude Christian FBOs in this chapter because local players had a limited role in establishing or funding them.

It must be stated that using the 2010 MAS survey is a cost-effective but inherently not a faultless method, because it almost certainly underrepresents the total number of nonprofits, especially small organizations, in any given geographic area. Furthermore, data used here is based on self-reported assessments of organizational capacity and status by leaders of the organizations. Obviously, whenever relying on self-reported data there is the risk “that respondents will not give accurate answers, especially to questions on organizational capacity that might be ambiguous, subjective, or even interpreted as a reflection of the respondent’s management performance (Kearns et al, 2005: 214)”. I addressed this issue by asking my interviewees a number of questions from the survey and compare their answers with that in the survey. Although both answers were almost identical, it should be noted however, that self-reported assessments cannot always be taken at face value.

Overall, 324 organizations (17.4%) in the MAS survey were labeled as FBOs. This category included the following organizations:

- Charitable societies belonging to places of worship;
- Specialized religious institutions and religious social service agencies; and,
- Nonprofit organizations that have a religious character, mission, or name.

4.4.3 Methodological Limitations

The arguments and descriptive nature presented in this chapter will not be the last word on the structure, motivation, and capacity of Islamic FBOs, in part because the analysis is limited in three important ways. First, as I explained earlier, the 2010 MAS survey lacks any question

that provides straightforward differentiation between faith-based and secular NGOs. Without allowing organizations to self-identify themselves as ‘faith-based’; researchers run the risk to over or underestimate the real status of FBOs. Until a new and updated survey with a separate section asking about the organization’s ideology, it would be difficult to gauge the true capacity of FBOs.

Second, the MAS survey collected information from NGOs based on their results during the physical year of 2009. As such, observations described here do not always convey an extensive historical understanding of how FBOs performed in previous years. Besides, taking into consideration the hostile attitude of the Palestinian and Israeli authorities towards Islamic FBOs in the West Bank during the time the survey was being administered, it will not come as a surprise to know that more FBOs opted either not to participate in the survey or undervalued their assets and budgets so they can escape the authorities’ suspicion. Given the current stable relations between the Fatah government in the West Bank and Hamas’s in Gaza it would be interesting to see whether FBOs in the West Bank would be more courageous to express their identity.

Third, my interviews with FBOs took place between July 2010 and June 2011. During this period several organizations operating in the West Bank were forced to close their doors as the PNA accused them of being front operations for Hamas. This unstable environment, fraught by suspicions and fear, rendered many FBOs reluctant to participate in my research. Fourth, I focused on the experiences of FBOs for only one region in the Arab world. Even though the Palestinian case offers several similarities to other countries in the region, the modern Palestinian history and the consequences of the long-term Israeli occupation produced exceptional changes in the civil society that other countries never had. The absence of any central Palestinian

government—until the establishment of the PNA in 1994—responsible for the delivery of basic social services moved this responsibility to the helm of civil society. Having been in control for the provision of public goods and services for more than half a century, local grassroots organizations and other civil society members (e.g. workers’ unions; charitable societies) acquired immense and valuable experiences, not to mention the admiration and loyalty of local communities. Future research should investigate other cases in the region in which religious faith-based services had an entrenched role in the welfare system.

4.4.4 Data from MAS Survey vs. Interviews

As I explained earlier, many FBOs were not interested in participating in either the MAS survey or my research. Although there is no data on the organizations that opted out from the MAS survey, the FBOs that did not respond to my interview requests lack any obvious common characteristics. Although all of them were legally registered with the local authorities and received permits to operate in the entire PT, they were not concentrated in certain geographical areas or involved in certain service sectors. Based on the replies I received from some of them, their refusal to participate in my research is based on their bad experiences with the Palestinian authority and their lack of trust to outsider observers.

Regardless of the fact that the researchers responsible for the MAS survey and myself found it impossible to convince all organizations to participate in our studies, there are important differences that set the information gained from the survey and the interviews apart. While as, the MAS survey was directed towards a general understanding of the status of NGOs in the PT, my interviews with the faith-based organizations were conducted with an emphasis towards understanding the interplay between the organizing process and individual perception of that process, including the way that experience is framed in terms of religiosity. By investigating the

behavior of FBOs, I base my research on a disaggregated view of civil society. In this sense, my project contrasts with the MAS survey, which sought to measure the overall strength of civil society organizations in the PT without any deliberate distinction between the various types of NGOs.

4.5 Findings

4.5.1 Organizational Characteristics

The goal of this section is to provide a wide-ranging description and analysis of the capacity of FBOs in the PT, to show their role in civil society and any future potential. To put their scale and capacity in perspective, explicit comparisons between FBOs and their secular counterparts will be explored. Tables 4.3, 4.4 and 4.5 compare secular and faith-based nonprofits by years in operation, areas served, total employees vs. volunteers, and budget according to the MAS survey.

There is a good deal of speculation in both the academic and popular literatures that secular and faith-based organizations differ in many basic organizational characteristics (Jackson-Elmoore et al, 2011). The following discussion reveals that FBOs in the PT are in some aspects not significantly different from their secular counterparts. However, the interviews and the survey also show that FBOs and secular NGOs have distinct attributes regarding their major types of operation, funding and obstacles faced. Taken together, this study yields several key findings.

Although there appears to be a great deal of variation in the basic structural indicators presented in Tables 4.3, 4.4 and 4.5, faith-based or secular status explains little of the observed variation. For example, faith-based groups are significantly older than secular providers (Table 4.3). 37% of FBOs have been in operating for at least 15 years or more compared with 19% of

secular NGOs. In contrast, roughly two-thirds of secular organizations are less than 10 years old compared with 47% of FBOs. The higher percentage of young secular organizations can be attributed to the peace agreement signed between the Israeli government at the time and the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) in 1993. As a direct result of the peace process billions of dollars were donated to the PT to support the newly established Palestinian Authority and enhance the battered civil society (Le More 2005, Challand 2008, Devoir and Tartir 2009). However, comparing the means for the number of years in operation and year founded (Table 4.5) suggest that these differences are of smaller magnitude than differences within each category of organization, and do not rise to the level of statistical significance.

Despite the variation in age, faith-based and secular organizations' services are relatively well distributed across the urban and rural areas in the PT. It is evident that FBOs provide more services to beneficiaries in the refugee camps compared to the secular NGOs. This finding is comprehensible when one takes into consideration Islamic teachings that emphasize helping the needy and poor who are more numerous in refugee camps. Therefore, any FBO seeking theological explanation for its mission feels obliged to focus its services in areas where the poor are more prevalent, as a general manager in a FBO notes:

Islam teaches us to be compassionate to our fellow brothers and sisters in need. Everyone should enjoy a dignified life which means people do not have to go to great limits to ask for help. To preserve our beneficiaries' dignities we prefer instead to approach them rather than let them seek our help.

Religious dogma cannot solely explain the tendency for religious organizations to base their services in refugee camps. After all, most NGOs—faith-based and secular—exist to help the poor and relief their needs. Another reason for this behavior can be attributed to FBOs' source of funding. A number of FBOs' directors have explained that their local and regional donors

express their preference to help Palestinians in refugee camps versus those in urban setting as the following quote clearly demonstrates:

“Most of the aid we receive from local or regional sources has no conditions attached to it. Nonetheless, several of our loyal donors prefer their zakat to be spent in refugee camps rather than city centers. They believe that urban dwellers have more opportunities for a decent life and therefore the zakat can reap more benefits if it was spent somewhere else”.

There are some interesting differences that emerge when comparing faith-based and secular organizations use of employees and volunteers. A healthy majority of 63% of the total human resources involved with the work of FBOs are volunteers compared to 42% in secular organizations. Familiarity with the work of FBOs motivates larger number of individuals to join the organization as volunteers. What differentiates Islamic NGOs from their secular counterparts, according to Wiktorowicz, “is the volunteers’ belief that they are promoting Islam through their work. It is an insider belief in the mission more than the activities themselves (2001; 85)”. Moreover, the basic welfare services FBOs involved with offer an opportunity for many unskilled individuals to offer their time as well.

FBOs’ fairly smaller budgets can as well explain their reliance on volunteers. A majority of 55% of FBOs had an annual budget in 2009 that is less than USD 80,000 compared to 47% of secular NGOs (Table 4.4). Only 9% of FBOs had a budget that exceeded USD 250,000. As with the age of the organization, comparing the means of the total budget indicated that the differences do not rise to the level of statistical significance. Interestingly, FBOs rely on volunteers more than on paid workers, as well as more than secular NGOs do. This runs alongside evidence presented in several studies that documented FBOs’ tendency to rely more on volunteers (Roy 2003, Challand 2008). More importantly, comparing the means of the number of workers and volunteers suggest that this observation is statistically significant.

Table4.3: Organizational Characteristics (in Percentages)

	Faith-Based (n= 324)	Secular (n= 1536)
<u>Age of Organization:</u>		
0-5 years	19%	28%
6-10 years	28	35
11-15 years	16	18
15-20 years	21	11
More than 20 years	16	8
<u>Population Areas Served</u>		
Urban	56	61
Rural	23	28
Refugee Camps	41	11
<u>Volunteers vs. Employees:</u>		
Volunteers	63	42
Employees	37	58
<i>Source: Palestinian Civil Societies 2009 Survey, MAS, Ramallah, West Bank</i>		

Table4.4: Budget Size/Year for FBOs and Secular NGOs

	Faith-Based (n=324)	Secular (n=1536)
Budget Category		
\$0- \$40,000	31%	21%
\$40,001- \$80,000	24	26
\$80,001- \$150,000	21	23
\$150,001- \$250,000	15	17
Over \$250,000	9	13

Table4.5: Age of organization/Annual Budget /Volunteers vs. Employees

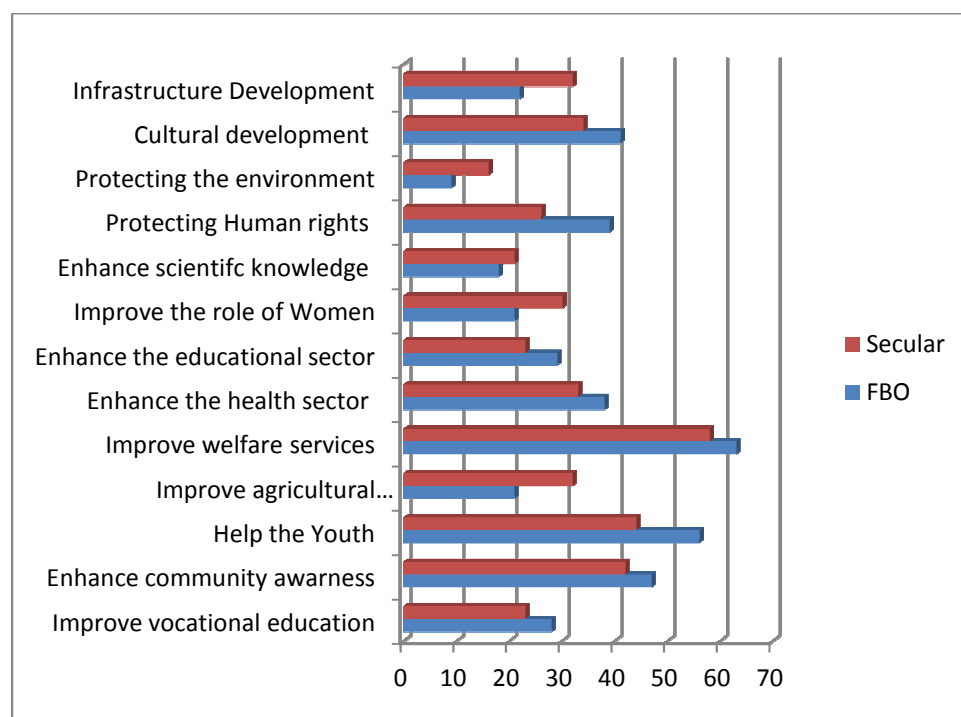
	Organization Type	N	Mean	Std. deviation	Std. error mean	t-test sig.
<u><i>Age of Organization:</i></u>						
Year Founded	Faith-Based	324	1984	7	1.4	0.23
	Secular	1536	1992	9	1.5	
Number of Years in Business	Faith-Based	324	25	7	1.4	0.33
	Secular	1536	17	9	1.5	
<u><i>Annual Budget</i></u>						
	Faith-Based	324	\$93,000	\$110,400	\$27,860	
	Secular	1536	\$82,000	\$95,435	\$51,190	0.43
<u><i>Volunteers vs. Employees:</i></u>						
Total # of Volunteers	Faith-Based	324	12.4	17.3	1.5	0.23
	Secular	1536	8.3	11.6	1.1	
Total # of Employees	Faith-Based	324	7.5	2	0.42	0.36
	Secular	1536	8.7	4.8	0.84	
Ratio of Volunteers to employed workers	Faith-Based	324	1.7	0.54	0.18	0.04**
	Secular	1536	0.72	0.23	0.17	
<i>Source: Palestinian Civil Societies 2009 Survey, MAS, Ramallah, West Bank</i>						
**Significant at the 0.05 level.						

4.5.2 Breadth, Scope, and Goals of FBOs' Service Delivery

FBOs in the PT are of interest not only due to their impact on the local policy process or the general stance among Palestinians and Israelis, but they are involved in the provision of a wide range of social services without which many Palestinians would suffer greatly. FBOs also are an active player in community and economic development. This position is widely reflected in how FBOs think of themselves and in their role within the society. For example, results from the 2009 MAS survey indicate that the reported goals and objectives of FBOs (Figure 4.2) lean towards general interpretations and wide-scale interventions rather than specific missions or aims. Sixty two percent of FBOs, for instance, reported that 'improving welfare service' is their ultimate goal compared to fifty seven percent for secular NGOs. More tellingly, around half of FBOs described their goals as 'enhancing community awareness' (56%). Reading these statistics

is surely a cause for concern for most administrators in the Palestinian authority. But how and to what extent do these goals translate into active programs on the ground?

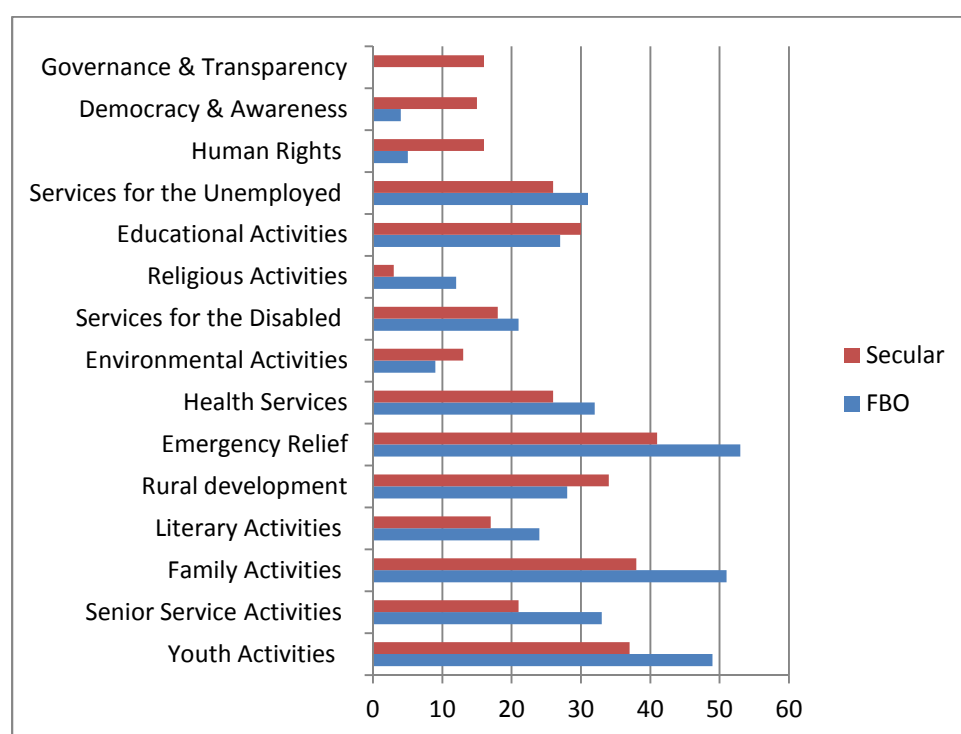
Figure 4.2: The Reported Goals and Objective of FBOs and Secular NGOs



To answer this question, one has to look at the actual programs and undertakings funded by FBOs. Figure 4.3 highlights a variety of service arenas in which FBOs and secular NGOs identified as their major activities. Overall, both FBOs and secular NGOs are involved in almost the same service arenas. What seems to break this rule though is that FBOs refrain from supporting any activities or initiatives that could be deemed ‘political’ by the PNA. Instead, this line of activity was almost solely left to secular NGOs since they are under lower levels of pressure and receive less scrutiny from the Palestinian security forces (apart from a small number of FBOs that reported ‘human rights’ activities as part of their funded programs). Family activities (51% of FBOs and 38% of secular NGOs) and emergency relief (53% of FBOs and 41% of secular NGOs) are the most common activities among nonprofits in the PT. programs for

youth activities are similarly widespread (49% of FBOs and 37% of secular NGOs). Given that FBOs opt to avoid politically sensitive activities, ‘governance & transparency’ and ‘democracy & awareness’ are only common among secular NGOs (15% and 16% respectively). Interestingly though, only four percent of FBOs reported ‘Democracy & awareness’ and five percent reported ‘human rights’ programs as part of their activities compared to 16% for secular NGOs.

Figure4.3: FBOs and Secular NGOs Participating in or Supporting Various Social Service and Political Advocacy Programs.



There is clearly a mismatch between how FBOs envisage their role in society and the actual work they are involved in. Besides, being involved in certain line of activities may be perceived by FBOs differently compared to secular NGOs. For instance, even though five percent of FBOs were funding programs related to human rights, 39% of them indicated protecting human rights as one of their major goals. When it comes to translating the lofty goals

into actual programs, most FBOs fall short of their ambitions. These observations offer a great opportunity to understand how FBOs perceive and rationalize their line of work. Refraining from the participation or the funding of political programs may not mean after all that leaders and founders of these organizations will not be participating in the political dialogue taking place in the society. On the contrary, results presented here suggest that FBOs are an avid supporter of human rights and community awareness, but the methods and programs they use to back these causes differ from what secular NGOs sponsor.

The emphasis within FBOs on providing relief and basic services while dropping advocacy campaigns and longer-term projects from their agenda demonstrate the Islamic FBOs' tendency to adopt what Sparre and Peterson (2007: 32) call an 'implementation-oriented rather than advocacy-oriented' approach. This observation may resonate with that of Gerard Clarke when he noted that faith based development organizations in general are "ready to advocate the charitable obligations of the faithful but less willing to press for political and social change (2007: 79)". The perception among many Muslim charities and organizations that their private donors will not fund certain activities also limit the service sectors FBOs are involved in (Khan and van Eekelen, 2008). This is because the perception, at least in the past, that traditional Muslim donors hold very conservative beliefs, and they also want to see a large part or preferably all of their donations being used directly in projects and not on overheads or on something as amorphous as 'advocacy' even if this produces tangible results in the long-run (*ibid*).

Another explanation for focusing only on relief and basic services can be attributed to the lack of specialist development experience and technical expertise within FBOs compared with their secular counterparts (Benthall and Bellion-Jourdan, 2003). Finally, there is a lack of

understanding among several Islamic FBOs’ advocates about how Islamic teachings relate to a range of development issues and how faith can actually structure and guide work (Khan and van Eekelen, 2008). Until solving some of the intricate issues involved with blending faith and development it would be hard to expect a sizeable transformation in the program mix embraced by Islamic FBOs.

4.5.3 Funding, Expenses, & Obstacles

The funding patterns vary significantly among faith-based and secular NGOs (Table 4:6). Palestinian philanthropists residing in the PT and Diaspora generated three-fourths of FBOs’ revenues in 2009. There is also a significant difference in the income generated internally from owned business. FBOs generate 20% of their revenue internally compared with 12% for secular organizations. This dependence on individual private funding rather than on institutional sources can be attributed to what several informants in the field called ‘the negligence of grassroots organizations’. As an interview participant from a FBO noted:

“The local charitable societies and FBOs went into a state of alienation and shock [after signing the peace process]. We thought to ourselves why we couldn’t take part in the new civil society being developed after the establishment of the PA. In particular, we were wondering why international donors have ignored us and did not seek our help in their efforts to provide social services for the Palestinians.”

Table4.6: Sources of Revenue / Funding (as Percentages of total)

	Faith Based (n=324)	Secular (n=1536)
Income generated from owned businesses (program service revenue)	20%	12
Aid from overseas organizations / governments	12	36
Grants from the Palestinian Authority	3	17
Donations from local philanthropists	37	26
Donations from Palestinians in the Diaspora	28	9

Source: Palestinian Civil Societies 2009 Survey, MAS, Ramallah, West Bank

Bypassing local FBOs cannot only be attributed to the international aid agencies and foreign governments. The Palestinian Authority lacked any plan as well to revamp or support the established charitable societies in general and FBOs in particular. As one interview participant explains:

“The role of the PA has been politicized; as a result social and charitable work in the PT has been politicized as well. Fighting among the different political factions about their role in the new authority had a negative toll on the stance and work of these charitable societies.”

As indicated in Table 4.6 as well, FBOs report that they are more dependent on internally generated revenues. Having to go through many red tapes to receive funding from overseas sources, especially after the event of 9/11, several FBOs decided to smooth the stream of revenue by either establishing small businesses or charging minor fees for the use of their current services. Moreover, given that FBOs rely much less on funding from the Palestinian Authority they seem to have more comparative advantages in securing resources (without any restrictions attached) from other sources. This ability to generate income from local communities and businesses reflects the somewhat deeper relations FBOs have with their societies. As explained in chapter one, this observation has also been attributed to other FBOs located in multiple Arabic and Islamic states. Differences in revenue patterns however do not reflect significantly on expenditure patterns (Table 4.7). Comparing the share of management and administration expenses out of total expenditure FBOs contribute 20% compared with 27% in secular organizations. This is consistent with the findings reported in the previous paragraph showing that secular organizations are more dependent on employees in their day-to-day operations. Likewise, expenses on fundraising events and brochures consume a larger share of total expenditures in secular organizations given they rely more on overseas donors, which in turn requires constant attention to foreign aid conferences, contract opportunities and proposal

deadlines. The difference disappears, however, when comparing large FBOs with large secular NGOs (those with a budget above \$150,000/year) as shown in Table 4.8. This result is consistent with other observations in different geographical settings. Comparing large faith-based and secular social service organizations in the United States, for instance, Twombly (2002) found that both types of organizations enjoy similar expenditure patterns.

Table4.7: Expense Types (in Percentages)

	Faith-Based (n= 324)	Secular (n=1536)
Program Service Expenses	72%	60
Management and Admin.	20	27
Fundraising	8	13
<i>Source: Palestinian Civil Societies 2009 Survey, MAS, Ramallah, West Bank</i>		

Table4.8: Expense Types for Large Organizations with Budgets > \$150,000 (in Percentages)

	Faith-Based (n= 9)	Secular (n=31)
Program Service Expenses	60%	56%
Management and Admin.	28	32
Fundraising	11	12
<i>Source: Palestinian Civil Societies 2009 Survey, MAS, Ramallah, West Bank</i>		

Total program service expenses, as a figure, do not reveal a great deal of information about the real intention of organizations or how they prefer to get involved in socio-economic programs. To help with this issue Table 4.9 lists the average percentage that FBOs and secular NGOs spend on each type of service. There is indeed a distinctive type of activities that FBOs prefer to get involved in. Twenty one percent of them assign their service expenses to providing food parcels for the needy compared with eleven percent in secular NGOs. FBOs are more likely as well to contribute higher percentages of their budgets to fund health services and provide clothing for the poor. Secular NGOs, on the other hand, tend more to fund services that

lead to job creation. These results suggest that FBOs are more likely to participate in or support services with a short-term gratification effect.

Table4.9: Percentage spent on the following Service compared to all services combined

	Faith Based (n=324)	Secular (n=1536)
Food Parcels	21%	11%
Cash aid	11	17
Aid for Education	18	20
Aid for Health	21	15
Aid for Job creation	8	14
Aid for clothing	10	7
Aid for insurance	4	6
Other form of Aid	8	9

Source: Palestinian Civil Societies 2009 Survey, MAS, Ramallah, West Bank

Another key finding is that obstacles faced also differ considerably across the two types of organizations (Table 4.10). Although the operations of both faith-based and secular organizations are under tight scrutiny, they look fundamentally different with regards to who is tightening the strings around their businesses. Roughly three-quarters of FBOs reported being faced with obstacles put upon them by the Israeli government, while 60% of them claimed that the Palestinian Authority is intensifying its grip on their activities compared to 17% and 39% respectively in the case of secular organizations. On the other hand, given that secular NGOs are more dependent on funds delivered by international aid agencies, donors' regulations and restrictions are reported as the major hindrance restricting their operations. The findings here do not provide an optimistic future for the development of FBOs in the PT. The continuous restrictions on activities and funds received threaten to imperil an important sector of the Palestinian civil society.

Table4.10: Major Obstacles (in Percentages)

	Faith-Based (n= 324)	Secular (n= 1536)
<i>Barriers imposed by:</i>		
Donors	8%	43%
Palestinian Authority	60	39
Local Society	14	25
Israeli Government	70	17
<i>Source: Palestinian Civil Societies 2009 Survey, MAS, Ramallah, West Bank</i>		

4.5.4 Targeted Beneficiaries and their role within the Organization

One issue that is always brought up in the literature when talking about Islamic social organizations is their tendency to be close from local communities. Islamic FBOs' projects is said to be more accessible and flexible, have the capacity to build on local skills, and enjoy a tight organization-beneficiary relation (Fawaz, 2005). It is argued as well that Islamic FBOs have managed to develop a more elaborate vision of self-sufficiency that goes beyond an increase in financial means and have placed empowerment back in its original political context (*ibid*). Although many NGOs in the region made conscious efforts to promote some kind of participation among their beneficiaries, Petersen (2012a) claimed that none of them have any mechanisms for the inclusion of beneficiaries in decision-making processes as elaborate as those exercised by FBOs. Examining the 2010 MAS survey we can see that there are not any significant differences among Palestinian FBOs and secular NGO with regards to the beneficiaries they serve (Table 4.11). Thirty eight percent of FBOs and thirty six percent of secular NGOs target their services to poor families and individuals. One of the distinctive categories of beneficiaries that are targeted more by FBOs are the families of individuals who have been killed by Israeli forces (17% vs. 7%). Secular NGOs on the other hand lean more towards supporting the unemployed and families with women as the sole breadwinner.

In addition to asking questions about the targeted beneficiaries, the survey also inquired about the role of these beneficiaries in decision-making processes. There is some evidence that beneficiaries in FBOs and secular NGOs are treated differently (Table 4.12). More FBOs reported including their beneficiaries in decision-making processes that had to do with prioritizing programs, development and planning, and evaluation. Beneficiaries in secular were only more involved in decisions that deal with the implementation stage of the program. Further, more secular NGOs perceived their beneficiaries to be only service recipients (31%) with no meaningful role in the decision-making compared to FBOs (27%). These results confirm, to an extent, previous perceptions about FBOs. They are better at incorporating their beneficiaries' needs and skills in their programs.

Table4.11: Who are your Beneficiaries (in Percentages)?

	Faith Based (n=324)	Secular (n=1536)
Poor families	26%	19%
Poor individuals	12	17
The unemployed	8	15
Families of Martyrs	17	7
Families of prisoners	13	10
Families with women as the sole bread winner	12	18
Institutions (e.g. orphan & senior homes)	7	11
Others	5	3

Source: Palestinian Civil Societies 2009 Survey, MAS, Ramallah, West Bank

Table4.12: What is the Role of Beneficiaries in your programs?

	Faith Based (n=324)	Secular (n=1536)
Active participant in prioritizing programs	17%	12%
Active participant in the development and planning stage	14	9
Active participant in the implementation stage	16	18
Active participant in the evaluation stage	23	16
Service Recipient	27	31

Source: Palestinian Civil Societies 2009 Survey, MAS, Ramallah, West Bank

4.5.5 Partners and Collaborators

Collaboration among civil society actors is an activity that in many times can guarantee survival. Comparing collaboration tendencies among FBOs and secular NGOs can provide a sharper image on the importance both groups ascribe to building collaboration and alliance networks with other actors. Recognizing the importance of collaboration, the survey asked had a separate section inquiring about NGOs' collaborators. Examples -from fieldwork- of some of the activities or initiatives on which these organizations collaborate include basic service provisions and emergency assistance like distributing food parcels, offering medications for poor patients, and providing support services for women with domestic abuse cases. Nonprofits also collaborate on long-term projects like building clinics or schools; provide long term housing for displaced refugees or deprived residents, and funding the construction of infrastructure projects for farmers and city dwellers alike. Table 4.13 below highlights collaboration partners for faith-based and secular organizations.

Table 4.13: Collaborating partners Among Palestinian Nonprofits (in Percent)

Type of Collaborator	FBOs	Secular Nonprofits
The Palestinian Government**	15%	35%
Private local Business*	52	23
Palestinian Nonprofit**	33	34
Regional (Arabic) Nonprofit*	38	24
Israeli Nonprofit	7	18
International Nonprofit	26	36
*Difference between Faith-based and Secular significant at the 0.05 level, ** at the 0.01 level		

In comparison to secular NGOs, FBOs are significantly less likely to collaborate with the Palestinian government. This should not come as a surprise given the unblemished hostility the Palestinian authority perceive Islamic FBOs. During the last three years, for example, the PA

prevented hundreds of Islamic FBOs from functioning in the West Bank. The PA's methods to accomplish this have ranged from direct threats to assets confiscation and imprisonment of FBOs' directors and employees (Challand, 2010).

Contrary to their relation with the Palestinian government and in comparison with secular NGOs, FBOs are significantly more likely to collaborate with local private businesses and regional nonprofits. This relation between local businesses and FBOs is mainly built on the 'zakat' or tithe all Muslims have to pay. Given that the Palestinian authority lacks any institutionalized mechanism to collect 'zakat', many business owners prefer to contribute their share directly to local FBOs. Zakat is not the only link between businesses and FBOs. Sami Zubaida (2002) points out that many businessmen and enterprises in Arab countries are related to movements like The Muslim Brotherhood. They contribute to social projects and charities of Islamist organizations and feed into Islamic social networks of patronage, conversion and mobilization. With regards to the regional nonprofits, the higher collaboration among them and Palestinian FBOs compared to secular NGOs is a reflection of the increasing clout of FBOs in the Arab world in general.

4.6 Discussion

A systematic examination of FBOs' wide and varied activities is particularly prudent now given the popularity of Islamic political parties in recent elections taking place in Tunisia, Egypt, and Morocco. Their popularity has already been proven as well during the Palestinian Legislative Council elections in early 2006. The current proliferation of Islamic philanthropy and FBOs in the PT, and the Arab world in general, raises a host of public policy questions ranging from the role of religion and religious values in government and legislative rules to more urgent questions of the ensuing role of civil society in a more dominated network of faith-based service provision.

Generally, secular NGOs and FBOs are encouraged to move into the field of service provision when other sources of delivery are cut and needs are rising. Ironically, religious organizations are experiencing new obligations as their motives are being viewed suspiciously. Whether and to what extent FBOs can take a larger role in the service provision sector remains at large susceptible to various streams of debate.

At the start of this chapter, I argued that the current focus on individualized conceptualization of FBOs has many shortcomings for scholarly and policy related reasons. In the light of the current sociopolitical changes in the PT and the pressures on FBOs to stray from political activities and focus more on the delivery of public services, I argued that there is also a need to depict them as partners in collaborative networks comprising other secular nonprofits, public agencies, for-profit enterprises, and political parties. Using the above descriptive results and observations as a template for a collective conceptualization of FBOs offers many interesting new avenues to think about their role in the Palestinian society. It is clear that the majority of FBOs, unlike what other have claimed, are far from being solitary enterprises with a single organizational dimension stretching from the provider to the recipient of the service. Instead, FBOs in the PT are embedded in networks and communities comprising several distinct players that share a similar organizational environment and have at least some similar features. What used to be thought of as a unique attribute to secular NGOs (e.g. aiming to enhance human rights) is also part of many FBOs' missions and objectives. Presenting it in this way opens new opportunities for future collaboration between faith-based and secular organizations. It also brings new possibilities for FBOs to envisage their own services, which in turn can carry changes to funding or organizational structures.

What is even more interesting is the information contradicting the ‘holistic’ approach claim. Although the activities and programs of FBOs cover a wide spectrum of social needs, individually, FBOs do not conform the image envisioned by those who think of them as ‘holistic’ entities or a ‘one-stop shop’ for the needy. Religious service-providers in the PT are very similar to their secular counterparts in that they are much more commonly characterized by attention to short-term emergency needs than involved and multi-dimensional interactions.

Information presented here illustrates that FBOs have a sizeable presence in the Palestinian local communities. The relationship FBOs build with their communities is distinctive from the traditional NGO-beneficiary form. It constitutes a dual connection within which FBOs play the role of both the end receiver and provider. The limited service sectors that FBOs are involved in and their focus on traditional emergency and relief work restricts their involvement into a viable actor for long-term development in the PT. Incorporating FBOs with other civil society stakeholders requires, however, a concentrated effort that goes beyond FBOs themselves. International aid agencies and the Palestinian National Authority should be both interested in making FBOs a viable partner in their ongoing attempt to revitalize the Palestinian society. To successfully and legitimately advance the concept of civil society in an environment that lacks the basic decisive factors for vigorous democratic governance, donors and advocacy NGOs have to create an ‘intellectual space’ within which the varied associations and organizations in the society “have the right to contribute to discussions about how to organize their society, deal with its problems, and ultimately define what kind of development is required and desired (Howell and Pearce, 2001: 13)”. The opposite scenario would be to use donors’ funds and power to push for an uncontested single vision of civil society, one that lacks any sensitivity for diverse

historical trajectories or the sundry meanings that may be embedded in a far stretched concept like ‘development’ or ‘civil society’.

4.7 Concluding Remarks

I have provided a wide descriptive portrait of FBOs’ current status, activities, capacity and goals in the PT, and I have argued that this portrait challenges at least two common claims about the faith-based activities in the Arab world. Contrary to the claim that FBOs are distinct from secular NGOs in their holistic, long-term and spiritual approach, FBOs are less likely to engage in religious activities and more likely to get involved in interim emergency relief initiatives such as delivering food parcels and providing temporary shelters. FBOs are a crucial part in the Palestinian welfare scene and their services fill a significant gap, but the role they play is not one that stresses a complete transformation in their beneficiaries’ well being.

Likewise, contrary to the claim that Islamic FBOs carry on their activities without seeking collaborative ties with other contributors to social services, their experience in the PT is a witness that they are far from this image. They tend to form, in fact, multiple collaborative networks with several agents. Their tendency to collaborate is not only concentrated within the nonprofit sector, many FBOs also seek partnership with for-profit enterprises and even some of them collaborate with their adversary, the PNA.

Studies and research embracing the topic of welfare activities in the Middle East have almost consistently focused on the “religious doctrine and political positioning” dimensions of these activities without yet paying any attention on how the different social and welfare programs are “endlessly evolving enactment of gender, family, local practices, community and state relationships (Naguib and Okkenhaug, 2008; 1)”. The goal should be to differentiate among various forms of organizing and structuring while avoiding reified and reductionist uses of the

concept 'FBO'. Not all FBOs operate in similar cultural, ideological, economic, and social contexts, nor do they all have the same political aspirations or significance. Much of the literature on Islamic FBOs, for instance, is concerned with those groups that are involved with funding terrorist cells or challenging secular governments in attempt to establish an Islamic state. This bias ignores the diversity of the Islamic FBO field that includes numerous examples of FBOs organized and financed on a community, national, regional, or international scale. What is at issue here is not whether FBOs are more efficient or productive compared to other secular NGOs, but what Fisher presents as "an understanding of what happens in specific places and at specific times (Fisher, 1997)".

Islamic social organizations and FBOs are providing basic public goods, financial aid, and welfare services to millions of citizen in the Arab world; as well as in other Islamic countries, nevertheless there has been little research scrutinizing the structure and functioning of these institutions, the makeup of their network, and their political and social outcomes (Clark, 2004). The current debate about Islamic movements in the Arab world does not take into consideration the substance of tactics, processes, and mechanisms of Islamic 'social' activists. The ongoing discussion about the proliferation of Islamic influence overlooks how Islamic organizations indulge in certain activities to overcome state control or repression. Although, it has been acknowledged that the social programs advocated by Islamic organizations contributed significantly to the current popularity of Islamic political parties, there has not been any study that looked on how these Islamic organizations manage to provide their services efficiently (Malka and Alterman, 2006). In a nutshell, there need to be more research that looks at what determines the formation and viability of Islamic FBOs? How do they respond to new rivals? How do they determine their service offerings and population segments? What alliance strategies

do they pursue and why? In doing this it would be beneficial to step over the polarizing debates about pro and anti FBO perspectives to consider the complex ways FBOs engage with the ideas and practices of international development in diverse and often contradictory ways, which I hope to accomplish in the next chapters.

4.7.1 Final Note

Observing Islamic FBOs in the field brings into attention two elements that add complexity to any researcher's attempt to understand and explain these organizations. First, unlike FBOs operating in Christian settings, the analytical distinction between religious and secular social organizations operating in an Islamic society is in many times blurred (Sparre and Petersen, 2007). Given the nature of Islam in engulfing all aspects of daily life, there are no clear-cut boundaries separating Muslim from secular organizations as the latter can sometimes evoke a religious message to fit in. Second, Islamic FBOs are far from being a homogenous group. Notwithstanding their diversity regarding their size, technical skills, structure and programs, the religious ideology is widely reflected in their character. Some organizations funded by *salafi* groups adhere to an ultra-conservative version of Islam, while others prefer to embrace a 'lighter' understanding of religion. Likewise, in some cases, links between faith and action have created customized programs that use the resources of the community to provide services, while as other FBOs preferred to maintain minimum ties to the founding communities preferring instead to mimic the programs of modern secular NGOs.

My fieldwork revealed significant differences in the ways that various FBOs used religious language and included faith-based messages in the programs. Most telling were the organizations that clearly adhere to Islamic teachings in their projects but refused to be called as faith-based because they associated being a faith-based organization with having an outright

proselytizing agenda. Given this convoluted environment and the embryonic topic of studying Islamic social organizations, arguments presented in this research are always susceptible for revision with more advancement in the field. Fortunately, with the increasing pressure on governments in the Arab world and the whiff of democracy hanging over the region, future progressions in the study of Islamic social institutions seem promising. Further, being able to openly assert their religious ideology, FBOs are going to be more motivated to open up their organizations for future stakeholders and auditors alike.

Chapter Five:

Not in a Vacuum: Collaboration Networks among Faith-Based Organizations

Abstract:

Communities around the West Bank and Gaza are facing challenging problems with complex socioeconomic components, many of which have not received any attention from public or international aid agencies. With responsibility for addressing these problems devolving from the PNA to local and international nonprofits and from nonprofits to charitable societies, local activists within communities are seeking to involve the parties closest to problems in the design, implementation, and evaluation of solutions. One strategy that FBOs count on to provide services and face pressure from the Palestinian and Israeli governments is collaboration. While collaboration have emerged as a prominent vehicle for fostering a more coordinated community response to complex issues, researchers failed to fully understand why FBOs enter into collaborative networks and what motivates them to collaborate with other organizations. Drawing on field interviews with FBOs' leadership and results from the 2010 MAS survey, this chapter focuses on inter-organizational activities among FBOs as a response to the political changes being experienced by the sector. Using qualitative and quantitative methods I develop a model that presents the predisposition towards forming collaborative networks with multiple partners as a function of environmental pressures, religious tendencies, and organizational characteristics. Understanding why FBOs enter into collaborative networks will allow for a better understanding to the full impact of those collaborations on services, the organizations engaged in collaborations, and how they may influence the policy process in the future.

In the Palestinian territories, the last two decades have been characterized by wide changes in the social and political dimensions of society. The establishment of the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) and the rocky relation that ensued with the consecutive Israeli governments produced a reality in which the former were not able to perform the minimum tasks ascribed to sovereign states. Nonprofit organizations have had to step in to fill the gaps in the

public sphere. There is nothing new about FBOs and secular NGOs providing assistance to the poor in the PT. Before there was a PNA-sponsored welfare, there were nonprofits and charitable societies offering assistance to thousands of beneficiaries. But change in the Palestinian welfare system changed the nonprofit sector. Social/welfare policies for the PNA had more to do with nation and state building, and with creating a social base of support for the emerging Palestinian state than with any concept of citizen rights (Karshenas and Moghadam, 2006). This new environment has fueled nonprofit concerns about stable funding sources and increased service demands. Security demands from the Palestinian and Israeli governments have added another layer of pressure on FBOs. As discussed in chapter three, hundreds of FBOs were forced to close their doors and surrender their assets to security forces. To minimize the risks and increase the probability of survival, inter-organizational collaboration with other members in civil society became a priority for many FBOs and secular NGOs.

Community-based and regional faith-based organizations started collaborating with other civil society members and government agencies in the development, implementation and evaluation of multiple development and social service projects (Brown, 2003). The tendency to collaborate reflects the increasing professionalism of the new breed of FBOs. Although religious entities have long been involved in providing charity, the current growth and proliferation of Islamic FBOs and the strategies employed by these organizations are unique in at least three important ways. First, unlike the traditional religious charitable societies modern FBOs are increasingly adopting modern practices in management and operations. The mission and structure of many of these organizations even resembles liberal and secular nonprofits in which religion has no significant role to play. Second, contemporary FBOs are not afraid to embrace a wide portfolio of services, which traditionally were reserved for secular organizations. Rather

than confine themselves to soup kitchens and religious classes more FBOs are getting involved in long-term agricultural projects, neighborhoods development, and skills enhancement classes. Third, to protect their professional image many FBOs opted out from collaborating with religious political groups and focused instead on establishing politically neutral entities. This choice of the non-aligned FBO has created a sector in which the religious ideology can triumph emergent political concerns.

The emergence of this new breed of organizations offers scholars new opportunities to study organizational effectiveness and how collaboration might intensify the benefits accruing from participating in inter-organizational collaborative ties. Similarly, to fully understand whether collaboration is an effective method for organizational survival and service delivery, researchers must understand how collaboration benefits both organizations as a whole and the services they deliver through collaborations (Sowa, 2009). This chapter focuses on inter-organizational activities among Palestinian FBOs as a response to the political and social changes being experienced by the sector. Using qualitative and quantitative methods I develop a model that presents the predisposition towards forming collaborative networks with multiple partners as a function of environmental pressures, religious tendencies, and organizational characteristics. Using this model, the chapter addresses three primary questions to assess the proliferation of collaborative ties among FBOs and other nonprofits, private businesses and governmental agencies: (1) what rationales do FBOs' executives cite for their tendency to form collaborative networks in their community? (2) Are there any significant differences between FBOs and secular NGOs with regards to their tendency to form collaborative networks with other nonprofits, for-profit businesses, and public agencies? (3) Are there certain organizational characteristics that can explain the variation in which FBOs utilize the benefits of collaboration?

I then quantitatively examine and validate the factor structure of these dimensions and describe the ways in which certain characteristics of FBOs could explain the apparent variation in the degree to which FBOs seek and utilize the benefits of collaboration.

Examining collaboration trends in 47 FBOs and using results for the 2010 MAS survey, I argue that FBOs' managers engage in collaboration to derive benefits to enhance the services they provide and increase the probability of their organizational survival as a whole. Although this study can be considered exploratory, the theoretical explanations provide significant evidence that scholars evaluating the impact of service delivery and advocacy collaborations should assess what organizations hope to achieve for their services and their organizations to assess the full impact of collaboration (Sowa, 2009). This chapter is organized into six sections. I begin with a short discussion about the important role of collaboration among FBOs in the Middle East. I then discuss the theoretical backgrounds for collaboration and why organizations need to collaborate. The third section describes the study context and the multi-method research design. Sections four and five present the findings and discuss their implications, respectively. I conclude the chapter with a discussion about the role of collaboration in influencing public policy and limitations for the study.

5.1 Collaborative Ties beyond Service Delivery

The recent discussion about faith-based social services is a predecessor of a wider debate about the future of civil society in the Middle East. While the long-term outcomes of the 'Arab Spring' are yet to be realized, it is not easy to ignore the heating debate taking place among locals –not to mention regional and foreign spectators- as to what is the future role for Islamists and Islamic-based institutions in Arab societies. Even though this blurry future is attributed to

the limited democratic experiences of Arabs and the long reign of oppressed regimes, one need also to acknowledge the lack of any reliable information about the services provided by FBOs and the general ignorance regarding the linkages between these services and the political process. Recent studies investigating faith-based organizations in the Middle East have left the structural location, actions, alliances, and orientations of these organizations under-theorized, and if we need to fully understand the role of FBOs in the political process there are important insights remain to be discovered regarding connections between religious values, organizational action, and state activity (Fitzgerald, 2009: 181). As Robert Wuthnow explains in his study about faith-based services in the United States, it is not enough to scrutinize previous research about the topic to figure whether the results are credible; one has to “make better use of relevant information in surveys and other data sets that have not yet been analyzed (Wuthnow, 2004: 4-5)”.

The central question driving this work is to figure out whether the provision of socio-economic services by faith-based organizations in the Palestinian territories and their collaboration with other organizations can extend their influence beyond the provision of services and into the realm of political influence. The inadequate analysis of social welfare provision in the region has led to a narrow characterization of the political and social dynamics of public action there, resting primarily on the authoritative actions of autocratic states and the ‘mischievous’ maneuvers of Islamic political parties.

This chapter examines one of the most important strategies utilized by FBOs in the PT to insure survival, expand services, and influence public policy: collaboration. As argued in chapter four and contrary to previous perceptions, FBOs are not isolated groups within the Palestinian civil society. Their religious ideology or the struggle with the government does not prevent them

from collaboration with secular nonprofits, private businesses, and state agencies. What is interesting in this context is to provide a larger picture that explains ‘with whom’ and ‘for what purposes’ these networks take place. Specific differences in the types and nature of collaboration between faith-based and secular nonprofits are also examined. To achieve this, the following discussion is based on data from the 2010 MAS survey as well as fieldwork interviews of faith-based and secular organizations.

5.2 FBOs and Networks

Welfare provision by faith-based organizations operates in a complex system comprised of worship places (Mosques and Churches), international aid organizations, sovereign foundations, wealthy philanthropists, grassroots organizations and political parties. It is unlikely that one can describe the characteristics and performance of any one set of agents or institutions within this system without first charting the overall context in which they operate.

Even though opinion polls in the Palestinian territories show that FBOs are considered to be more trustworthy compared to government agencies and secular NGOs (Benthall, 2007), the status of FBOs in the overall provision of socioeconomic welfare is more complex. That is due in part to the fact that a great deal of faith-based activity is either hidden from public view or is not thought of as a ‘faith-based’ activity in the first place. The key to understanding the features and impact of the ‘faith-based activities is to identify:

- a) Where such activities take place
- b) What types of organizations are active in the process
- c) What are the services and goods being provided
- d) What types of interactions between faith based and secular organizations

- e) What types of interactions between faith-based and government agencies.

The previous chapters provided answers to the first three questions. The goal for the rest of this chapter is to illuminate more on the last two.

5.2.1 FBOs and Collaboration

The two theories that received the most attention from researchers investigating collaboration are resource dependence (Pfeffer and Salancik, 2003) and transaction cost theory (Williamson, 1975, 1985, 1991). The first theory proposes that a collaborative strategy is the result of organizations' trying to acquire the necessary resources to continue their existence (Foster and Meinhard, 2002). Collaborative strategy according to the resource dependence theory is therefore the result of organizational efforts by organizations to manage external dependencies and uncertainties in their resource environment. Transaction cost theory suggests that inter-organization alliances and cooperation are attractive because they provide a mechanism to reduce transaction costs and thereby maximize economic or psychological benefits (Sharfman, Gray, and Yan, 1991). Despite their explanatory power, as Guo and Acar (2005) argue, these theoretical perspectives have been criticized for their insufficient attention to those constraints on strategic choice that are embedded in an organization's institutional environment (Galaskiewicz, 1985; Oliver, 1990), its structural context (Baum & Dutton, 1996; Galaskiewicz, 1985), as well as other contextual and organizational process factors (Cigler, 2005).

Nonprofits are a good example to demonstrate the limitation of these two theories. Organizations involved with the provision of social or economic goods and services do not usually operate as solitary agents in vacuum seal environments. Instead, these organizations comprise a link in a multi-linked network, which can include governmental agencies, nonprofits and private businesses. In these joint efforts and partnerships organizations jointly address

several challenges such as economic development, education, health, and poverty alleviation (Selsky and Parker, 2005). As Jackson-Elmoore et al (2011) illustrate, nonprofits collaborate “to build consensus, develop strategic approaches to problem solving, and provide opportunities to achieve long-term, sustainable accomplishment’s (12)”.

FBOs are linked to one another and to secular organizations through cooperative service programs, interest groups, foundations and supply linkages. All of these links, according to Wuthnow, makes it impossible “to understand the role of religion in service provision, let alone in civil society more broadly, without paying attention to these social connections (Wuthnow, 2004: 21)”. Collaboration network influences, as well, the type of services provided and the extent of focus on each service. In addition, collaboration allows a cohort of organizations to join efforts, creating what could potentially lead to a significant political participant (Jackson-Elmoore *et al*, 2011).

Across the Middle East, faith-based organizations –community, regional, and international based- are partnering with government agencies and private businesses in the planning, creation, and implementation of development and social service programs (Alterman and von Hippel 2007, Clark 2004, Jawad 2009, Roy 2011). Although local communities and places of worship have traditionally been involved in charitable activities and the provision of social services to the needy (e.g. soup kitchens, education, basic health care), today’s faith-based organizations are a different breed compared to their predecessors. A new class of FBOs in the Middle East, conscious about their sensitive political position vis-à-vis the state institutions, are adopting more aggressive strategies in their attempt to tackle the socioeconomic problems prevalent within their societies. Unlike their small, localized, and ordinary predecessors this new

breed of FBOs is not afraid to embrace new techniques and initiatives mastered by international NGOs and customize them to their own environment.

The history of faith-based social service provision in the Palestinian territories is a dense network of shifting roles for religious institutions, the state (both during Palestinian, occupied and colonial rule), and civil society. Modern FBOs in the Palestinian community exist at the confluence of the four primary structures of the Palestinian society: the Palestinian authority (the state), the Israeli occupation, the market, and religious institutions. To maneuver the obstacles and achieve their missions, FBOs realized, as the next sections will illuminate, that forming collaborations and alliances with other nonprofits, as well as with businesses and governmental entities is a crucial requirement for survival and expansion. A key issue is how coordination and collaboration takes place among this diverse set of participants.

5.2.2 Defining Collaboration

One of the first problems in attempting to understand a phenomenon as complex as collaboration is: defining it (Phillips et al, 2000). Collaboration ranges on a continuum from very informal and temporary to highly coordinated or permanent enterprises (Mahoney, 2007). Given its wide-ranging designs it is not going to be an easy task to provide a simple and exclusive definition of collaboration. For example, Phillips's et al defined collaboration as "a co-operative relationship among organizations that relies on neither market nor hierarchical mechanisms of control (2000: 24)". Although this definition stresses the 'outside market structure' characteristic it fails to take into account that many collaborative initiatives take place among organizations and governmental agencies. For the purpose of this dissertation I will use a more inclusive definition of collaboration that includes inter-organizational collaboration as well as interactions among an organization and the government or an organization and an individual. Furthermore, I

will not limit collaboration to certain forms of interaction since it can take many forms, such as service coordination, referral networks, or joint ventures.

5.2.3 Why Collaboration is Important?

Collaborative activities dealing with social issues have become more prominent and extensive during the last years (Selsky and Parker, 2005). Collaboration is constantly noted as a major influence on the nature and types of activities which faith-based and secular organizations engage in (Jackson-Elmoore et al, 2011). For example, a new study looking at the activities of FBOs in the United States found that the faith nature of an organization's collaborators is more important than whether a particular nonprofit is faith-based itself (Jackson-Elmoore et al, 2011). In the Middle East, where the political, social and economic environments generate many frustrations, Islamic FBOs have spread in large numbers and developed often intricate and complex networks of service provision. They have also placed local resident members, often largely demobilized previously, into positions where they can actually act on their poor living conditions by shaping their own process of service provision and organizing for their rights (Fawaz, 2005).

Collaboration among organizations is also positively associated with advocacy participation (Mosley, 2010). Even if the primary rationale for collaboration is not related to advocacy activities, just by collaborating with other organizations on non-advocacy programs can facilitate and enhance advocacy. For example, collaboration can help smaller organizations with no previous knowledge about impending policy reforms to learn about advocacy and participate in it. Moreover, the more collaborative networks an organization is involved with the higher the opportunity for the organization to participate in advocacy (Staggenborg, 1989). When FBOs join effective partnerships with other NGOs, businesses, or even public agencies they raise

their chances in participating in policy formulation and implementation. Their participation can either be through direct or indirect courses. FBOs can directly influence policy through participating in meetings with policy decision makers, partnering with public agencies to carry on certain programs, or receive contracts from government agencies to provide certain services. FBOs can indirectly influence policy decision makers by publishing policy memos advocating for certain policies, helping certain opposition groups to protest, or by demonstrating to the public how projects should be accomplished.

Collaboration and the composition of collaborators not only aid FBOs in reaching their goals and achieve their missions; there may be as well a ‘nudging effect’ in which the collaborators sought for help can have an influence on the activities of FBOs seeking the help. While studying faith-based housing services in the United States, Jackson-Elmoore et al (2011) found that the faith nature of an organization’s collaborators is more important compared to whether a particular nonprofit is faith-based itself. More pertinently to this study, one reason that can explain the endurance of Palestinian FBOs; compared to their secular counterparts; is the composition of the collaborative network that FBOs decide to join. The recent development in the structure and activities of FBOs in the region is in contrast with the historical charity-laden role these organizations used to be known for. The modern role of FBOs in combating social problems in contemporary Palestinian areas is taking place in a context of changing positions among the providers of social and welfare services in the area. Like most Middle Eastern governments, the Palestinian government lacks the financial ability to satisfy the minimum needs for health, education, housing and many other services for its populace. Although the gap used to be filled mainly through funding from sovereign aid agencies, international NGOs, and the United Nations through its *United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA)* for Palestine

Refugees in the Near East, funding cutbacks in recent years; expressly for socio-economic and infrastructure projects; allowed for other organizations and sources of funding to come together, creating potentially a venue for political influence.

Collaboration and alliances vary significantly with respect to their size, scope, internal organizations, goals and strategies (Risley, 2006). Collaboration can be local, regional, national, or international in scope. Collaboration also differs in terms of the structure of leadership and the processes within which FBOs decide on their long-term objectives. On one side of the spectrum, there are informal collaboration with short-term horizons and emerging needs, which usually tend to form as a result of unexpected incident or the emergence of acute need. In this form of collaboration it is hard to find a leading figure that can push for strategic outcomes. Instead, collaborators may elect someone to serve as a coordinator with a limited role in forcing duties and roles; finally, this form of partnership tends to dissipate after the need for collaboration is satisfied. On the other side of the spectrum we find more formal collaboration with a clear agenda and course of action. Partners here come together in the form of federation or umbrella organization to achieve a long-term objective, guarantee permanent funding, or accomplish a long lasting change in the civil society. Networks in which partners join for a long-term relationship are sustained by trust and loyalty. The boundaries separating these different types of alliances are not rigid in practice. For example, a network can serve as a “launching pad” for issue-specific coalitions (Shepard 2003); conversely, short-term coalitions can metamorphose into more formal bodies (Risley, 2006). Collaborative networks of varying types can help individual groups surmount the obstacles that most limit their political strength: insufficient resources, low visibility, and high fragmentation (*ibid*). Besides being direct conduits for resources and influence, collaborative networks benefit participants because they generate status

hierarchies (Galaskiewicz *et al*, 2006). An organization's status in the society is partly derived from whom it associates with. FBOs, therefore, can signal their credibility and legitimacy by associating their activities with players who already have accumulated certain prestigious, political, or financial status.

In the Palestinian case, there are at least four advantages for FBOs to seek collaboration with other organizations:

- 1- Collaborators can pool resources (organizations, financial, human, information) creating what can be called a mega-organization that can have a more lasting outcome.
- 2- Collaboration can help FBOs lessen the effects of harassments from the PA or the Israeli army.
- 3- Collaborators can avoid duplicating their programs in one region which can provide them with a higher capacity to target more beneficiaries in other regions.
- 4- Coalitions with strong collaborates can generate a critical mass that can boost collective demands and present a united front against the authority or other civil society groups.

Like most organizations, a key strategic decision for FBOs is how much to engage with other organizations and actors around them. FBOs are likely to use collaborations differently, depending on the initial base of their resources, the skills of their employees and volunteers, their position within the society, and the degree of hostility it suffers from the PNA or the Israeli army. Traditional charitable societies have a long history of inter-organizational and inter-communal cooperation in which local urban elites have acted both as founders and a linkage point between the charitable society and community at large (Challand, 2010). FBOs needed funding, facilities, technical skills, and referrals to prospective beneficiaries, and collaborative

networks were convenient conduits through which resources flowed to the organization. As the PNA was formed and the new bureaucratic institutions, including security forces, took control of the West Bank and Gaza in the mid-1990s, inter-organizational relations persisted but for a new purpose. Given the hostile attitude of the PNA towards the nonprofit sector in general and the Islamic FBOs in particular, cooperation was used as a mechanism to reduce pressure, divert attention, and if possible, change the course of politics.

Collaborative networks are also effective because they can provide access to information that can help organizations overcome environment uncertainty and gain control over their environment (Burt 1983, in Galaskiewicz et al, 2006). This information can be about new sources of funding, but it also can be about upcoming regulations or mechanisms to restrict the activities of nonprofits. For instance, during the early months of the second intifada in 2000, a number of NGOs responded to rumors of impending local elections by quickly forming an election monitoring committee (Brown, 2003). Even though the rumors proved later to be false, the speed within which NGOs acted could not be replicated without the initial collaborative networks.

Collaborative networks do not only promise significant benefits for FBOs, the PNA as well found itself in an awkward position seeking collaboration with FBOs and the civil sector in general. For example, the lack of available capabilities and resources to provide health services to all communities in the PT has prompted the PNA to seek cooperation with civil society actors active in the health sector. This position also induced the Palestinian Ministry of Health to declare a statement in which it “adopted a [new] vision that identified the roles of both the government and the non-governmental health care sectors as partners in health care delivery (Jamal, 2005: 55)”. In addition to the provision of services, collaboration with the civil sector is

also used to provide links to key constituencies and external credibility for the PNA (Brown, 2003). Generally speaking, the interdependence between the civil actors and the PNA “was far greater than either anticipated, wanted, or ever fully acknowledged (*ibid*: 139)”.

Finally, FBOs are more prone to join long-term collaborative networks and partnerships because what brings them together is religion. When religion is involved you get an already established identity in which partners can establish trusting relations faster than other coalitions where religion is not a common denominator. Moreover, secular organizations may choose to partner with FBOs rather than other secular organizations given that religious organizations are perceived to be more trustworthy. Several opinion polls in the Palestinian territories, for instance, have shown that religious organizations enjoy a higher rate of trust compared to other secular organizations or public agencies (Hanafi, 2009).

Taking all these advantages into consideration, one can argue that collaboration for FBOs means more than the effective delivery of services to the largest number of beneficiaries. Collaboration and the use of collaborative network can as well (1) secure multiple sources of funding; (2) conceal some of their activities under a different organizational structure; (3) survive the Palestinian authority’s harsh regulations and the Israeli army’s procedures; (4) mobilize and politically influence the middle class and the educated sector of the community; (5) preach an Islamic values/morals for modern life against other values that are considered ‘alien’ to Islam; (6) and –in some cases- overthrow the government.

5.3 Research Design

5.3.1 Phase One: Methods and Procedures

The task of the qualitative researcher is one of analysis and synthesis (Hula and Jackson-Elmoore, 2001). It is unlikely that the debate over the utility of the case study will ever be

resolved. However, for scholars interested in tracing complex linkages among events, organizations and individuals, some form of case analysis will almost certainly be necessary. There is simply no other approach that begins to allow the researcher to deal with the degree of complexity implicit in such an effort (*Ibid*). For that reason, open-ended interviews were conducted with 47 key informants representing various FBOs. To maximize the internal validity of this study the composition of these FBOs included small religious charitable societies, medium-sized FBOs providing services only to the residents of one city, large FBOs with activities that span the whole West Bank and Gaza, and local branches for international Islamic aid agencies. The sectors within which these organizations were involved ranged from simple food delivery to the funding of complex infrastructure projects. The sample for these interviews was attained from the FBOs list described in chapter three. Overall, I contacted all the 396 identified FBOs by phone and email but only 47 organizations agreed to participate in the study.

To enhance the knowledge gained from interviewing FBOs' representatives and to obtain a diverse sample of information, I conducted more interviews with other stakeholder groups in collaborative networks in which FBOs are members. In particular, insight from 15 secular NGO executives and eight PNA officials was sought. The sample for these interviews was mainly attained from referrals by: (1) FBOs' executives; (2) prominent civil society activists; and (3) local researchers in the field of civil society. The common attribute uniting these interviewees is their ability to speak to the range and effects collaboration can have on nonprofits' capacity and survival.

All interviews were face-to-face with the nonprofit representative. Informants were asked to describe their organizational founding, funding, management, governance, obstacles, personnel, external relations, and collaboration initiatives. If the FBO took part in any

collaborative network the informant was asked to provide more details about the rationale for collaboration and how this involvement may enhance their capacity. Interviews lasted approximately 45-100 minutes, and all were conducted at the offices of the nonprofits. Interview transcripts were then analyzed for quotes related to the role of collaboration in organizational capacity and survival and quotes that convey an organizational impact as a result of collaboration were assigned a common code. Codes were organized into a framework consisting of three broad categories of impact that dominate the interviews' transcripts (figure 5.1).

5.3.2 Results

Interviewees provided several rationales that explain why their organizations are interested and do participate in collaboration, and how this activity may have enhanced the organization's capabilities and probabilities of survival. In general, I found that factors cited for reasons of collaboration fall into three categories: survival/ environmental factors, higher value system/ religious factors, and opportunity/ organizational factors. Each of these will be discussed in greater detail below.

5.3.3 Survival/ Environmental Factors

As discussed earlier, FBOs in the PT operate under a great pressure. Both the PNA and the Israeli army went through massive operations to confiscate assets that belong to FBOs. Some organizations were even forced to close their door indefinitely. To predict and respond to this type of environment FBOs have to be innovative and they need to master the utilizations of several strategies to guarantee survival. Collaboration with other players in society plays a significant role in that endeavor, and information gained from interviews both validated and clarified this claim.

Informants described how collaboration with private businesses and other nonprofits (faith-based and secular) came to be seen in many times as the only way available to lessen the impact of forced closure or asset confiscation. Through collaboration threatened organizations could move their operations to new physical locations:

“We had a limited time to act after we learned that our organization is going to be shut-down by the PNA. During the emergent meeting with the board of directors, one member suggested that he can persuade another nonprofit to share its offices and infrastructure with us. In less than 24 hours our employees were back to their routines in our new ‘concealed’ location.”

For other organizations, collaboration meant working with the PNA or other powerful elites to persuade Palestinian or Israeli forces to renew permits or return confiscated assets:

“Many of our beneficiaries rely solely on us for their basic benefits and we just could not disappoint them even if we had to work with the PNA to reverse the litigation against us. We met several officials from the Ministry of Interior and Health and we decided to merge some of our operations with the Ministry of Health. By doing this, we can operate almost freely and the PNA can claim they have gained control.”

5.3.4 Higher Value System / Religious Factors

Through their consistent service, many informants reported that their organization behave like a silent partner to other bigger vocal nonprofits. To the former group, publicity is not a priority on their agenda, rather, they seek to promote social networks and interactions with individuals who inspire trust and enable communities to access resources that will lead to a better quality of life. Many informants explained that the development of their--and other smaller FBOs--is facilitated by drawing on the rich heritage of philanthropic institutions that historically fostered social justice within Islamic societies. With limited resources their organizations are forced to focus only on a limited line of services that do not cover the whole basic needs for the beneficiaries or their families. Collaboration with other organizations that usually focus on a different line of services emerges as a win-win scenario:

“Islam is an advocate for social justice and Islamic charities have contributed significantly to this cause. In addition to our role in delivering services, we serve as a mechanism for narrowing social distances and reducing inequalities. To achieve our goal we collaborate with numerous partners in planning and providing our services since our partners provide the means by which the wealthy can reach the poor. This linkage helps the poor as well to cover most of their basic needs.”

Indeed, having a single nonprofit providing a wide range of services may not be the most desirable way to operate. Other field interviews reinforce the notion that collaboration tightens the link between the different members of society leading to “the creation of a large Muslim family” as one leader of a FBO put it”

“Asking for help from other members or organizations in the society goes beyond the traditional aim for fund raising. When we ask other partners to collaborate for us or when we answer requests for collaboration we are basically following the example of early Muslim societies in which collaboration was an integral tactic to build alliances and establish links of trust...Our hope is that this tactic will work for us in the same way it helped early Muslim societies.”

5.3.5 Opportunity/ organizational Factors

The substantial interest and investment in collaboration is based on the assumption that collaboration enhances the capacity of people and organizations to achieve their goals (Lasker et al, 2001). From this viewpoint, FBOs are motivated to collaborate in order to acquire resources that they cannot generate internally, but which are needed for their program to take place. Of particular importance is a constant and reliable stream of financial resources that help the FBO develop long-term strategic plan without the risk of insolvency. As discussed in chapters three and four, many FBOs in the PT depend on *zakat* funds collected locally, regionally, or internationally. However, as part of the general ‘war on terror’ and with the introduction of new regulations limiting the amounts of funds being sent to ‘suspicious’ foreign Islamic nonprofits many informants noted that there is a tendency towards collaborating with local communities and businesses to cover the shortage of funding.

“Our funding does not have to come only from the wealthy. We encourage financial donations from the community we serve. This interaction reinforces the bonds of mutual reliance and legitimacy between the community and us. Local businesses as well are encouraged to form partnerships with us. They can donate their zakat to us and we can bring more business to them.”

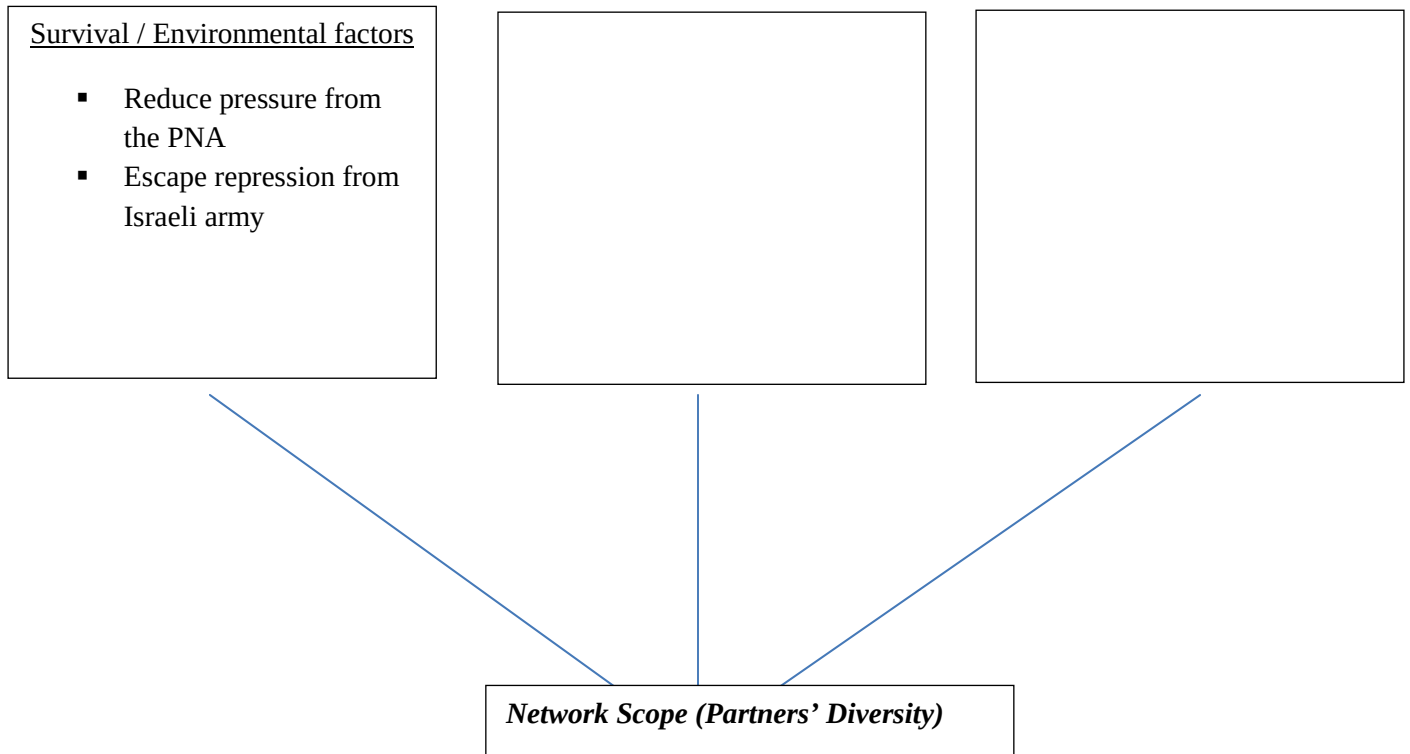


Figure 5.1: *Factors cited by FBOs as Reasons for Collaboration*

Extra funding is not the only rationale for collaboration. Several informants mentioned the prospect of additional volunteers as a motive for collaborating with other civil society organizations. Individual FBOs are constrained by human power, technical skills, and cognitive limits in the face of the complex programs and social service delivery. FBOs enter into alliances when they feel that their partner can contribute the needed capacities beneficial to them.

“We depend significantly on volunteers for everyday tasks, yet given the busy lives for many of our volunteers, we are in constant demand for more volunteers to fill the gaps in our human

resources. Collaborating with the Teachers and Workers Union is a reliable source for thousands of prospective volunteers.”

Other FBOs think of collaboration as a strategic option that enables them to address social problems more effectively. In addition to sharing financial and human resources, collaboration offers an opportunity to share information and knowledge as well. Informants described how collaborating with public agencies and other nonprofits help their organization to gain access to new capacities concerning their ability to identify additional disadvantaged families or learning new methods/solutions to solve old problems.

“Many poor individuals feel embarrassed to approach us for help. To identify them we have to access the records of the Ministry of Social Affairs. Collaborating with the Ministry on that issue provides us with an opportunity to reach more families and the Ministry can claim they helped more people”.

5.3.6 Phase Two: Multivariate Analysis

The goals of this phase of the research are two-fold. The first goal is to use the 2010 MAS database to provide detailed descriptive analysis of collaborating patterns for Palestinian FBOs and secular NGOs. This step will basically illustrate whether there are any significant differences in these categories between nonprofits. The second goal is to differentiate among collaboration within FBOs by quantitatively exploring the three dimensions developed in phase one and examining the relationship of each as it related to characteristics of FBOs.

For the purposes of this study and given the limited nature of the 2010 MAS survey, I identify the following types of partners that are the most likely collaborators with FBOs: the Palestinian government, private businesses, Palestinian nonprofits (both faith-based and secular), regional nonprofits, Israeli nonprofits, and international nonprofits. Likewise, constrained by results from the MAS survey, I focus on the five major ways in which FBOs tend to collaborate

with other entities: participate in brainstorming sessions to figure out the needs of the target population, coordinate activities to prevent duplication, participate in project planning, participate in project implementation, and participate in project evaluation. The MAS survey also provided numerous data on a range of organizational variables to determine characteristics of FBOs that affect the range and intensity of their collaborations.

5.4 Findings

5.4.1 Collaboration Networks and Actors

Within the Palestinian territories there exist several agents who participate in the provision of socioeconomic services, including several agencies of the Palestinian authority, the United Nations, international aid agencies, local nonprofits (secular and faith-based), and a number for-profit organizations. A key issue is how coordination and collaboration occur across this wide set of stakeholders. Of particular interest in this chapter are the types of collaborative networks that FBOs form in order to carry on their daily activities. Analyzing the partners, attitudes, and motivation for FBOs provides a crucial mechanism for identifying the collaborations between actors and determining which actors occupy the center stage when critical moments arise.

Palestinian FBOs are active in many sectors and collaboration networks of service providers are important for them. Because financial resources can be limited, or the general environment could become too hostile to function in, collaboration among service providers becomes essential as different organizations and actors may prove crucial for the future survival of other organizations. Indeed, the majority of FBOs and secular NGOs collaborate with at least

one partner (92% and 94% respectively). In particular, FBOs are engaged in an array of activities and collaborate with other organizations to fulfill all of their goals. The discussion and tables that follows highlights the extent to which these FBOs (and secular NGOs) collaborate with particular types of partners in general, which may well involve activities and services beyond their main sectors.

Collaboration among organizations is not simply a dual relationship in which each organization has one collaborator/partner at a time. Using bivariate correlations (Pearson Correlation) to measure the degree of relationship (association) among the different collaborators (Table 5.1 below; all statically significant correlations are noted in bold) one can see that collaboration is part of a complex structure where organizations seek multiple paths to ensure the achievement of organizations goals and guarantee survival by having access to several financial and organizational resources. There are statistically significant correlations between collaboration of Palestinian nonprofits with all the other organizations including the Palestinian government. Nonprofits in Palestine are consciously trying to maximize their survival odds by collaborating with all substantial actors in the Palestinian society. It is also worth noting that nonprofits are the most integrated with other actors, given that they have the highest number of significant correlations with other actors. This observation reinforces the previous argument that nonprofits have the most complex collaborative networks in comparison to the other actors in the society.

Given that my focus is on FBOs, it would be interesting to investigate whether there are any significant differences between faith-based organization and secular nonprofits with regards to their collaborating patterns (Table 5.2). This line of inquiry reveals very fruitful results. Mainly, unlike secular NGOs, there are statistically significant correlations between

collaboration with FBOs and all of the other actors. These relationships suggest a broad base of support is relied upon to achieve organizational goals. FBOs realized that goals achievement; and survival in general; requires the help of complex networks of actors. The network connections among FBOs and all the other actors active in the Palestinian civil society reflect an embeddedness of *FBOs in* that society. Two particular relationships stand out from the results in table 5.2: those among FBOs and private businesses from one side and FBOs and Israeli nonprofits. As will be discussed in more details in the next chapter, Palestinian FBOs have strong connections with the local private sector. Similarly, these organizations managed to build strong connections with Israeli FBOs, in particular Islamic organizations operating in Arab neighborhoods and towns inside Israel.

To gauge the complexity of the collaborating network with FBOs, tables 5.3 and 5.4 below present patterns of collaboration for FBOs and secular NGOs respectively. Results show that patterns of collaboration for FBOs are highly correlated compared with that by secular NGOs. For example, there is a significant correlation between FBOs collaborating with the Palestinian government and Palestinian, Regional, Israeli, and international nonprofits. Likewise, FBOs that collaborate with international nonprofits tend to form collaborative networks as well with Palestinian, regional, and international nonprofits. This suggests relationships with those components of a society focused on human capital and overall community development. On the other hand, secular NGOs tend to form more modest collaborative networks. For example, those that are collaborating with the Palestinian government are only prone to form collaborate networks with regional and international NGOs only. Likewise, secular NGOs collaborating with Israeli nonprofits tend to collaborate only with international nonprofits. It is worthwhile to note, however, the lack of significant correlation between FBOs that are collaborating with the

Palestinian government and those collaborating with private businesses. From the limited data available it looks as if FBOs are in a position in which they have to choose between collaborating with either the government or private businesses. The next chapter will shed more light on this fraught relationship and explain why FBOs are less likely to collaborate with the Palestinian government.

To summarize, the analysis here shows that there is a considerable variety in the types of collaborators associated with Palestinian nonprofits, ranging from private businesses to local public agencies. While many aspects of collaborative networks are similar for faith-based and secular organizations, FBOs appear to have somewhat broader or more eclectic collaborators.

Table5.1: Collaborating Partners using Bivariate Correlations (FBOs & Secular NGOs, N=1860)

	The Palestinian Government	Private Businesses	Palestinian Nonprofits	Regional Nonprofits	Israeli Nonprofits	International Nonprofits
The Palestinian Government	1.00					
Private businesses	.18***	1.00				
Palestinian Nonprofits	.34**	.38**	1.00			
Regional Nonprofits	.31	.07	.54**	1.00		
Israeli Nonprofits	.09	.1	.21**	.11	1.00	
International Nonprofits	.53*	.06	.61*	.19	.06	1.00
Significant at 0.05 , *Significant at 0.01						

Table5.2: Collaborating Partners using Bivariate Correlations for Faith-Based and Secular Nonprofits (N=1860)

	Secular	Faith-Based
The Palestinian Government	.47**	.13**
Private businesses	.23	.62*
Palestinian Nonprofits (faith-based + secular)	.42*	.27*
Regional Nonprofits (faith-based + secular)	.43***	.56**
Israeli Nonprofits (faith-based + secular)	.12	.29*
International Nonprofits (faith-based + secular)	.46*	.43***
Significant at 0.05 ; *Significant at 0.01		

Table5.3: Correlations for the Collaborating Partners for FBOs (N=324)

	The Palestinian Government	Private Businesses	Palestinian Nonprofits	Regional Nonprofits	Israeli Nonprofits	International Nonprofits
The Palestinian Government	1.00					
Private businesses	.26	1.00				
Palestinian Nonprofits	.41**	.51***	1.00			
Regional Nonprofits	.19**	.32**	.31*	1.00		
Israeli Nonprofits	.36	.21	.23***	.32***	1.00	
International Nonprofits	.53**	.23	.61**	.19**	.42**	1.00
Significant at 0.05 , *Significant at 0.01						

Table5.4: Correlations for the Collaborating Partners for Secular NGOs (N=1536)

	The Palestinian Government	Private Businesses	Palestinian Nonprofits	Regional Nonprofits	Israeli Nonprofits	International Nonprofits
The Palestinian Government	1.00					
Private businesses	.35	1.00				
Palestinian Nonprofits	.27***	.33*	1.00			
Regional Nonprofits	.19**	.17	.24***	1.00		
Israeli Nonprofits	.43	.53	.16	.41	1.00	
International Nonprofits	.42	.52	.42**	.57**	.37**	1.00
Significant at 0.05 , *Significant at 0.01						

5.4.2 Why FBOs Collaborate?

Nonprofits have no single approach to follow when providing services to their beneficiaries. Some organizations choose to specialize in single projects while others prefer to provide a holistic approach. The decision on which approach to adopt reflects the organization's financial, administrative, and human resources as well as its view towards the beneficiaries. The framework behind the approach to service provision has significant consequences on the position and visibility of the organization in civil society. An organization that specializes in providing counseling services for sexually abused women will induce a different perceptibility from its constituents compared to an organization that provides the latter service in combination with other services that cover the needs of the whole family. The approach to service provision can also impact the types of and rationale for collaboration (Jackson-Elmoore *et al*, 2011: 255).

Nonprofit organizations participate in collaborative networks and partnerships for several reasons. For example, some organizations seek collaboration to guarantee additional services for their clients. Other organizations collaborate to cover their needs for financial, human, or information resources. Regardless of their motive, organizations seek collaboration to widen their impact and increase effectiveness. With the case of FBOs in the PT however, collaboration takes a different dimension. It could simply mean the difference between survival and collapse. Since the 2010 MAS survey has a section about challenges faced by nonprofits it is worth looking at collaborating patterns and impending obstacles to see how organizations try to minimize challenges and increase impact.

The survey has only one question about reasons for collaboration. Specifically, the question asks organizations to point which reason/s from the following list induces them to collaborate:

- Participate in brainstorming sessions to figure out the needs of the target population
- Coordinate activities to prevent duplication
- Participate in project planning
- Participate in project implementation
- Participate in project evaluation

Table 5.5 below provides a summary that explains the rationale for collaboration for faith-based and secular nonprofits. Some of the results indicate a wide divergence among secular NGOs and FBOs regarding their rationale for collaboration. For example, while almost three quarters of FBOs sighted collaboration as a mechanism to minimize project duplication, only a third of secular NGOs shared that reasoning. Yet, a majority of secular NGOs (62%) mentioned project planning as a basis for collaboration compared to only 41% among FBOs. These results imply that although secular NGOs build a larger network of collaborators to plan projects, FBOs tend instead to maximize their benefits by financing projects that lack any previous equivalents or helping beneficiaries that do not receive aid from different donors.

Table 5.5: Rational for Collaboration (in percentages)

Brainstorming sessions	Secular	53
	Faith-Based	64
Prevent Duplication	Secular	31
	Faith-Based	72
Project Planning	Secular	62
	Faith-Based	41
Project Implementation	Secular	18
	Faith-Based	23
Project Evaluation	Secular	14
	Faith-Based	28

To gain a deeper understanding about collaboration strategies for FBOs, Table 5.6 summarizes the relation between the rationale for collaboration and the major activities in which FBOs are involved. It would be interesting to see the difference (if any) between organizations involved mainly in emergency relief services and those that prefer to indirectly influence policy through awareness programs and human rights initiatives. As one might expect, the types of collaborators as well as purpose and rationale for collaboration vary based on primary organizational activities. Results show that FBOs involved in infrastructure development, health services and emergency relief are more prone to collaborate with the Palestinian government. These organizations cannot simply carry on their activities without any assistance from governing councils and boroughs. Delivering emergency relief or developing a certain infrastructural project requires constant planning with the government. FBOs funding awareness programs have a different profile. These organizations are significantly more likely to collaborate with private businesses, Palestinian and regional nonprofits compared with other members in civil society. Their tendency to avoid collaboration with the government, and international nonprofits is an attest to the sensitivity of their situation in civil society. The years since the establishment of the PNA, especially the last six years, have witnessed many fluctuations in the relationship between the PNA and the civil society sector. Having successfully proved their credibility to the Palestinian populations, civil organizations expected a wide degree of freedom to act and voice their concerns. However, PNA officials had a different opinion. There was an apparent suspicion toward the civil sector and in many cases the PNA sought; by administrative or legal means; to limit the financial or political support NGOs received (Jamal, 2005).

Table5.6: Correlation Matrix of Organizational Activities and Collaboration with FBOs (N=324)

	Career Development	Awareness Programs and Political Advocacy	Infrastructure Development	Human Rights	Emergency Relief	Health Services	Education	Youth Programs
Rationale for Collaboration								
Brainstorming	.13**	.35*	.48**	.24*	.26	.34**	.27*	.23*
Prevent Duplication	.16*	.42*	.37*	.19	.36	.25	.19***	.37
Project Planning	.23	.51	.36	.32*	.27	.27*	.20	.31*
Implementation	.21*	.38*	.28**	.45	.41	.19*	.26	.43
Evaluation	.31	.18	.19	.26	.21	.11	.31	.28
Types of Collaborators								
The Palestinian Government	.43	.07	.62*	.06	.61**	.51*	.18	.11***
Private Businesses	.24*	.16*	.48	.09	.26*	.17	.10	.52**
Palestinian Nonprofits	.52**	.45*	.47**	.42*	.63*	.32**	.32*	.49*
Regional Nonprofits	.11*	.21**	.25***	.38*	.71*	.38**	.27**	.41*
Israeli Nonprofits	.09	.18	.11	.24	.47	.16***	.24	.08
International Nonprofits	.35	.62	.41	.12	.75*	.56*	.19*	.28
*Significant at the 0.05 Level ; **Significant at the 0.01 Level								

5.4.3 Multivariate Regression Model

The previous discussion focused on an organization's intent for collaboration. Specifically, why are organizations collaborating and whom they are collaborating with? Yet, to build a larger picture about collaboration among FBOs there is a need for a method to differentiate among different forms of collaboration. In particular, are FBOs collaborating for service delivery or for policy-related purposes? To assess the organizational characteristics that

could determine FBOs' tendency to form different collaborative ties, a series of analysis were conducted using the 2010 MAS survey. In particular, multivariate regression analysis is used to estimate the dependent variable. Because an existing data set is used, there are some limitations to the kinds of questions that can be asked about FBOs in the PT. However, the data provide crucial information on goal setting, coalition building activities and the relationship, if any, between organizational ideology (faith-based or secular), goals, collaboration activities, and types of initiatives taken to achieve goals. The 2010 MAS survey explores several relationships among nonprofits. In particular, the survey has five questions measuring if nonprofits forge collaborative relationships or project partnerships with other nonprofits and whether these nonprofits are local, Arab, Israeli, or International organizations. The survey also asks respondents to identify the type of relationship connecting them with public agencies, private businesses, and other Palestinian profits if any (funding; partnership, contractual, administrative). The data can be seen as a historical document, which provides a snapshot in time that can enhance our understanding into the on-going national political discussion about the work of religious organizations in delivering social services and influencing the political process. Finally, comparing collaboration tendencies among FBOs and secular NGOs can provide a sharper image on the importance both groups ascribe to building collaboration and alliance networks with other actors.

5.3.3.1 Measures

Dependent Variable: To explore the determinants and range of collaboration, I consider the number of partners that FBOs collaborate with as the dependent variable. The number of partners is an important indicator of network size, as it indicates the number of organizations that are involved in service delivery, advocacy, or any other activity (Graddy and Chen, 2006). As mentioned earlier, organizations that filled the MAS survey were given a list of six specific types

of organizations with which they might have collaborated with during 2009. The range and diversity of partners is obviously an important indicator of the intensity of collaboration, as it indicates the range of organizations FBOs collaborate with in service delivery or advocacy. It has, however, additional importance. Getting involved with multiple organizations is a testament to the FBO's ability to forge connections among the organizations in the community. This ability, in turn, suggests information about the FBO's position in the community, its trustworthiness, and overall influence. Credible, transparent, and effective FBOs have an easier job forming collaborations than unreliable ones.

Environmental Factors: Most studies on nonprofit collaboration take a resource dependency perspective (Provan, 1984; Zinn et al., 1997; Zuckerman and D'Aunno, 1990). Based on this perspective, collaborative relationships will be formed as a managerial response to turbulent conditions in an organization's resource environment (Pfeffer & Salancik, 2003). Collaboration can, therefore, help acquire critical resources and reduce uncertainty (Guo and Acar, 2005). The impact of environmental uncertainty on organizations has been an important research focus in both the for-profit and nonprofit literature (Buchko, 1994). In the nonprofit sector, the uncertainty is fueled by concern about stable funding sources and increased service demands (Foster and Meinhard, 2002). When nonprofits have to face as well a plethora of destabilizing situations that range from military occupation to authoritarian decrees, uncertainty becomes a constant concern rather than a calculated risk.

The model, as specified in figure 5.1, identified one environmental factor—pressure from the Palestinian or Israeli security forces (or both). This factor is expected to have a positive impact on the formation of collaborative networks—the existence of pressure from the Palestinian or Israeli forces, the more partnerships and collaborations FBOs are expected to

form. I measure this variable using the FBO's self-reported assessment regarding the obstacles they face in which they identified whether the Palestinian, Israeli, or both forces hinder their operations. It is defined as a categorical variable and takes on one of four values: 0, indicating the absence of any pressure; 1, indicating pressure from the Palestinian side; 2, indicating pressure from the Israeli side; and 3, indicating pressure from both the Palestinian and Israeli sides.

Understandably, this variable is a subjective reflection on environmental obstacles facing FBOs. What one organization may consider as a pressure tactic may be considered as irrelevant scuffle by another organization. What is more, pressure by the Palestinian security forces might not equal in ferocity the pressure originating from the Israeli side. Yet, including this variable in the analysis indicates clearly the extent of external obstacles FBOs have to live with. It also provides a rough picture about the delicate situation some FBOs have to maneuver in order to survive.

Religious/holistic Factors: The model specified one religious factor, the holistic service approach. This approach is measured as the number of different types of services an organization covers. The more services they seek to cover, the greater the need for partnerships. Undoubtedly, offering services in diverse areas automatically brings coalitions into contact with organizations that specialize in each of those programmatic areas, enhancing the likelihood of collaborations. This factor is divided into six different variables:

- *Social and legal services sector (social).* This variable examines the effect of operating in the social and legal services sector. It is defined as a binary variable and takes on two values: 1, indicating that an organization operates in the social and legal services sector; otherwise 0.

- *Education sector (education)*. This variable examines the effect of operating in the education and research sector. It is defined as a binary variable and takes on two values: 1, indicating that an organization operates in the education and research sector; otherwise, 0.
- *Health services sector (health)*. This variable examines the effect of operating in the health services sector. It is defined as a binary variable and takes on two values: 1, indicating that an organization operates in the health services sector; otherwise, 0.
- *Agriculture sector (agriculture)*. This variable examines the effect of operating in the agricultural sector. It is defined as a binary variable and takes on two values: 1, indicating that an organization operates in the agricultural sector; otherwise, 0.
- *Advocacy sector (advocacy)*. This variable examines the effect of operating in the advocacy sector. It is defined as a binary variable and takes on two values: 1, indicating that an organization operates in the advocacy sector; otherwise, 0.
- *Arts and culture sector (arts)*. This variable examines the effect of operating in the arts and culture sector. It is defined as a binary variable and takes on two values: 1, indicating that an organization operates in the arts and culture sector; otherwise, 0.

Organizational Factors: the model specifies three organizational variables: funding, the number of staff, and the number of beneficiaries. To measure funding and to what extent the organization depends on external sources to satisfy its financial needs, I consider the proportion of the FBO's total budget that is represented by its internally generated income (*internal income*). The higher this proportion, the less likely the FBO is to form collaborative networks with other organizations.

The best measure for the size of organization is a one that is related to the capacity of the organization to provide client services internally. To that end, I utilize two different, but related, ways: total budget (*budget*) and the number of staff. Budget size could have a complicated correlation with the range of collaborates in the form of a nonlinear u-shaped relationship given that both large and small FBOs may be perceptible to larger range of collaborators (Chen, 2008). For the purposes of this study, budget is defined as a continuous variable and is measured as the natural log of an organization's reported annual budget for 2009. Size of an organization can affect its propensity to cooperate with others. Larger organizations may be more appealing partners than small organizations in inter-organizational collaborations because they have more resources to share with others (Mulford & Mulford, 1977).

Organizational age (age): This variable is considered here as a control variable. It is defined as a continuous variable and is measured as the natural log of the difference between 2009 and the year when a given organization was founded.

Board size (board size): This variable is considered as another control variable. It is defined as a continuous variable and is measured by the natural log of the total number of people serving on the board of directors of a given organization. I expect that organizations with larger boards may have greater community ties or external relationships, potentially increasing the probability of collaboration (Suarez and Hwang 2008, Guo and Acar 2005).

Model: Given that the responses that I am interested in are the number of partners an organization collaborates with and since the dependent variable has a potential of seven categories (six possible partners and 0= no partners) and the value of each category has a meaningful sequential order where a value is indeed 'higher' than the previous one, an ordinal

logit model would be a good fit. Tables 5.8 and 5.10 set out the maximum likelihood estimation results for the number of partners ordered logits. A certain amount of care is required when interpreting the estimated coefficients of ordered logit equations. A positively signed coefficient implies an increase in the log of the odds ratio or, informally, higher values of these explanatory variables imply greater tendency to collaborate with more partners. The converse is true of negatively signed coefficients. To effectively interpret the effect of explanatory variables on the number of partners, marginal effects are also reported in the tables. Marginal effects are the probability of change in favor of a specific arrangement with respect to each independent variable, measured from the mean of that variable. A positive or negative sign of marginal effects indicates an increase or decrease in the probability of collaborating with one more partner.

For the logit model, the conservative approach of 10 events per parameter was used to determine the maximum number of independent variables in each model, as recommended by Hosmer and Lemeshow (2000). Standard regressions diagnostics were run in order to test for specification errors and goodness-of-fit and no problems were revealed (Hosmer and Lemeshow, 2000). Where interaction terms were included, continuous variables were mean-centered first in order to make coefficient easier to interpret and reduce possible multicollinearity. Mean-centered does not impact the substance of the results, simply how they are interpreted (Cronbach, 1987). The model provides a good fit for the data. The model explains about three quarters of the variation in the number of partners in the network. More interesting, however, is that all the three sets of factors have statistically significant impacts on the number of partners a FBO collaborates with.

The model will be first applied to all nonprofits operating in the PT to test whether being labeled as a FBO could have a significant impact on the organization's tendency to collaborate with more partners. The model will be then applied to FBOs only.

Table5.7: Operational Definitions of the Dependent and Independent Variables

Variables Definitions	Measures
<i>Dependent Variable</i> Network Size	Number of partners that an organization collaborates with.
<i>Independent Variables</i> <u>Environmental factors</u> Pressure from security forces	Reported pressure from Palestinian authority, Israeli forces, or both.
<u>Religious/Holistic Factors</u> Covered Services	The reported number of different types of services an organization covers
<u>Organizational Factors</u> Funding	The reported proportion of the organization's total budget that is represented by its internally generated income.
Size	Total Budget (natural log of an organization's reported annual budget for 2009).
# Of Staff	Total staff
Age	Natural log of the difference between 2009 and the year when a given organization was founded
Board size	The natural log of the total number of people serving on the board of directors.

Results

Most of the analysis in the current chapter is focused mainly on collaboration among FBOs. Yet, as the previous discussion indicated, organizations (faith-based and secular) do not report collaborating for just one or two specified goals. Nonprofits that are collaborating in order to provide health services, for example, are also likely to collaborate for several other reasons including funding, sharing equipment, or influencing local policies. In other words, while the major purpose may be to collaborate for service delivery, the mere linkage to a certain

organization may create new opportunities for more potential partnerships including policy commitments.

Results from Table 5.8 below provide an interesting venue to understand this last notice. Particularly, the number of partners that any given Palestinian nonprofit (both faith-based and secular) collaborates with depends on the degree of pressure from Palestinian or Israeli forces, operating in social; legal, health; or advocacy sectors, the number of years an organization has been in operation, the percentage of income generated internally, and whether the organization is a faith-based one. Looking more closely at the odds ratio and marginal effects in Table 5.8 shows the effect size for each variable. For instance, operating in the social and legal sector increases the odds of collaborating with one more partner by 13 percent and the marginal effect for the same variable increase the probability for collaboration with one more partner by 4.5 percent. Likewise, the odds increase by 33 percent if the nonprofit operates in the health sector, while the marginal effect has a more modest probability of 8 percent. Each point scored higher on the three-point pressure scale is estimated to reflect a 31 percent increase in the odds of adding one more partner, while the marginal effect shows an increase by 12.3 percent. For every additional year an organization is in operation the odds to add another partner is also increased by 38 percent and the marginal effect shows a 17 percent increase in the probability. Finally, if the organization is labeled as faith-based, the odds to collaborate with one more partner increases by 46 percent (marginal effect shows an increase by 21 percent), and the odds will climb to 52 percent if the faith-based nonprofit is under pressure from either the Palestinian or the Israeli governments. These results indicate that although the tendency to collaborate with more partners is influenced by several variables, the odds ratio for being labeled as a FBO has a significant

effect on the tendency to collaborate with more partners. FBOs are clearly seeking to build other collaborative relationships.

Institutional theory suggests that strategic alliances can originate from an organization's motives to improve its reputation, image, or prestige or to achieve congruence with prevailing norms in its institutional environment (DiMaggio and Powell 1983). The importance that FBOs attached to developing linkages with more partners for future collaboration may reflect their inclination to offer “socially acceptable” answers. In the current pro-collaboration environment, organizations may view compliance with these norms to be necessary for legitimacy and survival (Graddy and Chen, 2006).

To test this hypothesis, Table 5.10 present results using the same model showing FBOs' tendency to collaborate. As expected, the existence of environmental pressures in the form of security harassment by Palestinian and Israeli forces induces FBOs to seek collaborative ties with more partners. Specifically, the odds ratio increase by 44 percent for each point scored higher on the three-point pressure scale, while the marginal effect shows an increase in the probability by 21 percent. This suggests that rather than surrender to threats, organizations prefer to adopt a counter-strategy—that includes collaboration—to lessen the effect of harassment. Moreover, being involved in the advocacy sector and the social or legal sector has a positive impact on the number of the partners. The odds ratio to add an extra partner increases by 44 percent and 53 percent respectively (marginal effect shows an increase by 26 percent and 38 percent). This result is consistent with the nonprofit advocacy literature in the PT, which found that NGOs are more willing to cooperate with other organizations including the private sector when lobbying and advocacy operations are in question (Brown 2003, Jamal 2006). The percentage of revenue generated internally also has a statistically significant influence on the

number of partners. The results show that the more an organization generates income internally the less it is inclined to collaborate with extra partners given that the odds ratio decreases by 40 percent, while the marginal effects shows a decrease in the probability by 28 percent. It could be argued that organizations with internal sources of finance have less need to collaborate with other partners. Finally, older FBOs and those with more board members are also more likely to be engaged in collaboration. The odds ratio increase by 24 percent for each additional year the organization has been in operation and by 22 percent for each additional member on the board of directors. These results indicate that older organizations and those with more board members have better networking opportunities, and thus it is easier for them to attract or seek partnerships.

Table 5.8: Maximum Likelihood Estimates of the Ordered Logit Model for Number of Partners for secular NGOs & FBOs (N=1860)

<i>Variables</i>	<i>Estimated Coef</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>Marginal Effect</i>	<i>Wald Statistics</i>	<i>Sig. level</i>	<i>Odds Ratio Exp (B)</i>
<u>Environmental Factors</u>						
Pressure	1.536	(0.6352)	0.123	4.627	0.01	1.31
<u>Religious/Holistic Factors</u>						
Social & legal sector	1.015	(.2036)	0.045	5.163	0.02	1.13
Education sector	0.326	(0.512)	0.082	0.527	0.19	1.630
Health sector	0.2027	(0.532)	0.081	3.735	0.01	1.327
Agriculture sector	0.216	(0.26)	0.10	0.935	0.18	0.426
Advocacy sector	0.428	(0.372)	0.19	6.626	0.05	1.276
Arts & culture sector	0.183	(0.263)	0.12	0.297	0.15	1.935
<u>Organizational Factors</u>						
Earned Revenue	-0.328	(0.324)	-0.153	5.638	0.002	1.412
Total Budget (log)	0.912	(0.430)	0.078	0.471	0.215	1.637
Staff	0.191	(0.314)	0.016	0.719	0.29	1.196
Age	0.425	(0.342)	0.17	7.921	0.002	1.381
Board Size	-0.601	(0.429)	-0.051	0.312	0.12	0.528
Faith-Based	0.735	(0.169)	0.21	6.625	0.01	1.461
Faith-based*Pressure	1.367	(0.57)	0.000	4.842	0.01	1.52

-2log Likelihood 217.414
Chi-square 94.301
Df9
Sig 0.000
Pearson X² Value 198.112
R²= 0.615

Table5.9: Descriptive Statistics of Dependent and Independent Variables (FBO = 324)

	N	Mean	SD	Minimum	Maximum
<i>Dependent Variable</i>					
Network Size	324	3.75	.13	0	6
<i>Independent Variables</i>					
<u>Environmental Factors</u>					
Pressure from Security Forces	324	1.8	.27	0	3
<u>Religious/Holistic Factors</u>					
Social and legal services sector	324	.52	.21	0	1
Education sector	324	.38	.17	0	1
Health services sector	324	.31	.13	0	1
Agriculture sector	324	.21	.08	0	1
Advocacy sector	324	.16	.06	0	1
Arts and culture sector	324	.11	.05	0	1
<u>Organizational Factors</u>					
Internal Income	324	.42	.06	.15	.73
Total Budget (log)	324	11.25	1.83	5.74	19.42
Staff	324	.54	.08	.39	.81
Age	320	5.14	1.33	.66	8.04
Board Size	316	2.36	.52	1.42	5.17

Table5.10: Maximum Likelihood Estimates of the Ordered Logit Model for Number of Partners for FBOs (N=324)

<i>Variables</i>	<i>Estimated Coef</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>Marginal Effect</i>	<i>Wald Statistics</i>	<i>Sig. level</i>	<i>Odds Ratio Exp (B)</i>
<u>Environmental Factors</u>						
Pressure	3.3162	(1.8532)	0.21	6.635	0.0012	1.443
<u>Religious/Holistic Factors</u>						
Social & legal sector	1.683	(.5617)	0.26	7.042	0.0079	1.438
Education sector	0.9687	(0.4132)	0.01	0.3843	0.203	2.634
Health sector	-0.7431	(0.2635)	-0.17	0.7632	0.135	0.476
Agriculture sector	-0.365	(0.153)	-0.051	1.0635	0.285	0.657
Advocacy sector	0.644	(0.21)	0.38	5.536	0.0012	1.534
Arts & culture sector	0.274	(0.17)	0.065	0.8564	0.173	1.461
<u>Organizational Factors</u>						
Earned Revenue	-0.610	(0.60)	-0.28	4.033	0.003	1.396
Total Budget (log)	0.517	(0.757)	0.081	0.462	0.484	1.253
Staff	0.652	(0.632)	0.058	0.695	0.387	1.643
Age	0.853	(0.252)	0.16	12.632	0.002	1.236
Board Size	0.327	(0.256)	0.18	9.036	0.081	1.224
-2log Likelihood 287.921 Chi-square 96.705 Df9 Sig 0.000 Pearson X ² Value 244.724 R ² = 0.514						

5.5 Discussion

The impact of environmental uncertainty on organizations has been an important research focus in both the for-profit and nonprofit literature. In the case of Palestinian FBOs, the uncertainty is fueled by concern about stable funding sources, increased service demands, lack of needed expertise, and continued pressure from the Palestinian and Israeli security forces. In essence, more FBOs are forced to operate, and many times compete, in an unstable environment

leading to the adoption of strategies to sustain themselves and reduce risk. Based on interviews with directors of FBOs, as depicted in Figure 5.1 above, I hypothesize that collaboration is a function of the interaction of environmental, religious/holistic, and organizational factors.

From an environmental perspective, the perceived need for collaboration reflects powerful forces shaping the Palestinian civil society and public policy making. Palestinian individuals, organizations, and businesses working in an environment with limited opportunities for growth and ample causes for concern are becoming increasingly interdependent as their society undergoes rapid social, economic, and political change and becomes more fragmented and competitive. Communities around the West Bank and Gaza are facing challenging problems with complex socioeconomic components (e.g. poverty; unemployment; violence towards women) many of which have not received any attention for public or international aid agencies. With responsibility for addressing these problems devolving from the PNA to local and international NGOs and from NGOs to charitable societies, local activists within communities are seeking to involve the parties closest to problems in the design, implementation, and evaluation of solutions. One form into which these parties join efforts to solve problems and enhance their ability to survive is through collaboration and partnerships. These partnerships may differ in form, in the particular goals they are trying to achieve, and in whom they bring together. Yet, they all share a common impetus: the impact of environmental uncertainty on organizations forces them to adopt strategies to sustain themselves and thus reduce organizational stress, and collaboration is perceived as an integral part in their strategy portfolio.

The increased propensity for collaboration among FBOs operating in the social, legal and advocacy sectors, however, requires more discussion. It is apparent that there is something about organizations in these sectors that make them more perceptible to form collaborative ties with

more partners compared to other FBOs. Their unique position in society pits them to an inhospitable governing body that does not refrain from showing deep reluctance to any interference from civil actors in the governing process. FBOs in the PT do not receive significant financing from the Palestinian government, yet they are still indirectly in contact with governing political institutions. By simply being engaged in advocacy roles FBOs have to deal with rules and regulations established by the governing Palestinian government. In addition, by funding the publication of policy memos and educating their beneficiaries about their rights and roles towards the government FBOs are indirectly involved in policy related activities. One FBO leader summarized this position as follows:

“It is not that we dislike participating in advocacy-related activities, but we do not like to label our activities as such since it limits what we can do and it may bring a lot of troubles for us in the future.”

This ‘ambiguous’ position in civil society can also be seen as a motive to add more partners. Goldman and Kahnweiler (2000) found that collaborators with role ambiguity are more successful than those with less tolerance for ambiguity. Applying this to nonprofit organizations would suggest that those with very broad mandates, such as social services or education or advocacy, might be more likely to experience role ambiguity and thus might be more likely to collaborate than would health organizations that have a more defined mandate (Foster and Meinhard, 2002). Looking at the mission statements of FBOs involved in the social, legal and advocacy sectors typifies this ambiguity. Missions ranging from “protecting human dignity” to “preserving religious morals” provide FBOs with a wide list of projects and partners to pick from.

Collaborative behavior was also related to the age of the FBO. Understandably, entering into a collaborative relationship with other organizations may be more problematic for younger

organizations to execute (Foster and Meinhard, 2002). Newer FBOs have many competing priorities that draw on their resources as they seek to establish themselves. In addition, their relative undeveloped reputation means they lack the same depth of networks and connections as older organizations. Interviews with leaders of smaller FBOs (budgets less than USD 75,000/year) showed a trend of joining social initiatives and advocacy campaigns of larger organizations (faith-based and secular) or tapping into their resources and observe good standing with the government in order to do their work. Some organizations saw that engaging and strengthening their own beneficiaries was a valuable way of doing effective advocacy work. Rather than traditional lobbying within a “top down” approach, mobilizing user groups to advocate on their own behalf was sometimes referred to as important work.

The number of directors on the board had also an impact on collaborative behavior. This relationship had been established as well in different contexts. Galaskiewicz and Rauschenbach (1988) found that nonprofit arts organizations increased corporate contributions received when more corporate executives were on their boards. They argued that nonprofits used these board linkages to gain access to company foundations and contributions committees. Following this line of logic and extending it to the context of formalized collaboration, Guo and Acar (2005) postulated that board linkages with other nonprofit organizations help an organization gain access to more nonprofit organizations that may become potential partners for a higher degree of collaboration, thus eventually leading to more formal types of collaborative activities. It should be noted that this positive correlation cannot necessarily be interpreted as supporting a causal hypothesis that board linkages eventually lead to more partners. It is possible that collaborations themselves lead to greater board linkages; that is, the threat to organizational independence

inherent in formal alliances is balanced by organizational efforts to create more formal linkages across boards and management teams (Guo and Acar, 2005).

Interestingly, the size of the FBO, as measured by budget and staff, did not have any significant influence on collaboration. This result is not compatible with other previous findings which found that smaller organizations are significantly less likely than either medium or larger organizations to develop more interconnected relationships with other organizations (Foster and Meihard, 2002). One explanation for this is that risks facing smaller and larger FBOs are similar, and external pressure does not discriminate according to size. Different FBOs can find collaboration easier than others, but that does not prevent the rest to seek more partners even though they are forced to pay a higher price for collaboration.

While this chapter has covered numerous relationships, it is possible to summarize the most important findings in a relatively well-defined form. The most obvious conclusion is that collaboration among FBOs and other members in the Palestinian civil society is well established and one cannot understand the role of FBOs in society without fathoming how collaboration enhances that role and—possibly—increasing their effectiveness. Certainly, there are different strategies adopted by FBOs to assist them in service delivery or increase the probability of their survival apart from plain collaboration, but given the environmental uncertainty in which FBOs function in, collaboration and alliances among organizations have emerged as a strategic response to uncertainty and for fostering a more coordinated community response to complex issues. Indeed, both faith-based and secular nonprofits are significantly engaged in such alliances. Interestingly, new explanations of advocacy appeared under the theme ‘collaboration’. It was within this category that the involvement of FBOs often occurred. Collaboration involves partnerships and coalitions formed across the FBO sector and the wider civil society arena to

include influential agents as well as service providers. Collaboration was perceived as fostering a culture of advocacy at all levels of the civil society, as well as enhancing the collective power of FBOs and the ability to achieve support more broadly in society. A common perception was that collaboration could only be operationalized by the inclusion of civil society organizations, as well as, private businesses, as one FBO's director explained:

“It is hard to clap with one hand, you have to use both hands to do so, and that is the case with our work in the PT. We cannot simply influence policy on our own. We have instead to marshal the capacity of our partners, supporters, donors, and beneficiaries to achieve our goals.”

Overall, the analysis here was limited by the choice of collaborators associated with FBOs, ranging from the Palestinian governments to other nonprofits to the private local sector. While many aspects of collaborative networks are similar for secular and faith-based NGOs, FBOs appear to have a wider range of collaborators. For instance, they are significantly more likely to collaborate with private businesses compared to secular NGOs. Significant differences exist as well among FBOs' collaborators. Unlike the rest of FBOs, faith-based health service providers, for example, collaborate with Israeli nonprofits, while those in the emergency relief, career development and advocacy sectors are more inclined to establish alliances with private businesses. Undoubtedly, offering services in diverse sectors brings organizations into contact with entities that specialize in each of those programmatic areas, enhancing the likelihood of collaborations (Ebaugh et al, 2006).

In exploring the stories behind the formation of collaborative ties among FBOs and other actors in society, it became apparent that the decision by these nonprofit managers to engage in an alliance had to do with at least three different factors. Each of the organizations interviewed for this research had somewhat distinct motives for engaging in collaboration: motives aligned with external pressure, specific organizational characteristics, or religious/ holistic reasoning.

Since the decision to collaborate is to serve more than simply the delivery of services to certain beneficiaries, one must consider what aspects of an organization might induce collaboration. Logically, organizations engage in collaborative relations either to improve their services, increase the probability of their survival, or take advantage of needed skills. Palestinian FBOs sought to address organizational needs through these collaborations, needs that were driven by their distinctive circumstances and inimitable political environment in which they operate.

The question that must be addressed is what these findings demonstrate for the continuing development of the knowledge base focused on religious service delivery and the proliferation of inter-organizational collaborations among FBOs and how this may affect the future outlook of the Palestinian civil society. Although the findings presented here are exploratory, the distinct motivations driving FBOs to collaborate demonstrate that FBOs are more connected to civil society than previously assumed. The proliferation of faith-based social service provision and advocacy initiatives in the ‘hostile’ Palestinian setting demonstrates that FBOs will increasingly rely on collaboration to advance their cause. What is not yet clear is whether FBOs are simply collaborating because they lack any other innovative strategy, or they strategically enter into collaborations to secure more resources, raise the chances of survival and try to influence public policy. Early examples of collaboration among FBOs and other nonprofits clearly demonstrate that collaboration is more of a strategic option rather than a desperate shelter. For example, as part of their advocacy activities to lobby against the NGO law introduced by the PNA in late 1990s (explained in more details in chapter six), FBOs, charitable societies and other secular grassroots organizations formed a network, the General Union of Palestinian Charitable Societies, to increase the effectiveness of their lobbying. Having realized that their efforts may not suffice to overturn the law, the Union decided to cooperate with the

liberal Palestinian NGO network (PNGO), even though both entities are ideologically on the opposite sides of a spectrum. PNGO brought visibility and professionalism to the alliance, and the Union brought broader nationalist credibility and respectability (Brown, 2003: 154).

When exploring the organizational-level motivations of multiple nonprofits engaged in collaboration within a single policy field; such as the NGO law; it allows for questions to be developed “concerning the interaction of organizational and policy environment variables and the enactment and operation of collaborative ventures (Sowa, 2009: 1020-1021)”. FBOs do not need to be directly involved in advocacy activities and lobbying to consciously strategize the benefits of collaboration. Organizations may even not acknowledge collaboration for policy purposes or explicitly intend to do so. However, as Jackson-Elmoore et al explain, “while the goal maybe to collaborate for service delivery, the mere linkage to a certain organization may create an avenue for potential policy or political allegiances, or both (Jackson-Elmoore et al, 2011: 258)”. That is the theme of the next chapter. Particularly, how collaboration among FBOs and their partners is creating ample possibilities for the former to significantly engage in influencing public policy.

5.6 Conclusion

Collaboration between faith-based organizations, other nonprofits, and governmental agencies not only provide a glimpse on how state and non-state actors influence social / welfare policy processes and outcomes but it also provides a backdrop for a more pressing issue in the region: how religious values and ideals influence social policies. My interest here is not to focus on ‘political Islam’ or ‘Islamic fundamentalism’. These topics have already received a great share of interest in the previous two decades and are covered at great depth in multiple

publications since. Rather this dissertation takes a new step in the study of social and political makeup in a contemporary Muslim society (with a visible Christian minority) by introducing more comprehensive methods to assess the meaning and dynamics of social welfare provision there. To this end, my interest in Islamic social provisions and development initiatives stems from recognizing the crucial historical and present role which all religions have played in shaping their societies' moral ideals about human wellbeing and real life outcomes in society (Jawad and Yakut-Cakar 2010, Jawad 2009).

In this chapter I describe the degree to which faith-based organizations collaborate with other specific organizational types—that is, the intensity and range of these collaborations. I then examine organizational correlates of collaboration range. Based on fieldwork, I propose that environmental, organizational and religious/holistic are important in determining whether a FBO will collaborate with other partners. Results show that FBOs tend to collaborate quite extensively with other nonprofits, private businesses and the Palestinian government. Collaborating FBOs sought benefits for their organizations anticipating that these benefits would outweigh the costs associated with collaboration. The methodology used in this chapter provides an initial attempt to predict which Palestinian FBOs are most likely to collaborate with other organizations. The general finding is that FBOs enter into inter-organizational collaborations to widen the range of their services, diminish pressure from Israeli or Palestinian forces, and increase the effectiveness in their advocacy attempts. Likewise, generating more income internally and having been in operations for longer period are all determinants to the extent FBOs will collaborate at all levels. Interpretation of results from the study must take into consideration several limitations. First, because of the absence of a comprehensive list of organizations, this is not a true random sample. Although the quantitative analysis included all FBOs operating in the PT (N=324), the

interviews took place only with 47 organizations that agreed to participate in the study. Moreover, all the interviews took place with organizations operating in urban Palestinian settings or refugee camps that are geographically adjacent to an urban metropolis. The absence of any major rural FBO's perspective on collaboration limits the ability to generalize and apply findings into organizations of different settings. Rural nonprofits, for example, may experience unique environmental problems that shape the nature of service delivery; these unique characteristics and conditions may create special difficulties for collaboration among rural nonprofits (Snively & Tracy, 2002, 2003). Second, although results presented here suggest the association between various environmental and contextual factors and the tendency to collaborate with more partners, it must be noted however that because the 2010 MAS survey data are cross-sectional in nature, the results of the regression analysis should not be simply interpreted as supporting the causal relationship implied in the discussion. Third, information gained from the 2010 MAS database and conducted interviews are based on self-report from organizational leadership. In general, this information should provide an accurate representation of reality given that leaders are in a better position to discern how collaboration affected their organizations. As with other studies based on self-report methods, results presented here may suffer from variance at the individual level that can inflate the outcomes of collaboration. Fourth, the quantitative model used the number of partners as the dependent variable, yet partnerships among different nonprofits vary by scope and by level of formalization. Without controlling for this differentiation it would be hard to present the true influence of collaboration on FBOs. Finally, both the field work interviews and MAS survey did not consider the costs of collaboration and how forming collaborative ties with other organizations might limit the activities of FBOs and dilute their independence. Although an examination of the costs of collaboration is beyond this study, it is important that future research

take into consideration both the costs and benefits of collaboration to determine its long-term effect and how this might influence future decision making by FBOs' leaders.

In view of these limitations, future attempts to study FBOs and their collaboration mechanisms need more longitudinal data as well as information on FBOs with a significantly larger sample size to examine lagged effects of environmental, organizational and contextual factors on FBO choice of collaboration, as well as to cover the diversity of geographical locations, industries of operation, and revenue sources, among others (Guo and Acar, 2005).

Understanding what organizations seek to accomplish for the services and what they aim to gain for their organization, as a whole, will help future researchers to better understand the impact of collaborations. Results presented in the chapter indicated that FBOs are linked to one another and to secular organizations through cooperative networks. International and regional aid agencies and foundations also form linkages when they fund more than one organization in the same geographical location. Joining the PNA in its attempt to widen its social programs also brings many actors to think and act collectively. All of this makes it hard to form a coherent portrait of the role of FBOs and civil society and policy process without paying attention to these possible linkages.

Chapter Six:

A New Form of FBOs: Service-Oriented Combined with Indirect Tactics

Abstract: *This chapter is about successful grassroots organizing that aims to reshape public policy around prominent issues in one of the most troubled regions in the world, pursuing the interests of many populations that lack the political or financial capital to influence public policy in a direct manner. In particular, the chapter aims to describe how faith-based organizations use both (1) their widespread social networks, and (2) the arguments of religious faith to nudge public policy towards promoting their interests. The faith-based organizations discussed here represent a growing breed of entities in the Middle East that adapted to the lack of serious opposition politics and the proliferation of regime oppressive tactics by situating their operations and activities on the intersection between social welfare provision, religion, and politics. In contrast to the essentially advocacy-focused nonprofits or the traditional charitable societies, many modern FBOs have charted a new path for themselves in which the funding of socioeconomic programs goes hand in hand with an active social policy agenda. By cooperating with other civil society institutions and for-profit businesses FBOs work to reshape government policies.*

“One cannot effectively engage in humanitarian activities or protect the human security of civilians unless one understands the role that religious non-state actors provide in supplanting, supplementing, or contesting the state’s role or policies with regards to the welfare of their populations (Wellman, 2009: 1)”

A central purpose driving this dissertation is to provide a more coherent understanding of the role of Islamic FBOs in the Palestinian territories (PT) and delineate their contributions to both the civil society and policy process. In particular: to what extent do FBOs influence local public policies in the PT and by what means do they achieve this? Arguments from the previous chapters show that FBOs constitute a wide and diverse sector of organizations and their critics and supporters tend to under or overestimate their true contribution to society and politics alike. While it is certainly plausible, for example, that FBOs might use their networks and service function to influence policy in a way that may be deemed by observers as too religious or

Islamic, there is very little empirical evidence documenting the occurrence of this type of scenario. This chapter focuses on the policy-related activities of FBOs to explore the tendency to which their service efforts might lead them to extend their influence beyond their traditional arena of service provision to a more politically active role in which service provision, religion and politics are mixed up in a hybrid entity.

6.1 Introduction: FBOs as Political Players

Today, FBOs are widely recognized for their contributions to society and are heralded as important providers of public services in the Palestinian welfare system. They are also valued as guardians of traditional Islamic values such as empathy, dedication, and altruism. Yet, despite their established and much touted societal significance, there is little insight into the role FBOs play as actors in the political process. Work by a number of scholars has examined the growing role of community-based organizations and nonprofits generally but not of FBOs specifically. For example, several reports have hinted towards the political role of NGOs in the Palestinian context (Mishal and Sela, 2006). Likewise, recent scholarship suggests that NGOs often behave in a hybrid structure in which service delivery and indirect political advocacy are simultaneously functioning side-by-side (Challand 2009, Brown 2004). With the use of qualitative and quantitative methods, the current and next chapters examine how FBOs interface with governmental institutions and how they have embedded themselves in the political scene. The two chapters further demonstrate how FBOs navigate the environment of political opportunities and constraints and what political strategies and tactics they use to advance their goals and benefit their beneficiaries.

While there are many theories that explain the existence, proliferation and success of faith-based social institutions in Muslim societies, the existing theories often emphasize either

the passive nature of FBOs and their rejection of any active role in political activism, or their revolutionary attitudes that is concentrated on overthrowing the current regimes and the establishment of a pan-Islamic state. Existing theories simply under or overestimate the role FBOs play in Muslim societies and fail to distinguish among the varied streams of FBOs and how their unique ideologies and structure may produce different outcomes in different contexts. Particularly, these theories fail to address the subtle political role that many FBOs play, the diverse political relationships and collaborative networks that exist between FBOs, government institutions and the private sector, and the political tactics and strategies that FBOs use to advance their own interests in an unstable political arena.

There has been recently some recognition for the contributions of Islam to the emergence of a modern public sphere (Moors, 2006). Convincing arguments have been circulating explaining how a modern Muslim public sphere has come into being with increasingly diverse set of actors and publics engaging in public debate about the common good (Eickelman and Anderson 2003, Salvatore and Eickelman 2004). This chapter explores this new public sphere, focusing on how FBOs managed to find a place for themselves in national policies within a hostile environment.

Studying political behavior of FBOs is a challenge. Charitable societies and nonprofits are almost always founded for some purpose other than advocacy in the policy making process. Their mission is usually about comforting the needy, feeding the hungry, helping the patient, or accommodating the homeless rather than lobbying for a particular policy agenda. Extending the arguments that started in chapter four and building on the ones developed in chapter five, the current chapter aims to show how FBOs are far from being the apolitical entities practitioners and scholars like to think about. Instead, like most caring civil society organizations, FBOs in the

PT participate actively in national debates in which social and legal issues are being discussed. And like most participants, FBOs have their own views that they like to push and advocate for. But, unlike other participants in democratic contexts, FBOs in the PT do not participate in outright advocacy tactics in which civil society organizations directly lobby decision makers. Because direct advocacy of FBOs is subject to harsh retaliation from the PNA security forces, it is important to explore other ways in which these organizations influence public policy. The arguments and cases discussed here suggest that FBOs' involvement in Palestinian public policies is extensive, varied and unexpected. Despite a weak citizenry involvement and legislature, groups were willing to try a variety of approaches to get their favored policy concerns addressed by the government. They engaged in a number of tactics, which varied slightly by policy campaign. Within these tactics, significant patterns of indirect political engagement stand out. Particularly, two distinct types of group engagement were observed: collaboration and religious framing.

Throughout this chapter, I examine indirect advocacy activities such as these and explain why FBOs were successful in influencing public policy discussions and implementation. This finding is surprising in light of the existing literature that stresses the limited political skills of FBOs, the tendency for these organizations to focus instead on the delivery of basic public goods and services, and the unlikely inhibitions of civil society groups in the Middle East to participate in--not to mention influence--policy engagement.

I draw upon multiple sources of data to better understand how advocacy capacity is built in such direct service organizations. In this chapter I focus at point-in-time reports by surveying organizational leadership about their policy advocacy tactics (2010 MAS survey). This proved to be an important method to understand the complexity within which FBOs chart their agendas and

advocacy tactics. While the 2010 MAS survey offered a general picture about the role of FBOs in advocacy and their tendency to form network with other civil society agents, deeper exploration, through qualitative data, of how advocacy is practiced highlights other dynamics. Specifically, in the next chapter I discuss two separate cases involving new laws and legislations in which FBOs became active members in advocating for their specific views of the legal debate. The detailed, nuanced case study method is ideally suited to answer questions about organizational responses to environmental pressures left largely in a black box by “large N” studies (Binder, 2007). This comprehensive data collection and analysis of both qualitative and quantitative information about these cases enables triangulation and improves the validity of the conclusions drawn. The analysis provides rich description that allows for important dynamics, largely obscured in most research, to appear based upon specification of the factors proposed to predict policy advocacy.

This chapter is divided into six sections. The next section brings in the topic of FBOs and advocacy activities. It particularly emphasizes the role that some FBOs play in the policy process and how this role is often underestimated. Two advocacy tactics are further discussed in detail in section three: religious framing and the tendency to form collaborative networks with other partners in civil society. In depth analysis of the role of FBOs in the Palestinian policy process is discussed in section four. Section five presents the methodology used and explains both the rationale for quantitative methods. The analysis and discussion section will be divided into two parts. Section five in the current chapter will only present the analysis derived from the quantitative methods, while as the next chapter is devoted solely for the qualitative part. The final and sixth section concludes.

6.2 FBOs, Advocacy & Public Policy

One way to understand the role of nonprofits in the policy process is by framing the work of FBOs through the prism of “policy behavior”. Elmoore et al (2011: 5-6) talk about four examples of “policy behaviors”. Two are considered to touch on overt political behavior (electoral politics and policy advocacy) and two are seen as targeting the implementation of decisions already taken (service delivery and community & economic development). In other words, nonprofits –both secular and FBOs- enjoy two streams of political advocacy within which they can have significant influence: policy change and policy implementation. The political significance of civil society in general and FBOs in particular could be even more prominent in contexts characterized by conflict –such as the Palestinian territories- given the higher degree of politicization and the lower levels in structural institutional settings in these contexts (Marchetti and Tocci, 2009).

The talk about political and policy-related activities of nonprofits; especially FBOs; touch upon a sensitive side of their work. After the terrorist acts of 9/11 most research agendas involved with Islamic FBOs in the Middle East have been driven towards the ‘ultimate’ connection between the latter group and funding for terrorist groups. Although this connection has been established for at least a handful of organizations, the rest of FBOs had to live with a stigma that proved to be a determining factor for their future existence and growth. The silver lining for this whole debacle is the energized interest that researchers acquired towards studying Islamic FBOs in the field. To that end, the relationship between religion and social welfare in the Middle East was shown to be more intense for a variety of political and socio-economic reasons “making the study of Islamic welfare central to the understanding of the region and, also,

potentially fruitful in proposing new and positive avenues for social progress (Jawad and Kakut-Cakar, 2010: 695)”.

Advocacy is the public support for or recommendation of a particular cause or policy (Reid 2000a). When practiced by nonprofits and other civil society organizations, advocacy, according to Acosta (2011), “entails an outright intention of influencing decisions, projects or outcomes of governments or companies, outside legal frameworks but with claims to moral authority”. One of the most frequently cited definitions of advocacy within the nonprofit field is provided by Jenkins, who states that advocacy is “any attempt to influence the decisions of institutional elite on behalf of a collective interest” (Jenkins, 2006, p. 297). Advocacy, obviously, does not aim only to push for certain rules or policies, some advocate just to preserve the status quo situation. In that regard, Andrews and Edwards explain the role of advocacy organizations by stressing their aim to “make public interest claims either promoting or resisting social change that, if implemented, would conflict with the social, cultural, political, or economic interests or values of other constituencies and groups (Andrews and Edwards, 2004: 481)”. Some researchers even prefer to distinguish among different types of advocacy (Kimberlin, 2010). They argue that self-motivated or interested advocacy, in which organizations aim to protect their own funding and status, should be viewed differently from progressive advocacy, in which organizations seek to address underlying structural or power inequalities and engage constituents in the wider policy process (Donaldson, 2008).

Although, as Kimberlin (2010) explains, much nonprofit advocacy is conducted by core advocacy organizations, there is also an important advocacy role for direct service organizations, particularly human services nonprofits. By design, human services nonprofits concentrate their activities in areas and among populations that are disempowered or lack alternative resources for

aid. The beneficiaries of human service nonprofits are, hence, “disproportionately reliant on and affected by the design, funding, and implementation of public policies (Kimberlin, 2010: 167)”.

The traditional image of FBOs as providers of basic health services, education, shelter, food parcels, and other forms of welfare services overshadowed their important history as social change agents. The Islamic social movements, which emboldened millions of Arabs and Muslim around the world and shook the foundations of several authoritarian regimes, were bolstered by the participation of charitable societies and faith-based agencies that served the needs of local communities (Wickham 2005, Wiktorowicz 2002). This skewed view of FBOs as purveyors of charity, but not social change or advocates for equality, may lead observers, politicians, donors, and FBOs’ leaders to the conclusion that advocacy practice is not the domain of FBOs and as such one should not perceive them as active agents in influencing policy processes. In reality however, because of the front line nature of social work practice in nonprofit settings, the social work profession has a powerful opportunity to assist FBOs and other nonprofit human services agencies to integrate progressive advocacy functions into their work (Donaldson, 2008). In addition, given human services agencies’ direct experience with addressing human needs, they have a unique perspective to speak authoritatively about the root causes and solutions of social problems (*Ibid*: 27). The purpose of this chapter is to stimulate a greater understanding of the role of advocacy as a distinct activity within a FBO and explain the strategies and tactics FBOs use in their attempt to nudge public policy towards their interests.

For FBOs to get involved in policy participation and making is a new approach for a deep-rooted sector in the Palestinian society. This definitely corresponds with the way Sara Roy categorized Islamic social institutions (ISIs) in the PT as traditional/non-activist and developmental/activist (2011). Whereas the former tended to focus on satisfying emergent basic

needs, the latter partakes a more professional attitude that is concentrated on “civic empowerment through community participation and were inspired by a longer, more articulated view ... [which stipulated that] the development or betterment of the community as an ongoing and multidimensional process (Roy, 2011: 102-103)”.

Participation here means that FBOs are contributing to policy debates and exerting some degree of influence over policy decision-making. Understood in this way, participation includes a number of activities, such as conveying demands, offering information, analysis, and ideas, organizing campaigns and mobilizing the public, and collaborating with and/or putting political pressure on policy makers. Groups pursue different combinations of these and other activities during the agenda setting, formulation, and adoption phases of policy making.

The concepts of civic participation and political pluralism in the PT in particular, and the Arab world in general, did not spring overnight. The substantial growth in mass education over the last three decades, and the proliferation of new communication channels limit the abilities of any particular group to mobilize the cultural life. The ideas, images and practices of alternative social and political worlds, as Dale Eickelman (2005) argues, became a daily occurrence with multiple possibilities for creating communities and networks, fragmenting political and religious authority, and opening new grounds for interaction and mutual recognitions, which in turn “facilitates the collaboration of like-minded people across national and regional boundaries (p.39)”. This also facilitates the scaling up of civic-pluralist forces and solidarity networks in society, which in turn helps in generating an effective democratic power from below. This includes solidarity among those who least enjoy the benefits of contemporary affluence, as well as solidarity between them and democratically inclined people holding positions of influence in more elite institutions (Wood, 2002: 19).

One early example that demonstrates the newly acquired capabilities of this ‘civic-pluralist forces’ in the Arab world is the passage in Egypt in January 2000 of “The Law on Reorganization of certain Terms and Procedures of Litigation in Personal Status Matters” that gave women more freedom to initiate a “no-fault” divorce against their husbands. It took the Egyptian parliament fifteen years and an orchestrated campaign by a coalition of activists, lawyers, government officials, civic leaders, legislators, and scholars to pass the law. This new coalition achieved what others failed to accomplish, as Diane Singerman argues, for the following three reasons: first, coalition members managed to reach across to that part of the religious establishment that would concur with their religiously framed policies, second, they scaled up with political elites in the executive branch, legislators and officials, and third, they scaled down to gain support from various civil society organizations and their memberships (2004: 164).

During that same time Palestinian FBOs were busy as well in planning their own ‘civic-pluralist force’. The rapid changes that swept the Palestinian society after the establishment of the PNA and the accelerating emphasis by various civil groups on reforming social and economic policies rather than the traditional message of national liberation, have created a sense of urgency among FBOs that they have to join the ongoing social debates or else they may lose whatever privileged status they managed to acquire. In that new environment, the Israeli occupation and how to survive it was no longer the topic dominating national debates. Rather, Palestinian entered the state-formation phase and it was time to solve all the hanging social issues that have been ignored for more than 50 years: Women wanted to have equal rights like men, unions argued for limited economic integration with Israel, human rights activists advocated for more transparent governance, the Palestinian Authority wanted to curb the

increasing power of civil society groups, and FBOs sought minimum interference with their daily activities and the adoption of more laws derived from Islamic jurisprudence. For FBOs to achieve their goals and triumph over the parties who were advocating for opposing policies they needed to get involved in advocacy tactics. Yet, their involvement has to be subtle so not to arouse the suspicions of the hostile PNA's security forces. Learning from the experiences of other FBOs in the region, I argue that two tactics came to dominate FBOs advocacy attempts: collaboration with other civil society agents, and religious framing. The next section provides a more detailed explanation of these two tactics.

6.2.1 The Role of Collaboration and Informal Networks

Contrary to the mainstream social movement theory, which connects an open political opportunity to mobilizational activities by social movements, advocacy activities by FBOs in the PT sprang from what Benin and Vairel (2011) label as the “collective threat” facing these organizations. As the following argument and cases will demonstrate, it is the ongoing harassment from the Palestinian security forces and the feeling that these groups are losing their influence on civil society that ignited the impetus for action and motivated some FBOs to diversify their activities to include a number of advocacy related initiatives. This is a very important development in the study of civil society groups that has been largely ignored by mainstream social movement theorists and has only recently been acknowledged by a limited number of scholars. Bringing in more cases from the Middle East and North Africa to the study of social movements and civil society will enrich these fields with new insights and reverse some of the common arguments deemed as facts. In effect, the Middle East and North Africa regions hold a promise to “inspire the sociological imagination because they provide cases where mobilizations

emerge in the absence of ‘opening opportunities’ or when they are highly restricted or uncertain (Benin and Vairel, 2011: 8)”.

Like other parts in the region, a great part of the most successful Islamic mobilizations in the PT owe their success not to their ideological message or links to political parties, but to the local networks and relationships (White 2002, Wickham 2002). Compared to government parties that prefer a top-down hierarchal relation governed by an ineffective bureaucratic organization, the new Islamist mobilizations are a politics in the vernacular par excellence (White 2002, Hefner 2005). This Islamic version of “vernacular politics”, which was first coined by Jenny White (2002), “is based on local networks of people united within a complex set of norms of mutual obligation”. People sharing these norms expect to receive assistance from one another, without calculating immediate return, when the need arises. A history of such relations builds up trust and mutual obligations “that are power forms of social solidarity, integrating not just family members and people from the same region of origin, but neighbors with no other ties except those of local proximity (White, 2002: 20-21)”. According to Benin and Vairel (2011: 12), this type of ‘vernacular politics’--or informal networks-- may be a key to understanding both the “quotidian struggle for survival and social reproduction that absorb the energies of the vast majority of the population in the region”, as well as how undercurrents of anger and dissatisfaction may be mobilized, and the conditions that render mobilization possible.

Before delving deeper into the complex nature of religious mobilization, it is worth first providing a brief definition of what informal networking means in the context of civil society organizations in the Middle East. It has been argued that joining a coalition is often a first step to agency engagement in advocacy (Donaldson, 2008: 31). Coalitions have the benefit of pooling the resources of its members to lessen the burden on any one and they provide cover from

potential retribution by the advocacy target (*ibid*). The same rationality applies to Middle Eastern civil society groups. For example, informal networks according to Denoeux (1993) refer to “groups of individuals linked to one another by highly personal, non-contractual bonds and loyalties (p.3)”. He went further to identify four different types of informal networks common in the Middle East: clientelist, occupational, religious, and residential. The formation of these different types of networks and their effectiveness in recruiting and mobilizing adherents can be explained through contextually conditioned rationality (Benin and Vairel 2011: 20). Focusing only on the religious informal networks, the first step to understand them is by realizing that these networks are embedded in a local social structure of power, and their members typically do not envision themselves as “autonomous individuals whose rights and obligations can be disconnected from these networks (*ibid*: 21)”. This is not because they belong to an exceptional culture or adhere by different moral standards, but because the combination of poverty, states with limited capacity to provide essential services, and authoritarianism makes these networks essential for survival and simultaneously enhances their power over individuals (Benin and Vairel, 2011: 20).

This special environment is what sets Islamic mobilization differently from other mobilizational acts. Islamic activism is not fundamentally different from other forms of activism in the Middle East. The organizational structures, repertoires of contention, collective identity, and so forth of Islamic activism are similar, for example, to those of women activists throughout the region (Sigerman, 2006). What is special, however, in the case of Islamic activism, is the political context within which it operates. Forbidden from formal acts of participation in the political process, many Islamic groups adopted an indirect form of participation through informal networks and the construction of collective identities through these networks. The networked

world that constitutes associational life in the Middle East is what explains the emergence and organizational power of the Islamic movement (Singerman, 2004) and Islamic FBOs constitute a crucial link within that network.

Regardless of the approach of the political establishment, the prevalence of such informal mobilizations and alliances in countries across the Middle East shows that contemporary politics in the region has changed. It is no longer restricted to a handful of elites, religious dignitaries, and representatives of the privileged classes. As Hefner clearly puts it: “The age of mass mobilization has dawned, and with it has come not merely a pluralization of the political field, but a *contestive* pluralization centered on rival interpretations of Muslim politics, and rival efforts to organize in society and across the state-society divide (Hefner, 2005: 10)”. Outright outcomes of the new Islamist mobilizations introduce a totally different discussion. While Islamist groups in Turkey leaned more towards democratic notions of free speech and unhindered political action, Egypt’s Islamists have tended to be conservative on matters of democracy, pluralism, and women’s rights. These and other examples, as Hefner rightly concludes, illustrate “that there is no uniform Muslim modernity, nor a monolithic Muslim politics (Hefner, 2005: 11)”.

In summary, the study of informal religious networks holds a great promise to shed a light on the complex nature of policy decision-making in the Middle East in general and the PT in particular. Given that the costs of political participation in the region are high, and thus conventional forms of political expression are unavailable, people turn to informal networks to organize and advance their interests. Networks are not only the most viable means of mobilizing the masses and pushing for certain policies. They are also the safeguards of collective identity,

drawing the ideas, sensibilities, and reflexivity of people together while crisscrossing social, economic, and political hierarchies (Singerman, 2004).

Part of the unattended attention to these networks can be attributed to the fuzzy nature of their formation and structure. Studying and researching informal networks in the field was not, obviously, devoid of obstacles. Like other researchers whose aim was to draw the contours of informal networks and delineate their actors and motives, it was difficult to describe these networks given that their informal nature renders them challenging to identify the exact boundaries of their membership or understand how that network operates (Denoeux, 1993: 5). Unlike oppositional political parties, trade unions, or official civil society networks, informal networks lacks established membership procedures, organizational structure, clear-cut programs, and unified ideology. Yet, what binds people together goes beyond political and religious ideology or any particular type of organization. It is these networks, cultural values and interpersonal relations that bind people together, recreated a sense of community and allowed it to become a political force (White 2002). The focus on advocacy networks highlights, further, the coordination and negotiations needed for several organizations of asymmetric size, scope, ideology, experience, and motives to join forces to achieve a common goal. Their network logic provides them with enough fluidity to influence policymakers through various channels, which may include lobbying, hypermedia campaigns and marches (Acosta, 2011).

6.2.2 The Role of Ideas in Politics: The Efficacy of Religious Framing

Framing interests and ideas in a religious message to influence public policy is not a new mechanism in Middle Eastern politics. The rise of Islamic activism among urban, educated youth in the region in the 1980s and early 1990s under strict authoritarian states was facilitated through motivational framing. Islamist groups, as Wickham (2004) describes their activities in Egypt,

framed activism as “a moral ‘obligation’ that demands self-sacrifice and unflinching commitment to the cause of religious transformation (p.232)”. It is through such a frame that millions of activists and sympathizers were brought to view political participation as a religious duty. But as Wickham neatly observes, the positive reception of the Islamist message was not a function of the “frame’s ‘intrinsic’ appeal”. Instead, there have to be certain external conditions for a message to receive wide adherence. These conditions include; (1) a close fit between the message and the beliefs and life expectancies of the targeted population; (2) the credibility of the agents responsible for transmitting the message; and (3) the reinforcement of the message through small grassroots solidarity groups (Wickham, 2004). While this form of mobilization did not ignite an effective revolution against the ruling class, it did create a parallel culture that is detached from the values and orientations of state agencies. This culture provided Islamic activists (both in social movements and FBOs) with the framework needed for new kinds of political activism, which are disconnected from the traditional Islamic political and social activism.

The outcomes resulting from this new political activism are far from uniform. Some groups and organizations embarked on a violent track in an attempt to overthrow the state, while others joined the political process hoping to reach their goals in peaceful means. These phenomena challenge much of the conventional wisdom about the Middle East and emphasize that it is a region that should not be characterized blindly with its anathema towards political contestation and mobilization of all sorts (Benin and Vairel, 2011). By employing innovative ways of “spinning” the issues and communicating their views to society members and officials, religious activists sought to shape public discourse and the public agenda. Islamist ideas provided activists with a radically different vantage point from which to view the political

system and their role within it (Wickham, 2004: 245). Not surprisingly, some FBOs are more effective than others at performing this task. Understanding their varying degrees of success strengthens our grasp of policy influence in the region.

Considering the Palestinian case, the long-term occupation produced a fertile narrative for religious activists to link their religious message with the realities on the ground. FBOs could not simply focus on the delivery of social goods and services without acknowledging the continuous harassment to daily life and human dignity brought by the occupation. For the Palestinians in general, defeating the occupier, as Sara Roy argues, became a matter of cultural preservation, building a moral consensus and Islamic value system as well as political and military power. The struggle for FBOs was not for power per se but for defining new social arrangements and appropriate cultural and institutional models that would meet real social needs, and do so without violence. “The idea was not to create an Islamic society but one that was more Islamic, as a form of protection against all forms of aggression (Roy, 2003: 15)”.

Civil society activists see framing certain views on public policy with a religious grab as a survival mechanism and the preservation of traditional moral values rather than an outright religious proselytization. For these activists, no matter how hazardous the external environment is (e.g. occupation; authoritarian government; globalization), providing charity and advocating for safeguarding Islamic values goes hand in hand with other forms of political activism. Taking this rationale into consideration, many modern FBOs considered their mission to surpass the traditional delivery of basic goods and services to include a more wide-ranging appeal of the protection of authentic culture and human self-worthiness. The following passage by Janine Clark summarizes succinctly how FBOs in general rationalize their existence in an environment diluted by multiple competing ideologies:

“Islamists generally regards the period of the prophet Mohammed and his first four successors as one of ideological inspiration or guidance. Islamists’ appropriation of what they believe to be this tradition includes the assertion that Islam ... is a comprehensive system encompassing all things material, spiritual, societal, individual, political and personal. The Islamist project, therefore, is an attempt to create a seemingly seamless web of religion, politics, charity, and all form of activism. All of these realms should reinforce one another and promote public virtue and personal piety. In this invention of tradition, the concept of da’wa becomes central. Beyond simply proselytizing or preaching (as traditionally defined), da’wa becomes the very act of ‘activating’ Islam through deed in all spheres of life (Clark, 2004: 948)”.

Considering the Palestinian case again, there is an additional organizational feature to these efforts: to press public culture and politics into a more participatory mold (Hefner, 2005). The abrupt social and political changes that took place in the PT after the emergence of the PNA caused many concerns among Islamist activities and their supporters. During this time, civic activity by FBOs surpassed the traditional service delivery programs to include the preservation of cultural and religious values. With the changing nature of the threats facing the Palestinian society from military attacks to cultural aggression against beliefs and practices, FBOs felt compelled to upgrade their services into a more virtual realm that includes culture, values and ways of life. That is different from arguing that FBOs were advocating for a revolutionary vision in which Islam would form the basis of any future government. On the contrary, there is little evidence that FBOs formed any direct institutional links with activist political groups (Roy, 2011: 164). Rather, the PNA’s inability to meet all but a portion of the needs of the new urban masses created a demand for alternative providers of public services, which FBOs were happy to fill. The growing network of mosques and social Islamic organizations generated a sense among local Palestinians for the need to a more participatory practice of public life (Hefner, 2005).

6.3 Active FBOs: The Emergence of New Organizational Forms

In a territory that has historically been deprived from a national and central government and where occupying forces and local agents became the de facto rulers, the emergence of strong

civil society organizations committed to the national cause of liberation and the provision of essential public services and goods has been a typical means for the Palestinian population to address their grievances and emphasize their steadfastness on their land. After the six days war in June 1967, the Palestinians living in the newly occupied territories in the West Bank and Gaza Strip became physically isolated from the rest of the Arab world. This geographical segregation coupled with the increased pressure of living under a restraining Israeli military rule initiated a nationalist grassroots movement and the decrease of traditional forms of rule. The new organizations that originated as a result of the movement represented more than one social, local, or family interest, and were thus better suited to react and adapt to the changing political context (Amal, 2005: 46). According to Michael Cernea (1988), the civil society organizations that emerged during the early years of Palestinian resistance took the shape of two ideal types: (1) NGOs and associations with a mission to promulgate cultural values; and (2) public service providers. The first type included those organizations that took the establishment of an independent Palestinian state as the ultimate mission to embrace. By affiliating their cause with local elites and political parties these organizations managed to build a tight network of supporters among universities, private businesses, and workers' unions. Their activities became concentrated on educating the Palestinians living under occupation about their rights and in cooperating with multinational organizations to inform the international public opinion about the injustices taking place in the Palestinian occupied territories. The second type of civil society organizations are the ones that aimed to cover any social or economic gaps left by the military occupiers. These were task-oriented organizations that formed a quasi-public sector (Jamal, 2005: 46). However, this crude form of categorizations of Palestinian civil society organizations, as Amal Jamal argues, fails to capture the wide divergence among these organizations, or

understand the various strategies utilized by NGOs to manipulate the Israeli authorities and ensure their existence in the future. It is during this turbulent period that a robust Palestinian civil society took shape, which in turn influenced the structure of its future successor that emerged after the establishment of the PNA. Some of the policies toward non-state actors taken during the 1960s and 70s have even some influence on what faith-based and secular NGOs resemble today (Challand, 2009: 60).

Although there was sheer variety among civil society organizations created at that time, FBOs and religious charitable societies were relatively part of those organizations that were committed to providing basic goods and services. As explained in earlier chapters, Islamic philanthropy has mainly revolved largely around *waqfs*, the Islamic endowments. *Waqfs* responsibility is mainly concentrated on ensuring the condition of mosques and holy shrines, but they also provide donations to hospitals, soup kitchens and schools. After the 1948 war, when the West Bank and Gaza came under the control of Jordanian and Egyptian rule respectively, *zakat* committees were formed around local mosques in which some of their income was derived from *waqf*. In the West Bank, for example, alms were distributed to the poor and needy— following the traditional practice of *zakat* committees all over the Muslim world. The main responsibility for decision-making lay with the imam of the mosque, governed by Islamic law but also under the supervision of the Jordanian government's Ministry of Awqaf (plural of *waqf*), which had charge of religious affairs and holy sites (Benthall, 2008: 10-11). After 1967, however, there was more room for local organizations with an Islamic reference. This new acquired status led to the foundation of many Islamic organizations— some of them initiated by Palestinian Muslim Brotherhood activists, who were educated in Egypt and considerably influenced by the Brotherhood's message (e.g. the Islamic center in Gaza), other organizations simply built by

pious people or through various Islamic currents (Schaublin, 2009: 15). After the outbreak of the first *Intifada* (uprising) in December 1987, zakat committees gained heightened importance for their role in channeling foreign funding to the PT. They organized educational and health-related activities to compensate for services that were lacking as a consequence of the ongoing Intifada.

The establishment of the PNA changed the field for organizational activity by zakat committees and FBOs. As a start, the tasks of the Jordanian Ministry of Awqaf in the West Bank fell under the control of the PNA and were transformed into the PNA Ministry of Awqaf and Religious Affairs, which was in charge of governing the *waqfs*, mosques, and zakat committees in the West Bank (Schaublin, 2009: 16). This newly administrative arrangement did not translate into financial contributions, since the zakat committees have received minimal economic support from the PNA. Ironically, the reverse scenario is how the relation was conceived. According to some records, the Palestinian Ministry of Social Affairs asked for financial allocations from the zakat committees (Lundblad, 2011: 165). With regards to other FBOs, a fractious relation emerged with the PNA as a result of the latter's attempts to systematically assert its control over civil society organizations that were not under the domain of the PNA or the Fatah faction. Islamic organizations suffered disproportionately given that Islamist political opponents gradually appeared as the main threat to the PNA (Challand, 2009: 64).

The legal and funding environments also shifted dramatically during and after the establishment of the PNA. The passage of the new NGO law in 2000 marked a significant change in the organizational climate for FBOs especially, as articulated in Article 4 of the law, that the PNA has now the capacity to prevent the registration of any civil society organization that does not receive the approval of the Ministry of Interior. With its growing governing abilities and the power to allocate resources to the civil society organizations, the PNA provided

“clientelistic opportunities” to their civic allies and limited the availability of those opportunities to their non-supporters (Jamal, 2005: 50). This arrangement provided pro-PNA associations with a competitive advantage that helped them to exploit the opportunities offered by the PNA’s vertically structured clientelistic networks.

The result of these changes in the political, legal, and funding environments was a dramatic shift in the interaction between the PNA and the civil sector. Cause-oriented organizations advocating for legal protection, human rights, civic education, and democratization became a constant participant in political and civic discussions. Buoyed by generous funding from multinational and sovereign aid agencies, and an international consensus-led by Washington-that advocates for transparent governance and an active civil society, these advocacy organizations built a reputation for themselves as a neutral observant for the current legalistic discourse at the PNA and a guarantor for a liberal Palestinian state. Yet, for the rest of NGOs, those who were task-oriented in which public service-provision dominated their activities, the future was not always cheerful. Small grassroots organizations had to adopt some of the strategies similar to larger more professional NGOs. A number of them, for example, banded together creating the General Union of Palestinian Charitable Societies. While other more service-oriented NGOs became involved in advocacy-related activities.

In a series of surveys conducted by the Palestine Economic Research Institute (MAS) between the years 1999 and 2006, the percentage of NGOs that reported ‘increasing awareness and civic education through meetings and conferences’ as part of their objectives has increased from 27% in the year 1999 to almost 57% in 2006. Likewise, the percentage of NGOs that reported ‘protection of human rights’ as part of their objectives increased from 6% to 16% (MAS, 2007). In comparison, the percentage of NGOs that reported ‘assistance in kind, cash,

healthcare, orphanages and other relief’ has declined from 37.5% to 36% in 2006 (more details in figure 6.1 below). In summary, the economic, legal and political tightening in the PT after the establishment of the PNA produced both: a rapid expansion of national advocacy organizations with a main objective to secure human rights and guarantee a proper governance mechanism, and a substantial swath of organizations that combine national advocacy with a commitment to providing resources and services. The growth of this combined form of organization can be attributed to the widening socioeconomic gap in the PT combined with stiffen political and legal environment. Overall however, the change in organizational objectives and strategies was neither homogenous nor always cohesive, but it had a great influence on national reconstruction and state building (Jamal, 2005: 59).

In this context typified by the expansion of advocacy groups and the changing nature of service NGOs, the development of FBOs and religious charitable societies that combine both advocacy and service provision in their organizational identity and activities merits greater attention. It is these organizations that I will focus on in the current and next chapters. It is this peculiar duality that sets them apart from traditional zakat committees and unsophisticated mosque-based social organizations, and places them distinctively with the wider Islamic social movement organizations, which has implications for the development of Arab civil society and governance structures over time.

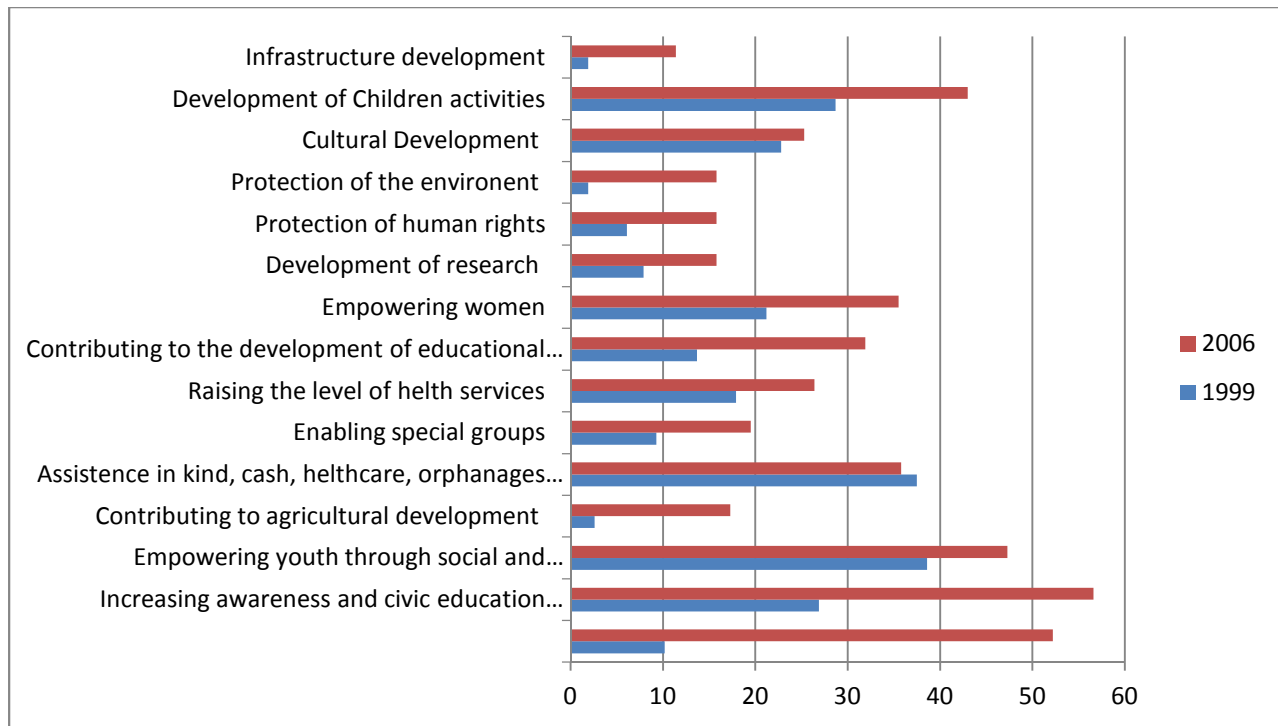


Figure6.1: Distribution of Palestinian NGOs based on their objectives between the years 1999-2006
(source: Mapping Palestinian Non-Governmental Organizations in the West Bank and Gaza Strip-MAS, 2007)

6.3.1 Politics and Public Policy in the Palestinian Territories

One of the principle characteristics of the authoritarian political regimes in the Middle East and North Africa is the weakness of established political parties. Even in countries where oppositional political parties have a limited margin of maneuverings (e.g. Jordan and Morocco) and are allowed to participate in national elections; their tactics are perceived as an ineffectual in challenging the all-dominant ruling regime. Faced with this bleak political environment, it is within the realm of “politicized civil society that demands for radical change to the political, economic, and social structures in place are articulated (Cavatorta and Elananza, 2008: 561)”.

In the case of the Palestinian territories and after the establishment of the PNA, the appeal of political parties have declined significantly in importance just as electoral politics has been

introduced. Most have even declined the “party” label, preferring the term “movement” or “front” instead (Brown, 2003). This change in rank stands in stark contrast to the central role political parties played in Palestinian resistance since 1948. For example, during the early 1950s professional and student unions that represented the specific interests of multiple political groups included many Palestinians who were active in the national movement prior to 1948 and intellectuals who understood the importance of the institutionalization process of political mobilization (Jamal, 2005). Through this early diligent work, and under the auspices of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO), Palestinian political parties rose to prominence during the 1960s and 1970s. Their influence extended beyond political and resistance activities to include civil institutions and the provision of welfare services as well. The PLO, with its political members, has therefore managed to play a major role in rebuilding the Palestinian national identity and in the remaking of a coherent Palestinian society (Jamal, 2005). This influence was even destined to reach higher levels during the late 1980s and early 1990s when the first Palestinian intifada took place in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Political parties were essentially the major cabals responsible for laying the groundwork for organizing protest activities (Hiltermann, 1991).

When the PNA held its first elections in 1996, most political parties opted out from participation citing the continuing Israeli occupation and the irony in the PNA decision to hold elections while the status quo on the ground was clearly limiting the governing ability of any Palestinian government. Moreover, the electoral law was structured to discourage party competition (Brown, 2003). Quarrels within parties amongst those against and in favor of participation in the elections and the subsequent factionalizing inside party ranks did not help as well in fomenting a unified stance in front of the Palestinian publics. After the elections, the role

of parties in the electoral sphere declined even further. The winning party in the 1996 elections, Fatah, proved both unwilling and unable to form a cohesive bloc in the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC), and public opinion polls showed generally deteriorating levels of popular support for opposition political parties (Brown, 2003). During this period and especially after the PNA showed its intent of dominating political and civil affairs in the PT several civil society organizations became increasingly engaged in political matters. This is particularly noticeable in demands for more protection of individual rights and for the introduction of some form of government accountability. Local and international NGOs started creating communities of interest by drawing attention to certain aspects defining their constituencies. Islamist movements were at the forefront of this struggle and they are much better analyzed as civil society actors even when taking on the role of more traditional parties, such as Hamas. This is because of their numerous social activities, their provision of services, their perceived autonomy from the ruling elites and their structured ties with a number of Islamic charities and non-political groups in society (Cavatorta and Elananza, 2008). This capacity for mobilizing attention and identities is critical for civil actors and social movements to give voice to the underrepresented (Salamon, 1999). As Marchetti and Tocci (2009) argued, the political significance of civil society may be more prominent in contexts marked by conflict. The existence of more pronounced motivators for politicization coupled with a less structured or developed institutional settings creates an environment in which the civil society can have an amplified role with regards to mobilization and activism.

For many Palestinians (and non-Palestinians), associational life offered the greatest possibilities for a new kind of politics in the Arab world. The creation of the PNA, however, caused confusion and conflict over the roles of NGOs (Brown, 2003). With the establishment of

the PNA, the new ‘state-like’ apparatus sought to control all aspects of public life in Palestinian society. As discussed in chapters three and four, the agenda of the PNA relied heavily on the “national reconstruction project” and the building of the foundations of the future Palestinian state. This new environment produced governmental institutions that began to limit the space of maneuverability for existing civil organizations while centralizing power with the growing PNA bureaucracy (Jamal, 2005).

NGOs, therefore, had a deep stake in the formulation and implementation of public policies. This is obviously the case when shifts in government regulations affect nonprofit activities, when changes in government spending affect nonprofit access to government grants or donor funds, or when security rationale threatens nonprofit existence. In these and other cases, nonprofits with vested interests in the particular policy outcome have an incentive to take action to preserve their self-interest and enhance their own view of the preferable policy outcome. Nonprofit contribution to the political process is even much wider than that. Indeed, by the standards set by the Arab world, Palestinian NGOs are remarkably strong and autonomous (Brown, 2003). Rather than relinquish their unique position in society to the PNA’s attempts for centrality, many NGOs were assertive about their right to protect their freedom of action as part of their objective to promote a vibrant political culture (Hammami, 2000).

The above situation poses a noteworthy dilemma for Palestinian political parties and the civil society alike: Do Islamic FBOs promote political identities that allow and encourage individuals to act as democratic citizens? Whether the nonprofit sector and FBOs in particular are capable of developing political identities and creating communities of interest depends on who participates in them (Clarke, 2008). During the early years of the PNA it was international NGOs and secular local NGOs funded by international aid agencies that took the helm to

promote for more transparent governance and elevate the stance of human rights in the PT. With the desperate situation in oppositional politics these NGOs envisioned themselves as a possible democratic alternative to the PNA (Hanafi and Tabar, 2005). Yet, as Reem Hammami argued concisely, that vision “was largely laid to rest by the NGO movement itself (2000: 16)”. Palestinian NGOs have been accused of some of the same charges they usually attribute to the PNA. In 1999, several leading PNA figures became involved in a public relations campaign aimed at criticizing Palestinian NGOs. The crutch of the campaign was based on a claim that several legal and human rights NGOs were spending foreign aid funds that were originally designated for the PNA. Criticisms were also directed at the excessive salaries NGOs’ leaders and employees receive while branding them as “fat cats” abusing the miserable conditions of the Palestinian people to enrich themselves and their families. Although many of these claims were later proved to be falsified, harm has been done and the reputation of NGOs among the public suffered severely. A public opinion survey that took place during the smear campaign and organized by the Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research (PSR) revealed that 43% of those surveyed believe that corruption exists in the NGO sector¹⁵. A later survey in 2006 concerning the state of Palestinian NGOs and charities implemented jointly by the Konrad Adenauer Foundation and the Coalition for Accountability and Integrity revealed that 53% of Palestinians believe that nepotism and its related forms are the most prevalent forms of corruption in NGOs and that 70% of Palestinians believe that NGOs and charities do not disclose their financial, administrative, or program related information to the public¹⁶.

¹⁵ <http://www.pcpsr.org/survey/cprspolls/99/poll42a.html#evaluation>

¹⁶ <http://www.kas.de/palaestinensische-gebiete/en/publications/8798/>

Against this background, it has been argued that Islamic FBOs and social activists with their grassroots organizing and proximity to local communities were in a better position compared to their secular counterparts to recapture the initiative of civil society (Sivan, 1990). For example, a public opinion poll conducted by Birzeit University to ascertain the degree of popular confidence in various civil institutions in the West Bank and Gaza revealed that Zakat committees enjoy one of the highest confidence rates among Palestinians second only to Palestinian universities (Benthall, 2008).

Undeniably aware of their sensitive position in Palestinian society, FBOs sought to form informal networks with other civil society members and private businesses in an attempt to expand their services and increase the probability of their survival. In an authoritarian setting, this informal organizational mechanism is likely to be the most successful means of mobilization (Clark, 2012). Unlike democratic polities in which formalized organizational structures may increase the likelihood of movement success, FBOs in the Palestinian territories were more oriented towards informal networks in which social and economic strategies were prioritized over direct political action. Given the institutionalization of these informal networks and the increasing repression FBOs have to deal with, informal networks became a direct venue for covert political influence.

Recruiting members to join the informal networks does not emerge simply through ideological congruity, framing of a religious message, or word mouth. It is part of a conscious effort by FBOs' leaders to selectively target prospective participants in their social networks. There are at least two reasons why sympathizers prefer to join social networks formed by Islamic activities and FBOs. First, many members sense the close 'fit' between the agendas of FBOs and

their life experiences (Wickham, 2004). Second, the credibility and effectiveness of the leaders increases in the confidence in these organizations to positively influence the society.

Recruitment therefore depends on a set of conditions that are external to the religious message purported by Islamic social activists.

6.3.2 FBOs, Advocacy & the PNA

Participation in the policy process implies a degree of influence that is difficult to study (Acosta, 2011). Andrews and Edwards (2004: 492) have put forward a conceptualization of influence for US-based advocacy organizations in five categories: (a) agenda setting; (b) access to decision-making arenas; (c) achieving favorable policies; (d) monitoring and shaping implementation; and (e) shifting the long-term priorities and resources of political institutions. Things start to look even more complicated when the field study is packed with hostility towards oppositional groups and those who interfere with politics. It is no secret that the PNA views nonprofits and other civil society members' politicking as unsavory and unpatriotic and fiercely discourages these organizations from engaging in overtly political activities especially those with a hint of criticism to the PNA's ruling standards.

While the Law of Charitable Associations and Community Organizations (discussed in more details in the next chapter) significantly limits the ability of civil society organizations to engage in politics, the persistent shortages in the PNA's budget and the inability of the Palestinian government to provide basic survives to the entire territories and populations have led to a growing interdependence between the civil society organizations and the PNA. From one side, a significant number of grassroots organizations were eager for attention and funding from the PNA, and many foundered in its absence (Brown, 2003: 188). The West Bank zakat committees for example, formally affiliated themselves with the PNA, becoming quasi-

governmental while retaining some autonomy. On the other side, the lack of resources available to the PNA to cover its proposed budget and the eagerness to demonstrate to the international community-especially the donors- that the newly established PNA differ from its authoritarian neighbors, have convinced Palestinian officials, especially their utmost leader at the time Yasser Arafat, that civil society organizations may be an enemy worth living with. More subtly, the changed political and economic situations within which the Palestinian society and government had to react to after the creation of the PNA created an entire new set of rewards and incentives for both the government and civil society organizations.

Portraying nonprofits and FBOs as passive members perceptible to the PNA autocratic impulses is a wrong assessment of the impact of the PNA regulations and tactics to limit nonprofits' political activities. As Amal Jamal demonstrates in his argument on the constitutive power of the legalist liberal civil discourse in the PT, the civil society sector has had a major influence on most of the laws passed by the Palestinian legislative Council (PLC). In Jamal's analysis, a significant and growing coterie "of civil organizations in the fields of law, politics, education, and human rights, has, since the 1990s, sought to influence the processes of national reconstruction and state building (2005: 59)". This discourse, while far from being organized or consistent, has been growing and expanding into different fields of Palestinian collective lives, spreading democratic values and elevating the concepts of human rights and accountability (Jamal, 2005). Evidently, a noteworthy momentum behind the push for liberal and democratic values came through the conscious efforts of international donors to establish a responsible Palestinian state to its neighbors and its citizens.

By no means underestimating the influence of foreign aid, in reality there are many unrestricted opportunities for local nonprofits and FBOs to undertake political or legalistic work

without applying the confrontational mechanisms adopted by Western funded NGOs and international human rights institutions. For example, one can argue that FBOs, by nature, are politically active in the local politics of welfare and social policies. Particularly noteworthy is their role as fervent advocates of the poor sectors in society. This role is not surprising given FBOs' traditional role as public service providers. As organizations that have experience with grassroots cooperative organizing and a wide network of service delivery, FBOs frequently interact with local businesses and elite, public agencies, and other nonprofits to carry on their routine activities. As such, FBOs are not only familiar with local needs and conditions, they stand to witness both the effectiveness and shortcomings of public policies. This situates FBOs in a unique position to advocate and push for changes in current and future social policies. Given that faith and religious values comprise an integral part of most FBOs existence and continuity, one would expect that their advocacy activities are going to be biased towards pushing for more social policies that are in tandem with their view of a decent human life. At the same time, as overt political advocacy carries with it ample risk for civil society organizations, it is rational that FBOs divert their advocacy activities to more subtle tactics that minimizes any suspicious perception on behalf of the PNA. Although FBOs' ability to push for more democratic governance in the PT is debatable, their access to grassroots organizations and links with local communities have generated optimism that FBOs can offer a needed push to Palestinian civil society and generate demand for more accountable and less corrupt government.

6.3.3 Service-Oriented FBOs and Advocacy: How are they Different?

As explained earlier, to understand how the agendas and activities of FBOs evolved from a simple service provision structure to an intricate network of organizations that sponsor infrastructure projects and do not hesitate to advocate for certain social policies, it is crucial to

situate their evolution within the larger socio-political Palestinian conflict. The social and political changes that took place inside the PT's associational life during the last 60 years shaped the evolution and structure of current civil society organizations. The shift from external domination over Palestinian politics after the 1967 war, for example, towards a grassroots nationalist movement, and from a rigid familial social hierarchy towards the emergence of urban middle class has had significant effects on the Palestinian civil society, which in turn formed the organizations attached to it (Challand, 2009: 62). With that in mind, hybrid forms of organizations emerge "as an effort to manage environmental uncertainty and episodic change (Minkoff, 2002: 383)".

The difference between the national advocacy organizations and other service-oriented NGOs is that the former may be able to mobilize their membership and pursue more sophisticated tactics informed by their wide skills and expertise. In contrast, service-oriented NGOs engage in much more modest advocacy activities given that their primary purpose is service provision, not political involvement (Mosley, 2011: 436). Given that the majority of populations served by these NGOs receive public social services (Kimberlin, 2010), these constituents are disproportionately reliant on and affected by the design, funding, and implementation of public policies, which in turn prompts some NGOs serving them into advocating for certain policies. Advocacy by service-orientated NGOs may serve as a bridge between marginalized groups and the government, since most national advocacy organizations do not represent the interests of poor individuals, but rather those of middle-class (Berry, 2001).

FBOs that combine service provision with advocacy related activities face a number of organizational dilemmas that differentiate them from pure advocacy or service FBOs operating

the PT. After all, projecting power into national political venues represents a qualitatively different challenge from the traditional local work of faith-based organizing (Wood, 2002). First, individual donors and funding agencies may be reluctant to back any organization that is involved in politics, especially if the organization's stance is the opposite from that of the ruling regime. Second, advocating for certain social policies may place FBOs in an awkward position vis-à-vis the state. Given that the PNA did not hide its intention to control civil society organizations, and they were adamant in revoking the operating license for any nonprofit that refused to substantiate its activities with the security establishment, being involved in advocacy-related activities might be used as evidence against the FBO by the local authorities. Third, there could be some philosophical barriers for FBOs to implement effective and sustained advocacy activities. For instance, some FBOs may be reluctant to fully empower their constituents to serve as advocates, preferring to view them instead as service-recipients more than active organizations representatives (Donaldson, 2008). Finally, as Sara Kimberlin (2010: 177) argues, within the same organization, the board members, leadership and staff may have different views about the appropriate extent and focus of advocacy activities.

FBOs and service-oriented nonprofit organizations must consider several logistical questions when structuring their advocacy practice (Kimberlin, 2010). For example, should the organization assign exclusive staff for advocacy tasks, or should the responsibility for advocacy be divided among program staff, based on their expertise and direct contact with constituents and in-depth knowledge of community needs and issues? Should the organization be involved in advocacy that is related to its core mission, or should the organization pursue a broader social justice agenda? What level of involvement in advocacy should be undertaken by staff versus board members versus constituents? What level of financial resources should be dedicated to

advocacy activities? These and other questions pose crucial dilemmas for FBOs planning to get involved in advocacy and the answers will determine the tactics and strategies adopted by the organization. With respect to how the expansion of the hybrid form of FBOs influences the development of service and advocacy forms, Debra Minkoff (2002) suggested that hybrid nonprofits in general play a central role in institutionalizing resource flows and legitimacy for the whole community. This means that the increasing prevalence of the hybrid form promotes the separate development of advocacy and service populations: “As they expand, hybrid forms routinize advocacy and maintain service as a viable alternative in a newly politicized environment. In this case as well, competitive relationships are expected to intensify as the density of hybrid organizations expands (Minkoff, 2002: 387)”.

Finally, FBOs work closely and develop relationships with at least four main constituencies when doing policy advocacy: government officials, local businesses, other nonprofits, and middle class working citizens. Understanding the complexity of these relationships, which FBOs must negotiate while undertaking policy advocacy, is essential. Much has been written about the FBOs-nonprofits relations and the coalitions that form policy changes (e.g. the coalition against the new NGOs law), but in PT there appears to be no systematic study or primary data on policy advocacy from the perspective of individual FBOs working with government officials, local businesses and middle-class working citizens. In a recent study, Sara Roy addressed the social components of the Islamist movement in the PT, the nature of Islamic socioeconomic work, and the impact of this work on community development and stability. Although her study also looked at certain institutions’ agendas and work methods, administration, clientele, and operational spheres she mainly focused on those organizations that are based in Gaza, particularly those that interact with Islamic political institutions (Roy, 2011).

This dissertation, on the other hand, focuses mainly on organizations based in the West Bank. It also explores the nature of Islamic social mobilization and how this may nudge a number of service-oriented FBOs to participate in indirect political advocacy activities. Attention is also directed towards the nature of the networks that do exist between FBOs, government officials, and local businesses, and an attempt is made to understand how these networks form and how they are operationalized. In short, this chapter aims to provide for practitioners and scholars interested in understanding the complex internal nature of policy advocate strategies and tactics facilitated by social service FBOs.

In summary, faith-based organizations have played varied roles in the Palestinian territories. Perhaps best known are their social and welfare programs. For decades, social scientists were interested and impressed with the elevated ability of Islamic social groups to deliver consistent socioeconomic services in communities that have been ravaged with long-term poverty. In recent years more emphasis were paid to the tendency of Islamic groups to infiltrate workers and students' unions and mobilize the educated and the middle class to their cause. Students of political science and sociology have written extensively on the scope and nature of Islamic nonprofits with the urban service delivery domain in the Middle East and how these activities have converted many to join the ranks of Islamic political parties. Scholars and other observers have also noted the significant role nonprofits play in the domain of policy advocacy. Nonprofits achieved significant accomplishments in their effort to advocate for the rights of children, minority groups, women and environmental concerns among other issues. What is less known is the role of Islamic FBOs in the general governance and decision-making processes in the PT, the focus of the next sections.

6.4 Research Methodology

Building on existing literature and research about civil society, community organizing and nonprofits as agents of democracy, this dissertation explores how Islamic faith-based organizations (FBOs) advance social change. Strategically placed to improve social and economic security for individuals and communities, FBOs have unique characteristics, resources and mobilization ability to influence policy process. The special potential contribution of FBOs in the PT relates to the fact that they are strategically located closer than any other social institution to the people who are most directly affected by certain public policies. To capture this special position in the political process, and following the steps of existing research in using cross-sectional organizational surveys to document nonprofits' policy advocacy tactics (Berry & Arons, 2005; Child & Gronbjerg, 2007; Mosley 2003; Schmid, et al 2008), I used both quantitative and qualitative data to untangle FBOs complex contribution to advocacy. The qualitative data provides an empirical response to the theoretical shortcomings of the literature on nonprofit organizations and demonstrates that several FBOs are politically active members, if through indirect tactics and strategies. One source of data comes from the 2010 MAS organizational survey of all NGOs operating in the West Bank and Gaza strip. As explained in previous chapters, the survey captured descriptive information about all NGOs regarding programming, size, human resources, funding, governance, obstacles, partners, and policy engagement.

6.4.1 Quantitative Data, Method & Analysis

Estimating the number of FBOs that participate in policy advocacy is a challenging task given the sensitivity of the topic to numerous organizations, the underreporting of advocacy activities by managers, and the difficulty in measuring the scope of advocacy among civil society

organizations. This lack of enthusiasm to talk about advocacy activity reflects, to a great extent, the lack of empirical evidence documenting advocacy at FBOs and other nonprofits in the PT. The dearth of academic studies explaining advocacy in the nonprofit sector extends, as well, to the wider Arab scene. This section seeks to overcome this knowledge gap by presenting a statistical framework for factors influencing advocacy activities by FBOs in the PT.

The professional literature and practice wisdom suggest that the advocacy behavior of nonprofit human service agencies is influenced by both internal and external factors (Donaldson, 2008). It is clear by now that external factors in the PT provide FBOs with multiple incentives to participate in advocacy-related activities, but what about the internal factor? Are there certain factors or organizational characteristics associated with a higher tendency to participate in advocacy?

One way of delineating differences between outright advocacy organizations and service oriented FBOs is by looking at tactics an organization participates in. To that end, Jenkins (2006) broad definition of advocacy as “any attempt to influence the decisions of any institutional elite on behalf of collective interests (p. 297)” provides an appropriate frame within which FBOs’ advocacy related activities could be understood. This definition of advocacy is useful since it excludes advocacy on behalf of individuals (Mosley, 2011), which FBOs in the PT participate in.

To assess what tactics FBOs in the PT use most frequently in their advocacy as well as how organizational factors may influence their choice of tactics, a series of analyses were conducted using the MAS 2010 survey data. The MAS survey provides a comprehensive view of the range and scope of the services provided by nonprofits, their targeted constituents, staffing, leadership, funding, and challenges among other characteristics, bringing in a unique opportunity to explore for the first time how and what types of FBOs are involved in advocacy behavior. As

will be explained below, the survey does not provide a comprehensive view of the range and scope of the advocacy related activities that FBOs are involved in. Still, the available information offers a unique opportunity to explore how certain advocacy tactics correlates with multiple organizational attributes.

Operationalization of Variables

Dependent Variable: Even though the 2010 MAS survey was not designed primarily to measure the wider aspects of policy-related activities of nonprofits active in the Palestinian territories, the survey however included three questions that are related to broader policy or political activity and tactics (stated below). The questions cover both direct and indirect advocacy tactics. Using answers on these questions, two aspects of nonprofits' political tactics (direct and indirect) are examined as dependent variables to explore the efforts of these organizations to influence political outcomes among their constituencies. The survey questions related to political advocacy tactics were worded to determine the relative effort each organization devotes to these activities rather than the number of projects or aligned budgets. Particularly, the dependent variable 'advocacy tactics' is based on responses to the following questions in the survey: "Is your organization involved in activities aiming to influence public policies (e.g. corruption cases, protesting ... etc.)?", "Is your organization involved in activities aiming to increase societal awareness (e.g. funding research, conducting workshops, publishing leaflets ... etc.)?", "Is your organization involved in activities directed to individual needs (e.g. advocating on behalf of prisoners)?" All responses to these questions are measured on a binary 'Yes/No' scale.

The first question corresponds with all advocacy tactics that can be labeled as direct attempts to influence public policy, increase judicial transparency, reforming public policies, and

exposing corruption cases. The second question, instead, is related to all other indirect tactics. These include, publishing policy memos, distributing leaflets about human right, and releasing policy reports. Finally, the third question concentrates on all tactics that are employed to help certain individuals, such as political prisoners. For the purposes of this chapter, results from the third question will not be included in any future analysis given that outcomes of these types of tactics benefit only a limited number of individuals rather than a whole sector of beneficiaries.

Independent Variables: Multiple studies have identified numerous factors internal to organizations that correlate either positively or negatively to advocacy behavior. Available resources (financial and human) are one of these variables that received immense attention. For instance, it has been argued that larger and more established organizations are more prone to participate in advocacy (Salamon 2002, Child and Gronberg 2007). Funding sources as well have been shown to influence advocacy. There has been a negative correlation between government funding and participation in advocacy (Chavesc et al 2004, Child and Gronberg 2007). One way that organizations can circumvent their limited resource pool and participate in more advocacy activities is by networking or partnering with other organizations. Sandort (2011), for example, found that networking with other organizations help reduce transactions costs and environmental uncertainty, enabling more organizations to share resources and knowledge in advocacy-related issues. Finally, Gibelman and Kraft (1996) identify the type of organization, size, mission, functions, and staff expertise as variables that influence the nature and depth of an organization's advocacy practice.

Socio-political events can also stimulate advocacy and activism within the nonprofit sector, even among agencies with relatively low capacity for advocacy (Brulliard and Williams, 2006). For instance the growth of privatization and devolution policies in the United States have

encouraged more nonprofits to participate in advocacy since local policy makers became more dependent on the expertise of nonprofits to carry out program design, implementation, and evaluation (Ansell and Gash, 2008).

For the purposes of this chapter, seven characteristics are examined as predictors/independent variables of the nonprofits political advocacy efforts, one of which is related to the faith identity of the organization. These variables include:

- Funding sources
- Other Organizational characteristics (size, years in operation, volunteers dependent, elected board of directors, always achieve goals)
- Collaboration with other organizations
- Geographical Location
- Religious affiliation
- Major services provided
- Population served
- Constraints

Funding sources is measured as five different variables that represent the percentage of funding in total budget from government, self-generated income, other local sources, regional, and international funding sources. Given that funding was sighted as one of the major constraints hampering Palestinian nonprofits (Israeli occupation, Palestinian authority, and lack of professional employees are the other constraints) one can expect that nonprofits with higher dependence rates on self-generated income are in a better position to participate more in policy-related activities that could increase their influence in the policy process. Likewise, nonprofits with international funding sources are normally more inclined to get involved in political activities given that several foreign funders are interested in enhancing human rights and political transparency in the Palestinian territories. In general, funding sources are expected to

have a significant influence on policy-related activities by nonprofits in general and FBOs in particular. Organizations with greater ability to generate internal financing are more resistant to governmental threats than organizations with a higher dependency on governmental funding.

Other organizational characteristics include size, number of years in operation, dependency on volunteers, the selection of board of directors, and the perception of management regarding goals achievement. Organizational size is measured as the total size of the annual budget in 2009 (in US dollars), the total number of volunteers, and the total number of paid employees.

Organizational size is a major factor in impacting the activities and programs of any organization. Research assessing the role of this variable found that large organizations have a better ability in raising more funds and that they allocate more resources to policy-related activities compared to smaller organizations (Mosley, 2010b). Moreover, larger organizations have a tendency to be less dependent on government funding which makes them more immune to government threats or sanctions if they engage in political activity (Schmid et al, 2008). McCarthy and Castelli (2002) note as well that larger, staff led organizations have substantially higher rates of survival than small, volunteer-led organizations that are involved in political activities. Finally, larger organizations with their sizeable service offerings and development programs are fundamental for any cash starved government. Even if these organizations are involved with some kind of political activity governments tend to shy away from criticizing them.

Number of years in operation (or age) for an organization goes together with its size. Older organizations are assumed to possess stronger networks with funders, private businesses, beneficiaries, and the larger civil society. They are as well more formalized and institutionalized and therefore enjoy a relatively high level of trust and legitimacy (Schmid et al, 2008). With this

entrenched position in the society, the intensity and diversity of political activity will be greater compared to younger organizations, which are still occupied with tightening their position (*Ibid*).

Larger dependency on volunteers was found to have a positive effect on the organization's political activities. Schmid *et al* (2008) report greater volunteer involvement has an affirmative influence on the organization's political influence. Volunteers are not only a cost effective strategy to widen the organization's reach and expand its programs; they are also free agents with limited constraints. Unlike paid employees and higher levels of management, "they can be more assertive and persistent in negotiations with policy makers ... [and volunteers] have extensive professional experience and connections with key figures in governmental agencies, which they can use to promote the organization's political activity and espoused goals (Schmid *et al*, 2008: 597)".

Analytical Method

To understand FBOs propensity to get involved in advocacy-related tactics, several analysis were conducted to assess which tactics were used most frequently and how organizational factors may influence the tactical choices FBOs make. First, a correlation matrix analysis is performed to measure the degree of interrelatedness and regularity among questions asking about the three policy-related tactics. Second, three binomial logistic regressions equations were estimated to assess which organizational factors are most strongly correlated with the use of direct, indirect, individual and both tactics combined. The use of binomial regression reflects the fact that the dependent variable can only take two possible outcomes (yes/no). To gain a better idea about the type of advocacy tactics that preferred by FBOs, Table 6.1 presents the percentage of FBOs who engaged in specific advocacy tactics during 2009. Results

make it clear that direct advocacy tactics are not common with FBOs. As discussed earlier, these results should be expected given the severe consequences for participating in any direct advocacy tactics. The tendency to focus on advocacy tactics seems to be concentrated among a limited number of FBOs rather than dispersed widely. Table 6.2, which presents a correlation matrix between the different policy-related tactics further, confirms this observation. Only 12% of FBOs that are involved in indirect tactics get involved in direct tactics.

Table6.1: *Percent of FBOs responding that they had engaged in specific advocacy tactics (N=324)*

Participated in Direct Advocacy Tactics	8%
Participated in Indirect Advocacy Tactics	38%
Participated in individual cases	27%

Table6.2: *Correlation Matrix of Policy-Related Tactics for FBOS (N=324)*

	Direct Advoc. Tactics	Indirect Advoc. Tactics	Individual Needs
Direct Advoc. Tactics	1.00		
Indirect Advoc. Tactics	.12	1.00	
Individual Needs Activ.	.53	.67	1.00

Seeing that indirect tactics have a slightly higher participation rate than direct tactics, it is worthwhile investigating which organizational factors are correlated with greater participation in indirect advocacy tactics. To achieve this, three models using binary logistic regressions equations were estimated and analyzed. The test included inspecting correlation coefficients and variance inflation factor (VIF) statistics. The mean VIF equaled 1.2, well within the acceptable range. The highest correlations were found between geographical location and funding (.61) and major service provided and populations served (.41). All others were below 0.23 and most

considerably below that. Tables 6.3 and 6.4 report the results of estimated coefficients, standard errors, and marginal effects for each of the variables in each of the determined models.

Table 6.3: Binary Logistic regression Assessing Organizational Characteristics and Participation in Direct, Indirect Tactics, or both for all Nonprofits (N=1860)

	Direct Tactics (Model 1)			Indirect Tactics (Model 2)			All Tactics (Model 3)		
Organizational Characteristics	Coef.	p-value	M. Effect	Coef.	p-value	M. Effect	Coef.	p-value	M. Effect
Total budget in USD(2009)	1.23	0.01	0.061	0.85	0.003	0.042	0.98	0.01	0.004
Years in Op.	0.42	0.03	0.054	0.78	0.01	0.11	0.37	0.01	0.074
% of workers	0.98	0.12	0.028	1.23	0.08	0.09	1.18	0.08	0.11
% of Volunteers	1.36	0.09	0.12	0.63	0.1	0.23	0.72	0.11	0.063
Elected Board of Directors	0.33	0.02	0.076	0.27	0.01	0.054	0.53	0.01	0.062
Location									
Operational in the West B.	1.53	0.03	0.18	1.28	0.01	0.14	1.17	0.01	0.08
Pop. Served									
Serving Urban	0.62	0.01	0.066	0.57	0.03	0.13	0.48	0.01	0.08
Serving Refuge	1.39	0.17	0.002	0.39	0.30	0.034	0.68	0.14	0.051
Major Services									
Health	0.537	0.02	0.25	0.733	0.001	0.17	0.668	0.01	0.11
Women related	0.768	0.001	0.21	1.34	0.001	0.26	0.81	0.001	0.23
Religious Activities	0.348	0.18	0.08	0.383	0.18	0.07	0.734	0.09	0.13
Rural Development	0.738	0.19	0.16	0.392	0.001	0.12	0.632	0.10	0.11
Research and Education	0.745	0.08	0.081	0.634	0.15	0.17	0.943	0.20	0.09
Human Rights	1.23	0.001	0.35	1.32	0.001	0.41	1.40	0.02	0.44
Democracy Enhancement	0.53	0.001	0.43	0.83	0.001	0.47	0.97	0.006	0.44
Funding									
Governmental	1.12	0.14	0.13	1.25	0.22	0.05	0.825	0.2	0.04
Self-Generated	0.68	0.31	0.005	0.57	0.30	0.08	0.79	0.22	0.06
Other Local	0.64	0.17	0.14	0.42	0.20	0.09	1.32	0.15	0.12
Regional	0.52	0.03	0.16	0.63	0.01	0.06	0.42	0.01	0.056
International	1.35	0.02	0.21	1.28	0.01	0.15	1.19	0.01	0.11
Governance									
Constant Evaluation	1.33	0.12	0.24	1.36	0.2	0.17	1.83	0.122	0.14

Participatory Project planning	0.53	0.21	0.13	1.36	0.28	0.23	0.78	0.15	0.24
Member in a NGO association	0.62	0.01	0.31	0.71	0.01	0.21	0.38	0.01	0.24
Constraints									
Lack of civil society cop.	0.52	0.16	0.03	0.62	0.30	0.06	0.61	0.15	0.02
Impediments-Funding related	0.88	0.21	0.14	1.35	0.42	0.12	0.75	0.28	0.05
Impediments-Palestinian Aut.	0.31	0.02	0.16	0.56	0.001	0.20	0.51	0.01	0.14
Impediments-Israeli Forces	0.31	0.03	0.11	0.29	0.01	0.09	0.72	0.01	0.09
Religious Aff.									
Faith-Based	1.81	0.082	0.21	0.69	0.004	0.13	0.285	0.02	0.16
Test	X ²	p-value							
Overall Model									
Likelihood Ratio test	10.635		0.051	10.638		0.036	10.533		0.003
Score Test	10.523		0.040	10.536		0.031	10.34		0.012
Wald test	9.871		0.037	10.364		0.029	9.637		0.002
Goodness of fit									
Hosmer & Lemeshow	9.184		0.120	9.163		0.053	10.356		0.04

Table6.4: Binary Logistic regression Assessing Organizational Characteristics and Participation in Direct, Indirect Tactics, or both for FBOs (N=324)

	Direct Tactics (Model 1)			Indirect Tactics (Model 2)			All Tactics (Model 3)		
Organizational Characteristics	Coef.	p-value	M. effect	Coef	p-value	M. effect	Coef.	p-value	M. effect
Total budget in USD(2009)	0.423	0.0085	0.11	0.72	0.0061	0.09	0.38	0.0054	0.12
Years in Operation	0.58	0.12	0.07	0.81	0.092	0.054	0.41	0.082	0.16
% of workers	1.3	0.17	0.25	0.783	0.131	0.19	0.721	0.142	0.17
% of Volun.	0.531	0.123	0.083	0.612	0.031	0.21	0.88	0.067	0.32
Elected Board	0.742	0.004	0.17	0.73	0.006	0.22	1.13	0.008	0.25
Location									
Operational in the West B.	0.88	0.05	0.16	0.59	0.0162	0.23	0.57	0.018	0.14
Pop. Served									
Serving Urban	0.16	0.004	0.27	0.32	0.003	0.18	0.41	0.015	0.13
Serving Refugee	0.48	0.25	0.15	0.52	0.29	0.09	0.26	0.31	0.18

Major Services									
Health	0.326	0.14	0.16	0.434	0.03	0.14	0.179	0.12	0.09
Women related	0.321	0.002	0.31	0.537	0.001	0.27	0.325	0.001	0.30
Religious Activities	0.136	0.21	0.14	0.325	0.28	0.19	0.414	0.18	0.22
Rural Development	0.153	0.12	0.08	0.264	0.02	0.07	0.542	0.16	0.05
Research and Education	0.227	0.26	0.02	0.356	0.37	0.08	0.311	0.28	0.07
Human Rights	0.461	0.001	0.31	0.671	0.001	0.57	0.291	0.003	0.45
Democracy Enhancement	0.264	0.002	0.44	0.376	0.001	0.54	0.331	0.02	0.52
Funding									
Governmental	0.173	0.36	0.26	0.371	0.52	0.18	0.341	0.38	0.24
Self-Generated	0.52	0.27	0.34	0.36	0.14	0.28	1.3	0.31	0.27
Other Local	0.13	0.28	0.27	0.72	0.12	0.15	0.41	0.23	0.26
Regional	0.37	0.14	0.11	0.491	0.004	0.17	0.273	0.086	0.12
International	0.12	0.06	0.23	0.22	0.015	0.25	0.114	0.03	0.21
Governance									
Constant Evaluation	0.74	0.08	0.07	0.624	0.18	0.14	0.52	0.17	0.18
Project plan.	-----		-----	-----		-----	-----		-----
Member in a NGO Associat.	0.33	0.002	0.36	0.44	0.05	0.38	0.68	0.005	0.29
Constraints									
Lack of civil society coop.	0.635	0.21	0.13	0.833	0.19	0.35	0.11	0.17	0.18
Impediments-Funding related	0.48	0.17	0.22	0.328	0.11	0.27	0.14	0.32	0.30
Impediments-Palestinian A.	0.42	0.21	0.12	0.26	0.038	0.21	0.186	0.076	0.17
Impediments-Israeli Forces	0.194	0.004	0.34	0.47	0.002	0.19	0.61	0.002	0.29
Religious Affiliation									
Islamic Faith-Based	0.543	0.103	0.24	0.69	0.074	0.17	0.285	0.042	0.15
Test	X ²		p-value						
Overall Model Evaluation									
Likelihood ratio test	10.064		0.032	10.537		0.036	9.647		0.014
Score Test	9.4254		0.043	9.532		0.042	9.816		0.011
Wald test	9.342		0.026	9.925		0.038	9.196		0.002
Goodness of fit test									
Hosmer & Lemeshow	8.635		0.016	9.547		0.053	9.183		0.04

6.5.1.3 Results and Discussion

To establish whether the faith identity of a nonprofit has a significant influence on the tendency to engage in advocacy behavior, the regression model was first applied using all nonprofits operating in the PT. Results from Table 6.3 clearly show that there is a significant and positive correlation between being involved in advocacy activities and nonprofits with larger budgets, more years in operation, operating in the West Bank, serving in urban populace, being involved with women; human rights and democracy issues, and those that receive international and regional funding. More importantly for the purpose of this research, there is also a direct and positive correlation between having a faith-based identity and advocacy. In particular, the correlation only stands when using the ‘indirect tactics and ‘all tactics’ models. This result reinforces the previous arguments about FBOs preference to operate in the shadow and refrain from any activities that can invite hostilities from the Palestinian or Israeli forces. To confirm these results, activities additional to the MAS survey checklist emerged that are not usually “named” as advocacy in the traditional sense, but were interpreted as such by FBOs. Most directors talked about the political nature of the term “advocacy”, and how invoking this term can summon negative consequences on their organizations. For example, several directors explained that since advocacy is a wide concept and is understood differently by various organizations and government agencies, they refrain from using the concept so they can avoid any negative connotations associated with the term:

“Advocacy has many faces. One can advocate for political, religious, social, or moral causes. Yet, when the PNA hears that we are involved with advocacy-related activities they only think about political advocacy. That is why we prefer not to use the term ‘advocacy’”.

One approach for understanding the differences in advocacy-related activities at FBOs is by delineating the different tactics and strategies a FBO participates in (Mosley, 2011).

Respondents to the 2010 MAS survey were asked to identify the types of advocacy activities their organizations undertook. The results of the responses to the checklist are summarized in Table 6.1 above. The overriding trend demonstrated in the table is that FBOs are much more likely to undertake indirect than direct advocacy tactics. During interviews, many organizations stressed that they never take part in direct election related activities. They are also unlikely to directly organize demonstrations or direct protest action. On the other hand, several FBOs participate in publishing policy memos and government sponsored consultations, work directly with government agencies in support of a particular issues, and advocate on behalf of specific clients (e.g. political prisoners).

More interestingly, however, a number of organizations in the interviews expressed a further strategy for conducting advocacy, one not identified in the MAS survey. These referred to forms of collaboration, identified by the respondents as advocacy. Several organizations sometimes attended workshops and meetings with other FBOs and secular NGOs, joined advocacy campaigns often under the leadership of large organizations, and encouraged their beneficiaries to take various forms of participatory action.

FBOs interested in advocacy have to be conscious to what strategy they could use to reach their goals. Their decision on a certain tactic could be based on capacity, skill, beliefs, and preferences as to how to engage with decision-makers (Mosley, 2011: 436). To place FBOs' tactical choices in context, we must shed a light at what features of the FBOs environment might influence the trajectory of advocacy-related activities and how these activities may differ from more traditional advocacy organizations. Three trends may be important: increasing pressure from the PNA, high levels of professionalization within the FBOs sector, and the changing

nature of the Palestinian civil society. But are there certain organizational factors that positively associated with greater participation in direct and indirect advocacy tactics?

To answer this question, Table 6.4 presents the results of three binary logistic regressions. Nine organizational factors—total budget, elected board of directors, physical location, involved in women; human; or democracy rights, facing obstacles for Israeli authorities, receiving international funding, members in a nonprofit association, and associated with Islamic faith—were significantly associated with both increased direct and indirect tactics. FBOs with greater capacity on terms of budget size, for example, were more likely to engage in advocacy behavior. This finding is consistent with the findings in the literature, which suggest that nonprofits with stronger economic structures are more likely to engage in advocacy behavior (Donaldson, 2007). Interestingly and unlike the results when all nonprofits were considered, age of FBOs did not yield a significant correlation. This could be largely explained by the tendency of both young and old FBOs to engage in advocacy. These results are in tandem with other observations in different countries. For instance, research has shown that larger organizations tend to be more involved in advocacy, likely because they have more staff and resources that can be devoted toward non-service-related activities, but age does not seem to be related (Child and Grønberg, 2007; Mosley, 2010).

Larger FBOs in terms of budget size are able to use more tactics overall, and it appears they also focus more on indirect tactics. Generally speaking, FBOs with greater resources, engaging in advocacy activities allow them to be involved in a range of initiatives and issues that facilitate their deeper integration in the larger policy-making process. A parallel finding, however, is that small FBOs are clearly quite constrained in the amount of advocacy they are

able to do. This calls into question the degree to which nonprofit advocacy is truly a representative voice.

The data also showed a significant correlation between having an elected board of directors and advocacy behavior. The board of directors represents a critical aspect of a FBO's internal polity, more so even within the PT. This result can explain the PNA's eagerness to replace the board of directors for several FBOs. Many of the FBOs' directors interviewed explained how their assets were confiscated by the PNA and they were forbidden to operate only if they agree to discard their elected board of directors and allow the PNA to appoint a new one.

Predictably, results in Table 6.4 indicate as well that FBOs involved with women, human rights, and democracy issues are significantly involved with advocacy compared to other FBOs. Although many of these FBOs are actively involved in service delivery, success of their long-term goals can only be achieved with successful and structured advocacy campaigns. For example, human rights FBOs can always provide counseling services for victims of abuse cases, yet a more widespread achievement would be to force the PNA to stop some of their abuse activities, and this can only be achieved through advocacy tactics. This scenario reinforces the complex organizational context examined in this study, and human service organizations in the PT are much more vulnerable to changes in government policy. In addition, political activity aimed at promoting the rights of marginalized and disadvantaged people can be construed as opposing the policies of the government or local authorities. Thus, organizations engaging in such activity face a threat to their survival because of sanctions and loss of resources.

Additionally, findings show that FBOs that receive international funding are significantly correlated with advocacy behavior. Clearly, FBOs that depend financially on the PNA would not

want to ‘bite the hands that feed it’, but what is not clear is why FBOs with local or internally generated sources of funding shied away from advocacy. Results from interviews indicate that local donors to FBOs are also susceptible to the PNA or Israeli forces’ harsh policies. Several FBOs’ directors have expressed their concern regarding new PNA course of action to question some of their donors. The directors think that these new tactics were mainly employed to exert pressure on local donors and prevent them from future donations.

As expected, being a member in a nongovernmental association was also significantly correlated with advocacy. This is likely because advocacy (both direct and indirect tactics) is hard to conduct as a solitary organization and organizations connected to a large association with numerous members will have many opportunities and invitations to participate in advocacy. Part of the process for this cooperative manner when dealing with advocacy-related activities seems to be a concerted effort to professionalize the sector so that FBOs and their leadership can communicate with government on an equal footing. An important aim was to gain the trust of government but also draw support more widely from the public, as the following quote reveals:

“We are aware that we exist in an undemocratic environment in which the authorities seek to control all aspects of life. As such we can easily be accused by the PNA of being involved in illegal activities without even presenting any evidence ... to prevent such a scenario we only work with credible partners. We also communicate directly with several officials from the PNA and sometimes seek their advice for future actions. Doing this prevent the PNA from treating us as a threatening entity.

Finally, FBOs who are only located in urban settings, versus those located in refugee camps or villages were involved in advocacy. This result should not be surprising given that these organizations have bigger budgets and they can easily attract more professional employees and volunteers. It is important to note, however, that the effect size for participation in direct or indirect tactics differ among the factors. Indeed, all factors have a higher effect for participation in indirect tactics compared to direct ones. This pattern of findings confirms the previous results

that showed more FBOs are involved in indirect tactics. More importantly, the sum of all the above analysis clearly indicates that advocacy constitutes an important part of FBOs agendas. Even though the scope and intensity of advocacy activity cannot be measured using the available data, and the scope and type of political activities were limited to certain FBOs, it is still evident that advocacy constitutes a part of FBOs' activities.

Despite the major role of FBOs in providing social services, the problems of social distress, lack of human rights, exclusion, marginality, poverty, widening social and economic inequality, violence, and other social problems will not be solved if they limit themselves to the role of service providers. By focusing exclusively on service provision, they cannot bring change, even if the results of their activity are visible in the short run. To achieve their espoused goals, they need to become a major actor in the arena where decisions are made. This kind of involvement requires appropriate skills, patience, tolerance for ambiguity, and perseverance, where the results of such activity are not immediately visible. FBOs have to understand that if they remove themselves from the political arena, their ability to provide services to their clients will also be impaired and they will be the ones to lose.

6.5 Conclusion

Given the wide social, political, and legal changes taking place in the Arab world nowadays, conclusions derived from these chapters shed important insights on future developments in Palestinian society as well as the rest of the region. After all, the literature on civil society, FBOs, state building, and the relation between the PNA and the Palestinian society is part of a larger body of literature on the Middle East and the Arab world. Conclusions about politics in the PT—or any other country in the region—are often drawn from this larger analysis

of the region as a whole (Abdelrahman, 2004). In general, the PNA, like other Arab governments, does not treat social policy issues as programs designed and implemented by disembodied governmental bureaucracies, rather the outcome of public policy have to be seen as integral to political, economic and social relations within the West Bank and Gaza (Karshenas and Moghadam, 2006). Therefore, knowing why some organizations are more involved in advocacy than others is important for at least two reasons. First, advocacy is an important tactic in managing external environment. Success in advocacy can simply translate into stable organizational structures, increases in funding and preferable policy atmosphere. As such, organizations involved in advocacy behavior may well increase the probability of their survival. This probability may even be higher in an environment characterized by heightened levels of risk, such as in the PT. Second, advocacy can be important from a client-focused perspective (Mosley, 2010). When civil society organizations contribute to policy debates they can actively seek a better outcome for their beneficiaries' well being. Such contributions can be important because civil organizations observe policy outcomes directly and possess a complex understanding of how those policies affect people's lives (*Ibid*).

Chapters four and five presented a series of statistics and regression models which focused on the scope and scale of FBOs by looking at what they do, how they do it, and with whom. This chapter changed focus by looking at the type of advocacy activities chosen by FBOs. The analysis presented here investigates why advocacy is important for FBOs, what tactics these organizations are using, and what factors predict participation in advocacy tactics. Answers to these questions advance our theoretical understanding of how organizational characteristics and resource dependence affect the behavior of FBOs. Results indicate that the FBOs that are active in advocacy tend to be those with more capacity, and lower dependence on

local, self-generated and government funds. Having an elected board of directors, operating in an urban setting, and being a member in a nonprofit association were also significantly correlated with advocacy behavior. Years in operation did not have any significant influence. In addition, FBOs prefer to focus primarily on indirect advocacy tactics.

Clearly, these results are a direct consequence of internal and external environments. Without the needed financial, human, and technological resources organizations will find it hard to commit their limited resources to risky endeavors. Likewise, the way that FBOs respond to environmental instability is crucial to their ability to survive and achieve their desired goals and purposes. Theories of adaptation see organizational leaders as having multiple options available to them as they scan the environment and respond to the changing conditions they find there (Mosley et al, 2012), and the Arab region is rife with changing conditions.

Political influence by Islamic groups--in the shape of political parties; civil society organizations; charitable societies; and religious institutions—has been one of the most dynamic political and social forces in the Middle East for the last three decades (Shehata 2012, Roy 2001, Bayat 2003). Whether by directly challenging the secular ruling regimes, (e.g. Egypt, Palestinian territories), or by effectively collaborating with the state institutions (e.g. Jordan, Morocco), Islamic groups have had a visible impact on the structure and nature of Middle Eastern foreign and local politics, and a big role in shaping the societies in which they are embedded. Regardless this broad consensus on the role and importance of Islamic groups, there has been far less agreement on their character, the role of Islamist movements in domestic affairs, the reasons for their success, or how these groups can influence the future (Shehata, 2012). This research is a small step towards this attempt.

As always, it is important to consider these findings in the context of the limitations of this study. Most important, the MAS data used here are cross-sectional and cannot establish causality. In regard to funding in particular, there is a strong possibility of an iterative relationship. Although the existence of such a relationship would be consistent with the conceptual framework proposed here, panel data should be collected to further explore this possibility. Second, nonprofits replying to the MAS survey were asked only about a subset of possible tactics, and it is unknown to what degree organizations were involved in each tactic, just that they had done so at some point over the previous year. This data also cannot provide needed information on why certain tactics were chosen over others. Qualitative data will be necessary to understand the processes behind why organizations choose one set of tactics over another. Third, self-reported data from NGO and FBO leaders may contain biases and errors. Also, some data are imputed to resolve missing data problems for a few independent variables. Clearly, a complete data set derived from multiple sources would increase reliability. Fourth, these findings are based on FBOs and secular NGOs located in the PT, and their generalizability to other regions is unknown. Another concern is that, despite careful efforts on behalf of the survey organizers, it is likely that it is the least formalized organizations that were unable to be contacted, leading to a possible nonresponse bias in the sample. Finally, due to the sensitive political conditions in the PT and the harsh treatment FBOs receive from Palestinian and Israeli forces, it is possible that some FBO respondents did not report involvement because they misunderstood or feared exposing their organization to PNA scrutiny.

Even with these limitations, this chapter significantly contributes to our understanding of the advocacy involvement of FBOs as professionalized behavior. FBOs in the PT are not marginalized outsiders; they are active players in the policy-making process. They participate in

a wide variety of advocacy tactics, and overall have higher mean participation rates for indirect tactics. This suggests that we should revise our understanding of these organizations as being outside of the political system and look at them as perhaps being more similar to interest or lobby groups.

Chapter Seven:

Are they Foes or Friends? FBOs and Pragmatic Networks

Abstract: *The aim of this chapter is to present two cases in which FBOs have been successful in influencing public policy. I identify two important pathways for political participation: collaboration with other civil society members and private businesses, and the successful framing of issues in a religious wrap. I argue that when FBOs build collaborative networks with other partners in the society and arrange their ideas to cohere with Islamic teachings and values, they increase their chances for influencing policy formulation and adoption. These two strategies help in explaining not only how FBOs manage to survive in a hostile environment, but they also shed a light on how civil society organizations participate in policy making decisions in non-democratic contexts.*

In the previous chapter I used data gained from the 2010 MAS survey to answer several questions about the advocacy behavior of FBOs. Given the nature of the available data, I was only able to draw a picture of the individual behavior of organizations rather than depicting them in a group or networked action. This produced a limited view of what FBOs are capable of in terms of advocacy. In an effort to deal with this limitation this chapter aims to draw upon different sources of data to better understand how advocacy capacity is built in such service-oriented organizations. While the 2010 MAS survey was useful in capturing point-in-time reports about FBOs' policy advocacy tactics, analysis of interviews and qualitative data gathered over time suggest that critical capacity resides at the network level. While the MAS survey offers one frame, a more deep exploration of how advocacy is practiced highlights other and more fluid dynamics.

Results from previous chapters indicated that FBOs are active collaborators with other civil society institutions, yet what is hard to answer using the previous data is whether faith-based organizations concerned with particularistic issues collaborate constructively and effectively in the public sphere—particularly when authoritarian and secular state institutions are in

domination? More importantly, can they do so in ways that are broadly enough organized to strengthen democratic strands in Palestinian politics? These questions have recently gained further urgency in the Arab world as a result of the political upheavals that shook the foundations of current ruling regimes, and as this political change, or what came to be called as the “Arab Spring”, marches ‘erratically’ toward establishing new governance structures and ruling systems, there is heightened scholarly attention to the role of civil society institutions, as both service providers and political interlocutors, in this ongoing renewal process.

In this chapter I identify two important pathways for political participation: collaboration with other civil society members and private businesses, and the successful framing of issues in a religious wrap. I argue that when FBOs build collaborative networks with other partners in the society and arrange their ideas to cohere with Islamic teachings and values, they increase their chances of influencing policy formulation and adoption. These two strategies help in explaining not only how FBOs manage to survive in a hostile environment, but it also shed a light on how civil society organizations participate in policy making decisions in non-democratic contexts. The next section discusses the importance of informal networks between civil society organizations and how these networks can aid their attempts in influencing public policies. Section two presents two cases to demonstrate how FBOs utilize informal networks and religious framing to influence public policies in the PT. One case tackles the tumultuous subject of personal status law, while the second focus on nonprofit regulations. Presenting both cases together offer a very interesting view of how FBOs rationalize their decisions to work with different partners.

7.1 Advocacy and Policy Network

Advocacy can be understood as an adaptive and proactive tactic that organizations use to exert influence over their vulnerable environment and manage their relationship with decision makers. It is basically a straightforward way to exert power so as to influence the institutional rules that shape the environment that an organization operates in (Scott, 2007). If successfully applied and administered, advocacy-related activities can bring important changes in the organization's environment by, for example, enhancing stability, guaranteeing funding, or changing rules and regulations. A key trend in many Arab-liberalizing regimes over the past decade has been the rise of advocacy nongovernmental organizations to the position of primary opposition to authoritarianism against the almost complete marginalization of opposition parties (Langohr, 2004). In the PT, while aggressive political maneuvers by the PNA sidelined the position of opposition parties, the limited liberalization measures that took place during the same period created the conditions for civil society groups for a partial participation in political decision-making.

Nevertheless, outright lobbying and advocacy activities of nonprofit and faith-based organizations in the Palestinian territories is subject to political limitations, and in many times reprisal consequences. That is why it is important to explore other ways in which these organizations affect public policy. Joining political networks is an important strategy for FBOs to influence policy. Theories of social capital focus on how cooperation is supported by trust, norms of reciprocity, and civic engagement (Coleman 1988; Putnam 1995). Networks are an important theme underlying the idea of social capital since they reflect opportunities for informal interaction, engagement in social activities, and the potential for bridging relationships across disparate groups (Putnam 2001). A policy network consists of all the public, private, voluntary, or community-based organizations that interact to determine and to implement public policy on

some substantive issues (McGinnis, 2011). Advocacy networks represent a tangible form of complex relations in our information society outside formal institutions, including governments and states (Acosta, 2011).

For some analysts, members of a policy network typically share a common belief system, or at least a common understanding of the underlying nature of the policy problems to which they jointly respond (Sabatier, 2007). For others, a regular pattern of interaction is sufficient to define a network, and attention shifts to how participants of different forms and with contradictory interests manage to interact in a productive manner (Bryson et al. 2006). The main difficulty in the research of advocacy networks is a clear definition of what these networks actually are. The voluntary allegiance of many organizations or informal groups in the light of a particular issue-area to be advocated for is a truly liquid form (Acosta, 2011). This last notion takes even another dimension when one investigates the case of the Palestinian territories. Although there are umbrella organizations and networks, but the degree of effective and sustained cooperation is not as substantial as it should be because the center, that is PNA through its departments and structures, deals individually with associations and groups. This diminishes the opportunities for cooperation among different groups, as one nonprofit will inevitably attempt to gain more advantages through its 'higher' personal linkages with decision-maker. The formation of umbrella organizations that could be representative of all groups, in order to negotiate basic demands on more political openness and accountability, is difficult also because of ideological differences. These are particularly stark between faith-based organizations and secular/liberal ones (Cavatorta and Durac, 2010).

Given this morbid situation, secular and faith-based nonprofits have to devise innovative tactics to circumvent the lack of established trust and wide umbrella associations. As Cavatorta

and Durac (2010) have pointed out, a system with no democratic accountability at any level institutionalizes practices that privilege patronage. As a result, any society and social actor wishing to access the Palestinian regime can only achieve this through informal networks of patronage. This situation means that civil society members and activists have to rely on their personal contacts and links to both: deliver benefits and influence public policy. Organizations and associations aware of this issue have to make a decision whether they want to take part in this arrangement and utilize patronage networks. This will eventually create a situation in which organizations have to make decisions on a case-by-case basis. That is, the policy or issue on the table will eventually determine the shape of the network.

7.2 Two Cases, Two Networks, One Outcome

This chapter offers a different perspective on political advocacy by faith-based organizations in the PT. Rather than embarking on a revolutionary path; FBOs instead adopt an evolutionary strategy in which grassroots work successfully to reshape public policy. They managed to achieve their aim by using the language of religious faith in the public arena to promote the interests of their constituents and building collaborative networks among different influential partners. Borrowing from the literature on policy image and agenda setting, I identify the strategies used by successful FBOs in their efforts to change the system through redefining problems, reframing issues, and securing legislation with the help of politicians sympathetic to their causes. In order to examine the change in policy image, I used content analysis, which is most frequently used to determine attributes of communications, including print media, broadcast media, and personal correspondence. While the rigor of the method has been questioned at times (Gilbert, 1989), proper application of the technique is often the only way to gain insight into messages communicated outside of a researcher's presence (Haggarty, 1996).

Community organizing sits at the center of these organizations' advocacy attempts. In contrast to the confrontational mechanisms that secular NGOs chose to challenge the PNA, FBOs chose instead an indirect route to influence public policy. For example, several FBOs arranged high-profile public events to force the PNA to adopt a different view on certain legal issues. These events are usually organized by local FBOs or charitable societies affiliated with faith-based organizing networks. The current chapter examines the involvement of multiple FBOs and other civil society groups in two policy areas: nonprofits regulations and personal status laws. These issues spanned more than four years of policy making and it took the collaboration of multiple groups and networks for the legislations to land in FBOs backyard. Further, some organizations have contributed to both legislations, offering an excellent opportunity to compare their behavior in different policy domains.

I chose the areas of personal status law and nonprofit regulations for a number of reasons. First, both two areas have wide consequences on the daily life of Palestinians. There are currently more than 2100 nonprofits operating in the PT between the West Bank and Gaza. Any regulation that tempers with their funding and services runs the risk of preventing thousands of individuals from receiving basic goods and services. Moreover, assessing the legislative and lobbying initiatives related to personal status law in the PT will provide an important case study to understand the constraints and opportunities that will shape the struggle over legal reform and family law in the coming period of Palestinian statehood (Labadi et al, 2002). Although existing personal status law was not substantively amended, a series of critical events and debates took place, which revealed the tactics that several FBOs, religious institutions and other civil society groups use to influence the direction of future public policy. Among these were the debates

within the newly elected Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC) and a year-long ‘Model Parliament’ initiated by women’s NGOs.

Second, I believe the Law of association of 2000, or what came to be known as the ‘NGO Law’, is worth studying because it received incredible amounts of NGO attention from the beginning. Its provisions concern the operations of NGOs, and it raised questions about the creation of new regulatory structures and group participation in their development. It thus posed a great risk for the survival and durability of any NGO or civil society group that deemed to pose an imminent risk for the state.

Third, the two cases of personal status law and nonprofit regulations provide an interesting opposite scenarios in how FBOs utilize religious framing and collaboration to achieve their goals. Even though FBOs collaborated only with religious institutions and scholars against women and liberal NGOs to prevent any reform in applied personal status law, they sought the help of the same NGOs to prevent the PNA from changing regulations regarding nonprofit registration. This pragmatic discourse towards collaboration shows that FBOs do not hesitate to work with various groups depending on their resources, preferences, and options. The cases, further, demonstrate that there is no single path FBOs must follow to influence policy.

Finally, both cases present an excellent opportunity to observe how religious values can ‘interfere’ in different ways with the state-building process. With the case of the ‘NGO Law’, FBOs’ arguments were concentrated on the language of human rights and freedom to act, while in the personal status law the opposite was true. Religious institutions and FBOs argued against providing women with the same equal rights as men. As Penny Johnson (2007) argue, an examination of the political dynamics and the features of Palestinian rule are crucial to understanding why the personal status law was not promulgated, despite many drafts and

extensive efforts by the PLC. They also shed a light “into the complex links between state formation and legitimation, on the one hand ... and the positioning of Islam... and legal reform, on the other (112)”. Such an examination of the Palestinian “state-in-the-making” is relevant to other state transitions, which is highly relevant in the current Arab world context going through massive social, legal and structural changes.

I conducted 45 interviews with faith-based and secular NGOs’ directors (23 FBOs and 12 NGOs) and public officials. This sample of 23 FBOs acknowledged that they do policy advocacy; thus, they are policy advocates who are active in changing the status quo. Additionally, I consulted published documents, brochures and booklets. These proved very useful in capturing observations and informal interactions among FBOs and their partners.

Multiple questions in the interviews were concerned about the role of these FBOs in advocating against the ‘2000 NGO Law’ and the preservation of the current ‘Family and Personal Law’ discussed later. The rationale behind the selection of these organizations is that the groups involved in policy domain vary with respect to their resources, characteristics, service fields, and attitudes toward advocacy. This diversity provides for a richer investigation of FBOs and their behavior. Other considerations in choosing the sites included: proven availability and willingness and capacity of the organizational leaders to participate in the research.

The FBOs I surveyed are examples of charitable societies and nonprofits that provide multiple services to the poor and the middle class and advocate with local elites, business people and-in some cases-government officials on citizens’ behalf. As hybrid organizations that combine service delivery with advocacy, these FBOs perceive themselves as bastions of Islamic values that look forward to spread the message, help the needy and reverse any injustices experienced by weak members in society. As service providers FBOs provide multiple services

that cover almost all the basic needs for a respectable life. New FBOs have even ventured into a more complex portfolio that includes micro lending, infrastructure development, and higher education. At the same time, these organizations engage in an indirect advocacy initiatives aimed at fixing the root causes of the poor's social problems and bring about social change.

The remaining group of FBOs comprised a variety of organizations that refused to participate in the study for a variety of reasons: they did not want to talk about their advocacy work; they said they do not do advocacy; or they simply did not respond to multiple requests to participate. Consequently, this sample is biased in favor of FBOs who acknowledge they do policy advocacy and are willing to talk about it. Although the sample is diverse, there are types of FBOs that are missing (e.g. mosque-based charitable societies, social arms of political parties), and one should be cautious about drawing generalizations beyond this sample. Moreover, coming up with a clear number that demonstrates the proportion and prevalence of advocacy activities among FBOs in the PT would prove to be a great challenge. Notwithstanding FBOs' hesitancy to declare their support or participation in any advocacy-related activities given the heightened risk of such activities, measuring the scope of advocacy among FBOs has certain challenges given the differing definitions of advocacy.

It should be noted that the interviews with FBOs and NGOs took place during 2010–2011 and therefore were affected by the political landscape of the day. The generalizability of the sample is limited, as it was limited to 45 organizations operating across the West Bank. However, the informants reflected on the wider advocacy context in which they worked. In addition, recent studies which specifically survey advocacy strategies in the third/community sectors (see Donaldson 2007; Schmid et al. 2008), and literature that discuss emerging themes

more generally, have been drawn on. Together, these provide sufficient material for an exploratory analysis, which raises interesting questions rather than provides definitive answers.

7.2.1 Regulating Nonprofits Activities: The Case of the NGO Law

In the midst of building the PNA after the Oslo Peace agreements, a social and political crisis between the newly established Palestinian governments; with its head Yasser Arafat; and the nonprofit sector galvanized the Palestinian public opinion. The crisis started in September 1995 when the Ministry of Social Affairs introduced a new draft law proposal—the Law of Association-- that reframes the relationship between the PNA and civil society organizations. The draft law was basically concerned with the activities of charitable societies, social bodies, and private institutions. The draft NGO Law produced most closely resembled the Egyptian law, which NGO activists regarded as mere authoritarian (Brown, 2003). The proposed law basically forces NGOs to receive an official permission in order to operate rather than just register. Further, the Ministry of Interior (which main job is to guarantee security) were assigned the power to grant operating licenses for NGOs, and NGOs would need to receive official permission before receiving any foreign funds. Moreover, by assigning the Ministry of Interior as the institution responsible for issuing licenses to NGOs, the PNA was sending a strong message to current and future civil society members that their activities will be strictly scrutinized and any questioning action may prompt a swift closure order.

What was special about this particular draft law is the total privacy within which the PNA acted to introduce the draft. Not only PNA officials ignored any consultation with human rights groups or international donors, they also failed to consult with the parties mainly affected by the draft: the nonprofit sector. In a direct critique to the process within which the draft was proposed, the spokesperson of the Palestinian NGO network (PNGO) at the time declared:

"We received the news that a draft law had been already written, without discussing anything with us. Then, the PNA wouldn't even give us a copy of the law! This is the only law not published or made available to the public¹⁷".

Understandably, most NGOs were against the law since its passage would significantly undermine their activities and fund raising events. From the PNA's standpoint, however, especially its leader Yasser Arafat, the law of associations was supposed to strike a good example of how a bill becomes a law (Sullivan, 1996). The process is supposed to go through the following stages: A ministry (in this case, the Ministry of Social Affairs) initiates and sends a draft law to the President, who turns it over to the Minister of Justice who reviews it and asks the opinion of the Legal Counsel for Reviewing Decrees and Laws '*Diwan al-Fatwi wa al-Tashrii'ah*'; they return it to the Minister of Justice who passes his recommendation on to President Arafat, who seeks advice and a vote from the Cabinet of Ministers.

Having learned the long-term consequences for such a law, FBOs were not interested in falling in the same legal limbo with their Egyptian brethren. They decided to act fast to alter the draft before it is too late to do so. Their mission to achieve that goal relied mainly on tactics: religious framing and collaboration.

7.2.2 Send them a Strong Message: The power of Religious Framing

In this section, I analyze the myriad ways in which FBOs and other civil societal actors politicize issues, articulate demands, and "frame" ideas. I argue that FBOs that mobilize religious ideas successfully are more likely to influence policymaking. Effective religious framing is a significant pathway to participate in the policy process. In essence, this section is about the exercise of "persuasive" power. FBOs frequently rely on the religious persuasiveness of their ideas and information to influence governing authorities — which enjoy more "authoritative"

¹⁷ In Sullivan, Dennis, 1995: 40.

forms of power. This process to influence public policy is a site of creativity and innovation, especially for the types of groups analyzed in this chapter, which seek to defend (and define) the public interest. Such FBOs aim to become credible purveyors of ideas and interpreters of reality. By disseminating their views widely, they struggle to shape the public discourse and agenda, to affect how people think and talk about a given issue.

Like any other organization in the field, FBOs realize the power of framing in influencing public and official opinions. However, unlike most nonprofit organizations in the PT, FBOs have a competitive advantage when it comes to framing strategies: religious credentials. In the Palestinian conservative society, religion plays an important part in the daily lives of citizens. The role of religion does not only dominate the social and legal aspects of society, it also interlopes to political decisions as well reflecting Islam's character as a religion of laws pertaining to society's organization as well as individual morality (Tessler, 2002: 339).

Being aware of religion's unique status in society and legislation, FBOs sought early to utilize this variable to their advantage. After all, Fatah cadres dominate the newly established PNA and it is no secret that their ideology is mainly secular. The NGO law draft became, therefore, an early test in which FBOs, and other religious groups, can put the religious framing tactic into practice. The efforts to do so were first manifested in several brochures that were distributed in the West Bank and Gaza arguing against the NGO law draft. The argument concentrated around the harm that this law may bring to the daily activities of FBOs and how this will basically infringe on the 'Word of God¹⁸'. In other words, FBOs are the physical manifestation of all the Islamic values and teachings that called for helping the poor and weak, and any attempt to restrict their activities is seen as a direct attack on Islamic values themselves.

¹⁸ Personal interview with FBO-3 Director

Not content with the effect that these brochures might produce, other FBOs sought an alternative strategy. To openly link their organizations with Islam, several FBOs put ads in local papers with their mission statements highlighted. In an interview with a FBO director he further expounded this strategy by stressing that many FBOs' mission statements are derived from direct verses from the Quran, and as such, any attempt to restrict their actions is seen as a restriction on the Quran itself. Yet, religious framing was not the only tactic utilized by FBOs to change the law draft, collaboration with other organizations was used effectively as well to reach the same goal.

7.2.3 Collaborate and Conquer

Anticipating an ongoing conflict with the PNA, FBOs and charitable societies banded together to form the General Union of Palestinian Charitable Societies. The framework for this Union was based on older institution, the Union of Charitable Societies (UCS) that was founded in 1958 in Jerusalem¹⁹. The aim of the new Union was to galvanize the Palestinians behind FBOs and charitable societies, and hence demonstrate to PNA officials the nationalist backing for these organizations²⁰. Other professional and liberal NGOs anticipating restrictive legislation from the PNA formed, as well, an umbrella association for themselves, the Palestinian NGO Network (PNGO). The network or the alliance made canvassing for NGO autonomy one of its main tasks, using the militant history of civic associations against the Israeli occupation and their historical strong connections with mainly left-wing political parties (Hilal, 2003). Even though the Union and PNGO had totally different ideologies, lobbying against the NGO law draft became an area where both groups can agree on. There came to be an 'unannounced' contract between the two alliances in which PNGO uses its professionalism and international connections and the Union

¹⁹ Personal interview with the Director

²⁰ Ibid

its national backing and local connections to force the PNA to change the NGO law draft²¹. This alliance, as the next case will demonstrate, was only a temporary effort to thwart the PNA from changing the law. It was clear to FBOs that it would be hard to extend any collaboration with other secular organizations in the future as the following quote by a FBO director illustrates²²:

“When it comes to legal registration and standing, both religious and secular organizations are in the same boat. Although we would prefer to have a separate treatment, but until that day arrives we have no choice only to abide by the law. Differences are more acute, however, in almost all aspects within structure and organization.”

These differences notwithstanding, collaboration among FBOs and secular NGOs proved to produce an influential momentum among Palestinian lawmakers. Having realized that nonprofits are united in their stance against the law draft, several PNA officials pushed Arafat to lessen his attitude towards the new law and propose a new ‘more friendly’ draft instead. This change in the PNA approach towards the draft was further accelerated by the direct lobbying acts carried by PNGO and the Union, as the following quote the PNGO director clarifies:

"We lobby the PNA as a group but also personally - i.e., any way we can. The PNA isn't just some anonymous, distant government. These are colleagues, friends, former students, and classmates. It is such a luxury to deal with them compared with Israel. We couldn't even speak to anyone there. They didn't care what our problems were. The PNA is different, of course. For example, with the proposed law on NGOs, I called Nabil Shaath and all the ministers I know to ask them to resist this law. I also called international leaders to tell Arafat to change the law²³."

In the end, a compromise between the PNA and the nonprofit sector was agreed upon. The final version of the law stipulated that all nonprofits have to register with the Ministry of Interior, yet nonprofits secured a set of legal and institutional arrangements that would support their work without surrounding too much of their autonomy. The PNA's infringement on NGOs, however, did not stop with the passage of 'NGO Law' in the PLC. PNA officials tried to change

²¹ Interview with PNGO and the Union

²² Personal interview with FBO-5

²³ In Sullivan 1995

the ‘NGO Law’ during at least two separate events. In June 2005, the Interior Committee and the Legal Committee of the Palestinian Legislative Council attempted to amend the Palestinian law of Charitable Associations and Community Organizations in a manner, which Palestinian NGOs regarded as harmful to their interests²⁴. A number of FBOs in coordination with PNGO have developed a memorandum, which has been circulated to PLC members. The NGO coalition has also conducted different meetings with members of the PLC and the legal as well as the interior PLC committees. To fortify their efforts, the NGOs have even sent a letter to the Palestinian ministerial council. The amendment to the law was eventually stopped. Again in June 2007, PNGO, the Union of Charitable Societies and a number of FBOs played a leading role when a presidential decree was declared revoking the Palestinian Law of Non-Governmental and Charitable Organizations of 2000 and calling on all NGOs to renew their registration with the Ministry of Interior. The above coalition has taken measures to mobilize the civil society against this presidential decree. The articles of the decree were seen as a violation of the Palestinian law governing non-governmental and civil society organizations²⁵. The director of the Union of Charitable Societies expressed the coordinated effort by various FBOs and civil society groups by stressing their role “to influence this policy to not allow the government to control or change internal laws of NGOs in Palestine”. He further argued:

“As the decree targeted the entire NGO sector of Palestine, it was our natural role as a network of NGOs to take the lead in campaigning against it in its attempt to protect the freedom of Palestinian NGOs as well as to enforce the rule of law as initially implemented in 2000.”

The coordinated effort among FBOs and other civil society groups were successful in preventing the implementation of this presidential decree. Nonetheless, even with ‘limited’ successes the introduction of the Law of Charitable Associations and Community Organizations

²⁴ Interview with the author.

²⁵ Interview with the director of the Union of Charitable Societies- Ramallah July 10th, 2010.

in February 2000 has left civil society members hostage to the whims of the Palestinian government. The PNA successfully are in a position now-by law- to wholly govern the activities of all operating NGOs under the rubric of Ministry of Interior. For example, after the whole legislative saga the Ministry of Interior circulated a new questionnaire form to NGOs, especially those who were located in Gaza, which asked about the personal and political activities of their members, including questions regarding past detentions or imprisonment and the reasons behind the circumstances (Jamal, 2005: 58). Obviously, this measure was taken to separate those NGOs that are headed by politically active (or used to be politically active) members in the society. It is clear that the PNA was not interested in any form of dissent or criticism. Moreover, the experience of the Charitable Associations and Community Organizations law clearly demonstrates the manner in which the PNA perceives the role of civil society members in the governing process. The intransigence of the PNA in amending the civil sector law or even sharing their vision with the NGOs, who after all will bear the full cost of the law, revealed to a great extent the authoritarian tendencies that have characterized the Palestinian state building process.

7.2.4 Personal Status and Gender Politics

In the late twentieth century, a combination of geopolitical developments focused particular attention on the Islamic *shari'a* and specifically on its role as an identity and legitimacy signifier for opposition movements in the governments of Muslim majority states (Welchman, 2007: 11). In different states with a Muslim majority, courts and legislative councils became a site for contestation of different perceptions of the requirements of the *shari'a* and the extent to which statutory laws would defend or concede to the different invocations of 'Islamic law'. One of these contestations regarding women and family laws took place in the PT between

the years 1998 and 2000. Particularly, with the changes in the political situation as a result of the Oslo Agreement and the establishing of the PNA, the legal status of women became one of the main fields of discourse addressed by women's organizations (Jamal, 2001). However, Personal status and family laws in the PT are considered the last strongholds of the religious establishment and the only field of law explicitly framed through Islamic notions of morality (Moors, 2006: 115).

Until 1994 Palestinians had not themselves been able to legislate any of the laws that ordered their private and public life. As part of the Ottoman Empire, personal status law in Palestine was based on the Islamic *shari'a*, which was the main source of legislation. Women under Ottoman law were virtually deprived of any civil rights. Their role was determined by family law, which was an outgrowth of the Ottoman millet system, under which each religious community regulated its family status matters according to its own religious belief. This system is still in place today. In the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, which until 1967 were under Jordanian and Egyptian rule respectively; *shari'a* remained the main source of legislation in both. Even during Israeli occupation, the Jordanian Personal Status Law of 1976 and the Egyptian Family Law of 1954 were applied in religious courts in the West Bank and Gaza Strip respectively. To the religious organizations and scholars, it was self-evident that family and personal status law fell within their field of expertise (Moors, 2006). Christian denominations have their own religious courts.

Public debates about personal status and family law in the PT emerged as soon the PNA took control in parts of the West Bank and Gaza. To preserve the status quo and ensure their dominance in the field of personal and family law prominent members of the *sharia*' judiciary council took the first initiative to guarantee separate communal jurisdiction of the *sharia*' courts.

Leftist and women NGOs on the other hand were busy at work identifying legal provisions that discriminate against women and preparing plans for future proposals to reform certain parts in the law. When a series of public discussions on family and personal status law took place, both religious groups and women NGOs joined the debate.

The elections to the PLC in 1996 raised a public discussion regarding the constitutional status of the PNA. Being one of the most organized social forces, the women's movement viewed the PLC as a positive avenue to institutionalize women's rights through legislation (Jamal, 2001). For women's groups and organizations, internal debates in the newly elected PLC could act a Trojan horse for women to ensure better equality laws and a framework for participation in the political process (Hammami and Johnson, 1999). The most prominent example of women's campaigning is the joint project "The Model Parliament: Women and Legislation".

The Model Parliament (MP) was an attempt to open new public venues in which different Palestinian citizens engage in debating issues such as women labor, social welfare, education, and criminal and public law. The Palestinian Model Parliament was a networking project between a number of human rights centers, women's centers, and women's coalitions. It was established in 1997 with the aim of bringing together all parties interested in proposing Palestinian laws and legislation based on equality and human rights. As defined by the initiators, the Model Parliament:

"is the culmination of the national campaign for legislation that guarantees equality and human rights for Palestinian women. It is a public gathering that provides a democratic and free stage for official and unofficial people from different social groupings and different parts of the homeland. It is shaped in the form of parliament and parliamentary discussions in order to discuss several proposed amendments to the existing laws. This aims to achieve equality and abolish women's oppression and to eradicate their discrimination in the law as well as to formulate the amendments and adopt it for the sake of women's rights seeking the good will of the family and society²⁶".

²⁶ "The Model Parliament: Women and Legislation". A document published by Women's Center for Legal Aid and Counseling. 1998

The MP aimed "to pass Palestinian legislation that ensures equality and women's human rights for Palestinian women, as well as their participation in building a civil society based on justice, equality, respect for human rights and [the] rule of law²⁷". It had no juridical or legislative status. Nevertheless, it managed to mobilize different sectors of Palestinian society to discuss issues raised by its members. The convening of the Model Parliament in 1998 reflected the weight the women's movement attached to public lobbying to change the social and political reality in Palestinian society (Jamal, 2001). The Model Parliament began with planning sessions in all regions of the West Bank and Gaza. The activities resulted in the election of 88 members from the West Bank and 120 members from the Gaza Strip. The parliamentary seats were divided equally between men and women. The participants were representatives of political parties, members of the Legislative Council, human rights activists, representatives of women's organizations and grass-roots organizations, as well as some sheikhs.

Members of the MP were aware of the existing contradictions between the Islamic model of the family and gender relations based on the *shari'a*, and the civil law of modern citizenship. The law related to central issues such as age of marriage, dowries, polygamy, maintenance, divorce and custody, alimony, paternity, inheritance, and custody (Abdo, 1999). The fact that the Basic Law passed by the PLC in 1997 refers to the *shari'a* as one of the main sources of legislation in Palestine made the personal status law even more threatening to women's rights.

7.2.5 The Effective Mix of Collaboration and Religious Framing

Framing is a key aspect of organizational efforts to disseminate understandings of issues and interpretations of reality, influence public discourse, and gain an audience among policy

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makers and the citizenry. Studies concerning Islam and gender have relied heavily on the notion of a “woman question” in Islam. A strong discourse in this field of studies claims the incompatibility of Islam with women’s emancipation. Looking at how Islam affects women’s lives, women’s rights and gender justice, these studies have centered on two overlapping feminist questions, namely whether Islam restrains women’s freedom and mobility (Is Islam bad for women?) and whether Islam is compatible with liberal democracy or liberal movements such as feminism (Is Islam bad for feminism?) (Winter 2001, Mojab 2001). Islamic organizations and FBOs in the PT had a distinct idea about the role of women in the Palestinian society. Even though Palestinian women have always played a part in the struggle for national independence, and although the women movement is considered one of the most organized social movements in the PT, and it was the first to begin reorganizing itself and shifting its discourse to suit the new political reality (Jamal, 2001), they still failed to match the tactics mix which FBOs utilized to push for their own views.

The subject of Muslim Family law in the PT became a matter of unprecedented public attention during the transitional or ‘interim period’ that followed the conclusion of the Oslo Accords, the establishment in 1994 of the Palestinian National Authority with jurisdiction over parts of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, and the redeployment of Israeli occupation troops away from those areas. Since then, sustained interest in Muslim family law has not found similar public attention (Welchman, 2003), as the civil society groups previously involved have had their energies drawn and missions changed after the disastrous consequences of the second intifada, which started in September 2000. The debates of the transitional or interim period nevertheless provide crucial background for the examination of any Palestinian law of personal status that may be issued at a future stage; and that law itself, and the process leading up to its

promulgation, will be a critical marker as a contemporary illustration of what may be presented and agreed upon as 'Islamic family law' (*Ibid*: 35).

As explained earlier, the women's campaign for equal citizenship rights generated debates on all levels. PA officials, as well as opposition groups, were drawn into the debate regarding women's status in Palestinian society. The Model Parliament turned into a central public arena in which debate and discussion of central social and political issues were raised. The fiercest campaign against the MP initiative was organized and carried on by Islamic groups and organizations. This counter-campaign took many forms and required the participation of Islamic FBOs, preachers, and politicians.

Monitoring the printed media over 1997-98 provides substantial indications of the development of the anti-MP project on the one hand, and the proliferation of the Islamist discourse on the other. The Islamists used printed materials as well as speeches in mosques to develop and articulate their ideas about women's rights, the role of 'evil women's organizations' in demolishing 'Islamic society' and breaking down Islamic norms and customs (Shihada, 1999). It all started when Sheikh Hamid Bitawi, the head of the West Bank Appeals Court, issued a sharp denial of the MP's right to address social issues that have religious implications. Sheikh Bitawi's intervention (covered in the local press) was the spark that touched off the larger Islamist attack on the model parliament and the women's movement. Joining the religious cluster of critics, Bassam Jarrar; a Hamas-affiliated religious figure; raised the level of criticism to new heights. Jarrar attacked the proposals made by different women's organizations and described them as "frightening and go[ing] beyond the imagination of any Palestinian Arab Muslim"²⁸. He warned the public that the discussions taking place in the Model Parliament had reached a level that "they might become the law that obliges society, every family and every individual." In his

²⁸ Al-Quds (Jerusalem), March 26, 1998.

view the proposals presented to the MP regarding the amendment of the personal status law are based on ignorant ideas and do not reflect a campaign for women's rights, but rather a clash of civilizations.

The Islamists' campaign against the MP included a petition, signed by religious figures, sent to the president of the PLC asking him to ignore the proposals raised by MP members regarding the family law²⁹. The signatories appealed to the Legislative Council to reject what they referred to as a “draft personal status law prepared and supervised by women of the ‘Model Parliament’” on the grounds that “most of the provisions of this draft are in explicit violation of God’s Book and the Prophet’s *Sunna* and the consensus of the Muslims”. Listing various specific issues of controversy, the memorandum went on to note that:

“The draft is explicitly seeking the abolition and total removal of the *shari’a* courts ... The draft has been prepared under the supervision of women [educated in a] foreign culture and has no relation to the Islamic *shari’a*”.

It went on to bewail the sidelining of “those with expertise in the Islamic *shari’a*”—that is, the sectors from which the signatories were drawn. The signatories concluded that they considered the “draft personal status law” to be “a dangerous conspiracy against our *shari’a* courts, Islam and the Muslims.”

Leaders of various FBOs have also given public speeches and issued printed materials expressing suspicion about the MP’s objectives. They have warned about the ‘dangerous war’ initiated by women’s organizations in general, and the MP in particular, against Islam and Islamic values (Hamdan, 2010). Various arguments are presented to convince their audiences that women are not eligible to discuss the Family Law. Sometimes they mention the Prophet’s Hadith that “woman lacks reason and religion”; or they raise the cultural perception of women as

²⁹ Memorandum of 1 March 1998 to the Speaker and Members of the Legislative Council of the Palestinian National Authority: Petition for the rejection of the ‘draft law of personal status’.

persons who lack the capacity for the unemotional judgment that is required for discussing serious political, religious and societal issues (Shehadeh, 1999).

The main document of the movement spearheading their attack was a pamphlet titled "The Arab Woman and the Conspiracy of Secular Women." The booklet used the common formula of labeling the women's movement as an arm of the American and European conspiracy to destroy Islamic civilization (Hammami and Johnson, 1999). Specifically, the women's movement, along with leftists and secularists in general, are termed 'dissemblers'—people who are most dangerous because they are seemingly part of the social fabric but are actually playing the role of destroying it from within (Al-Hoda Society 1998, 3).

Further, anonymous leaflets and handbills were also used to attack the MP's activities as a threat to Palestinian unity against Israel; and at the same time, the Islamist newspapers offered their readers several weekly columns to discuss the danger to the Palestinian cause and Islamic values posed by the MP. The columns were positioned next to a platform for the discussion of Islam and a range of issues relating to family, marriage, sexuality, gender relations, female identity and behavior (Shehadeh, 1999).

The PNA leadership was aware that a majority of the Palestinian public defines itself as conservative. In a public opinion poll conducted by the Jerusalem Media and Communication Center (JMCC) in March 1999, 79.8% of the Palestinian public favored a state that is run according to Islamic law. Only 15.8% favored a secular state. According to the same poll, a majority of 71% favored a national coalition government consisting of all the political and religious parties, including the opposition. Furthermore, 64% thought that implementation of Islamic law by the PNA would increase their support of that entity. Consequently, any clear support of the women's movement's demands by the PNA, especially on issues that were

considered as threatening Islamic law, would have reflected negatively on the PNA and would have played to the hands of the Islamic opposition. Therefore, the PNA adopted an ambivalent stance towards women's demands.

Interestingly, the collaboration patterns in this case among FBOs and their religious partners (e.g. religious institutions; schools; scholars) mimicked to a great extent the organizational patterns of the Muslim Brotherhood movement in the PT between the 1960s-80s. Given the security risks involved under occupation, early Brotherhood leaders considered the informal aspects of their organizational activities as important as their formal activities. To gain wider acceptability and credibility in the Palestinian society they maintained a network of close relations with important individuals in the community; these include prominent independent religious personalities, traditional leaders and wealthy business personalities (Shadid, 1988). In return for their support, the Brotherhood will come to the defense of its network allies whenever nationalist groups criticize them, especially the PLO, for their anti-nationalist political positions and behavior. The Brotherhood coordinates closely with this network on various community issues, this leads occasionally to the formation of a party to challenge the nationalists at the elections of local institutions such as charitable societies, public committees, unions etc. (*Ibid*).

7.3 Conclusion

Local, regional or national efforts to achieve policy changes are increasingly taking a 'softer' or more institutional tone, in contrast to a 'harder' or more radical one (Onyx et al. 2010). Advocacy in the PT by FBOs is no exception. While nonprofit organizations in other contexts have shifted to harder advocacy approaches to respond to the diverse commitments civil society organizations have with local governments, whether in the form of funding; service

delivery or assessment (Acosta, 2012), Palestinian FBOs on the other hand, adopted a softer approach given the aggressive political environment they have to deal with, especially the hostile attitude of the PNA towards them. Because the direct lobbying activity of FBOs is subject to political limitations, it is important to explore other ways in which these organizations influence public policy. Ultimate success in bringing about a policy change depends on which policy image becomes dominant (Vaughan and Arsneault, 2008). Through their direct service delivery, FBOs--like other nonprofit--often bypass the formal agenda of political institutions and achieve problem redefinition when the public chooses to support or consume nonprofit services in which the new policy image is embedded. Through this process Vaughan and Arsneault (2008) argue, nonprofits (including FBOs) are an appropriate venue through which to facilitate a change in the dominant rhetoric surrounding a public policy problem.

The significant increase in nonprofit service delivery and policy advocacy, as the previous chapters showed, clearly demonstrate an active presence in addressing policy problems in the PT. By engaging in activity independent of government initiation, FBOs make decisions on policy issues all the time—where to locate an orphanage, how to distribute food parcels, building an elementary or a high school, and which small businesses to support. Advocacy efforts, including structuring the problem with regard to means and methods of service delivery, are embedded in these service delivery choices (Vaughan and Arsneault, 2008).

The FBOs studied here represent the intersection of religion, political, welfare services, and social issues. Yet, rather than simply channel government or donors funding to the provision of traditional public services, these organizations became informal active critics to the PNA and its social policies. The tension between the classical understanding of the role of FBOs as basic service providers and their increasing involvement in advocacy initiatives and programs raises

important questions about their future role in the Palestinian civil society and public governance structures.

In chapters five and six, I studied the role and strategies of FBOs in the Palestinian policy process. I documented the political presence and influence of FBOs, which in many times take an indirect route, compared to the somewhat overt political presence of secular NGOs. Through the use of quantitative and qualitative methods, I argued that FBOs are active political actors in the policymaking process and that they function as hybrid organizations in which political advocacy and service provision and roles combined with the unique religious ideology complement each other in attaining a successful social and political presence at the local and national levels.

This chapter presented two cases in which FBOs have been successful in influencing public policy. I identified two important pathways for political participation: collaboration with other civil society members and private businesses, and the successful framing of issues in a religious wrap. I argued that when FBOs build collaborative networks with other partners in the society and arrange their ideas to cohere with Islamic teachings and values, they increase their chances of influencing policy formulation and adoption. These two strategies help in explaining not only how FBOs manage to survive in a hostile environment, but it also shed a light on how civil society organizations participate in policy making decisions in non-democratic contexts.

It all started with the tendency to centralize power within the PNA. This strategy did not only limit the activities of FBOs, the PNA has also waged several attacks on the social, political, and welfare infrastructures of the Islamic movement in an attempt to weaken its support base. Many Islamic leaders, activists, and journalists were imprisoned for transgressing the PNA's defined legitimate space for political and journalistic maneuvering (Jamal, 2005). In short,

government restrictions and the PNA scare tactics warning civil society members not to engage in political activities help explain why many nonprofits are reluctant to engage in public policy advocacy or other overtly political activities. This is a rational reaction given the external environment FBOs had to deal with. After all, having an effective and a long-lasting effect on the political arena requires more than a successful sole initiative or protest. The public realm in Palestine includes far more than the newly built institutions of the PNA. Indeed, as Richard Wood explains, “the most crucial dynamics for long-term political change arguably do not lay within government at all, but in the formation of political will and aggregation of interests among both the general citizenry and leaders of nongovernmental institutions in society (2002: 126)”. Particularly, two kinds of social locations are crucial for these processes to succeed: the political society and civil society.

This chapter, further, argued that a complete understanding of FBOs’ role in Palestinian public policy can best be achieved if we perceive FBOs as ‘hybrid’ entities in which they resemble both traditional institutions (with a physical location, professional workforce, tangible services and the like) and social movements (with an objective to revitalize societies, change policies, channel collective actions and so forth). It is this operative fusion that makes FBOs an interesting topic to study. On a practical level, knowing more about the survival tactics of FBOs and the factors that constrain or encourage them to participate in advocacy-related activities reveals a lot about the future direction of civil society and the expected role of FBOs in governing the changing Arab societies. This knowledge gains even more importance with the new wave of political upheavals taking place in the region. With most constitutional and electoral shackles removed, Islamic political parties, representing all facets of the ideological spectrum, have proved resistant to more than 60 years of political and ideological repressions.

Their outstanding performance in recent elections around the Middle East and North Africa is a clear testament to the loyalty and legitimacy these groups attain among local communities. Although most FBOs are not directly connected with the newly established Islamic political parties, it is hard not to think of how the activities of the former could have influenced recent political outcomes.

In looking at survival tactics of FBOs it is important to pay careful attention to the fact that there is a great diversity reflected in the label ‘faith-based organizations’. Different FBOs have different goals and structures, depending upon their leadership, mission, size and clients they serve. Although they all provide public goods and services to needy individuals and communities, they operate in very different organizational fields and face different types of regulation and rules all of which mediate an organization’s relationship with their environment (Hasenfeld, 2009). Not all FBOs will be able, or have the desire to, participate in the same level or type of advocacy. The successful advocacy campaigns identified in this study exhibit a sophisticated level of collaborative skill building, educative practices, and public relations expertise. It could be argued that the development and sharing of professional skills within coalitions across the sector enable new types of advocacy that are constituted through sector co-ordination, and which enhance the likelihood of successful policy outcomes.

Chapter Eight:

The New Role of Faith-Based Organizations in Civil Society and Future Policy Implications

Much of the existing literature on Middle Eastern politics and civil society groups lead us to believe that the latter have no chance in getting involved in policymaking or contribute to the discussion about public policy. Jealously protecting their authoritarian procedures, governing regimens in the Arab world built a reputation of themselves as sole arbiters in the social, political and economic venues. No opposition groups are allowed and dissent will be faced harshly, including the limited involvement by a small number of civil society organizations. Local and foreign researchers tend to emphasize a plethora of political, economic, and societal factors that conspire against constructive citizen participation in the region. However, in this dissertation, I demonstrated that FBOs in the PT have managed to exert considerable influence over policy making in the PT. In several cases, they showed their ability to combine their service provision activities with multiple strategies aimed at shaping the content of social policy, pressure legislators to adopt reforms, and even collaborating with PNA ministries to carry on social projects.

Since I started working on this dissertation the Arab World has seen unprecedented social and political changes reminiscent of those witnessed during the post-colonial era in the mid twentieth century. Dictators have been toppled, Islamist political parties are in control, ultra conservatives (Salafists) are gaining power, and the general population is restless. It is too early to speculate where all these changes will lead to, and whether the outcome of the ‘Arab Spring’ will produce a more democratic, just, and sustainable governing and economic systems. What is

clear, however, is that the evolutionary tactics of civil society institutions coupled with a more revolutionary stance among the general public can result in significant power fluctuations at the highest level of the state. Given that FBOs are an integral part of the wider civil society, one can expect to see a more assertive approach to the way these organizations deal with the governing authorities or the society at large. This final chapter is, hence, a moderate attempt to explain how the role of FBOs—as service providers, policy advocates and religious institutions—may help in shaping the future nature of governing mechanisms and social interactions.

8.1 What did we Learn so Far

It was clear through my fieldwork that Islamic teachings and the social organizations adopting those teachings do not seek to cancel or eliminate the role of civil society in the everyday lives of Muslims. On the contrary, by encouraging people to devote money and time to welfare organizations in their communities, which many of them are voluntary based, the Muslim activists behind these organizations were in essence calling for a more advanced and developed role on behalf of civil society. Particularly, they were trying to advance an alternative model of civil society from the one promoted by Western governments and their aid agencies. A model that is based on local traditions and teachings, where the backed values and advocated socio-economic programs are not considered to be perceived by constituents as alien concepts completely detached from their historical backgrounds.

Using this basic conclusion as a framework to analyze FBOs' activities and tactics, these organizations can truly appear as rational agents seeking to enhance the welfare of their communities. After all, according to institutional theory, an organization's life chances are significantly improved by organizational demonstrations of conformity to the norms and social

expectations of the institutional environment (Meyer and Rowan 1977; Meyer and Scott 1994).

An organization often establishes linkages or exchanges with other organizations to meet necessary legal or regulatory requirements (Guo and Acar, 2005). Mandates from higher authorities (e.g., government agencies, legislation) may provide also the impetus for collaborative relationships that otherwise might not have occurred voluntarily (Oliver, 1990).

This strategy becomes even more crucial when the organization is faced with continuous existential threats from the surrounding environment. New or small FBOs, for example, aware of their shortage of resources, skills, or experience are obviously more eager to establish collaborative links with other established organizations or individuals in society. The relationship is, therefore, somewhat reciprocal: disadvantaged communities benefit from the organizational infrastructure that community organizations provide, but such organizations may not survive without the support of local citizens and institutional ties, particularly through the grassroots funds those citizens may provide.

To the extent that networks evolve through the accumulation of ties between increasingly embedded or influential organizations, which are more likely to enter new strategic alliances with organizations in their existing networks of partnerships (Gulati and Gargiulo, 1999; Uzzi, 1997), FBOs already embedded in resource flow relationships with other organizations or donors are more likely to collaborate on policy advocacy with their existing partners. For example, resource flow relationships, such as referrals and sharing information, may enable organizations to receive advance notice of proposed rule changes and legislative activity that they would not know about otherwise (Mosely, 2011). Such access to evolving policy deliberations may galvanize collaborative policy advocacy.

Several individuals would ostensibly argue against these claims. As discussed in the previous chapters many scholars, analysts and governments have continuously criticized FBOs preferring instead to adjoin them to political parties at best or terrorist organizations at worst. Although sociopolitical legitimacy may seem to provide an unalloyed benefit to FBOs in their efforts to sustain themselves over the long term, it is possible that organizations in resource-poor environments (e.g. the Palestinian territories) may, in fact, be disadvantaged by the possession of certain types of sociopolitical legitimacy, especially when those legitimating ties impose additional administrative burdens (Walker and McCarthy, 2010). In other words, the legitimacy of FBOs in the PT could have contributed to the fact that FBOs are seen as fronts to Islamic political parties, which in turn, brought them significant pressure and critics.

What is missing from the critics' rationale, however, is a solid understanding of the complex environments within which FBOs operate in. For instance, the service delivery roles of FBOs posit them in close proximity to the governing Palestinian Authority and in many occasions it enforce them to directly contact with governing agencies and departments. Even without direct governmental financing FBOs must deal with rules and regulations established by the PNA. No FBO, or any nonprofit, provide services in a vacuum. Capacity, environmental, and legal constraints push most FBOs to interact with each other, the larger civil society sectors and private businesses to provide services, enhance resources, respond to emergencies, and ultimately to engage the policy process. While the faith nature of nonprofits clearly matters in how they provide services and interact with the public sector, the impact of faith orientation is rarely simple or straightforward (Jackson-Elmoore *et al*, 2011). Generally, the role of faith in service provision is more complex, and perhaps more limited, than the available literature has suggested. Equally important, FBOs involvement in policy processes and their ultimate influence

on the resulting public policies in the Palestinian territories exhibits a bolder approach to the one envisaged by existing explanations of FBOs' role in civil society and public life in general. As has already been argued, advocacy activities involve a wide repertoire of strategies that engage particular stakeholders. This can include generating support in the electorate, invoking a moral or religious argument, and/or demonstrating that the public interest is best served by a particular course of action. Some FBOs may choose to advocate a case directly to government ministers, others will focus on cultivating relationships within the civil society or with successful businessmen, while yet others will seek to influence public opinion, and in that way persuade the government indirectly of the efficacy of a particular course.

8.2 What about the Future

Most of the arguments presented here focused on the threats or pressure for engaging in local politics, but what has been missing so far is a thorough analysis for the available opportunities or incentives that could motivate FBOs to get involved in public policy. This issue is currently at the center stage of current political forecasting within the Middle East. More subtly, the 'Arab Spring' created an entire new set of rewards and incentives for FBOs. Interestingly, these rewards are not only available for those organizations operating in states that witnessed the direct rampages of the changes (e.g. Tunisia, Libya, and Egypt), but other FBOs, and secular nonprofits, in almost all corners of the Arab World are now convinced that change is feasible as long as one keeps pushing forward. Yet to take advantage of the new opportunities, FBOs have to learn to present themselves in new ways. States and authoritarian rulers are not the frightening behemoths one used to think of; their foundations are shaky and they are vulnerable to persistent wide opposition. FBOs looking for future support and influence have to bond with the right party. Authoritarian states have learned their lessons as well. Rampant injustices

coupled with dire economic situations and lack of opportunities can easily destabilize the most brutal systems. That could explain why a number of Arab countries (e.g. Morocco, Jordan, Kuwait) feeling the heat of the change acted swiftly to defuse anger among their populations by introducing new amendments to their constitutions and opening the field for a more competitive political action.

These—somewhat—more transparent societies combined with FBOs' legitimacy offer them a golden opportunity to act as policy entrepreneurs. According to Donaldson, a policy entrepreneur's job is "to facilitate the development of: problems into public issues; policy ideas into feasible policy solutions; and a fractured political climate into one that is disposed to one's policy position (2008: 29)". All of these simultaneous efforts require an enormous amount of relationship building with many and varied actors within and on the fringes of the public making policy process, which FBOs are already experienced in. Additionally, FBOs are more prone to join long-term partnerships because what brings them together is Religion. When religion is involved you get an already established identity in which partners can establish trusting relations faster than other coalitions where religion is not a common denominator.

What critics to FBOs may argue, however, is that their religious nature could offer serious threats to traditional liberal societies in the region. Yet, if one is to seek historical episodes to gain knowledge for the future of the unceasing political and ideological tensions between Islamists and other groups in the Arab world; such as nationalists, liberals and socialists; that have dominated much of the contemporary period, they have not prevented these groups from establishing coordinative links and cross-ideological alliances or protest or challenge exiting governments on issues such as election reforms, limitations on press freedoms, or the regulation of civil society organizations (Browsers, 2009).

Within this continuous aura of transformation one still wonders whether FBOs take on religious culture is to serve religion, or does religion simply provide a perception of legitimacy, access to social capital, and some organizational and financial resources to sustain political engagement? An especially important but a difficult question to answer is whether and how faith influences the programs and activities of social organizations. Understanding the faith factor implies more than simply assuming that faith-based service provision is a more humane approach. Rather, as Avis Vidal (2001) put it, faith-based service provision requires “careful exploration of the various ways in which a belief system or ties to a religious organization affects decisions about whether and how development is done”.

This question is gaining serious attention recently especially after the ultra-conservative Islamist groups (Salafists), who are known to encourage the funding of FBOs, won about 25% of the seats in the Egyptian Legislative Council during the recent elections, and the encroaching power these groups are trying to accumulate in Tunisia, Libya, Jordan, Yemen, and other places. On the other hand, questions arise regarding whether religious organizations—including FBOs—lose their commitment to their religious calling when the resources that keep the organization alive are dedicated to a secular calling with outside accountability from secular sources. If local FBOs, with foreign help, sought to gain a larger role within the political arena to the detriment of their traditional roles as service providers can this lead the general public to shun away from them as they did to many foreign funded secular NGOs before. Stone and Wood (1997) describe how small religious nonprofits frequently undergo crises of legitimacy at the point where they begin to seek outside help to expand their activities and taking the necessary steps to secure the professional management standards expected by non-religious funders can cause conflict and discord in the organization.

There remains much to learn about FBOs in the Palestinian political process, given that they are posited to play an even more important role in the design and delivery of public goods and services. With the rapid changes in political and social arenas in the Arab world, there is strong evidence that such organizations will play an increasingly important role in the Arab civil society. Whether this expansion is something to be nurtured and supported or actively constrained defines one of the complex challenges facing contemporary Arab politics.

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