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Palestinian Non - Governmental Organisations caught between Reality and Challenges

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“ If you hate a person, you hate something in him that is part of yourself. What is not part of ourselves does not disturb us. “

“Wenn wir einen Menschen hassen, so hassen wir in seinem Bilde etwas, was in uns selber sitzt. Was nicht in uns selber ist, das regt uns nicht auf.“

HERMANN HESSE

(Demian, 1919)

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ABBREVIATIONS

CBO	Community Based Organisation
CHF	Swiss Francs (Swiss Currency)
CG	Consultive Group
EANGO	European and North American Non-Governmental Organisations
EAP	Emergency Assistance Program
EC	European Commission
ECOSOC	Economic and Social Council (UN organ)
EU	European Commission
GONGO	Government Non-Governmental Organisation
GRO	Grassroots Organisation
GSO	Government Substitutional Organisation
GUPW	General Union of Palestinian Women
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organisation
IRCS	International Red Crescent Society
LDC	Less Developed Countries
MEDA MEDOC	Mediterranean Democracy Department
MOH	Ministry of Health
MOI	Ministry of Interior
MOP	Ministry of Planning
MOSA	Ministry of Insurance and Social Affairs
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NOK	Norwegian Crowns (Norwegian Currency)
NORCROSS	Norwegian Red Cross
OPEC	Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries
PNA	Palestinian National Authority
PCRF	Palestine Children Relief Fund
PCRS	Palestinian Red Crescent Society
PDP	Palestinian Development Plan
PECDAR	Palestinian Economic Council for Development and Reconstruction

PHC	Palestinian Council of Health
PLO	Palestine Liberation Organisation
PNGO	Palestinian NGO Network
PSO	Public Service Organisation
QUANGO	Quasi-Governmental Organisation
RCS	Red Crescent Society
SONGO	Self-Organized Non-Governmental Organisation
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNRWA	United Nations Relief and Works Agency
UNV	United Nations Volunteers
USAID	United States Agency of International Development
VAT	Value Added Tax

1. INTRODUCTION

Before I start to explain the course of this investigation, the main concepts (Orientalism, Civil Society and NGO) and facts that underlie the situation in the occupied territories are going to be clarified in this introductory part. The three central terms have an outreach into my empirical data assessment. The single chapters provide more detailed insights which deal with the individual concepts.

The West has particular interests and expectations regarding the Arab societies in the region. One of the controversial issues is that democracy as part of the governance debate manifests itself as soon as possible and in particular in the same mode that is seen in the West. Is this picture shaped by the influence of the Orientalist image? And if so how? It might well be that Orientalist conceptions are behind some of the concepts and strategic goals pursued by certain NGOs and donors who are taking a backseat.

Non-governmental Organisations (NGOs) have not only gained more and more relevance in the development process of Near Eastern developing societies, but they have also raised an increasing scholarly interest. The traditional civil society in the Middle East, which used to be in charge of the tribe or large families, has been altered by new groups, which are organized around new social structures, interests and goals.

The number of NGOs has experienced a swift increase in number and size, and the extent of some renders them important players in the social welfare sector, both at the national and global levels. The expansion and the increasing role of NGOs worldwide since the end of the 1970s as actors in socio-economic development and in the formulation of public policies has had great influence around the globe. However, this new function is not automatically the outcome of independent activity; but rather the result of ramified relationships between the national and international environment. The Palestinian case is revealing in this regard, Rex Brynen points out:

“Under occupation, Palestinians constructed an extensive array of some 1.000 Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs)¹, including charitable associations², voluntary cooperatives, women and students groups, trade unions and professional syndicates, and other development, health, education, human rights, and media institutions.”³

It is a unique case with the Palestinian civil society, because it has continually been a very energetic civil society under the continued occupations from the Ottoman Empire, the British⁴, Jordanians, Egyptians and Israelis; Palestine unites the largest number of NGOs in such a small space.

¹ The current estimated number of NGOs that are active in the occupied territories is about 1.500 (Field Research in February 2005).

According to Allam Jarrar in 2005, there have been over 1400 NGOs, which have been providing the Palestinians with various services in the numerous sectors and which at the same time as he states “also managed to fill the role of national government.”

Cp. Jarrar, Allam (2005): The Palestinian NGO Sector: Development Perspectives. In: Palestine-Israel Journal of Politics, Economics and Culture, Vol.12, No.1 on <http://www.pij.org/details.php?id=324> (September 5, 2005)

According to Rema Hammami in 1995, estimates of the number of NGOs in the West Bank and Gaza ranged from 800-1200 – although the diversity and informal nature of these organisations made a precise count difficult.

Cp. Hammami, Rema (2000): Palestinian NGOs since Oslo – From NGO Politics to Social Movements? In: Middle East Report Information Project, No. 214, Vol.30, No.1, p.16.

According to Sullivan, Denis J. in 1996, the Palestinian NGO sector ten years ago counted about 1500 organisations. Where it has to be emphasized that the data in his notes vary: the Catholic Relief Services puts the number of 1200 NGOs (including cooperatives, unions, and

youth clubs), the PNGO network against that estimated the number of NGOs up to 800 (excluding unions, cooperatives, and clubs), The Palestinian Centre for Development puts the figure at 1200 to 1500 NGOs.

Cp. Sullivan, Denis J. (1996): NGOs in Palestine: Agents of Development and Foundation of Civil Society. In: Journal of Palestine Studies, Vol. 25, 3/99, p.99-100.

² Voluntary charitable societies are the oldest type of NGOs in Palestine.

³ Brynen, Rex (1998): From occupation to Uncertainty: Palestine. In: Rex Brynen; Baghat Korany, Paul Noble (Eds.), Political Liberalization and Democratization in the Arab World, Comparative Experiences, Vol. 2, (London) p.194.

⁴ Amal, Jamal (1995): Civil Society Without State? The Example of Palestine. In: Ibrahim, Ferhad; Wedel, Heidi (Eds.), Problems of Civil Society in the Near East (Opladen) p.167.

The Palestinian society was mobile and very involved in activity with regard to the sectors of education and communication among each other and new politically interested active circles came into being. Cities offered the meeting locations for these newly established communication associations, besides the traditional places such as mosques, churches, cafés or even private houses. Schools served as a kind of mouthpiece where national or even religious ideas were spread. In the mid-1930s there was a great variety of associations and organisations founded such as welfare organisations, trade unions, sports clubs, and others that were active next to the political parties existing at that time. Influential persons, families and political parties had financially supported even the media. They also were a forum for those who did not belong to a traditional elite or family. Through small efforts a new class was created in the urban way of life, a class that we now call civil society.⁵ Strictly speaking, a Palestinian “state” has not emerged yet, and therefore civil society has been in charge of “Para-state” functions, while at the same time, rendered and administered essential services in the fields of education, health care, agriculture, etc.

There are four main events that contributed to the development of the Palestinian civil society: the 1948 war, which dismembered Palestinian society, the 1967 war that established Israeli occupation, then, the 1987-1993/4 Intifada. And finally the Second Intifada, which differs from the first with regard to Palestinian civil society and the NGOs involved, both of which topics will be discussed later. The existing groups at that time ranged from nationalist and Islamic to traditional associations.

The first Intifada (1987-1993) was a sign of Palestinian resistance, and civil society served as a kind of front for its political activities, which were proscribed by the Israeli occupation. At its height in May 1988 and even earlier supporters of the Intifada used civil society in order to establish public assistance and encouragement. The uprising proposed the opportunity to dilate the number of

⁵ Krämer, Gudrun (2002): History of Palestine (München) p.309-310.

autonomous actions that were undertaken by Palestinian NGOs in order to strengthen its civil society and create a stable basis and infrastructure for a future Palestinian state.

Throughout the years, many changes have occurred and the formation of the various associations has been altered in many ways. Some of the associations and organisations have gone through shifts in their structure that were caused by state co-optation and international assistance. All of this has had an influence on the vision and the agenda of many organisations and it has also changed their relationship with local actors and the communities on the ground. A vast majority of these civil society organisations have specialised in the different sectors, and have become partners of generous donors and other professional organisations. Of course, these changes did not really have a positive impact on all the NGOs for the reason that many of them had undergone a metamorphosis in a sense that their agendas and goals were denatured from its original character. On the other hand, this caused them to look less reliable and responsible in front of the local society.

Thus, it is important to comprehend the situation the Palestinians have faced and moreover the social gap and political struggle which has determined their lives for years. In the period of 1967-1991 when the Palestinian society lived on a terrain without a state and central government, self-organisation was very important. This happened in the form of civil groups, which have turned into NGOs. Most of these associations were known as public associations, voluntary associations, social welfare organisations, charities and missions.⁶ The fundamental space of action for NGOs is civil society. But what does the term civil society itself embrace? What lies behind this concept, which has been very controversial in its definition and application? The particularity is how far this corresponds to the case of Palestine since the civil society concept is considered as relatively independent from the state. This will be addressed in a

⁶ Fernando, Jude L., Heston, Alan W. (1998): NGOs between States, Markets, and Civil Society. In: The Role of NGOs: Charity and Empowerment (Philadelphia) p.10.

later section in order to understand the notion of civil society in the Palestinian context.

In view of the fact that the Palestinian civil society represents an unique situation, which is notably active under the continued occupation with a large number of NGOs. The NGOs and in particular the Palestinian NGOs regard themselves as a driving force for the civil society strengthening in the Arab world because of their unique experience. They were responsible to provide the most basic needs to the Palestinian society in a non-state environment a state and within a lacking strong private sector. At the same time the Palestinian NGOs regarded themselves as responsible to mobilize their own people for the national rights throughout their non-violent strategies, which they called Resistance Development Strategies.

Their great efforts to achieve their goals did not remain unaffected through external influences such as the Israeli authorities, the international donors pursuing their political interests that are weaved in agendas, and other factors that shaped the NGOs' surrounding. Hence, it is not surprising that the Orientalism debate has also rubbed off on Arab NGOs who are working throughout the region (the near and Middle East, and North Africa). Even NGOs did not remain impervious to the systematic modern form of imperialism, which has been practised by donors through the determination of money flows and the imposed conditions. This prejudiced mindset complicates the relationship between NGOs and donors. Here, we conjure up the thought of Birgit Rommelspacher, who stated that prejudices emerge and positive aspects such as competence, stability and other characteristics are accredited to oneself, whereas all other negative thoughts such as violence, chaos and others are associated with the "Other". This image that has been projected onto the Palestinians that were criticized since they were not conform to the "western" model.

Most non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in the Arab world, particularly in Palestine, have traditionally been active in the areas of social work and charity, often within a religious or communal framework. Herewith, I refer to the Islamic

organisations and charities that have had a strong position in the Palestinian society throughout history. The waqf-system, which could be seen as a different type of civil society actor, is going to be discussed as well. The waqf structures were religious endowments in form of land which were held in trust by the Islamic organisations. It was used for charitable purposes such as mosques, schools, accommodations for the poor, or even for fountains. This kind of contribution was donated by prosperous families who supported the poorer communities. The Islamic waqf system has been a social system with the thought to support the needy. This model had also the purpose to preserve the infrastructure of the old cities such as Jerusalem. The Islamic organisations enjoy a strong clientele and their financial independence from international donors enables them to have their own agenda.

On a less positive note many of the western oriented NGOs have recently become the forum for conflicts between different political trends, while others tackle political problems such as human rights or democratic issues. Facing the rejuvenated NGO scene in the Arab world, public authorities remain torn between support for the concerns of civil society and the traditional mode of management, which does not delegate, consult, or decentralize them. Thus, numerous questions arise such as: Can NGOs in the Arab world be considered full-fledged actors of governance and of national and local development? Is the relationship between NGOs and public authorities at the national and local level one of partnership or opposition and competition? Are NGOs perceived to be palliatives to the shortcomings of the public authorities? How is the relationship between NGOs and society to be defined?

It will be attempted to answer these just listed questions on the basis of the Palestinian case, which has to be contemplated because of its peculiar situation. A further aspect is the contemporary political status within the occupied territories through the entry of Hamas who had won the January elections 2006. It has been the antithesis to the PLO and it has neither acknowledged Israel's existence nor a peaceful coexistence with the state of Israel. Various actors among others the NGOs feel to be caught between the different "parties" due to the shift in the political arena and the changes

involved. In spite of the recent disputes between the Hanija-led Hamas and Abbas' Fatah, there is a tendency towards a two-state solution, which is still in the dark though efforts have been revived through the so-called Near East Quartet (EU, UN, Russia and the U.S.)

The initial chapter develops the research problem and explains the relevance of the problem, with regard to the particularity of the Palestinian case study. Further, the methods and approach used are explained. The empirical data assessment was done in form of interviews with the NGOs, donors and others concerned who are active on the terrain. Moreover, the Orientalism concept is discussed in the beginning chapter. It opens with a disambiguation of the term itself, continues with a historical overview which presents the different cesura of Orientalism. It further considers both counterparts Orientalism as well as Occidentalism and concludes with the Orientalist view on NGOs.

Chapter two discusses the notion of civil society and analyses the roots of this "idea", which has played a significant role in various societies in Europe as well as in the Arab countries. Philosophers such as Al-Farabi, Ibn Sina, Ibn Rushd, Al-Ghazali and scholars like Hegel, Marx, Gramsci have coined the term decisively. This also entails a debate on the aid system in Islam from the past up to the present, which has always been part of civil society and which has also constituted a part of peoples' lives. Finally, the differences within the numerous Arab societies are discussed that have existed under the various political regimes.

The third chapter deals with the actors of civil society – Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs). There have been and still are disagreements on the definition of this abbreviation. The term "NGO" gains in the Palestinian context a totally different character based on the reason that there has not existed a state yet, except for the Palestinian Authority, which is rather seen as "quasi-governmental" institution and the representative body of the Palestinians. With regard to the latter, this view has changed in view of the last elections (January 2006), where Hamas came out as winner.

However, NGOs and their predecessors have played a crucial role and they have had a fundamental function for the Palestinians, in particular with regard to the “three events” that shaped the Palestinian history. The waqf organisations who are embedded in Islam have also contributed significantly to the Palestinians. This type of organisation has also its roots in Hamas, who maintains a strong social system. The chapter finally discusses the NGOs’ role in the Second Intifada and discusses in the following chapter the obstacles and difficulties the NGOs’ faced after the conclusion of the Oslo Accords at the beginning of the 1990s.

One of the initial problems the NGOs had with the new authority was their handling in terms of legislation. Next to this the NGOs were also exposed to the rules of the occupying regime which was in addition an obstacle. Then, the donors that fund the NGOs and in that way provide aid have also a function in the constellation consisting of NGOs and Israeli regime. It is discussed how these external contributors have a share in the NGO scene.

The fifth chapter outlines the different types of organisations and NGOs that are active on the Palestinian terrain. These vary in terms of size, field of work, source of funds and the related conditions (dependencies on donors), on how they present themselves and their future prospects. These are just some of the typologies that were developed in order to categorize the NGOs interviewed. The sixth chapter presents other important factors and parameters that shape the Palestinian NGO scenery and determine their position on the terrain. Through the increased rivalry for funds among the NGOs a sort of clientele has developed. Beyond the donors’ rules set the frame for the entire business as well.

Chapter seven evaluates the results of the empirical data and demonstrates the facts on the Palestinian ground. It further points out on how the NGOs and their donors are viewed by the Palestinian society, who is receiving aid. In comparison to the secular NGOs, the Islamic ones have had a better position and recognition within the Palestinian society. The Palestinians are aware of the fact that there are differences between both types, and on top that the PA under

Fatah has not really made any difference. Their dissatisfaction may have reflected itself in the recent election result, which is discussed as well.

The concluding chapter summarizes the major results of the thesis, which are the following: In view of many Palestinians there is no belief in a positive future with regard to an independent Palestinian state. From the past up to the present, it has become clear that the aggravated situation and difficult circumstances in the occupied territories have not really alleviated the Palestinians' life. Though NGOs tried to fill the gap the "quasi-state" left open, it was not enough. The First Intifada had a different character for the reason that the maintenance of social services was united with the common national goal and the fight against the occupation. With the Oslo Accords in the early 1990s a feeling of elation developed with view on a future Palestinian state, but this vision was taken with the break-out of the Second Intifada in the fall of 2000.

With regard to the latter "event" the NGOs were also subject of protest because of their ignorant behaviour towards the Palestinians and the then existing circumstances. Thereto the donors exerted pressure on the NGOs who felt to be caught in-between the aid recipients and their financiers. Through the growing chagrin the NGOs are not able anymore to meet the requirements and to fulfil their mission. NGOs have also lost their reliability and authenticity in view of the Palestinian society. There is a small number of NGOs left who enjoys the independence from donors. the Islamic ones belong to this category since they have been anchored in tradition, culture, religion and hence in society. As mentioned they are not subject to the regulations and conditions the donors ask for before they agree to offer funds. They have independent sources of funding amongst others the Palestinian Diaspora and the Gulf States.

With Hamas' victory in the legislative elections, the international community stopped its aid and in that way attempted to enforce a decision that was supposed to result in the recognition of the Israeli state by the new Hamas-led government. Certainly, the mourners were the Palestinians who have already been struggling with the deteriorating economic situation.

This investigation revealed that through the increasing demands, conditions and regulations the NGOs have become instrumentalized and rather serve as a tool for political interest of the donors and their governments. The entire aid issue has changed from aid provision into an NGO business, where the big ones have a say. And this constellation contributed to the centrifugal effect on the marginalized Palestinian society, whereas the Islamic organisations (among them those of Hamas) have gained a stronger position within the society and they have also had cohesive impact. Nonetheless, it has been confirmed that the Orientalist coloured view affected the Palestinian NGO scenery which has been dominated by the international donors and their policies.

The next section is going to elucidate the underlying research problem, which is followed by the relevance of the topic.

1.1 Research Problem

NGOs have not only drawn attention because of their actions on the ground, but they have also raised criticism by being unrepresentative with regard to the services and welfare provision for their clients – the local society in the occupied territories. But the explanation for this kind of weakness that NGOs suffer from is a disadvantage of the difficulties, which happen in the aid system due to increasing demands and conditions set by the donors for financial support. The rivalry for foreign funds among the NGOs is growing and therefore the solidarity with the base is decreasing. The dynamics and rules that exist aggravate the situation for both parties – the local society and the NGOs. The course NGOs must follow enlarges the gap between those who provide the services and those who receive them. This dissertation will focus on a detailed investigation of the effects of foreign “sponsorship” of NGOs with regard to three decisive points in the Arab-Israeli Conflict: the First Intifada (1987-1993), the Oslo Accords (1993) and finally the Second Intifada, which is also called the al-Aqsa Intifada (Fall 2000-2005). This thesis aims to study the interactions of Palestinian Non-Governmental Organisations (PNGOs) and their relations to donors and International Non-Governmental Organisations (INGOs), and to research to what extent development efforts undertaken by PNGOs are influenced and enhanced by donors.⁷ Of greater interest is the relation of external dependence (UN, EU, clubs, individuals and other Islamic organisations) versus the mobilization of internal resources in terms of financial means that the PNGOs have.

Further the goal is to examine NGOs, both of local as well as international nature under different aspects. The more relevant research element is their role in politics, society, and the resistance against the occupation. Furthermore, I shall investigate under which conditions they have been successful in the Palestinian case and how they influence Palestinian society.

⁷ For purposes of this paper, the term „PNGO“ will refer to local Palestinian NGOs, which are working with the international NGOs.

More specifically, the investigation intends to analyse the influences of NGOs (donor agencies) in order to understand the role (Palestinian) NGOs play in the empowerment of Palestinian civil society, and the linkage between the various NGOs and the (conditioned) donor agendas. On the basis of these findings it has to be discussed whether the active NGOs in Palestine could be seen as centrifugal or cohesive forces on the social, cultural, regional and religious basis with regard to a prospective Palestinian state. Do the NGOs need the occupation in order to survive on such a vulnerable terrain? Officially, the NGOs in Palestine work against the existing situation. If they really want to effect change, it has to be considered that change involves risks. According to this, the following questions arise: How does society in Palestine reproduce itself under Israeli pressure and discrimination? Which obstacles does it face and how does it grow, though there is no proper state? The intension is to contribute to the understanding of NGOs/donor-relations in relation to their counterparts on the terrain they are working in. As it is throughout the whole Middle East; NGOs in Palestine still remain an understudied terrain, especially with respect to their external and internal management structures.

The current circumstances in Gaza and the West Bank are accompanied with violence and victims on each side, which additionally aggravate the efforts towards peace and the work of PNGOs working on the ground. Since the beginning of the al-Aqsa-Intifada the social conditions have deteriorated even worse than after the outbreak of the First Intifada in the late 1980s. Although the protection of, and services provided to, the Palestinian population in the occupied territories were transferred to the Palestinian Authority (PA), along with a number of other state responsibilities, the Oslo Accords that were concluded in 1993 strengthened Israel's complete control over the Palestinian economy, living spaces, roads, and most importantly, natural resources. Shortly after the Oslo Agreement a donor conference was launched in order to pledge funds for the Palestinian Authority (PA). This, in fact, made it more difficult for the NGO community to survive because the foreign money was redirected to the Palestinian Authority and not directly forwarded to the individual organisations serving the needs of the community, though not all donors followed this pattern. Many NGOs were facing serious financial problems.

However, little or no attention was paid to them and the Oslo process represented another obstacle in the eyes of the organisations and the affected Palestinians. Instead, the money flow went to the PA in order to support the establishment of state structures negotiated in the Oslo Agreements for the interim period (1993-1998). Attacks and incursions undertaken by the Israeli government on the branches and the structures of the PA since the start of the al-Aqsa Intifada in many cases weakened the PA's ability to implement the rule of law, leading to further incidents.

In the meantime the Palestinians social and economic rights deteriorated significantly. With the continued occupation, particularly since the Second Intifada and the virtual collapse of the PA, Palestinians have become overly dependent on aid from NGOs. In Gaza and the West Bank, Palestinian civil society and the Palestinian Non-Governmental Organisations (PNGOs) faced increased difficulties in conducting their work effectively, or even at all. The existing circumstances and obstacles, such as checkpoints and security checks, make the NGOs work more difficult, which may lead to Israelis confiscating equipment and materials needed by the NGOs for their projects.

There have been many restrictions in the carrying out of the NGOs work, such as far-reaching restrictions on the freedom of movement and incursions into Palestinian towns and villages. These imposed limitations not only affect the NGOs but also the recipients of their work. NGOs have had their offices raided and personnel badgered and detained. Staffs of international NGOs have been subjected to restrictions of movement or they have been overtly attacked with the consequence that even less international organisations and their staff members were allowed to enter the occupied territories.

This again had a negative effect on those depending on the services and aid delivered through the international associations, which have led to isolation. The Palestinian civil society is repressed and restrained by the occupying power as other non-state actors and radical groups are gaining stronger and stronger footholds within the Palestinian society. The violence between Palestinian

citizens, the Israeli police, and other security forces are tied to the outbreak of the al-Aqsa Intifada.

Since the establishment of the Palestinian Authority, government donors have funded both the Authority and Palestinian civil society. Many donors have presumed that Palestinian civil society could act as a balance to the non-state Authority. On the contrary, since its birth the PA has tried to subordinate and oppress NGOs. There has always been a conflict between the Executive Branch of the PA and the NGO community regarding the role and the status of the PNGOs and welfare charities.⁸

One of the discrepancies between them has been the legislation for NGOs specifically, under which law they should be governed. As already mentioned above, since the PA came into power, PNGOs have been facing severe changes. Until then they had been working to fulfil important functions in the public sector (health care and education) under the observance of an ongoing occupation and stifling regime.⁹ Thus, the NGOs are still in a conflicting situation and try to overcome the daily difficulties that the aggravated circumstances involve.

⁸ Asseburg, Muriel (2000): Blockierte Selbstbestimmung: Palästinensische Staats-und Nationenbildung während der Interimsperiode, (Baden-Baden) p.123.

⁹ Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network (2004): Tightened spaces for Human Rights – Palestinian NGO Work – A Discussion Paper on Palestinian NGO Work on <http://www.euromedrights.net/usr/00000026/00000027/00000028/00000245.pdf> (May 3, 2004).

1.2 Relevance of the topic

After 1948, after the state of Israel was created and later Jordan annexed the West Bank, but the statehood of the non-Israeli part of Palestine and the status of that territory was never determined, and the competing powers for organizing those territories were held in abeyance. Instead what filled the void and provided structure was a whole range of various NGOs and their predecessors.

In comparison to the churches (Protestant, Catholic or Orthodox) - NGOs are a fairly new structure. Next to the old-established structures such as those of the family and the clan there was the United Nations (UN) that took care of the Palestinians' needs in form of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA). Prior to its existence other rulers of the Ottoman Empire until World War I, and the British had been in power over the territories. UNRWA offered various services and assistance to the Palestinians. The PLO and its predecessors considered the UN as a powerful world organisation and they had hopes that it would reward them with their rights based on resolutions.

The UN established a presence there for over fifty years. Though numerous social structures existed on the ground the vacuum has continued to exist since there has not been any real government in place and a peace treaty has not yet come into being. Thus, it could be said that these NGOs, which are seen as civil society organisations, serve as a kind of substitute for the lacking government structures or better yet, a state system. In that way it has been possible for them to provide the services that are needed by Palestinian society. The important question is: for how long are these civic associations - which are mostly supported through foreign funds - going to replace the state system?

1.3 Methods

“Interviews with experts are a colourful example due to the regular code of practice in the field of empirical social research, which does not take course with the methodical reflection.”¹⁰

Certainly, this method enjoys great popularity since it allows the researcher to collect the relevant data he or she needs, and because of this, many researchers believe that interviews allow them to gather significant information and a working knowledge of the particular field of research. But it has to be emphasized that this sort of methodical procedure holds difficulties based on the fact that finding the right interviewees to provide the information sought by the researcher depends on many components such as expertise in a certain area. Beyond that, the relevant data, as named it above, is defined as not just the expertise the interviewee has in the specific field, but also his or her experiences, their specialized knowledge, and their the susceptibility for the culture and the environment, which determine the expertise. I considered the expert-interview method as the most appropriate mean for my research since it gave me the opportunity to investigate the wide spectrum in order to gain impressions and hypotheses since little data on NGOs was available. There is hardly a comprehensive study on NGOs in Palestine.¹¹

¹⁰ Bogner, Alexander, Menz, Wolfgang (2002): Das theoriengenerierende Experteninterview – Erkenntnisinteresse, Wissensformen, Interaktion. In: Bogner, Alexander; Littig, Beate; Menz, Wolfgang (Eds.): Das Experteninterview. Theorie, Methode, Anwendung, (Opladen) p.33.

¹¹ There are individual studies dealing with civil society and NGOs in developing countries in particular regarding their relationships to their international counterparts. There are a few case studies on civil society actors in Jordan (by Basma Bint Talal) or Bangladesh (by Kendall W. Stiles), which analyse the interrelation between the single „players“. The former addresses the Jordanian development organisations and their practices. It also sheds light on the royal Jordanian Hashemite Fund for Human Development. The latter against that investigates the emerging social structures in the Less Developed Countries and examines the ongoing trend of organisational changes NGOs have to undergo in order to be conforming to the international donor agencies.

Cp. Bint Talal, Basma (2004): Rethinking and NGO: Development, Donors and Civil Society in Jordan, (New York)

Bogner and Menz criticize above, the rules and methods used by researchers according to the performance of such interviews are not the same as obtaining information. It is not the primary concern of this chapter to analyse the methodology of this interview genre, but rather the interest was aimed at contacts with the interview partners and the outcomes that would result. It is a method that is viewed reluctantly as the authors above state. I consider it as

Cp. Kendall W. Stiles (2002): *Civil Society by Design: Donors, NGOs, and the Interstitial Development Circle in Bangladesh*, (Westport)

Sheila Carapico's study on civil society in Yemen investigates the civic participation in modern Yemen and traces the complexities of Yemen's history over the past five decades. It considers its response to the colonial encounter and the years of civil unrest. It also challenges the stereotypical view of conservative Arab Muslim society in which the country demonstrates its activism seeking development in the political, economic and social spheres of the modern democratic state.

Cp. Carapico, Sheila (1998): *Civil Society in Yemen: The Political Economy of Activism in Modern Arabia*, (Cambridge)

Sari Hanafi and Linda Tabar in their study inquired in which ways external actors influence Palestinian NGOs in terms of their development policies and their relative promotion of democratization. Further they concentrated on the capacity of Palestinian NGOs and their contribution to the elaboration of global agendas through transnational activism and global conferences. They address the issue of Islamic organisations but do not deepen their thoughts with regard to the Palestinian society.

Cp. Hanafi, Sari, Tabar, Linda (2005): *The Emergence of a Palestinian Globalized Elite*, (Jerusalem)

Mohammed Hashem Almbaid investigated in his academic discourse the "planning under uncertainty" by means of "Health NGOs in Palestine". He addressed their relationship between planning under uncertainty and the planners' perceived effectiveness of their NGO. Mohammed H. Almbaid is chief of party at Tamkeen (a five-year Civil Society and Democracy Project) in Ramallah.

Cp. Almbaid, Mohammed H. (2000): *Planning under uncertainty: The case of health NGOs in Palestine*, (PhD thesis published at the Florida State University)

Sarah Ben Nefissa and her co-authors Abd Al-Fattah and Hanafi address the issue of NGOs in the Arab world, particularly those that have traditionally been active in the areas of social work and charity, often within a religious or communal framework. But recently, many of these organisations have become the forum for conflicts between different political trends, while others tackle political problems such as human rights or democratic issues. Facing the rejuvenated NGO scene in the Arab world, public authorities remain torn-between support for the concerns of civil society and the traditional mode of management, which does not delegate, consult, or decentralize. Thus they attempt to answer numerous questions such as: Can NGOs in the Arab world be considered full-fledged actors of governance and of national and local development? Is the relationship between NGOs and public authorities at the national and local level one of partnership or opposition and competition? The studies in this collection are based on the Conference on NGOs and Governance in the Arab World held in Cairo in March 2003.

Cp. Ben Nefissa, Sarah, Abd Al-Fattah, Nabil, Hanafi, Sari (2005): *NGOs and Governance in the Arab World*, (New York)

worthwhile to be aware of in order to prepare this form of data acquisition carefully. Initial contacts with some NGOs offered the opportunity to forge links with others working in the field. It was important to select the interview partners from different NGOs in the numerous sectors, which allowed a broader spectrum with regard to interview partners being active in the various fields. Thus, I deemed it as expedient to have the diverse NGOs in the varying sectors since most NGOs are active in more than one field such as gender issues, democracy, education etc. Choosing a number of NGOs which work all in the same field might have led me to a result specifically for the selected field (deduction principle). My interest in the problem is whether all NGOs (independent of the sector) face the same obstacles and problems in the implementation of their projects on the difficult terrain. The plethora of NGOs is diversified, but it might reflect or even lead to the result that, despite their heterogeneity, these organisations share a common denominator in terms of the same difficulties (induction principle).

I selected the interview partners with this in mind I refer to them as expert/s not they are characterized by Maria Behrens and Eike Hennig¹². I mean the term in its broadest sense: with experts I relate to all persons, who work on the spot or in a local or international organisation – people who have the experience in the field, who organize the numerous tasks, who implement the various projects and any other step such as the planning and the administrative work (i.e. applications for donor funds, etc.) in addition to the characteristics listed above. Hence, the term expert/s embraces, in my view and in particular for my research, people who are involved in the work on the terrain and with the proper NGOs whatever position they occupied. According to Maria Behrens, in the course of the interviews depending on the counterpart – the interviewee – it sometimes became clear that these effect – types as she calls them appeared, for instance when the interviewee was a leading person (director, project manager, desk officer etc.) in his or her organisation.¹³ Then he or she was

¹² Behrens, Maria; Hennig, Eike (2006): Qualitative Methoden der Internationalen Politik. (Unpublished source).

trying to impart the relevancy of the organisation and its work beyond what the questions asked. To this point I have to say that all interviewees were open and objective in the course of the interviews; Behrens and Hennig put it as follows, the

“Subject of the interviews is the role and the knowledge of the expert.”¹⁴

The outcome of this is that the role allocation does not matter while the interview with the expert is conducted. It cannot be ruled out that there could be a difference in the standard of expert interview depending on the counterpart, which means that there could be varying point of views, whether the person is a head of an NGO or someone who is active in the field, for instance as a social worker or project manager. Nevertheless, both are in that sense experts, because both are involved and work in the same sector.

In the early stages of my research, access to NGOs in order to conduct the field research was not easy. It took some time in order to make contact with the various NGOs that are active in Palestine. However, I have to say that the approach with genuine local NGOs (Palestinian NGOs) was easier than with the international NGOs. For me, it was important to include local Palestinian NGOs as well, those who serve as a kind of mediator between the local communities and finally the international NGOs. Initial contacts were made via the Internet (emails) and by telephone. NGOs that also maintain offices here in Germany offered contacts to their local offices that operate in Palestine and other international partners they work with and the major NGOs working in the field.¹⁵

My stay in the U.S. (2004) offered me the opportunity to conduct more in-depth research while at the same time, get to know Palestinians who are active in the

¹³ Behrens, Maria; Hennig, Eike (2006), op. cit. p.5 (translated by Layla Bahmad)

¹⁴ Behrens, Maria, Hennig, Eike (2006), op. cit. p.6 (translated by Layla Bahmad)

¹⁵ Mohammed Khaled who worked for CARE Palestine has been an important contact and very helpful, whose assistance I appreciate. He was a Community Development and Emergency Response Sector Coordinator.

Diaspora and who run an NGO (PCRFF)¹⁶ initiated in the U.S. with a local office in Ramallah. This NGO organized a fundraising gala at Washington D.C. with Dr. Hanan Ashrawi as guest of honour. There I had the chance to get to know more people in order to prepare my field research. Through the presence of so many well-known people that are engaged in the field, it opened a path towards interview partners. The PCRFF has been a partner to numerous local Palestinian NGOs working on the ground, and on the basis of the existing difficulties in Palestine, their fundraising event provided the first step in terms of prospective interview partners.

The data collection for this empirical research was conducted by means of guided interviews¹⁷ and conversations with experts working with different NGOs in the field. Guided interviews are a popular form for collecting data, since most researchers assume that through this method they obtain all the relevant information they need from an expert in the field of their research. Moreover, Bogner and Menz state

“The transaction of guided interviews is helpful in a way that it facilitates and shortens the time of long observation processes in case the interviewee (expert) is an important contact point having practical Insider information and can be considered as a representative for a large number of actors in the field of research.”¹⁸

Additionally, it has to be said that also various factors such as reliance on the expertise of the interviewee and their experience in the field play a significant

¹⁶ Palestinian Children’s Relief Fund founded by Steve Sosebee. The PCRFF administrates medical assistance to children who were injured in Palestine and other countries in the region.

¹⁷ “Expert interviews are conducted with a guideline for the specific case they are intended for. They might be recorded if the interview partners agree.”

Cp. Sack, Detlef (2002): Lokale Netzwerke im Stress: Güterverkehrszentren zwischen kombiniertem Verkehr und Standortkonkurrenz, (Berlin) p.227.

¹⁸ Bogner, Alexander, Menz, Wolfgang (2002), op. cit. p.7.

Cp. Esser, Hill, Schnell (1999): Methoden der empirischen Sozialforschung, (München) p.30-301, 354-357.

role.¹⁹ The expectations I had were that through this form of interview I would receive the information I needed in terms of expertise (on an academic level), timelessness, and experience in the field. And I considered this form of interview as the most appropriate for my investigation, since access to that particular field is a bit difficult, whereas by comparison, other institutions for instance run a public relations office that is responsible for inquiries. The experts were mostly executive staff (directors), social workers and public officials who were the interviewees throughout the research. Additional information was provided in the form of brochures, reports, papers, documents, and reference to homepages. All interviewees concerned were cooperative in the interviews and offered to answer to any further questions that might arise. The positive aspect was that the interviews were very fluid and some of the information given went beyond the question and offered a broader explanation of their work. With regard to more delicate questions concerning the financial aspect of the NGOs, the majority of NGOs interviewed seemed to be, in most cases, very communicative. Some of them even referred to their annual reports and papers.

But I assume, and also Brigitte Rieger in her investigation in Lebanon confirms, that some interviewees felt embarrassed and sought to keep the picture of their financial status blurred for the reason that they feared their competitors.²⁰ Furthermore, language played an important role and eased the course of the

¹⁹ Bogner, Alexander, Menz, Wolfgang (2002), op. cit. p.8-9.

Cp. Selltiz, Claire; Jahoda, Marie; Deutsch, Morton; Cook, Stuart W.; Maus, Heinz; Fürstenberg, Friedrich (1972) (Eds.): *Untersuchungsmethoden der Sozialforschung I & II – Soziologische Texte*, (Neuwied)

Cp. Atteslander, Peter (2003): *Methoden der empirischen Sozialforschung*, (Berlin)

²⁰ Rieger Brigitte (2003); *Rentiers, Patrone und Gemeinschaft: soziale Sicherung im Libanon*, (Frankfurt) p.8.

It has to be added that the interview partners Brigitte Rieger talked to have also tried to guide the conversation, since most of them felt to be directed through the interview. The reason for this sort of behaviour is based on the aims the partners sought such as emphasizing specific problems, presenting certain positive aspects of their institution or even self-portrayal. She also explains that Hizbullah provided information on its social activities with the objective of promoting itself as a respectable, humanitarian dedicated and strong force. In: Rieger, Brigitte (2003), op., cit., p.8.

interview; with language I mean that I gave the interviewees the option to speak in Arabic rather than English (with exception of those who do not speak Arabic, and in these cases the interviews were conducted in English).

Here the aspect Behrens and Hennig refer to has an effect

“(...). The interviewer has to be familiar with the new field, language and references of the area should be available in order to avoid a sort of demotion from expert to quasi-expert (on the part of the interviewee). Out of this cognition the interviewer has to recognize possible changes that might occur in terms of detailed information, answers and frequency.”²¹

Usually, the interviews follow a study of relevant literature in the course of the research. Thus, the interviewer familiarizes himself or herself with the field and the person (institution) he or she is going to interview and that serves as a guideline. The interviewer not only needs a solid foundation in terms of knowledge, but also the interview procedure is a sort of task the interviewer has to approach with empathy in order to see how far he or she can go during the interview. With empathy I refer to the tactfulness and sensitiveness the interviewer needs in order to achieve the optimum of information without to transgress the border.²²

However, the interviewer still has to remember to ask all the questions listed on the interview questionnaire in order to receive the relevant information needed. Certainly there might exist one or another expert who is not willing to reveal any

²¹ Behrens, Maria, Hennig, Eike (2006), op. cit. p.8. (translated by Layla Bahmad)

²² The difficulty is rather that the methodical requirements cannot always be kept up in the course of the interview. It happens that the interviewee anticipates answers before the interviewer even had a chance to put the question he or she was going to ask later on. In that sense the interviewer is forced to adapt him or herself to the situation. But it does not mean that he or she has to let the interviewee stipulate the direction of the entire conversation. Nevertheless, the interviewer should let the interviewee talk without losing his or her striking point. In my view, at the beginning of each interview there is a strict pattern, which looks like a question-and-answer game, but this eases after the initial formal question has been asked. Moreover, it is the aim to have the interviewee talk in order to receive the information needed. In addition, I have to say that the rigid structure as just mentioned (question-and-answer game) does not necessarily contribute to the desired results. Hence, it is more interesting and even more efficient to have a sort of narrative form of interview, which allows the interviewer to get as much information as possible.

information regarding the institution that he or she is working in. From my point of view a lot also depends on the sympathy between both parties, irrespective of the clear lines the expert has to follow in terms of secrecy, and I encountered such a case. There have been NGOs who rejected any kind of inquiry about their organisation and their activities in the form of an interview. Here, I have to emphasize that these did not constitute part of my interview partners. I also encountered the difficulties with religious NGOs that denied the supply of information and thought that I was working for a foreign donor who was going to support them financially. The selection of NGOs was based on the existing different types of NGOs that work in Palestine. By means of the guided interview structure it was possible to develop and evaluate the answers given as explained by Behrens and Hennig.²³

A clear classification in categories (typologies) made it possible to compare the similarities and differences of the NGOs.²⁴ I have chosen the induction method, which allows the argumentation of particular results and their generalization (whereas the deduction method is based on coherent and sequential conclusions of one form). The induction system is based on the limited number of empirical data, in my case the guided interviews and therefore the deduction principle does not apply because of the plurality in terms of NGOs.²⁵

The variety of NGOs being interviewed and the data collected are reflected in the inference scheme, which allows the conclusion of a statement that is being deduced from evidence. King, Keohane and Verba differ on the idea of

“Descriptive inference, which is the use of observations from the world to learn about other unobserved facts, or that something may involve casual

²³ Behrens, Maria, Hennig, Eike (2006), op. cit. p.9. (translated by Layla Bahmad)

²⁴ The breakdown into categories made it possible to look for similarities the NGOs share and the differences, which let them, vary such as the size, the type (national or international), budget and other criteria.

²⁵ Esser, Hill, Schnell (1999), op. cit p.58.

*inference, (which is the) learning (process) about casual effects from the data observed.*²⁶

Therefore it is important to pay attention to the process of the interview, Behrens and Hennig emphasize

*“The open form of interviews does not apply to the pre-structured pattern and it allows next to the deduction principle (the interview guideline) the induction principle, which arises out of the interaction in reference of the interviewees particularities.”*²⁷

And hence

*“The plurality or the limit has consequent impacts on the generalizability and thus an impact on the related inference.”*²⁸

Hence, this study cannot be representative for all NGOs for the reason that a small number has been chosen, analysed and interviewed during the field research. Therefore this investigation represents a small faction out of the large number of NGOs working on the very crowded ground that is Palestine.²⁹ This is a pilot study giving insights into a complicated field and permitting hypotheses on NGOs.

²⁶ King, Gary Keohane, Robert Verba, Sidney (1994): *Designing Social Inquiry*, (Princeton) page 3-9

²⁷ Behrens, Maria, Hennig, Eike (2006), op. cit. p.8. (translated by Layla Bahmad)

²⁸ Behrens, Maria, Hennig, Eike (2006), op. cit. p.6. (translated by Layla Bahmad)

²⁹ Sixteen NGOs (local and international ones) were interviewed out of 1500.

1.4 Approach

“The Orient signifies a system of representations framed by political forces that brought the Orient into Western learning, Western consciousness, and Western empire. The Orient exists for the West, and is constructed by and in relation to the West. It is a mirror image of what is inferior and alien (“Other”) to the West.”³⁰

“The Orient of the Orientalist is an artificial product, a projection screen, which the West uses in order to objectify its own fears.”³¹

In relation to the first given citation above, Birgit Rommelspacher takes up the notion of the “Other” and analyses from where it was derived. In her view the “Other” or even

“the alien in the classical sense is the one, who is from afar, and who is unknown and unfamiliar (for us Layla Bahmad). But he or she has to be close enough in order to be an alien for the reason that people of whom we do not know anything are in our perception not strangers or aliens. The alien is the one, who is close enough so that we discern him or her as (a sort of) counterpart.”³²

Her idea is reasonable in that anything not familiar to us is viewed distantly and induces a kind of incertitude. Hence prejudices emerge and positive aspects such as competence, stability and other characteristics Rommelspacher mentions are linked to oneself and all other negative notions such as violence, chaos and others are associated with the “Other”.

³⁰ Sered, Danielle (1996): Orientalism on <http://www.english.emory.edu/Bahri/Orientalism.html>, (April 25, 2006)

³¹ Sardar, Ziauddin (2002): Der fremde Orient – Geschichte eines Vorurteils, (Berlin) p.31. (translated by Layla Bahmad).

³² Rommelspacher, Birgit (2002): Anerkennung und Ausgrenzung – Deutschland als multikulturelle Gesellschaft, (Frankfurt am Main) p.9. (translated by Layla Bahmad)

She explains that this sort of image serves in order to ensure ourselves against all the negative things we fear. Further this image that we visualised ourselves of the “Other” reflects these just mentioned fears.³³ The “Other” does not lie long way off from us; it is rather our mirror image. But the more decisive thought is that this image of

“the Other is neither exclusively the product of our projections nor is it the effigy of the other (us), but what appears in this image is the relationship to each other and its history.”³⁴

Birgit Rommelspacher gets to the point by saying that this general image can vary and that there is not the typical type of alien; she mentions the contemporary example of the Muslim of which many people think or other images that are associated to the “Other” in terms of religion or ethnicity. The discussion on the “Other” as we will still see throughout this chapter has a deep impact on the pictures drawn today by the West. This is reflected in a large number of issues we deal with on a daily basis. But now we turn our attention back to the NGOs and how they are pictured. In particular, and in this case the Arab NGOs are regarded differently.

The approaches and theoretical frameworks used by many scholars in order to investigate the NGO phenomenon have varied in context and level. One of the approaches has been the following, which represents two poles. Sheila Carapico points out that on one hand there is the Developmentalist view of NGOs, which considers them as agents of liberation. On the other hand there is the Orientalist stereotype of Arab society as either passive or violent, but incapable of civic behaviour.³⁵ Hence, I consider it as essential that we delve deeper into the aspect of Orientalism that is the credibility with which we regard

³³ Rommelspacher, Birgit (2002), op. cit. p.10.

³⁴ Rommelspacher, Birgit (2002), op. cit. p.10.

³⁵ Carapico, Sheila (2000): NGOs, INGOs, GO-NGOs and DO-NGOs – Making Sense of Non-governmental Organisations. In: MERIP, No. 214, Vol. 30, No.1, p.12-16

Arab NGOs and their credibility in the view of their Western counterparts and donors.

The debate on the so-called Orient and Orientalism has dilated itself. What used to be the oriental picture of the “Other” or the “Exotic”, being reflected in a large number of issues such as the sciences, most notably in literature³⁶ and arts, has been projected onto a picture drawn by the West, which represents the Arab and Muslim societies as underdeveloped and backwards. There is broad amplitude of prejudices towards the Near/Middle East, but less solid information on the region, Sabah Alnasseri emphasizes this in his study and centralizes it in one sentence

“The Orient is the female who is subordinated to the dominant male Occident.”³⁷

Alnasseri argues on the basis that there is an intensified interference and influence on the near and middle east region including its societies by the West. He speaks of a new sort of imperialism, which does not have a military character, though the latter has never been absent. Certainly, he also emphasizes the situation in the occupied territories and gives priority to it in terms conflict resolution. He explains the Western raid on the Arab societies headed by the U.S. not as a reaction to the threat they feel or the desire to introduce democracy into the region. Instead it is rather based on the U.S.’ self-interest and existing internal discrepancies, whereas he calls the latter as a flaw of the U.S.³⁸ The ulterior motive of such behaviour is the idea that democracy is considered as the right track. Its introduction into the region happened at the end of the 1990s, when the former communist countries experienced the

³⁶ Sardar, Ziauddin (2002), op. cit. p.32.

³⁷ Alnasseri, Sabah (2004): Politik jenseits der Kreuzzüge – Zur aktuellen politischen Situation im Nahen und Mittleren Osten, (Münster) p. 189-190.

³⁸ Flores, Alexander (2005): Jenseits der Kreuzzüge – Interne Widersprüche und das eigene Interesse prägen das Engagement des Westens im Nahen Osten – konstatiert Sabah Alnasseri. In: Frankfurter Rundschau (March 2, 2005) on http://www.fr-aktuell.de/in_und_ausland/kultur_und_medien/literatur/?em_cnt=640040& (March 5, 2005)

breakdown of communism. It did not take long until the peoples of these countries felt the first wave of democracy. The U.S. considered it to be their responsibility and an important goal on their foreign policy agenda.

In current debates, and even earlier, the Middle East viewed as tenacious towards democracy. Yahya Sadowski criticized the Political Scientist Samuel P. Huntington, who meets encouragement in the writings of the Orientalist Bernard Lewis. Hence Huntington considers democracy in the Middle East as almost digressive.

Sadowski states that the Orientalists and the Islamic scientists have discovered the civil society component and tried to integrate this new variable into their theories regarding democracy in the Middle East region.³⁹ He even criticizes the view that Political Scientists such as Crone, Pipes and Gellner hold, in a way that they still regard Islam as a stiff entity that will never change or even adapt itself to history. And a more important fact he brings up is the ignorance the Orientalists (both traditional and modern ones) have in general towards imperialism, which has determined history in many important ways, - and in particular at times of colonialism, as he exemplifies:

“For Orientalists of all varieties, there is no point in dwelling on the fact that half the populations of Libya and Algeria died during the course of their colonial occupation. (...) Essentialism and the dismissal of Western colonialism and imperialism are commonly paired together, since each makes the other more plausible.”⁴⁰

Referring back to the contemporary and (in general) Western point of view of Orientalism, the concept of Orientalism is associated with something peregrine,

³⁹ Sadowski, Yahya (1993): The New Orientalism and the Democracy Debate. In: MERIP, No. 183 Political Islam, p.14.

⁴⁰ Sadowski, Yahya (1993), op. cit. p.20.

Imperialism is one of the most important mechanisms of historical change that Orientalists must discount. (Sadowski, Yahya (1993), op. cit. p.40).

and the notion usually given to it has a sort of opposing and negative connotation character.

The incidence of September 11, and the wars which followed in Afghanistan and Iraq under U.S. leadership, and the continuous conflict between the Palestinians and the Israelis have hardened the front between the West and the Arab Islamic world. Furthermore, the negative characteristics associated with Orient-alism and Islam has shaped the full picture of an enemy in the eyes of the West. According to this, the concept of Orientalism has been provided with another identity. Scholars – traditional and Neo-Orientalists – believed that through a well-functioning civil society the problem would be solved, which means that civil society would represent a counterbalance to the authoritarian government and balance the relationship between both, and this would make it easier to allow the introduction of democracy, such as ones we see in countries like Morocco⁴¹ or Jordan in the form of democratic elections. As part of the “three deficits,” as they are called in the first Arab Human Development Report (2002) emphasis was put on democracy as a component in order to reach these three goals.⁴²

⁴¹ “In Morocco, the legislative elections held were judged to be honest. There was a notable quota reserved for women on national lists, which contributed to a large number of women winning seats. The government changed afterwards.” In: Arab Human Development Report (2003) p.30.

Cp. Sweet, Catherine (2001): Democratization without Democracy: Political openings and closures in Modern Morocco. In: MERIP, No.218 Vol.3 No.1, p.22-25.

Cp. Maghraoui, Abdeslam (2001): Political Authority in Crisis: Mohammed VI’s Morocco. In: MERIP, No.218 Vol.3 No.1, p.12-17.

⁴² In an international study (World Values Survey) presented in the Arab Human Development Report 2003, the crucial question was raised: “How Do Arabs feel about the Three Deficits?” The three deficits that were outlined in the first Arab Human Development (2002) are the following: freedom, womens empowerment and knowledge. This investigation was conducted on an international basis in various countries among them Morocco, Jordan, Algeria and Egypt, who represent half of the Arab population. It arrived at the conclusion that the Arab countries who were the first on the list, considered democracy as the best form of government and according to this, they also rejected authoritarian rule (Arab Human Development Report (2003), op. cit. p.36.)

“Political instability and fierce struggles for access to political positions in the absence for an established rule for the peaceful rotation of power - in short, democracy impede the growth of knowledge in the Arab soil.”⁴³

But all this is related to

“Arab history that in effect is narrated as though it had been solely one of alienation and corruption at a time when the Arab world had, in fact, witnessed valuable scientific, intellectual and cultural production, had experienced democracy and had undergone momentous socio-political shifts.”⁴⁴

In comparison to Morocco or Jordan, countries that initiated first steps towards democratic elections, the Palestinian case is the foremost model in that the elections conducted there were real and democratic.

Mustafa Al-Barghouti stated:

“While the Palestinian People are struggling to build a national home, citizenship, a real democracy, they have succeeded – in the midst of a ferocious struggle against occupation, and despite huge human sacrifices – in building pioneering human development models, which are copied in many countries.”⁴⁵

In spite of all the advances that have been undertaken on the part of the Palestinians in terms of democratic elections that were held recently, the West repudiates the results because they did not produce the candidate that the West wanted. Furthermore, the West criticizes the lack of freedom and good governance in the Arab countries as exemplified with Morocco or Jordan. The latter criticism is rooted in Omar bin al-Khattab's thought:

“Freedom and good governance: an historical legacy. Since when have you compelled people to enslavement, when their mothers birthed them free?”⁴⁶

⁴³ Arab Human Development Report (2003)

⁴⁴ Arab Human Development Report (2003)

⁴⁵ Arab Human Development Report (2003)

⁴⁶ Bin al-Khattab, Omar, in: Arab Human Development Report 2004 (Executive Summary) p.23

This reflects that the West tries to impose its concept of democracy, freedom, gender equality; components that are summarized under the key word good governance.⁴⁷ This manifests itself in the predetermined agendas that are presented by the donors. Referring back to Al-Barghouti, Palestine represents a particularity in contrast to its Arab fellows. It is not just the sense for the common struggle, which has determined this sort of unit, but also the strong Palestinian civil society, which has contributed considerably. Nevertheless, diverse vigour exists on the Palestinian terrain, which determines the equilibrium between the Palestinian Authority (PA) and civil society. In search of the right rapport between both, there was no consensus on the question of whether the state or civil society should be weaker or stronger. The political scientist Samuel P. Huntington is convinced that democracy and human rights complement one another and that the latter can only exist for those who understand human rights.⁴⁸ To contradict Huntington, Sadowski retorts

“The fact that democracy has not flourished in the Middle East does not mean its development is impossible.”⁴⁹

⁴⁷ The release of the Arab Human Development Report 2003 was a thought-provoking impulse for the Arab countries. I think it was the calling, and at the same time the demand on the part of the West that changes have to occur in order to reach political stability. Certainly, Arab governments and civil society actors saw them confronted with this challenge and have been proactive. This was result of the official statement given at the summit of the Arab League in May 2004, whose states declared to modernisation processes in the political, economic, social and educational field. The appeal for changes and reform initiatives not only came from inside but also from outside the region. The challenge of democracy is a sort of vicious circle for the reason that the West on one hand calls for changes but on the other hand keeps the authoritarian rulers alive and nothing really happens.

⁴⁸ Huntington, Samuel P. (1996): Kampf der Kulturen – Die Neugestaltung der Weltpolitik im 21. Jahrhundert, (München) p.307-316.

Cp. Jürgensen, Carsten (1994): Demokratie und Menschenrechte in der arabischen Welt – Positionen arabischer Menschenrechtsaktivisten, (Hamburg)

Jürgensen comes to the conclusion that the Arab debate on Human rights and Democracy reflects different ideological views on society. These differences discussed openly at the legendary Human Rights conference in November/December 1983 in Limasol, where the Arab Organisation for Human Rights (AOHR) was founded. In: Jürgensen, Carsten (1994), op. cit. p.193.

⁴⁹ Sadowski, Yahya (1993), op. cit. p.20.

It is disregarded that the perception of democracy itself and its norms and values differ. The Western definition is considered as the right one and hence as self-evident, which has to be practised everywhere in the same sense. And Sadowski states, because democracy has not been established in the Arab countries, it is unable to become widely accepted. It is rather the expectation of the West that democracy manifests itself as soon as possible and in particular in the same mode that is seen in the West. Is this picture shaped by the influence of the Orientalist image? It might well be that Orientalist conceptions are behind some of the concepts and strategic goals pursued by certain NGOs.

Thus, there are relevant questions that have to be asked, which will provide a basis for our understanding: What is Orientalism? What lies behind this term, which has found entrance into the current? This is a term that has been used over and over, and which is associated with something unknown and strange, but it does not, however, correspond to it since the term is liaised to the Arab world and Islam. The latter thought is also reflected in Edward Said's publication, where he sheds light on the Western perception in terms of history, politics and culture of the Orient. He emphasizes that the Near East and Middle East have been overshadowed by prejudices, which has prevented the West from the real comprehension of the so-called Orient.

Edward Said argues

*"I emphasize in it (his book) accordingly that neither the term Orient nor the concept of the West has any ontological stability; each side is made up of human effort, partly affirmation, partly identification of the other. That these supreme fictions lend themselves easily to manipulation and the organisation of collective passion has never been more evident than in our time, when the mobilizations of fear, hatred, disgust, and resurgent self-pride and arrogance – much having to do with Islam and Arabs on the one side, "we" Westerners on the other – are very large-scale enterprises."*⁵⁰

⁵⁰ Said, Edward (1979): Orientalism, (New York) p.xvii.

Cp. Ashcroft, Bill; Ahluwalia, Pal (1999): Edward Said – The paradox of identity. (London)

He was one of the major debaters regarding the term “Orientalism”, but his point of view is afflicted with his origin, whereas he also generalizes the image of Orientalism that tends to be imperialistic. Edward Said’s book⁵¹ induced great interest on the one hand and on the other, he provoked criticism that continues. In this sense he still is in the centre of a debate which is linked to the context of dominance, oppression and resistance and to the legitimacy of foreign intervention. He aimed to adjust an entry for the Western thread towards the Orient and with it the notion of Orientalism. In the following section we will take a closer look at the origins of Orientalism which have shaped and characterized this term and coherent with it the connotation of Orient as *“geographical sector.”*

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In view of Edward Said

*“the Orient is an idea (as the West itself) that has a history and a tradition of thought, imagery, and vocabulary that have given it reality and presence in and for the West.”*⁵³

Ashcroft and Ahluwalia wrote the first comprehensive introduction to Edward Said's literary, political and cultural thinking. Drawing upon Said's journalism as well as his more formal works, Ashcroft and Ahluwalia reveal Said's contemporary significance. While acknowledging the ground breaking significance of Said's Orientalism their publication demonstrates that the key to his work lies in its concept of worldliness and in his demonstration of the paradoxical nature of identity formation in the post-colonial world.

⁵¹ Edward Said analysed and made an excellent study of the way in which the West has observed the Arabs and their societies. Said makes it clear that he is not breaking new ground. He limits Orientalism to how English, French, and American scholars have approached the Arab societies of North Africa and the Middle East. Although at times he refers to other periods, ranging as far back as the Greeks, the time period he covers is more limited than the scholarly field really extends. Said stays within the confines of the late eighteenth century to the present, whereas European scholarship on the Orient dates back to the High Middle Ages. He makes three major claims. Firstly, that Orientalism, although purporting to be an objective, disinterested, and rather esoteric field, in fact functioned to serve political ends. Secondly, he claims that Orientalism helped define a European (mainly English and French) self-image. Lastly, Said argues that Orientalism has produced a false description of Arabs and Islamic culture.

⁵² Said, Edward (1979), op. cit. p.5

⁵³ Said, Edward (1979), op. cit. p.5

Robert Irvin against that attempted to confute Said's arguments. Said declared the Western view of the Arab region and its societies in which Europe has had a superior position, which justified imperial domination and colonisation over these peoples.⁵⁴

Saunders remarks Irwin's inaccuracies and also that

*"Irwin's polemical vigour sometimes allows him to fall into the same faults he finds in Said."*⁵⁵

In that way Saunders emphasizes that

*"what is at issue is not a clash of civilisations but a paradigm shift."*⁵⁶

Edward Said meant to present the typical western manner and skewed sample it has with regard to the so-called Orient. He did not include the German Orientalists, nonetheless, he was convinced that they smoothed the way of imperialism and colonialism as well.⁵⁷ The German scholars did not write pointedly in relation to Edward Said and his "Orientalism".

⁵⁴ Irwin, Robert (2007): *The Lust of Knowing: The Orientalists* (London).

⁵⁵ Saunders, Bill (2006): *The Lust of Knowing: The Orientalists and their enemies – A little bit of the other* on <http://enjoyment.independent.co.uk/books/reviews/article347902.ece> (May 4, 2007)

⁵⁶ Saunders, Bill (2006): *The Lust of Knowing: The Orientalists and their enemies – A little bit of the other* on <http://enjoyment.independent.co.uk/books/reviews/article347902.ece> (May 4, 2007)

⁵⁷ Schwanitz, Wolfgang (2006): *Sammelrez: M. Al-Daami: Al-Istishraq (Orientalism)* Deutsches Orient-Institut Hamburg on <http://geschichte-transnational.clio-online.net/rezensionen/id=8065&count=303&recno=12&type=rezbuecher&sort=jahr&order=down&segment=16> (May 4, 2007)

Cp. Lockman, Zachary (2004): *Contending Visions of the Middle East: The History and Politics of Orientalism* (Cambridge).

Zachary Lockman's book offers a broad survey of the development of Western knowledge about Islam and the Middle East. Beginning with ancient Greek and Roman conceptions of the world, Lockman goes on to discuss European ideas about Islam from its emergence in the seventh century, with particular attention to the age of European imperialism, the era of deepening American involvement in this region, and the aftermath of the 9/11 terrorist attacks. Along the way, he explores how scholars and others in the West have studied and depicted Islam and the Middle East, focusing on the politics and controversies that have shaped Middle East studies in the United States over the past half century, including the debates over Said's influential critique, *Orientalism*.

They rather put focus on as Ludmila Hanisch or Sabine Mangold did on the history of German Orientalism in the 19th century and addressed in their studies questions regarding German Orientalism in the first half of the 20th century.⁵⁸

Irwin solely concentrated on Arabic studies and the Middle East. Schwanitz argues that it seems as if Irwin overestimated the role of German Orientalists. He explains that they certainly had the lead between 1850 and 1914 in Europe, but there were British specifics at earlier stages of history.⁵⁹ The discourses regarding Orientalism vary.

In the following section it is going to be discussed what the term “Orientalism” embraces and where the concept finds a use.

⁵⁸ Hanisch, Ludmila (2003): Die Nachfolger der Exegeten. Deutschsprachige Erforschung des Vorderen Orients in der ersten Hälfte des 20. Jahrhunderts (Wiesbaden).

Cp. Mangold, Sabine (2004): Eine „weltbürgerliche Wissenschaft“ – Die deutsche Orientalistik im 19. Jahrhundert (Stuttgart).

⁵⁹ Schwanitz, Wolfgang (2006): Sammelrez: M. Al-Daami: Al-Istishraq (Orientalism) Deutsches Orient-Institut Hamburg on <http://geschichte-transnational.clio-online.net/rezensionen/id=8065&count=303&recno=12&type=rezbuecher&sort=jahr&order=down&segment=16> (May 4, 2007)

1.4.1 What is Orientalism? How is the concept defined?

However it is of particular importance to have a look at the historical roots of Orientalism and where its origins lie in order to understand the present image of Orientalism, which shapes the Western perception and thinking, is one of the prevalent definitions of Orientalism according to Sauer:

“The enlightened West dominates the mysterious Orient wherewith the European culture has been able to take over the Orient ideologically, politically, militarily and scientifically. In doing so the Orient has been reproduced by the West. The Orient is decadent and stagnating, whereas the West is dynamic and consolidated morally. Thus, it is understood that the Western way of thinking is an unbroken tradition of an engrained animosity with regard to Islam.”⁶⁰

First of all, this definition does not explain what Orientalism is. It just separates the Occident and the Orient into positive and negative categories. Further, the term Orient does not imply which countries it includes and it does not provide any explanation with regard to the derivation. In addition, the Orient can also comprise geographically the North African countries as well as those in the Far East such as China.⁶¹ Wittfogel, a traditional Orientalist, also included all the countries in his Orient image, which were beyond the lines of the conquerors in his definition of the Orient, not only China, but also India, the Middle East and the Empires of the Maya, the Aztec and the Inca. He offers all his scholarliness in order to construct a warning example for the West.⁶²

⁶⁰ Sauer, Birgit (2006): Politische Theorien / Begriffsliste on http://www.powi.at/documents/sauer/begriffe_c1_ws04.doc (April 23, 2006) (translated by Layla Bahmad)

⁶¹ Wittfogel, Karl A. (1981): *Oriental Despotism – A comparative study of total power*, (New York)

⁶² Sardar, Ziauddin (2002), op. cit. p.35.

Therefore, it is not clear if the term specifically indicates the Arab countries or better Muslim countries (societies). With regard to the above given definition, the latter part of it emphasizes that the so-called Orient points at Islam (the Islamic countries) as enemy. This determination of Orientalism is too narrow-minded and confusing. Roger Scruton defines Oriental Despotism as follows:

“Oriental despotism has been already used by travellers in the 17th century (...). Traditional Chinese bureaucracy, the Mogul Empire, certain phases of the Tsarist Empire, and even (although the intention here is no doubt ironical) the modern USSR, have been described as oriental despotisms.

The principal characteristics are: concentration of power in the hands of a despot and his entourage; control of all social and political activity from above; absence of a rule of law, and immediate oppressive reaction to any challenge to the central power; emphasis on military power, rapid mobilization of the whole populace in order to override and eliminate opposition, usually without regard to moral niceties.

It is not clear whether oriental despotism and Asiatic despotism are synonymous; it is possible that the second is described in a mode to production, the first in relation to habits of violence, and that the two do not necessarily coincide. Various theories have been advanced to explain oriental despotism, including the now largely discredited hypothesis (Wittfogel) that it is a system made necessary by centralized schemes of irritation.”⁶³

According to Scruton this reflects that Oriental despotism as it is defined above seemed to have a broad use in various societies throughout history. It is described as a systematic behaviour that avoids any form of intervention where domination prevails. Nevertheless he associates the notion of oriental despotism with violence and the concentration of power.

⁶³ Scruton, Roger (1982): A dictionary of Political Thought, (London) p.337.

Out of this context the Arab-Islamic societies are afflicted with this image as being violent, suppressive and dominated by authoritarian regimes that have control over their societies.

Abdul Rahman Al-Kawakibi (1854-1902) considers the character of Despotism in a different manner

*“We have become accustomed to regarding abject submission as polite deference, obsequiousness as courtesy, sycophancy as oratory; bombast as substance; the acceptance of humiliation as modesty; the acceptance of injustice as obedience and the pursuit of human entitlements as arrogance. Our inverted system portrays the pursuit of the simplest knowledge as presumption; aspirations for the future as impossible dreams; courage as overreaching audacity; inspiration as folly; chivalry as aggression; free speech as insolence and free thinking as heresy; and patriotism as madness.”*⁶⁴

Next to his fellows’ Jamal ad-Din al-Afghani and Mohammad Abdou, Abdul Rahman Al-Kawakibi aimed for social reform and enlightenment in the Islamic Arab world. Al-Kawakibi played a significant role in the Arab liberation movement. In his thoughts, he tried to impart a sort of common sense in the Arab Islamic societies in order to solve the existing problems, which he points out in his publication “The Character of Despotism and the Downfall of Slavery”, Dar un-Nafa-es, Beirut 1984 and 1993. In his notion of oriental despotism any feature of life is presented in a negative sense and influenced by the Orientalist view, which considers these societies as incapable of civic behaviour and attitudes. This demonstrates that the own way of life (herewith I refer to that of the West) is considered as the right one.

⁶⁴ Al-Kawakibi, Abdul Rahman, in: Arab Human Development Report 2003, p.10.

Another definition of Orientalism offered by Danielle Sered who views the concept differently:

*“Orientalism is “a manner of regularized (or orientalized) writing, vision, and study, dominated by imperatives, perspectives, and ideological biases ostensibly suited to the Orient.” It is the image of the Orient expressed as an entire system of thought and scholarship.”*⁶⁵

According to the second definition, there is a completely different approach towards the denotation of the term itself. The latter views the concept from a more academic and scientific angle. From a Western point of view, Orientalism is represented as an attitude towards the so-called Orient or “Arab world,” which is seen as incapable and weak and therefore needs to be controlled and re-shaped in a Western manner.

Edward Said articulates this thought and states that

*“The principal dogmas of Orientalism exist in their purest form today in the studies of Arabs and Islam. Let us recapitulate them here: one is the absolute and systematic difference between the West, which is rational developed, humane, superior, and the Orient, which is aberrant, underdeveloped, and inferior.”*⁶⁶

The latter “image” described by Edward Said is not correct since it has partly changed. It is undeniable that there still exist prejudices and features which characterize both – the Orient as well as the Occident. He criticized the ignorant behaviour of the West (emphasizing that Europe is not better than the U.S.), who looks condescendingly at the Arab and Muslim societies for their backwardness, their lacking sense of democracy and disrespect for women’s rights. The problem is not the existence of democracy and the people’s longing

⁶⁵ Sered, Danielle (1996): Orientalism on <http://www.english.emory.edu/Bahri/Orientalism.html>, (April 25, 2006)

⁶⁶ Said, Edward (1979), op. cit. p.300.

for it, but it lies at another point and thus the question we must ask is: Who precludes such a system?

These are the authoritarian governments who just touched democracy by allowing one or another NGO to become active, with democratic elections etc. Said further pointed out that the West cannot change history, much less Arab and Muslim societies in a way that the West has been trying to impose its way of living upon them. The West is trying to reshuffle the map in the Middle East as if

“ these grown societies and hundreds of peoples can be thrilled like peanuts in a box (...) which already happened in the past at the end of the 18th century when Napoleon invaded Egypt and where a great variety of people, languages and cultures have been swept away.”⁶⁷

With regard to the last ten years, he also criticized the wars that have been conducted after September 11th, in Afghanistan and Iraq under U.S. and British leadership, which are considered as illegitimate according to International law, blaming among them Orientalists who also contributed and/or served and were a sort of catalyst for these wars. Further, after the debate about the Orient was placed in the spotlight and has been reheated, a plethora of books about the evil Middle East and its dangers have been published, reflecting a negative picture of Islam as barbarian and the Arab countries as defenders of terror. Said adds that

“without the systematic produced feeling that the peoples in the Near East are not like us and that they do not agree to our values – is the quintessence of the Orientalism dogma because then there would not have been a war.”⁶⁸

⁶⁷ Said, Edward (2003): Kultur der Einföhlung. In: Le Monde Diplomatique (September 12, 2003) on <http://www.monde-diplomatique.de/pm/2003/09/12/a0005.text.name,askO7d0IR.n,1> (April 28, 2006) (translated by Layla Bahmad).

⁶⁸ Said, Edward (2003): Kultur der Einföhlung. In: Le Monde Diplomatique (September 12, 2003) on <http://www.monde-diplomatique.de/pm/2003/09/12/a0005.text.name,askO7d0IR.n,1> (April 28, 2006) (translated by Layla Bahmad).

With regard to the above-given quote of Said, he attempts to shape a rigid view the West has on the Near Eastern societies. Beyond doubt this view held by the West on the concerned peoples still exists and it surely has coined the Orientalism dogma in a certain way.

Sihem Bensedrine and Omar Mestiri address the issue from a different angle by putting focus on how the European countries, – through their foreign policy courses in line with that of the EU, are trying to protect and defend themselves against the increasing fundamentalism coming from the (North African) Arab countries. In a way this reflects the strategy that was used by Europe after the September 11th attacks, which let the West change its course in order to stabilize its safety policy and secure its borders at any price. This *modus operandi* may be sustained for a certain period of time, but it also fuels extremism as the authors emphasize.⁶⁹

⁶⁹ Bensedrine, Sihem, Mestiri, Omar (2005): *Despoten vor Europas Haustür – Warum der Extremismus den Sicherheitswahn schürt*, (München)

Cp. Bensedrine, Sihem, Mestiri, Omar (2004): *L'Europe et ses Despotes – Quand le soutien au ,modèle tunisien dans le monde arabe fait le jeu du terrorisme islamiste*, (Paris)

Cp. Asseburg, Muriel (2005): *Demokratieförderung in der arabischen Welt – hat der partnerschaftliche Ansatz der Europäer versagt?* In: *Orient* 46/2, p. 272-290.

The Greater Middle East Initiative was not supposed to be labelled US initiative since the Europeans had had a say as well. The goal was to carry out the project in cooperation (ownership) with the participating and concerned Arab states in order to achieve greater success. The leading thought was to avoid the one-size fits all- approach and rather works with an adjusted concept. The idea was met with criticism on the part of the Arab world, which felt dominated by the American initiative and regarded it as insolent with a hidden agenda to create a new hegemonic order. It was conceived as a neo-imperialistic model combined with the implementation of regime change under constraint. The Arab world doubted the enthusiasm with which the idea was presented, whereas strategic goals were the ultimate goals. Even civil society actors have hoped that through this mean a change could have caused a change in terms of reform. Certainly, the Arab states assured that they have already tended to bring about changes within their societies. The West recognized that this endeavour has been viewed critically by the Arabs. But they have still tried to impose their ideas in form of civil society projects (good governance, democracy, etc.) via international and local NGOs in order their objectives. (Asseburg, Muriel (2005), op. cit. p.274-276, translated by Layla Bahmad).

This seems to be one problem, which the West (Europe and the US) faces. A further challenge the West encounters is that of terrorism in relation to political Islam. I do not intend to conduct an in-depth debate on any of the terms. The Arab governments realize that there is hidden agenda which the West tries to achieve with any means.

Werner Ruf comes to the point that the Islamic elites were deceived in their faith that the Europeans would bring changes (at the beginning of the 19th century).

But instead

“the principles – liberté, égalité, fraternité of self-determination and nation-building”

shaped up as colonialism and dominated the Islamic countries. Hence, Werner Ruf concludes

“These are the reasons why the Muslims shifted back to their traditional roots. The current dilemma is that any step taken towards democratisation again could let the fundamentalists take over and that is why the Western politics (who seeks stability) is keen to keep good relations with the dictatorial regimes.”⁷⁰

Georges Corm argues that through the September 11th, attacks the West feels confirmed in its alleged millennial antagonism, which has existed between the Orient and the Occident.

Muriel Asseburg emphasizes that “the Western undertaking might target at reform in the region in some cases, but principally are focused on geo-strategic interests. In particular the attitude towards countries such as Egypt, Libya, Jordan, Saudi-Arabia, Syria and Pakistan is striking, because not the protection of human rights, good governance and equal political participation obtain the top priority. But rather these are the strategic interests, which determine the formation of the relationship with the just mentioned states. The Arab-Israeli conflict, the stabilization of Iraq, the maintenance of resources, the opening of new markets or even the cooperation and combat against terrorism” (count to the agenda, L.B.), (Asseburg, Muriel (2005), op. cit. p.290).

⁷⁰ Ruf, Werner (1998): Demokratie in der arabischen Welt – Ein Widerspruch in sich selbst? Demokratie in Nordafrika und Nahost? In: E+Z Entwicklung und Zusammenarbeit 39/9, p.228-231.

He further explains that

“The West understands nothing so well, as to canonize himself. It (i.e. the West) is the reason, and it is a God, even if he has dropped from him. He may and must give all world lessons. He is enchanted, but it celebrates the Parousia of God.”⁷¹

But before delving deeper these thoughts, which have showed us the Western perception and interpretation of this image, we will turn our attention to the origins of Orientalism, which I consider as indispensable in order to understand the history of the existing prejudice.

This will provide an insight into the existing notion of Orientalism, which again has triggered heated debates.

⁷¹ George Corm demonstrates in his study based on the clichés that have existed since the 19th century that the alleged antagonism between the West and the Orient are concerned about an imaginary polarity between both. By means of the mystic, archaic and irrational picture of the Orient he reveals where the prejudices against the Orient derive from – pointing to the image of the retarded Orient standing across from the modern and rational West. (Corm, Georges (2004): *Missverständnis Orient – Die islamische Kultur und Europa*, (Zürich) (translated by Layla Bahmad).

1.4.2 Historical roots of Orientalism

Ziauddin Sardar and Reinhard Schulze in their studies trace back the way of Orientalism and both insinuate that the beginnings of the term are different from those assumed. Ziauddin Sardar points out that

“The real background history of Orientalism, which has to be told, is one of Western thinking; anyway it is not the history of the West approaching the East in search of greater understanding. (...) The history of Orientalism is the history of the West itself, its ideas, its course of action, its fears and modes, what outcrops sometimes more and sometimes less.. (...) But the history of Orientalism begins with Islam for the reason that Islam questioned the Western image and precipitated a crisis for which an answer had to be found. (...) In other words: The West used the Orient in order to find its identity.”⁷²

About 1600 the Orientalism discourse entered the academic sphere, which also involved the oriental languages. But also the Islamic belief has become subject of research.⁷³ As stated above Islam was the initial factor for Orientalism since the Occident began denying anything that was linked to Islam and it preferred to orientate itself to anything that was non-Western, among other things, the Latin and Greek history.

Over a period of more than three centuries (~700-1050), a distinctive feature was that the Greeks and the Islamic neighbours of the then Western Europe were far more advanced, which seemed to be a bothersome fact for Europeans. The Greek system, in terms of politics and religion, was very similar to the prior existing Christian one, and at the same time it represented a rival to the Latin occident in the own ranks. In such an environment, Islam was a kind of enemy for both, especially and in addition the Greeks and the Muslims were far more advanced in terms of development, intellect and power. But Europe did not want

⁷² Sardar, Ziauddin (2002), op. cit. p.31-36. (translated by Layla Bahmad).

⁷³ Schulze, Reinhard, (1996): Orientalistik und Orientalismus in: Ende, Werner; Steinbach, Udo (Eds.): Der Islam in der Gegenwart, (München) p.707-717.

to accept that fact.⁷⁴ Around About ~700, the Christians were about to lose great parts of their territories in such as broad regions such as - Syria, North Africa, Palestine and Spain, places that had already been captured by the Muslims.⁷⁵ The Europeans started to deal with Islam right after its emergence.⁷⁶ But still the West tried to isolate itself from Islam and to find its own self. Sardar Ziauddin explains that

“(In) contrast Islam did not have any difficulties to accept Christianity and considered it as a legitimate belief and its believers who also experienced protection while living in Muslim countries. But Christianity did not recognize Islam and tried to assert its uniqueness in Europe. A century after the death of the Prophet Mohammed, Europe saw itself confronted with Islam on a political level. In addition the Muslim civilisation was superior to the European one on an intellectual, social and cultural degree. And in order to face this new challenge Orientalism has been invented.”⁷⁷

By comparison, the Muslim societies that existed were far more advanced in many ways than Medieval Europe that was way behind. (The European societies of that era were still following the monastic and feudal course).⁷⁸ Simultaneously, the Muslim societies cultivated their cultural traditions, and enhanced the sciences and philosophy Averroes (Ibn Rushd), Avicenna (Ibn Sina), Al-Farabi, et al.). Islam was seen as the enemy of Christianity and its values as well.

⁷⁴ Southern, Richard W. (1976): Kirche und Gesellschaft im Abendland des Mittelalters, (Berlin) p.13.

⁷⁵ Southern, Richard W. (1976), op. cit. p.13.

⁷⁶ The first translation of the Quran was done in the 12th century.

⁷⁷ Sardar, Ziauddin (2002), op. cit. p.36-37 (translated by Layla Bahmad).

Cp. Hourani, Albert (1994): Der Islam im Europäischen Denken (Frankfurt) p.28-29.

⁷⁸ Southern, Richard W. (1981): Das Islambild des Mittelalters, (Stuttgart) p.9-18.

Sardar Ziauddin elaborates on this idea

“Wilful misunderstanding and conscious ignorance were, from the beginning, on significant features of Orientalism even until later when further details about it were known. The crucial point was that the West only just acknowledged things it wished to understand and what it was the West able to accept. After the Orient image was has been present, it developed a momentum and pullulated with the rapid disseminating Islam.”⁷⁹

Certainly, the image of Islam in the eyes of Europe and Christianity was negative. No earlier than the 18th century a more positive picture has started to develop and with the translations that followed in the 19th century form the Islamic world. Orientalism is often discussed. It has been talked all the time about Orientalism, but there has not been any clear explanation as what it meant at that time. Did it just represent a kind of concept of the enemy - Islam? Sardar Ziauddin quotes in his study, two scholars (the historian Hans Prutz and Gustave le Bon) who recognize Islam as useful in a sense; they that both argue

“The West not only availed itself of Islam in terms of rational thinking, but also the West used Islam in order to acquit itself from the Christian church. Whereas Gustav le Bon emphasized that the European universities benefited for more than five centuries from the Muslim comforts.”⁸⁰

A more decisive aspect, which led the interest in Islam to grow, was the point in time when colonialism began, since the British and France sought to know more about the societies they occupied, Edward Said states

“The two greatest empires were the British and the French; allies and partners in some things, in others they were hostile rivals. In the Orient, from the eastern shores of the Mediterranean to Indochina and Malaya, their possessions and imperial spheres of influence were adjacent, frequently overlapped. But it was in the Near Orient, the lands of the Arab Near East, where Islam was supposed to define cultural and racial characteristics, that the

⁷⁹ Sardar, Ziauddin (2002), op. cit. p.38-39. (translated by Layla Bahmad)

⁸⁰ Sardar, Ziauddin (2002), op. cit. p.80. (translated by Layla Bahmad)

*British and the French encountered each other and the Orient with the greatest intensity, familiarity, and complexity.*⁸¹

Since then there has been an increase in interest with regard to the Islamic world and its societies. Sardar gets to the point and concludes that the beginnings of the Occident originate from the Orient. And the Orient image that was born in the past was due to scarce information that was available to the West. This led to the falsification of the existing Orient picture, though the West had gained more knowledge about it, but left it as it was – as a sort of backward region. Later on, as stated above, the interest of the West increased for the societies living in the region and these consolidated the clichés, though there were some inconsistencies with regard to literature and the arts.

But the West saw its advantages in advancing its thinking through availing that what it needed from the oriental repertoire. And these patterns have been revised several times in a way that it is considered as of “ones own”, which has been the foundation for the construction of the reality that exists to the east of the West. Sardar Ziauddin argues that Orientalism is nothing else neither in theory nor in practice.⁸² After having shed light on the provenance of Orientalism, in the following we will turn our attention towards Edward Said and his Orientalism study. Opinions on the subject of “Orientalism” and on him may differ.

⁸¹ Said, Edward (1979), op. cit. p.41

Cp. Hourani, Albert (1991): A History of the Arab Peoples, (London) p.315-320.

⁸² Sardar, Ziauddin (2002), op. cit. p.82. (translated by Layla Bahmad)

1.4.3 Orientalism from a different perspective

Edward Said opened the critical debate through his book “Orientalism” which was published in the late 1970s for the first time and which set the ball rolling regarding the Orientalism debate. For Said

“Orientalism is not a mere political subject matter or field that is reflected passively by culture, scholarship, or institutions; nor is it a large and diffuse collection of texts about the Orient; nor is it representative and expressive of some nefarious Western imperialist plot to hold down the Oriental world. (...) Indeed my real argument is that Orientalism is – and does not simply represent – a considerable dimension of modern political-intellectual culture, and as such has less to do with the Orient than it does with or world.⁸³ (...) Orientalism is the generic term that I have been employing to describe the Western approach to the Orient; Orientalism is the discipline by which the Orient was (and is) approached systematically, as a topic of learning, discovery and practice.”⁸⁴

In his study he accused the Orientalist scholars in a sense that they created a picture, which they sold as a kind of academic product and which further strengthens the European power about the region; Orientalism as a sort of Western hegemonic exercise over the Arab countries and their societies. His critics even went even beyond that of the Islamic fundamentalists who considered the Orientalist⁸⁵ point of view as an attempt to destroy Islam.⁸⁶

A further scholar Aziz Al-Azmeh examined the existing discrepancies between the Western and the oriental culture, which, on the other hand, has a common basis in terms of the cultural identity of both. He emphasizes that Islamic fundamentalism as it has existed so far does not totally correspond to the

⁸³ Said, Edward (1979), op. cit. p.12.

⁸⁴ Said, Edward, (1979), op. cit. p.73.

⁸⁵ The current term being used in Germany is Islamic Sciences rather than Orientalism.

⁸⁶ Ragab, Abd al-Halim (2002): Orientalistik on <http://www.bpb.de/wissen> (April 24, 2006) (translated by Layla Bahmad)

Muslim traditions and therefore, has to be regarded as a feature of populist nationalism, which is not a typical characteristic of Islam. The most important aspect he mentions is that Islam itself has been “instrumentalised” in a sense that it has been used as kind of means in politics, history and finally, in society.

Al-Azmeh explains that

“I (he) take(s) it as an accomplished fact that modern history is characterized by the globalization of the Western order. (...) The reasons for this are manifest: the conditions of Western economic and political conquest and hegemony in the modern age have endangered, for good and for ill, correlative conditions of equally real ideological and cultural hegemony.”⁸⁷

He also indicates that

“It has become impossible to speak with sole reference to traditional texts and without reference to Western notions.”⁸⁸

It is often also disregarded that the large majority of people in the Arab countries are Islamic, but that they vary in culture and traditions, though these might resemble each other in one aspect or another. Their traditions are an integral part of the particular culture and not as they are perceived in a Western sense, either as apologetic or reformist, but rather, according to Al-Azmeh:

“they are idioms and do not validate themselves. (...) Islam is not a culture, but a religion living in amidst very diverse cultures and thus a very multiform entity – that the predominant, literate discourses in social and political life are local adaptations of Enlightenment and post-Enlightenment traditions⁸⁹

Sardar Ziauddin underlines that Islam is not a rigid and inflexible entity. The West has had a broad experience with the eastern cultures and thus with the

⁸⁷ Al-Azmeh, Aziz (2003): *Islams and Modernities* (London) p.39.

⁸⁸ Al-Azmeh, Aziz (2003), *op. cit.* p.39.

⁸⁹ Al-Azmeh, Aziz (2003), *op. cit.* p.40.

Orient. But it has to be a differentiated between the numerous oriental cultures and Islam, which the West had encountered far in the preceding eight centuries before Orientalism emerged. The contact with Islam exerted influence on the relationship with the other existing oriental cultures at that time. He limits his analysis and addresses the issue of Islamic Orientalism in order to point to the current position of Orientalism.⁹⁰

“The Western civilisation still views Islam as a problem, a sort of obstacle crossing its way towards their goal: Globalization.”⁹¹

The mainstream views as they are represented by Huntington or Pipes, contribute to the mainstream cultivation and education as it predominantly exists. This originates from the dichotomy they constructed and constitutes the foil for such views. Hence, the West does not differentiate and tends to generalize all together: Islam, Arab world, terrorists, and the Orient as a broad region covering one country in a way that has caused the picture to become blurred. And this notion cannot be left as it is since there are many differences, but also common things that these peoples share. This certainly applies to the West as well: Europe by itself is not the West and the U.S. either – both comprise the West in the broadest sense. In the following section an analogue term is used in order to describe the West, constituting the counter piece of Orientalism. Bernard Lewis also addressed the Question of Orientalism where he emphasized that

“For some years now a hue and cry has been raised against Orientalists in American and to a lesser extent European universities, and the term Orientalism has been emptied of its previous content and given an entirely new one – unsympathetic or hostile treatment of Oriental peoples.”⁹²

⁹⁰ Sardar, Ziauddin (2002), op. cit. p.86. (translated by Layla Bahmad)

⁹¹ Sardar, Ziauddin (2002), op. cit. p.86. (translated by Layla Bahmad)

⁹² Lewis, Bernard (1982): The Question of Orientalism on <http://www.dartmouth.edu/~rel8/Dpndtdocs/General/Orientalism1.pdf> (April 26, 2006).

The idea that both, Bernard Lewis and Samuel Huntington share is alike in a sense that both consider the Islamic world as a sort of threat. Bernard Lewis voices this clearly in the following thought:

“We are facing a mood and a movement far transcending the level of issues and policies and the governments that pursue them. This is no less than a clash of civilizations--the perhaps irrational but surely historic reaction of an ancient rival against our Judeo-Christian heritage, our secular present, and the worldwide expansion of both.”⁹³

Here again, it becomes obvious that the Orientalist historian Bernard Lewis is the principal witness for Samuel Huntington’s thesis that world politics of the 21st century is not dominated by political, economic or social conflicts; rather that these are based on conflicts among cultures. So far, we have seen that Said and al-Azmeh have attempted to show that the Islamic world with its various cultures cannot be viewed as a collective with no principles and rules and likewise Orientalism just reflects the deficiencies of the West. Whereat Huntington, Pipes and Lewis argue that the existing problem transcends the political sphere.

The following chapter is going to give into the understandings and definition of the two extremes.

⁹³ Lewis, Bernard (2000/1): The Roots of Muslim Rage. In: Policy, Vol.17 No.4, p.17-26.

1.4.4 Orientalism versus Occidentalism?

“The philosopher Nishitani Keiji holds the Reformation, the Renaissance and the Emergence of the natural sciences responsible for the deterioration of the unitary intellectual European culture, and this hits the mark of Occidentalism. One of the essential differences between the modern West and the Islamic world, as it is claimed so often, is - the separation of the church and the state. The church as an autonomous institution has never existed in Islam.”⁹⁴

In contrast to Nishitani Keiji, Irschad Mandschi states that it has never been taught in Europe, which significant contribution Islam had made to the European Renaissance. She argues that it could have been conducive to point out the Muslim ,input to Western history at least in public schools in order to make this more comprehensible. But her argument is based on the idea that this would facilitate Muslims the acceptance of ,democracy and ,pluralism instead of rejecting these values. Since they emerged in a cultural context and hence are components of the own culture. In opposition to the prevalent ,Western thought that ,democracy cannot be intruded on the Islamic world, she reasons that this thinking is due to the cultural traditions, which define themselves as religion and not Islam per se. She refers to tribal thinking, which constitutes an essential part of Arab culture and thus is antidemocratic. In my view this might correspond to some cases, but it cannot be generalized as she does. But Palestine for instance, has a very sophisticated and civilised society. In addition it has to be mentioned and emphasized that the Western understanding and definition of ,democracy can vary and are not really accepted as they are practised in some

⁹⁴ Buruma, Ian, Margalit, Avishai (2004): Okzidentalismus – Der Westen in den Augen seiner Feinde, (München) p.14. (translated by Layla Bahmad).

However, the survey represented by the Arab Human Development Report 2003 above gives the impression that the Arabs have longed for ,democracy as the right system. Certainly, they did so and they still do. The fact that almost all countries in that region are under more or less authoritarian rule does not mean that these peoples are not able to be democratic.

Arab countries such as Morocco or Jordan. But Palestine sets a good example for the other Arab countries.⁹⁵

Not only has the West born the Orient image in his mind, which is moulded through a plethora of prejudices and thoughts that have been largely affected by the Western governments, but also the East has shaped its view on its counterpart. Ian Buruma and Avishai Margalit address the issue from a different angle and shed light on the polarity between the West and the East as a sort of counter-piece to Edward Said's Orientalism. Predominantly, it is not, as they emphasize, the odium that derives from the Islamic fundamentalists in the particular region – the Near and Middle East who bear the hatred against the West. They assume that this phenomenon also has its origins in Europe, referring to Occidentalism,⁹⁶ is firstly independent of radical Islam, and secondly, it is an attitude that is rooted in Europe that having a vast majority of advocates by whom "*this Westernization*" is considered as *a disease, which has afflicted the Japanese spirit*" or as the "*European thing*".⁹⁷

It is made clear that there exist mutual clichés on both sides and that these are more and more aggravated through the increasing gap between the West and the East. It is the Western modernity (whereas it has to be asked: how are modernity and tradition defined?) against the traditional East or Orient. Further, they reveal that the existing prejudices are not exclusively Islamic that they are also rooted in the West as all the -isms, such as Capitalism, Marxism, etc. were born in Europe and later on have been transferred to other parts of the world.⁹⁸

⁹⁵ Mandschi, Irschad (2005): Reform beginnt mit den Frauen! In: Internationale Politik, No.4, p.58-63.

⁹⁶ Occidentalism is defined (as the principal rejection of any form of liberal societies) by the authors as "The de-humanising picture of the West, which has been drawn by its enemies". (Buruma, Ian, Margalit, Avishai (2004), op. cit. p.13.) (translated by Layla Bahmad).

⁹⁷ Buruma, Ian, Margalit, Avishai (2004), op. cit. p.13-14. (translated by Layla Bahmad).

⁹⁸ Buruma, Ian, Margalit, Avishai (2004), op. cit. p.13-14. (translated by Layla Bahmad).

In conclusion, it can be said that the Orient picture of the Orient has become blurred through the changes which have occurred throughout history and up to the present. Sardar Ziauddin gave us a historical retrospect of the origins of Orientalism and demonstrated that these have been formed by the Europeans and the West themselves. Birgit Rommelspacher explains that

“The picture of the “Other” is similar to a chameleon since it underlies a permanent alteration, which varies and depends on the constellation and at the rate of power.”⁹⁹

This becomes apparent with Islam that has been considered and perceived as an opposing force against the West and at the same nominated as the prototype of the “Other”, Birgit Rommelspacher emphasizes. The barely existing information on the Orient allowed the West to draw its own picture and afflict this image with negative characteristics. This biased picture drawn by the West has had its origin at the end of the Cold War at the end of the 1990s. With its end something else had to act as a buffer, and Islam seemed to be the right one. In this context Samuel Huntington, with his book *Clash of Civilisations* contributed to the narrow minded view with regard to the picture of the “Other” (in this case the Arab world) and he also tried to consolidate this image of a weak and stagnating Arab world. The Islamic world and culture in his view are the significant features that are going to challenge the West.

A significant thought is that Islam is instrumentalised and used as a sort of screen where anything negative can be projected on it. Usually the “alien” used to be identified by his or her nationality whereas nowadays Islam is representative and is being used for all. The ongoing present debates on the issue have been characterized by antagonisms such the increased hostility towards Islam and its societies. It is the blindness of the mainstream of the West and the given facts, which support this. But that is not all. The West is also trying to win over the Islamic world with its ideas and agenda.

⁹⁹ Rommelspacher, Birgit (2002), op. cit. p.99.

In my view, this is controversial for the West for the reason that on the one hand it does not abandon the negative image of the other, but on the other hand it is keen to impose its ideas and notions on the “Other”. What is this? Rightly, Birgit Rommelspacher asks: Does the West feel to be responsible to adopt the role of the Christian knight, who later becomes the imperialist conqueror in order to fulfil his civilizing mission?¹⁰⁰

As already stated above the image of the “Other” or even the Orientals has been provided with numerous characteristics and the different stages of history, such as colonialism, helped to shape the notion of these people. But the features such as weakness, backwardness, stagnation and other negative aspects remained the same. It is the West who determines the profile for the Arab world and classifies the single societies in lower categories. Edward Said comes to the conclusion that the so-called Orient is needed by the West in order to show proudly how advanced and sophisticated it is. Certainly, the West with its liberal ideas considers itself as the right and driving force which is desirable for any society. These thoughts allow the conclusion that Orientalism is the artefact of imperialism, which has dominated the oriental societies. It offered the screen for anything the West did not possess. It was the reflection of the West itself and not that of the so-called “Others”. According to that Edward Said holds that *“the two geographical entities thus support and to an extent reflect each other.”*¹⁰¹ In contrast, the eastern point of view on the West, called by Buruma and Margalit, “Occidentalism”, takes up a declining stance on the West and its liberal patterns of life and perspectives.

In the next section we will address how the Orientalist view has had an influence on the civil society sphere and its actors in the Middle East. In the next section I will discuss to what extent the Orientalism debate has cast its shadow on civil societies and NGOs in Arab societies.

¹⁰⁰ Rommelspacher, Birgit (2002), op. cit. p.101.

¹⁰¹ Said, Edward (1979), op. cit. p.5.

1.4.5 An Orientalist view of NGOs?

This short outlook on Orientalism was given in order to provide an insight into the roots of Orientalism. The purpose was to reveal the basic phenomenon that the legitimate character of Orientalism lies in the exercise of dominance, and rule. The imperialistic notion is involved in the biased structure of the West. In the following part it will be discussed to what extent this view influenced by the Orientalist perspective dominates the relationship between the West and the Arab civil society actors. The Orientalist discourse was an important element of the legitimization of imperialism, which was presented, by the colonial powers as a moral duty as it is so well expressed by the French slogan “*Mission civilisatrice de la France*”.¹⁰²

The West still doubts the abilities of these organisations and scrutinizes them. Though the opinion exists that they are good partners, but broadly the opinion exists that

*“The strength of society in the Islamic civilizations not only made the state unstable; it also obstructed the development of true civil society and democracy.”*¹⁰³

Like most Orientalists dissent, civil society can only exist under the pre-requisite of democracy. They are convinced that these two crucial components go hand in hand.

¹⁰² Ruf, Werner (2006): Barbarisierung der Anderen – Barbarisierung des Wir. In: Utopie Kreativ No.185, p.222-228.

Cp. Lecour-Grandmaison, Olivier, Le Colonialisme à la Peau dure (March 30, 2005) on www.algeria-watch.org (November 9, 2006)

¹⁰³ Sadowski adds that Hegel was similarly sceptical of claims that political assertiveness by social groups produced national progress, p.40. (Sadowski, Yahya, op. cit. p.18.).

They also believed that such social organisations did not exist in Islam. Sadowski writes

“Civil society cannot be seen as a raucous band of solidarities that check the states tendency towards despotism. Rather as a civilised assemblage of groups that expands production without threatening state power.”¹⁰⁴

The traditional Orientalists, as well as the neo-Orientalists, soon recognized that their views have been outdated with regard to the proper balance between state and society in order to achieve persuasive states and favourable democracies. The Orientalists even disagree with each other, whereas the traditionalists concede that society has to be stronger, and the neo-Orientalists contradict their view and adjudge more strength to the state. This thought is sort of incongruous for the reason there is not a determined scale to decide, which induces the balance between both aspects. But this line of thought will not be discussed in depth at this time. The more interesting element to consider is the approach regarding the NGOs as already indicated earlier. The idea is ripe that civil society and its actors are not capable and do not sustain Western interpretation.

The Orientalist believes that democracy is a crucial ingredient for a successful society, and this, ostensibly does not exist in the Middle East. This Orientalist view is outdated. More often than not these societies are viewed by the West as weak, their social organisations as insufficient and lacking the absence of strong capabilities in terms of institutions and legal structures. This is completely misunderstood and it is rather viewed as a kind of enervation of the society to face the state. But the crucial point does not lie in the provocation of the government on behalf of society in order to be allowed to have a civil society. Referring to the Palestinian case, civil society and its actors such as the NGOs have had a totally different position and role.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁴ Sadowski, Yahya (1993), op. cit. p.19.

¹⁰⁵ As already mentioned earlier the Palestinian civil society is distinguished through its distinctiveness and all-embracing dedication and its commitment to the national struggle against the occupying regime, in particular in the 1980s and throughout the First Intifada. Out of it

Thus, it is not possible to put these aspects on one level. Both require different approaches, which allow a detailed analysis. The more relevant demur here is how NGOs in the Arab world are viewed, and in particular, in Palestine. Carapico already implied above that the NGOs are put into two categories either progressive or as backwards. Certainly, it is not easy in the region since the governments are rigid and reluctant to give up some of their power and to create a space for civil society and its actors.

Ghanem Bibi explains

“NGOs relations with the governments are diverse and complicated in the Arab world because of the whole question of accountability.”¹⁰⁶

Indeed, the varying Arab countries are diverse and with them their civil societies and the actors involved. Thus, the NGOs in Palestine as well as in Lebanon, for instance, have been used to work under affliction and the difficult political circumstances that have formed part of their daily life.

However, the demanding and challenging situation has been linked to problems and obstacles in the implementation of their work, which let them go beyond their limits in order to satisfy the needs of their society as best as they could. Nonetheless, these civil society actors exist and they have accomplished a lot. From the Orientalist point of view regarding Arab NGOs, these are considered as unreliable, as not transparent, and their authenticity is doubted. A Distinction

emerged a close connected network of organisations, which has been affected by the common combat. Through the created capacities and the high potential it has had, Palestinian civil society encountered support on the part of the population. The strong sense of togetherness mobilised the Palestinians. Particular interests such gender issues, trade unions and others were not of prime importance. Hence, at that time the Palestinian civil society was a sort of collective and at the same homogenous actor.

Cp. Bauer, Iris (1997): Nationalstaatsbildung, politischer Transformationsprozess und die Rolle der Zivilgesellschaft in Palästina. In: Lauth, Hans-Joachim, Merkel, Wolfgang (Eds.): Zivilgesellschaft im Transformationsprozess – Länderstudien zu Mittelost- und Südeuropa, Asien, Afrika, Lateinamerika und Nahost, (Mainz) p.347-382.

¹⁰⁶ Ghanem, Bibi (1995): The NGO Phenomenon in the Arab World (interviewed by Peteet, Julie and Stork, Joe). In: MERIP No.193 Vol.25, No.2, p.26-27.

is made between the more secular organisations and the traditional and charitable ones. However, the former are contemplated as more democratic vis-à-vis state-run institutions Ghanem Bibi confirms.¹⁰⁷

Carapico states

“Even today, some community and charitable associations in the Muslim Middle East may be depicted as mere expressions of extended family loyalties, whereas other groups connected to Hamas or Hizbullah are represented as terrorist fronts, yet those with bylaws and letterheads are frequently dismissed as inauthentic occidental imports.”¹⁰⁸

She considers the Orientalist perception as narrow and biased for the reason that they

“may have prevented anthropologists, sociologists and economists from seeing the non-governmental sector as anything but an extension of “the three Ps”: patrimonialism, patriarchy and primordialism. The conventional assertion that Islam recognizes no separation of “church and state” (an inversion of American political values in lieu of an empirical or descriptive statement) prevented many scholars from recognizing the historic independence of foundations, academies, guilds, welfare societies and other precursors of NGOs.”¹⁰⁹

It is important to distinguish between the traditional organisations such the Waqf-type, which will be discussed later in this work and others. Furthermore, the more secular types of organisations and those who are politically oriented seek goals of the state. To a large extent there is a trend that even governments have started to create NGOs, which also allows them to control these Government-Organized Non-Governmental Organisations (GONGOs), as

¹⁰⁷ Carapico, Sheila (2000), op. cit. p. 12-16.

¹⁰⁸ Ghanem, Bibi (1995), op. cit. p.26.

¹⁰⁹ Carapico, Sheila (2000), op. cit. p. 12-16.

they are called. Hence, not all NGOs can be lumped together, but then a clear-cut line cannot be drawn. This does not mean that through the blurred NGO-picture these have not contributed to the development of their societies. Far from it, the Palestinian NGOs have contributed and accomplished a lot for the Palestinians and their development. Increasingly, the international counterparts (with their governments and donors in the background) are the ones who complicate the life of their Arab partners through the increasing demands and expectations. Ghanem Bibi explains in response to the remarkable growth of NGOs that

“The West is encouraging this NGO phenomenon. One reason is to alleviate hardships of social transformations. (...). Donor NGOs represent, in many cases, very significant financial resources – private and governmental.”¹¹⁰

He might not be wrong with his statement, but these are not the sole interests the West seeks, and in addition as mentioned above, governments have started to establish their own NGOs behind which they can pursue their own interests. This aspect cannot be discussed here in depth.

The reason why I conducted this previous and extended debate is in the first place that I considered it as significant to have a fundamental understanding of Orientalism with regard to its historical roots and the various existing discourses. Secondly, in what respect the Orientalist view has had an influence on NGOs in the Arab countries. Finally, how this attitude is reflected in the NGO scene, in particular in the NGO-Donor relationship. In the following part, we will turn our attention back to the approaches regarding NGOs and their terrain of action. Hence, in the next section, I shall examine the concepts of civil society and NGOs, which have been in use throughout history.

¹¹⁰ Ghanem, Bibi (1995), op. cit. p.27.

On closer inspection, I will attempt to determine what importance these concepts have in the Palestinian context.

This is of great significance and they are seen on the main stage during the First Intifada, after Oslo and the Second Intifada. First, we will refer back to two major concepts, which shall suggest to us their meaning. The first one I will start with is the concept of civil society, since it is the broader space in which NGOs function.

Then I will examine the concept of NGOs, since this term has been used in various forms. The more important aspect is that its notion experienced various alterations in terms of definition and understanding.

1.5 Conclusion

The introductory chapter gave us an idea of what Orientalism embraces and how the concept is defined and perceived in the West. The term existed throughout history in the various societies from Asia over to the Arab-Islamic societies, but the more crucial point that in relation to the Arab-Islamic societies it has been characterized as negative and violent. Against that Edward Said criticized the ignorant view of the West with regard to the Arab-Islamic societies who are in the centre of the Western consciousness and at the same time the artificial and systematic feeling they have produced in view of these “Others”.

But this can be referable to the European behaviour at the beginning of the 19th century, which was supposed to bring changes into the Islamic elites and rather transformed into colonialism and domination. Hence, the consequence was that they turned back to their own traditional roots. The contemporary situation in the Arab-Islamic societies is almost the same where the West is attempting to introduce “*democracy*” and “*good governance*” in order to “*civilise*” them. As a sort of counter reaction the fundamentalists gained more strength within most of their societies, which the West is keen to keep relations with. It is questionable if the West will ever bear away from its attitude to transform any “other” society, which does not apply to its pattern.

In the analysis with regard to the historical roots of the term itself, the Orientalist historian Bernard Lewis represents the traces of Samuel Huntington and bases his thoughts on cultural rather than political or economic differences which separate the Occident from the Orient.

Al-Azmeh explained that the discrepancies between the West and oriental cultures have a common ground in terms of cultural identity. The growing fundamentalism within the Arab-Islamic societies is not part of the Muslim traditions, it has been used as a tool in form of populist nationalism in order to achieve particular objectives. Nonetheless, in the eyes of the Western

civilisation, Islam is still considered as an obstacle of the ongoing progress in terms of globalization.

Finally, the terms “Orientalism” as well as “Occidentalism” have been afflicted with specific features that have characterized them. Whereas Orientalism is associated with negative, backward and violent attributes, “Occidentalism” against that is defined as *the de-humanising picture of the West, which has been drawn by its enemies*”.

Still, the West attempts to keep his influence and liberal patterns on these societies, who have from the ground up a different basis and structure.

The next chapter is going to examine the NGO and civil society concepts which have a significant role in the entire investigation regarding Palestine.

2. CIVIL SOCIETY AND NON - GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS – WHAT DO THESE CONCEPTS MEAN?

“Individual human beings cannot live alone. They are drawn naturally toward social solidarity. The importance of civil society¹¹¹ derives from the need to balance the desires and needs of the individual with the will and needs of society. Where civil society is present, an individual is a part of the body, joined to other members to form an organic whole.”¹¹²

(Medieval philosopher al-Farabi)¹¹³

¹¹¹ The Arab translation for civil society is al-mujtama al-madani or al-mujtama al-ahli, in which al-madani means “civil” and the second means both “civil” and “civic”. The latter is believed to be more indigenous. It is argued that long before the word madani was introduced by Arab modernists; ahli modernists described the huge sphere of activity that was independent of the state, including schools, awqaf, mosques, charitable organisations, etc. And therefore, if madani is assumed by secularists to be associated with a Western-style modernity and consequently with secularism, ahli is supposed to be a more Islamic term.

(Tamimi, Azzam (2001): Civil Society in Islamic Political Thought (Institute of Islamic Political Thought) on <http://www.ii-pt.com/web/papers/civil.htm> (March 8, 2006)

Nathan J. Brown translates civil society as al-mujtama al-madani (Brown, Nathan J. (2003) op. cit. p.140.).

¹¹² Hanafi, Hasan (2002): Alternative Conceptions of Civil Society – A Reflective Islamic Approach. In: Chambers, Simone; Kymlicka, Will (Eds.): Alternative Conceptions of Civil Society, (Princeton) p.180.

¹¹³ Lutz, Bernd (1995): Metzler Philosophen Lexikon – Von den Vorsokratikern bis zu den Neuen Philosophen, (Stuttgart) p.261-264.

Al-Farabi was born ~873 in Farab and died 950/51 in Damascus. He referred to the living together of citizens in a perfect town. (Lerch, Wolfgang (2002): Denker des Propheten – Die Philosophie des Islam, (München) p.48-54.

In my view Al-Farabi’s understanding of civil society (above) refers to al-mujtama al-ahli, which he regarded as a large and active sphere independent of the state. His definition includes the above listed institutions.

The Lebanese Associate Consultant Omar Traboulsi defined civil society as follows: “It is very interesting and informative. In Arabic exist two terms for civil society. The first one is al-mujtama al-ahli which describes a society defined through family ties, and the second one is al-mujtama al-madani which defines the civil society. The prior embraces blood relationships and tribal structures rather than social movements. And these features are signified in the term madani

The term civil society has existed for a long time in the very general sense that human beings are, by definition, part of a social body. Consequently the term is not an invention of certain branches of recent social sciences. It has found entry into many debates and it has been used in a large number of contexts for many years. It seems to be an ever-changing concept object that has gone throughout centuries, and scholars from Aristotle over al-Farabi, Ibn Sina¹¹⁴, Ibn Rushd¹¹⁵ up to Gramsci have tried to shape this concept and characterize it with a proper definition.

It cannot be disregarded under which circumstances and historical context this so called civil society developed and its importance as a component of society. Mainly civil society has been regarded as a bulwark against the state, as a kind of counterbalance. Here, it has to be emphasized that NGOs as actors are part of the civil society concept.

In the following we will consider two important questions in order to understand the concept of civil society.

which implies the willingness to detach from traditional structures. The Lebanese model is more that of blood relationship than that of civil character. [...] Issues such as environment, gender or human rights were picked up by new secular groups that could count to the latter pattern. Nonetheless they do not constitute a plurality." (Traboulsi, Omar (2005): Zivilgesellschaft im Libanon – Sensible politische Themen ausgeklammert (Interview with Bernhard Hillenkamp) on http://www.qantara.de/webcom/show_article.php/_c-494/_nr-31/i.html (December 5, 2006) (translated by Layla Bahmad)

¹¹⁴ Ibn Sina was latinized in the West as Avicenna (Rudolph, Ulrich (2004): *Islamische Philosophie – Von den Anfängen bis zur Gegenwart*, (München) p.42-55.

¹¹⁵ Ibn Rushd was Latinized in the West as Averroes, (Rudolph, Ulrich (2004), op. cit70-76.)

2.1 The historical roots of the term Civil Society

The following section will give an overview with regard to the history of the civil society concept due to the close ties to the philosophy of the high-medieval period, without which the Renaissance and the Enlightenment periods in Europe would not have been achievable. For this overview it is not possible to go into the details of the work of Hegel and Marx as they are known in the classical political theory and the philosophy of law. Hegel translated the political term *societas civilis* with the German term “Bürgerliche Gesellschaft”. According to Reese this embraces the existing sense of citizenship and political culture within society and also includes a variety of organisations and institutions, which are located beyond the state and power sphere.¹¹⁶ The purpose is only to shed light on the traditions and the variations of the concept. Therefore, it is necessary to dip briefly into the traces of the civil society concept in order to understand its background.

The notion of civil society could be traced back to the era of Aristotle. In his philosophical view the human being was regarded as a political creature by nature. In his philosophical ideas he emphasizes that civil society (*koinonía politike*, latin: *societas civilis*) is the only and real sphere for association, which is not dominated by any higher power and where all participants in this sense human beings are regarded as equal and independent citizens. Aristotle's picture does not view civil society either as an existing sphere beyond the state or as a pre-state terrain. On the contrary, it was seen as a common unit or entity, which involved the state component. In his view it served as a kind of common platform that makes a peaceful living together possible as Georg Kneer explains.¹¹⁷ He further points out that Aristotle in his perception differentiated between the social, political and the economic space.

¹¹⁶ Reese-Schäfer, Walter (1994): Was ist Kommunitarismus (Frankfurt a. M.) p.42-45.

Cp. Reese-Schäfer, Walter (2000): Politische Theorie heute (München) p.75-81.

¹¹⁷ Kneer, Georg (1997): Zivilgesellschaft. In: Kneer, Georg; Nassehi, Armin; Schroer, Markus (Eds.): Soziologische Gesellschaftsbegriffe, (München) p.229.

The interpretation of Aristotle's understanding of civil society served as a base for other theorists and scholars such as Ibn Rushd, Ibn Sina, Ibn Khaldoun, al-Farabi, and al-Ghazali¹¹⁸ who made up their minds about the common sphere that individuals share and its organisation, which will be discussed in the following as well. They tried to explain civil society relations in the context of Islam.

It is not the aim of this thesis to look into the philosophical development and debates on how society was differentiated in relation to the state by authors like Hegel and Marx, etc.¹¹⁹ The term civil society also gained an important place in Antonio Gramsci's debate with the term.¹²⁰

The Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci differentiated between the two categories – civil society and state – in a methodical manner, but on the other hand he emphasized that the social reality unites civil society and state as an inseparable entity. In his point of view, in socialism a political society is needed by the state. Neubert states that Gramsci did not give a precise definition of what he meant by political society and civil society. He delineated political society as a sphere, which involves all state structures and tools such as political institutions, the judiciary, and the military and with civil society he associated the non-state sphere embracing societal organisations and associations that unite the people through cultural and social relations and common activities, which he called the intellectual, ideological, and religious superstructure of society.¹²¹

¹¹⁸ Al-Ghazali was Latinized in the West as Algazel. He was theologian and Islamic philosopher (Rudolph, Ulrich (2004) op. cit. p.56-60.).

¹¹⁹ Inwood, Michael (1992): A Hegel Dictionary, (Oxford) p.53.

¹²⁰ Kebir, Sabine (1991): Gramsci's Zivilgesellschaft, (Hamburg) p.48.

¹²¹ Neubert, Harald (2001): Antonio Gramsci: Hegemonie – Zivilgesellschaft – Partei, (Hamburg) p.61.

Gramsci did not fill his definition of civil society with moral values such as tolerance, respect for human rights, non-violence, democracy or legality. His characterization of the term arose out of the revolutionary events that had started since 1917. He had been asking himself why the revolution had won in the then developing Russia, but had broken down in the developed West.

His answer to this question has become a classic quotation:

“In the East the state used to be the head of everything, and civil society was at its beginnings and still viscous. In the West on the other hand the relation between civil society and the state was balanced, and in case the state started to totter, civil society was a strong counterbalance. The state was a kind of trench that was pushed in front behind which a robust chain of fortresses and a bombproof room existed.”¹²²

In Kebir’s point of view, Gramsci’s definition of civil society includes all non-state actors who influence public opinion and intellect. He counted the churches, trade unions and the media as the most dynamic part of this ideological basis, but he also considered libraries, schools and various clubs and associations as part of it.¹²³

The idea of civil society has been rediscovered by Eastern European and Latin American thinkers and activists – and by Western social scientists eager to develop concepts of “transition” from the former one-party systems to pluralist democracy after the cold war in the late 1980s, who regarded it as necessary to create a space that offers citizens the terrain to engage with each other.¹²⁴ The more important factor was that this sphere should not be controlled or interfered by the state. The major thought was to have a society which acts as a collective

¹²² Js (2000): Zivilgesellschaft und Revolution – Antonio Gramscis eines Begriffs, der zum Modewort wurde. In: Sozialistische Zeitung, No.25, p.16. (on <http://www.vsp-vernetzt.de/soz/002516.htm>) (translated by Layla Bahmad)

¹²³ Kebir, Sabine (1991), op. cit. p.19.

¹²⁴ Schwedler, Jillian (1995), op. cit. p.1.

and expresses its interests within this sphere called civil society. The concept had been revived through the political changes in Eastern Europe. It cannot be discussed here to what degree Western political actors understand civil society and its actors as well as means for influencing political processes in these countries.

An example are the hostile reactions of the current Russian government towards NGOs cooperating with Western NGOs, foundations etc. that point into this direction. The Russian legislation is trying to curtail the rights of civil society in Russia. The law is regarded as a fundamental violation towards universal rights of freedom of expression and association. It also undermines the independence of existing civic groups, which on the other hand decelerates the development of the Russian civil society.¹²⁵

Actually, the term has appeared in the social sciences and in political discussions. Bob Edwards and Michael Foley state

“Whether as society against the state in the Polish and Latin American conceptions of the 1970s or as a sphere of social autonomy and democratisation the concept served to juxtapose a sphere of voluntary, purposive association to the forces of chaos, oppression, or atomisation of the time.”¹²⁶

In addition it is important to understand and know the circumstances, which Edwards and Foley call

“The marks of the political struggles within which they (the various concepts of civil society) were born. In each of the cases mentioned above, civil

¹²⁵ Walker, Christopher (2005): Russia, Legislating Repression of Civil Society. In: Nations in Transition Democratization from Central Europe to Eurasia, (New Brunswick) on <http://freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=70&release=319> (March 9, 2006)

Cp. Sutton, Jonathan (2005): Civil Society, Religion, and the Nation. Reflections on the Russian Case. In: Steunebrink, Gerrit, van der Zweerde, Evert (Eds.): Civil Society, Religion, and the Nation. Modernization in Intercultural Context: Russia, Japan, Turkey, (Amsterdam) p.51-72.

¹²⁶ Edwards, Foley (2001), op. cit. p.2.

*society crystallized projects of social autonomy against the dominant power(s) of that time and place.*¹²⁷

In Latin America civil society was understood as the force against the military dictatorships of the 1970s and 1980s and a widespread conviction that conventional party politics had contributed to the failure of these societies. In this case civil society not only provided a space for a “society against a repressive state” but also a society that replaced the political parties.¹²⁸

The term gained more relevance and was related to certain values such as tolerance, respect for others, and philanthropy. The disputed and controversial debates about civil society and its contents also depend on aspects such as state power, individual freedom and other criteria, which confer to its function and use in a certain environment. The various existing definitions have been filled with different contents which stand in an immediate context to different cultures where the term is used. It cannot be overlooked that the current or Western definitions adhere to features such as activity in terms of democratic participation, forms of social self-organisation and equal opportunities for any human being in society. So, the conventional perceptions of civil society are also connected to a certain dynamic and engagement within this so called third sector. A further issue is whether or not this trendy Western definition of civil society is appropriate towards other spheres beyond the West. Therefore, many scholars have difficulties to reduce the definition to a common denominator and regard it as distorted and ambiguous. Jude Howell and Jenny Pearce emphasize that the term has been

“Overloaded with meanings and utilized for different purposes. The concept is deemed too blunted to serve usefully as a sharp tool of analysis ...like democracy civil society is sufficiently feel good to be the desire of all. Yet

¹²⁷ Edwards, Foley (2001), op. cit. p.2-3.

¹²⁸ Edwards, Foley (2001), op. cit. p.3.

*without further definition it is like a stick of candyfloss, gentle in colour, sweet to the tongue, but like air.*¹²⁹

Harry Blair defines civil society and sums it up as

*“The collectivity of those social organisations that enjoy autonomy from the state (which are not a part of the state or creatures of it) and have as one important goal among others to influence the state on behalf of their members.”*¹³⁰

John Keane against that defines civil society as

*“A complex and dynamic ensemble of legally protected nongovernmental institutions that tend to be non-violent, self-organising, self-reflexive, and permanently in tension with each other and with the state institutions that frame, constrict and enable their activities.”*¹³¹

Helmut Anheier provides a modern definition of civil society, which he views as

*“The sum of institutions, organisations, and individuals located between the family, the state, and the market, in which people associate voluntarily to advance common interests.”*¹³²

These modern definitions of civil society reveal that today’s determinations of the term is placed around or better between the state and the market in which people associate. Civil society is not a static unit that is motionless; on the contrary it is a dynamic and driving force that provides space for citizens to express their common interests and demands. So far the definition of this popular word embraces many features and characteristics, which cause it to

¹²⁹ Howell, Jude; Pearce, Jenny (2001): Civil Society and Development – A Critical Exploration, (London) p.111.

¹³⁰ Blair, Harry (1997): Donors, Democratization and Civil Society. In: Edwards, Michael; Hulme, David (Eds.): NGOs, States and Donors. Too close for Comfort? (Hampshire) p.25.

¹³¹ Anheier, K. Helmut (2005): Non-profit Organisations Theory, Management, Policy, (New York) p. 57.

¹³² Anheier, Helmut (2005), op. cit. p.56.

appear in form of a complex and fuzzy structure. And Edwards and Foley emphasized above that the concept of civil society and its definition also depend on the society it plays a role in, where Kebir stated that its role in Eastern Europe was a different one than in the West. And this applies even more so to the Arab world¹³³, where the Western concept is viewed as difficult to accept or rejected at all. Here, it has to be emphasized that the Arab world cannot be viewed as a compact entity since the political systems vary extremely among the states of the Arab League, still having one decisive element in common: All these systems are highly oppressive and authoritarian. Hence, civil society and its actors differ from one country to another, which will be discussed later on, and it has to be questioned to what extent these civil society actors represent Westernised values and key elements (women's organisations) or if they are more traditional oriented in terms of Islamic relief organisations.

The problem is, furthermore, that civil society – in the sense of Gramsci and almost all other authors, be they more or less Gramscian or not at all – has always been considered as being a part of industrially developed, socially differentiated and often democratic societies. It seems that this analytic aspect is totally neglected in the studies of Eastern Europe “transition societies”. Civil society is generally reduced to the emergence of NGOs. And most of them are perceived as positive (and democratic) developments because they are prone to Western values. This problem is even more acute in the Arab world which is characterized by extreme underdevelopment of these rentier states.¹³⁴

After the publication of the Arab Human Development Report in 2002, the Economist stated that

¹³³ The use of Arab world refers to the states who are members of the Arab League.

¹³⁴ Iris Bauer addresses the question: If there have always to be constitutional and democratic structures in order to be able to speak of civil society? Whereas as she states “the development of a civil society is not absurd in political authoritarian regimes. Contrariwise, they can have a substantial share in the maceration of authoritarian structures and hence, support the development of a democratic system.” (Bauer, Iris (1997), op. cit. p.367-368.) (translated by Layla Bahmad)

“Civil Society, in the Arab world, has a terribly long way to go. NGOs are hobbled by legal and administrative obstacles laid in their path by authorities deeply suspicious of what they might be up to. But they also suffer from internal weaknesses, often getting their money either from foreign sources, which adds to the suspicions, or from the government, which defeats the object of their creation.”¹³⁵

Thus, it becomes clear that these Arab civil society actors are pervaded by Western influence in the form of foreign aid, which makes them dependent and causes their weaknesses towards their actual existence and goals. NGOs that embrace Western values may oversee the real developments that take place or underestimate them, and with such a narrow sight this could even lead to self-deception.

Even a vast number of Arab social scientists and other scholars have started to make up their mind on how the concept of civil society is defined within the Arab sphere and then they approached the Western model. Jillian Schwedler offers with regard to the Middle Eastern countries a more simplified definition of civil society:

“...This network of independent, voluntary organisations.”¹³⁶

Richard Norton also evaluates civil society in the Middle East and discusses to which degree it exists in the region, and furthermore its importance in the regions transition to democracy, the obstacles it faces and the approaches to civil society that are specific to the areas cultural and political composition.

¹³⁵ Economist (2002): Arab development Self-doomed to failure. In: Economist Vol. 364, No.8280, p.24-26.

¹³⁶ Schwedler, Jillian (1995), op. cit. p.2.

In doing so, he defines civil society, first as a physical state: Civil society exists where

*“a mélange of associations, clubs, guilds, syndicates, federations, unions, parties and groups come together to provide a buffer between state and citizen.”*¹³⁷

Second, as an attitude:

*“Civility implies tolerance, the willingness of individuals to accept disparate political views and social attitudes; to accept the profoundly important idea that there is no right answer.”*¹³⁸

The ongoing debates about civil society in general and in particular those with focus on the Middle East and its reception of civil society have to be considered as well. Norton's definition just given above, the Western interpretations of civil society focusing on the region mostly adhere to values such as democracy, capitalism, freedom etc., which in their view are considered as pre-requisites of civil society, but not compatible with the Arab culture. To my mind this is not appropriate for the reason that civil society has existed in the Arab culture since very early in history, keeping the historical environment in mind. But through different influencing factors such as colonialism and imperialism, the content of a rich Arab civil society has been reduced by Western ideas and deformed in a way that it matches the Western view. Then it is no wonder that the Western perception is trying to dominate in a sense that it is the right one. Consequently, that this might not be applicable to the Arab countries is comprehensible, but the West still hopes that the democratisation wave, which has started in the late 1980s, reaches the Middle East and therewith civil society is linked to it. According to Norton who takes *“the global trend towards more open political systems”* for granted, considers this system as inappropriate to the Middle East based on the grounds that *“there democracy is said to have little resonance”*¹³⁹

¹³⁷ Norton, Augustus Richard (1994): Introduction. In: Norton, Augustus Richard (Ed.): Civil Society in the Middle East Vol.1, (Leiden) p.7.

¹³⁸ Norton, A. Richard (1994), op. cit. p.11-12.

¹³⁹ Norton, A. Richard (1994), op. cit. p.1.

In this sense he agrees with Samuel P. Huntington that the lack of democracy in the Middle East is due to cultural and not ideological reasons, meaning that these peoples are not capable to behave and live in a civic manner as the modern and mainstream West does. Beyond that Norton affirms his position by saying that *“the world is cleaved culturally between those with a yearning for freedom and those content to live in bondage.”* He even claims that *“the people of the Middle East are-in the main-ill suited not to say hostile to democracy”*¹⁴⁰. His perspective clearly reflects the same position Huntington holds that the civil society principle, which he defined above does not match the peoples in the Middle East. The fact that the peoples of the Middle East are governed by dictatorships tells less about their character than about the actual structure of the international system. Therefore, their alleged inability to be democratic comes close to racism. Both, Huntington and Norton are convinced that (if at all) the countries in the Middle East region are unable to master the path of political reform. Then how do Huntington and Norton avow themselves generally speaking the plethora of civil society actors (NGOs, charitable organisations, voluntary organisations etc.) in the concerned region?

Hence, I consider it as indispensable to investigate and comprehend the origins of Arab civil society in order to demonstrate that there has been a sense of civil society in the former Arab societies. Therefore, from the outset the origins of Arab civil society will be delineated in order to understand the roots and thoughts that are connected to the concept. Furthermore, I emphasize that the western expectations and models of civil society as they exist do not have to correspond to the Arab ones. Not to neglect that the Islamic civil society has deep rooted origins and has continued to exist up to the present.

The following part is going to provide an insight into this system and other aspects.

¹⁴⁰ Norton, A. Richard (1994), op. cit. p.1.

2.2 The origins of Arab Civil Society

The concept of civil society in the Arab world, as already briefly referred to above by al-Farabi and other scholars (Ibn Sina, Ibn Khaldoun, and Ibn Rushd etc.) has deep roots. In al-Farabi's state model that was influenced by Aristotle and Plato, he wrestled with the necessity of human kind to unite and engage with each other. He also focused on the types of these so-called alliances within society and the need of individuals to join together.¹⁴¹ Al-Farabi viewed human beings as social creatures who have had a certain position within society and that he or she needs the community in order to carry out his or her duties. Abdulkader Irabi emphasizes al-Farabi regarded the Islamic community as a perfect one in which the single members are not connected on the basis of the division of labour; it is rather the societal and moral order that unites them. Irabi further explains that the ethical claim al-Farabi reveals is the unselfish behaviour and the reciprocity within a community, which are based in Islam.¹⁴²

In al-Farabi's understanding of society he does not differ in terms of nationality, ethnicity, culture or any other feature. He rather views his concept of this so called society in a universal manner in a way that civil society is not specific to any form of society. Irabi calls it

*"The period of validity of al-Farabi's Utopia Islamica is unlimited and goes beyond time and space; she reflects the self-comprehension of Islam."*¹⁴³

Elis Goldberg, civil society in Medieval Islam enabled each individual to

*"pursue common interests without detailed direction or interference from the government."*¹⁴⁴

¹⁴¹ Al-Farabi (1985): Al-Farabis Abhandlung – Der Musterstaat. In: Dieterici, Friedrich (Ed.), (Hildesheim) p.1-136.

¹⁴² Irabi, Abdulkader (1989): Arabische Soziologie – Studien zur Geschichte und Gesellschaft des Islam, (Darmstadt) p.29-32.

¹⁴³ Irabi, Abdulkader (1989), op. cit. p.33. (translated by Layla Bahmad)

He emphasizes the importance of understanding historical changes as an instrument to grasp the development of Muslim civil society and trace medieval society's heritage of liberty. In medieval Islam he argues that there was a civil society that enabled men to defend against the king and state. If there was a lack of political participation, it was due to the state not living up to ideals of Sharia.¹⁴⁵

As the medieval philosopher al-Farabi clarified above civil society has far-reaching roots in Islam. Ibn Sina (Avicenna) deviates from al-Farabi in a sense that he considers human beings from an economic point of view as part of a domestic society, whereas he or she belongs to civil society in terms of politics. Ibn Sina treats the individual as a political creature, who only seeks socialization in order to survive. His view is modeled after Aristotle.¹⁴⁶

Islamic scholars at times of the Prophet Mohammed associated the Madina¹⁴⁷ community with civil society. Other Arab political thinkers and philosophers used the term civil policy as Ibn Khaldoun (1332-1406) did in a sense that any member of society or better citizen is part of a counterbalance to the state. He used his Asabiya¹⁴⁸ concept in relation with civil society.

¹⁴⁴ Goldberg, Ellis (1993): Private Goods, Public Wrongs, and Civil Society in some Medieval Arab Theory and Practice. In: Goldberg, Ellis, Kasaba, Resat, Migdal, Joel S. (Eds.): Rules and Rights in the Middle East: Democracy, Law, and Society, (Seattle, 1993) p.248.

¹⁴⁵ Goldberg, Ellis (1993), op. cit. p.250-252.

¹⁴⁶ Strohmaier, Gotthard (1999): Avicenna, (München) p.107.

¹⁴⁷ Madina is the term for city.

¹⁴⁸ Simon, Heinrich (1959): Ibn Khaldouns Wissenschaft von der Menschlichen Kultur, (Leipzig) p.48.

The basic idea that lies within Ibn Khaldoun's¹⁴⁹ Asabiya is that

*“The intention any human being has is to unite with others because that is in the nature of mankind. Therefore parties and groups come into being in that way, but their relationship with regard to the Asabiya is not that strong as it is within blood relationship.”*¹⁵⁰

Nowadays Arab world sees civil society in Western understanding as alien to Islam, secular, antireligious, and as trying to Westernise Muslim societies. Orientalists like Richard Norton argues that religious groups are gaining power and influence in the Middle East, and that their ideology, in some cases, rejects democracy and civil society

Edward Said counters

*“between the people and “Islam” there was obviously a dynamic encounter of sorts, yet what mattered to the Western student was the supervening power of Islam to make intelligible the experiences of the Islamic people, not the other way around.”*¹⁵¹

Edward Said retorts Norton in a way that from a westward point of view realities and facts were faded out. And beyond that the westward Orientalist biased glance tends to interpret and understand things in its preferred way.

According to Edward Said

“Now the Orientalist has become the representative man of his Western culture, a man who compresses within his own work a major duality of which that work (regardless of its specific form) is the symbolic expression:

¹⁴⁹ Ibn Khaldoun also dedicated his interest to the Arab-Islamic society, its developments and social as well as political outward forms (Irabi, Abdulkader (1989), op. cit. p.35.)

¹⁵⁰ Asabiya means group, the membership to a specific Bedouin tribe, which means the closeness of the members that on the other hand influences thinking and acting of the individual. Ibn Khaldoun referred to the development of human society. (Simon, Heinrich (1959), op. cit. p.53.) (translated by Layla Bahmad)

¹⁵¹ Said, Edward (1979), op. cit. p.276.

Occidental consciousness, knowledge, science taking hold of the furthest Oriental reaches as well as the most minute oriental particulars. Formally the Orientalist sees himself as accomplishing the union of Orient and Occident, but mainly by reasserting the technological, political, and cultural supremacy of the West."¹⁵²

Samuel P. Huntington sees "*social pluralism and civil society*" only in Europe and in Western societies by saying that "*Western society historically has been highly pluralistic.*"¹⁵³ basing his statement upon Karl Deutsch who featured the appearance of "*autonomous groups (that are) not based on blood relationship or marriage.*"¹⁵⁴ as Western characteristic. Further, he takes it for granted that "*the West has had a civil society that distinguished it from other civilizations*"¹⁵⁵ whereas he totally disregards al-Farabi in terms of the early development of civil society in Arab societies of that time. The peculiarity is that al-Farabi's definition argues in the same sense that civil society is present where the individual's needs and desires are balanced with those of society, and all this is based independent from the prerequisite that a relationship based on blood or marriage has to exist. The fundamental idea is that if individuals affiliate in order to form a syndicate, this happens based on the reason that they share common interests and goals independent from any form of affinity. Beyond that Huntington mentions that "*Individualism remains a distinguished feature of the West in the twentieth-century civilizations*"¹⁵⁶

However, described by Huntington, in the twentieth century how shall individualism exist when the imperialist structures started to gain ground in the Arab societies and dominate them? Further, it is an individual decision to

¹⁵² Said, Edward (1979), op. cit. p.246.

¹⁵³ Huntington, Samuel P. (1996): The West unique, not universal. In: Foreign Affairs, Vol. 75, No. 6, p.32.

¹⁵⁴ Huntington, Samuel P. (1996), op. cit. p.32.

¹⁵⁵ Huntington, Samuel P. (1996), op. cit. p.32.

¹⁵⁶ Huntington, Samuel P. (1996), op. cit. p.33.

determine whether to become part of a collective or not. Moreover, the leading thought is to affiliate in order to form a community, if the achievement of specific interests comes to the fore. And in addition to that the Palestinian society of the twentieth century started very early to develop civil society structures and to organize itself. According to Huntington the concepts of “*Representative bodies*” and “*Individualism*” together are only applicable and unique to the West. He further claims that

*“these concepts, practices and institutions have been far more prevalent in the West than in other civilizations. [...] They are what is Western, but not modern, about the West.”*¹⁵⁷

At this point he tries to draw a clear line and bases his argument on Arthur M. Schlesinger’s (Jr.) view that “*Europe is the source, the unique source of the ideas of individual liberty, political democracy, the rule of law, human rights, and cultural freedom... These are European ideas, not Asian, nor African, nor Middle Eastern ideas, except by adoption.*”¹⁵⁸

Herewith, he disputes all non-Western societies the ability and capability to have and to practice all the above-listed characteristics. And in his opinion specifically this makes the West what it is modern and a sort of model for all the others. He argues that these Western characteristics stand out against all other non-Western societies and “*make the Western civilization unique, and (it) is precious not because it is universal but because it is unique.*”¹⁵⁹ In this place he also considers the adoption and the application of western values in non-Western societies as “*immoral in its applications.*” But at this point his notion is inconsistent and contradicts his perspective concerning “*imperialism as the necessary logical consequence of universalism*” and furthermore that the West is not in need to impose its view on others. Then how does Huntington explain

¹⁵⁷ Huntington, Samuel P. (1996), op. cit. p.35.

¹⁵⁸ Huntington, Samuel P. (1996), op. cit. p.35.

¹⁵⁹ Huntington, Samuel P. (1996), op. cit. p.35.

and justify the legitimization of imperialism as discussed in the Orientalist discourse above?

This argument results from the reasoning that *non-Western societies*, as he calls them, needed to be civilized by the colonizers. Besides that he totally neglects the fact that the West is still trying to assert its ideas and notions on non-Western societies which takes place in many aspects. With regard to the Arab Muslim societies among others, Huntington is convinced that they are neither able to practice the rule of law nor to be democratic or even to have human rights.

Concerning the Palestinian society with its dynamic and vibrant civil society has proved to be more than democratic. Nevertheless, the West still tries to force its views and notions upon other societies such as in the case of Afghanistan or Iraq, which will not be discussed here in depth. In my view it does not mean that these societies reject democracy or civil society at all; it is specifically the Western interpretation and understanding of these two concepts. But the numerous projects carried out there through the various actors reflect the agenda of the West. Hence, Orientalism or the Orientalist approach has its roots in the Western social sciences of the imperialist age. Ziauddin Sardar emphasizes that even Marshall Hodgson pointed in his essays (1940-1960, even prior to Foucault) to the fact that the West would dominate the Orientalist discourse over the Non-Western societies.

Further in his view

“Both Orientalism and the Western culture assumed that each civilisation has an essential core, which manifests itself in their classical works. This kind of approach lowers history to a farce, which in a way obstructs the view towards changes and presents the past as a drama: in the case of Muslim civilisation it is seen as tragedy whereas it is celebrated in the Western societies as triumph. Consequently, the history of the occident is told in the sense of development towards freedom and rationality and that of the East is regarded as despotic and as the subject of cultural stagnation. And it is impossible to limit the Muslim civilisation within a certain region, it embraces the Middle East and Asia and therefore it is global. On the contrary Islam goes beyond many civilisation

barriers and it brings numerous new social and cultural combinations. And these are on the one hand Islamic, but on the other hand Arabic, Indian, Chinese, Turkish or even African."¹⁶⁰

The legacy of Orientalism is also reflected in the Western social sciences.¹⁶¹ As already demonstrated, civil society has existed in the Muslim societies for a very long time as a form of social organisation. Richard Norton acknowledges some components of civil society in the Middle East that originate from traditional practices in the region, for example tribal culture, which could be found in Yemen¹⁶² and the Diwaniyyahs and cooperatives in Kuwait.¹⁶³ Ahmad Moussali makes an interesting contribution with regard to

"the record on Islamic fundamentalist attitudes toward civil society", which in his view *"needs to be set straight."*¹⁶⁴

He argues that

"Islamic fundamentalism is not a monolithic bloc, but includes a variety of discourses on the relationship between the individual, society, and the state. In the theoretical foundations of civil society developed under different Islamic regimes, two main schools of thought emerged concerning the viability and necessity of civil society in Islam. On the one hand, a limited number of radical fundamentalists look negatively at strengthening civil society. On the other hand, moderate fundamentalists, who compose the significant majority of fundamentalist thinkers, call for establishing pluralistic civil society as the

¹⁶⁰ Sardar, Ziauddin (2002): *Der fremde Orient – Geschichte eines Vorurteils*, (Berlin) p.101.

¹⁶¹ Al-Azmeh, Aziz (2003), *op. cit.* p.128-142.

¹⁶² Carapico, Sheila (1995): *Yemen between Civility and Civil War*. In: Schwedler, Jillian (Ed.): *Toward Civil Society in the Middle East? A Primer*, (London) p.83.

¹⁶³ Hicks, Neil; al-Najar, Ghanim (1995): *Civil Society in Kuwait*. In: Schwedler, Jillian (Ed.): *Toward Civil Society in the Middle East? A Primer*, (London) p.59.

¹⁶⁴ Moussali, Ahmad (1995): *Modern Islamic Fundamentalist Discourses on Civil Society, Pluralism and Democracy*. In: Schwedler, Jillian (Ed.): *Toward Civil Society in the Middle East? A Primer*, (London) p.35.

cornerstone of the new Islamic state. In fact, claim the moderates, civil society is precisely Islam's original and ideal form of civil society."¹⁶⁵

Moussali also holds that

"the early existence of civil society in the Muslim societies reveals that many civil groups flourished, including the crafts, and the notables, ulama (Islamic scholars) circles and minorities' institutions."¹⁶⁶

The negative attitude towards the Western interpretation of civil society on the part of the more radical Islamic society is not unfounded. The root causes lie within history (two centuries of imperialism, colonialism, etc.).¹⁶⁷ The Islamic intellectuals Jamal ed-din al Afghani¹⁶⁸ and Mohammad Abdou¹⁶⁹ argue for the compatibility of Islam and modernity where they view Islam from a rational point of view. Al-Afghani represents the Islamic resistance against the then existing colonialism whereas Abdou, on the other hand, stands for the modernized interpretation of Islam that contains many Western ideas which in one way suited the interests of the more liberal and national elite. He pointed out, however, that they were not supposed to go beyond a certain limit with regard to Islam.¹⁷⁰ Afghani is the founder of the political Islamic movement – pan-Islamism - and his ideas are still present.¹⁷¹ Through his deep interest for the

¹⁶⁵ Moussali, Ahmad (1995), op. cit. p. 35.

¹⁶⁶ Moussali, Ahmad (1995), op. cit. p. 35.

¹⁶⁷ This is based on the colonisation of a large number of Arab countries such as Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, who were colonised by the French; whereas the British dominated countries such as Egypt, Jordan etc. And even before the French and the British colonised these countries the Ottomans also had an influence on them.

¹⁶⁸ Jamal ad-Din al-Afghani (1838/39-1897) almost spent his entire life in action for the fight against the European colonial expansion in the Islamic world. He was very active and rather a tactician than a theorist. (Peters, Rudolph (2005), op. cit. p.113-118.)

¹⁶⁹ Bihl, Wolfdieter (2003): Islam, (Böhlau) p.89-96.

¹⁷⁰ Peters, Rudolph (2005): Erneuerungsbewegungen im Islam vom 18. bis zum 20. Jahrhundert und die Rolle des Islams in der neueren Geschichte: Antikolonialismus und Nationalismus. In: Steinbach, Udo; Ende, Werner (Eds.): Der Islam in der Gegenwart, (München) p.109.

¹⁷¹ These days as Irschad Mandschi argues, there is no need for an external concept, which is going to be imposed on Islam by the West. On the grounds that Islam itself has a rich culture, called Itschihad, which is characterized by its independent thinking, the religious practice is able

Islamic society, he considered it as necessary to be reformed and modernized. He criticised the authoritarian power structures and appealed to the abolition of imperialism. He viewed society in terms of Islam, which means that he emphasized the religious community in his thoughts, which is not bound to any nationality Irabi states

“The religious consciousness is stronger than the national one.”¹⁷²

Here, it has to be differentiated between society and civil society. Social scientists emphasize the difference between community and society.

“In the social sciences the fundamental term society represents the broad entity of a structured living together of human beings within a defined spacious terrain. Therefore society is an essential structure as a sort of pre-requisite for the permanent organized and structured co-action of human beings in order to achieve certain goals and purposes in particular for the formulation of individual and common needs.”¹⁷³

Towards the end of the 19th century, Ferdinand Tönnies (1887) dealt with the terminology of community and society.¹⁷⁴ He viewed community as a human form of organisation, which precedes society. The relationship among family members represents for him the origin of a community. Society on the other hand does not have strong ties among the single members that belong to it. These can develop, but they are not completely given as it is the case within a

to conform and adapt itself to the coeval circumstances. She refers to her fellow believers and tries to clarify that it is not necessary to import foreign traditions and values. She is positive about the bridge over of the existing barriers between the West and the Islamic world. Mandschi thinks that there is a form of Arab imperialism, which complicates the situation. She emphasizes that Islam itself does not depict the main problem. But this is the problem, because Islam is generalized and it is usually viewed as the monster that has to be tamed.

¹⁷² Irabi, Abdulkader (1989), op. cit. p. 68.

¹⁷³ Gerd, Reinhold (1991): Soziologielexikon, (München) p.198. (translated by Layla Bahmad)

Cp. Opielka, Michael (2004): Gemeinschaft in Gemeinschaft – Soziologie nach Hegel und Parsons, (Wiesbaden)

¹⁷⁴ Tönnies, Ferdinand (1963): Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft – Grundbegriffe der reinen Soziologie, (Wiesbaden) p.8-82.

community. Members of a society live peacefully together, but they are still separated from each other. He bases his view on the fact that members of a community have a sort of exchange (give and take), which is not necessarily expected within a society.¹⁷⁵

“The reciprocal=common, unifying attitude as own will of a community is the element, which has to be understood as consensus. And it is this particular social energy and empathy that keeps the people like limbs of a whole together.”¹⁷⁶

In the view of Tönnies, community is based upon close relationship and trust as they exist within a family, and that of a society depend on rational and a sort of beneficial ties. With regard to the community concept, he adds that it is organized around the house, the family and the components of language, religion and culture play an essential role in that context. He broadens his thought and expresses it as follows

“In fact the collaborative ways of life and systems, those wherein the folklore and its culture preserve themselves are a sort of sphere which the state opposes with a cloaked dissembling hatred and contemptuous acceptance (to a certain degree) that this sphere is detached and alienated.”¹⁷⁷

The community seems to be a closed entity that is characterized by its values and own ideals, hence this sphere cannot really be touched by the state since it is based on strong ties among its members. Whereas the state can exert influence on a society since this form of association does not represent such a close alliance as a community does. Gerd explains that in view of Tönnies, the community concept is based on ties that are real whereas the social or societal ones are more fictive.¹⁷⁸ In 1925, Max Weber broadened Tönnies concept of

¹⁷⁵ Rieger Brigitte (2003), op. cit. p.23.

¹⁷⁶ Tönnies, Ferdinand (1963), op. cit. p.20. (translated by Layla Bahmad)

¹⁷⁷ Tönnies, Ferdinand (1963), op. cit. p.243. (translated by Layla Bahmad)

¹⁷⁸ Gerd, Reinhold (1991), op. cit. p.184-186.

society and community and analysed the collectivization and socialization aspect of both.¹⁷⁹

At times before Islam, altruistic behaviour and reciprocity characterize the spirit of a society, which was only integrated through kinship. This reciprocal behaviour which was based on kinship was expanded later towards collective interests and the individual is embedded in the social network of a group. These are the structures of Ibn Khaldoun's "*Asabiya*".¹⁸⁰

Even primordial structures such as family, clan, tribe, but also communities (castes and social status) are excluded from the civil society concept because these do not include free choice as civil society does, where people decide if they want to join others voluntarily (within associations or organisations) in order to seek a common interest.¹⁸¹ One of the essential functions of the clan is to secure the economic and social coverage of its members among each other and towards the outside world as well. A clan consists out of several communities of various descents, who sometimes ascribe to a common root in the family genealogy. These groups usually live in one or several villages together in the same area.¹⁸² But this does not necessarily mean that people did not have a relationship independent from their family structures.

Ibn Khaldoun emphasized this in his "*Asabiya*" concept and Al-Afghani argued strongly against imperialism and asked the Egyptians to encounter the colonial threat by the British. The crucial point for al-Afghani was not only that the Muslims unite in a community, but also to recognize that Islam and rationality were not sufficient by themselves, but rather it is the ability of society to adapt

¹⁷⁹ Cp. Weber, Max (1922), Winckelmann, Johannes (1990): *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft: Grundriss der verstehenden Soziologie*, (Tübingen)

¹⁸⁰ Irabi, Abdulkader (1989), op. cit. p.4.

¹⁸¹ Rieger, Brigitte (2003), op. cit. p.21.

¹⁸² Erhard, Franz (1988): *Zu Familie, Klan und Stammeswesen*. In: Steinbach, Udo; Rovert, Rüdiger (Eds.): *Der Nahe und Mittlere Osten – Politik, Gesellschaft, Wirtschaft, Geschichte, Kultur*, Vol.1 Grundlagen, Strukturen und Problemfelder, (Opladen) p.511-520.

changes. Likewise Abdou tried to analyse the existing relations with the Islamic society at times of colonial domination and to bridge the chasm between the European and Islamic societies.

The Western expansion during the second half of the nineteenth century was the starting point for the development of modern Islam that has been started through the Western influence in form of colonialism. It became a kind of opposition to resist to the external influences that have come essentially with the colonial powers. The reactions towards the changes that took place within the Islamic world were viewed differently. The expansion of colonial domination over the Islamic world was a process, which lasted from the beginning of the 19th century up to the end of World War I. This process accelerated towards the end of the 19th century. The European powers acquired almost the entire Islamic world. The remaining parts were controlled by one or several European powers. The Islamic world realized that the influences started to grow and therefore - as in Egypt and Tunisia, - they tried to oppose this action through a kind of military reform and extended their strategy by means of reforming their laws, administrations and educations programmes, which led to an educated elite. Trade was an additional component.¹⁸³

The attraction towards the pan-Islamic ideas of al Afghani was limited. Some argued against them and others saw an option in them to reform Islam. The expansion of this pan-Islamic wave caused deep and extensive emotions. The initial impulse was whether the Islamic world was ready to accept or to reject the “intellectual products that were coming from the West” as Rudolph Peters calls them.¹⁸⁴

¹⁸³ Peters, Rudolph (2005), op. cit. p.104.

¹⁸⁴ Peters, Rudolph (2005), op. cit. p.103-104.

Further he emphasizes that

“For the Muslims arose the need to defend their cultural identity, not only because of their current situation to be governed and dominated colonially, but also due to the immediate attack on their identity.”¹⁸⁵

But the Islamic world countered and negated the claim that arose on behalf of Western thinkers that Islam poses an obstacle to progress. The Islamic world argued that it was quite the reverse, because they were developed further and advanced economically and culturally in the Early Middle Ages than the Christian Europe at that time.

Rudolph Peters points out that

“The flourishing European sciences owe the Islamic thinkers of the past a lot. In the Middle Ages the Europeans have taken the attainments of the Islamic philosophers and sciences. And now, if the Muslims took over the technology and the sciences of the West, then they would just adopt that what has been their legal body of thought.”¹⁸⁶

The nineteenth century thinkers, such as al Afghani and his fellow Abdou, recognized and understood the debate with Western thinkers and their train of thoughts. Therefore, they considered the reformation of Islam a modern form as the key to social and political change. In view of the attacks towards Islam they viewed it as necessary for the reason that the real Islam has been deformed and needed to be adapted in terms of the public interest (Arabic *Maslaha*). Further they sought the establishment of an Islamic unity in order to oppose European colonialism. The major idea was that the Islamic governments would cooperate with each other and build a common structure, which would protect them from European attacks.

¹⁸⁵ Peters, Rudolph (2005), op. cit. p.106.

¹⁸⁶ Peters, Rudolph (2005), op. cit. p.118.

Referring back to al Afghani's kindred spirit Mohammad Abdou who also sought to achieve a common sense of the Islamic world, which he regarded as the only right path to strengthen it, he said

“The realization of this idea was for him indispensable in order to achieve the well-being of all individuals within the Muslim societies. He affirmed his thought with the reason that it would lead to social stability and secure the progress of society.”¹⁸⁷

In the course of the nineteenth century, the European influence throughout the Islamic world started to shine through and became more visible in form of laws and economic facilities. These innovations divided the so called Europeanized elite and the population into two parts. Mohammad Abdou aimed to counteract these vigour's that were introduced by the Europeans. He strived to bridge this gap by the instrumentality of Islam in the form of religious knowledge, which he considered as the right mean.

He wrote:

“How shall the relationships among the large community be preserved, if the relationships between the families have fallen apart? This would be, as if someone wanted to pick the fruits from the branches of a tree, after he had felled the trunks and dug out the roots?”¹⁸⁸

In his view, Irabi explains that truthful education furthers the social cohesion and the religious consciousness, which on the other hand might hinder social decay. These thoughts were a kind of drive, which let him try to combine these European elements with Islam and to provide an acceptable option to the Europeanized elite. The Muslim Brotherhood¹⁸⁹ in Egypt that had been founded

¹⁸⁷ Peters, Rudolph (2005), op. cit. p.121.

¹⁸⁸ Irabi, Abdulkader (1989), op. cit. p.72. (translated by Layla Bahmad)

¹⁸⁹ Farschid, Olaf (2006): Staat und Gesellschaft in der Ideologie der ägyptischen Muslimbrüderschaft. In: Islamismus, (Berlin) p.48-94.
(http://www.bmi.bund.de/Internet/Content/Common/Anlagen/Broschueren/2003/Islamismus__Id__25235__de,templateId=raw,property=publicationFile.pdf/Islamismus_Id_25235_de.pdf)

by Hasan al-Banna in 1928. According to Abdou, they view Islam as rational and they aim to establish a society that is based on Islamic law, which is considered as fair.

They neither tend to the former socialist system of Marxism nor to the Western concept of democracy whereat they view the latter as Western imperialism. Peter Heine states

“The Muslim Brotherhood reproached the European systems to export their ideologies, which they try to project only onto the Arab respectively to the Islamic world. But according to present statements they have changed their view. Representatives of the Muslim Brotherhood stated that it is the task of the Muslim societies to hold forth on Islam in the Western societies.”¹⁹⁰

Thus, as we have seen, the deprecating attitude toward the Western idea of civil society is not unsubstantiated, though both al Afghani and his like-minded friend Abdou tried to encounter the colonial influence on the Islamic world from a rational perspective with regard to Islam. They created the basis for community and solidarity in the Muslim world and thus pan-Islamism, which was seen as the response towards the European progress.

Hence, as explained above by Hanafi, the more radical Islamic view of civil society is not unfounded, but there is a second reception in the Muslim world of civil society that tends to view it as a universal concept independent of its Western heritage. This perception goes along the social differences, which means the more Western oriented elites (as some NGOs are considered to be part of, because of their programmes, that reflect a Westernised agenda) in contrast to the so-called rest, which on the other hand are more traditional (religious) oriented as the Islamic organisations are.

¹⁹⁰ Heine, Peter (2003): Islamismus-Ein ideologiegeschichtlicher Überblick. In: Bundesministerium des Inneren (Ed.): Islamismus, (Berlin), p.16. (translated by Layla Bahmad)

Cp. Heine, Peter (2004): Terror in Allahs Namen – Extremistische Kräfte im Islam, (Bonn) p.98ff.

The former rather look at it as a kind of tool, which is used

*“as a model, a norm of practice, and an ideal in lifestyle for individuals and societies. This is the other radical position – the secular, westernised alternative.”*¹⁹¹

Hanafi provides a third option that

*“there are some that argue for the possibility of developing the ingredients of classical Islam to reflect modern social needs. They argue that similarities can be maintained and differences can be bridged through creative reinterpretation of the basic ethical sources of Islam. Furthermore, civil society is not one uniform type in the Muslim world.”*¹⁹²

Ahmad Moussali explains that according to this trend (including more Islamist thinkers such as Hasan al-Banna, Rashid al-Ghannushi (Tunisia), and Hasan al-Turabi (Sudan) and others) attribute violence to the absence of democratic institutions and pluralistic civil societies. They do not see any contradiction between Islam and Western philosophies and institutions.¹⁹³

Further, Marwa El-Daly argues,

*“Islamic philanthropy has a long tradition of institutionalised giving that is deeply rooted within Islamic cultures and nations.”*¹⁹⁴

Ana María Caballeira-Debasa adds that

“The Islamic pious endowment (waqf, pl. awqaf, hubs, pl. ahbas) as a social, economic, and juridical institution has undergone considerable development in the Islamic world and played an important role in society. In general terms, the waqf or hubs as an endowment in perpetuity, in which the proprietor

¹⁹¹ Hanafi, Hasan (2002), op., cit., p.171.

¹⁹² Hanafi, Hasan (2002), op., cit., p.171.

¹⁹³ Moussali, Ahmad (1995), op. cit. p. 36.

¹⁹⁴ El-Daly, Marwa (2002): Islamic Philanthropy: An Overview. In: MAECANATA ACTUELL No.37 p.3.

renounces the rights with the condition that the profit or usufruct be dedicated toward the immediate or future benefit of some pious charity. Normally, the properties cannot be transferred, this being one of the restrictions that characterize this institution.”

She explains that

“the choice of recipient to obtain the benefits determines the categorization of this type of endowment.”¹⁹⁵

The intention was to serve the community in general and to provide a base for sustainable social development and the idea still exists today in a large number of Arab countries. Certainly, these Islamic philanthropic institutions and traditions did not remain unaffected. They were subject to the state with all its regulations and laws, which tried to have an influence on them throughout all the stages of history.

These days the situation and the environment of these Islamic philanthropic institutions throughout the Arab world have changed, and they feel to be exposed to new economic and social confrontations. They have changed in different countries depending on historical developments, colonial impact, political regimes. As a result of these experiences, and on the basis of their perception of the past, a larger number of them fear to be dependent on foreign aid in order to continue their mission. But the decisive factor is

Marwa El-Daly reveals,

“In many of these countries, the old traditions of giving have been lost, or have become stagnant due to the suppressive policies and regulations of governments, and perhaps most importantly, the lack of trust between citizens, government, and civil society. Institutionalized philanthropic systems that once

¹⁹⁵ Carballeira-Debasa, Ana María (2005): The Role of Endowments in the the Framework of Andalusian Society. In: Borgolte, Michael (Ed.): Stiftungen im Christentum, Judentum und Islam vor der Moderne – Auf der Suche nach ihren Gemeinsamkeiten und Unterschieden in religiösen Grundlagen, praktischen Zwecken und historischen Transformationen, (Berlin) p.109.

characterized Islamic nations for centuries (such as the existence of different types of awqaf) ¹⁹⁶ served diversified social development purposes, disappeared in many Islamic countries.”¹⁹⁷

Out of Caballeira-Debasa’s arguments it becomes clear that these institutions and therefore this form of civil society, has its origin in Islam. This explains that the people used to share many things among each other and through their shared values in terms of religion they built up a strong community and hence, a kind of society that used to act in a civic manner independently from any higher power. These organisations used to have their own administration and regulations with regard to their society. The modern variant in form of ministries of Waqf and Religious Affairs does still exist today in many Islamic countries where Islamic philanthropy is pursued with support of civil society actors who could be found in a variety of associations and NGOs. Their task is to carry on the development efforts and to support the needy part of society.

¹⁹⁶ (singular Waqf – endowment; plural Awqaf - endowments)

¹⁹⁷ El-Daly, Marwa (2002), op. cit. p.3.

2.2.1 The Aid System in Islam in the Past up to the Present

In Islam there are four types of giving *zakat*, *sadaqa*, *heba* and *waqf*. The first one – *zakat* (*voluntary tax on wealth*)¹⁹⁸ is one of the five pillars of Islam where all Muslims are obligated to donate or pay 2.5% of his or her income or savings for social causes. Then *sadaqa* (*rightfulness, truth*) and *heba* are a different form of giving which is more on a voluntary basis. Therefore, the donation does not have to be of materialistic value. It is the good deed for others, which counts. *Heba* (*gift*) is a form of charitable giving (either in form of property or possessions) a Muslim can do during his life. The last one is the *waqf*¹⁹⁹, which is the institutionalised form of giving in order to guarantee sustainable development. The literal meaning of the word itself is to hold, tie up or stop. Therefore, all the donated money or property is changed into the property of God. Ana Maria Caballeira-Debasa emphasizes that through the institution of pious endowments, the founder assures himself not only of achieving some religious merit in the eyes of God, with the hope of receiving the recompense of the hereafter, but also of acquiring social prestige before his peers.²⁰⁰

The first waqf existed in Egypt in the year 641. The waqf system reached its summit at the beginning of the Ottoman rule in Egypt. At that time around 40% of the lands were endowed by waqf institutions. The first type of *waqf* (pl. *awqaf*) or *hubs* as it is called (the public hubs are the hubs khayri) have an altruistic character. They are an endowment with a pious purpose in the benefit of institutions of public utility, whether it is a service of a religious or social order. With regard to the second type of waqf/hubs – the family hubs (hubs ahli), is a measure that the founder adopts in order to cover the necessities of his

¹⁹⁸ Pfeifer, Karen (2005): Is there an Islamic Economics? In: Beinlin, Joel, Stork, Joe (Eds.): Political Islam – Essays from Middle East Report, (Los Angeles) p.158.

¹⁹⁹ There are three types of waqf: the charitable or public waqf for public charitable purposes, the family waqf, which is an endowment that serves the heirs of the endower, and mixed waqf, which combines the two forms just explained above (El-Daly, Marwa (2002) op. cit. p.6).

²⁰⁰ Carballeira-Debasa, Ana María (2005), op. cit. p. 109-110.

relatives, thereby responding to a fundamentally material interest. When the beneficiaries designated by the founder die out, the goods assume a pious usage and are transformed into public hubs. In this case the hubs provide an easy means of eluding the Quranic prescriptions on matters of inheritance and constitute a method of bequeathing the patrimony or, more precisely, the usufruct proceeding from the donated items. The objective here is to safeguard the integrity of the property within the midst of a group of persons. These type of hubs could also respond to the founders desire to protect the patrimony against confiscation by the rulers in turbulent times.²⁰¹

The intention of waqf was to work for a good cause.²⁰² It has to be considered that this system has had a significant role in economic and social terms with regard to the Muslim societies in Arab countries. But not only there, but also in Al-Andalus²⁰³ (which was under Arab domination for seven centuries). At that time, the wealthy ruling Muslims built mosques and public cemeteries in the great cities, which were supposed to serve as pious endowments and to be deemed by God as worthy.²⁰⁴ They also had an eye on social, political and economic conditions and traditionally used the awqaf as part of an effort to preserve their wealth and influence, especially in periods of change and uncertainty. The objectives of the awqaf or hubs were charitable ones that were directed to the needy against the background of Islamic notions of equality and social justice. Thus, it is also remarkable that the first awqaf with provable roots were established in Palestine in the year 912. The waqf (in Jerusalem under British Mandate) fulfilled vital political, social and economic functions. Reiter presents a picture of the role of Islam in mandatory Jerusalem through the resources of the waqf. The awqaf, as owners of 80% of the land in the old city of Jerusalem, and their socio-political influence, lie at the root of the present

²⁰¹ Carballeira-Debasa, Ana María (2005), op. cit. p. 110.

²⁰² El-Daly, Marwa (2002), op. cit. p. 6.

²⁰³ Al-Andalus is the Arab term for the southern part of the Iberian Peninsula (Andalusia).

²⁰⁴ Carballeira-Debasa, Ana María (2005), op. cit. p. 112.

debate about the character and future of this Holy City. The prevalent image of institutionalised corruption within the waqf system, involving beneficiaries, administrators and members of the elite, is not completely supported by the findings of the present study.²⁰⁵ The charity and charitable institutions in Medieval Islam and Muslim societies of the Middle East played a significant role for the reason that medieval Islamic societies lacked public institutions and services to alleviate the suffering of the indigent and incapacitated. The pious endowments not only served the poor in that way, they also served to promote science, culture, and knowledge among the ulama (Islamic scholars) of humble social background.²⁰⁶ Abdelbaki Hermassi points out that they were also a kind of support

“to finance marriages, cover funeral services, and lessen the risk of certain commercial activities. Islamic brotherhoods and Sufi orders also served these functions, although the services were only provided to members.”²⁰⁷

Yaacov Lev analysed in his study a variety of primary resources, including Arabic chronicles, dictionaries, waqf deeds, and epigraphic evidence. He covers a large range of periods in medieval Islam including the Fatimids, Abbasids, Ayyubids, and the early Ottoman period. Charity is deeply embedded in religious thought and teachings of the three monotheistic religions. This discussion while focusing on medieval Islam is set in a wider framework, with many references to both Christian and Jewish Parallels. He examines three main topics: the meaning of charity to the individual, the social and political ramifications of alms-giving, and the impact of the institutionalised forms of charity (the awqaf system) on urban and rural societies. He analyses the motives and attitudes of the donors (the caliphs, the sultans, emirs, and the wealthy); the recipients of charity (the poor and the educated class); and the charitable institutions and services that provided the framework for conveyance

²⁰⁵ Reiter, Yitzhak (1996): *Islamic Endowments in Jerusalem Under British Mandate*, (London)

²⁰⁶ Carballeira-Debasa, Ana María (2005), *op. cit.* p. 116.

²⁰⁷ Hermassi, Abdelbaki (1995): *Notes on Civil Society in Tunisia*. In: Schwedler, Jillian (Ed.): *Toward Civil Society in the Middle East? A Primer*, (London) p.77.

(hospitals, Quranic schools, the so called madrasas, and law colleges, the ransom of captives, and support of orphans and widows)²⁰⁸

Hence, this shows that the Muslims in the Arab world have their elements of what we call civil society today deeply rooted in religion (Islam) and general culture, and al-Farabi describes that

*“(the) civil society derives from the need to balance the desires and needs of the individual with the will and needs of society.”*²⁰⁹

Even later in the fourteenth and the fifteenth centuries these endowments played an important role throughout the Islamic world and they were the most popular institutions. The endowments not only enjoyed popularity, but also the decisive factor and thought was to bind society together.²¹⁰ With regard to this, Marwa El-Daly makes an interesting and important remark.

The structure of the awqaf resembles that of today's modern foundations and associations, which flourished in many Arab countries. A large number of recipients benefited from it, either in the form of education (schools etc.), health (hospitals), water supply and many other services. The purpose was to set up those institutions independently and separately from the state to protect them from instrumentalization by rulers and to offer a better life to the population. The original waqf has undergone much change and has more or less adapted itself to the existing laws and regulations within the state. Accordingly, these have had a great influence on civil society if one considers how wealthy the awqaf are. Therefore, the states or the governments, especially since the 19th century, tried to gain control over them and nationalize them. With regard to Palestine,

²⁰⁸ Lev, Yaacov (2005): *Charity, Endowments, and Charitable Institutions in Medieval Islam*, (Gainesville)

Cp. to Borgolte, Michael (Ed.) (2005): *Stiftungen im Christentum, Judentum und Islam vor der Moderne – Auf der Suche nach ihren Gemeinsamkeiten und Unterschieden in religiösen Grundlagen, praktischen Zwecken und historischen Transformationen*, (Berlin)

²⁰⁹ Hanafi, Hasan (2002), op. cit. p.180.

²¹⁰ El-Daly, Marwa (2002), op. cit. p.7.

after the Israeli takeover of East Jerusalem in 1967, Islamic institutions remained Jordanian organs. After the peace accords between Israel, the PLO and Jordan, the Palestinians adopted a strategy of establishing a local Palestinian Supreme Muslim Authority serving as a political body to handle Palestinian religious and national debate for the future of Jerusalem. The waqf institution, which is in decline in many Muslim countries, has been revived under Israeli rule. The economic resources of the waqf have been mobilized for the political struggle and it serves as a means of preserving the Islamic character of East Jerusalem and of strengthening the Muslim Arab population's attachment to Islamic institutions.²¹¹

In Tunisia, a further stage in the development of associational life apart from the awqaf had been created with French colonial domination. The French saw the need in the establishment of

*“a society of civil character with a cultural orientation. A club and forum, (its) teaching and activities sought to link modernity and asalah (rootedness)”*²¹² with each other. The traditional and very old associations such as the awqaf have been marginalized in a way and were replaced by new groups such as political parties, professional associations, Unions and others.

On the other hand Abdelbaki Hermassi states

*“these groups were not very involved during national mobilizations for independence, they managed to retain a margin of autonomy.”*²¹³

In Algeria, for example, the French administration nationalized all awqaf with the consequence that no elements of “social security” were at the disposal for the

²¹¹ Reiter, Yitzhak (1997): *Islamic Institutions in Jerusalem: Palestinian Muslim Organisation Under Jordanian and Israeli Rule*, (New York)

Reiter focuses in his study on the role of the Sharia (Islamic law) courts in various mechanisms which were developed to facilitate the adaptation of the traditional Islamic institutions to modern conditions.

²¹² Hermassi, Abdelbaki (1995), op. cit. p. 77.

²¹³ Hermassi, Abdelbaki (1995), op. cit. p. 77.

population whose land was confiscated by the colonial administration. In that way they tried to gain control over the Islamic infrastructure, and the second purpose was to distribute land among French settlers. The effects for the Islamic endowment were not insignificant and the consequence of this was the so called désacralisation.²¹⁴

This has been realized in many Arab countries, where the government expropriated the owners and brought properties under its supervision. Here, again not only was Egypt was the first country with the first waqf, it was also the forerunner who established the first ministry (called *diwan al ahbas*) to control the awqaf, established in 736. Its task was to supervise them and to control their finances, which could be equated with a Ministry of Finance. Before, the trustees of these awqaf were accountable to the judiciary, but with the creeping change in the form of laws and policies by the government, the awqaf institutions were subject to a conscious diminution of their power and influence. Even in Egypt the form of family or mixed awqaf has been prohibited by law since the mid of the twentieth century up to the present time. In the former Soviet Union the awqaf property of the Muslim minority living there was confiscated by the government at the beginning of the twentieth century.

The consequence was that the Muslim societies saw themselves forced to give up a rich and cherished cultural component of civil society.²¹⁵ The awqaf have always represented a special greatness of civil society. According to that the major idea behind it, was not to be or build a counterpart to the government. In a way it was rather to build up a strong common structure.

²¹⁴ Kogelmann, Franz (2001): Islamische Stiftungen und ,religiöse Angelegenheiten im Algerien des 20. Jahrhunderts. In: Orient, Vol. 42, No.4, 642-643.

²¹⁵ El-Daly, Marwa (2002), op. cit. p.8.

Marwa El-Daly concludes that

“this system could not flourish under suppressive governments.”²¹⁶

Nevertheless, these so-called civil society associations contributed a lot to the strength of civil society in the Muslim societies in particular within the more religious parts of society where they found great consent and sympathy. This is reflected in the Islamic institutions such as Islamic Relief, Hamas and Hizbullah who are all very popular. The crucial point is that these civil society actors have a strong basis within society, since they are not introduced by the West, and they represent traditional and religious values of Islam. In the exercise of their duties in the welfare sector through the waqf and zakat they have positioned themselves on a certain level. Certainly, the more secular NGOs in the Arab countries, who are prone to Western values, may view them as a competitive component because of their self-evident acceptance whereas the secular ones are recognized but viewed as ambiguous. The Western influences, which invaded the Arab societies in the social field do not always, bring modernity that expresses itself in a social manner. What happens is that these societies try to adapt themselves to the Western pattern and adjust the new elements in the form of democracy and liberal structures. But the core institutions (in particular the Islamic organisations) and values remain within the old and solid structures, which will be explained in the following by means of civil society in the Arab states.

²¹⁶ El-Daly, Marwa (2002), op. cit. p.9.

2.2.2 The varying civil societies in the Arab states

Thus, civil society in the Muslim or Arab world varies from one country to another; for instance, civil society in Afghanistan under the Taliban domination is defined and lived differently than in Lebanon, Morocco or Tunisia where civil society is more liberal. Jillian Schwedler explains that

*“The instances of civil society in the Middle East are not few. Every day, from Iran to Morocco and from Yemen to Turkey, citizens meet formally and informally to discuss issues ranging from health and social services to economic policy and political reform.”*²¹⁷

The more interesting point in his thought is that

*“Some Middle Eastern governments tolerate these gatherings; in other countries, nongovernmental associations are strictly forbidden and harshly repressed.”*²¹⁸,

which shows that these so-called civil societies as they exist throughout the Arab countries differ in their spread and effectiveness, and above all, if the authoritarian regimes allow this spheres to exist, they determine in which form and to what an extent. This means that civil society expresses itself in a way in which society considers as the right one for itself and that suits its needs best, whether opposing an authoritarian regime or a theocratic form of government. A large number of authoritarian regimes limit the space of activity for civil society and its actors. This can be found in Afghanistan under the rule of the Taliban or in Morocco. The recent dramatic economic and social changes in Morocco have caused civic associations to emerge, especially in urban centres, but state-imposed constraints have limited their impact on public policy. Thousands of associations exist, yet they are inefficient as channels and tools of representation due to the constraining effect that the state and conservative parties have on them. Often these groups rely on political parties to exist. The

²¹⁷ Schwedler, Jillian (1995), op. cit. p.2.

²¹⁸ Schwedler, Jillian (1995), op. cit. p.2.

largest obstacles to democratisation and political liberalization include overwhelming power of the monarch, the attitude of the political elite, the role of the Makhzen (state), and legal and administrative constraints.²¹⁹

Brigitte Rieger conducted a study about civil society structures in the form of associations and organisations in Lebanon and which role these actors play in the Lebanese civil society. She focused on the civility aspect, which she questioned against the background of militia organisations that have come into being without formal civility criteria and who are flawed with a military past. She refers to political parties and NGOs with a confessional, family or clientelistic background and to the neo-traditional forms of organisation.²²⁰ She analysed the relationship between original communities (for instance the *tawaif*, *pl. taifa*, which are defined as a group of people who share the same confession) and the existing civil society.²²¹ By means of her Lebanese case study she emphasizes that external effects cannot inhere or better reduce the value of existing civil society structures such Hizbullah and other private welfare organisations that enjoy a deep confidence in the population. She revealed that adjustment processes take place, but cannot replace the primordial structures. Further, she makes clear that

“Strengthening indigenous NGOs does not lead automatically to the empowerment of civil society. It could also contribute to the force of the primordial structures and hinder transformation.”²²²

Richard Norton evaluates the overall state of civil society in the Middle East and claims that civil society is largely lacking in the region, although certain countries show promising signs of greater social and political participation. Here, it has to be emphasized that the Western perception and interpretation is

²¹⁹ Layachi, Azzedine (1998): State-Society Relations and Change in Morocco. In: Layachi, Azzedine (Ed.): Economic Crisis and Political Change in North Africa, (Westport) p.89-105.

²²⁰ Rieger, Brigitte (2003), op. cit. p.22.

²²¹ Rieger, Brigitte (2003), op. cit. p.26.

²²² Rieger, Brigitte (2003), op. cit. p.384.

lacking and the reason for this is not far away. Since the Arab states are authoritarian and oppressive regimes, though Norton states most governments are not democratic, there is a development of civil society within existing political frameworks. This is part of a process of liberalization that some governments have chosen to undertake, which has made it easier for civil society to develop. But the situation is not the same everywhere. In Tunisia, for instance, there are about 8400 NGOs out of which just three can be considered as independent or literally Non-Governmental Organisations, and that is why they are made incapable of action. He points out that from the 1960s to the late 1980s; the number of associations in the region increased from 20.000 to 70.000 ²²³ and that, in the 1990s the

“new language of politics in the Middle East talks about participation, cultural authenticity, freedom and even democracy.”²²⁴

Nonetheless, he points out that such reforms and means of liberalization are often intended to maintain non-democratic regimes instead of gradually installing a democratic system of government (e.g. Jordan). He stresses the diversity of the Middle East and maintains that some societies accommodate the development of civil society in the region. He notes that authoritarianism is prevalent in the region and that this is partly responsible for the dearth of civil society there. He argues that authoritarian governments view open participation and pluralism as a threat to their authority and manipulate and stifle civil society in an attempt to protect their control over people. He claims that authoritarian governments tend to *“breed exclusivity”*²²⁵ so that their subjects are encouraged to reject plurality.

Hanafi is aware of the fact that those Arab countries who follow a more liberal or as he calls it a “middle” course are still far away from civil society in its fullest

²²³ Norton, A. Richard (1994), op. cit. p.9.

²²⁴ Norton, A. Richard (1994), op. cit. p.5.

²²⁵ Norton, A. Richard (1994), op. cit. p.7.

sense as it is understood in the mainstream West. But what does this Western civil society mean? The right to vote? To have political parties? Freedom of the press? The worn-out term of democracy? Or human rights? Informal political actors? For optimists in the Arab world the concept represents the catalyst for political transformation. Hanafi is convinced that the Western reception of civil society can be brought into accord with Islamic ethical theory on the basis of the cultural context it underlies.

In his point of view the last above given approach towards civil society is the only one that would work for pluralistic Muslim societies no matter which country they belong to.²²⁶ The Western concept(s) have to contain certain keywords that are connected to the understanding of it, and if that is not the case it is impossible to talk about civil society anymore. Hanafi has already attempted to emphasize, many of the Arab countries are still distanced from putting human rights and other values into action, but in the Muslim world other values such as the family, the community and cultural aspects still play an important role in civil society. The family is an essential element of the larger structure of society and in a way towards civil society. The family is related in that sense with culture as being the cultural capital within civil society. Here, again appears the concept of the awqaf, and in particular the family awqaf, which used to play an important role within Islamic institutions and therefore within civil society before the governments tried to take possession of them. The awqaf developed its own form of civil society within the culture of the Islamic societies throughout the Arab world behind which the idea existed to bind society together. Hence, it does not mean in order to talk about civil society that the concept has to be filled with secular or any specific key terms so that it can be labelled ,civil society. The awqaf system has proved that it has been able to provide a large number of services to its community and to be a cohesive entity that has had the capacity to administer itself and to serve the needs and interests of its members.

²²⁶ Hanafi, Hasan (1994), op. cit., p.173.

Hanafi summarizes the Islamic understanding as follows

“in short, Islamic theory and practice sustain a number of legitimate human groupings existing between the state and the individual. These groupings are endowed with their own sphere of autonomy free from government intrusion, which made Islamic societies historically far less monolithic and undifferentiated than some Western stereotypes of a theocratic society allow.”²²⁷

Therefore, in my view, *civil society could be located as an existing sphere, which is situated below formal politics (political parties, governmental institutions) but above the single individual, and this platform provides space for society to gather for common interests involving the necessary tools in form of associations, foundations, or organisations, which allow the group of people to act as an entity to achieve its interests. Civil society, then, is independent from cultures and is not specifically linked to types of political systems like, for example, Western democracy. This should help to follow the path of Islamic civil society and what its ideas are.*

These groupings or awqaf (religious endowments) are an essential component in Islamic civil society, whereas pessimists view it as a Western concept that has been used as a kind of stereotype being applied and transferred to other societies. The civil society debate has always been conducted with key terms such as secularisation, democratisation and pluralism, which reflect optimism towards this concept, but it has also been accompanied with critical eyes.²²⁸ The civil society debate is also embedded within a historical and political context, where on the one hand the Islamic world is regarded as the enemy of the West since the 19th century, and on the other hand the Islamic world is largely viewed as incapable to act in a civic manner and does not apply to the Western standards of civil society. Furthermore the imperialist structures, which

²²⁷ Hanafi, Hasan (1994), op., cit., p.174.

²²⁸ Hermann, Katja (2000): Aufbruch von unten: Möglichkeiten und Grenzen von NGOs in Jordanien, (Hamburg) p.14.

started in the beginning of the twentieth century and have lasted to the present day in the form of conflicts, which cast a shadow on it. This does not lead to a constructive set-up of a civil society that corresponds to the Western scheme. Instead it causes just the opposite in a way that it is felt and grasped as a dominant force, which tries to internalise its values and ideas into these Arab Islamic civil societies. This strategy is reflected in the funding connected agendas that a vast number of donors present their Arab partners (NGOs). This approach is a form of indirect rule, which determines the shape of the already existing civil society. It could be regarded as a kind of external transformation that takes place with certain tools such as money in the form of funds. Those more liberal and secular oriented organisations - who feel attracted and get into the trap – are considered to be hypocrites of their own cultural identity, which is reflected in the Palestinian NGO elite. It is viewed as a separate bubble, which is situated in the upper part of the civil society sphere, for the reason that it is closer to the external partners than to its base. And this tears the basis into pieces, which might not feel to be part of an entity. Therefore, the question arises is it the cultural component that contributes to the characteristics of civil society and to their split or cohesion of a base (society)?

The reason why the Arab world or even Muslim societies deny the Western definition of civil society may lie in its rigid shape that does not allow any flexibility in the extension of the term and through the abundance of civil concepts. There might be a trace of flexibility in the civil society pattern but only for their Western societies. In contrast to the European or even Western definition of the concept as many scholars and theorists tried to explain, the Islamic understanding contains a genuine and natural sense of civil society, which means to join individuals together who might be connected to each other through a common interest, which is reflected in the Umma.²²⁹ There is also a

²²⁹ Umma is the Arabic word for community. It has its origin in the Quran and it is the term for any form of community. Later it was used for all devoted Muslims in the Islamic world such as in the Diaspora independent from their ethnicity, nationality, language or any religious specific features.

deep mistrust with regard to Western interference, which dates from 150 years of colonialism, imperialism and suppression.

Sami Zubaida states that

“In Islamic societies, both Islamists and Orientalists argue, the global unit of solidarity is the Islamic community of the faithful, the Umma; the territorial nation-state is incompatible with this higher unity. Western writers would add that alongside this global solidarity there is the more immediate solidarity of primary communities based on tribe, region, or sect, equally incompatible with the nation-state but played out within its alien political field under modern ideological labels like nationalism and socialism.”²³⁰

It is interesting to observe how the Western definition of the civil society concept has changed throughout all the years since the debate began to flourish again in the 1970s. It has gone through various trends, and while the genuine Islamic concept remained the same, in the Arab world has tried to define a model that could match the more liberal Arab governments who have already experienced a wave of secular ideas through the West. This has not gone unnoticed since the dependencies of Arab civil society organisations and actors have grown. It has to be emphasized that these more secular organisations have undergone a number of secular influences, such as for instance the practice of pluralism, democracy etc., while the Islamic organisations like Islamic Relief, Hamas or Hizbullah act according to what they perceive as corresponding to their faith. The reason for the former lies in their dependence on foreign funds whereas the Islamic organisations still receive a vast amount from the Muslim communities. Since the Islamic organisations could be considered as traditional and inflexible, they offer no option for any external influences, whereas the secular could be categorized as more adaptable – even open-minded - towards the pluralist and democratic wave coming from the West trying to establish its ideas within the framework of NGOs on a big scale. This idea can be traced back to the European Bourgeoisie of the nineteenth century. It viewed Islam as a system

²³⁰ Zubaida, Sami (2005): Is Iran an Islamic State? In: Beinin, Joel, Stork, Joe (Eds.): Political Islam – Essays from Middle East Report, (Los Angeles) p.103.

containing negative values that did not match those of the Europeans. And this explains why the Muslim world has been considered as rigid and immutable, not really being able to progress.

The civil society debate not only was re-kindled in Europe in the 1970s, but also parallel to it, religion found entry into the political arena of many cultures and civilizations in the Arab world. The political changes that have taken place throughout the Muslim and Arab world have an influence on the awqaf (religious endowments) and the ahbas²³¹ as they existed in many North African countries such as Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia, countries that used to be controlled and governed by the French colonial power. Franz Kogelmann has conducted a study about Islamic endowments with regard to religious affairs in Algeria in the twentieth century. He reveals interesting results and disproves the general hypothesis that the character of the Islamic religious endowments has lost its meaning through the modern development of Arab states and that this does not apply to the Algerian case. In Algeria it turned out that through the development of a modern state system in the form of a bureaucracy with ministries was the most useful thing to do in order to gain control over the Islamic movements that have come into being since the 1980s. The Islamists aimed to create a theocratic state, as it exists in Iran. Therefore the Algerian government decided to integrate the more moderate Islamists with the objective to lose sight of them.²³² But we do not want to go into detail about Algeria; the more interesting element is the Islamic endowments (awqaf and ahbas) and how and why these civil society organisations have been nationalized. Here the question arises did the governments of the concerned states intend to destroy the Islamic social basis because they feared their superiority in terms of money, property and more importantly, their popularity among the citizens?

²³¹ (Waqf is the singular form and awqaf the plural form; habous is the singular form and ahbas the plural form).

²³² Kogelmann, Franz (2001), op. cit. p.639-658.

As discussed above the religious endowments had and partly still have a significant position within the Muslim societies for the reason that they had at their disposal capacities that enabled them to fulfil para-state functions at least in the welfare sector and the necessary organisations to serve the needs of the community. Not only that, but a further important factor has been their independence. The awqaf institutions accounted only to the Islamic law (Sharia), which was the only authority for them. The question that later on appeared in many Arab countries was how to integrate the religious endowments into the structure of a modern state system, which meant to include a civil society that was not used to being subordinated to any dominating power structure.²³³

Michael Walzer in his analysis sheds a positive light on the state and explains that civil society will always require a strong state, which is needed in order to enforce and regulate the norms of civil society. In his view the state serves as a kind of buffer between the more and less successful groups within the civil society sphere and as a balance for inequalities.²³⁴

Various actors are part of the civil society sphere, which is illustrated as the sphere between the state and the market. In the above given definition for civil society of Helmut Anheier, he uses “market,” the pure capitalist term which derives from the Western view of reality in the context of civil society. There are more problems in this debate in coming to grips with the term in the Arab world. In societies like that of the Arab states where norms of pre-capitalist terms are still prevalent, the situation can be different. The contradiction does not necessarily lie between the state and the market, but within an extraneous crammed state and a society that defends itself against the introduction of a capitalist state with all its destructive consequences. Surely, this shows an anti-modern attitude, but it is socially and historically explicable.

²³³ Kogelmann, Franz (2001), op. cit. p.641.

²³⁴ Walzer, Michael (2002): Equality and Civil Society. In: Chambers, Simone; Kymlicka, Will (Eds.): Alternative Conceptions of Civil Society (Princeton) p.47.

2.3 Conclusion

Hence, as discussed above the civil society concept is a phenomenon and it has been abandoned to a large number of definitions and applications throughout history which have started in ancient times (Aristotle) over to the middle Ages until the present day.

It has become obvious that the given views on civil society differ in many ways. The reason for the presentation of them towards civil society makes someone realize that the existing debates about the concept vary. The diverse views and interpretations of civil society reflect the different perceptions of the civil society system and its actors such as the NGOs (in Palestine), who have a central role. Herewith, I mean that civil society in Palestine has had played a significant role. The given definitions have shown that civil society is tied to its origin in the history of the environment it was born in.

Accordingly, the civil society debate is conducted through the different stages of history, al-Farabi who viewed civil society as natural fellowship when human beings gather in a social circle or Gramsci who regarded civil society on two levels, civil society and the state as two independent spheres but two components which complete each other. He did not equip his definition of civil society with moral values. He rather tended to explain the concept in terms of the political circumstances, which existed at that time. Mustapha Kamel al-Sayyid points out that

“Antonio Gramsci was concerned about demonstrating how institutions of civil society could play a dynamic role in perpetuating the hegemony of one class or in enabling a dominated class to establish its counter hegemony.”²³⁵

²³⁵ Al-Sayyid, Mustapha Kamel (1995): The concept of Civil Society and the Arab World. In: Rex Brynen; Baghat Korany; Paul Noble, Political Liberalization and Democratization in the Arab World Vol.1 – Theoretical Perspectives (London) p.132.

Hence, Gramsci viewed civil society separate from the super-structural sphere, which on the other hand is independent from the state. The revival of the civil society debate in the different parts of the world for the last three to four decades has brought a change with it in a way that the origins of the concept as they existed throughout history do not exist anymore. In today's perception other keywords have found entry into the definition as stated above. The contemporary discourse on civil society has been degraded to NGOs and other voluntary organisations in combination with democratic paradigms and liberal ideas. Dina Craissati states

“It (civil society) represents an amorphous space for the taking over of an insurmountable and diffuse mix of tasks and projects and for achieving socio-economic and political reforms, but it says and differentiates little about the content and vision of social transformation.”²³⁶

In conclusion it could be said that the (Western) notion of civil society has been adapted to the present demands of society, which express themselves in the existence of the need for civil society organisations and their actors, as they can be found across the world, independent of culture, nationality or ethnicity. Western domination has also had a share in terms of its cultural and political hegemony in a way that NGOs have only been recognized when they corresponded to the Western norms and ideas. When the civil society debate arises, it is always conducted in the Western interpretation and shaped after the Western model. But still, on the other hand, Western influences, which try to bump into the civil societies in the Arab states, may stir a little change but they cannot fully transform the Arab societies and with them the existing original systems. Or they might even ignite a conflict within the society.

At the outset it has to be understood that the Western capitalist societies have different prerequisites than the less developed countries including the Arab states (societies), which are governed by authoritarian regimes. It has to be

²³⁶ Craissati, Dina (2005): *New Social Movements and Democracy in Palestine – A Model for the Politics of Civil Society in the Arab World* Vol.45, (Münster) p.23.

emphasized that despite their attempts to blurt things out with funds for democracy projects and others they cannot overlook the historically established complex and paint over it with new ideas which in their view may bring a democratic state. This looks more like a (civil) society that has been inflated through extraneous effects. The westward centred perspective is coloured by the Orientalist prospect. The narrow-minded view of the West blinds out the fact that there exist other forms of social organisations than those the West itself knows and which it deems as appropriate. If certain ideas and concepts are inflicted on a society, it does not mean automatically that this avails right away. Each society has its own culture and with it different forms of social organisations as they exist throughout the numerous Arab societies.

This is one of the many disputes in which the need for comprehension and recognition of the other is vital, and accordingly a dialogue shall ensue. The (Arab) NGOs sit on the fence between the West and its ideas on the one side and their respective societies on the other. Certainly NGOs play an important role in that context which will be discussed in the following section.

3. WHO ARE NGOS?

THE PHENOMENON OF NGOS IN PALESTINE

The usage of the NGO term has entered the daily language and it is connected with globalization, media, public opinion, humanitarian projects and other issues, which involve these actors. Whether they are active for the support of environmental issues such as Greenpeace is, or their commitment to the observance of human rights in various countries (Amnesty International) or their engagement in less developed countries as for instance Oxfam the list of active NGOs in the present day is long and embraces many sectors. As already referred to above NGOs are also present in the occupied territories and carry out a large number of duties. Certainly, in the first moment we associate a positive idea once we hear or read about them and think of helping hands who seek to alleviate poverty and human suffering. But at a second glance we may start to ask ourselves questions more in depth: What these so called civil society actors do? Who legitimises their actions? How dependent or independent are they? If yes, by whom?

By the latter question I refer to the hypothesis that NGOs might be used as soft instruments in a form of neo-imperialistic structures in the present neo-liberal age. Even their finances are an important aspect of the question how they fund themselves in order to provide support to others, which leads to the assumption that the funds supplied by a third party – foreign donors – changes them into an instrument that is being used to achieve certain interests.

The idea that only NGOs can be blamed for this is questionable since there is a lot more behind the complex relationship between states and NGOs. NGOs might be viewed as ambiguous, whereas they claim to be independent though they are used as tools by the state. This ambiguity can be due to financial resources in a way that they become dependent on state structures whereby they could be used as henchman to achieve certain interests. These and other problems will be discussed in the following part.

But before we turn our focus towards the questions above, we should first look at the meaning of the term NGO. Similar to the civil society debate, social and political scientists devoted themselves with the subject and have tried to find an appropriate definition for the term, which clearly reveals the features of such an organisation. In his essay, Jörg Becker sought the question

What NGOs are and which interests they try to achieve in the 21st century?

“They are the clear conscience, when the state fails: Non-Governmental Organisations.”²³⁷

Taking a closer look at the above-mentioned quote we question ourselves about if it is true that NGOs are a sort of substitute when the state is not able anymore to fulfil its obligations. Are both components intertwined or are these non-governmental organisations? Jörg Becker investigated the issue and he describes that NGOs

“claim of themselves to be NON-GOVERNMENTAL in terms of being independent from the state, to be non-profit oriented, to be sensitive for public interests and their representation as well (...).”²³⁸

But he is positive about the fact that reality looks totally different, as NGOs purport. They believe to fill the gap, the state left open. Becker is convinced that

“the gap is either filled bottom-up through social movements or NGOs are used as political instruments in order to harmonize or camouflage conflicts.”²³⁹ One especially problematic aspect of this is that humanitarian aid is losing the autonomous role it once had.”²⁴⁰

²³⁷ Becker, Jörg (2006): NGOs im Geflecht von Kriegspropaganda. In: Roithner, Thomas (ÖSFK) (Ed.): Die Weltunordnung von Ökonomie und Krieg Von den gesellschaftlichen Verwerfungen der neoliberalen Globalisierung zu den weltumspannenden politischen Ansätzen jenseits des Casinokapitalismus Bd. 49, 2, (Münster) p.165-187. (translated by Layla Bahmad)

²³⁸ Becker, Jörg, op. cit. p. 165-187. (translated by Layla Bahmad)

²³⁹ Becker, Jörg, op. cit. p. 165-187. (translated by Layla Bahmad)

²⁴⁰ Debiel, Tobias; Sticht, Monika (2005): Development, Humanitarian and Conflict resolution NGOs in the Age of Globalization. In: INEF Report, No. 79 p.25.

Tobias Debiel and Monika Sticht address the same issue in their report and outline the ways in which the functions and the role of NGOs have changed in a situation of eroding statehood.

Furthermore, the correlation between NGOs and governments has always existed, which Becker describes as impervious, intransparent, as being affected by its informal structures, and finally as powerful. In particular, at times of conflict in a specific region, NGOs for instance cooperate close with the military which protects them whereby they offer information substitutional for the service they receive, which Becker calls the interest to survive on part of many NGOs. Debiel and Sticht even state that *“in some cases NGOs are using private security companies to provide protection.”*²⁴¹ NGOs have become politicised through the services they provide and humanitarian aid in general. Carapico is not wrong by saying that

*“In recent years, NGOs have been depicted as saviours of failed economies in some circles while reviled as stooges of Western imperialism in others.”*²⁴²

Whereas she also emphasizes that

*“NGOs are hardly a quick, cheap or easy fix for underlying problems facing many Middle Eastern societies today. Philanthropy from the rich and voluntarism from the poor cannot undo the root causes of water shortages, political repression and growing inequality.”*²⁴³

It is not just the environment the NGOs work in that entails challenges and difficulties; likewise, they are reliant on funds in order to carry out their work, which demands a lot and there is fierce competition for funds from donors. The financial aid given to NGOs has been used as a tool by donors (of various types

²⁴¹ Cited from Debiel, Tobias; Sticht, Monika (2005), op. cit. p.26.

²⁴² Carapico, Sheila (2000): NGOs, INGOs, GO-NGOs and DO-NGOs – Making Sense of Non-governmental Organisations, in: MERIP, No. 214, Vol. 30, No.1, p.12-16.

²⁴³ Carapico, Sheila (2000), op. cit. p. 12-16.

including governments) to seek political interests. Here, we have reached the initial question asked at the outset: Are NGOs literally *non-governmental* as they assert?

In the following this question will be addressed in detail. However, it is important to understand what the NGO concept embraces and what is behind the three letters taking into account the NGOs' claim that they work on behalf of civil society and regard themselves as organ of public interests.

3.1 “NGO”: A changeable term

The term NGO was first used by the United Nations in 1949. During the early period, the term became widely applied to a broad spectrum of organisations. Since then, terms used to identify these organisations have multiplied. Some of these terms include “voluntary associations”, “nonprofit associations”, “international non-governmental organisations”, “new social movement organisations” to name a few on a long list. These terms include a broad range of organisations that vary in terms of ideology, organisation, and operation. Ann C. Hudock defines NGOs as those organisations outside the realm of government, and distinct from the business community.²⁴⁴

Often referred to as the “third sector,” NGOs are characterized by their non-profit status, in some cases, a value-based orientation or a cadre of volunteers carrying out the organisations mandates. In contrast to Ann C. Hudock, Blair defines an NGO as a civil society organisation and as the characteristic institution of civil society.²⁴⁵ The definition provided by Ann C. Hudock is very simple and general, but the structures and degrees of being allowed to speak of an NGO are more complex. The following definition given by Pamela Aall embraces more characteristics of NGO, which in her view is a private, self-governing, not-for profit organisation dedicated to alleviating human suffering; and/or promoting education, health care, economic development, environmental protection, human rights, and conflict resolution; and/or encouraging the establishment of democratic institutions and civil society. She adds that NGOs are dedicated to the service and protection of those sectors of society that tend to be underserved or unserved by governments and other official institutions such as the United Nations.²⁴⁶ David Hulme and Michael Edwards differentiate

²⁴⁴ Hudock, Ann C. (1999): *NGOs and Civil Society, Democracy by Proxy?*, (Cambridge) p.1.

²⁴⁵ Blair, Harry (1997): *Donors, Democratization and Civil Society*. In: Edwards, Michael; Hulme, David (Eds.): *NGOs, States and Donors. Too close for Comfort?*, (Hampshire) p.24.

²⁴⁶ Aall, Pamela (2003): *Guide to IGOs, NGOs and the Military in Peace and Relief Operations*, (Washington D.C) p.89.

between NGOs, which they regard as intermediary organisations that are active and provide money for or offer another form of assistance to the communities and other organisations. These organisations and Grassroots Organisations (GROs), which are membership organisations of different kinds aim to promote development as their first mission goal. They emphasize that other authors distinguish in the same way but that they use other terms.²⁴⁷

In the Occupied territories any kind of civic association could be found there. There are international NGOs that work with local NGOs, which serve as a mediator between the international NGO and the aid recipients. But there are also many others, who carry out their projects by themselves. Looking at the Palestinian example, not only NGOs in both forms (INGO and PNGOs) serve the Palestinian community but also the UN initiated program United Nations Relief Works Agency (UNRWA) has been active in the Occupied territories since 1950. We see that the definitions for an NGO can vary and therefore, it has to be questioned if everything that comes from the bottom could be called an NGO. For example, could citizen action groups or social committees, for example, be equated with an NGO? Most researchers agree that there are difficulties associated with the definition of the term NGO. The concept of an NGO (and its variants) and NGO activity in the Middle East are still in question. Many NGOs regard themselves as marginal actors, charities, advocacy groups and a large number of other civic associations as they are in the Middle East. The latter ones have also become agents of political, economic and social change, influencing the allocation of scarce resources in their own societies and the images national regimes project abroad. A confluence of internal and international trends, social, economic and political, have contributed to the NGO phenomena in the 1990s, whereas some pre-existing institutions and movements have been reincarnated as NGOs, and other NGOs reflecting contemporary transnational concerns have emerged.²⁴⁸

²⁴⁷ Hulme, David; Edwards, Michael (1997), op. cit. p.21.

²⁴⁸ Carapico, Sheila (2000), op. cit. p. 12-16.

Taking a detailed look at the frequently used abbreviation NGO, we do not perceive what it stands for, because it has passed into our language and usage. It means non-governmental organisation, as we all know. Karim El-Gawhary simplifies his definition and says that they are not part of the government without giving any further specification.²⁴⁹ By non-governmental we mean that the civic association is independent and autonomous in its actions, but with regard to the Palestinian case, is it then possible to say non-governmental? Certainly, the international NGOs (INGOs) and a certain number of other groups operating on the ground belong to the category “NGO”. But still there is that kind of NGO, which is part of the Self-Organized NGO (SONGO) or as those, which are initiated by the government overnight, and as they exist in the West Bank and Gaza the so-called government-organized NGO (GONGO).

For the latter it has to be said that these were just established in order to receive the foreign funds as for instance UNVP and UNDP were working with NGOs that were just made up to get the money, and after the completion of the projects, they disappeared. The Palestinian Authority has created many of these so-called GONGOs after the Oslo Agreements were concluded in the fall of 1993 in order to ensure that foreign aid gets channelled to the new developing “government structures” and not to the “real” NGOs anymore. And even those that have been created by the Palestinian Authority have tried to get foreign aid channelled the right way. And even those that have been created by the Palestinian Authority are dependent on the quasi-government. It is difficult to have a clear understanding of what is right and what is wrong for an NGO.²⁵⁰ As we have seen the criteria vary. NGOs have played an important role in the law making and funding process since the debate arose in 1995 (the legislation issue concerning NGOs in Palestine will be discussed in a later chapter). In that context Nader Fargani points out that more and more NGOs in Egypt are

²⁴⁹ El-Gawhary, Karim (1995): NGOs zwischen Basisarbeit und Regierungsgeschäft. In: INAMO, No.1 p.45.

²⁵⁰ During my research and even in the field the terms varied though the common term NGO has been in use, others like PVO (Private Voluntary Organisations) or CBO (Community Based Organisations) were current as well.

“incorporated” by the governments and that these NGOs have been co-opted by the government for the reason that they are on the same wavelength, while others were neglected. He explains the mechanism and adds that some NGOs turn into government tools in order to transmit the message from the upper level to the base.²⁵¹ Another example is that after a certain period of time international NGOs transform local projects and its success into local NGOs who become independent.

Then there are the so-called QUANGOs, which are the quasi-autonomous non-governmental organisations. The definition given in the encyclopaedia explains the term as follows: the term itself, attributed to Sir Douglas Hague was originally invented as a joke, but fell into common usage in the United Kingdom to describe the agencies produced by the growing trend of government devolving power to appointed, or self-appointed bodies. The United Kingdom government’s definition of a QUANGO is:

“a body which has a role in the processes of national government, but is not a government department and which accordingly operates to a greater or lesser extent at arms length from Ministers.”

Since most of such bodies are in fact part of the government in terms of funding, appointment and function, the acronym does not work as a description; these are generally not NGOs with less autonomy than others. Quasi-autonomous non-ministerial governmental organisation would be a better description.²⁵²

The list could go on with DONGOs, which are Donor Organized NGOs, or another would be NGDO that is a Non-governmental Development Organisation, or a not so common abbreviation would be CBO (Community

²⁵¹ El-Gawhary, Karim (2005), op., cit., p.45.

²⁵² Definition of Quasi-autonomous non-government organisation on http://www.wordiq.com/definition/Quasi-autonomous_non-government_organisation (June 12, 2004).

Based Organisation) or PSO (Public Service Organisation), to name a few. How such a civic organisation is named depends on its organisational and operational frameworks.

As demonstrated above the term NGO is like a chameleon that has the ability to adjust itself to its environment. In a way the genuine term does not exist since different forms have come into being and shaped themselves proper to their needs as the single abbreviations clarify. Accordingly, to that Jörg Becker emphasizes that

“NGOs are likely to pretend (concerning their images) that they are left out from the state as well as the market sphere, nevertheless, reality looks different.”²⁵³

This allows them to remain obscure, but that is not the only reason that calls for a more detailed look at them. The Western-oriented definitions of the NGO term are blemished with the Orientalist view for the reason that it is based on their restricted Western form of organisations, which explains why they have difficulty locating any civil society forms in the Orient. Consequently, this leads to the prevention and recognition of dialogue. And this hides the fact that there have existed civil societies - including their civil society actors (NGOs) - for a very long time. Therefore, I regard it as compulsory to take this into consideration with regard to the NGO concept in particular in the Middle East (Palestine) where NGOs have played a significant role in the development of civil society and society itself.

To begin with, we will shed some light on the use of the concept.

²⁵³ Becker, Jörg (2006), op. cit., p.165-187. (Layla Bahmad).

3.2 Analysis of the concept “NGO” and existing working definitions

The present definitions are problematic for the reason that the same organisation can be referred to by different names in different contexts. Therefore, it is very difficult to define who and to what extent a civil association can be labelled NGO.

Because of the lack of consensus about the meaning of the term “NGO”, it will attempt to develop my own definition of the term that applies to the Palestinian context and that will be used in an operational manner. In the context of this research it is interesting to analyse the differences between a “regular” NGO (both forms INGO and PNGO) and that type of religious affiliated Waqf²⁵⁴-NGO, and with regard to the financial dependency and the internal and external management of such civic associations.

Through the Islamic roots and understanding of Hamas or a waqf, it could be said that this organisation is similar to the church in that it provides social welfare services, although Hamas has political aspirations and goals at the forefront of their agenda.

²⁵⁴ A Waqf (plural awqaf) is a religious endowment, often in the form of land. The revenues of the Waqf are to be used for charitable or religious purposes.

Clark, Janine A. (2004): Islam, Charity And Activism – Middle Class Networks and Social Welfare in Egypt, Jordan, and Yemen, (Bloomington) p.183 n 19.

3.3 Development of original NGO definition with regard to the Palestinian context

Though in general NGOs are seen as non-governmental organisations, the prefix “non” does not really fulfil its function anymore for the reason that more and more welfare organisations have become dependent on government funds (or any other form of institutional funding like from the European Union or USAID, which are government supported initiatives). USAID is one of the major players in the provision of funds worldwide. A large number of countries such as Canada, Australia, Sweden and others run a branch or department in their foreign ministries that response to development services with assistance in form of funds.

Once we look at the Palestinian case, the term non-governmental Organisation does not match its function, because there have not existed governmental organisations before Oslo and those other welfare and charity organisations existing on the terrain were born with the first national uprising against the occupation in the late 80s. Since then the genuine local Palestinian and other international welfare and charity organisations have entered the arena.

But referring back to the clarification for an appropriate definition that fits, then the pure local Palestinian NGOs on the ground should be called, Quasi-Government Organisations (QUANGOs) with regard to the fact that they fulfil and substitute government functions and serve the Palestinian people.

The international organisations serving the needs of the Palestinians are excluded form the above-mentioned definition. A large number of them are dependent on their governments and the funds they receive and no longer fall under the NGO category.

In my view there is a small minority of organisations left, which can be labelled NGOs, because most of them have a tie to a funding institution. Therefore, it might be carefully concluded that NGOs in the Palestinian framework working in the various sectors on the difficult terrain could be seen as “government-substitutional organisations” (GSOs). They have taken care of many tasks and functions in a stateless environment.²⁵⁵ They have tried to supply the capacities and resources needed in such a difficult surrounding. Looking at the NGO definition given by Pamela Aall, I agree with some parts of it: Officially NGOs are seen as private and self-governing. The financial support NGOs receive from different governments, many of them not case to be private or self-governing.

Even though, it is correct to say that NGOs regard themselves as dedicated to alleviating human suffering, the promotion of education, health care, economic development, human rights and conflict resolution. Moreover, NGOs encourage the establishment of democratic institutions and civil society.²⁵⁶ One of the important aspects she mentions, and which I regard as indispensable, is that a charity organisation regards its task as the provision of services and the protection of those sectors of society that tend to be - or as in the Palestinian case - are underserved or even unserved by the Quasi-Government, the PA and other official institutions such as the UN initiated program UNRWA.

In my view an NGO represents a social or civic association, which pursues a certain goal which could be of any kind, either in the form of social activism or the provision of services. This association can be active in various fields of interest and can be labelled – “community of interests”. Mostly, these organisations are or should be founded on a voluntary basis and be financed by their own means without any “external” support in order to speak of a real “NGO”.

²⁵⁵ Herewith, I mean a sovereign Palestinian state apart from the occupying and dominating Israeli regime.

²⁵⁶ Aall, Pamela (2003), op. cit. p. 89.

And finally, an NGO should be able to draw attention to its work and goals and at the same time try to have an influence on the people it addresses. But in the Palestinian context a NGO is more than a social or civic association in particular with regard to the First Intifada in the late 80s. Such a charity organisation (in the Palestinian case) has fulfilled two functions, which are the following: first, their establishment reflected a form of resistance against the occupying regime during the national uprising and second, it provided those services in the different sectors (health, education, etc.) that have been neglected by the “government”. There they have been working in a stateless environment. It has to be understood that the function of an NGO on such a difficult terrain is even different than in another Arab country not to mention the Western definition and understanding of an NGO. In summary an NGO in Palestine is more than a social or civic association; it is supposed to strengthen the Palestinian people and its civil society as a whole.

Taking the whole discussion a step further the NGO definition will be applied to the Arab context and what a role or better ranking an NGO has in the Arab world. As it will be discussed later in this chapter, there is still another form of “Islamic NGO” or Islamic welfare organisation, which has to be seen in a separate context, because these organisations have a more difficult mission than their international fellows. The zakat organisation is a huge business. They run several types of social services such as clinics and kindergartens, and they provide financial and in kind support to poor families. The source of funding is from the individuals who pay zakat in and out of Palestine and Islamic institutions.

“I do not think that they are able to access funding from resources such as USAID or the EC.”²⁵⁷

It has to be borne in mind that these zakat and Islamic organisations are scrutinized for terrorism or affiliation with Hamas which will deprive them from institutional aid such USAID and others. Of course this does not affect that

²⁵⁷ Interview (October 9, 2006)

much, if at all. Though, a USAID requirement is to check on or vet every local partner against the list of terrorists published by US Government. Their Christian “counterparts” – the Christian faith based NGOs – are also dependent on contributions from the local Christian community, Christians in Diaspora and churches that they belong to in the world.

“Probably because they are smaller in number and serve smaller communities (mostly Christians) they look like as if they have more funding. I do believe that they can access USAID and EC funding.”²⁵⁸

Surely, this puts the Christian organisations in a different position compared to the Islamic organisations.

“Christian NGOs, it is true that these NGOs are never short of finance, it is true that these NGOs as most of their funding is coming from the U.S., and their funds are not monitored as is the case with Islamic NGOs. I know for a fact that many Muslim NGOs who are now being either strictly monitored or even are being harassed, by the FBI and the Mossad, simply because they are collecting their funds from Islamic communities around the world. The justifications given for the strict monitoring is the high risk of terror support allegations, which is nonsense in most cases. As for funds coming from Islamic countries, do keep in mind that the majority of these countries are ruled by regimes that are supported and monitored by the U.S. Government, and so the controls are already there. Just an anecdote so as to avoid wrong impressions, Christian NGO funds are not necessarily directed to Christians in the country, and that is why in many cases these NGOs are not looked upon anymore as Christian NGOs.”²⁵⁹

The Christian as well as the Islamic form of solidarity is based on religion and both have been very popular in the occupied territories. The Islamic organisations (religious endowments) have offered great support in terms of welfare services to the Palestinian society. In the following we will discuss the

²⁵⁸ Interview (October 9, 2006)

²⁵⁹ Interview (October 5, 2006)

predecessors of the Palestinian NGOs, and then the “Waqf”-type of organisation which has played a significant role in the occupied territories throughout history including the First and the Second Intifada. The Islamic organisations under the auspices of Hamas are part of a huge structure of community based organisations. It is just that the situation is very complicated already, with very unclear positions at all levels.

But first, we will turn our attention towards the historical roots of such Palestinian organisations and their ancestors.

3.4 Historical overview of Palestinian NGOs and their predecessors

“It is sometimes observed that Palestinian NGOs are so significant because they emerged in the absence of a state.”²⁶⁰

Elsewhere in the Arab world Nathan J. Brown states, it is often held that strong states emerged first, greatly limiting their political and social space and autonomy for NGOs. The associative phenomenon in the Arab World is linked to the underlying current conditions and at the same time explains the factors, which hold back the development of Arab NGOs. Certainly, Arab and Palestinian associational life varies from that of the West or within the European Union and the U.S. Therefore, I consider it to be very important to understand the background of any single civil society including its actors in form of NGOs or any other association etc. for the reason that this may explain its appearance and the behaviour of those who act within that sphere.

The Middle East has been burdened with the Arab-Israeli conflict for decades and its origins trace back to the beginnings of Zionism at the end of the 19th century. Even at the time when the Ottoman-Turkish rulers dominated the region, Palestinians established cultural societies and various clubs to advocate public policy issues and to mobilize the masses to achieve their goals.²⁶¹ These organisations were traditionally based on religious and family affiliations, which were led by prominent figures. During the British Mandate, Palestinians established a mixture of religious, family related and political organisations to pursue practical and specific projects in the socio-economic fields as well as to express and publicize their political aspirations. The organisations of this period

²⁶⁰ Brown, Nathan J. (2003), op. cit. p.148.

²⁶¹ Abdul Hadi, Mahdi (1997): NGO Action and The Question of Palestine-Challenges and Prospects (Palestinian Academic Society for the study of International Affairs-PASSIA), (Jerusalem) p.1.

maintained the traditional linkage to the main families and prominent figures, which had patriarchal structures. This leads to the assumption that the family structures have been linked to the civil society sphere or that they have made up a great proportion of it. Since that time, the family has played a cultural as well as social component within the Palestinian society.

This also demonstrates that there have been NGOs prior to the existence of the PA (which was created later) or even a state and the PLO served at that time as the representative for the Palestinians. The Palestinian NGOs have organized themselves and they have had a different political position than their counterparts in other Arab states. But it has to be emphasized that there have been states that governed them while they were organizing themselves. These states were Egypt, Jordan and Israel who have had an eye on them, each of them trying to impose their conditions in the form of legal frameworks and policies.

After the first war in 1948, the Palestinians started out to organize themselves in the set-up of a social network. The first NGO that had been established in Palestine was during the time of the British Mandate. It aimed to work for the national struggle and the environment that associations worked in was on the local level. In the same year of the creation of the Israeli state, Palestinian NGOs involving women, teachers, students and others remained very strong outside the British Mandate's territory.²⁶² Student and professional associations were founded that represented the interests of their members. Some of these organisations felt to be very close to the PLO seeking a common goal, some were involved in the foundation of the PLO (1964) and a few arose out of the PLO. Later, these organisations were co-opted by political organisations and they were used as an organisational infrastructure. In the 1960s, the PLO dominated these organisations.

²⁶² A 1997 survey of 250 organisations in the West Bank and Gaza reported that one-fourth of organisations existing at that time dated back to the period before 1967. While no breakdown was offered, the authors further reported that only a small number of organisations were founded in the years between 1948 and 1967. (Brown, Nathan J. (2003), *op. cit.* p.279.)

This unity among the NGOs working for the national cause and the PLO seeking the same showed that there existed no difference between these civil society actors and the PLO.

More than a decade later, the Camp David Accords between Egypt and the Israelis followed. The Palestinians were offered a framework concerning their autonomy, which they rejected and regarded as inadequate. The Israeli government with the Likud party holding office at that time decided to create a civil administration that would watch over the partly autonomy. This second opportunity was a Jordanian initiative, but the PLO and the Arab League disagreed with this proposal. Instead, they preferred their own suggestion that they could help the Palestinian society by pumping large amounts of money to the occupied territories. The responsible authority designated for the distribution of these funds was a committee, called the PLO-Jordanian Committee. Jordan financially supported the religious affiliated organisations. Jordan benefited in two ways, the first was the appreciation by the Palestinians that Jordan was not a negotiating partner at the Camp David talks in 1978, and the second was that Jordanian institutions were allowed to keep in close contact with the West Bank. The expulsion of the PLO at the beginning of the 1980s showed a greater need for the creation of Palestinian institutions. According to that it is comprehensible why the NGOs had close ties to the PLO both sought the same goal. This is an important factor to the three decisive stages of the Palestinian history.

There are three relevant moments in Palestinian history, which have had a significant influence on the formation and shape of Palestinian society. At the outset was the war in the late 1940s, which broke the Palestinian society into small pieces; then in 1967 there was the occupation that established Israeli colonization and finally, there was the 1987-1993 Intifada. Then the Oslo Accords in 1994, which promised enthusiasm for the Palestinians and at the same time, also affected the civil society sphere.

Finally, the Second Intifada, which differs from the first one with regard to the Palestinian civil society and the NGOs involved. Both Intifadas will be discussed. The existing groups at that time ranged from nationalist and Islamic to traditional associations.

The First Intifada witnessed a series of organisational efforts leading to several attempts at the building of a new civil society in Palestine. After the 1967 war and the Israeli occupation, Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip founded many professional and charitable associations and organisations to meet the needs of the community. Professionals founded trade unions, but at the beginning of the 80s these associations began to serve as a façade for nationalist groups. They used them for their political activities and in order to control the trade unions and their actions. Social and economic interests moved off the priority list and nationalistic interests such as self-determination and hatred against the occupying regime dominated the agenda.

Then there has been the Feminist Movement-the General Union of Palestinian Women (GUPW) - which has had its indirect origins in the PLO in 1964. It has been active as a social organisation since the beginning of the 70s. The movement also fought for the active role of women in society and they have been engaged in the charity sector as well.

Another group already mentioned above were the student organisations. A young generation of Palestinian students have been fighting for their interests and this has developed a strong sense of consciousness. They also assisted in the provision of social and economic problems in the daily routine. But through the war that started in June 1967, people were angry about the structure of their society. In their consciousness and conviction these organisations started to increase and new forms of civic engagement arose such as periodicals, cultural journals. Parallel to these organisations, the Islamic associations aimed at creating an Islamic view of life and to represent Islamic values.

On the other hand there have been medical associations and committees, which came together and formed a network of doctors, who worked on a voluntary basis in Gaza and the West Bank.²⁶³

A few leaders of these NGO-like bodies no longer came from the traditional background, but from new, educated political elite.²⁶⁴ The twentieth century, especially the last three to four decades, has witnessed a rapid increase in number of NGOs and this has happened since the military occupation of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip by Israel in 1967. The Palestinian NGO community has been growing and therefore they see themselves confronted with major challenges.

²⁶³ Amal, Jamal (1995): Was geschieht mit der Palästinensischen Zivilgesellschaft? In: Ibrahim, Ferhad; Wedel, Heidi (Eds.): Problems of Civil Society in the Near East (Opladen) p.167.

²⁶⁴ Abdul Hadi, Mahdi (1997), op. cit. p. 1.

3.4.1 “Waqf” Organisations – A different type of NGO?

“The Strategy of the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas): Palestine is an Islamic Trust.”²⁶⁵

Different from those civic associations discussed above there is another type of NGO, the so-called waqf-organisation, which is defined as a religious endowment, a property giving revenues, as regulated by Islamic law. Janine A. Clark explains that historically, there have been three kinds of awqaf²⁶⁶: religious waqf for the mosque maintenance and services; philanthropic waqf for public works and buildings such as hospitals; and family waqf, where the proceeds of the waqf went first to the descendants of the dedicator and the surplus went to the poor. The social aspect of the Waqf is also the mutual support.²⁶⁷ The revenues from the Waqf finance mosques, hospitals, schools and other religious institutions.²⁶⁸ Hence, the waqf is considered as a part of the mosque or the institution.

Awqaf were vital to the religious parts of the society before the establishment of modern states in the Muslim world. Issa Khater analysed the Waqf situation in the West Bank between 1982 and 1983 where he found out that Jerusalem had at that time (1982) the highest amount of waqf facilities, which were not a source of income.²⁶⁹

²⁶⁵ Hroub, Khaled (2000): *Hamas – Political Thought and Practice*, (Washington D.C.) p.273.

“According to Omar Ibn Al-Khatab Palestine is an Islamic waqf, so to say a religious endowment which has been given in trust to the Muslims and therefore imprescriptibly (Article 11). It has a central role [...] in Islamic history.” (Baumgarten, Helga (2006), op. cit. p.63.)

²⁶⁶ Awqaf is the plural form of Waqf.

²⁶⁷ Clark, Janine A.(2004), op. cit. p.164 n 23.

²⁶⁸ Khater, Issa (1987): *Waqf in der West Bank – Zur wirtschaftlichen, sozialen und politischen Rolle der islamischen religiösen Stiftungen im westlichen Jordanland des ehemaligen Palästinas*, (Marburg) p.208.

²⁶⁹ Khater, Issa (1987), op. cit. p. 57-61.

Regardless of the Israeli-Jordanian war, Jordan still had strong administrative connections with the West Bank. Jordan carried on funding the activities in the health, education and agricultural sector to a certain degree in spite of the administration by the Israeli state. It also provided support to the Waqf administration because it aimed at preserving the waqf system in the West Bank as a working and developing institution.

The waqf system in Gaza was different than that in the West Bank for the reason that it was not fostered by any state power. Another major problem it faced was that it lacked resources and the result was a rapid decrease. In contrast to Jordan, the Egyptian government attempted to manage the waqf affairs in the Gaza Strip for a limited period of time. The Egyptian government supplied some funds in order to replace the income that had been directed by the Supreme Muslim Council to the Gaza waqf offices. After the establishment of the Israeli state, the mamur al-awqaf office in the Gaza Strip lost more and more significance and had problems in dealing with the new situation and meeting the expectations of the Gazan people. Unlike the waqf system in the West Bank that was integrated into the Jordanian system, the waqf structures in Gaza were not part of the Egyptian state. The waqf revenues from land and property in Gaza were used in order to take care of charitable institutions. But during the time in which Gaza had been under Egyptian control its waqf system had improved its standing from a minor local administration into an important central authority in Jerusalem. It was semi-autonomous for the reason that it was still dependent on the funds from the Egyptian state and under their supervision. On the administrative level it remained independent.

Through the establishment of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) for Palestinian Refugees (at the beginning of the 1950s, the local waqf authorities began renting some of their land and property to the UN Agency. In the UNRWA-guided refugee camps the local waqf committee built eighteen mosques for which it had organized financial assistance.

But through the increase of Islamic fundamentalism a large number of Islamic organisations were founded and neither their leaders nor their lands were related to the waqf system. Different sources for funds were donations from one of the wealthy waqf endowment, which provided money and property for the construction of a hospital. A further source of income for the Gazan waqf system (which is not publicly admitted) was the Israeli military government. Compared to the West Bank, the waqf administration in Gaza was weakened and therefore it could not have the same political impact, and on the other hand it lacked a strong financial infrastructure.²⁷⁰

But even in modern society awqaf are important ways of financing the administration of mosques and religious schools. The institution of awqaf is described in the Sharia (the Islamic Law), but not to the same extent as many other regulations. It is central to a waqf that it has a permanent nature, and plain money is in most cases not seen as upon a waqf.²⁷¹ A similar structure existed in Lebanon where a civil war lasted for fifteen years (1975-1990) and non-state actors like Hizbullah (Party of God) took over the role and functions of the state in order to fill the gap that arose in the years. On this basis the set-up and extension of such structures has grown, where also religious-political communities (tawafiq) have provided social services.

Though there have been a large number of different charity organisations and foundations established by both Christians and Muslims, the former civil war militias established their own social service systems and institutions. The spectrum of help ranges from education to health to financial support in the form of small credits. In contrast to the Martyr organisation, the Islamic organisation for Health, which was established in 1984, has a very close tie to Hizbullah. It

²⁷⁰ Dumper, Michael T. (1993): Forty Years without slumbering: Waqf politics and administration in the Gaza Strip, 1948-1993. In: *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol 20, No.2, p.174-190.

²⁷¹ Encyclopaedia of the Orient: Waqf on <http://i-cias.com/e.o/waqf.htm> (June 3, 2004)

runs two hospitals and several treatment centres (Mustawsaf), which are open to anyone.²⁷²

In both parts, the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, there is a similar organisation, which is Hamas. Hamas, which means zeal, represents a waqf institution in the occupied territories. The Islamic Resistance Movement has stabilized its position through the provision of social welfare services among the Palestinian people and it gained a broad base of popular support. It has a great influence on the Palestinian society. Khaled Hroub emphasizes, that Hamas' social and political activism are very closely connected to each other. The reason for this is that the Muslim Brotherhood (Hamas origin), dealt for many years with social difficulties at its first priorities. With some exceptions Khaled Hroub points out, the social and educational aspect of the Brotherhoods activities took priority over its political dimension from the early 1960s until nearly the end of the 1980s. Helga Baumgarten explains

“the Palestinian Muslim Brotherhood laid emphasis on an Arab-Muslim and Palestinian-Muslim autonomy based on the reason that it did not agree to align itself into an international preformed and mostly western direction. The Palestinian Muslim Brotherhood was aware of this fact and tried to counteract through its individual initiative.”²⁷³

²⁷² Rieger, Brigitte (2002): Wohlfahrt ohne den Staat? Das soziale Netz der Hizbullah. In: INAMO, No.3, p.22-23.

The Martyr foundation is probably the oldest and well-known relief organisation in Lebanon. It has close ties to the Hizbullah, which was founded under the same name of the Iranian partner organisation in 1882.

²⁷³ Baumgarten, Helga (2006): Hamas. Der politische Islam in Palästina, (München) p.44. (translated by Layla Bahmad).

The Muslim Brotherhood expanded institutionally at a great pace in various sectors in form of charitable organisations, sports clubs, kindergarten, hospitals, schools, mosques, and universities. (Baumgarten, Helga (2006), op., cit., p.44.)

Further, she points out that that the Muslim Brotherhood had control over almost all spheres regarding the waqf system until the mid-1980s primarily in Gaza and thus they gained great influence in the economic sector.²⁷⁴

Hamas major interest lies in the foundation and the provision of social charitable services²⁷⁵ in order to offer aid to the poor. Hamas activities range from health care over to vocational trainings and other services.²⁷⁶ Hamas' social activism has been very broad-based and embraces mosques, clinics, youth sports clubs, kindergartens, space for women in form of education centres and even a university was built through the support of Islamic development funds. All this shows that Hamas has always had a very strong sense of commitment in civil society.

The financial means for the charitable activities are derived from private donations inside and outside the occupied territories and remarkable support also comes from the Palestinians in the Gulf States. Through Hamas' dedication and activism for the poor it has been able to have a certain influence on the public's religious attitude, beliefs and choices. By way of its religious ethics and supportive attitude Hamas succeeded and gained a broad majority of people who backed this kind of organisation. It aimed at fortifying a society through religious education, which in turn allows them to challenge the occupation with a fortified society.²⁷⁷ A further advantage that Hamas had was that the public wanted an organisation to contrast to the PLO, which was regarded as corrupt,

²⁷⁴ Baumgarten, Helga (2006), op., cit., p.44.

²⁷⁵ The services involve social and charitable societies as well as schools, mosques, cultural and sports clubs etc. Hamas and the Muslim Brotherhood both were active in these fields right before the outbreak of the First Intifada in 1987. (Hroub, Khaled (2000), op., cit., p. 235.)

The Muslim Brotherhood started its social activism very early and built a very strong foundation. They put emphasis on the education sector, on the construction of mosques in the occupied territories. In the period from 1967-1975, the number of mosques in the West Bank almost doubled from 400 to 750, and in Gaza the number even tripled (200>600). From the mid-seventies up to the early eighties the Muslim Brotherhood concentrated on the development of its social sector. (Cp. Baumgarten, Helga (2006), op., cit., p.31-33.)

²⁷⁶ Hroub, Khaled (2000), op., cit., p. 233.

²⁷⁷ Hroub, Khaled (2000), op., cit., p. 235.

incompetent, discredited, and at the same time conducting an economy of nepotism.²⁷⁸ Hamas' activism also found attention in the media as exemplified in a Reuter's article about Islamic charitable engagement. In 1994, there was an event which was organized from a Hamas like-minded organisation that raised US\$ 200.000 for the society's projects. According to Reuters, even those who were against Hamas contributed to its funds through donations, and this kind of behaviour was accepted because this donors knew that the money would serve its purpose, while others reasoned that it was their religious duty to support charitable projects.²⁷⁹

In the Western media Hamas is generally presented as a terror organisation. This is not the place to discuss the criteria of definitions which depend on political goals. What is of importance here is the fact that the social character stands of Hamas is too the fore which offers a large number of services such as healthcare, schools, orphanages, legal-aid societies, and other recreational and educational services for children. Hamas is not like any other organisation or in this case NGO it has a particular role and it has successfully integrated itself into the Palestinian society. The recipients of its services appreciate its work while opponents of Hamas claim that its work is accompanied by the doctrines of Islamic extremism. The Hamas Charter states that Palestine is an Islamic Waqf throughout all generations and to the Day of Resurrection (Chapter Three: Strategies and Methods, Article 11).²⁸⁰ Therefore many ask, "What kind of organisation is Hamas, the Islamic Resistance Movement?"

*"It is over for this generation of Islamic activists. We tried and failed, but time is on our side. We must plant the seeds for an Islamic future in the next generation through social change. We must alter the mindset and mentality of people through an Islamic value system. We do this through example and education. We do it quietly and with persistence."*²⁸¹

²⁷⁸ Jarbawi, Ali (1994): Hamas' Bid to Lead the Palestinian People. In: Hroub, Khaled, (2000), op., cit., p.235.

²⁷⁹ Reuters News Agency report (April 11, 1994). In: Hroub, Khaled (2000), op., cit., p.236.

²⁸⁰ Hroub, Khaled (2000), op., cit., p. 273-274.

With regard to the latter question asked above, Sara Roy makes an interesting and important contribution with her empirical research and fieldwork on the Palestinian Islamic Movement. She points out that the comment given above reflects the views of many members of the largest political faction in the Palestinian Islamic movement in both parts of the occupied territories - Hamas. It could be said that a change of mind has occurred, which goes from the political and military extreme to the social and cultural one. An important aspect is that Hamas has shifted its actions to a lesser level and tends to the social realm with the provision of social services to its community and with a hint that they are developmental initiatives. With her interesting observation, Sara Roy makes clear just how the Hamas agenda has changed seven years after the Oslo negotiations in 1993 the question she raises is not only what has changed in the Hamas strategy and constellation, but also why? The first argument she gives is that the term "Islamic movement" not only refers to the political part of Hamas, it also includes the social and cultural component. Whether these are linked to the political aspect is another question and will not be discussed here. The second is that Hamas presents the largest faction in the occupied territories and it constitutes the reference to the Islamic political sector. The final and more important reason is the connection of the political/military sector of Hamas with the social/cultural part of it, since its birth during the Intifada. As many believe, Hamas has control over all Islamic social institutions in Gaza and their use for political indoctrination and military recruitment.

Hamas' shift caused an orientation towards social services and Islamic values and community development. One of the interviewed prominent Hamas representatives from the West Bank said:

*"Increasingly, Hamas represents religion and an Islamic way of life, not political violence."*²⁸²

²⁸¹ A prominent political official of Hamas. Cp. Roy, Sara (2000): The Transformation of Islamic NGOs in Palestine. In: MERIP, No. 214, Vol. 30, No.1, p.24-27.

²⁸² Roy, Sara (2000), op., cit., p. 24-27.

Hamas possesses an advanced institutional infrastructure and it gives attention to the needy and it addresses their unmet needs. Another scholar explained:

“We cannot defeat the occupier through the military force—we have learned that—but we can defeat him by preserving our culture and value system and Islam is the means through which we do so. In this way, we shall prevail.”²⁸³

Sara Roy points out that Hamas aims at the creation of a more Islamic society filled with Islamic values and norms rather than aggression against its enemy. Hamas new guideline moves towards the provision of social services and serving its community. Many religious affiliated (Islamic) organisations are considered as charitable associations and labelled as NGOs. As discussed above the Islamic NGOs - in contrast to the Christian faith based NGOs - are still considered as suspicious by the western donors. With the January elections 2006 in Palestine, Hamas has gained a new position in the Palestinian political landscape and since they were elected into power the single ministries have lost significance such as the “NGO Ministry” and others which have served the NGOs as partners.

In the next section we will discuss what role Islamic NGOs play and what influence they have on the Palestinian society. As shortly touched on the subject above, with the change through Hamas in power, it may gain a stronger foothold on the terrain which they have been doing in the social sector anyway.

²⁸³ Roy, Sara (2000), op., cit., p. 24-27.

3.4.2 The Role of Islamic NGOs in Palestine

Although Hamas remains the largest Islamic civic organisation that serves the Palestinian community in the occupied territories, there are others. Sara Roy states that the number of Islamic NGOs that are active in Gaza and the West Bank is 10% to 40% of all social institutions in both parts. These figures were composed from a variety of sources, such as the Palestinian ministries, Islamic and secular NGOs and Palestinian research institutions. For the specific sectors such as education, the numbers seem to be higher; for example 65% of all Gazan educational institutions below the secondary level are Islamic, according to a Ministry of Education official. The contribution Islamic NGOs make and the efforts they achieve are not insignificant. They could be found in the field of relief and charity work, preschool, primary and elementary school, library development, the education and rehabilitation of physically and mentally disabled children and adults, primary and tertiary health care. One of the best hospitals in the occupied territories is Islamic, which is founded, administered and financed by Islamists.

The Islamic NGOs are also active in women's income-generating projects literacy training the care of the elderly, the care and placement of "illegitimate" children who come to them as abandoned infants, as well as organizing youth and sports activities. Islamic services directly reach tens of thousands of people and impact hundreds of thousands more.²⁸⁴ Brigitte Rieger proved the latter in her study: the Islamic structures can be traced back to the traditional social systems that have been largely based on primordial networks and formations.²⁸⁵ Further she emphasizes that the conceptual formulation of

²⁸⁴ Roy, Sara (2000), *op. cit.* p.24-27.

²⁸⁵ Rieger Brigitte (2003), *op. cit.* p.4.

“social security should be understood in its ‘narrow’ sense as it is presented in the ILO Convention (102/1955) about the minimum standards in terms of social security.”²⁸⁶

Sara Roy gives some general facts, patterns and trends that characterize Islamic NGOs. Well-educated staffs manage them with professionalism and with a high level of skills. A large number of the staff holds advanced degrees from Western universities. The services provided by Islamic NGOs are generally of high quality and are perceived as such by the population. In fact, a high-ranking Ministry of Interior official admitted,

“We look the other way with many Islamic institutions because they provide excellent services and this helps us (the PA) a great deal.”²⁸⁷

Islamic NGOs almost uniformly define niches and work in sectors and localities where considerable needs are largely unmet. Their constituencies are mostly the poor and marginalized (e.g. widows, orphans, children born out of wedlock, the elderly), and in some localities of the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, Islamic NGOs appear to be the only ones working with these groups. All heads of Islamic institutions have confirmed that anyone is eligible to their programs and services, regardless of socio-economic, religious or political background.²⁸⁸

All Islamic NGOs are official and legally registered with the appropriate Palestinian ministries, as they were with the Israeli authorities before 1994. They receive assistance from a variety of sources willing to support them, religious or secular, including U.S., European and Arab Governments, the European Union, international organisations and secular and religious NGOs

²⁸⁶ Rieger Brigitte (2003), op. cit. p.4.

This convention was concluded in Geneva in 1952. On a state level it emphasizes the responsibility to provide for a risk in case of exceptional situations and to assist in order to overcome such difficulties.

Cp. International Labour Organisation C102 Social Security (Minimum Standards) Convention, 1952 on <http://www.ilo.org/ilolex/cgi-lex/convde.pl?C102> (January 12, 2006) (Layla Bahmad)

²⁸⁷ Roy, Sara (2000), op., cit., p.24-27.

²⁸⁸ Roy, Sara (2000), op., cit., p.26.

throughout the world. Islamic institutions do not typically work with non-Islamic institutions, although there are a few examples of such cooperation. Furthermore, Islamic NGOs are very competitive, even territorial, and there appears to be very little collaboration or partnerships among them. The common and perhaps only form of cooperation is information sharing about people applying for relief aid in order to avoid duplicating benefits. It is not unusual to find that one institution did not appear to know what another is doing. Finally, there is no comprehensive social program or master plan (at the macro level) among Islamists or within the Islamic movement that serves as a framework for institutional development or program planning. The lack of an organizing vision linking social programs to a social plan reveals the absence of long-range thinking or planning. Instead, the programs and the projects of Islamic NGOs are the initiatives of individuals and the institutions to which they belong.

Sara Roy emphasizes that the conflict is not only between different political ideologies, but also far more between actors competing over limited economic resources - funding for social, community and development projects. In fact, Islamic NGOs, like their secular counterparts, are now engaged in a social competition for the “street”. One illustration of their success comes from U.S. government sources.

From 1998 to 2000, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) decided to restart its funding support to secular NGOs in Palestine after having curtailed such funding in 1994. According to USAID officials, the decline in financial support hurt the NGO sector and created a vacuum in the West Bank and Gaza that was successfully filled by Islamic institutions. Fearing a “ Hamas takeover,”²⁸⁹ as one official put it USAID felt it was time to begin

²⁸⁹ Ali Khashan discusses Hamas’ new position. There have been numerous debates whether Islamist movements should participate in the government. Ali Khashan emphasizes that one of the important aspects considered was their influence on the societies they operate in and points to the Palestinian case which represents a particular case throughout the Arab countries. He points to the fact that Hamas did not have any difficulty to find its way into the current government in order to achieve its aim, the formation of an Islamic state.

refunding the Palestinian NGO sector and reprioritising community development initiatives. Was the real reason to strengthen or to keep the structural occupation alive?²⁹⁰

One of the successful strategies the Islamic institutions have is the competition on the social and developmental level for the reason that these are the only channels open to them. This rivalry is not only for position and power, but for survival as well. After having realized this, Islamic NGOs now aim at professionalization. Through Hamas change in line with the goal in the social sector, the Islamic movement seems to be moving toward a more pragmatic and non-confrontational view.

“But there is only one way to achieve this: the non-violent way, through a democratic process and a peaceful transfer of power. In Palestine, Hamas has worked very assiduously throughout the years and has made great efforts and sacrifices in order to achieve that aim. But is it likely that the new Hamas-led government will show flexibility or modify its political methods, and will it be possible for it to acquire experience in its administration of the Authority.” [...] “Since the existing system in Palestine is not Islamic, nor are the laws of the country based on Islam, then what will Hamas be dealing with? It is a movement that calls for Islam, yet does not apply it because the system is secular and it has to operate within its confines. Hamas has reached the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC) based on the precept which says that Islam is the solution and the claim that the laws in force are temporal / positive in nature.”

He proposes that the best choice would be that Hamas “stays within a secular, pluralistic political system that guarantees a certain measure of freedom through which Hamas can maneuver and even govern and express its thoughts and positions overtly to the Palestinian people.” [...] “Hamas has accepted to enter the political game and it can have at its disposal a variety of justifications if it wants to persevere in the government.” [...]

“Hamas is the master of choice as it commands the majority in parliament. However, it cannot stay forever without reaching radical solutions, all the while holding the Palestinian people hostage with it. The victory of the movement in the elections and its involvement in the political process does not mean that the people would automatically embrace its platform and would rush to join it, individually or as groups. The people’s reaction will be commensurate with the political program and goals that Hamas offers them, as well as the practical steps it undertakes and the actions it succeeds to accomplish within the framework of the political system through which it has agreed to operate.” [...] “Therefore, Hamas needs to review the political vision it is pursuing at present. It has to provide conditions conducive for collective work in a democratic climate throughout the whole of Palestine, including all the parties and political forces, irrespective of their divergent tend.”

Cp. Khashan, Ali (2006): Hamas, Islam, and the Authority. In: Palestine-Israel Journal of Politics, Economics and Culture, Vol.13, No.3 on <http://www.pij.org/authors.php?id=482> (January 14, 2007) (Layla Bahmad)

²⁹⁰ Shikaki, Khalil (1998): Peace Now or Hamas Later. In: Foreign Affairs, Vol.77 No.4, p.29-43.

In her conclusion Sara Roy assumes that Hamas is returning to its historical roots, which lie in the Muslim Brotherhood.²⁹¹ She suspects that Hamas attempt at political and military organisation within the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, has failed.

Furthermore, she emphasizes that if the intention to achieve an Islamic state by spreading Islamic values without violence and with the provision of social services, community works, caring for humanity, this might be an alternative especially in a moment when so much else has failed in the Palestinian society.²⁹²

²⁹¹ Helga Baumgarten gives a detailed delineation about Hamas and its predecessor the Muslim Brotherhood and its incipencies in Palestine. Cp. Baumgarten, Helga (2006), op., cit., p.7-31.

The Muslim Brotherhood (Arabic: Ikhwanu I-muslimin) is a Palestinian Islamist organisation that was started by the Egyptian Hassan Al-Banna in the 1940s. He was the leader of the original Egyptian Brotherhood. Out of the Palestinian Muslim Brotherhood, the more known group Hamas grew in the late 1980s. With the start of the First Intifada, Sheikh Ahmad Yassin (who was assassinated on April 16, 2004) and other six leaders join in on the protest against Israel's continued occupation of Palestinian territory. The outcome of this politicisation was the organisation Hamas. In many respects, Hamas represents the continuation of the Brotherhood. But still the Brotherhood exists as its own organisation, and with good relations to Hamas.

Cp. Hroub, Khaled (2000), op., cit., p. 1-14.

²⁹² Roy, Sara (2000), op., cit., p. 24-27.

3.4.3 The Role of NGOs in the First Intifada (1987-1993)

“On the 9th of December 1987 Israeli soldiers killed four young Palestinians in the Gaza Strip. Their funeral turned into a national uprising, where thousands went on the streets (...) this was the outbreak of the Intifada – twenty years after the beginning of the Occupation. The outcome of these two decades was for us Palestinians a disaster: The education and development system were blocked, and our Youth had suffered from a psychological and physical break and remained without perspectives.”²⁹³

The symbiosis of the first NGOs and the PLO, which arose very early have been rooted in the common struggle for the national cause. The decisive moment for the increased number of NGOs in Palestine was the First Intifada. It started in a refugee camp in the Gaza Strip, where despair and misery dominated the situation everywhere. The cause for this rebellion was the disappointment in the PLO (Palestine Liberation Organisation) and the Arab League, who watched the situation with cold interest. The Arab defeat against Israel in the wars of 1948 (and in particular 1967) led to great disappointment and pessimism on part of the Palestinians. In the 1970s, the declining conditions and the absence of community organisations were the reason for disillusion that the Palestinians were aware of. The move against the existing circumstances was the formation of popular organisations. Compared to the charitable associations, their main idea was to oppose the existing guidelines and rules that were imposed by the military authority. The experiences these organisations had were not always positive; affliction from the Israeli military aggravated the situation. However, they did not give up and continued on their track to withstand the military and have succeeded in carrying out important activities.

²⁹³ Farhat-Naser, Sumaya (2002): Thymian und Steine – Eine palästinensische Lebensgeschichte, (Basel) p.119.

The first Intifada

*“also provided an atmosphere in which further organisational efforts (by Fatah, the Islamist groups, and leftist parties) flourished. A series of new organisations arose, dedicated to providing a host of services (such as health and agricultural assistance) to a population suffering deprivation during the Intifada.”*²⁹⁴

Some of them have managed to receive funds from European sources in order to support their work and enhance their skills and capacities. The close tie to the PLO remained as before, but their work was affected by the Israeli government, who blocked the organisation and even closed them. Furthermore, the disadvantage these organisations had was internal inconsistencies, which at times had priority over their activities. This resulted in the favourable treatment of factional interests over the public good and needs of Palestinians. But nevertheless, they assumed to maintain enduring assistance to the development of a framework to the occupying regime. One aspect was that they had a strong basis. Therefore, a large number of Palestinians were educated and prepared in order to be heads and directors in the different sectors of the Palestinian society. Those active associations in the development sector have also been engaged in confronting the Israeli military occupation, as popular organisations have been doing since the 1970s. They were the ones who laid the framework of opposing the occupation and at the same time they also took care of the education sector and other welfare committees. This led to a growing self-reliance that followed the 1978 Camp David Accords. The Accords signalled that there was no hope for any external support, which offered the occasion for increased activity and the establishment of further civil associations. For twenty years (1967-1987) the Palestinians waited for external support, either from the PLO, the Arab states or even from the great powers, but nothing happened.²⁹⁵

²⁹⁴ Brown, Nathan J.(2003), op. cit. p.150.

²⁹⁵ Fahrhat-Naser, Sumaya (2002), op., cit., p.120.

In the 1980s, these organisations were more successful, although the Israelis tried to weaken their development in many ways. Recognizing the importance of NGOs, the Israeli military government even tried to foster its own groups at the beginning of the First Intifada (1987-1993). At the same time Hamas was brought into being in order to split the PLO. This was ultimately the catalyst for the Intifada that started in December 1987, which led to the substantial expansion and organisational activities in the area.²⁹⁶

The structures, which developed shortly after the outbreak of the First national uprising (Intifada), were significant for the duration and the success of it. The range of organisations founded was enlarged by research, media and human rights organisations, and gained an increasing international interest and financial assistance. The so-called “peoples committees” and the “United National Leadership of the Intifada,” medical committees, education committees, neighbourhood committees and committees for public relations and information constituted the principal framework. Throughout the last twenty years a well-educated and emancipated generation of Palestinians has grown.

All these organisations together laid the ground for that what is known today as the Palestinian NGO sector. In the absence of governmental institutions and projects that address the most basic needs of the various communities, NGOs representing various interests have been attempting to fill the gap. The active NGOs in the region range in Islamic, Christian, secular-, feminist-, and labour-oriented organisations, and are both local and international NGOs.

Prior to the First Intifada, the West Bank had flourishing charities, clubs, unions, associations, and the like. In Gaza, however, the number of NGOs was lower with regard to the large refugee population under the Egyptian administration.

²⁹⁶ Barghouti, Mustafa (1998): An Overview of Palestinian Non-governmental Organisations and Their Future Role. In: Asseburg, Muriel; Perthes, Volker (Eds.): *Surviving the Stalemate: Approaches to Strengthening the Palestinian Entity*, (Baden-Baden) p.83.

All of this activity was undertaken despite a relatively hostile atmosphere. While constraints on NGOs varied over the years of direct Israeli military rule, the relationship was largely confrontational.

The military government condemned the popular committees, which were seen as a new political sort of NGO that had gained popularity. The contrast is not absolute; the Likud Government put far more constraints in place and roadblocks in the way of NGOs than did the Labour Governments.

But in spite of the dominating discrepancies and obstacles many Palestinian NGOs had strong relations with outside groups. They received financial and technical assistance from Jordan and other Arab countries. Accordingly, they formed some of their own organisations and attempted to take over leadership of others. The last two decades have proved that the Palestinian NGOs were able to defend themselves and carry through their goals. This civic network has demonstrated its capability to survive, whereas during the First Intifada it was seen as the sphere of freedom, independence and protest. At the same time it strengthened the population's resistance against the occupying regime and its forces. Its creation and cohesion were of decisive significance in order to meet the need for self-reliance and the establishment of a Palestinian infrastructure. Palestinian NGOs grew with the aim of strengthening the infrastructure that Israeli occupation aimed to weaken.²⁹⁷ Many of the charitable and cooperative organisations that were established earlier in the 1920s and the 1930s have relied on a large number of NGOs functioning in Gaza and the West Bank, most of which still exist.

²⁹⁷ Barghouti, Mustafa (1998), *op. cit.* p.82.

3.4.4 The Institutionalising Process

The wretched and difficult circumstances during the first Intifada led to an increase and the creation of new civic associations. The activism of these civic bodies effectively served the population and they were seen as kind of prerequisite for the national liberation and at the same time they were a preliminary stage of institution building for a prospective Palestinian state. These civic institutions were the heart of the Intifada in the sense of civil action, and were deemed as necessary in order to continue the fight against the occupying regime. National and social interests were combined together in the struggle.

As a result, the Israeli Government began to intervene into the action scope of the civic bodies that served their needy brothers and sisters in the riot. The form of intervention ranged from the limitation of actions to the prohibition and dissolving of single organisations.

This kind of de-institutionalising by the Israeli Government had the goal to prevent the establishment of a Palestinian infrastructure and a ground for a future Palestinian state. One of the forms used to face the problem was legislation and the control of the organisations. The legal aspect and the problems and difficulties NGOs have been facing in the Occupied territories will be addressed in the third chapter of this dissertation.

3.4.5 The Role of NGOs after Oslo (1994)

“In 1994, when the PA began operation, its leaders had long experience working with some Palestinian NGOs. They had operated largely on might be viewed as state corporatist lines, attempting to create or license organisations and having them hew to the national line as sketched by the PLO.”²⁹⁸

In spite of the Oslo Agreement and the establishment of the Palestinian Authority and its existence, the Palestinian NGOs and other community based organisations remained indispensable on the ground. On the other hand the NGOs did not benefit from the new authority quite the opposite happened; in fact the PA has tried to become stronger and to assert itself as the single authority. The Palestinian Authority did not recognize that PNGOs still had an essential role and that they laid the foundation for and contributed to Palestinian civil society. In addition, Palestinian NGOs had enlarged their capacities through the influx of external funding that had not been coming from the PLO and they had also professionalized their work. Both sides knew that the absence of the NGOs would be inconceivable since they had been providing the services in the main sectors for the last thirty years under the occupying regime of Israel.²⁹⁹ But the signing of the Oslo Accords did not affect the responsibility of the NGOs or even reduce them. In the health sector the NGOs

²⁹⁸ Brown, Nathan J. (2003), op. cit. p.150.

²⁹⁹ *Article 55 of the Fourth Geneva Convention (Supplementary Protocol I)* declares that “to the fullest extent of the means available to it, the Occupying Power has the duty of ensuring the food and medical supplies of the population; it should, in particular, bring in the necessary foodstuffs, medical stores and other articles if the resources of the occupied territory are inadequate. The Occupying Power may not requisition food stuffs, articles or medical supplies available in the occupied territory; except for use by the occupation forces and administration personnel, and only if the requirements of the civilian population have been taken into account. Subject to the provisions of other international Conventions, the Occupying Power shall make arrangements to ensure that fair value is paid for any requisitioned goods. The Protecting Power shall, at any time, be at liberty to verify the state of the food and medical supplies in occupied territories, except where temporary restrictions are made necessary by imperative military requirements.” (on <http://www.icrc.org/Web/Eng/siteeng0.nsf/htmlall/genevaconventions>, (March 6, 2007)

continued to deliver full rehabilitation services, and not less than 60% of primary health care services.³⁰⁰

The Palestinian Authority regarded the civic organisations and those delivering services as useful and supplemental to its own services and it had to take the full responsibility for all the sectors that were served by NGOs. A central problem would be the lack of financial means, the expertise in the field and of course efficiency and achieving results in the provision of services to the Palestinians. A large number of state functions were replaced by NGOs who had been in charge of the different sectors.³⁰¹ Accordingly, various ministries welcomed the commitment of the NGOs. In one way the NGOs served as a kind of mediator between the Palestinian society and the authority in a sense that they knew what the needs in the development field were. There was a growing interest on the ministerial level with regard to closer cooperation between the single ministries and the NGOs. Mustafa Barghouti describes this kind of interest, as a development model which is more sensitive to the needs of the Palestinian society than the Palestinian Authority and a further obstacle he points out are the hurdles of bureaucracy. On the other hand the NGOs have the flexibility and the driving forces to create these so-called development models, which are to conform to the society's needs.

A further advantage the NGOs have is that through their non-governmental status they are able to explore various possibilities in spite of the existing occupation in search of development models. Mustafa Barghouti suggests that the Palestinian Authority could share labour with the NGOs in a way that both would benefit both the employees and the PA. The latter would remain active and be responsible for the development project and the government would have the responsibility for infrastructure. In his opinion all this together would be

³⁰⁰ Barghouti, Mustafa (1998), *op. cit.* p.84.

³⁰¹ Barghouti, Mustafa (1998), *op. cit.* p.85.

To these services count care for the disabled, health promotion, preschool education, services for women and human rights activities.

beneficial for both parties.³⁰² But as nice as it sounds, this approach seems to be difficult to realize since there are already other existing problems between the two.

One of the major problems was the lack of a central authority that would control the different organisations with the support of laws and other legal means, but this was not the case and therefore the numerous organisations have established their own priorities and interests over the common national interest. This was an indication that the cohesion of the society threatened to fall apart. Another thorn in the Palestinians flesh has been that even the signing of the Oslo Accords did not really bring any significant changes and that the occupation could be progressed unhindered. The occupying regime still has had influence and control over the major areas such as roads, lands, the import and export business, checkpoints and borders of the Palestinian Territories.

In a prior debate the Palestinian NGOs in Gaza and the West Bank were considered as an alternative option to the Palestinian National Authority, but this idea did not find much support. At the same time, the Palestinian NGOs were charged with bribery and corruption in the same way as the Palestinian Authority. There was a campaign - supported by PA Loyalists -, which called them “fat cats”, those who exploit donor funds and put it into their own pockets. The worst of all is that this kind of economy aggravates the situation of the bereft Palestinian population.³⁰³ The Palestinian Authority (PA) and the Palestinian NGO community have never had a great relationship for the reason that the PA has always made the effort to defame NGOs. Mustafa Barghouti even confirms that the NGOs should remain independent from the Palestinian National Authority because of its poor performance in negotiations, which did not bring any remarkable outcomes for the Palestinians. He blames the negative result of the bargaining process due to the absence of civil society

³⁰² Barghouti, Mustafa (1998), op. cit. p.85.

³⁰³ Hammami, Rema (2000): Palestinian NGOs since Oslo – From NGO Politics to Social Movements? In: MERIP, No. 214, Vol.30, No.1, p.16.

organisations such as NGOs. The same pattern asserts the government's poor achievement in the creation of accountable and transparent economic institutions with the consequence of a shortening of foreign assistance from the international community.

Certainly, the NGOs recognized that they were seen as the employment sector of the "economically privileged". Rema Hammami describes this as an outcome or a consequence of their integration into a global NGO ethic and culture that is largely conducted by the presence of a huge number of international donor aid agencies, which have had the task of supporting the efforts of the peace process negotiated in the Oslo Accords. A more central aspect is that this ongoing process of NGO retrenchment from a popular constituency that predated Oslo has developed into the de-politicisation of the society that has marked the formation of the Palestinian National Authority rule. Many NGOs on the ground realized that through their institutional transformation they have contributed to the political decline within the Palestinian society and are trying to get back on the "grassroots track."³⁰⁴ But there have also been some positive outcomes since Oslo and the Palestinian NGOs developed an umbrella organisation, which is known as the PNGO Network. A further goal was the ratification and signature of the NGO law by President Yassir Arafat. The legislation issue will be addressed later.

Referring back to the situation of the NGOs, it is interesting to look at the circumstances and facts that accompanied them prior to Oslo, interesting, because there was no Palestinian National Authority and this gap provided a political space for the formation of a varied and multiple bases of NGOs. The underlying reason for the establishment of this new sphere was because of and despite the occupying regime. The number of NGOs working in Gaza and the West Bank at that time (1995) was estimated at 800-1200 although the difference and simple nature of these organisations could not be really

³⁰⁴ Hammami, Rema (2000), op., cit., p. 16.

determined.³⁰⁵ The numbers given above, give us an idea of how important and to what extent these organisations have played a role in the occupied territories and in particular, to the stifling regime and statelessness, while their configuration implies to their various historical trajectories.³⁰⁶

The charitable organisations are the oldest and largest sector, while the NGOs had their roots in the PLO's mass mobilization or national front strategy that emerged after the conclusion of the 1977 Camp David Accords. Organisations that were left oriented (in particular the communist party) had a decisive theoretical and organisational role in this strategy. Basically grassroots organisations (GROs) consisted of non-factional women student and worker groups, who aimed at national resistance and self-help in the form of social support and this was on a more voluntaristic structure. After the end of the 1970s these groups or movements split into factionally based groups.³⁰⁷

The institutionalisation process started after the organisations became factionalised and their projects and initiatives were supported financially. In the early 1980s the PLO supplied funds to those organisations that had close ties to it. In contrast other organisations have started to develop contacts to foreign or better European Donor NGO organisations. But the communist party, not being part of the PLO, spearheaded these links out of necessity. Other leftist organisations followed suit and began to ramp up their factional funding with the money they received from the donors.³⁰⁸

³⁰⁵ Ten years later (2005) the number of active NGOs has almost doubled.

³⁰⁶ Hammami, Rema (2000), op., cit., p. 16

³⁰⁷ Hammami, Rema (2000), op., cit., p. 16.

As such, in the mid-1980s there were five womens committees, four health committees, at least two agricultural committees, and two competing labour union federations.

³⁰⁸ Hammami, Rema (2000), op. cit. p. 16.

As we have seen above, the outbreak of the First Intifada reaffirmed the origin and nature of these organisations, which were supported by a broad part of the population. The established various committees had to function as a resistant shield in the first two years of the Intifada. The success of this movement was connected to the organizing and mobilizing skills and the experiences of the grassroots organisations (GROs).

But this did not last very long and already at the beginning of the 1990s, a large number of these popular organisations were transformed into modern, professional and skilled and above all foreign-funded and development-oriented centres. Not only these centres emerged, but also many donor-funded research centres were founded in response to the closures of the universities that had been happening for years. This was a turning point of prime importance, which was a signal for the transformation from a mass movement into NGOs elite, including political, and professional autonomous institutions. Foreign funding played a major role, but it was not the most important pillar in the complex process.³⁰⁹

³⁰⁹ Hammami, Rema (2000), op. cit. p. 17.

Rema Hammami has dealt with that process in depth in her article "NGOs: The Professionalization of Politics," in *Race and Class* 37/2 (1995). Here she only addresses the aspects of this process that have relevance for the current situation.

3.4.6 The Role of NGOs during the Second Intifada

“The Intifada presents a direct challenge to Palestinian Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) as well as to their counterparts among donor and international Non-Governmental Organisations (INGOs) and donor to intervene and to respond to the humanitarian crisis in the West Bank and Gaza as well as to act as a witness to Israel’s massive military offensive for self-determination.”³¹⁰

September 2000 was another decisive moment for the Palestinians, when they saw themselves challenged for a second time to withstand the occupying regime – the Al-Aqsa Intifada – with all their strength. This time the revolt had changed with regard to the one in late 1987 for the reason that the PLO and the NGOs used to be a kind of unit and they were not distinguished from each other because they both fought for the national cause. Through the changes that have occurred with the Oslo Accords in 1994 and the time after, the relationship between the civil society sphere (the NGOs) and the new Palestinian Authority (PA) has become deformed. Thus, the role of NGOs during the Second Intifada varies from the First Intifada in many ways, and leading at the same time leading to a chasm between the Palestinians and the local NGO activists. Palestinian society’s sense of alienation can only deepen.

This time the Intifada was not only geared towards resistance against the occupying and repressing regime, it also aimed directly at the Palestinian NGOs and their international “fellows” and their international donor counterparts. The Palestinians believed that the NGOs could intervene and attend to their duties in order to rejoin the human misery in the occupied territories, but there has been no counter reaction by the NGOs who have been the eyewitnesses of the Israeli military offensive that aggravated the situation more and more. On the one hand Palestinian society expected that the Palestinian NGOs would be able

³¹⁰ Hanafi, Sari; Tabar, Linda (2005): The Emergence of a Globalized Elite - Donors, International Organisations and Local NGOs, (Jerusalem) p.14.

to support the national goal in a way to strive for the wide interests that were united in the national agenda.

In a roundtable discussion that was conducted by the Palestinian Institute for the Study of Democracy – Muwatin in August 2002 - representatives of different NGOs being active in the occupied territories discussed the situation. The purpose of this discussion was to visualize and recall the role of NGOs being active either in the West Bank or Gaza in order to understand what difficulties they have been confronted with on the complex terrain.

The situation during the Al-Aqsa Intifada has been compared with a morass where secular, left-leaning, national democratic forces reside, whose absence on the current Palestinian political stage within the current Intifada³¹¹, could not be more glaring.³¹² The participants and representatives of the various NGOs agreed in their debate about the difficult and complex situation that NGOs were facing at that particular stage of the Intifada. The goal was to have a serious and analytical argument about the obstacles and problems faced by NGOs. It was an attempt to prompt critical reflection to the dynamics witnessed within the NGO and international donor sphere during the Oslo era, including the formation of a local branch of globalized professional elite, and the estrangement of NGOs from the people's movement. The time after Oslo reflects that the NGOs on the ground expressed genuine social interests, but at the same time they worried about their own interests.

This represented challenges to all those who sought real change from the blatant inadequacy of the organisational paradigms of the Palestinian movement at that time. The discussion involving the NGO experts was conducted with the objective to solve the problematic situation with regard to the

³¹¹ Its end was concluded officially in February 2005.

³¹² http://www.between-lines.org/archives/2002/aug/NGO_compilation.htm (June 17, 2004)
Cp. Between the Lines (2002): Roundtable Discussion: NGOs, Globalization, Donors & Elite Formation (compiled by BTL). In: BTL, (August), p.14-29.

unresolved dilemmas NGOs and international donor sectors face, and further how NGOs could consolidate their position without a political approach, serving as the active extension of an organized constituency-based political program. In the following I will present the major arguments that have been debated in the attempt to improve the situation, a large number of the following arguments have been confirmed throughout my data collection and on-site field research with the various NGOs.

One of the participants Dr. Mustapha Barghouti³¹³, emphasized that many people confuse Palestinian NGOs with the Palestinian NGO Network (PNGO). The more significant point he brought up was that the Islamic NGOs and charities are gaining soaring strength and attention. He pointed to the seriousness of the transformation-taking place at the level of the strength of the Islamic organisations. But the major concern that has always prevailed in NGO work in Palestine is that of who decides the policy. Of course many NGOs claim to have their own agendas and guidelines they follow, and this has always been unresolved issue. The general tendency is that the international donors determine the agenda though many NGOs claim to have their own, which they may do but nonetheless is difficult to enforce. But the biggest problem they face is that they are losing their independence on two levels, which Mustapha Barghouti points out. The first one is the Israeli occupation and the second one is the complete takeover of the international community including the development agenda and the internal structures agenda as well.³¹⁴

In this way the NGOs are exposed to barriers from two sides, the one is the physical aggravated circumstances which surround them and then again the pressure on the part of the donors This makes the efforts the NGOs are trying to undertake more difficult, because then they are not really able to conduct

³¹³ He is the Director of the Health Development Information and Policy Institute (HDIP), as well as a founding member of the Union of Palestinian Medical Relief Committees (UPMRC). He is also a member of the politburo of the Palestinian Peoples Party—the former Palestinian Communist Party.

³¹⁴ http://www.between-lines.org/archives/2002/aug/NGO_compilation.htm (June 17, 2004)

their work or fulfil their mission in the way it was intended due to external influence in the form of rules and regulations given by the international donor community. These aforementioned difficulties that are faced by the NGOs reveal that Palestinian society has been completely marginalized into elite and non-elite and this creates a sort of chasm between the two spheres. This process of marginalization took place very fast regarding the input from Palestinian society, including NGOs and political parties.

Another issue is the North-NGO and the South-NGO relationship, which has always been a bit complex in a sense that no country would ever accept giving an endowment fund to anybody. By an endowment a transfer of the power base is meant – from one structure to another. This has been confirmed in so many cases that the donors set the policies and determine the rules. Attention has to be paid to the difference between transference of funds and resources, and the transference of power. Again a further difficulty Palestinian NGOs had in the 1980s was the transformation in funding processes, where most international NGOs simply became governmentally funded.³¹⁵ He asserts that the only sphere to remain independent were the churches and the Islamic sphere that have been independent. That practically removed the funders' independence internationally, and by losing their independence along the way, they have transferred their own loss of independence to their partners around the world, including Palestine. Concerning the question of the NGO elite in the occupied territories is not primarily whether some Palestinian NGO leaders were separated from political parties, but rather if they are disconnected from the national agenda or from national factions.

The point is that one can still represent the ideas of the national agenda without being related to a particular national factional agenda. One realizes that there is a huge difference between the occupied territories and other countries and this is not happening in Palestine because of the existing national conflict with the

³¹⁵ Close to 90% of the Palestinian NGOs have been supported by governments

Israelis, which keeps pulling people back to the national issue they cannot avoid.³¹⁶

Another participant in the discussion was Randa Siniora, who calls the “professional” NGOs technocrats, which are aware of the global agenda and its discourse.³¹⁷ The latter has also been stated in one of the interviews where it was asserted that the NGO trains technocrats. Historically as NGOs – be they professional or those linked with grassroots Organisations (GROs) - both have played a substitute role during the occupation in the absence of a state. Many of these organisations believed in a social change.

In this sense NGOs are more flexible and creative, and can bring in new ideas so that they represent a kind of catalyst. They cannot regard themselves in isolation from other GROs, which are also part of civil society or from political parties. She presents evidence to support the fact that it is not a shame to be linked to a political party because international NGOs and donors who have ties to political parties back up a large number of organisations working on the difficult terrain.³¹⁸ It is no secret that the international donors seek specific political interests and look for the appropriate organisations.

In supporting her argument, she states that it is the failure of these organisations has always been due to the weak relationship between both – the grassroots organisations and the political parties. Most of the NGOs [...] emerged as professional NGO organisations during the late 1980s and early 90s.³¹⁹ These kinds of associations were the women’s organisations, which

³¹⁶ http://www.between-lines.org/archives/2002/aug/NGO_compilation.htm (June 17, 2004)

³¹⁷ Randa Siniora used to be the Director of Al Haq-Law and Service of Man, a Palestinian Human Rights Organisation based in Ramallah. She resigned in November 2005. Al Haq is a professional NGO, which is not linked to a specific political party.

³¹⁸ http://www.between-lines.org/archives/2002/aug/NGO_compilation.htm (June 17, 2004)

³¹⁹ In 1903, the first women’s organisation was founded under the rule of the Ottoman Empire with support of the Greek-orthodox parish in Akka, which offered support for poor girls. Some time later Christian and Muslim women’s organisation those were active in the social sector in Jerusalem and Jaffa until the 1970s, the Palestinian women’s movement had a welfare

emerged from the different women's committees functioning and working at that time. These organisations developed separately from political parties or from women's committees, which on the other hand were linked to the political parties in order to do more professional work. Islah Jad points emphasizes that

*It is true that Palestinian political parties have neglected the women's issue resulting in the departure of many women cadres and activists. [...] These parties were able to empower their women cadre without training them in "target groups" and without giving them courses in "lobbying and advocacy".*³²⁰

The active women who were involved had broad experiences in the numerous popular sectors, which shaped their professionalism.

*"These are the kind of cadres created and empowered by the political parties."*³²¹

Other organisations were established in the early 90s like the Women's Studies Centre at the Birzeit University or the Women's Centre for Legal Aid and Counselling. These organisations wanted to do their work as professionally as they could and this was the reason for the contacts on the international level with donors and in particular with the international women's movement. Short after, the professional NGOs working on the ground did not realize that the thesis (which justified the need for more professional work) was disproved with the facts of de-politization, disengagement from the people's movement, and the highly paid technocrats as they were called.³²² This gives rise to the question of whether or not the entire scenario could be called an "NGO

character. These organisations were founded by educated women of prosperous families living in the cities (...). In 1929, the first denominational Palestinian Women's Union was founded which was later co-opted by the PLO. They aimed at taking over the social part of work in order to support the men in their political fight. A large number of women started to be active in the education sector and taught in schools. (Fahrhat-Naser, Sumaya (2002), op., cit., p.102.).

³²⁰ Between the Lines (2003): Reflections on the Palestinian Women's Movement. In: (Compiled by BTL). In: BTL, (March), p.35-38.

³²¹ Between the Lines (2003): Reflections on the Palestinian Women's Movement. In: (Compiled by BTL). In: BTL, (March), p.36.

³²² http://www.between-lines.org/archives/2002/aug/NGO_compilation.htm (June 17, 2004)

Business”, which is more engaged in its own goals than in the mission they are there for. As many others in the NGO sector in Palestine, Randa Siniora considers the NGOs to be professional and transparent, representing global values, which have emerged from the West and she does not think that they should not be undermined just because they were from the West or because of their link to international partners and donors, which hold them for accountable. In her argumentation she neglects the Islamic organisations and charities who contribute a considerable share to the Palestinian civil society. She only addresses the more western NGOs that have close ties to their “western” partners and financial backers. It does not necessarily mean that all NGOs that are in favour of a more “western” tendency could be hold for accountable and transparent. Surely, many NGOs are keen to do so and to stand out through their efforts and achievements.

Siniora totally neglects Islamic civil society with all its organisations and welfare services. What becomes clear is that the donor and international partner aspect is relevant for her, which has a decisive influence on the local NGOs. Through the conditions (fund applications, reports etc.) set by the international partners, they are automatically forced to provide transparency and proceed in terms of global values. She might be right with her argument that these global ideas and notions, which should make up the features of the NGO, are part of its image in order to please its international fellows. She also argues that the NGOs represent global values, whereas the question arises what the term “global” embraces. Further, if the NGOs stand for these values based on their philosophy or whether these are imposed by the international donors. It has to be distinguished to what extent these so-called values are congruent with the NGOs’ (real) agenda. This aspect is going to be discussed later on. What she defines as global ideas remains open and it could embrace a broad spectrum. She may refer to the keywords such as democracy, gender, etc. which the donors and international partners want to hear from their fund recipients – the Palestinian NGOs. They are expected to represent a “modernist” discourse which corresponds to western views and ideas.

She argues that if people are interested in working within their own communities and also developing a relationship with their political parties, they could bring back to life and achieve a better standing within the society. Here, she leaves the decision up to the NGOs, whether they decide to get closer to the community or not, but she disregards the reaction on part of the internationals.

The NGO community - or in this case professional organisations - become aware of the fact that they have to be closer to their base and that their work has to be transparent and accountable in order to be recognized. It seems as if the NGO community has been standing against the local communities and society in general. A further component is that the professional NGOs have not been able to work with others who have similar ideas and projects in mind, because there is intense competition among the organisations themselves. Another aspect is the decision-making process, which has to be made together with the communities and NGOs do not have the right to jump over the communities and decide for them. The agenda has to be in accord with the people, even though NGOs have their own goals and objectives. Working in agreement with like-minded organisations from the various sectors would be beneficial for all in order to become influential on the level of power.

But if it were the same sector and different political ideologies then this would lead to conflict. She concludes her contribution with the statement that if the NGO community does not change, it will continually be known as elite, which is isolated from the community and its needs. This is not in the least wrong for the reason that if NGOs continue the way they used to in the past, the gap between them and those who depend on them and their support will widen more and more. Where does the sense of the NGO work in the occupied territories remain then?

Petter Bauck – another participant in the discussion – states that development policies and activities exercised by many European governments constitute a

part of their foreign policy.³²³ For sure there is a reason why so many governments are heavily engaged in development projects and initiatives around the globe. It is considered a helpful tool for the determination of foreign policy structures in a particular country or even region where support in various forms is provided. A Norwegian researcher, who has been working on NGOs in Norway, commented on the fact that although Norwegian NGOs are basically government funded, that they are still called “NGOs”. This is an important issue he addresses and recalls to mind, which features really characterize a genuine NGO? It seems that almost all NGOs in whatever form and in whatever field are mostly government-sponsored in order to carry out their activities. This leads to what we call dependence on the donor, which may also set the agenda and determine other conditions that could influence the NGOs . In Palestine the following case is taking place: If the Palestinian NGOs are primarily financed by international donors (who are governmental, or who are funded by their own government) is it then correct to speak of NGOs? It is right to say that money causes dependence, it has influence and it is a very strong force. As many other governments claim, including Norway, there are two reasons why they are active in the occupied territories: first, to support, facilitate and to put the peace process on track and second, to support the institution-building process on the ground, which should lead to the establishment of an independent Palestinian state. He is critical about the latter and says that it has always been uncertain and in question.³²⁴ The latter statement has also been confirmed throughout the field research, that the international donors in a sense finance and keep the ongoing Israeli occupation alive.

Palestine used to be a terrain where NGOs existed before and the perspective has changed where they have worked with the aim of establishing a Palestinian state and having NGOs as well. Equilibrium has to be found between the future state-building process and civil society. But the circumstances and the situation

³²³ Petter Bauck is the Director of the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation – NORAD.

³²⁴ http://www.between-lines.org/archives/2002/aug/NGO_compilation.htm (June 17, 2004)

in general for the civil society community in the occupied territories is not very easy and in particular when special conditions have to be met. In view of this, donors play an important role in the civil society life in particular for NGOs, because it is the international donor community that supports and funds the organisations that are active in Palestine. Here again the issue is linked to the agenda, which means that they can set the agenda on both levels: first, on the governmental level of the Palestinian state and on the NGO level. And this leads automatically to the establishment of similar structures, which already exist in society. Finally, Petter Bauck summarizes that it has to be questioned “Who is setting the agenda?” and that the international players are the ones who drive the agenda with their strong influence and in particular at times of the Second Intifada. This irradiates a negative light on them and this casts the “global values” argument - mentioned by Randa Sinoiora - into doubt

Mohammed Shadeed approaches the discussion by saying that the international donors are undertaking different projects in Palestine for their own interests rather than that of the Palestinian community and he agrees with Petter Bauck that their “solidarity” serves as a foreign policy tool.³²⁵ He also adds that the reason for their presence is the stability of the region. The decisive point he speaks about is that in international relations, there are no permanent friendships: there are only permanent (self) interests. These just listed statements are not far-fetched and reflect the scenario on the ground.

So once those interests are no longer high, then funding will be reduced and affects those who depend on the financial aid coming from abroad. Each donor has its own regulations and expectations he wants to have fulfilled and some of them are friendly and acceptable and others are compulsive. It is emphasized that in the case of Palestine not all donors could be blamed and seen as the black sheep. A more interesting aspect is that the aid the NGOs receive from the international donors is linked to risks, which may change the NGO into an

³²⁵ Mohammed Shadeed works for the Welfare Consortium for the Management of the NGO Trust Fund Project.

instrument used by the sponsor to implement its agenda. Of course there may be opportunities the NGO would consider as useful, but nevertheless the NGOs have to be careful for the reason that the Palestinian elite and NGOs are a possible target of being “instrumentalised”.. An interesting remark is a look at the Palestinian Authority (PA) and the elites (including the NGOs), and approximately 50% of them ended up being in the ministries or as ministers and the other 50% remained in the NGO sector or in the opposition. But there was a danger coming from the US government, which wanted the Palestinians to have a leader elected, who fully agrees with their agenda, the call for reform and the connected conditions, and if this did not happen then the funds would have been cut off. With the regard to the latter, Mohammed Shadeed was convinced that the US would not just cut off their financial support.³²⁶

Since the PA is under siege of the Israeli regime and its institutions are not really functioning, NGOs have to take over and form a kind of unity with the funders and set a common agenda and have the same priorities. This sounds like a vision as we have seen before; the donors are the ones who wield power in terms of conditions and obligations. It cannot be denied that the NGOs on the ground are more effective and efficient than the institutions of the PA, because of their flexibility and their proximity to the needy. The NGOs have been aware that they have to work more towards sustainability (self-reliance of Palestinian institutions) and capacity building (through the partnerships with the private sector) and try to loosen their ties from their international donors. Mohammed Shadeed also says that the Palestinian NGOs in the West Bank and those in Gaza have to form partnerships and that the elite NGOs do not really look for partnerships with NGOs in marginalized areas. Between Palestinian NGOs there should be more emphasis – not on massaging the egos of the donors, or forming strong relations with international donor NGOs, who are the “professionals”, but in formulating and networking with strictly solidarity

³²⁶ http://www.between-lines.org/archives/2002/aug/NGO_compilation.htm (June 17, 2004)

groupings within the donor community which will help (by putting pressure on the donors) to direct their funds towards Palestinian priorities.³²⁷

Andreas Deschler who is also active in the NGO sector calls the whole situation in Palestine a “NGO economy” meaning that the NGOs earn good money and have a lot more money than the Palestinian people. The NGO business can destroy the Palestinian economy, which is already very weak and suffers from the consequences of the occupation. This has been the hint of a very dangerous development and its side effects on the political and economical influence on the local society, who finally has to carry the entire burden. If the NGOs distance themselves more and more from the community, they will lose their trust and this may pose a serious problem for them. But it is not only the gap between the NGOs and the people that could develop or has developed; it is also the gap between the large, well-organized NGOs and the smaller ones, including the community organisations. The impression of the NGOs in Palestine is that they try to suit the donor’s wishes and expectations. Furthermore the applications the NGOs bring into line for the donors involve terms like “enhancement”, “strengthening”, “gender”, “sustainability”, “participation” and others in order to receive funds for their projects. Looking at these keywords the question arises, if the above-mentioned is what the NGOs are really applying for or if it is just a strategy to receive the money and in reality things are different than they seem. Of course, it is not easy to determine what are genuine interests and goals of NGOs.

Sometimes those who process the NGO applications wonder if the ideas presented in the proposal match the facts on the ground. It is questioned whether a workshop on gender equality in Balata (refugee camp) is the most urgent need of Palestinian society.³²⁸ It is obvious that the example given is a

³²⁷ Andreas Deschler is a Project Assistant at the Friedrich-Naumann Foundation – Jerusalem, which is a German Foundation of the Liberal-Democratic Party (FDP) on http://www.between-lines.org/archives/2002/aug/NGO_compilation.htm (June 17, 2004)

³²⁸ http://www.between-lines.org/archives/2002/aug/NGO_compilation.htm (June 17, 2004)

matter of dependency and at the same time related to funds. He emphasizes that people should fund and contribute to their own struggle instead of waiting for donors to pay the bill. Many are aware that this remains an illusion in the occupied territories. Nonetheless, NGOs have to be careful not to rely so much on international funding but this seems to be a great obstacle. Certainly, this sounds easier said than done, but the reality is that the dependence on the international donors is very strong except for the Islamic NGOs, who have other funding sources. There are NGOs who are “non-governmental” in its purest sense and which conduct private fundraising, but it has to be considered that sometimes the amounts provided by the donors are higher than those raised. The advantage for the “private initiative” is that there is no given agenda and the NGOs can dispose of the money as it wishes.

The last attendant of the debate was Izzat Abdel Hadi who states that elites are very important in any society and regards them as a positive concept, which really seeks a social change in their own society. This does not happen by force but rather by mechanisms, as he explains.³²⁹ Through the implementation of projects, these civil associations try to increase the participation of the people in the decision-making process. The globalized elite are also considered as decisive for the reason that NGOs are exposed to the international community, which serves as a kind of model. He orients by Randa Siniora, who also revealed the global component and particular role NGOs need to play in order to integrate themselves into the “global image”. But the substantial issue is the question of the sources of the elite’s legitimacy and their link with the social movements, which are observed in the Palestinian context.³³⁰

³²⁹ Izzat Abdel Hadi is the Director of the Bisan Center for Research and Development based in Ramallah.

³³⁰ http://www.between-lines.org/archives/2002/aug/NGO_compilation.htm (June 17, 2004)

Only during the Oslo period did NGOs become more technical because the agenda was more developmental and slogans changed from “managing the transition” to “relief to development” and from “resistance to development”. He concludes with the thought that the Palestinian NGOs have always been waiting to introduce and integrate the Palestinian issue and their national rights within the global agenda.

3.5 Conclusion

The phenomenon of NGOs has raised interesting questions and debates throughout numerous societies and countries, which brought these actors great attention. As discussed above international scholars defined the term in many ways and filled it with various characteristics. The more interesting aspect was whether these so-called Non-Governmental Organisations are literally independent or whether they have ties to other “parties” except for the aid recipients they support. The numerous abbreviations demonstrated that the term exists in variable forms such as QUANGO; DONGO, SONGO etc. which again confer a totally different nature to it.

The Palestinian NGOs have their predecessors rooted in their history, culture and tradition. This particularly applies to the waqf structures (Islamic trust) that have existed until the present day under the auspices of Islamic organisations. Regarding the Palestinian case, where NGOs have built a strong branch within the Palestinian civil society they have also played a major role. They have experienced great support in many ways either in form of funds or volunteers.

Usually, it seems to be an ambiguous issue regarding the NGOs’ position, reputation, recognition, transparency and authenticity in particular within the Palestinian society and in front of the financiers who provide the financial means. In view of the Palestinian history, NGOs have contributed a lot during the first Intifada, where national interest and social activism were united and strengthened in the dispute against the occupying regime.

Looking at the second historical event alongside the time line the Oslo Accords reshaped this “body” and rather caused a cleavage between the newly established “quasi-government” and the NGOs, but the nonetheless the PA remained sort of dependent on them because of their longstanding work and experiences on the terrain.

With the second Intifada in September 2000 the entire issue regarding NGOs and the PA gained a new character based on the reason that the riot was addressed against the occupying and stifling regime but also against this newly established elite of Palestinian NGOs together with the international partners who have been watching silently the ongoing riots in the streets.

This ambiguity still exists today and it has raised debates about the Palestinian NGOs that are exposed helpless to the international community. In the following part I am going to discuss the obstacles the Palestinian NGOs faced after the conclusion of the Oslo Accords and what effects this had on them.

4. NGOS FACING OBSTACLES AFTER OSLO

A large number of civic associations or NGOs have been operating in North Africa and the Middle East for many years. Different foreign sponsors have supported their work in order to carry out their projects. In Palestine, after the conclusion of the Oslo Accords in the early nineties, many NGOs - in particular PNGOs faced severe changes and drastic cuts in their work efforts. The money and the funds that were coming from Western governments at that time were intended for strengthening peace and coexistence, such as the normalization (as it was called) between Israel and the Arab states. The major money flow was coming from the United States who supported the Israeli government throughout the negotiations in order to achieve security and avoid violent outbreaks (the US is particularly interested in countering dehumanising stereotyping of Israelis in Palestinian textbooks and media, but not vice versa). At the same time the financial shots coming from the European Union (EU) for the regional NGOs were transformed with the beginning of the EU's grant-making departments that have been responsible for the funds. Before this change occurred many European governments used to forward the money directly to the NGOs they were supporting; now the European Commission serves as a kind of mediator who receives the money from the European governments and channels it to the NGOs eligible for the fund. The main sponsor for the region is the Mediterranean Democracy Department (MEDA DEMOC), which supports the democratisation and peace-building process efforts.³³¹

It seems as if the receipt of money for certain projects in the region has become more complex and looks like a hurdle. On the one hand there are the Arab governments, which are trying to keep control over the foreign funds that local associations receive and on the other hand the Western donors being aware of this have started to condition their money supply with the acceptance of particular projects and certain requirements. This kind of practice can be found

³³¹ Pitner, Julia (2000): NGOs Dilemmas. In: MERIP, No. 214, Vol. 30, No.1, p.35.

particularly in Palestine, where the EC demands the money recipients to report about human rights violations that have been done by the PA.³³² Through this kind of practice and the changes that took place many NGOs being active in the region are more or less forced to change their mission in a way, which suits the donors best, but which also do not match the needs of the real aid recipients on the ground.

This leads to the thought that the financial dependency on foreign donors and the increasing rivalry between the NGOs on the ground, leads to less solidarity with those reliant on the NGO work and their projects. Julia Pitner considers this problem as well and emphasizes that those local NGOs, which still receive and ask for money from the Western donors face three difficult choices: one, that they may be transformed into GONGOs, or two, they may have to change their mission line, or three, which would be the worst case scenario, that they continue as they used to do before, but with the risk to face obstruction due to the lesser amount of funds being accessible without any conditions or limitations.

The first choice would mean that the recipient NGO would be only allowed to get funds from the sponsor's Ministry of the Interior, where the host funder would have the right to control and observe where the money is going and what it is going to be used for. This issue is also linked to the fact that the NGOs have to be apparent in that what they do otherwise they risk to losing their chance for a second financial shot. But the reality still seems to be unusual for the reason that a large number of NGOs have not been sincere about their internal structures and they did not want to be open about this issue. According to the latter neither the donor nor the needy really know about the real aim these civic associations seek if there is no transparency in their work and attitudes.

³³² Pitner, Julia (2000), *op. cit.*, p.35.

The second choice would be that the aid seekers could keep going as usual and formulate their applications for foreign funds, but this could cause severe obstacles for them. Because of Oslo and the new situation with the EC grant-giving mechanisms it is hard for them to get access to funds. Before the conclusion of the Oslo Accords, it was no problem for the NGOs to receive money free of any requirements and demands from the individual European governments or foundations and therefore the rivalry among the NGOs used to be very high for the grants and international assistance. This used to be the way in which NGOs had access to free money without justifying what it used for and there was no limit on the number of projects for which the money has been requested. In the Post-Oslo Period the competition, which was regarded as a major obstacle to the developed in the occupied territories has faded to a lesser extent. The still-existing antagonism is that between secular and fundamentalist organisations and those organisations that conduct soft projects such as democracy and education. Nonetheless, there is an increased demand for services provided by grassroots organisations and requests for funds.³³³ The real difficulty now is that many local NGOs are not really able to provide the transparency for their work and how the money was spent. Many NGOs feel to be stunned with this new rule.

Since Oslo, the foreign funds accessible for the active NGOs on the ground in the occupied territories have increased exponentially. There have been many complaints about these new application procedures and the conditions linked to them for the reason that the foreign funds come with a particular agenda and requirements. If the NGOs do not agree, they either suffer from a decrease in funds or new NGOs come into being that are willing to carry out the mission. This kind of behaviour shows – whether they are INGOs or PNGOs – how little they care about the Palestinian society they are working in, which may lead to the assumption that it has become an “NGO business”.

³³³ Barghouti, Mustafa (1998), op. cit. p.87.

Another issue is how the local NGO presents itself in order to meet the Western standards and to be eligible for funds. Many of them working in the region have tried to foster their image through a well-educated staff (most of them hold an advanced degree from the West); their websites are bilingual, usually in English and Arabic. Through these efforts, the local associations try to receive a reference from other larger international organisations in order to become a member of the funding list. This may also give rise to cynicism from members of their own society. In reverse to the above-mentioned, those organisations, which really design their projects and their entire work according to their recipients, have problems receiving larger funds. Neither the one nor the other extreme is very helpful because should the rules change for those NGOs that have changed their mandate in order to receive the foreign funds such as from the EC or those who did not really have the financial support coming from abroad – both may have lost credibility within their societies. Therefore, they have to consider this aspect in advance and review their mission and agenda.

The final option NGOs have is to remain loyal to their own agenda and raise the money they need themselves. The point is that if a donor wishes to support their projects, he can contribute the money to them. One instance Julia Pitner mentions is where USAID has been eager to implement a program on the rule of law in Palestine, and it approached several of the more credible NGOs to be partners with them on this project, but they were rejected by many. USAID was told that the project was neither possible nor appropriate at that time with the political circumstances, especially since many Palestinians felt that it was the US government that was undermining the rule of law in Palestine. USAID would have been likely to continue its search for appropriate partners, perhaps among the newer organisations, which are still in need for foreign funding.³³⁴

A further aspect local NGOs or in general NGOs have to be aware of is how to treat the foreign sponsors with their requirements in terms of transparency and accountability, which have an impact on the donor-NGO relationship. Many

³³⁴ Pitner, Julia (2000), *op. cit.*, p.37.

NGOs in the Middle East have realized this practice, but on the other hand the international donor community still has to learn and accept the differences in terms of standards and procedures the local NGOs have and that they need time. The point in question remains where the supporting funds are coming from and their distribution, which cause rumours in society, evokes misinformation from governments, and leads to rivalry between the NGOs seeking the financial aid, which then portrays them in a bad light in the donors eyes. Julia Pitner regards the whole NGO-funding scenario there under the slogan “take the money and run” and not “community service”.³³⁵ In this sense she shares the same thought with Karim El-Ghawary that the NGOs are very “flexible” when it comes to funding and support from the outside.³³⁶ Such behaviour and the political situation in the region burden the work of NGOs and do not really help the establishment of a stable Palestinian society.

In contrast to the above-mentioned the situation could also be the other way round where the donors provide help to the local NGOs in the form of project initiatives, which could be developed gradually with a positive impulse for the region and the aid recipients as well. If both donors and NGOs come together in order to understand what the difficulties, needs and possibilities are, then their work will be more efficient and bring more benefit to those who need social services. But this is not by any means the only obstacle NGOs and their counterparts have been facing in the last decade. There have been legal guidelines that determine the rules for NGOs working on the ground, but which in their view have not been “NGO-friendly”. In particular the Palestinian NGOs have faced various restrictions with regard to their work. The handling of the Palestinian NGOs has been a controversial and complex issue, which will be discussed in the following part.

³³⁵ Pitner, Julia (2000), *op. cit.*, p.37.

³³⁶ El-Ghawary, Karim (1995), *op. cit.* p.45.

4.1 NGO-law and the lack of legal structures

“Palestinian associational life has undergone dramatic changes; even after the creation of the PA, few firm or systematic arrangements have emerged.”³³⁷

“An unhealthy environment between the NGO community and the PA emerged.”³³⁸

“With the advent of the PA, however, the future of the PNGOs is less certain.”³³⁹

The legal guidelines for NGOs vary in the different Arab states, where a broad range of practices exist. Kareem Elbayar exemplifies that for instance in Egypt 16.000 NGOs are registered whereas in Saudi Arabia no private associations exist at all. Compared to the other Arab states with their laws, Palestine seems to be a special case for the reason that

“the PLO did not constitute a fully sovereign state, and Palestinian NGOs were able to operate with a relatively free hand in seeking funding from regional and international donors, such as the wealthier Arab states and the World Bank.”³⁴⁰

³³⁷ Brown, Nathan J. (2003), op. cit. p.143.

³³⁸ Brown, Nathan J. (2003), op. cit. p.151.

³³⁹ Sullivan, Denis J. (1996): NGOs in Palestine: Agents of Development and Foundation of Civil Society. In: Journal of Palestine Studies, Vol. 25, No.3/99, p.93.

³⁴⁰ Elbayar, Kareem (2005): NGO Laws in selected Arab States. In: The International Journal of Not-for-Profit Law, Vol.7, No.4 on http://www.icnl.org/journal/vol7iss4/me_1.htm (April 9, 2006)

In his study he analysed the aspects under which the NGOs in ten Arab countries (Algeria, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Palestine, Saudi Arabia, and Yemen) are governed, and their laws and practices. His investigation offers a view of the application regarding the legal guidelines the civil society actors have to comply with. He reaches the conclusion that these vary from extremely repressive to excessively liberal. He specifically focused on the licensing and registration requirements, legal rights and obligations, and government supervision and enforcement, and further important or oppressive clauses have been highlighted as well.

Before the PLO began operation in the early 1990s, the civil society sector in Palestine - including the Palestinian NGOs - had been given plenty of rope in its work on the terrain compared to other regional neighbours who had been subject to restrictive laws. But shortly after the PA assumed power, they tried to impose their rules on the Palestinian NGOs and to control them. The PA used the Jordanian and Egyptian model to model its handling of them. The relationship between both parties experienced a sharp bend.

Hence, the legislation and procedures for NGOs in Gaza and the West Bank have been shadowed with many barriers that have aggravated the circumstances and the environment they are working in. The disagreements that have dominated the relationship between the PA and the NGOs have led to tensions regarding the legal rules. Though the PA does not have the status of a state, in the view of many NGOs it has acted as such in the provision of laws, the policing and licensing of them.³⁴¹ Twice the PA tried to set rules for NGOs and to bring them under the supervision of the Ministry of the Interior, which would have had the task to control them. Accordingly, the NGOs defended themselves successfully against the ratification of the proposed laws. The Palestinian NGO network and a broad range of its members succeeded with support of the Palestinian Legislative Council in passing a law in 2000, which was the first Law of Charitable Associations and Community Organisations. It embraces all important points, from registration to financial affairs of the associations or organisations and general and transitional concluding provisions.³⁴²

But before, the laws applied were that of the pre-1948 British Mandate Law, which caused the closure of more than a dozen charities without any specific reason. The law that was used in Gaza stemmed from the Ottoman rule of 1908.³⁴³ Hence, it is quite understandable that the NGOs saw themselves

³⁴¹ Brown, Nathan J. (2003), *op. cit.* p.144.

³⁴² The Law is attached to the Appendix.

³⁴³ Barghouti, Mustafa (1998), *op. cit.* p.88.

acting in a vacuum, which again was a kind of excuse for them not being transparent and accountable. Certainly, it has not always been easy for either side to conduct a smooth relationship for both sides – the NGOs as well as the PA. Both parties saw themselves confronted with a new situation embedded in a large number of hurdles and obstacles that had to be solved rationally. Being officially in office and having started operation, the PA started to give the local NGOs orders and insisted on prior permissions for meetings. And this did not remain the only difficulty the PA even went further and before long the Palestinian General Intelligence tried to control the NGOs through the distribution of two questionnaires that seemed excessively intrusive to activists in order to gain information on each organisation and their activities.³⁴⁴ The NGOs felt to be constricted in their freedom through the sudden influencing control of the PA, which at the same time tried to impose its severe draft NGO law. But the successful lobby conducted by the NGOs led to a more acceptable law than that proposed at the beginning. The NGOs at that time did not let the opportunity slip and let their complaints become loud not only at the national as well as within the international sphere of donors and other partners, which in a way had not made a strong impression of the new Palestinian National Authority in the eyes of the donors. Each side had the feeling that the other was trying to assert itself on the other. Brown states

“in essence, the PA regarded NGOs as recalcitrant and unwilling to accept leadership; NGOs regarded the PA as overly quick to impose state dominance in a manner all too familiar in neighbouring Arab states.”³⁴⁵

A large number of NGOs feared that the PA would reach for the same means used by the neighbouring Arab countries in dealing with NGOs not without good reason. Elbayer emphasizes that

“even the liberal Law 1/2000 cannot escape what appears to be a regional propensity to require the licensing of all groups, formal and informal.”

³⁴⁴ Brown, Nathan J. (2003), op. cit. p.280.

³⁴⁵ Brown, Nathan J. (2003), op. cit. p.151.

*But still the NGO law was and remains by a wide range the most liberal and least restrictive NGO law in the Middle East.*³⁴⁶

The requirements for the NGOs who wish to operate in one of the Arab states resemble each other in terms of registration etc. For the NGOs in Palestine it is compulsory to register with the Ministry of the Interior (MOI), but even though the licensing path there has less hurdles compared to others. The acceptance or rejection of an application submitted by an NGO is processed within two months. After two months, if the ministry had not come to a decision, the NGOs then had the legal status to work and it was approved by the MOI. But in case the decision turned negative, reasons had to be given by the Ministry. Here again the Palestinian case reveals a particularity in the sense that the MOI cannot deny any NGO which does not comply with its principles. As opposed to the procedure for instance in Algeria where

*“The law gives government agencies the right to deny a license if any founder has demonstrated conduct contrary to the interests of the fight for national liberation, or if the association was founded for a purpose contrary to the established institutional system, public order or public decency.”*³⁴⁷

The Egyptian legal structures in terms of NGO governance have also served as a pattern for a large number of Arab states among them Palestine. In spite of all the restrictive clauses of the Law on Non-Governmental Societies and Organisations (No. 84 of 2002), Egypt unites a very dynamic civil society. The regulations for NGOs in Egypt are more severe than in Palestine. In most Arab states the registration process is a requirement, but takes more time into account than in Palestine. But the more interesting point for NGOs in Egypt is that the NGOs do not hurt the government in a way that they push for social reform or political liberalization. Thus, the NGOs are bridled and seek interests

³⁴⁶ Elbayar, Kareem (2005), op. cit. on http://www.icnl.org/journal/vol7iss4/me_1.htm

³⁴⁷ Elbayar, Kareem, op. cit. on http://www.icnl.org/journal/vol7iss4/me_1.htm (Act 90-31 Algeria: Articles 4-5).

in fields such as the environment, education, and welfare, which then again leaves them operating without any interference by the government.

According to international NGOs that wish to operate in Egypt, they have to get approved by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which can reject the application without giving any explanatory statement. But in case the application is complete the Ministry of Insurance and Social Affairs (MOSA) has to respond within two months, otherwise it is considered as accepted. And this is an advancement compared to the prior legal structures (Law 32/1964) that used to govern NGOs in Egypt and granted MOSA the right to expand the application procedure.³⁴⁸ Still it was reported in an Egyptian newspaper that the MOSA tended to return applications as being incomplete without any specific reasons.³⁴⁹

Not only has that made life for NGOs in Egypt more difficult, but it also prohibits any activity with political parties and it has the right to dismiss any NGO it feels that could imperil national unity. Further the NGOs have to consult the government before any decision is made. In case of non-compliance the NGOs can be sentenced to fines. For those that follow the guidelines given by the government receive a kind of compensation in the form of deductions for their fixed costs and others to run their offices and activities. As we have seen, the Egyptian law remains very stringent and therefore the NGOs have to comply with it in order to conduct their work.

Referring back to the Palestinian case the guidelines are a bit looser than in Egypt, though at the beginning the PA sought to adapt the Egyptian legal structures in order to govern the NGOs on the ground. The Palestinian NGOs are not subject to the regulation that they have to consult the PA in advance

³⁴⁸ Elbayar, Kareem, op. cit. on http://www.icnl.org/journal/vol7iss4/me_1.htm . (Law 84/2002 Egypt: Preamble, Article 4).

³⁴⁹ Elbayar, Kareem, op. cit. on http://www.icnl.org/journal/vol7iss4/me_1.htm

Cp. Mariz Tadros (2003): Matters of Permission. In: Al-Ahram Weekly Online, Issue No. 641, on <http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/2003/641/fr2.htm> (April 9, 2006)

before they run activities to raise funds from domestic and international donors. They are also free in the founding and dissolution process, and they are free in their choice of association with other national and international organisations. Further, the Palestinian NGOs receive economic benefits such as an exemption from tax and customs duties, and they are also entitled to appeal in court in case they feel they have been wronged by the MOI. The MOI is not entitled to dissolve an association without the consultation of the court. Another positive aspect the Palestinian NGO law contains is that there are no individual punishments regarding criminal acts these are regimented in the law and are wielded through administrative means. Here again the Egyptian model – the Law 84/2002 - handles such an issue differently through individual penalties or even the imprisonment of members of the association without court proceedings.

The international counterparts who wish to run an office on Palestinian land have to obtain permission from the MOI and the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation. The Palestinian case again represents a peculiarity by comparison to other Arab states such as Algeria; the formation of NGOs is encouraged. In Algeria the severe clauses of the law make it more difficult to found an association, and once created, the steps that follow through the Ministry of the Interior are complicated for example international fundraising requires pre-approval whereas fundraising within the national sphere is not restricted. Egypt is similar to Algeria, where international NGOs have to make sure that they get approval from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in order to conduct their activities there. The unspecified terms and vague formulations in the Algerian and Egyptian legislations pose major obstacles for the existing NGOs on the ground and those who would like to join the field. And that is why the Palestinian NGOs demonstrated against the NGO draft law first proposed by the PA.

Many Arab governments took into consideration to review the NGO laws and alter them with regard to the foundation, registration, and operation of NGOs that work on their terrain.

One of the primary interests the Arab governments sought was the relation of their local NGOs to the foreign NGOs abroad, particularly the financial relationship between them.

This raised many concerns and debates around the issue. They have been reluctant about the whole INGO-NGO funding relation and they would like to have the alternative to decide whether their native NGOs are allowed to have such an alliance with their foreign counterparts or not. The reverse of the issue is that the receiving NGOs, which receive the foreign funds, are upset with those funding them from the West – INGOs and others like USAID or the European Commission (EC). What bothers the local association is that foreigners come and dictate to the local organisations what to do and how to do it. The major problem is that the notion the donors have in mind does not go with the realities on the ground and the circumstances dominating the situation. Hence, it is very important to consider the local challenges and differences on the ground in order to achieve efficient results. Only a few foreign donors and international NGOs have developed a feeling of what the real needs are. Referring back to USAID and the EC, these major contributors of foreign money come to the concerned area and expect their local counterparts to carry out the agenda in the way they want without thinking of the political situation or of the consequences that could follow such an action. According to Julia Pitner the latter rather tends to make grants on paper, but they do not deliver the funds until the eleventh hour, and yet still expect the program to be carried out on schedule, thus forcing NGOs to carry debts they cannot cover.

The debate on the legal standpoint of NGOs and their partnerships to foreign sponsors was discussed earlier in Egypt in 1996. The law that passed there was considered for the civic associations working on the difficult terrain in Palestine as well. In Egypt, it is the Ministry of the Interior that is responsible for the approval of all foreign money that has been supplied to the local Egyptian

NGOs. In the occupied territories the situation is very similar to Egypt. As discussed before the Palestinian case seems to be an exceptional one, but still the civil society actors and NGOs still have difficulties on the institutional level, which they face on a daily basis for the reason that the PA has been trying to control them. Earlier in the post-Oslo period the absence of clear guidelines for the NGOs led to an incongruous situation between the Palestinian National Authority and the NGOs. Surely, more severe guidelines for the NGOs would also mean complication for the NGOs' work, but in comparison to other Arab states Palestine has the most pleasant regulations.

The Palestinian National Authority tried twice to impose a restrictive law on the NGOs and it aimed to put all NGOs together under the supervision of the Ministry of the Interior. But the NGOs were successful in their lobbying activity against the law, which they considered as paralysing their activities. Instead the Palestinian NGO Network proposed another alternative that went into force in 2000.³⁵⁰ Before 2000, the Palestinian Authority used pre-1948 British Mandate laws to close 16 charities. The lack of structures and policies represented a major problem for the NGOs and made it more difficult for them to be considered as accountable and transparent.³⁵¹ The PA has been trying to put certain requirements on the taking of foreign financial support. It wants to control the money income and its expenditure. A few Western governmental donors have reacted to the request of the PA in a way that they have channelled some of the money through the Orient House while contributing lesser amounts directly to the active NGOs on the ground. Those INGOs that also run an office in the field have learned how to handle the obstacle and have their own connections to other stronger regional organisations, which have a direct link within the communities.³⁵² The relationship between both parties has not always been the best and most of the time very confusing in particular on

³⁵⁰ It is called the Law of Charitable Associations and Community Organisations approved by the Palestinian Legislative Council.

³⁵¹ Barghouti, Mustafa (1998), op. cit. p.88.

³⁵² Pitner, Julia (2000), op. cit., p.35.

the management and operation of different activities and operations on the ground. At the outset after Oslo, after the PA had assumed office, it started to frame the legal structures for NGOs and its cooperation with them.

But the NGOs felt controlled by the PA and the authority viewed them as disobedient. So far the Palestinian law governing NGOs seems to be the most democratic among the Arab guidelines for NGOs. Though many considered the modification of the existing laws, basic rights have to be conceded to the NGOs without any exceptions, though many authoritarian regimes in the region feel it hurt their power. With regard to Palestine, it has many peculiarities concerning the political situation and status. According to Nathan J. Brown

“Palestine is, in short, a model democracy. Its most significant flaw is that it does not exist. This is true in two senses. First, Palestinians on the West Bank and Gaza are governed in many of their internal affairs by the Palestinian Authority, an uncertain political hybrid that falls far short of sovereignty (...) And, second, domestic problems as well as international obstacles have blocked the emergence of a liberal, democratic Palestine (...) Palestine on paper shows the Arab world a different kind of politics, one that avoids the authoritarian, unaccountable, and highly centralized practices prevailing in the region, but it has failed to build the institutions to give this politics full substance. The logic of the PA’s origin led it to develop in an authoritarian direction. It was built on foundations that were not designed to answer to the local population in any way.”³⁵³

³⁵³ Brown, Nathan J. (2005): Evaluation Palestinian Reform Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Democracy and Rule of Law Project. In: (Middle East Series), No. 59, p.3 on <http://www.carnegieendowment.org/files/CP59.brown.FINAL.pdf> (April 10, 2006).

His point of view illustrates clearly that the PA is acting in a vacuum, which means that on the one hand it tries to assert itself on the terrain with its institutions existing so far, but on the other hand with regard to the international sphere it lacks recognition and status in terms of a sovereign state.

In his last sentence he mentions a central thought that the PA not only has had discrepancies with the NGOs but also the more crucial component: with its own population, the Palestinian society. Here, the disagreements have had an affect on the relationship between both as a sort of centrifugal vigour which lead to the chasm between the Palestinian society and the PA.

4.2 NGOs and their relations to the PA and its different ministries

“Prior to the emergence of the PA, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip were among the few areas in the Middle East where a political space was available for the emergence of a strong and pluralistic infrastructure of NGOs. This was achieved both despite and because of the Israeli occupation.”³⁵⁴

The relationship between the Palestinian NGOs and the Palestinian Authority has not always been straight-lined. Their relationship has been affected by the political circumstances, which did not ease the situation for either particularly in the post-Oslo period. Certainly, the conclusion of the Oslo Accords meant changes for the Palestinian NGOs, who had been active on the terrain for decades and who had achieved a lot at the same time. Other than the debate about who would have which role within the PA frame, the debate on donor funds arose since the peace process had to be organized and financed as well. The PA blamed the NGOs for emulation of donor money, whereas accusations on part of the NGOs did not fail to appear because of the venality of PA servants. A press campaign was launched by PA loyalists with the aim to inflict damage on the NGOs image where the minister of justice

“denounced publicly NGOs as a bunch of thieves, fat cats and foreign agents.”

Further he considered human rights organisations as *“being stooges of foreign backers and claimed (that) their directors received salaries of more than US\$10.000, to the salaries of ten judges.”³⁵⁵*

³⁵⁴ Hammami, Rema (2000), op. cit., p.16.

³⁵⁵ Hammami, Rema (2000), op. cit., p.18.

It is obvious that there has been a tense and contentious rivalry between the NGOs and the PA. The financial dependency is one determining factor next to the positioning and allocation of resources as to Oslo Accords, which were concluded in the mid-nineties.³⁵⁶ The NGOs, who had been fulfilling para-state functions prior to Oslo, found themselves in a situation, where the PA was trying to impose its authority and superiority on them. Many NGOs not only saw a problem in the financial aspect, but also in their legal management. Through the NGO law initiative, which was motivated by the PA as discussed earlier the NGOs faced new obstacles. The majority of them knew that a dispute with the PA could not be avoided since they aimed to protect the well-established NGO-sphere that has served the Palestinians for years. External factors such as the World Bank project with the \$15 million Palestinian NGO fund designed to be controlled by the NGOs was a thorn in the PA's side.

“The World Bank was interested in funding Palestinian NGOs in particular after Oslo. We were left with a lack of resources, so the World Bank took the initiative to fund Palestinian NGOs. They needed an implementing agency, an organisation to advertise for a building process for a local organisation or international NGO to run the fund. Then the following consortia, short-listed the Welfare Association, the British Council, Charity's Aid Foundation are the ones who won the bit in the first phase after Oslo. And they gained on their comparative advantage in order to run \$15 million projects.”³⁵⁷

There was no doubt that the PA felt threatened that the NGOs would be in a stronger position than the quasi-government and formally recognized representative of the Palestinians. Immediately, the former president Arafat founded a sort of control instrument called the government-controlled Higher Council of NGOs, which was based in Gaza and it was composed of Fatah organisations and others that were not members of the Palestinian NGO

³⁵⁶ After Oslo a Donor Conference took place as it will be discussed later. A large number of donor agencies got together in order to pledge funds for the Palestinian Authority and to buttress the peace process.

³⁵⁷ Interview with Izzat Abdel Hadi (Director of the Bisan Center for Research and Development) (February 6, 2005).

network. In addition, Arafat remained at the wheel and established the governmental NGO networks, which were supposed to be the counterpiece of the Palestinian NGO network. The foundation of this governmental instrument attempted to compete with the Palestinian NGOs for the announced World Bank Trust Fund. This reaction and the creation of the new institution was a smokescreen for the enlargement of GONGOs (Government Organized NGOs) where in fact Arafat tried to broaden his influence. Further, NGOs defending human rights in his view were the rotten apple in the scene compared to those who provided social services to the Palestinian population throughout the Intifada.

A staff member of the well-known human rights organisation Al-Haq stated that

“the PA concentrated on legal studies and we worked more with the Palestinian Legal Council and Legislative Council. In a certain sense it was effective. The Palestinian legal council wanted to adopt certain changes in their law and to incorporate international human rights standards in the Palestinian Law. We are still working with the PA; we provide training for law enforcement officials like the police.”³⁵⁸

The mutual pinpricks between the PA and the NGOs have been aggravated through the increased competition for donor money. The Ministry of Planning for instance tried to gain control over the NGOs and their funding resources.

“We could not solve the problems, because there was also a personal interest and direct contact through the Ministry of Planning, which asked for the information about the NGOs and the data, was not easy to get. We did not know how much money went to the PA. The aid pledged by the donors was about \$2.2 billion, who later wondered where all the money went to. The rule before Oslo was that the money went straight to the NGOs.”³⁵⁹

³⁵⁸ Interview with Tahseen Ellayan. He is Media Coordinator at Al-Haq in Ramallah, (February 7, 2005).

³⁵⁹ Interview with Dr. Sanaa Ashour (Institutional Development Manager of Islamic Relief, Germany), (April 26, 2005). She used to work for the Ministry of Planning.

The more the NGOs fought the PA's intervention, the more repressive and unpleasant it became. The PA saw itself confronted with a strong force of skilled and competent NGOs united under the PNGO umbrella.

Almost four years after the PA assumed office "*Two incidents...*" Rema Hammami states

"marked this transition. The first was the obstruction of elections to the PNGO network in Gaza by armed "Force 17" soldiers who, under orders from the ministry of interior, stipulated that a permit was required to hold a public meeting.³⁶⁰ The second was a presidential decree annulling the board of Maqassed Hospital in Jerusalem and replacing it with Fatah loyalists."³⁶¹

These occurrences implicated that the NGOs had to undergo severe interventions of the PA in form of detailed interviews on their political background. It also tried to get to the bottom of the NGOs sources of capital and other information was scrutinized. This was a clear sign for the NGOs to accept the PA's interference otherwise there would follow more profound consequences. The heated debate on the law draft regulating NGOs lasted several years until former president Arafat agreed to sign the law. The PNGO network fought the draft proposed by the PA and sought a smoother and a more adequate handling.³⁶² The PNGOs' dedication to fight for a fair law governing the NGOs on the ground was successful though the drawback was that they were supposed to be controlled by the Ministry of Interior not as desired by the Ministry of Justice.

³⁶⁰ According to Rema Hammami the Ministry of Interior is one of the ministries that Arafat kept in his portfolio. His deputy ran it on a daily basis (Hammami, Rema (2000), op. cit. p.48.)

³⁶¹ Hammami, Rema (2000), op. cit. p.17.

³⁶² According to Rema Hammami the countless frictions on details such as with which ministry the NGOs should register were difficult enough for the reason "that NGO registration should be changed from the Ministry of Justice to the Ministry of Interior. Throughout the Middle East, interior ministries are extensions of the mukhabarat (intelligence services)." (Hammami, Rema (2000), op., cit., p.18.)

The various ministries which have been established after Oslo meant that the NGOs in the corresponding sectors had to be geared to them. The Palestinian Red Crescent Society used to function during the first Intifada and prior to Oslo as a sort of quasi-governmental organisation being responsible for the health sector and working as Ministry of Health. Oslo implicated many changes for the NGOs and their work on the political as well as socioeconomic level. With the new political entity and system the Palestinian NGOs were forced to restructure their approaches and terms of reference. The point was that the NGOs, which had the role of a quasi-government prior to Oslo and who had secured the social services for the Palestinians throughout the Intifada, were supposed to be replaced by an official ministry appointed by the PA. Another factor was the increased rivalry for financial assistance and the influence the PA and its constituents have been trying to assert on the NGOs.

Finally, it became very clear that the relationship between the PA and the NGOs was never a healthy one. It was more one of control on the part of the Ministries over the NGOs. The pretext of keeping an eye on money channelled to “terror” supporting organisations was always a tool of pressure and control. In view of the implementation part, the relationship was also one of cooption. The “clue” was that who got the money first, was going to receive the approval of the PA. Obtaining financial assistance for NGOs was never an easy task, and the question always asked was “why doesn’t the Ministry receive the money?” Of course, the most influential is the Ministry of the Interior, which was in direct link with the Israeli and the U.S. intelligence networks. The latter was stated with confidence and without any reservations.

In the following part it will be discussed what effects the creation of an NGO Ministry (by the Former president Arafat) had on the NGOs.

4.2.1 The Creation of the Ministry of NGO Affairs

“The Ministry of NGOs Affairs aims at coordinating and organizing work between all Palestinian NGOs and foreign NGOs and other various governmental Parties. This stems from the principles of complementary, participation and transparency in planning and execution in order to achieve the comprehensive national plan for the service of the Palestinian community.”³⁶³

During the interim period, the established ministerial steering committee had not determined which institutional body would finally regulate the NGO activities. This and the legal framework issue triggered heated debates among the Palestinian NGOs and the PA. The anti-NGO law campaign the NGO umbrella PNGO conducted was successful up to the point that the former president Arafat did not accept the NGOs registration with the Ministry of Justice and preferred to have them under survey of the Ministry of Interior. With the establishment of the Ministry of NGOs³⁶⁴, which was brought into being in June 1999, the PA sought to show the NGOs that it still could attain dominance and check on NGOs.

As the above first article of the presidential decree states, the Ministry of NGO Affairs not only seeks to cooperate and work with the Palestinian NGOs, but international NGOs and other governmental parties are also concerned. The NGOs knew right away what these words would mean for them and their work.

³⁶³ That is Article 1 of the presidential decree No. 4 of the year 1999. The full text of the presidential decree is attached to the Appendix at the end of this work.

³⁶⁴ Its full name is the Commission for Human Rights and NGO Affairs (MONGOA). It consists of numerous departments as follows: the Planning and International Relations Dept., the Democracy and Human Rights Dept., the Dept. for Voluntary Work, the Dept. for Institutional Co-operation and Co-ordination, Media and Public Relations, the Dept. for Legal Issues and finally a Dept. for Computer and Internet. The Dept. for Institutional Co-ordination and Co-operation seems to be one of the most important components for the reason that the ministry relies on the NGOs experiences and skilled staff. The official definition of the Dept. for Co-ordination and Co-operation is that “The Department aims to foster Co-ordination and Co-operation between NGOs and the private and governmental sectors.” (cp. <http://www.mongoa.gov.ps/English/home.htm> (September 5, 2006).

Brown states

“NGOs neither sought nor obtained independence from the PA; they sought some freedom in setting their own agendas and some autonomy in daily practice.”³⁶⁵

The crucial point for the active NGOs was to continue their work as they did before Oslo without any interference or control from a higher authority since they had gained all the experience throughout the different stages of the Palestinian history and at the same time fulfilled important tasks. Though numerous attempts were made in order to bring the NGOs and the PA close to each other and find a common denominator for both parties, it has been difficult.

The idea was to share information and to have a sort of exchange in the various fields. This did not really function well among the authority and the NGOs. It also depended on the various sectors. Hence, the desired effectiveness regarding this cooperation was neither really high nor permanent. Nevertheless, the PA transferred some tasks in particular fields to the NGOs. This was due to the qualified experience the NGOs have had and their knowledge in terms of population and environment. The PA could not expect that much since, next to the financial resources, it lacked the most essential component: the skilled staff.

The NGOs were not really responsive to the new ministry, which was headed by Hasan Asfour³⁶⁶, who also participated in the Oslo negotiations with Israel. According to Brown, the ministry’s emergence was not really welcomed in the NGO scene and its function was viewed with scepticism.

³⁶⁵ Brown, Nathan J. (2003), op. cit. p.158.

³⁶⁶ According to Brown there have been some discrepancies with the ministries legal position. But this issue did not arrive at the Palestinian Legal Council, which has been very supportive to the Palestinian NGOs throughout the law drafting phase. This means that “Hasan Asfour could only serve as minister of state. A minister of state has charge of no ministry but is often designated to in Arab political practice to deal with a specific issue area. Actually, Asfour already served as minister of state, meaning that the legal effect of the appointment was only to give him a specific area to work on as well as a skeletal support staff. Asfour nevertheless attempted to ignore the distinction, referring to his staff as a ministry.” (Brown, Nathan J. (2003), op. cit. p.159.)

They reckoned that his behaviour in the past was not an act of friendship and that he rather tried to gain information about them, which he could report back as a PA loyalist. Accordingly, Asfour who took office of the new ministry attempted to mitigate the situation over the then contentious issues on the NGO law and funding. In order to show the NGO community that he was on their side, he dissociated from the PA supported governmental NGOs. Predominantly, the NGO ministry made the attempt to gather the NGOs active on the ground and harmonize its work with theirs. The NGOs had no objections towards this idea, but they still maintained distance. The outcome of these gatherings was not as positive as expected and the NGO ministry could not really make the effort to contribute to collaboration between the two parties.

Even years later there was no visible output regarding their cooperation. Three years later after the formation of the NGO ministry, its incumbent lost office in consequence of reorganisation and took a back seat. Here, some of the NGOs saw themselves confirmed in what they had assumed right from the beginning on.

As stated by MONGOA, the ministry still seeks the goals such as reinforcing the nature of developmental work for NGOs or increasing the understanding of the NGOs and the Palestinian Authority in the development of local community.³⁶⁷ These are just some of the listed aspirations the ministry wants to achieve. In its strategic vision the ministry of NGO Affairs is aware of the efforts the NGOs achieved throughout the years.

“Palestinian NGOs - regardless of their category - have played a central role during the past decades in protecting the social fabric of Palestinian society from all challenges and risks that still continue to threaten its existence and entity. The absence of a Palestinian State has granted NGOs and the NGO sector a particularity unique in its kind, this has distinguished it from the other Arab and international countries. The NGO sector has played a leading role in resisting the Israeli Occupation and facing its discriminatory policies towards the

³⁶⁷ (Cited from <http://www.mongoa.gov.ps/English/home.htm> (September 5, 2006))

*Palestinian land, citizen and institutions. The sector has also played a central role in development under discriminatory and racist conditions. In previous years the sector has borne the responsibility of providing various special kinds of services to the Palestinian people in all locations.*³⁶⁸

The above statement given by the ministry, which tries to show its appreciation, does not correspond to the PA's behaviour in the past in terms of the NGO law draft and the contentious issue of funding sources. This left the NGOs in their critical position. It does not really seem to have aspired the goals and functions it has been equipped with. In short, it lacked the necessary effectiveness and in that way it lost somehow its credibility - Brown states

*"the ministry hardly forged an effective partnership."*³⁶⁹

These days MONGOA does not work as a ministry anymore and it is referred to as the Commission of Human Rights and NGO Affairs, and Hassan Asfour is no longer Minister since the changes that took place in 2002. There is a difference between the technical information and the real purpose of this ministry. In 2004, the Prime Minister specified the mission of this ministry in fourteen points or specialty assignments. But the majority of NGOs believe that it is an extended arm of the *mukhabarat* (intelligence services).³⁷⁰

Initially, this ministry was supposed to coordinate the work of the NGOs in relation to the authorities, and from the beginning, it was clear that Fatah affiliated NGOs were favoured and supported while others were pushed back. Later, the game was so evident that the ministry lost its significance, and what happened was that each ministry of concern such as the Ministry of Health (MOH) set up its own NGO department to liaise with NGOs. These departments

³⁶⁸ (Cited from <http://www.mongoa.gov.ps/English/home.htm> (September 5, 2006)

³⁶⁹ Brown, Nathan J. (2003), op. cit. p.159.

³⁷⁰ According to Sullivan in 1995 "PNGOs were being "monitored" by al-mukhabarat al'aama (general intelligence), which distributed two "questionnaires" to the NGOs. The mukhabarat threatened any organisation that "leaked" this questionnaire" The first one asked for general information on the NGOs, whereas the second one required more detailed information on the staff (officers) and their families. (Sullivan, Denis J. (1996), op. cit. p.97.)

were far more operational and practical as they were dealing with the core issues of cooperation between the NGOs and the PA.

In 2004, no one anticipated that there will be a change in power in 2005. In the current situation, the relationship between the NGOs and the PA is very arduous. The long-winded arguments between the PA and the NGOs did not really lead to conciliation between the two. In addition, the internal and in particular the external factors regarding the international community have been partly responsible for the uptight correlation. The dominance the PA tried to assert on the NGOs neither sparked enthusiasm nor acceptance. The bottom line is, everything there is chaotic and nothing is really clear, nothing is straightforward and no one really knows what is happening now or what will happen in the near future. There is an ongoing debate now about whether to bring down the current government, and NGOs are worried about taking sides not knowing who will win, but at the same time NGOs are pressured by their donors, and it is known who the donors are supporting. In that sense many slippery games are played at all levels, which are affected by uncertainty.

“Currently, like all other ministries, it (the “NGO Ministry”) is a skeleton with no clear function at all. Not to forget that with Hamas getting into power, like all other ministries, even the skeletons started to crack and fall apart.”³⁷¹

The views with regard to the current government remain pessimistic.

“Right now we see no future at all. NGOs are taking over the role of the PA, donors want it this way since Hamas won the elections, and we will go back to the dark ages of the 1st Intifada. The problem is that we all see it but most NGOs are running after it as it involves lots of money and lots of jobs.”³⁷²

The NGOs' status has not really altered due to Hamas being in government; otherwise they will hit themselves in the foot. Hamas has a large network of CBOs so it is to their advantage to keep a space for NGO operations.

³⁷¹ Interview (October 5, 2006)

³⁷² Interview (October 5, 2006)

Nonetheless, the NGOs on the ground are very cautious before they take sides. But in case Hamas in the end joins a national unity government, they will definitely have a lot of control over the internal affairs, while Fatah will be more on the political and international affairs, and so NGOs do wish to stay on the safe side whichever way things turn.

All this reflects the contemporary disequilibrium and uncertainty in Palestine. In the following section I am going to discuss the problems and obstacles the NGOs faced with the occupying regime.

4.2.2 NGOs and the Israeli Government – the Occupying

Regime and its restrictions

With the annexation of the West Bank and Gaza in 1967, the Palestinian population became reliant on social services more than ever.³⁷³ The charities had to cope with the increased request in the various fields. Though there have been service provisions from the occupying regime, the activism of the Palestinian charities did not lessen and in fact, their number rose. The circumstances have been very difficult and the Israeli military did not ease the situation through its restrictions and additional obstacles to the already existing ones. According to Brown,

*“Israel issued separate proclamations for the West Bank and Gaza assigning all constitutional authority to the Israeli military governor. After that point, and even after the construction of a civilian administration in the 1980s under the military governor, the autocracy of the mandate period returned with full force.”*³⁷⁴

The legal issues regarding the NGOs already existed earlier in terms of registration and all the other related requirements. The active organisations have faced severe hardships, which have had significant repercussions on their work.

The grassroots organisations which emerged in the late 1970s started to provide their support in other fields and thus created a new aspect in the philanthropic sector. The point is that in comparison to the other NGOs, this movement started the provision of its services without any legal concession on

³⁷³ According to Ittijah - the Union of Arab Community Based Organisations - is the network for Palestinian NGOs in Israel), between the foundation of the Israeli state in 1948 and the annexation of the West Bank and Gaza in 1967 “the military rule effectively prevented the existence of independent Palestinian organisations through restrictions on civil liberties and the creation of an atmosphere of harassment of political and social leaders within the community. “ (Cited from <http://www.ittijah.org/inside/ngos.html> , September 9, 2006)

³⁷⁴ Brown, Nathan J. (2003), op. cit. p.66.

part of the occupying regime. These GROs were a sort of thought-provoking impulse for the NGOs and civil society to reconsider their task. This short retrospect was supposed to show that there have always been restrictions and difficulties between the Israeli authorities and NGOs. Not only the legal framework presented an obstacle for NGOs but also the restrictions, which have been imposed on NGOs and hindered their work. Regular searching of NGOs at the checkpoints and the confiscation of equipment belong to everyday life on the ground. Recently, new travel restrictions were introduced and numerous people have been struck.³⁷⁵

This has had an impact on their projects and at the same time it has had an affect on the aid recipients – the local communities. The activities and projects carried out by NGOs are influenced by humanitarian needs at all times and it can be said that the work in general is not only affected by the needs but also by the external barriers. The situation was more aggravated through the curfews and other obstacles at times of the first and second Intifadas³⁷⁶, which deteriorated the situation for the Palestinian population and thus exacerbated the NGOs' work.

In the 2006 Palestinian parliamentary elections, Hamas came out as winner with a clear majority and ensured itself a majority of more than fifty percent in the Parliament. Thus the Arafat loyal party Fatah lost its mandate over the Palestinian Authority. The outcome of these elections was considered surprisingly for the reason that Hamas participated for the first time in parliamentary elections and won them right away. Experts explained that this was due to the

³⁷⁵ Khalid Amayreh (2006): Israel introduces new travel restrictions (6/2/2006) on <http://english.aljazeera.net/NR/exeres/2C4D96C4-31A0-43DA-99F3-BC3CA15DF85A.htm> (September 8, 2006)

³⁷⁶ According to an UN Report (UN System Network on Rural Development and Fund Security) "since the outbreak of the second Intifada (...) more than 60% of the population has lived under a poverty line of US\$2 per day, and the number of poor has tripled from 650,000 on the eve of the Intifada to almost 2 million. Unemployment has risen to more than 50 percent." (UN System Network on Rural Development and Fund Security (2003): UN Seminar discuss humanitarian crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. On http://www.rdfs.net/news/news/0308ne/0308ne_Palestine_en.htm) (September 8, 2006)

lacking capacities of Fatah, which was unable to manage service provision to the Palestinians, then the aggravated situation and also the high rate of unemployment. A further and decisive factor was Fatah's authenticity that faded due to the bribery incidents and accusations. This new environment has also had an impact in terms of financial assistance to the PA. Scepticism let Western financiers withhold their grants, which used to be forwarded to the PA. Even the occupying regime refused to cooperate politically with the new PA until it is disarmed and changed its attitude regarding Israel. But this aspect will no be discussed here in detail.

The bereaved who suffer from these realities are the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza whose circumstances are degraded on a daily basis. The PA is aware of this and knows that the financial capacities are lacking in the treasury. Even though, it attempts to provide as much services as it can in the various sectors. Still, civil servants working for the PA depend on their monthly salary as source of income for their families. Since Oslo, the PA has taken responsibility for the education and health sector, which largely used to be carried out by NGOs.³⁷⁷ Particularly with regard to the fields of health and education, these sectors are at risk because of the deficiency for funds. This status does not provide the best requirements for a future Palestinian state as it has been negotiated by the international community. The financial cut on the part of the Western governments and other aid agencies not only hit the PA but also the Palestinian economy. According to Mohammed El-Samhouri

“the Palestinian banking sector which has survived adverse conditions in recent past, and is currently under mounting pressure not to deal with Hamas-led government, could face serious trouble if PA and other local businesses fail to honour debt obligations, leading banks to tighten credit policy, thus further straining the economy.”³⁷⁸

³⁷⁷ According to Allam Jarrar, “it is believed that the share of the NGO sector in service provision covers over 60% of all health-care services, 80% of all rehabilitation services, and almost 100% of all preschool education.” (Jarrar, Allam (2005), op., cit. on <http://www.pij.org/details.php?id=324> , September 5, 2006).

³⁷⁸ El-Samhouri, Mohammed (2006): Palestine: Making a bad situation worse. In: The Electronic Intifada (5/6/2006) on <http://electronicintifada.net/v2/article4687.shtml> (September 5, 2006)

In order to avoid the Hamas-headed PA, the Western financiers have been looking for alternative options to channel their money to the Palestinian Territories. Thus, active cosmopolitan NGOs and numerous UN branches provided a surrogate solution to remit the needed means for the insufficient services. The sticking point has been that this would mean to obviate the formal organized PA institutions, which were established after the conclusion of the Oslo Accords in order to cooperate and deal with the foreign donor agencies and governments. These seesaw changes cause unnecessary discrepancies and problems, which finally concern the Palestinian population. Beyond that, this means NGOs would have to resume service provisions, which they used to carry out prior to Oslo. But in consideration of the fact that Hamas has the experience and the means, it will not be reliant on NGOs. In view of the entire situation, the environment for NGOs could be hampered through possible increased and tightened measures by the occupying regime. The oppressive crunch and the Israeli travel restrictions are negative indications for a stable future prospective state.

As partly discussed in this section, donor and in particularly Western financial backers play a significant role in the entire process and thus in the sphere regarding NGOs and the PA, whereas the occupying power sets the limited and outer framework for the involved actors. Hence, the overall picture is very complex, particularly with regard to the active NGOs, who are fixed between the demands and needs on the ground on the one hand, but then by the donor-dominated agenda. Nevertheless, the mutual dependency among both parties has not always been unequivocal based on the increased exigencies and expectations on the part of the donors. However, it has to be realized that it is all in the hands of Israel. Looking at it, and recognizing that any goods or material supplies like food, medications, equipment etc. have to pass through Israeli ports to reach the PA areas and which are sometimes confiscated by the Israeli authorities and thus do not reach the needy.

The same applies for cash even expatriates working in the PA need a work visa from the Israeli government, and not to forget all the restrictions on movement inside the PA areas imposed by the army.

So, the simple fact is that Israel holds the faucet, and it decides how much to open or to close. It should not fall into oblivion that the existence of the PA is based on agreements with the state of Israel, and until the last elections of January 2006, the PA was doing its utmost to respect and abide by all conditions of these agreements. As long as Israel felt that the agreements were respected, they were allowing marginal access, but they were always ready to close, and on many occasions they did.³⁷⁹ The Israeli restrictions on the Palestinians and so to the economy caused major shortcomings and diminished the living of standard. According to the World Bank, since 2000 “average Palestinian incomes have declined by more than one third [...] More than 600,000 people (16 percent of the population) cannot afford even the basic necessities for subsistence.”³⁸⁰ Since the tax revenues and duties are controlled by the Israeli authority, it may stop these payments in case it considers this as necessary which results in more exploitative living conditions for the Palestinians. This did not only cause difficulties for the Palestinians but also for the NGOs and their work, who tried to comply with the donors’ demands.

In the following section this interrelation will be outlined in more detail in order respond to the question whether NGOs and donors “speak the same language.”

³⁷⁹ Farsakh, Leila (2000): Under siege: closure, separation and the Palestinian economy. In: MERIP, No. 217, Vol. 30, No.1, p.22-25.

³⁸⁰ Arab Media Watch for objective British coverage of Arab issues (2003): Israeli restrictions on the Palestinian economy on <http://www.arabmediawatch.com/amw/CountryBackgrounds/Palestine/IsraelirestrictionsonPalestineconomy/tabid/89/Default.aspx> (January 17, 2007)

4.2.3 NGO & Donor Relationship

“In the NGO Business it is difficult and dangerous as well where you get your money from. Donors give money to the NGOs in Palestine only if they implement lets say human rights and democracy projects³⁸¹ though something else is needed.”³⁸²

In order for NGOs to be effective and carry out their work and projects, funds are necessary. Fundraising is the issue most NGOs are concerned about, and particularly local NGOs. Of course there are some that are dependent on foreign aid, but it varies from NGO to NGO. Those working on the ground are the ones who are close to the target groups of their work in the various sectors. The post-Oslo Era also had effects on the relationship between International Organisations and NGOs. Due to the fact that funds have been channelled to the Palestinian Authority instead of directly to NGOs, the NGOs have been forced to reduce their services. The intention of the donor community after the donor conference that was held to gather pledges after Oslo was to support the Palestinian Authority in the foundation of institutions, however they did not think of the Palestinian NGOs that would be forced to deal with the consequences of budget cuts. And indeed this was the case; some of them had to limit their activities due to budget cuts. The decrease of funds for the local NGOs was not easy to cope with since the international donors backed them on a large scale.³⁸³ Since 1993, more than 60% of Palestinian health care centres were

³⁸¹ Prior to the recent elections in the occupied territories in January 2006 (out of which Hamas came off as the winner) the Palestinians have been overwhelmed with a “democracy wave” and huge activism and endeavors undertaken by the NGOs. This attracted great support on the part of the donors who financed the large number of NGOs involved. Even the Palestinian NGOs received for the parliamentary elections an amount of US\$ 3 million for a broad range of democracy focused programs (the activities undertaken by international NGOs are not included). (Cp. Baumgarten, Helga (2006): Die Hamas: Wahlsieg in Palästina (2006). In: Orient – German Journal for Politics and Economics of the Middle East, Vol. 47, p.41.)

³⁸² Interview June 3, 2005.

³⁸³ Van Bleek, Greta; Gritzner, Cathy (2002): International Aid to the Palestinian Health System, 1987-2000: The Donors Perspective. In: Barnea, Tamara, Hussein, Rafiq (Eds.): Separate and Cooperate, Cooperate and Separate – The Disengagement of the Palestine Health Care System from Israel and its Emergence as an Independent System, (Westport) p.295.

forced to close because of the switch of grants to the Palestinian Authority. Hence, the NGOs had to deal with that change and therefore they developed their own strategies to encounter the new situation by means of the establishment of networks in the different sectors. Together they believed they would be a stronger unit for lobbying purposes and they also succeeded in getting some international donors on their side, which continued to provide financial assistance. This had a positive effect on Palestinians living in rural areas who had been served by health NGOs, though the Palestinian Authority turned out to be the major health provider. The foreign assistance these NGOs received was limited and only for certain programs and projects. The health NGOs experienced a cutback in funds of 50% in the period between 1994 and 2000.³⁸⁴

This brought about a change with regard to the duration of how long projects are financed. The majority of international donors now rather prefer to fund short-term projects rather than long-term activities since they regard them as more useful and effective. And if the first phase of the project has been successful, then they continue to provide further financial assistance or start another project. Another trend is to support soft projects, which are not constructive in the setting for a future Palestinian state.³⁸⁵ These lead to neglect of substantial sectors of health and education, which require effective long-term assistance. They all declare that it is the international community's task to support the development and building of a civil society in Palestine, but out of what if the cake is given in slices instead as an entire piece? Of course, the thought of corrupt and obscure NGOs might come to mind, but what we are talking about is providing the essential help to those who depend on it – the Palestinians. But some NGOs rather preferred to deal with other issues such as democracy, human rights, and gender issues. This does not mean that these issues are less important, but what is needed in the Palestinian Territories is an appropriate and constructive development of an infrastructure. Democracy is a

³⁸⁴ Van Bleek, Gritzner (2002), op. cit, p.291.

³⁸⁵ Barghouti, Mustafa (1998), op. cit. p.89.

nice thing to have, but Mustafa Barghouti states that it is important to empower people to practice democracy than to tell them how to practice it. He is right by saying that such involvement will have a greater impact in the building of a Palestinian nation and an improvement of their lives.³⁸⁶ In order to be effective and to provide efficient results an NGO has to be well-equipped with enough financial means, a skilled staff, knowledge of the area it is working in etc. A large number of NGOs have to apply for grants and funds for their planned projects. The spectrum of donors that offer money is broad, but there is a catch to this kindness. In many cases the donor presents the project agenda so that NGOs have little or no scope of action. This kind of restriction limits the NGO in its efforts. The following chapter will show what pitfalls and difficulties NGOs have to encounter when they try to achieve satisfying results. The case studies in the next chapter will provide a deeper insight into the work of different NGOs that are active in Palestine.

The relationship between the NGOs carrying out the work on the ground and the donors who wield the sceptre is a delicate issue in particular when it is a northern donor and a southern recipient. The spectrum of donors forwarding money to the PA and the PNGOs ranges from the United Nations, the European Union or the European Commission, the World Bank, and USAID, and they represent the U.S. government to other individual or private sponsors from the Arab world. Large amounts of money flow every year into different projects, and often the foreign donors determine where the money is going and for what it will be used. Karim El-Gawhary makes the point by saying “Whose bread I eat, of whom the song I sing”; by using this strategy many NGOs adjust their application in the way which suits the donor best.³⁸⁷ The conditions and rules fixed by the financial backers are not without demands and are often not easy to meet. It is rather hard and severe competition between the NGOs, who have to initiate a project and find a partner organisation which is going to carry out the

³⁸⁶ Barghouti, Mustafa (1998), op. cit. p.89.

³⁸⁷ El-Gawhary, Karim (1995), op., cit., p.45.

planned program. All this has to happen within a very short period of time and if not they are regarded as ineffective and inefficient.

The requirements and the increasing pressure on NGOs have a great impact on their mission. Fergani calls this usual scenario between the sponsors and their counterparts a form of colonialism for the reason that donors only care about the bookkeeping balance and not about the people concerned.³⁸⁸ Such methods do not necessarily lead to the expected results; rather they tend to be inconsistent and less than productive. A survey carried out by the commission of non-governmental organisations in the Gaza governorates early this year found that 54% of NGOs face an extreme financial difficulty. The survey showed that NGOs rely heavily on foreign financial resources, yet the major pitfall was the fact that Palestinian organisations viewpoints do not always match their sponsors' conditions. Another frequent fundraising hurdle facing NGOs is the aspect of efficiency which the financial backers ignore.³⁸⁹

Mustafa Barghouti mentions another trap where the international donors hamper the model building process. If there is not sufficient funding for development projects then program models in the fields of education and health cannot be built, which are a necessary base for sustainable development of Palestine.³⁹⁰ Another example Julia Pitner gives is that international funders set certain conditions that the recipients have to observe. The local NGOs are forced to adopt specific projects. In this case it was that the European

³⁸⁸ El-Gawhary, Karim (1995), op., cit., p.46.

³⁸⁹ "Palestinian Report says 54 % of NGOs face funding crisis." In: Al-Quds Daily Newspaper in Arabic (3/15/2004) on <http://web.lexis-nexis.com/universe/printdoc> (May 5, 2004).

The survey indicates that 54% of NGOs are facing severe hardships, and additional 33% face lesser level of difficulty. Up to 73% of the NGOs exist in the city of Gaza itself, 21% are located in the refugee camps, while the number of NGOs in the surrounding villages and other remote area is much less pronounced. Of the most important social projects undertaken by the NGOs, 19% were in the field of child care, 14% were in the field of health and environmental education, 12% focused on the establishment of training of educational courses, 11% were devoted to the creation to the creation of job opportunities, and summer camps constituted 10% of all social activities.

³⁹⁰ Barghouti, Mustafa (1998), op. cit. p.89.

Commission had been funding the Palestinian NGOs and had wanted them to document the human rights violations committed by the PA.³⁹¹

The increased pressure by donors on NGOs may also lead to bribery, while at the same time reducing the credibility of both the NGOs and their counterparts with regard to those involved and depending on the services on the ground. Such behaviour leads to the assumption that it matches the Machiavellian approach in the sense that the donors main objective is to reach the maximum of power. This could be best achieved by hiring as many NGOs as possible, giving them a large amount of money and letting them install new projects, which serve the needs and interests of those depending on the services they provide. Mustafa Barghouti makes an interesting contribution by stating that while the traditional European NGOs such as NOVIB, Christian Aid, and OXFAM UK proceed in a certain manner in order to develop and support the local NGOs, the approach used by other European NGOs and North American NGOs (EANGOs), which are new on the terrain is inappropriate and raises the crucial question of whether they are reacting to the local needs or to their own interests. Though most Palestinian NGOs seek to remain loyal to their rules and policies they are far from the local frame regarding the situation and the strengthening of local civic organisations as a public opinion poll demonstrated.³⁹² The mistake they make is that they use the knowledge and experience they gained in other countries in the occupied territories since a large number of them provides donations worldwide in the less developed countries (LDCs). The LDCs differ in a way that they have either suffered from a natural disaster, have a high level of poverty or they lack a strong civil society with a broad base of NGOs.

³⁹¹ Pitner, Julia (2000), op. cit., p.35.

³⁹¹ Carapico, Sheila (2000), op. cit. p. 12-16.

³⁹² Nazaha - Public Opinion Poll on the state of Palestinian NGOs (2006): Enhancing accountability in the NGO sector (15-18 June, 2006) on http://www.kas.de/proj/home/pub/19/2/-/dokument_id-8798/ (January 17, 2007) (Layla Bahmad)

All this does not apply to the Palestinian case if we recall to our mind that the occupied territories have the strongest NGO community in the Arab world and they have founded the strongest local service infrastructure. Nonetheless, EANGOs have not changed their minds in order to adjust to the local circumstances because that would mean breaking their rules. Furthermore, they also accelerated the rivalry among the local NGOs by jumping in and doing the job. They would be of better help if they strengthened and cooperated with the local NGOs, but not many of these so-called EANGOs have integrated this into their concepts. Through the permanent attendance and readiness of the EANGOs and the UN agencies like UNRWA the local NGOs are in competition with them for a competent and capable staff. The major problem lies in the difference of payments the local NGOs are not able to provide as much as the international organisations. It is also a question of image if someone works for an international organisation and earns good money. Therefore most professional Palestinians rather work for the international NGOs than for the local organisations.³⁹³

Of course, all the NGOs' work is based on the guideline of good governance and support to the Palestinians. Nevertheless, it is not out of question that there are NGOs which do everything possible in order to receive the "job" and thus the donor money. The idea and purpose behind this behaviour is that it does not fall into the hands of another competitor NGO working in the same field. It is obvious that there is an increased competition among NGOs for funds.

Another issue Julia Pitner points out is that the human rights organisations working in the region have been especially regarded as pernicious dangers for the reason that they threaten national security.

³⁹³ Barghouti, Mustafa (1998), op. cit. p.89.

During an interview the Lebanese Minister of the Interior Michel al-Murr said that the ministers

*“were complaining of the human rights organisations in their countries and that the work of these organisations and their movements do not aim to protect human rights but to paralyse security operations and countries security policies.”*³⁹⁴

The reaction to this from the Arab states was to contact the Western funding countries to stop their financial support flow to those organisations. A second step was that the concerned governments have become more aggressive and they are employing a different tool-kit to handle the situation and to encounter the “problem” in order to undermine and discredit the NGOs efforts (especially those human rights organisations).³⁹⁵

An interesting aspect emphasized by Julia Pitner is that governments create their own NGOs and that they fill them with staff from the intelligence services. The Tunisian government for instance, had set its own NGO, a GONGO, staffed by members of the secret services. The reason for this action was to attend conferences and monitor what was being said about Tunisia (particularly by Tunisian NGO representatives). Since 1996, front organisations for the Tunisian government have multiplied, but all have a recognizable tag: “sans frontières” - Psychologists without Borders, Lawyers without Borders, etc. Even long-standing organisations now have staff members who report first to the intelligence services and then to the organisation itself.

In the occupied territories there was a similar case (in particular in Gaza) where the PA dissolved the boards of NGOs that were established after 1995. New “elections” were arranged and were committed to include at least one general

³⁹⁴ „Al Murr places his hand on the file for human rights organisations: The Central Security Council plans for security confusion,” (An-Nahar, 1/8/1997, p.7; Pitner, Julia (2000), op. cit. p.37.)

³⁹⁵ Pitner, Julia (2000), op. cit., p.35.

intelligence service officer. These still so-called NGOs are part of a network that was created in order to oppose a separate PNGO network, which was not formed by local communities, but at the request of the World Bank to receive money from a special fund allocated for the “strengthening of civil society”.³⁹⁶

Once we take a closer look and think about this, is it then still possible to speak of a Non-Governmental Organisation though a large number does not really match the definition? This aggravates the credibility of the NGO in particular with regard to the aid recipients on the ground. Nevertheless, there is a broad spectrum of donors, who fund NGOs. They range from the government supported agencies to the UN to the churches to the smaller private initiatives who support the Palestinians through their services. Thereby, they also vary in form, size and most importantly aspect in their goals and interests.

In the following we are going to discuss the various donors who support the Palestinian NGOs.

³⁹⁶ Pitner, Julia (2000), op., cit., p.35.

4.2.4 The various donors

“The program has political content because it is important for the people to see very early that their situation will improve under peace.”³⁹⁷

“It was very difficult on the ground, but we had to coordinate, that was the obstacle in the planning process for the national plan. We did not know how much went to the NGOs; we only had the numbers for the PA. The rule before Oslo was that all the money went to the NGOs.”³⁹⁸

“Almost all foreign aid to PNGOs is now threatened or already has been stopped because donors are shifting resources to the PA.”³⁹⁹

The number of donors supporting the international (and sometimes own) NGOs as well as the local Palestinian NGOs is large in the occupied territories. Many efforts have been undertaken in order to drive the Palestinian civil society before and after the Oslo Accords. From the beginning of the first Intifada up to the Declaration of Principles (Oslo) all the public government services such as clinics, medical services etc. provided in the health sector were administered by the Israeli Civil Authorities. Before the national uprising the Palestinian health NGOs had strong ties to the PLO and they were largely supported with funds from their Arab Islamic brethren. At the same time their international counterparts offered financial assistance on a lower level. These international NGOs portrayed themselves to be generous because of either the religious or political concern (mostly left-wing) that was reflected in their agendas.⁴⁰⁰

³⁹⁷ Bouhabib, Abdallah (1994): The World Bank and International Aid to Palestine – An interview with Abdallah Bouhabib. In: Journal of Palestine Studies, Vol. XXIII, No.2, Issue 90, p.66.

³⁹⁸ Interview, (April 26, 2005)

³⁹⁹ Sullivan, Denis J. (1996), op. cit. p.94.

⁴⁰⁰ Van Bleek, Gritzner (2002), op. cit, p.283-284.

Due to the sudden start of the first Intifada some popular health organisations were founded or revived, therefore, the Palestinian NGOs in the health sector increased at times of the Israeli system. In the course of the first national uprising and for a time afterwards, a large number of international NGOs (among them Europeans) entered the arena and sent greater funding to their counterparts in the occupied territories. During the national struggle many European governmental donors - among them Italy, the UK, France and the European Union - tried to fill the gap and suit the needs as best as they could. Nearly all of them used the option to deliver their funds and support through either local or international NGOs.⁴⁰¹

Today, for instance, Norway still provides aid through its national Red Cross – the Norwegian Red Cross - which works closely with the Palestinian Red Crescent Society. Van Bleek and her colleague Gritzner conclude the salient points of the donor policy with regard to funding in the health sector during the first Intifada as follows: firstly, to channel the financial aid through the local Palestinian NGOs and the UN agencies instead of contacting the organisations directly. The second point is not to exaggerate the assistance to the occupying Israeli administered body in the health sector.⁴⁰²

Not all, but some of the financial backers considered the establishment of coordinating bodies as useful and even helpful for their procedures. Van Bleek illustrates this with the example of a coordinating committee, which was called into life by the Islamic Bank for Development, the Arab Fund for Development, the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), the European Union and the Welfare Association. All the above-mentioned donors supplied more than \$ 10 m. per annum to the NGOs in the health sector. The operations

⁴⁰¹ Van Bleek, Gritzner (2002), op. cit, p. 284.

⁴⁰² Van Bleek, Gritzner (2002), op. cit, p. 284.

In accordance with Geneva Convention IV related to the protection of civilian persons in times of war (Diplomatic Conference of Geneva, 12 August 1949). (Van Bleek, Gritzner (2002), op. cit, p. 295n6.)

of this multilateral committee only lasted for three years.⁴⁰³ At the time of the first Intifada and because of the existing circumstances during the national uprising, a large number of the contributing donors kept their aid covered and therefore the entire picture of financial assistance in the late 80s and early 90s is blurred and no real figures are available.⁴⁰⁴ Principally, the Israeli administered services had access to the financial support through the Italian government and the UNDP, and others such as USAID and the WHO, which amounted to a total of \$2.5 million.⁴⁰⁵

A shift occurred in the period from 1994 to 1997 where most of the funds (about 11% of the total amount, >\$224 m.) went to the new government – the Palestinian Authority. Except for Japan, a large number of the European countries supported this project. Step by step, prior Israeli-run institutions were handed over to the Palestinians. The PCRS used to work as quasi-governmental organisation in the health sector during the first Intifada and before Oslo from abroad at their headquarters in Cairo. But after the conclusion of the Oslo Accords, they returned to the West Bank (Ramallah), where they planned to continue their work. There they encountered a problem with the staff that used to work in the Israeli-run Civil Administration, which was financed through foreign aid, Israeli or Palestinian taxes. The intention of the Palestinian Authority was to transform the PRCS into the Ministry of Health. The varying interests and ideas collided and it was very difficult to get a common consensus on how the newly established institution should be led. The PRCS preferred to channel their funds through the different donors to the Palestinian Authority, and then to the Ministry of Health, as the PRCS did not see itself able to compete with the Ministry of Health. But the staff that used to work during the first Intifada and prior to Oslo had far more experience and means since were serving

⁴⁰³ Van Bleek, Gritzner (2002), op. cit, p. 295n7.

⁴⁰⁴ The total budget for that year was estimated at \$ 28 m. This figure does not include intergovernmental organisations such as the Arab Fund/Islamic Bank or the UN agencies (UNRWA, UNDP etc.). (MAP-UK, NGO Directory 1991) (Van Bleek, Gritzner (2002), op. cit, p. 285.)

⁴⁰⁵ Van Bleek, Gritzner (2002), op. cit, p. 295n12/13.

Palestinians everywhere. From the point of view of the former staff it should have merged with the Ministry of Health. Though the PCRS is still very active and works with the Palestinian Authority; it is also supported through other sister organisations. This was not only the case with the PRCS, this happened in most of the organisations. Anxious about their long-established contacts for financial aid and under the control of the Palestinian Authority, some NGOs established networks in order to continue their work in the field but also to widen their responsibilities. Hence, tension and suspense filled the sphere of competence among the local NGOs and several ministries, both “trembled” for their future. Through increased uncertainty among NGOs, they rejected revealing any information concerning their agenda, funding sources, plans, etc. They rather wanted to remain obscure. The NGOs felt that the Palestinian Authority was trying to intervene in their own business and control them. Sharkawi states that in 1994 some local NGOs did not shrink from activities against the Palestinian Authority distributed a paper in Gaza with the title: “Peace or Destruction”, which emphasized their aggravated financial situation, they blamed on the government. The reason for the NGOs’ defeat was that they had suffered from ongoing deficits, and donor-driven programs, ineffective projects, and a lack of financial management. At the time of the financial crisis, many local NGOs faced being controlled and dominated by the Palestinian Authority and being ignored by the large agencies, donors and international NGOs. Some continued their support to those they favoured. The newcomers on the scene remained unmoved and watched the situation from the sidelines.

Others reacted with rapid actions and projects. Nonetheless, the rivalry among the various UN branches and international NGOs increased while they were trying to come up with new project ideas and to enlarge the existing ones with their local counterparts.⁴⁰⁶ But the Palestinian Authority and its Ministries

⁴⁰⁶ The NGO in question enjoyed years of generous financial support. It set salary scales and operating budgets beyond what could be realistically maintained. (Sharkawi, Hossam (2002): *Can't Live with Them, Can't Live without Them*. In: Barnea, Tamara, Hussein, Rafiq (Eds.): *Separate and Cooperate, Cooperate and Separate – The Disengagement of the Palestine Health Care System from Israel and its Emergence as an Independent System* (Westport p.276.)

considered it as essential in order to keep fragmentation at a low level and to support the national effort.

A former staff member of the Ministry of Planning confirmed that it was very difficult at that time to coordinate the external funds coming from the different government agencies and they set the conditions for the projects to be carried out. Difficulties appeared on the project level since the donors wanted to have it done in a certain way, and threatened to stop their support if it was not. The staff did not see itself capable of solving the problems for the reason that personal interests existed within the Ministry. The weakness the Ministry of Health or any other Ministry in Palestine was the dependence on funds and that meant that they were automatically bound to their conditions. On the other hand the donors wondered where all the money was spent that was pledged at the donor conference.⁴⁰⁷

Just before the Palestinian Authority was called into life in mid-May 1994, little by little the fund sponsors disappeared from the donors' landscape in the West Bank and Gaza, but they maintained their aid supply through the various local and international NGOs. But others such as the WHO entered the field and provided health consultancy and support to the Ministry of Health. In the period between 1998 and 2000, the amount of aid donors deteriorated and projects that had already been started were threatened to fall apart. In a way it was significant to keep up with the construction of a Palestinian infrastructure and to effect a positive change instead of causing a slow decay. The Palestinian Development Plan (PDP) covering the period from 1999-2003 contained the figures of the donors annual expenses from 1994-1997, which grew from \$ 400 million to \$ 500 million including the social sector with around \$ 200 million. The PDP also asserted that the foreign aid assistance would continue on the basis of developmental and political aims. Hence, concluding that there will be an increased tension and rivalry for larger amounts of assistance. In order to avoid discrepancies in the combination and implementation process of the aid

⁴⁰⁷ Interview, (April 26, 2005)

packages for the different sectors, sectoral working groups were organized, which involved the Palestinian Authority, the UN and of course the donors.

It was unusual that the Palestinian NGOs, who had remarkable achievements and worked all the years before the Declaration of Principles, were not a part of the team.⁴⁰⁸

“There were four Ministries responsible for the following: the Ministry of Social Affairs was responsible for education, the Ministry of the Interior dealt with issues regarding the infrastructure and public works, the Ministry of Justice was responsible for the legislature and the Ministry of Health was the first one to be established from the first group. After Oslo they (we) worked on another plan, and before they (we) had an emergency plan, which was prepared for five years for the West Bank and Gaza. It was a comprehensive plan, a kind of guideline and an overview for us.”⁴⁰⁹

Even the World Bank contributed to the development efforts that were essential for the interim period from 1993-1998. The “Conference for the Enhancement of Peace in the Middle East” was launched with the aim to pledge funds for the prospective Palestinian Authority. The conference was held at the State Department on October 1, 1993, where \$2.1 billion were pledged for the five years, \$570 of which was planned for the first year. Not all participating countries contributed for the full five years, some of it just for the first couple of years. The sum was not committed to any specific projects or areas. The Consultative Group (CG) of the World Bank discussed all the issues together with other participants like the various regional and international organisations, UN agencies at the Paris meeting, which was held on December 16 of the same year. This kind of meeting was held so that the donors could coordinate tasks among themselves and assign the funds where needed and to avoid the duplication of projects. The Palestinians and the Israelis were the centres of

⁴⁰⁸ Van Bleek, Gritzner (2002), op. cit, p. 295n24-27.

⁴⁰⁹ Interview, (April 26, 2005)

attention, since the Israelis had sovereign power over the Territories at that time.⁴¹⁰

The first estimates that were made amounted to about \$2.4 billion for the fixed period of time. The intended sum was supposed to flow into the basic social and physical infrastructure of the Palestinian Authority, which would later pass to the state – whether it was independent or an autonomous entity.⁴¹¹ The estimate also included the establishment of economic institutions, such as Palestinian Economic Council for Development and Reconstruction (PECDAR).⁴¹² But the initial step was to put the so-called Emergency Assistance Program (EAP) and the Technical Assistance Program into work. Its purpose was to improve the people's lives by supplying water, electricity, schools, roads, and hospitals anything that was fundamental for an infrastructure. The more important part of the program was institution building with the intention to show the Palestinians that they can look ahead to positive development. Therefore, smaller projects were of primary concern such as electricity, the expansion of schools and so on. A significant aspect of the EAP was to use the existing institutions on the terrain such as UNRWA local and international NGOs and others through which to provide the services and to direct the funds. The Post-Oslo era was also shadowed by disagreements among the coordinating partners – the donors and the Palestinian Authority. Each of the participating nations was responsible for the single sectors.⁴¹³

⁴¹⁰ Bouhabib, Abdallah (1994), op., cit., p.65.

⁴¹¹ Bouhabib, Abdallah (1994), op., cit., p.64.

⁴¹² It was established by the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) in 1993 in full cooperation and coordination with the donor committee to Palestine to support the peace process. The bylaws of PECDAR were approved by the PLO on October 1993 and in the same year; PECDARs was endorsed by the general meeting of the donors which was held in Washington under the chairmanship of Secretary of State and the World Bank. The mandate covers arrange of responsibilities including Aid Coordination, Economic Policy, Projects Management, Coordination with NGOs and UN specialized Agencies, Technical Assistance and Training and as well as IT. Donor funds are disbursed effectively and efficiently and in the most transparent way. Funds are project oriented in accordance with national priorities, where project preparations and monitoring is carried out by PECDAR, while projects identification is carried out by the relevant ministries and municipalities.
(What is PECDAR? On www.pecdar.org/Default.asp?Page=2715 (December 16, 2005)

⁴¹³ Sharkawi, Hossam (2002), op. cit, p.275.

The next component in the assistance plan was capacity building and institution building. The six major donors were the European Community, the United States, Japan, Norway, Saudi Arabia and Canada. These countries also constituted the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee, which was chaired by Norway. The purpose of its formation was to avoid duplication and the waste of money. It has dealt with policy and coordination issues and it has taken care of the legal aspects with regard to financial assistance to Palestinians. It has also provided a platform where all participating countries could get together and exchange information amongst them.

Not only the major donors had a say in this project, but also the Israelis, who have been the occupying regime over the territories, the World Bank as a non-political organisation, and the Palestinians themselves, and this meant that they had to accept the Israeli presence. The big political issues like Jerusalem, the refugees and so on were left aside and only the economic issues were discussed. The funds to the Palestinians from the World Bank consisted of grants and soft loans, which were charged with a small interest rate of less than 1% (a 0.75% “service charge”). But it was up to each donor to decide on their own conditions for the donation. And accordingly, at the CG meeting the Palestinians asked that there should not be any conditions attached. The World Bank made the recommendation to burden the Palestinians as little as possible and to provide as much untied assistance.

In view of Abdullah Bouhabib, another factor was that the money was going to be spent efficiently and therefore it was planned that missions would be sent several times a year to the West Bank and Gaza Strip to control the progress on the ground since the Palestinian national institutions would not have been strong enough at that time. He adds that in a case like this where the autonomous government is still inexperienced in the implementation of such programs, one has to be more creative and flexible

The aspect of capacity-building seemed to be a problem for the international community with regard to the fact that it is time consuming and more important the prerequisite that on the political level everything goes well. But the major

concern expressed was that the Palestinians carry out the projects with the money provided in a proper way and the faster they would do this the faster aid assistance could have been disbursed.⁴¹⁴ A second interest and obstacle Abdullah Bouhabib brings up is that there is the fear that some donors may want to use their financial assistance in order to advance their own economic interests. He confirms that it has been the case all over the world that donor countries are under the pressure of their own commercial interests and try to lobby for projects conducted by their private sector. They have a profit orientation and disregard the fact that it might not match the needs on the ground. Abdallah Bouhabib calls these kinds of projects “white elephants” into which a lot of money is given and which also create employment but not in the long run. This kind of undertaking is useless. This was actually later the case with some NGOs and USAID who only received the funds on the condition that they had to purchase their equipment (computers etc.) from American companies or that were manufactured by American companies. He concludes that the occupied territories represented a different case without a host government, as it is usually the case when the World Bank supplies support to a LDC and that the absence of a government there had changed their way of operation.

At the end of 1997, the World Bank published a report which contained three crucial points with regard to the challenges/threats (depending on ones own point of view) in the health sector: firstly, the aggravated economic situation and its effects on the health status of the Palestinians, secondly, the financial sustainability of planned investments, and finally the general performance and effectiveness in the health sector. The intention was to appeal to all participating members and a closer cooperation between the public sector and the NGOs on the ground. The different aspects were supposed to be brought into accord with each other in order to achieve a smooth course and an optimal outcome. But the major goals were to provide the Palestinians capacity-building efforts and to assist them with funds for the achievement of an effective health system.

⁴¹⁴ Bouhabib, Abdallah (1994), op., cit., p.72-73.

Contrary to what the donors expected and what their plans were, they had lost interest because of lacking reforms and improved quality others on the other hand complained that their governments compared to the Post-Oslo era and stepped back and were hesitant to contribute more to the activities on the ground, which seemed to slow down the entire process. The donors also felt bothered since they did not see any real achievements such as the supply of primary health care services to a full extent instead of other more specified services that were not as needed by the Palestinian population. They had thought that the co-operation between the ensemble consisting of the Palestinian Ministry of Health, the NGOs and UNRWA would complement one another in many aspects.

Despite all there were also some catches that have been revealed from the Palestinian Council of Health (PCH) for example that donors do not always match the appropriate needs on the ground. Instead numerous other projects were conducted, and the donors had given priority to other projects than to those which were in real need. This has led to the neglect of vital services and human resources. For example, in the health sector, the human resources such as nurses and doctors need more skills and education in the field. This goes back to the lacking input in the education system in order to buttress sustainable development. Prompt decisions and activism are a further pitfall for donor assistance. The use of keywords in the application for funds seemed to be the key for assistance.

Sharkawi stated that the faster the NGOs reacted they have had a chance to receive funds. Sharkawi stated that the motto was; (in order) to get your share of the pie, you better submit something and quickly. Many international and local NGOs did not keep the donors waiting and started to change their own priorities and agendas and channels of aid in order to become eligible for the funds. This did not happen in a voluntary way, but rather under pressure of the donors so that the NGOs exchanged their longstanding work with an entrance into a new sector. Behind this laid more interests combined with attractive funds than needs. This kind of behaviour was reflected in quick organized workshops where the local NGOs took advice from international experts most of them

lacking English or Arabic skills, who tried to impart to the new guidelines. The absence of agreements posed another problem. The donors did not confer with the Palestinian Authority about their plans and arrangements. They rather pretended to have the control and needed knowledge in the field. If they had informed the Palestinian Authority about their intentions this would have also meant to let them know who their partners were. Certainly, many donors still conduct a sort of consultation with the Palestinian Authority, but rather as a formality and as a courtesy. A further obstacle was that since the Palestinian Authority was in charge of the national planning efforts, it faced increased disagreements and arguments. The single donors and NGOs used this as reason to act on their own instead of stabilizing the national plan efforts. At the phase of the Interim Plan - and even before - they turned it down and insisted to continue with their programs without the consent of the Palestinian Authority.⁴¹⁵ These gaps between the donors and the Palestinian Authority, the donors and the NGOs seemed to be very serious. If there were already discrepancies in the upper levels, what would be the outcome for those who depend on the support? The donors follow their own development agenda and international trends instead of making common arrangements and conducting adequate needs assessments on the ground.

Some donors do, but whether these results still match the real needs is another issue. This has also been confirmed by many NGOs who apply for funds. The donors send their own consultants, who determine the needs. Sharkawi sees the development field as one with its own rules and fads, which set the tone. The one-year democracy is the major issue, in the following year the key issue is gender and these are the key words for grants applications as mentioned before. Sharkawi does not deny that these are of reduced importance, but not for the post-conflict Palestine at that stage where other things had priority for an emerging state.⁴¹⁶ But the donors did not pay attention to this fact and mixed up the situation with global ideas and trends.

⁴¹⁵ Sharkawi, Hossam (2002), op. cit, p.278.

⁴¹⁶ Sharkawi, Hossam (2002), op. cit, p.278.

Other problems existed such as the bad economy, the refugee issue, the reserve of funds from the Israelis and the donors. All this together and the accompanying circumstances made the situation difficult enough. For example, the release of value added tax (VAT), collected by Israel and amounting to hundreds of millions of shekels, was delayed for months.⁴¹⁷ Above all, the donors were very demanding to their local counterparts who had to expect streams of consultants sent by the donor to carry out the required work and to fulfil their job. Many donors just concentrate on specific areas in the West Bank or Gaza and do not cover the entire terrain since this is regarded by the Israelis as support to the national effort. Taking away the few trained and skilled Palestinians from the public sector through higher and more attractive salaries has set a further difficulty for the arising Palestinian state in the Post-Oslo era. Even before staffs that used to work in the occupied territories left and went abroad. The greater presence of international employers (in particular in the larger agencies that have been very popular), meant a drawback and decrease for the Palestinian institutions. These days still new NGOs are founded who aim to fill the gap for the Palestinians in need.

The donors' support of new NGOs which do not intend to address the real needs on the ground is doubtful for the reason that they were intended to back up a specific political faction, individual or non-priority sector. A large number of the Palestinian NGOs have admitted that they have been threatened by their international partners that they will freeze funds if disagreements arise as to local priorities and plans of action. This served as example of the human rights sector, where the number of NGOs experienced a prompt increase in the period from 1994 to 1996.

Through the quick changes with regard to the sectors of the different NGOs, it was not absurd for the donor to consider the NGOs as their property. This becomes obvious at international meetings and conferences where the mother agency tries to take care of its protégé from being linked to other donors.

⁴¹⁷ Sharkawi, Hossam (2002) op. cit, p.281n5.

Sharkawi states that this phenomenon is deeply rooted in the international rivalry for funds and not in the Palestinian needs.⁴¹⁸ Sharkawi looks at the pre-Oslo donor assistance from the NGO/recipient-perspective, where Israeli-run projects were denied by the Palestinians. He exemplifies this by means of USAID who is one of the major contributing donors in the occupied territories. USAID supported several water projects in cooperation with the Israelis, but as a result Sharkawi states no credible Palestinian leader would meet (at least publicly) and coordinate with them. The snag was that the partnering Palestinian NGO was not allowed to attend a national coordination meeting, which took place. Likewise the majority of the public services offered in the fields of health, education, etc. were addressed by Palestinian staff, but in the upper levels these were administered by the Israelis and therefore the Palestinians rejected to support such facilities. The PLO had to inform the occupying regime about any step undertaken, and they always feared that the Israelis might put obstacles in their way and destroy their efforts.⁴¹⁹

But the foreign assistance Palestinians received from the international community, such as from Norway⁴²⁰ who shows that it is pro-Palestinian left the Israelis untouched. Instead other strict methods were used, which the international donors could not change or influence. The Israelis only allowed projects to be supported and carried out that were of pure humanitarian nature, though communication and transportation counted to infrastructure. The donors avoided the latter issues based on the reason that they were to political and infrastructure oriented, and moreover approval from the Israelis was always needed. Under the pretext that they were neutral the donors denied to fund government services. A more delicate difficulty was the delivery of funds, which occurred through the donors' own national NGOs towards their Palestinian counterparts or other multilateral bodies such as the UN. Straight bilateral

⁴¹⁸ Sharkawi, Hossam (2002) *op. cit.*, p.279-280.

⁴¹⁹ Sharkawi, Hossam (2002), *op. cit.*, p.272.

⁴²⁰ Norway certainly reflects a willingness to complement its political initiative with economic aid to Palestinians. (Hanafi, Sari, Tabar, Linda (2005), *op. cit.* p.73.)

financial support has been explicitly for sovereign or semi-sovereign states and this did not apply to the Palestinian case. Related to the latter programs or projects that might have any sense of national agenda was banned as well, therefore these just could focus on certain areas or regions.

Furthermore, the foreign donors supplying the funds to the occupied territories did not regard the PLO in the pre-Oslo phase as the representative body of the Palestinians and consciously ignored its existence in order to avoid any difficulties with the Israelis who had a final say if they were allowed to enter the terrain. Anything that was connected to nationhood, independence and even meetings was prohibited, and all this became obvious during the first national uprising when a large number of leaders supporting the national cause were arrested. At times during the first Intifada it was difficult for the Israelis to recognize which activities were done and supported by whom though they expected prior information about them. Sharkawi concludes and says that the above given components were cryptic, aimless, and not really in accord with each other. This was justified with the reason that the Palestinians wanted to avoid any information leaking out to the Israelis. This secret behaviour has been exercised by many local and international NGOs that have been involved.⁴²¹ Yet, because of this behaviour no exact figures on the money flow towards the occupied territories before Oslo are available, which has also been stated by van Bleek and Gritzner.

At the height of the First Intifada the international donors, many of whom were neither used nor needed, supplied vast amounts of medical equipment. And because the Palestinians have always focused on their national agenda, the existing local NGOs during the Intifada had become politicised and this found approval in the form of funds that were channelled to political factions using humanitarian NGOs as cover.⁴²² Despite the national agenda, the local NGOs did everything possible to come up with their duties and help their own people in

⁴²¹ Sharkawi, Hossam (2002), op. cit, p.273.

⁴²² Sharkawi, Hossam (2002), op. cit, p.274.

all parts that have not been really covered the Israeli-run public sectors. Though it was a hard time with the varying interests and a lack of financial means, they succeeded to remain a driving force within the Palestinian (civil) society.

With the Post-Oslo era many changes took place, and therefore it was difficult to prioritise what was to come first. Disagreements arose between the local NGOs and the emerging Palestinian institutions.

Some of the local NGOs found their way into the Palestinian Authority, and others against that did not and remained on the ground. Right away after the establishment of the different ministries, these institutions started to look for bilateral partners in order to get the foreign aid that individual NGOs were in charge of before. The number of NGOs experienced a quick increase and new and larger international NGOs entered the terrain that was well-equipped with ample funds. The larger agencies like the World Bank, the European Union, and others worked parallel to the NGOs and assisted on the ground.⁴²³

Aid, partnership and support have become the keywords in the donor and NGO scene. The financial means provided by the donors have been affected by concomitants, which go beyond interests and goals. Aid has become a new sort of business and this is going to be delineated below.

⁴²³ Sharkawi, Hossam (2002), op. cit, p.275.

4.2.5 What is Aid?

“A token of concern, power and expertise, aid is given with a glow of satisfaction. A badge of candidate-membership in the club of modern nations, aid is received with gratitude. Givers and receivers, at least in their public utterances, applaud foreign aid as a good thing that should continue.”⁴²⁴

“Aid in the context of occupation was often highly politicised and controversial. Many opposing forces and interests were at play: those of the Palestinians and their leadership, the donor nations and their chosen channels of assistance, and Israelis.”⁴²⁵

David Sogge states where foreign aid dominates pride and ambition have given way to dependence and deference.⁴²⁶ The foreign aid business started at the beginning of the 1940s. From his point of view foreign aid has a rather destroying than supporting effect whereas he underlines his by the example of Rwanda. Michael Keating views aid as a tool that has been used successfully in order to strengthen (foreign L.B.) political goals.⁴²⁷ With regard to Palestine, aid in the form of funds and other means has been forwarded for more than ten years aiming to assist in the formation of a prospective Palestinian state and to fill the gap in the humanitarian field. Since the conclusion of the Oslo Accords, the international community has not only undertaken efforts to buttress the construction of Palestinian institutions but also to respond to the needs of the Palestinians. Seven years after Oslo changes occurred donors have achieved some favourable outcomes. A study that was been done by Japan and the World Bank proved that the economic situation of the occupied territories

⁴²⁴ Sogge, David (2002): Give and Take – What is the Matter with Foreign Aid?, (London) p.7.

⁴²⁵ Sharkawi, Hossam (2002), op. cit. p.271.

⁴²⁶ Sogge, David (2002), op. cit. p. 7.

⁴²⁷ Keating, Michael (2005): Introduction. In: Keating, Michael, Le More, Anne, and Lowe, Robert (Eds.): Aid, Diplomacy and Facts on the Ground, (London) p.4.

through the donors' input improved and slackened the economic decrease and contributed to the overall picture, which at the same time helped to keep the peace talks among the Israelis and Palestinians on track.⁴²⁸ Western and Islamic NGOs have helped the Palestinian population who lost their livelihoods to deal with the situation in a way that they provided services in different forms such as emergency assistance etc. These assistants deeply examined their consciences with regard to the fact that they had left the decision to the occupying regime of whether to neglect its duties or not. Keating emphasizes that Arafat used financial aid and the public resources of the Palestinian Authority as means of his political goals and to strengthen his position. He received money to help the Israelis clean up the Gaza Strip. Donors as well as diplomats involved in the scene knew that the agreements concerning aid were anything but reasonable since income from monopolies and from tax refunds collected by Israel found their way to the Palestinian Authority. He argues that the use of aid as patronage is not suitable for countless reasons and all the more it does not function.

Nevertheless, its use by Arafat weakened the PA's popular legitimacy and it could have been a possible reason for the failed peace negotiations. The Palestinian Authority and the Palestinian NGO elite have suffered from a weakened popularity in a way that foreign aid enlarged the gap between them and their aid recipients. The so-called Palestinian NGO elite has distanced itself from the people on the ground whose interests and needs it was supposed to represent and now has more in common with the Western Aid officials.

The Palestinian civil society institutions NGOs and also the public have got the picture that foreign aid is donor-driven through their political agendas rather than by the real needs of the Palestinian population. These agendas are out of place for the reason that they neither match the needs nor are they adequate

⁴²⁸ Keating, Michael (2005), op. cit, p.4.

Aid Effectiveness in the West Bank and Gaza, a study produced by Japan and the World Bank for the Secretariat of the Ad Hoc Liaison, 2000, Executive Summary, p.xx.

and accordingly they are raising suspicion among large parts of Palestinian society.

They do not believe anymore that the entire humanitarian and development aid provided is well-meant to improve their lives towards a peaceful solution in the conflict.⁴²⁹ Their doubts are filled with scepticism and cynicism; their belief with regard to the peace talks is based on the difficult circumstances they went through and on the level negotiations level rather than by the improved economic situation. The extent of aid cannot be a sort of cure-all to the conflict, which requires more steps in terms of progress.

Throughout the next sub-item we will discuss the donors' influence on Palestinian NGOs.

⁴²⁹ Keating, Michael (2005), *op. cit.*, p.6.

See for example, the numerous polls conducted by the Jerusalem Media and Communication Centre, the Palestinian Centre for Policy and Survey Research and the Development Studies Program of Birzeit University

4.3 How does International Aid influence NGOs, particularly Palestinian organisations?

The existence of Palestinian NGOs depends totally upon international aid, and so the use of influence does not give right to reality; hence, the word control is far more appropriate to describe the circumstances on the terrain. This demonstrates that the Palestinian NGOs are forced to work under very complicated conditions. It is a sort of circle in which the donors have their expectations, there are restrictions set by the Israeli government, and there are needs on the part of the Palestinians.

All these factors together represent an unequal image of the Palestinian NGOs and the situation, which lack a sense of reality. The NGO-donor relationship could be pictured as that of a master-slave one the donors are setting up not only rules and regulations, but fields of intervention, strategies and methodologies of intervention. The relationship has become very simple, “take or leave it because someone else will take it.”⁴³⁰ This attitude shows that the donors find it easy to attract NGOs and at the same time they demonstrate their power over the dependent organisations.

The just given “slogan” reflects the increased rivalry among NGOs for funds and in case NGO X does not agree to the conditions of the offered project, then NGO Y may accept these and carry out the undertaking.

After Oslo the donors shifted most of their funding to the PA, and any funds allocated to NGOs had to be coordinated between the NGOs and PA.

⁴³⁰ Interview (October 9, 2005)

So the developmental approach was becoming more evident, based on the reason that proper control on the PA was missing, while at the same time the NGOs were controlled very strictly by the PA. And this method applied to NGOs caused a sort of damage to the formula of development and weakened the NGOs.

The Palestinian NGOs found themselves caught in a sort of trap, which was put by the donors and the ups and downs in their environment with regard to the political situation in Palestine.

4.4 Conclusion

The NGOs on the Palestinian terrain have faced numerous obstacles not only in the implementation of their work but also with regard to the surrounding and political circumstances which have shaped their existence and activism. With the conclusion of the Oslo Accords in the early 90s, even the political and legal landscape changed for the NGOs based on the creation of the Palestinian Authority. Many of the organisations feared the new authority and did not trust it, though there were a few among them who had close ties to the newly established “quasi-government”. One of the initial debates which broke out was that regarding the legal structures under which the NGOs were supposed to work. Prior to Oslo the Palestinian NGOs operated freely and did not have to give account where they get their funds from or what they use them for. The new PA attempted to apply the Jordanian and Egyptian laws that govern their civil society organisations, but the Palestinian NGOs did not consider the PA as authorized to set the rules. Instead of co-operation between the two parties, discrepancies between the PA and the Palestinian NGOs arose in terms of their legislation and handling. In addition, it was a long process until the “appropriate” law was ratified and adopted. This seemed to be one of the smaller problems, of greater interest was the competition for donor funds which reheated the debate again. Since there was no agreement on which ministry shall be responsible for them, the PA saw a need in the creation of a Ministry of NGO Affairs which was supposed to be familiar and responsible with all NGO matters on the ground.

The other difficulties the NGOs have had, were the restrictions set by the occupying regime which also aggravated their work. The numerous checkpoints, the curfews, travel restrictions and confiscations of material are just a few of a long list. However, the NGOs have tried their best in order to implement and accomplish their projects as best as they could. The implementation and accomplishment of projects is significant for an NGO and in order to realize such, funds and support from donors are needed.

The Palestinian NGOs are aware of the demands and conditions the donors ask for and that these are connected to particular interests which make them dependent on them if they want to keep their financial source. Certainly, the donors not only vary in demands, area of interest, activism but also in size and financial contribution to the asking NGOs.

Foreign aid has had an extensive influence on Palestinian NGOs due to the growing demands by the aid recipients and simultaneously because of the “shrinking” access for funds. Hence, the NGOs are caught in between the community and the financiers.

5. DIFFERENT TYPES OF ORGANISATIONS AND NGOS

Among the large number of NGOs operating in the occupied territories, a broad spectrum of different types of organisations could be found. As already discussed there are different terms for these civic organisations or so-called NGOs that have been active there for years. The majority of them work in the various fields such as health, education, and nutrition, emergency assistance, microfinance, water and sanitation and the list goes on. Behind the different kinds of NGOs have different features, which characterize an NGO. Those working in the West Bank and Gaza are either of local or international nature. Some NGOs are international by origin but they also run an office in the occupied territories in order to maintain closer contacts to their counterparts and their target groups. Furthermore, they conduct field visits to see the progress their projects are making. But some international NGOs, which are not based in the occupied territories, depend on the support of the local NGOs. The local NGOs serve as a kind of broker e.g. when for instance medical equipment is supplied. Mostly the international NGOs have difficulties with the Israeli authorities and the regulations concerning the import of equipment.

In such cases the local partners are more experienced and they help to get the goods to their recipients. Then there are the local NGOs that have a closer relationship to their own people and they work with the so-called CBOs (community based organisations). These are working in the refugee camps, for instance, and in the different communities. Then there is that type of NGO which has a sort of mediator function. An international donor has either established it or it is local by origin but it has an international cover, which means that it represents the international agenda. But the agenda issue will be discussed in a later part of this work. Depending on the field of work many NGOs are affiliated to the distinct international organisations such as the ECOSOC (Economic and Social Council - an organ of the UN system of which large NGOs are accredited) or other international organs.

Some networks like the International Red Cross Society (IRCS) and the Red Crescent Societies (RCS) which operate worldwide also run single branches in the different countries. In the occupied territories the Palestinian Red Crescent society has been active for many years.

The NGOs not only differ in their origin but also in the goals and aims they seek. They range from secular to Christian to Islamic organisations and accordingly, they represent certain interests. But there are more criteria which determine an NGO. The organisations vary in size, field of work, financial income, capacities and on many more aspects. Hence, I considered it as useful to develop a typology for the NGOs I interviewed and subdivided them into categories. Among the NGOs were also a few donors that provide financial assistance to the NGOs in the occupied territories. There are numerous factors as for instance the agenda and conditions set by the donors or the financial volume which influence the NGOs' work.

The next chapter will discuss the various aspects that shape the organisation's profile.

5.1 The Size of the NGOs

“We train technocrats; we are perceived as an elite organisation.”⁴³¹

The size of an NGO can vary. It can be either a very small NGO or one that provides services to people all over the globe. Those active in the West Bank and Gaza range from small international groups that consist of private individuals who want to support Palestinians by providing services such as medical treatment and free surgeries, to others who have headquarters offices, several branches and local representative offices in the different countries. There are also local organisations who run a main office in the West Bank (either in Ramallah or Jerusalem), and if, another one in the Gaza Strip. The number of employees is related to the extent of the NGO, it can vary from a minimum of 8 up to 3800 persons who are active. It has to be differentiated between the staffs that manage the administrative work and those who are active on the terrain. There can be among 8 to 35 employees working in the offices and among 145 to 200 who carry out the projects. The larger number given above corresponds to the staff number of the Palestinian Red Crescent Society, though their number of volunteers reaches up to 20.000.⁴³²

Therefore, the size not only depends on the number of its staff, but also on its annual budget and coherent the expenses in the form of projects and other costs. The “age” of an NGO is another component that can determine its size and influence. With regard to the staff, the NGOs, and particularly the international ones, expect their employees to fulfil certain requirements. They want their staff to have adequate competencies and skills, a multifaceted background and international experience. Most of the staff members of the local

⁴³¹ Interview with Izzat Abdel Hadi (Director of the Bisan Center for Research and Development) (February 6, 2005)

⁴³² The PRCS has a staff of 3800 employees, and 20.000 volunteers in 27 branches in five countries (Occupied territories, Lebanon, Syria Egypt and Iraq). It maintains 15 hospitals and 80 clinics.

NGOs hold degrees from Western universities; they have language skills, which are also considered as very important.

“The vacancies at international NGOs are very popular, because they pay higher salaries and they have the reputation. You have the option to travel abroad and to meet with partner organisations, to attend international conferences as at the UN.”⁴³³

In addition, the staffs are also expected to have more abilities.

“The project managers that work for us must have good qualifications in order to be able to identify the communities’ needs and he or she needs research and methodological skills. The lowest qualification a staff member can have is a Bachelor Degree, better is a Master’s Degree, of course English skills, planning skills, monitoring skills, implementation skills, and finally evaluation and reporting skills.”⁴³⁴

Some of the international NGOs have a local field representative who is dealing with the issues on the spot like administrative skills, representing the NGO in front of authorities and sometimes partner organisations. Furthermore, his or her capability to communicate with target groups and their knowledge about the environment they are operating in are necessary and useful for their work. And finally, managing the projects that are implemented by the NGO and maintaining compliance with the donors and the host government’s regulations and policies.

“I have been working for CARE for seven years. I managed the following projects and implemented them in Occupied Palestine: three emergency water projects funded by ECHO, emergency food projects funded by ECHO as well, one food security project (development) funded by the EC, and community development services funded by USAID. One project funded by AUSAID in support of women’s savings and credit association – all in the Jenin area. I

⁴³³ Interview with Omar Jubran who works at the UN in Jerusalem (February 2, 2005)

⁴³⁴ Interview with Izzat Abdel Hadi (Director of the Bisan Center for Research and Development) (February 6, 2005)

*represented CARE for two years on the grants committee of TAMKEEN a civil society strengthening program funded by USAID.”*⁴³⁵

Not all staff members working for the various NGOs are employed on a full-time basis; many NGOs also have volunteers who are supporting their work or even interns, but for the latter that is not very often the case.⁴³⁶

*“Terre des Hommes has volunteers especially in the psychological support projects. The volunteers are usually undergraduate psychology students who need to volunteer a certain number of hours before they graduate. In some cases, graduates from the same field looking for jobs temporarily volunteer until they find jobs; it is also good for their CV’s.”*⁴³⁷

Most NGOs believe in the strong efforts they undertake and the efficiency of their work in support of their staff members and volunteers. An NGO’s representation is so to speak its calling card. The NGOs attach great importance to their image in particular with regard to the donor community.

In the next passage we will discuss the purpose of NGOs’ representation and which means they use.

⁴³⁵ Interview with Mohammed Khaled (He used to be a Community Development and Emergency Response Sector Coordinator for CARE West Bank/Gaza) (November 10, 2005)

⁴³⁶ Islamic Relief Germany, half (50%) of its staff are volunteers.

⁴³⁷ Interview with Khalil Marouf (Country Representative for Terre des Hommes Switzerland) (November 10, 2005)

5.2 Self-Portrait

“The success is that we grant our donors wishes and at the same time receive positive feedback from our aid recipients. That is the most important goal for us.”⁴³⁸

It goes without saying that each NGO pushes ahead its marketing strategies with the intention of being attractive to donors and then to its target groups and others. Such a statement as given above shows self-confidence and conviction of doing a good job. It is not a matter of dispute that the NGOs aim at an efficient purpose through the provision of their services in the different fields. But they are also concerned about their images and they try to sell themselves as effectively as possible in the “scene” in particular with regard to donors.

Many NGOs have their websites with plenty of information about their mission and goals, their field of work, their history, how to donate money, and get in touch with the NGO. This is not unusual if the NGO wants to be successful and new technologies such as the Internet provide space for it. Some of them are not only present online they even go beyond and mail information about new projects in the form of newsletters or monthly or bimonthly magazines, which reflect the facts and news of current projects. This sort of campaign aims at attracting attention of the public and donors, either private individuals or other institutions. The fundraising issue is one of the top goals for NGOs.

“We are a member of Social Watch, which is an umbrella with fifty organisations and consortia working on poverty alleviation indicators and we publish one academic article per year.”⁴³⁹

⁴³⁸ Interview with Tarek Abdelalem (Director of Islamic Relief, Köln/Germany) (April 18, 2005)

⁴³⁹ Interview with Izzat Abdel Hadi (Director of the Bisan Center for Research and Development) (February 6, 2005)

Many NGOs in Palestine are a member of a network for example Social Watch or the Palestinian NGO Network (PNGO), which is the umbrella organisation for the local Palestinian NGOs. Its counterpart for the international organisations in Palestine is the Association of International Development Agencies (also known under the abbreviation AIDA).

“The PCRf is also member of the international NGO network AIDA. We meet once a month in order to discuss various issues. The network is really active.”⁴⁴⁰ However, cooperation is in the form of sharing information etc. and it is not at its optimum level.”⁴⁴¹

“Bisan is a member (and also one of the founder organisations) of the PNGO Network, which is one of the most important NGO umbrellas in the West Bank and Gaza. It is also a founder of the Arab NGO Network for Development, one of the most important regional networks. Bisan is in both networks member of the steering committee.”⁴⁴²

Some NGOs are represented in ranking lists such as the Charity Navigator which not only evaluates the “charity’s” financial rating but also includes details on their achievements, their administrative expenditures, other expenses, and of course the comparison with others being active in the same or a similar field. Some NGOs have a donor privacy policy which is the

“charity’s commitment to donors’ privacy rights. In order to meet our (the charity navigator) criteria, the charity must have a donor privacy policy in writing, guaranteeing that they will not sell or trade their donors personal or contact information with anyone else, nor will they send mailings on behalf of other organisations. Furthermore, the policy must be prominently displayed on the charity’s website or in its marketing and solicitation materials.”⁴⁴³

⁴⁴⁰ Interview with Steve Sosebee (President and CEO of Palestinian Children’s Relief Fund – PCRf), (February 5, 2005)

⁴⁴¹ Interview with Khalil Marouf (Country Representative for Terre des Hommes Switzerland) (November 10, 2005)

⁴⁴² Interview with Izzat Abdel Hadi (Director of the Bisan Center for Research and Development) (February 6, 2005)

Herewith, they undertake a commitment not to pass information about the donor to a third party. Certainly, the NGOs not only set great value upon the latter but also on their eminence and their reliability in public and in the concerned communities. There is also a first draft (June 2006) regarding a *Code of Ethics for Palestinian NGOs* which determines various principles such as the adherence to local laws, good governance, transparency etc. concerning the work of Palestinian NGOs.⁴⁴⁴

However, success stories are also very important for the reputation of an NGO, as well as articles in newspapers, any distinctions and letters of gratitude from the community they served or host governments, these all make up a part of a NGOs image. The general view is significant for the NGOs. The feedback reflects the impact they had through their projects.

“We also receive feedback from the people.⁴⁴⁵ We usually ask them. Fairly positive they appreciate the service they receive. Effectiveness is not really easy; it is very difficult and complex to measure the impact because some variables lay beyond our possibilities. We provide the trainer, the time, and the necessary facilities in order to ensure that it is a successful project.”⁴⁴⁶

The NGOs’ achievement does not only consist of its efficacy and positive results concerning the aid recipients. Their success also depends on the satisfaction of the donors who can determine for what project their donations can be

⁴⁴³ www.charitynavigator.com Out of the NGOs I interviewed, Islamic Relief, the PCRF, and the Near East Foundation have a written donor privacy policy.

⁴⁴⁴ This draft (June 2006) is for discussion only as explicitly referred to on the website of the Palestinian NGO Project (http://www.pngo-project.org/award/docs/PALESTINE_DRAFT_CODE_OF_ETHICS-June_13_2006.pdf) (January 18, 2007) (Layla Bahmad)

⁴⁴⁵ The German Konrad-Adenauer Foundation in cooperation with AMAN Transparency Palestine (Nazaha) conducted a public opinion poll (15-18 June, 2006) on NGOs in Palestine. 1270 Palestinians (males and females; at the age of 18 and above) in the West Bank and Gaza were asked about their view on NGOs in Palestine. The Nazaha project aimed at “Strengthening Civil Society through enhancing the accountability and Good governance in the NGO Sector”, which will be discussed in detail in a latter section of this work. AMAN was the first coalition of civil society organisations. (<http://www.aman-palestine.org>) (January 28, 2007)

⁴⁴⁶ Interview with Mohammed H. Almbaid (Chief of party at Tamkeen) (February 6, 2005)

used for. This case applies to Islamic Relief who receives large amounts from individuals in particular at times of religious holidays such as Ramadan. Then special projects are planned in the various countries Islamic Relief works in. Another aspect, which NGOs appreciate, is the cooperation with the host government and its institutions and those they get along well with. The volunteers of the German NGO Hammer Forum whose volunteers - medical doctors providing surgery for free - were accommodated in public houses provided by the Ministry of Health since they were working in the public hospitals in the West Bank. It has also had good contacts with the UPMRC, who is one of the leading organisations in the health sector. The better the NGOs works, the higher its chances are to receive funds for the projects the donors want to see carried out by the different organisations. This final thought leads us to the criterion and one of the most important means in the NGOs' work: the funds.

Since, the donors have certain expectations and ideas what the donation should be used for they are connected to a so-called donor's specific agenda. Donors do not just look for reliant and successful partners; they also anticipate associations who fulfil their requirements and carry out the program specific agenda.

This is subject of the following section, which is going to discuss the processes NGOs have to undergo in order to be eligible for financial assistance. The international donors including the European governments and the U.S. have specific demands attached to their funds.

It is questionable, whether the efforts the donors undertake could be seen as assistance to the Palestinians or whether these have the objective of certain political interests.

5.3 Conditionality for Funds

“They (the donors) are the ones who imply the conditions on you. Most of the projects come from the donors. They have political motivations, I would say. It is very hard to get an approval for a project we propose.”⁴⁴⁷

“We depend on donors 100%. Conditions seem to be very important and they have an agenda.”⁴⁴⁸

“One thing the donors have encouraged is the Palestinian strategic goals. Everything a donor must apply for are the Palestinian long-term goals which are going to be produced with the assistance of the donor community and that will be when they define their goals.”⁴⁴⁹

It does not work that easily for the NGOs to receive funds for their activities because these are bound to certain requirements and sometimes prerequisites the NGOs have to comply with. The climax of the whole issue is that sometimes these conditions that are fixed by the donors are dressed with different interests which could have financial and/or political character or even be related to programs the donors want to see carried out. In a few case the donors even require specific prerequisites in order to qualify for funds.

“Sometimes the annual budget is a pre-condition for receiving a similar amount of funding.”⁴⁵⁰

⁴⁴⁷ Interview with Dr. Sanaa Ashour (Institutional Development Manager of Islamic Relief, Germany), She also used to work for the Palestinian Red Crescent Society (PRCS) for six years at the headquarters in Egypt. Later (after Oslo) she worked for the Ministry of Planning in Ramallah. (April 26, 2005)

⁴⁴⁸ Interview with Izzat Abdel Hadi (Director of the Bisan Center for Research and Development) (February 6, 2005)

⁴⁴⁹ Interview with Ingrid Schøyen (Desk Officer Middle East at the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Oslo), (September 27, 2005)

⁴⁵⁰ Interview with Tarek Abdel Ghany Kotob (Country program Director for the Near East Foundation – the West Bank and Gaza Program), (October 13, 2005)

Most NGOs bend themselves in order to fit into the donor's requested pattern. This kind of transformation may cause the NGO many problems and even internal changes that affect its structure, mission and goals, the biggest side effects are usually on the target group. This means with regard to the aid recipients that the NGOs are not able to match the obligations on the ground anymore. They give up some of their priorities and they are forced to re-orientate themselves. There is a small number of NGOs, which is literally non-governmental for the reason that it is not financially supported by any government or institution. This applies for instance to the PCRF, who does not receive any government support and finances its work with private donations from individuals, in particular Palestinians in the U.S.⁴⁵¹ The fundraising dinner which was organized in May 2004 (Washington D.C.) with Dr. Hanan Ashrawi was entirely successful. A further example is Islamic Relief Germany who has also applied for government support, but still receives a large amount of financial support from the Muslim societies. This has allowed them to have a solid base for their work. Hanafi and Tabar in the same way found out that

“the Islamic social organisations they observed were indeed financially self-sustaining and supported by a network of volunteers. Also, in contrast to the more professionalized NGOs, some of the Islamic organisations have formed linkages with Palestinian Diaspora communities, and receive substantial financial support from them.”⁴⁵²

But for those who do not have another choice “fuse” with their money suppliers. It is up to the donors to decide and they drive a hard bargain with the prospective partner NGO. Generally, the donors put on and take off the items on the agenda.

“We negotiate a lot with donors about the contents. They set the conditions.”⁴⁵³

⁴⁵¹ The largest Palestinian Diaspora community in the U.S. lives in California, which is followed by New Jersey.

⁴⁵² Hanafi, Sari, Tabar, Linda (2005), op. cit. p.234.

⁴⁵³ Interview with Izzat Abdel Hadi (Director of the Bisan Center for Research and Development) (February 6, 2005)

But usually the subsidizers come off well in the debates because they set the rules and determine the course. While a project is in progress the NGOs are required to report on the efforts made so far. The donors want to have reports submitted along the different stages.

“When it comes to reporting, the reporting process is very difficult and it includes different obligations. It has to be 120 pages long. They want Outcome based reports, narrative reports, semi-annual reports, annual reports, specific project reports and the final evaluation reports. The concept here is stakeholder consultation.”⁴⁵⁴

Many NGOs consider the reporting process to be very difficult and demanding since it is succumbed to complex obligations. However, the donors insist on this item since it is part of the agreement.

“When it comes to the dependence in terms of reporting, absolutely yes, we have to report according to their formats, timetables and criteria. Terre des Hommes so far is mainly dependent on the Swiss government and the Swiss public, and so their agenda is in line with that of Terre des Hommes.”⁴⁵⁵

“We have to comply with donors requirements in terms of reporting. Though, not each donor has the same requirement. We prepare the reports internally and submit them to the donors. Internal reports are also required in order to ensure that the implementation process is as planned.”⁴⁵⁶

Certainly, each donor expects and wants to make sure that the money is spent correctly and useful. Correspondingly, they pay attention to the agreed schedule and make regular checks on them.

⁴⁵⁴ Interview with Izzat Abdel Hadi (Director of the Bisan Center for Research and Development) (February 6, 2005)

⁴⁵⁵ Interview with Khalil Marouf (Country Representative for Terre des Hommes Switzerland) (November 10, 2005)

⁴⁵⁶ Interview with Mohammed Khaled (He used to be a Community Development and Emergency Response Sector Coordinator for CARE West Bank/Gaza), (November 29, 2005)

Some of the governmental donors, such as Norway, stated that

“There is also a very high level of bureaucracy in the whole process. They have a lack of administrative capacity on the Palestinian side (the reform unit which only has four people) to produce the reports with the information we want. The Norwegian role as a donor is to coach them through the process - as a partner, of course, and not as an opponent. It is a challenge on both sides to identify the criteria for success. We have become more experience on that environment. The monitoring responsibility on the Norwegian side is taken seriously.”⁴⁵⁷

The Norwegian perspective criticized the reporting process on the part of the local partners. In their view it has to be improved and redone, which see as a learning process. There have been cases where it was not clear what has been done and therefore the donors require more documentation such as minutes from semi-annual meetings with progress reports. They want to know how much money was spent, and whether they went over or under budget. But the Palestinian organisations who receive funds from the Norwegian government expressed their appreciation to the donor for its consistency regarding requirements and its approach in comparison with other donors. The reason is that Norway concentrated on fewer areas compared to others and tries to attract further donors who share their idea.

“Good Governance, infrastructure approach and education; these are the three areas chosen by Norway though Norway should concentrate on fewer sectors (donor coordination, co-financing, lead the donor principle). We want other donors to join us in order to avoid that the recipient country has to report to several donors at one time. All donors have different priorities; Norway focuses on institution building aspects.”⁴⁵⁸

⁴⁵⁷ Interview with Ingrid Schøyen (Desk Officer Middle East at the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Oslo, (September 27, 2005)

⁴⁵⁸ Interview with Ingrid Schøyen (Desk Officer Middle East at the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Oslo, (September 27, 2005)

The responsibility and main idea is to contribute to the Palestinian community to organize itself. Norway sees its responsibility in the way that it assists the Palestinian internal coordination. The first form of assistance besides the funds is the expected feedback in the form of reports back to the donor as already mentioned above. The whole point for the donor is that the contribution goes to local ownership and to the ability of single institutions to run their own affairs and it is undesirable without the consultation of the responsible ministry. Norway for instance does not approach the intended ministry directly without first going to the coordinating body, which in the Palestinian case is the Ministry of Planning. It seeks to have an overall perspective on the situation through reports, the mutual exchange of information etc. The Ministry of Education then receives all its funds from foreign donors and no money flows in from the Palestinian Authority.

The foreign donors know that local organisations compete for foreign assistance and donor attention. That is a problem for the reason that many international donors approach the sector ministry instead of going straight to the sector in order to avoid the institutional dependency.

The NGOs became accustomed to asking for funds from somewhere else. The decisive point is that they should produce their own budget to avoid dependency, because the Palestinian Authority is in view of the donors a client-state which cannot survive without them. Taking again the Norwegian example, who stated that the Palestinian NGOs can be dependent on financial support from donors, but not on an institutional basis.⁴⁵⁹

The Norwegian assistance goes to the Ministry of Finance, because it is the single treasury account, which is reflected in the national budget. Project clearance and coordination is done with the Ministry of Planning (in particular

⁴⁵⁹ Interview with Ingrid Schøyen (Desk Officer Middle East at the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Oslo, (September 27, 2005)

the coordination unit). Norway assists them in the development of long-term plans and in the planning of donor assistance.

The Norwegian government not only provides assistance to the Palestinian Authority but also to the local organisations. It has been emphasized that the Palestinian Authority does not have an influence on that or ownership of what NGOs do.

The concept behind these demands is that the donors regard them as part of their arrangements and according to that adequate feedback is assumed. Some of them even send consultants in order to assess and evaluate the situation. They study the NGO and conduct analytic work before they make any concessions with regard to a fund. The information these consultants gather is related to the socio-economic situation on the ground and then they combine these two components together and make a decision.

The majority of donors want to be involved from the first consultation up to the final stage and the end of the project (including all reporting stages). They want to be informed about any step that is undertaken by the serving NGO.

“For instance the U.S. Agency for International Development stated that they do not care, because they want to implement their program. A large number of NGOs have had problems with USAID who just wants to support soft projects and not infrastructure oriented projects.⁴⁶⁰ However, the World Bank and the IMF for instance have the condition that they employ their own consultants and not local ones and finally, you end up with a report about the consultant rather than about the project.”⁴⁶¹

⁴⁶⁰ A soft project involves consultations, report writing, research etc. nothing really related to the facts on the ground.

⁴⁶¹ Interview with Dr. Sanaa Ashour (Institutional Development Manager of Islamic Relief, Germany), (April 26, 2005)

Often many projects are refused. Regarding this it turned out that NGOs diversify in search for donors in spite of the fact that NGOs apply for funds to more than one donor.

The NGOs often complain that the donors are the ones who impose conditions on them, but some admitted that it has been impossible to work without funds and they seemed to be the only source of income.

The dependency aspect is going to be discussed in a separate section of this chapter. Despite the difficult situation on the ground NGOs see themselves forced to cooperate. Hence, they have had to put up with the consequences.⁴⁶² Beyond the demands that are imposed on the NGOs a further obstacle in the eyes of the NGOs is that some donors require the purchase of project inputs from their own markets, an example is USAID.

“USAID requires purchasing vehicles and PCs that are manufactured in the U.S. by U.S. companies.”⁴⁶³

Another example is the European Union who has similar expectations.

“They have a lot of conditions and we have to stick to them. Like the EU for instance, who tells us to purchase EU products, all of their equipment from European countries and not to pay the tax to the Palestinian Authority.”⁴⁶⁴

I think that this sort of condition exceeds the rules and makes the NGOs' work more complicated than the existing circumstances already ask for in the occupied territories. Thus, it might not be the case for all of them, but nevertheless it shows that two major donors on the ground have such arduous

⁴⁶² Interview with Dr. Sanaa Ashour (Institutional Development Manager of Islamic Relief, Germany), (April 26, 2005)

⁴⁶³ Interview with Mohammed Khaled (He used to be a Community Development and Emergency Response Sector Coordinator for CARE West Bank/Gaza) (November 10, 2005)

⁴⁶⁴ Interview with Izzat Abdel Hadi (Director of the Bisan Center for Research and Development) (February 6, 2005)

demands. The social organisations in that way are caught between their needs and the donor agenda.

If we look at this process from a donor perspective then the procedure is the following: in most cases a request is sent out to the different organisations and they are asked if they are interested in carrying out the project, though not all donors apply this kind of strategy. In case they do, then they are asked to submit a brief summary with the main ideas and tasks, a cost estimate and an approximate schedule has to be given as well. In the instance of Tamkeen, technical staff members are sent to the applying organisations and these are advised with comments on how to optimise their full application, which is submitted later.

The donors expect the proposal to be written according to the regulations (under coaching and supervising of the technical staff assistant) and before a final decision is made a member of the development team presents the application on behalf of the organisation in front of the grants committee. Usually it is more likely that the proposal will be accepted, but in cases where the application is denied the NGO is not allowed to apply for the same project a second time. The only option it has is to apply for another project announcement that might come up in the future.

A different case is that of the European Commission Humanitarian Organisation (ECHO), which determines the conditions (the Framework Partnership Agreement) for the funds, but the funds go straight to the NGOs in Palestine they work with. ECHO also follows the principle that those who have proved to be doing a good job have a chance to be hired again. Alongside these strict application rules there are others the NGOs have to comply with.

The NGOs need to have good financial management systems, their staffs are required to have various skills and experience to implement the project, and then of course they should have a good reputation within the community and with the donors. Of course, the better the NGO works the better its chances are to become rehired by a donor or to receive funds.

This clearly demonstrates that the civil society actors are asked to have these qualifications in order to be eligible for the money that is advertised by the donor like a job vacancy.

The Norwegian initiative aims to encourage donors to share costs in the form of co-financing with other donors. There are also cases where no particular project is announced and the NGOs take the initiative to apply for grants.

“We only submit if our priorities (based on needs of target area) match with the priorities in the call for proposal.”⁴⁶⁵

For this kind of application the NGO has to prove that its goal is efficient and that its work is needed on the ground. But in general, the goals of both parties have to match each other. There is also that type of NGO that do not agree to anything the donor says. Some of them try to remain independent or they deny funds from certain donors such as USAID. Some local Palestinian NGOs are courageous enough to say “No” to projects that they feel might have hidden or suspicious agendas such as projects of co-existence and peace building.

“We have a policy not to receive governmental U.S. funds.”⁴⁶⁶

In such cases they rather say No, thank you! And fall back upon other forms of fundraising. Those might not be sufficient with regard to the amount, but they are still done. It has become obvious that the NGO business is very difficult and dangerous as well where the NGOs obtain their money from. Many local NGOs complain that some funds are strictly bound to democracy or human rights projects though something else is needed. There are always strings attached and budgetary implications as well. In cases of financial constraints, the NGOs chose projects according to the priority needs and at the same time the availability and willingness of the donors to fund these priority projects. Usually the field sets up the priorities according to short- to medium-term strategic plans

⁴⁶⁵ Interview with Mohammed Khaled (He used to be a Community Development and Emergency Response Sector Coordinator for CARE West Bank/Gaza) (November 10, 2005)

⁴⁶⁶ Interview with Manal Issa (Administrative Officer at Al Haq), (February 2, 2005)

that are eventually approved by their headquarters. More and more restrictions are being placed on the scope of projects and flexibility on project implementation is decreasing all the time.

In the project proposals, very specific details are requested on the target areas, the beneficiaries, even by subgroups, relations with existing structures, methods of implementation etc. The donors are introducing new elements into their calls for proposals where they are asking for each and every project what is being done to reduce tensions, to build trust between conflicting parties, democracy and peace building.

CARE international is one of the NGOs, which regards itself as a kind of exception.

“In CARE, we only submit if our priorities (based on the needs of target area) match with the priorities in the call for proposal.”⁴⁶⁷

There are other mechanisms, where they submit unsolicited proposals and beforehand they identify the needs, design the project and estimate its costs and turn in their request afterwards. Any donor has its own proposal format and the decision is left to the NGO to elaborate and write its proposal. Of course, not all NGOs can allow themselves such behaviour if they are really in need for funds and external support.

Islamic Relief Germany for instance uses a different strategy in order to carry on its fundraising activities in the form of direct mail campaigns, where they contact private individuals for their cause then there is the form of community fundraising at places such as mosques or churches; and others are done through Internet via emails. Here, they differ between warm and cold donors. Warm donors are the kind who supports the NGO's activities constantly and cold donors are indirect donors who are contacted through address lists in the neighbourhood.

⁴⁶⁷ Interview with Mohammed Khaled (He used to be a Community Development and Emergency Response Sector Coordinator for CARE West Bank/Gaza) (November 10, 2005)

“Our NGO is financed exclusively on the basis of fundraising activities and donations. In support of our database with 10.000 addresses we reach many people and they are becoming more.”⁴⁶⁸

Donors could also be binding that they require that their donated money is spent for a certain project and the NGO is more or less obliged to forward their request as they wish to. This applies to 70%-80% of the donations. The other 20%-30% left are then spent for those projects that are in real need (emergency projects). These NGOs regard themselves as committed to hold account for that what they do and publish semi-annual or annual reports about the projects conducted.

“All NGO donors are focusing and stressing that their funds not reach into the “wrong hands.”⁴⁶⁹

Since the donors cannot explicitly put such a stipulation in their proposed agreements, they are now placing a clause in the agreement which states that the funds have to be used in accordance with international humanitarian law. The donor countries organized and coordinated a number of training sessions for senior managers on International Humanitarian Law.⁴⁷⁰ The conflicting view

⁴⁶⁸ Interview with Tarek Abdelalem (Director of Islamic Relief, Köln/Germany) (April 18, 2005)

It was also mentioned (in the interview) that Islamic Relief had tried to apply for funds from the German government, which was denied. This statement again opposes the above-given statement regarding their fundraising strategy.

⁴⁶⁹ Interview with Khalil Marouf (Country Representative for Terre des Hommes Switzerland) (November 10, 2005)

⁴⁷⁰ (According to Hanafi and Tabar) “It is important to point out that in 1998; the Swiss constituency in Amnesty’s General Congress raised the matter of combining human rights law with international humanitarian law. For the first time, Amnesty spoke of the protection of the Palestinian people in accordance with the Fourth Geneva Convention. During the current Intifada, Amnesty’s Belgium branch took a strong position in favor of denouncing the Israeli policies in the Palestinian Territories. Paradoxically, and this is another example of the importance of the actors inside of any institution, another representative of Amnesty’s Brussels office at the Stuttgart Conference 1999 rejected an NGO draft declaration for a stronger recommendation which would have called for the Europeans to pressure Israel to fulfill the agreements signed with the Palestinians. [...] Amnesty’s hegemonic paradigm remains unaltered and, as a consequence, both international humanitarian law and collective rights remain outside of the sphere of its campaigns.” (Hanafi, Sari, Tabar, Linda (2005), op. cit., p. 144.).

is that NGOs are trained on international humanitarian law by the donors in order to operate in respect of their norms. It was clear from those sessions that there are implicit restrictions based on NGOs, if they wish to sustain their funding base.

“On the unofficial level, donors are asking mindless questions every once in a while through mail sent out asking if there are children of martyrs or political prisoners amongst the beneficiaries of the ongoing projects. Of course the clear answer the NGOs respond with is that their admission criteria do not enable them to collect such information and so they cannot control if they have such beneficiaries or not.”⁴⁷¹

In particular this kind of policy is strictly pursued by USAID.

“The majority of Palestinian NGOs, and most of the major NGO networks, actively reject USAID’s initiative to make their funding conditional on the signing of a legal contract that guarantees they will not support or work with entities which United States government defines as ‘terrorist’. “No good can come of USAID’s initiative or the subsequent rift with Palestinian civil society that has developed.”⁴⁷²

With USAID, the signing of the Anti-Terrorism Certificate makes it difficult for so many local agencies to receive funds from USAID as the definition of “terrorism” is not widely agreed upon especially in the Palestinian context.⁴⁷³

⁴⁷¹ Interview with Khalil Marouf (Country Representative for Terre des Hommes Switzerland) (November 10, 2005)

⁴⁷² Welfare Association Consortium (2004): “Terror Certification”: An Obstacle to Development of Palestinians Civil Society. In: Welfare Association Consortium Palestinian NGO Project Newsletter 13 p.6.

⁴⁷³ The term terrorism will not be here discussed in further detail.

“USAID, like all government development agencies, has always been careful about where the taxpayers’ money goes. After the start of their government’s “war on terror”, USAID issued Acquisition and Assistance Policy Directive AAPD 02-19, which dates from 31 December 2002, and stated that:

“...[name of organisation] hereby certifies that it has not provided and will not provide material support or resources to any individual or entity that it knows, or has reason to know, is an individual or entity that advocates, plans, sponsors, engages in, or has engaged in terrorist activity, including but not limited to the individuals and entities listed in the Annex * to Executive Order 13224...”⁴⁷⁴

This constraint on the part of USAID puts a large number of NGOs in a dilemma. The Palestinian NGO Network and its members was one of the first opponents who took initiative against this. Numerous NGOs have the instruction not to accept USAID funds. The PNGO network tried to stipulate in the Palestinian NGO Law that

“NGOs may only receive unconditional assistance.”⁴⁷⁵

All of the donors (if not part of the government, or Foreign Ministries) report back to their governments. And in case it is a bilateral donor then the information goes to both.⁴⁷⁶ Each donor has its regulations to ensure that the money is spent correctly as agreed in the contract. Related to this are cases where the NGOs do not accomplish the projects as expected and have to pay back a certain percentage of the money the donor provided. Some of the demanding requirements and regulations on how the donors expect the applications of the NGOs to be completed have already been explained.

⁴⁷⁴ Welfare Association Consortium (2004): “Terror Certification”: An Obstacle to Development of Palestinians Civil Society. In: Welfare Association Consortium Palestinian NGO Project Newsletter 13 p.7.

* “The list in the Annex was long and comprehensive, including Palestinian organisations such as the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP).”

⁴⁷⁵ Palestinian Non-Governmental Organisations’ Network statement (July 12, 2003) on (www.pngo.net)

⁴⁷⁶ The West Bank is supported multilaterally.

But the procedure is multifarious and complicated because sometimes the NGOs cannot act in the way they want due to lacking financial means or other resources.

There are NGOs who do not have an alternative and accept conditions. In the health sector for instance, if free treatment is provided for a certain kind of disease or another specific service, the NGO cannot decide its own agenda. Hence, the type of funding is based on projects and programs more than on the vision of the NGO. Though they try to stick to their agenda, the NGOs consider the proximity to the people as very important. This makes it possible for them to develop a sense for the needs in the field.

“Bisan tries hard to pursue and fulfil our mandate. In support of the so-called CBOs, Bisan succeeded in carrying out its projects in the refugee camps, villages and other concerned areas. The generous assistance we receive from foreign donors allows Bisan to finance and implement these projects correctly.”⁴⁷⁷

The NGOs seek to act more responsive the recipients' needs. In case unexpected irregularities in the budget happen, the donors have to accept higher risks than in a normal situation.

“The general message is that as long everything is documented, there is no rigidity. The basis for changes is also checked. We have to be flexible as a donor. In certain situations you have to redirect your program but do not go beyond possibilities and communication is an important aspect.”⁴⁷⁸

According to Norway's statement above it does not seem to be unusual that NGOs ask for additional funds. Nonetheless, the donors expect detailed information but they are also aware of their limits.

⁴⁷⁷ Interview with Izzat Abdel Hadi (Director of the Bisan Center for Research and Development) (February 6, 2005)

⁴⁷⁸ Interview with Ingrid Schøyen (Desk Officer Middle East at the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Oslo, (September 27, 2005)

The entire process is accompanied by a very high level of bureaucracy and needs time, but it is in the donor's interest that the program is completed successfully. Still, the NGOs seek to achieve their all objectives fully. From an NGO perspective deviations are not usually accepted, even if supported by reasonable justifications which complicate the situation.

“Any small modifications on the projects have to be approved at the highest levels. These modifications include both activities as well as budgetary aspects.”⁴⁷⁹

Many NGOs know by experience that it is becoming more and more difficult to obtain approval on modifications and whenever it is crucial to request changes further the justifications needed are numerous. Some donors do not have a problem if a delay in the project implementation occurs as long everything is reported and documented. Not all donors are flexible but there are donors who do not feel that they have to look from the community perspective as to what is needed and what not. This has been criticized by a vast number of NGOs who felt to be in conflict with the donors on the one side and their target groups on the other one. An example of this is that

“The donors are not even flexible, because they have their own conditions, for instance government X wants to do a project on womens rights in the West Bank and the NGO asking for funds has done a community needs assessment and the priority for women is to improve their skills and make them aware of their rights that is not the actual need. In Palestine, the Palestinian women are very active.”⁴⁸⁰

⁴⁷⁹ Interview with Khalil Marouf (Country Representative for Terre des Hommes Switzerland) (November 10, 2005)

⁴⁸⁰ Interview with Luna Abu Swaireh (She used to work as a project officer for the United Nations Volunteers Program (UNVP) and for the United Nations Development program (UNDP) in Gaza. The UNVP was a program created by the UNVP, but it was funded by the UNDP). She is also one of the founders of Al-Awda and the One People Organisation (June 3, 2006)

Since the donors become set on their policies and guidelines they do not differ between black and white the outcome is other than expected. After all, NGOs have to make compromises, otherwise there is no deal.

This extensive section showed that the NGOs most of the time have difficulties to meet the criteria and conditions set by the backers. Obtaining funds is the first difficulty NGOs have to overcome, but another outstanding aspect is the limited access for funds which are bound to projects.

The next section shall shed some light on the timeframe donors set for their sponsorships, which can vary in time and extent. Not only are the elements that are incorporated in the donors' agenda significant for the NGOs' work but also the duration of the sponsorship, which can have an impact on the projects' effectiveness. This and further aspects are going to be discussed below.

5.4 Duration of Sponsorship

“When donor agencies funds are small, they tend to be task oriented and for shorter periods of time.”⁴⁸¹

In the previous passage we discussed the demanding requirements the donors expect from the applicants. After the long application procedures for funds, the NGOs start to carry out their projects with the donated money. There are always projects that are of first concern; and that is a crucial factor in the NGOs' work, but in most cases project-specific funds limit the space and time of activity in the concerned field. The periods of time are shortened with regard to the length of financial support and in that way the projects are restricted. But all of this also depends on the sectors the different NGOs work in and the existing circumstances in the occupied territories.

There are short-term as well as long-term projects. Some are limited in time and some are not, but this aspect is set in the project announcement and it also depends on the project's success which is a decisive factor as well. In case the project had a positive outcome then it is likely that they might be continued onto a second phase. It also happens that the community makes suggestions for further projects, but the decision is made by the NGOs and the donors who supply the funds.

The NGO might support the idea of the community, but whether or not they are able to realize it and whether the donor agrees is another issue.

⁴⁸¹ Interview with Tarek Abdel Ghany Kotob (Country program Director for the Near East Foundation – the West Bank and Gaza Program), (October 13, 2005)

According to Tamkeen

*“The projects usually last three to four months up to 18 months or even two years. A charitable organisation in Nablus for example has a project called Program with Young Mothers. Goal of the project is to educate young women, inform them about early marriages, and how to become involved in their own community. The project lasts one year and its estimated costs are US\$ 60.000.”*⁴⁸²

As exemplified with this case, the donors always ask if the project has a long-term impact or not, an input analysis follows and the donor sends out its own staff to the field in order to make site-visits and monitor the operation.

*“Some donors have their own strategies on how they measure the general impact and they look at the Macro picture.”*⁴⁸³

In cases where the donor had an individual project that is not going to be continued, evaluators are hired to look at the sector to make two major studies on the project. But it has been proved in most cases that a large number of projects conducted are short-term. A certain dollar amount is provided, which is used for the project, and no more money is added. It is very hard to apply for additional funds for the same project since the donor rejects these. How long a sponsorship lasts this is mainly based on donor requirements, for instance most emergency projects have a short financing period of up to only one year. Only large agencies provide for three to four year projects for developmental issues only. The goals the NGOs seek with their projects are to improve livelihoods, resiliency to shocks, and capacity building. Sometimes the NGOs just focus on one geographic area in order to achieve a greater impact.

⁴⁸² Interview with Mohammed H. Almbaid (Chief of party at Tamkeen) (February 6, 2005)

⁴⁸³ For the Macro picture data is collected on each project during its implementation. This sort of system is applied by Tamkeen (a USAID supported organisation). The Macro picture gives the donors' an overall picture on the progresses made in the single projects. It includes expenses, capacities, impact of the implemented projects.

It is not unfounded that each NGO considers its projects to be very important and essential for Palestinian society. Grants periods vary depending on the type of project. The Norwegian government (through the support of its local representative office) concludes agreements for a maximum period of three years.

“Each agreement would be for two to three years, but not longer. The contribution to the NGOs takes place once a year. It depends on factors such as the size of disbursement, contributions (e.g. dialogue projects), and regional studies (e.g. on refugees). All this is conducive for the peace process and the information on the ground.”⁴⁸⁴

Each donor has its own method how the funds are distributed to the NGOs. Some tend to forward them in “slices” based on the reason that the NGO just spends the money needed for that particular stage of the project. Whereas others as in the Norwegian case donate the entire amount calculated for the project. Hence, it can be generally concluded that a project cycle can be divided into phases on an average of two to three years which also depends on the type of project and the organisation.

“Development projects are usually funded over a period of two or three years which are renewable once. So a project cycle can be of two phases to a maximum of six years. For smaller projects, the projects are usually ranging from one to two years.”⁴⁸⁵

⁴⁸⁴ Interview with Ingrid Schøyen (Desk Officer Middle East at the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Oslo, (September 27, 2005)

⁴⁸⁵ Interview with Khalil Marouf (Country Representative for Terre des Hommes Switzerland) (November 10, 2005)

Here, it is worth mentioning that the preparation of a project proposal for such a development project is taking between six months to one year by a team of specialised experts.

“This is due to numerous justifications and details needed on the part of the donor before such proposals are approved. Even after approval, projects are segregated into different phases and no new phase can be started without the successful implementation of the previous phase.”⁴⁸⁶

The NGOs find themselves in a conflicting situation for the reason that they have to fulfil the conditions set by the donors in order to be able to carry out the projects in the different sectors aiming at the target groups. But whether this kind of behaviour corresponds with the needs of the target groups on the difficult terrain is a matter of concern. Through this complex structure dependencies between the NGOs and the donors arise. Though the NGOs try to maintain their sense of individuality, reality looks differently. This contentious issue is going to be discussed in the next passage.

⁴⁸⁶ Interview with Khalil Marouf (Country Representative for Terre des Hommes Switzerland) (November 10, 2005)

5.5 In- / Dependence on Donors

“We have to diversify who we get money from.”⁴⁸⁷

“I see it, daily; NGOs in financial crisis are giving up more and more principles in return for renewed or new projects on which their survival depends. There is a definitive reorientation.”⁴⁸⁸

“We believe in good governance. We should not be donor orientated.”⁴⁸⁹

The relationship between donors, NGOs and funds is a sort of triangle. The international donors are looking for new partners they can persuade with their new ideas and projects. It is simple, those who have the money have the power, and so donors with specific agendas use the funds as a means. Through the increasing competition for funds among NGOs some goals are of course neglected and sometimes the money is misused.

“Everybody knows that there has been corruption among the NGOs themselves but there were more rumours about this outside the institutions of the Palestinian Authority on it.”⁴⁹⁰

Many NGOs confirmed that their mission and work were influenced regarding their work. A pure development agency and some others had to cease their projects because they lacked resources. The biggest challenge for the NGOs was the maintenance of their activities in their development forms and to address the emergency cases at the same time. This meant that their project

⁴⁸⁷ Interview with Steve Sosebee (President and CEO of Palestinian Children’s Relief Fund – PCRF), (February 5, 2005)

⁴⁸⁸ Interview with Mohammed Khaled (He used to be a Community Development and Emergency Response Sector Coordinator for CARE West Bank/Gaza) (November 10, 2005)

⁴⁸⁹ Interview with Izzat Abdel Hadi (Director of the Bisan Center for Research and Development) (February 6, 2005)

⁴⁹⁰ Interview with Dr. Sanaa Ashour (Institutional Development Manager of Islamic Relief, Germany), (April 26, 2005)

proposals were modified in such a way to become eligible for emergency funds in order to continue the development work. At the same time, a higher level of coordination took place to assure the maintenance of the projects. For the issue of control, strict systems imposed by the donors remained in place. The procedure usually takes place in the following order: first, the preparation of a complete proposal is submitted to the donors; second, the donor either approves it or rejects it or asks for modifications and further clarifications; third, once the application is approved, a detailed memorandum of understanding is prepared by the donor specifying the responsibility of each party, with details on the timeframes of implementation, reporting, financial control, and external evaluations and audits. The fourth step takes place once the agreement is signed by both parties and then a first transfer from the donor is made, not exceeding 50% of the total budget. Based on the type of project, a second instalment is made after the completion of specific phases of the project and after submission of relevant documentation and reporting. Usually, the final transfer is made upon completion of the project with the submission of all activity and financial reports and an external audit, according to the timetable set by the signed mutual agreement. Long-winded demands are required by the donors, which dominant the NGOs behaviour. Some donors are consistent in their approaches and demands and are not very flexible. NGOs have recognized this rigid behaviour of the donors and at some point it is difficult for them to implement activities, but in such cases they try to be innovative and use their networks.

For those NGOs who are literally “non-governmental” this means that these do not accept any state donations and target this kind of donation.

On the other hand they conduct their private fundraising initiatives where prosperous individuals donate money in order to support their budget.

*“After September 11, 2001 the U.S. induced these persons either to stop the financial support to the Palestinians or their assets in the U.S. will be frozen.”*⁴⁹¹

⁴⁹¹ Interview, (October 30, 2005)

Overnight they stopped the money transfer. The amounts they donated were considerable and at least covered the yearly administrative costs. For these NGOs the donors only have an influence on the money they donate but not on their work or their agendas. But there are only a few of them and regrettably the large majority in the occupied territories depends on the funds and therefore on the donors. Once we take a look at the Islamic organisations that have a different standing compared to their western-oriented fellows being dependent on the donors' support. The Islamic organisations and charities have as discussed earlier a stronger position within the Palestinian society.

“There was no re-orientation with regard to the projects. We remained straight with our core programs such as the food, water, school, Ramadan and health projects that are fixed in our agenda. Exceptions are emergency projects or in case the private donor wishes to support a specific Muslim country which also happens.”⁴⁹²

Views on this issue regarding re-orientation in terms of dependence vary. The different opinions show that the affected NGOs are concerned about their existence. Some are aware of the fact that in case they do not comply with the rules of the game their existence is threatened, which again can have an impact on the basis. And this does not absolutely stays out in a few cases where NGOs are caught in between. In addition to the already difficult situation for the NGOs, the first and second Intifada and the Oslo Accords played an important role in the NGOs' development and work. These historic events have had a significant role on the NGOs and their work on the ground, which are going to be discussed in the following part.

⁴⁹² Interview with Tarek Abdelalem (Director of Islamic Relief, Köln/Germany) (April 18, 2005)

5.6 Beginning and Change of the NGOs work

“Everyday there is a new NGO opening, one closing. It is very difficult to know the exact number.”⁴⁹³

Nobody denies the NGOs had to overcome difficulties during three decisive events in the Palestinian history – both Intifadas and the Oslo Accords in 1993. The NGOs have been influenced in many ways. Some NGOs came into being with the first national uprising, but these were genuine local NGOs who fought for the national cause. Throughout the field research it has been clarified that the NGOs’ work was influenced by the events. For some NGOs who experienced all three stages, the work was affected - particularly through both Intifadas in different ways. On one side there were sharp increases in the demand of the services due to higher levels of poverty, lack of services by other providers such as the Department of Health, which was later transformed into the Ministry of Health. Against that a sharp decrease on the efficiency level happened due to the waste of valuable resources (logistics of movement), and days lost because of closures. Also curfews, late arrivals of staff because of roadblocks and other obstacles hindered them and made the NGOs work more complex. In addition there was an increased demand on relief services which prevented and usually even worked against development work. They also witnessed the emergence of new NGOs doing purely relief work; for example, some of these NGOs worked in the distribution of infant formula milk⁴⁹⁴, something that is considered a taboo in some NGO projects.

It has to be said that the majority of the NGOs working in the occupied territories are a product of Oslo. Many of them have grown along the

⁴⁹³ Interview with Dr. Sanaa Ashour (Institutional Development Manager of Islamic Relief, Germany) (April 26, 2005)

⁴⁹⁴ Infant formula milk is a substitute for breast milk for feeding infants. (For infants to achieve normal growth and maintain normal health, infant formulas must include proper amounts of water, carbohydrate, protein, fat, vitamins, and minerals. The milk-based formulas are prepared from cow milk with added vegetable oils, vitamins, minerals and iron).

circumstances. In particular Oslo and the second Intifada shaped the programs of many NGOs to a large extent. The change in needs was based on the conditions; the projects were designed to respond to the emerging needs during the second Intifada. For example, those NGOs who have been working in the health sector started the supply of medical equipment during the second Intifada in order to help the Palestinian Authority and the local NGOs to respond to the medical emergency needs that occurred due to the Israeli invasion and the lack of national resources to purchase the medical supplies. Other projects like the distribution of water were created in response to damage of water distribution systems, for instance in Jenin by Israeli tanks.

Before Oslo about US\$ 180 million were channelled each year to the Palestinian Territories, but since the Oslo Accords just one third or about US\$ 60 million went to the NGOs. In the period of 1994 to 1996 the donor money was channelled to the Palestinian Authority, and then it was rechannelled to the NGOs again. In 1995, the donors started to turn back to NGOs. One of the NGOs interviewed stated that it changed its focus indirectly after Oslo.

“Prior to Oslo we focused on human resources development (training people, business management, leadership skills, etc.) but after Oslo we focused on institutional development, because this contributes to statehood building in addition to human resources development. Our goals were to strengthen governance and the CBOs through community development.”⁴⁹⁵

Its goal was to strengthen civil society. After the outbreak of the second Intifada, the NGO realized that the donors shifted their priorities to poor humanitarian assistance to short- and medium-term development and about 86% of the funds went to humanitarian assistance.

“Bisan adopted some of its project components to respond to the new needs and priorities of our own people.”⁴⁹⁶

⁴⁹⁵ Izzat Abdel Hadi is the Director of the Bisan Center for Research and Development based in Ramallah

⁴⁹⁶ Izzat Abdel Hadi is the Director of the Bisan Center for Research and Development based in Ramallah

Somehow NGOs were forced to adjust themselves to the new situation; otherwise they would fall by the wayside. Despite these circumstances and adjustments on part of the NGOs, they tried to remain with their mandate and mission, which gave them unfavourable status. It should be considered that the various donors have advantage over the NGOs were who just carried out the job. The donors determined the rules and at the same time sought their foreign policy interests.

“Even in a crisis situation you need to link your own intervention to the empowerment level such as capacity building (provision of food to the villages) with the local authority and budget development as well.”⁴⁹⁷

Governmental donors such as Norway, who has been active in the occupied territories since the late 80s on a small scale, increased their support to the Palestinians after the Oslo Accords.⁴⁹⁸ Their representative office was created at that time and Norway multiplied the volume of its assistance based on the fact that they regarded themselves as the instrument to the Oslo process, which has been a contributing factor to the survival of the Palestinian Authority. Certainly the first Intifada differed from the second one, but the second Intifada made it more difficult for NGOs to carry out their projects.

The volume of assistance remained the same, but the amount of funds supplied to the Palestinians at that time increased despite of the deteriorating economic situation and aggravated circumstances. The second Intifada did not have implications or an immediate impact on the policy, general priorities or programs of the Norwegian government. The U.S. and the European Union⁴⁹⁹ (with the

⁴⁹⁷ Izzat Abdel Hadi is the Director of the Bisan Center for Research and Development based in Ramallah

⁴⁹⁸ Interview with Ingrid Schøyen (Desk Officer Middle East at the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Oslo) (September 27, 2005). (A detailed chart could be found on page 250).

According to Hanafi and Tabar since the 1990's, one of the Scandinavian embassies had one person responsible for aid to the Palestinians. Following the onset of the peace process, their funding increased 10-fold, yet the donor continued to operate with just one person. (Hanafi, Sari, Tabar, Linda (2005), op. cit., p. 198.)

EU as an entity on the one hand and then the single European governments on the other) are the biggest donors in the occupied territories. The UN contributes a large percentage in the area with eighteen agencies. The NGOs' activities have been influenced all the time by the humanitarian needs and the surrounding difficult circumstances. The Norwegian Red Cross (NorCross)⁵⁰⁰ for instance was cooperating very close with the Palestinian Red Crescent Society (PRCS) in order to manage the numerous operations.⁵⁰¹

The latter is a well-known and very active NGO in the occupied territories. During the first Intifada and before Oslo, the PRCS was working as a quasi-governmental organisation (replacing the present Ministry of Health), because there was no government on the ground. Its role was to coordinate activities, lead the organisation, and communicate with people. There were further PRCS branches in the neighbouring countries such as Syria, Lebanon, and Jordan, and the headquarters was located in Cairo. At that time the PRCS depended on funds from partner organisations such as NORWAC and others. Following the 1993 Oslo Peace Accord and the formal establishment of the Ministry of Health by the Palestinian Authority, the PRCS took the role of an auxiliary body to the public authorities targeting at the needs of the most vulnerable and disadvantaged groups of the Palestinian population.

Since then the PRCS has become one of the main non-profit providers of medical and social services in Palestine. Despite some obstacles and hindrances the society persisted in providing its ongoing services and support to the Palestinian people through its branches in Palestine and the above-mentioned Arab countries. The PRCS is affiliated with the Red Cross Red

⁴⁹⁹ ECHO with Julia Koch (Desk Officer at the European Commission Humanitarian Organisation, Brussels) started its activities in the occupied territories in 1996. A detailed chart on EU donations (2001-2005) can be found in the Appendix.

⁵⁰⁰ Additionally, PRCS has been involved with others such as International Red Cross Federation (IFRC), the Spanish Red Cross, the American Red Cross, and the German Red Cross in training personnel to become part of the International Medical ERU and IRT systems.

⁵⁰¹ Interview with Mohammed Khaled (He used to be a Community Development and Emergency Response Sector Coordinator for CARE West Bank/Gaza), (November 29, 2005)

Crescent organisation. Since its establishment in 1968, the PRCS has developed a considerable network of branches, sub-branches, locations and facilities, such as hospitals, rehabilitation centres, volunteers committees, nurseries, kindergartens, mental health centres, cultural and heritage centres in all districts of Palestine in an attempt to target the most vulnerable people. This network proved to be a great asset during the second Intifada. Services of different programs and centres were integrated in the best possible ways for meeting the continuously increasing needs of local communities, as seen in the following example.

The social welfare, youth and volunteers health care departments carried out hundreds of home visits to those injured in the Intifada, families of the martyrs and families affected by the recurrent Israeli invasions. The purpose of these visits was to assess needs and provide home care and support to the wounded. This is just one of the numerous activities that the PRCS was doing during the second Intifada. The entire PRCS network participated in varying degrees in the relief operations in Jenin, Nablus, Ramallah, Bethlehem, Hebron, Khan Younis and Rafah. In 1996 and 1999, the PRCS was mandated by the Palestinian Authority to provide national ambulance and blood transfusion and pre-hospital emergency services in Palestine. The International Committee of the Red Cross, Sister National Societies, and the International Federation of the Red Cross Red Crescent Societies, INGOs and the Palestinian Authority support the PRCS.

The above given example shows how difficult it has been for the local NGOs to keep up with the situation. After the Oslo Agreement was signed, the international donors were very interested in supporting the Palestinian Authority and a donor conference was held in Washington D.C. Many already existing NGOs saw themselves forced to prepare plans to get financial support. There was some kind of pressure on civil society to help to build up the Palestinian Authority.

During the second Intifada the rush for funds on part of the international donors slowed down. Norway remained the number one country with its constant support, followed by the Netherlands and France, and the United Kingdom and the U.S. held the last place on the ranking list.

With the event of the Second Intifada most of the donors stopped their financial aid to the major projects such as the Gazan seaport and withdrew their staff due to the recurring events. For the NGOs on the other hand except for the funding problems they have had obstacles such as the checkpoints which made it very difficult to provide the help and support needed. Nevertheless, many NGOs have tried their best in order to provide as much as possible to the Palestinian society despite of the eventful times which aggravated their work.

5.7 Self-Image

"We would like to empower the Palestinian population to be able to achieve its legitimate rights and live with dignity and to be able to lead its development and improve the living conditions of the households and individuals far from poverty."⁵⁰²

"We were responsible for providing the most important basic services to our own local community in the absence of a state."⁵⁰³

"In Palestine, civil society, the economy, politics, social aspects, culture and tradition are altogether linked. The environment in Palestine created that and politics influences everything and has an impact on the society."⁵⁰⁴

The NGOs operating on the difficult terrain have found themselves in a challenging situation. On the one hand there have been the demanding donors and on the other the Palestinian people in need of support. But overall that they have been very satisfied with their work though some financial gaps and other problems added to their burden. The feedback the NGO received has been positive as it was confirmed by the head of an NGO working in the health sector. 95% of the NGOs' cases were successful and achieved positive results on the part of the recipients.

The NGOs also consider it as very important that their achievements are reflected in the success stories they get to hear from the recipients. It has to be

⁵⁰² Interview with Mohammed Khaled (He used to be a Community Development and Emergency Response Sector Coordinator for CARE West Bank/Gaza) (November 10, 2005), (August 2, 2005)

⁵⁰³ Interview with Izzat Abdel Hadi (Director of the Bisan Center for Research and Development) (February 6, 2005)

⁵⁰⁴ Interview with Luna Abu Swaireh (She used to work as a project officer for the United Nations Volunteers Program (UNVP) and for the United Nations Development program (UNDP) in Gaza. The UNVP was a program created by the UNVP, but it was funded by the UNDP). She is also one of the founders of Al-Awda and the One People Organisation (June 3, 2006)

differentiated between the feedback local and international NGOs receive as it was stated in an interview.

“There are affecting moments as in one case where a mother from Bethlehem brought her child to us to be medicated. The mother was emotional and could not believe that her child was cured. And that is real gratitude, because the family came from poor circumstances. Our assistant on the spot receives more feedback than we do even through local authorities such as from the mayor of Beit Rima.”⁵⁰⁵

But it is also of notable importance when they receive the consent of a donor for funds. How much money they are granted and from who is an essential component of the NGOs’ image. The more donors provide financial support the better for the NGOs. Certainly, NGOs hope to receive high amounts of funds from state institutions because these are usually largish sums of money than those collected through private fundraising.

Still, it has to be emphasized that the latter does not relate to Islamic organisations that have different sources of income. But the donors also pay attention on the aspect that is running the NGO; therefore the NGOs are very careful in choosing their staff and dedicated people. Sometimes, it is trivial personal politics that dictates the agenda of large amounts of financial assistance, or a network of friends and other contacts, which is form of nepotism that tended to flow freely all through the years.

Well-known Palestinian NGOs have close contacts to embassies and representative offices who are concerned in the distribution process for funds. Lobby work carried on by the NGOs belongs to their strategy. It has been mentioned earlier that there has been a success quote of 95%, this figure correlated to an NGO that does not receive any state money and conducts its own private fundraising.

⁵⁰⁵ Interview with Martin Geukes (Director of the Hammer Forum) (April 12, 2006)

Notwithstanding foreign aid policies have not been rooted in the needs and realities of the Palestinian population. Regardless of the struggle for funds, basically the NGOs' work is still to improve the lives of the Palestinians, to give them a future perspective of hope. In addition, NGOs emphasize that they do not seek a specific target group. The projects and services supplied are open to all and there are no preferences. The evaluations the NGOs accord themselves vary in many ways, for example, the size of an NGO is a deterrent as well as authoritative component. The larger, e.g. the budget of an NGO is the more it can achieve and offer in terms of services. But for some NGOs what they can offer and their impact on the situation is more important than their size. Many of them regard themselves as very good, sufficient, supportive and sensitive to local needs as well. Indirectly, the NGOs mentioned that if they had more money at their disposal then they would be able to conduct more activities and do more for the Palestinian society.

Smaller NGOs are already "stunted" since the donors only support the bigger NGOs for the reason that they have more experience and knowledge in the occupied territories. In addition it is complicated for them to get a second chance from the donor, if they did not achieve their goals for the first time and furthermore in some cases the donor wants the provided amount of money back. This again applies to those NGOs who depend on international donors who expect certain outcomes of the projects they supported and financed.

Others admitted that it is sometimes very difficult to please all the members of Palestinian society at any time or at once and that mistakes are made as well, but they draw lessons to be considered for future interventions. They are aware of the fact that they may face problems in identifying or selecting the beneficiaries. And it may sometimes happen that they overlook some needs and focus on others. There is no 100% accuracy; therefore they need to make best judgements based on information from communities, authorities and partners. Progress is regularly delayed due to movement restrictions, which are quite unpredictable.

The Israeli restriction on the NGOs movements is not only an obstacle to the implementation of their projects, but also to their staffs. Mostly the checkpoints and security checks are hindering NGOs, and this is something they have no control over. But through the existing networks which provide a platform for information exchange among NGOs, their work has been made a bit easier and they have learned how to deal with it.

The Israeli measures against Palestinians also have an impact on the NGOs' projects as the following example shows, for an NGO that supports agricultural projects (with agricultural inputs, training and other types of assistance) to farmers in the occupied territories, the Israeli army may close the area during the harvest time or impose closure on the big cities (where the main markets are located). Hence the farmers suffer from the loss of their production with the consequence that the entire project fails. Or what will be the impact of improving a water system if the Israeli authorities do not allow people to use water resources?

Sometimes NGOs have the feeling that they are paying the costs for the occupation. Another example was when an NGO tried to build a road with funds from the European Union and USAID, but this project was destroyed by the Israeli army. The NGO rebuilt the road, and the Israelis were asked to compensate for the damage. But the question whether the Israeli authorities made up for the damage remained unanswered. The NGOs are far more concerned about the financial realm than in such a physical obstacle, which they can somehow handle or even avoid.

Another more obscure thought that the NGOs have always emphasized that they try to remain donor-independent, but the existing dilemma is that they do not see any other options to get funds. Regrettably, the reality looks different, as many organisations admitted. They rather look at it as a sort of defect they have, since some of them just carry out the donor-desired projects, though their goal for the long run has been to support sustainable development in Palestine and for a future Palestinian state.

Although the political situation has been continuously working against the NGOs' interest, specific impact surveys conducted in the target areas by various NGO showed a positive improvement on status of the recipients in the specific fields of intervention. However, the impact of small NGOs on the national level can be very limited and the efforts needed are far higher than the capacity of an NGO. Nonetheless, they try hard to empower the local communities to the extent that they might someday replace the NGOs. Nonetheless, Palestine has a very vibrant and dynamic society which has been characterized through history and politics.

All this has shaped the NGOs' environment filled with aggravated circumstances and moments. In the following and final section of this chapter, we will try summarize and take a look at the prospective future regarding the NGOs in the occupied territories.

5.8 Future Prospects

“As a Palestinian managing an NGO that is working for its interest, we are preparing contingency plans just in case we witness darker days. But in the end, I hope there will be light at the end of the tunnel - for the moment there is not even a tunnel - and then our role will be to rebuild a democratic state that is able to live in peace but in dignity as well.”⁵⁰⁶

“This is not for me to answer since I am not an expert on these issues. We are not making statements regarding political issues. The likely humanitarian consequences of different scenarios should be better answered by someone else.”⁵⁰⁷

“We are dealing with humanitarian development and responding to peoples urgent needs regardless to the prevailing political situation. We adopt our services and the political situation and we are not aiming to create it. The only thing we aim for is to empower the local residents to take matters with their hands.”⁵⁰⁸

With regard to the crucial question of the Palestinian future, NGOs were silent, they gave cautious answers or they were very optimistic about the future. For most of them it was a difficult question to answer. It has been said that unless the world (referring to the United States and Europe) realizes that the conflict is not only a security problem, the conflict will remain open. When it is dealt with as a political problem - rights abused that must be respected - then there will be a solution.

⁵⁰⁶ Interview (October 9, 2006)

⁵⁰⁷ Interview with Ingrid Schøyen (Desk Officer Middle East at the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Oslo) (September 27, 2005)

⁵⁰⁸ Interview with Tarek Abdel Ghany Kotob (Country program Director for the Near East Foundation – the West Bank and Gaza Program), (October 13, 2005)

Some were not optimistic for the near future for the reason that all indicators in the West Bank show that the separation wall will change the West Bank into small cantons of Palestinian populations connected together through narrow guarded corridors. From their point of view, the West Bank will become a worse prison than Gaza was.

Many realized that no amount is enough to revive the Palestinian economy as long the occupation exists. Some of them even regarded themselves as a kind of bandage to heal the wound. Development assistance has to be accompanied by the same level of diplomatic and political initiatives as it was indicated by an interviewee.⁵⁰⁹ Humanitarian assistance can alleviate human suffering, but not an occupation. They have little or no influence on the political aspect, they just do their work.

In some cases there was no information available from NGOs regarding their problems. These were discreet and treated as a kind of internal business, and some NGOs refused to answer some questions. Others refused to be interviewed at all. Uncertainty and doubts were the main reasons for such behaviour. There was a case where the interview partner was only willing to share information, because he believed that I had asked on behalf of a donor who wanted to support their charitable organisation. This sort of behaviour was a bit odd, but I accepted that there were cases where no information was available.

⁵⁰⁹ Interview (anonymous),

5.9 Conclusion

This chapter demonstrated that there are different types of NGOs which also vary in many ways. The size of an NGO is also one of the determining factors in terms of activism and reputation. The bigger the organisation is the more options it has and the more it can offer regarding jobs etc. Thus, the NGOs' demands for well educated staff members for instance are very high, but they are also very popular as employer in particular when the NGOs have good ties with international partners and funders. Certainly, the NGOs attempt to do a good job and to represent themselves. Their self-portrait is for many NGOs simply their figure head and there are also NGO umbrellas and networks which most but not all NGOs belong to in order to have an exchange of information and to communicate with each other.

A more significant aspect in an NGO's "life" is the matter of financial resources and support, which are mostly linked with conditions and rules that are determined by the financier. The majority of projects are praised in form of an advertisement the organisations can apply for and at the same time also means that these funds are project-specific funds. Not only the provision of financial support is important, but also the expectations of the donors in terms of reports, field-visits, time frames, etc. as discussed above.

According to this a form of dependency develops between the donor and the implementing NGO, though some NGOs try to diversify who their financial backers are in order to remain constant with their mission if possible. Based on this it could also happen that shifts occur as in the case of the decisive moments (the conclusion of the Oslo Accords and the second Intifada) of Palestinian history which had a great influence on the NGOs' work on the ground through the severe circumstances.

Many NGOs consider themselves as a driving force with regard to the Palestinian (civil) society and pursue the goal to improve the Palestinians' standard of living, which could result some time in a Palestinian state. The next chapter is going to discuss the numerous factors on the NGO scenery.

6. NUMEROUS FACTORS ON THE NGO SCENERY

This chapter will attempt to demonstrate that not only NGOs are subject to specific parameters, that there are also other factors which determine the entire NGO scenery on the Palestinian terrain.

Through the increased competition and conditions for funds among NGOs a sort of “clienteles relationship” between the donors and the social actors developed. The different funding bodies have their own agendas and rules. In a few cases some NGOs are even forced to alter their system in case they still want to be part of the business.

This again isolated them from the Grassroots organisations and pushed towards the bureaucratic structures of their western funders. In the following the single components that account for the NGO sphere are going to be explained and discussed as well.

6.1 Funds - Clienteleism

Financial grants have been and are still fundamental factors in the NGOs work. As illustrated throughout this investigation a great *mélange* of donors⁵¹⁰ has made funds⁵¹¹ available to the Palestinian NGOs. There are three kinds of funding bodies which allocate resources to the NGOs active in the West Bank and Gaza. Bodies such as the UN and its variants, as well as the EU and governmental agencies, fall in the category of the major contributors. To the next category belongs to the so-called mediator or facilitator organisations that provide assistance in the form of financial, professional and technical assistance. Finally, foundations such as those from Germany support and cooperate with their local Palestinian counterparts. It has become clear that these donors vary in size, experience and above all in influence. Access to funds has been based on conditions and demands the NGOs have had to meet that were set by the donors.

However, the Palestinian NGOs shaped a solid basis for a strong civil society resisting the persistent occupation. There have been various formations of associations such as the popular organisations, which emerged at times of the national movement or the newer and more sophisticated organisations (research institutes), which entered the field at the end of the 1990s after the national movement abated. The determining factor here is the point in time that the Western funds started to flow towards the occupied territories and in particular their ascendancy on the local organisations. A large number of Palestinian organisations confirmed that an alteration in their structure took

⁵¹⁰ According to Sari Hanafi and Linda Tabar “there are approximately 130 foreign donors assisting Palestinian NGOs today.” (Hanafi, Sari, Tabar, Linda (2005), op. cit., p. 60.)

⁵¹¹ There are different types of funds. Core funding, for instance, is used to cover the monthly expenses such as salaries, rent, etc. These expenditures exist independent of the running projects, regardless of number and time. The other type is project-oriented funding, where the donor provides a particular amount that is project-tailored and beyond that expects regular reporting on the expenditures and efforts made. It rarely happens that NGOs receive funds that can be used by the NGOs as needed. The trend went towards proposals for which the NGOs have to apply.

place based on the increased accessibility to donor money. In that way they had the opportunity to enlarge their scope of action and at the same time their projects as well. This also meant that they became a bureaucratic character and distanced themselves increasingly from the grassroots movement, which had emerged in the 1970s.⁵¹² Accordingly, this change not only implicated a larger budget for the NGOs, but also an escapable modification whereby they took a different shape. To that effect there were different funding designs. The root causes for this reorganisation lie in the downfall of the national movement and its internal discrepancies. This new concept threw a different light on the connection between the new organized associations and their international partners. Hence, a sort of new elite developed, and with it a shift in revenues occurred.

However, in the 1980s when the PLO recognized the need to create its institutions, funds were distributed to those political parties that were close to it. According to Hanafi the communist party was the first one, who was on the lookout for funds coming from the westward direction.⁵¹³ Thus, it gained experience with the Western financial backers and was primarily assisted by Germany and France. Various organisations such as Islamic ones which had also emerged in the 1980s had their own channels through which they received their financial support. In that way the different orientations came into money. But the crucial moment during that decade was the inception of the First Intifada in a way that increased funding from Western as well as Arab states and it was directed towards the Palestinian NGOs.

In the interval up to the second Gulf war in the early 1990s, the plurality of donors had grown. The motives for the amplified support were the notion of

⁵¹² Hanafi, Sari, Tabar, Linda (2005), op. cit. p.63.

⁵¹³ According to Hanafi and Tabar, the Union of Medical Relief Committees, the Palestinian Agricultural Relief Committees and LAW were the ones who have had the longest tie with their Western partners and INGOs. Further, it is also believed that Western aid even started in the 1970s (Hanafi, Sari, Tabar, Linda (2005), op. cit. p.64.)

solidarity with Palestinians and at the same time the effort to strengthen Palestinian development.

The situation became more serious

“after the Gulf war, (when) Arab funding dropped to near zero and PLO funding steadily decreased. At the same time, Western donor funding continued and since the 1990s has become the main source of assistance to PNGOs.”⁵¹⁴

Through this decrease the entire situation took a new shape and the revenues were only half of the amount provided prior to the Gulf conflict. With the creation of the PA, the cash flow lowered since most donors thought it was the responsibility of the PA to answer for the needs of the Palestinians. Nonetheless, the Oslo negotiations and finally their conclusion brought a new wave of funds that sought to support the PA structures and peace as well. In that sense there have been ups and downs in the delivery of funds, which the PNGOs had to deal with, and according to this, adopt themselves to the circumstances. In my view, on the one hand this happened on a voluntary basis through the increased access for funds, but on the other hand this caused them difficulties regarding the requirements for the reception of financial assistance. The NGOs fell into a trap and have been limited in the frame of their activities. Those NGOs who did not comply with the conditions set by the donors experienced a deep notch in their budgets. The more crucial point is that this led to a sort of instrumentalization of NGOs being used as tools of the Western donors. A further aspect in the entire NGO-donor relationship is that of clientele-ism, which plays a major role in the provision of funds.

For clarification clienteleism is defined as *“Personal relationships that link patrons and clients together in a system in which jobs, favours, and protection are exchanged for labour, support, and loyalty.”⁵¹⁵*

⁵¹⁴ Hanafi, Sari, Tabar, Linda (2005), op. cit. p.64.

⁵¹⁵ Definition of Clientelism on <http://www.photius.com/countries/brazil/glossary/> (September 14, 2006)

Brigitte Rieger gives a further definition of clientelism that describes the concept. In her view

*“it is a direct, personal, informal and voluntary relation between two unequal social partners (that is to say between patron and client) for the reciprocal exchange of goods and benefits.”*⁵¹⁶

Hence, this could be equated with the NGO-donor relationship where both parties face each other, but on two different stages such as the patron and the client. She explains their relationship as asymmetric for the reason that

*“the client (within the relation) is dominated and dependent on the patron to an extremely high degree rather than the other way around. In that way the patron prevails and decides on the client.”*⁵¹⁷

If we translate this asymmetric pattern into the NGO-donor relationship then the scheme corresponds to it. The relation between NGOs and donors is stipulated, but still there is a sort of unilateral dependency on the part of the NGOs since their need for funds is higher than vice versa. The donors might seek to achieve certain interests; however, the subordinate position of the NGOs is clear. It has to be understood that the NGOs commit themselves unsolicited to this relationship. Brigitte Rieger stresses that this reciprocal exchange of goods and benefits determines the trade-off between both parties.

Through the increased power the patron - or as in our case, the donors - could wield power and gerrymander the relationship. And those NGOs that wanted to remain independent experienced a cut in their budgets and either were shut down or they had to shorten the programs. But she concludes that the most significant aspect in this sort of relationship is that both partners have to be satisfied with the results whether their expectations were fulfilled or not. This

⁵¹⁶ Brigitte Rieger emphasizes that there is no consent in the current literature on the definition of the clientelism relationship. Therefore, the discussions conducted start directly at the clientelism level. (Rieger, Brigitte (2003), op. cit. p.80.)

⁵¹⁷ Rieger, Brigitte (2003), op. cit. p.81-83.

really matters in the NGO-donor scene as it has been confirmed through the interviews. Thus, it is based on the reason that the more successful the project was carried out the better are chances to be re-hired by the donor.

Referring back to the Palestinian case, it has become obvious that the advancement of MEGA-NGOs as they are called by Hanafi and Tabar leads more than ever to NGO elites where smaller organisations are ignored and neglected. According to Hanafi and Tabar:

*“In addition to this, a form of clientelism exists between the donors and some NGOs in urban centres. Generally, donors look for organisations with capacity in the cities and not in the periphery. At the many social events organized by the donors, such as cocktail parties and receptions held by European or US consulates, one finds the heads of some large NGOs there, yet the smaller NGOs are absent.”*⁵¹⁸

This demonstrates that there is a preference given to those who are the favourites whereas the smaller ones that lack the expected capacities and agenda fall behind. The agenda issue will be discussed below. This contiguity to the donors was also confirmed by an interviewee during my research. It was stated that on a private level there even existed friendships and that they were on good terms, but on the business level there were strong guidelines and rules regarding the accomplishments of their work.⁵¹⁹

⁵¹⁸ Hanafi, Sari, Tabar, Linda (2005), op. cit. p.198.

⁵¹⁹ Interview with Dr. Sanaa Ashour (Institutional Development Manager of Islamic Relief, Germany), (April 26, 2005). She used to work for the Ministry of Planning.

A further aspect is the asymmetric distribution of NGOs since most of them are either located in Ramallah or in Jerusalem. According to Hanafi and Tabar

“Jerusalem and Ramallah alone account for 45% of the Palestinian NGOs (respectively 208 and 130 NGOs),⁵²⁰ according to the same survey.”⁵²¹

Some INGOs also run a local office which is usually staffed with natives who work for the international NGOs. Those who work for an INGO have higher salaries than those who work for a native organisation. Hence, the INGOs have specific expectations and requirements in terms of education and skills, which have to be fulfilled by their staffs. This is considered as very important insofar that it has an influence on the access to such vacancies most Palestinians desire to fill. Such as in the case of Tamkeen, which is a USAID supported organisation that seeks to have qualified staff that brings various competences. But I will not go into this here. It was just a short note since this also matters in the clientelism context. Clientelism not only means that there is coherence between the patron (donor) and the client (NGOs) in terms of funds, but also as already mentioned the capacity and size of the NGOs to a certain extent. Hanafi and Tabar concluded:

“Overall, the distribution of funding not only revealed an imbalance between centre and periphery, and between urban and rural areas, but also an imbalance between cities with large and small populations. Some districts with a high density of population received as small percentage of funding.”⁵²²

⁵²⁰ Of course some of these organisations have branches outside of Jerusalem and Ramallah.

According to Sullivan, Denis J. in 1996, “over 40% of the PNGOs were concentrated in the Ramallah-Jerusalem-Bethlehem area, but many of these have provided services to communities throughout Palestine.” (Sullivan, Denis J. (1996), op. cit. p.94.)

⁵²¹ Hanafi, Sari, Tabar, Linda (2005), op. cit. p.67.

⁵²² Hanafi, Sari, Tabar, Linda (2005), op. cit. p.68.

These inequalities show that the donors have a specific clientele though the distribution of funds is linked to specific demands and conditions as demonstrated above. It can be assumed that the NGOs which belong to the “elite” rather benefit from larger funds than the smaller organisations. In addition these informal structures and the practices involved do not really have a fundamental share in the formation of a prospective Palestinian state. In spite of the existing PA system, they rather leave the situation amorphous and marginalize a number of NGOs.

Regarding NGOs, it has always been a fact that each NGO has its own “clients” each supporting its own group and of course securing funds from those who are these after groups. Money coming from some Islamic sources was supporting only the NGOs that support their followers, and on the other end the same applied. This leads us to the next point: corporatism and rent-seeking, which have a complex role in the relationship between donors and NGOs. Most of these relationships are afflicted with particular preferences and tendencies.

6.2 Corporatism & Rent-seeking

Corporatism and rent-seeking are two significant terms, which have had a relevant role in the NGO sphere. Recalling Brown, who explained that

“Corporatism (is) a mode of interest group representation” corporatism⁵²³ signifies a mutual dependency between actors for the mediation of interests. With the establishment of the PA, various organisations and associations tried to ensure themselves preferential treatment. But there were also organisations that feared incisive changes coming from the new authority, which could also cause swift changes and thus alter their working environment. The intended collaboration between the newly founded PA and the numerous NGOs was not crowned with success. The drafting of the NGO law and other difficulties brought about the lack of trust and mutual recognition. Certainly, not all NGOs were affected, since the PA loyalists had their own position. The effort, which was seen in that undertaking, was the integration of Palestinian associational life and its actors into the new quasi-government system, which was doomed to failure after the debate of the contentious points.

The triangle relationship involving NGOs, PA and donors has proved to be a complicated. On the one hand NGOs come to know about the pressure the PA exerts on them and on the other hand the donors play the same game with their requirements and expectations. But the most crucial point is that through the changes in terms of revenue flow towards the Palestinian territories (in particular after Oslo) caused an increased rivalry between the PA and the

⁵²³ Phillippe Schmitter defines

„Corporatism is a system of interest representation in which the constituent units are organized into a limited number of singular, compulsory, non-competitive, hierarchically ordered and functionally differentiated categories, recognized or licensed (if not created) by the state and granted a deliberate representational monopoly within their respective categories in exchange for observing certain controls on their selection of leaders and articulation of demands and supports.” (Brown, Nathan J. (2003), op. cit. p.142.)

PNGOs. Since then any contribution either made to the PA or the NGOs counted a lot.

Carapico noticed that some Palestinian NGOs arranged themselves around important organisations such as the World Bank instead of being close to their own constituencies. Whereas the Islamic oriented NGOs have had other sources of financial support and sought grants in the Gulf States area, which have not been unremarkable amounts.⁵²⁴ This implies that there is a biased orientation towards the donor sphere on the part of some Palestinian NGOs. It has to be emphasized that not all NGOs give preference to such behaviour and there are some who strictly deny any assistance that comes either Arab or from Western states. This leads us to the next issue of rent-seeking. Rent-seeking can be considered as another form of lobbyism at the level of superior and influential bodies, as some donors are.

The first part of the term in our context means the successful reaping of financial revenues. Through the provision of financial assistance, new forms of organisations in form of GONGOs, QUANGOs, etc. are created in order to receive any possible cent. Other criteria are added, which beautify the NGOs' image and recognition in the scene.

All this gives them a new shape and character which is a controversial point, where it can be argued whether the NGOs have not been instrumentalised and used as tools and probably do not correlate anymore to the origin of an NGO. The great influence that is practised by donors and their methods on NGOs misleads many of them. The exerted pressure reveals that behind the blurry picture of assumed NGOs government initiated structures exist. In the following I will discuss two major issues which determine an NGO's life.

⁵²⁴ Carapico, Sheila (2000), op. cit. p. 14.

6.3 Budgets vs. Agenda-setting

For any project that is carried out money is needed. And therefore every NGO is in need of revenues in the form of a budget and complies with an agenda. According to Anheier

“Budgets are instruments for showing: planning considerations – setting goals, priorities, and strategies, and the coordination of them; a budget will put plans into an expenditure framework and identify what activities can take and at what level.” With regard to *“political influences – a budget can show competing scenarios and hence be used to influence policy.”*⁵²⁵

In his definition, he mentions a further decisive aspect: the setting of goals. The budgets and the agenda are close matched elements, which loom large on the Palestinian NGO scene. Due to the reason that there is a dependency between the NGOs and their financial backers, the NGOs' budgets are dictated by a donor specific agenda.

Through the growing to-do list given by the donors, the NGOs feel increasingly restricted and limited in their actions. An additional obstacle is the fierce competition for funds, which NGOs have to face. Those who do not agree with the terms set by the donor come to know a cut in funds or termination in the bilateral relationship. Others restructured themselves in order to be more flexible. As stated throughout my research the amounts provided get less whereas the requirements become more complicated and almost impossible. Some donors, for instance, feel bothered by the administrative manner some Palestinian NGOs have and complain about their working attitudes.

⁵²⁵ Anheier, Helmut (2005), op. cit. p.272.

This for sure leads to discrepancies and at the same time slows down the entire process. Many NGOs recognized that their agenda is submitted by the donor and with it their budget.

Through this kind of indoctrination some NGOs have become a new character if not a new type of organisation. But the fact is that budgets are set by the donors and so is the agenda one the NGOs have to follow, even if the resources are not sufficient or not appropriate. In that way NGOs have gained a totally new shape and character.

6.4 Skills/Staff

“I am always dazzled by the level of expertise available at the NGO level, far better than the PA, as the NGOs pay better, especially international ones, and so the NGOs have screwed up the system and drained a lot of the expertise from the PA channels. In fact even to the level of corrupting the who system.”⁵²⁶

Regarding this point, the numerous PNGOs on the ground are endowed differently in terms of staff and equipment and these factors also depend on size and capacity of the single NGO. The organisations in the NGO scene know and observe each other so that critical remarks do not fail to appear. According to Sullivan there is a *“lack of professionalism and non-accountability.”*⁵²⁷ In their view, further shortcomings are the lacking structures such as a general assembly or board of directors. These aspects are likewise primary factors for the donors, which reflect that these configurations correspond to the Western patterns that were criticized by many smaller PNGOs. Not only had this aspect caused discussions, but also the growing demand on well-educated staff with particular skills. A degree in business administration, language skills, and international experience can be an asset for the applicant.

Even, the higher salaries, which are paid by the international organisations compared to the local ones, spark great interest in such jobs. It is not a secret that the jobs at the international organisations are in great demand. This has also raised debates among the Palestinians and is criticized in the sense that those working for an INGO are affiliated with the foreign organisation.

The more reputation the organisation had the greater was the interest for a vacancy there. The UN branches working in the occupied territories are also

⁵²⁶ Interview, (October 2, 2005)

⁵²⁷ Sullivan, Denis J. (1996), op. cit. p.94.

favoured since they allow a special status to its staff. Certain projects require particular skills and experience in the specific field in order to be carried out successfully. The varying interests and preferences of the single NGOs in the field and the diverse perceptions and debates resulted in factionalism.

But the decisive point is that because of this alienation, some projects in the various sectors were carried out twice whereas others were lacking or not considered at all. This factor will be discussed below in the context of donor or even fund-based projects.

6.5 Projects

Most NGOs are specialized in a specific sector and thus coordinate and transact numerous projects.⁵²⁸ The implementation of a project requires a lot of preparation and the measures have to match the needs on the ground in order to achieve a successful and satisfying result. Here, the problem becomes visible since most NGOs depend on funds from donors. The range of free activism is constrained by the demands and visions which are set by the donors. Mostly short-term projects are favoured rather than long-term projects and in some cases the continuation (if at all) is divided in phases.⁵²⁹ The money supplied to the NGOs is distributed in slices. This method allows the donor to monitor and control them. Next to that regular reports are required in order to follow up the progresses, which is the next difficulty since most donors complained that there is no regularity regarding the deadline of the reports. Certainly, the Palestinian local partners are anxious to fulfil the demands, but one of the problems was that for instance personnel was lacking to produce the papers and the language skills played a further role since the reports needed to be written in English.

Further, the donors preferences towards certain issues unbalances the distribution of funds and at the same time the projects. This demonstrates that there is a sort of circle where the donor's predilection determines who is going to receive the fund, and thus the implementation of a particular project follows and if there is a follow-up action, the process starts again and the NGOs reapply again. Surely, there are also projects which go beyond a short-term period of time, but they still have to be renewed. Hanafi and Tabar state that the more capacious the NGO is and in case it implements projects in the donor's desired

⁵²⁸ According to Hanafi and Tabar "A project can be defined as a concentration of means in a limited time and space in order to achieve a defined objective." (Hanafi, Sari, Tabar, Linda (2005), op. cit. p.189.)

⁵²⁹ According to Silsby, "the long term impact of donor funding, which is typically short-term supply-driven, is that it can undermine incentives and capacity building that are crucial to successfully contribute to sustainable development." (Hanafi, Sari, Tabar, Linda (2005), op. cit. p.189.)

field the greater are its chances to receive higher amounts of core funding.⁵³⁰ As confirmed in an interview a large part of its core finances come from institutional donors including the different aid departments of governments, the EU and EU member countries. Another but smaller part of the finances comes through public donations specifically from the public. The funds are used for managing and implementing the projects, so the project budgets include staff salaries, administrative expenses, transportation and beneficiary costs like medications and community support. In cases of need an extraordinary budget is provided. A representative of the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs confirmed that in the event of unexpected irregularities in the budget, higher risks have to be accepted than in normal situations. Above all there is a very high level of bureaucracy. That is not a general method since the donors strategies vary and finally, they are the ones who come to the ultimate decision. Though donors claim to be flexible, they still hold the view of not being able to go beyond their possibilities.

Nonetheless, Hanafi and Tabar have come to the same conclusion that the majority of the conducted projects by PNGOs are project-based and limited in their frame. The PNGOs do not totally agree with this new pattern, but they do not really see an alternative and hence comply with it. Taking the case of Tamkeen into consideration, who even phrases project advertisements for which NGOs can apply in order to get the contract for the project, and this confirms the above-mentioned. And if there was a satisfying outcome, the NGO has the chance to be rehired and in case the application failed for a particular project then the NGO cannot apply for the same again. And those NGOs, who are on the cusp of being accepted, get professional help to restructure their application and submit it, which is then presented on behalf of the applying NGO by a staff member of the donor.

⁵³⁰ Hanafi, Sari, Tabar, Linda (2005), op. cit. p.189.

Through this behaviour the donors seek a certain strategy. As consequence of the selection of a specific region and the pre-elected NGO, donors automatically minimize their impact and the outcome of the project. Another aspect is the high expectations they have on the projects and the implementing NGOs. To add up, short-term projects cannot bring the same and ideal outcomes as long-term projects could do. Whereat it depends on the effect the aid recipients are going to have instead of that what the donors wants to see. A close connected point is the donors' nescience and the lacking experience with the local population though INGOs are hired to carry out the assignment.

All these differences cause problems and obstacles, which slow down the efforts that need to take place in order to serve the necessities of the concerned communities. Further, the donors' ideas are silhouetted against the realities and needs on the difficult terrain. And based on these attitudes little will change unless fundamental modifications and attempts are made. The rigid manner donors have and practice complicate the situation and hence retard flexible responses. Due to the existing deflections, the situation is very complex and tough for all people relevant.

6.6 Conclusion

*“Frankly speaking, all NGO projects are avoiding the issue that is causing the suffering and creating the need for their work. The issue in Palestine is purely political but no one wants to talk about it, and so in the end all our work is helping but is not contributing to a solution. In terms of problems, one of the biggest problems is access due to Israeli control and not to forget the continuous deterioration on the situation which tends to reverse positive impacts of NGOs projects.”*⁵³¹

*“It is a dilemma as a donor to contribute to an occupation. It is also a dilemma to ask for certain behaviour if you know that you support an occupation. There are many more dilemmas.”*⁵³²

*“Israel asked us to donate, build roads....institutionalize an Apartheid system in occupation.”*⁵³³

*“Donors have turned to finance either the Palestinian submission, compliance, passivity or collaboration and collusion vis-à-vis the Israeli U.S.-backed unilateral plans, with a questionable indifference to the death of the peace process and the reoccupation of the PA autonomy, while showing an astonishing exemplary tolerance towards Israel’s destruction of the state-building infrastructures financed mainly by money paid by European and American taxpayers.”*⁵³⁴

⁵³¹ Interview , (October 9, 2006)

⁵³² Interview, (September 22, 2006)

⁵³³ Interview (September 22, 2006)

⁵³⁴ Nasser, Nicola (2006): Western Donors to Palestine: What Mission? “Aid has turned into a tool which supports Israeli ambitions on <http://www.globalresearch.ca/index.php?context=viewArticle&code=20060906&articleId=3161> (February 14, 2007)

These concluding remarks reflect the realities on the ground which not only aggravate but also slow down any efforts in terms of progress and a sustainable solution. It is true that even through efforts made by the NGOs, fundamental changes in the political landscape have to occur and at least donors have to realize the circumstances in order to react according to the needs. As long as these thoughts are not considered or have been ignored little changes will take place, if at all. The donors enter the NGO scene in the occupied territories and expect their agenda to be carried out as it was composed. Certainly, there are NGOs that feel solicited and attracted by the donors' offers. This behaviour demonstrates clearly the "master-slave" relationship, where the donors have the say and the NGOs follow the rules and regulations. But still it has to be distinguished between the numerous NGOs those that are respected and others that seem to be scurrile. Donors are aware of the fact that they are supporting an occupying and stifling system. The PA is supported by some NGOs in the various sectors, but not all of them are affiliated to it. But the current situation leaves so many questions open since the NGOs do not know what side to take and also do the donors based on the reason that they do not want to channel funds to the Hamas - headed government and therefore go back to the NGO method. The Hamas - oriented NGOs may benefit from the situation since it cannot be disregarded that Hamas' social and political activism are very close connected as already discussed above.

Considering the NGOs' role in a future prospective Palestinian state, then this should be a complementary role, that of cooperation and coordination as it was supposed to be with the Commission for Human Rights and NGO Affairs, which finally failed and resulted in the fact that the single ministries established a sort of "NGO-departments" in order to conduct their work in cooperation with the NGOs. It has become obvious that the PA cannot do all the work and the NGOs cannot do it all either though they had proved at times of the first Intifada and even earlier to be a solid base in the common struggle against the occupation.

Through the external influences imposed on NGOs they have reshaped and gained a new structure. One of the repeated complaints was duplication of projects in the NGO scene, which happened very often based on the lack of arrangements and coordination among NGOs and the PA. Hence, duplication should be avoided and NGOs should focus more on building the capacities of the PA.

Nevertheless, the fundamental issue remains the Israeli control over the PA and the donors who burden the NGOs with their demands. In addition the new political landscape in the occupied territories with the new position Hamas holds may effect that Israel increases its control and restrictions.

The NGOs' situation in the occupied territories with the "new" environment in mind leaves many questions unanswered.

The next chapter is going to summarize and conclude from the findings of this investigation with respect to possible recommendations.

7. EVALUATION

“Even as the PNGOs lose the ability to serve the communities that have come to depend on them, the PA remains unable to replace them.”⁵³⁵

The growing number of Palestinian NGOs, either in the form of a women’s organisation or any other type have made fundamental efforts and contributions over decades to serve the Palestinian communities. Certainly, they had a hard time to overcoming the severe conditions of Israeli occupation. Still, the NGOs went to great lengths to adhere to their services and benefit the communities throughout the occupied territories.

In the following section, we will discuss what perception the Palestinian communities have had of the aid providing organisations. It should be kept in mind that Islamic organisations serve their own communities, though it has been claimed that their services are available for anyone. Nevertheless, I consider the aid recipients’ view on the philanthropic services as essential, since they reflect the NGOs’ efficiency and capacities. At the same it is a reflection of their work and a sort of feedback. To what extent this matter will be analysed below.

In most cases, the relationship of NGOs to the community was more special than that to the PA. This does not necessarily mean that it was a perfect one, but the services provided were better and the development - no matter how small - was in most cases genuine. This gave the NGOs some more credibility compared to the PA. Mainly, the Palestinian (local) NGOs are more respected than international NGOs since the latter are always viewed as having hidden agendas, corrupt expatriates, and their decisions are made on a government level in case they are government supported. These insinuations cast a poor light on them and let them look unreliable.

⁵³⁵ Sullivan, Denis J. (1996), op. cit. p.96.

One of the advantages the local NGOs might have is their knowledge and sensitiveness regarding the Palestinians, whereas the international groups jump into the field and try to impose their ideas. Certainly, the expectations the Palestinian community has on NGOs and on the PA vary. Supposedly, all that was not done by the PA should have been the work of NGOs, in addition to human rights which should always be the work of NGOs.

However, with the weakness of the PA the people were expecting more and more from the side of NGOs and there were always NGOs who were happy and ready to assume that role. Nevertheless, the Palestinians' view of NGOs really depends since some NGOs are highly respected and others are looked upon as suspicious and intransparent. It all depends on the sources of funding and the type of projects the NGOs implement. It can even be the luxury of the NGO itself that gives a negative impact of where the money is going. The difficulties that the NGOs face with the Palestinian society are that they can only do a little to cover all the society's needs so much. The gap is huge and the society expects NGOs to come up to all their expectations and requirements, which is in a few cases almost impossible.

The following survey represents the major features that characterize the NGOs. Next to my own empirical research in form of interviews a recent study that was conducted by AMAN in support of the Konrad-Adenauer-Foundation investigated in their Nazaha project the efficiency of NGOs in the occupied territories. Nazaha aimed to enhance the accountability in the NGO sector. The survey revealed interesting results regarding the NGOs in Palestine. It has to be mentioned that this public opinion poll has been done on a smaller scale with 1270 persons (males and females), at the age of 18 and above in both areas – the West Bank and Gaza. But the majority interviewed was in the West Bank (830 interviewees) and in Gaza (440 interviewees) – comprising 127 residential areas, which represents a broad distribution.

Generally speaking the study revealed that “53% of Palestinians believe that nepotism and its related forms are the most relevant of corruption in NGOs”⁵³⁶ Further it demonstrated that “70% of Palestinians believe that NGOs and charities do not disclose their financial, administrative, or program related information to the public.”⁵³⁷ Even 47% of the sample said that they believe that general directors are the most involved in corrupt parties in NGOs.

Certainly, this analysis raises many questions concerning the NGOs in the occupied territories and their work. Reason for this inquiry has been the ambiguous situation and view on NGOs (particularly with regard to corruption) on the part of the Palestinians.

Before we start to discuss to what extent the interesting outcomes of the survey correspond with the findings of my empirical data ascertainment, it has to be said that certain features were set regarding the sample: a) male-female, b) educated persons with a B.A. / M.A. degree and illiterates, and finally c) in both parts the West Bank and Gaza.

⁵³⁶ Nazaha - Public Opinion Poll on the state of Palestinian NGOs (2006): Enhancing accountability in the NGO sector (15-18 June, 2006) on http://www.kas.de/proj/home/pub/19/2/-/dokument_id-8798/ (January 17, 2007) (Layla Bahmad)

⁵³⁷ Nazaha - Public Opinion Poll on the state of Palestinian NGOs (2006): Enhancing accountability in the NGO sector (15-18 June, 2006) on http://www.kas.de/proj/home/pub/19/2/-/dokument_id-8798/ (January 17, 2007) (Layla Bahmad)

7.1 Facts on the Palestinian Terrain

Concerning the question of corruption in Palestinian institutions 66% stated that corruption is evident in the PNA structures, 11% in political parties, 3% in the private sector, and 2% in the media sector who are involved in corruption deals. It has been interesting to observe that 73% of the male interviewees and 59% of the female interviewees believed that men are more prone to be manipulated through corruption than women are. Even the views of the educated (81%) and illiterates (47%) vary based on the reason that the degree holders had a more realistic judgment on corruption in the public sector than the uneducated part did. Against that staffs of the private sector (76%) considered the public sector as dishonest, and 70% of the public sector felt the same way. The more surprising statement was that about 27% thought that there did not exist any form of corruption among NGOs, while 57% believed that it was present on a small scale, and less than one fifth (17%) supposed a high level of bribery in the NGOs sector. Finally, a rate of 18% to 23% accepted corruption on a low/moderate rate as true.⁵³⁸

Another interesting aspect is so to say the distribution of “corruption” where the survey showed that it was more dominant in the West Bank (62%) than in Gaza (50%). It is assumed that this is due to the higher number of NGOs in the West Bank as discussed above (Jerusalem and Ramallah) than in Gaza. But the more interesting aspect is that “‘Wasta’⁵³⁹ and nepotism in employment with no regard to qualifications” was considered (by 53%) as the most prevalent form of corruption in NGOs, whereas 47% regarded the heads of the NGOs as the most corrupt, (15% the heads of departments and 10% the employees).⁵⁴⁰

⁵³⁸ Nazaha - Public Opinion Poll on the state of Palestinian NGOs (2006): Enhancing accountability in the NGO sector (15-18 June, 2006) on http://www.kas.de/proj/home/pub/19/2/-/dokument_id-8798/ (January 17, 2007) (Layla Bahmad)

⁵³⁹ Wasta is the intervention for the interest of certain individuals without commitment to the work principles and the required qualifications.

One of the principal and most significant findings of the survey was the Palestinians' view on the NGOs' work, which revealed that 38% do not think that the NGOs' work is neither responsive towards nor aware of the needs of the Palestinians. Here again the views vary: 32% believe that they do at a low rate, 20% believe in it at a moderate rate, and just 5% felt that the NGOs defer to their needs. The just given numbers also showed that males (42%) had a more pessimistic view on the efficiency of the NGOs' work than the females (35%) did. The major point was that 36% (highest percentage) deemed the donors responsible for the lacking awareness towards the "basis", and 21% of the sample remarked that the target groups' needs were the main focus the NGOs seek, whereas 17% believed the PNA to have an influence on the agenda and lastly a similar percentage of 16% considered the NGOs themselves as the decision makers and thus as those who determine the agenda. This demonstrates that the majority of the Palestinians feels neglected and in a sense not understood. The NGOs' projects and programs do not match their needs based on the reason that the NGOs who are tied to a donor-oriented agenda and conditions are not very flexible.

The above given numbers of the public opinion poll stated that this assumption is not wrong since the funds the NGOs apply for are agenda- and project-oriented. These do not necessarily allow any margin for own choices and decisions that could be made by the NGOs which then could provide their target groups' specific services. The majority is convinced that the agendas are donor-driven, whereas the latter numbers thought the PA to have a say, but the PA itself is dependent on donors. Concerning the number of those who believed that the target groups' needs are the main drive; this may not apply to all the organisations. This could be applicable for international NGOs rather than for the local ones who have a more difficult position. However, there are a few NGOs that attempt to live up to the expectations of the communities they are serving, but sometimes the existing conditions prevail.

⁵⁴⁰ Nazaha - Public Opinion Poll on the state of Palestinian NGOs (2006): Enhancing accountability in the NGO sector (15-18 June, 2006) on http://www.kas.de/proj/home/pub/19/2/-/dokument_id-8798/ (January 17, 2007) (Layla Bahmad)

In view of the fact that the competition for funds among NGOs and the PA after Oslo has been a contentious one, this has also had an impact on their interrelationship. The PA has had the administrative part in the entire process in terms of registration with the various ministries and the regulation of laws, which has been a difficult issue as well. About 61% of the sample (65% in Gaza and 59% in the West Bank) took the view that the “government” does not attend to its duties and liability. Whereat still 31% deemed the PA as already complying with its functions, but with the addition that 82% of the interviewees considered the foundation of an anti-corruption system as necessary whereat 12% saw no need for it. Thereby NGOs could cope with corruption in the NGO sector. In terms of transparency a small percentage of just 22% (28% in Gaza and 18% in the West Bank) had ever seen or read financial, administrative or project specific records the NGOs produce. Certainly, this number was higher regarding those holding a degree (58% M.A., 38% B.A.).⁵⁴¹

Nevertheless, many Palestinian graduates aspire to work for an NGO and in particular for international ones since these offer attractive and well paid jobs. About 70% stated that the NGOs were never declaratory of their records, whereas they thought that the NGOs should be more open towards the public. Certainly, many do through their annual reports, brochures and their websites and internet performances in order to present the programs as well the efforts made regarding their ongoing projects. But the problem is that they do so for their donors either type private or state contributor but not for those concerned – the Palestinian society. It is also a sort of self-marketing for the NGO itself. In a way the donors respectively the NGOs decide upon the aid recipients and the projects and services they receive.

These findings reflected clearly a high level of dissatisfaction on the part of the Palestinians which is quite understandable with all the existing circumstances and the ongoing occupation. However, this leads us to the aspect of

⁵⁴¹ Nazaha - Public Opinion Poll on the state of Palestinian NGOs (2006): Enhancing accountability in the NGO sector (15-18 June, 2006) on http://www.kas.de/proj/home/pub/19/2/-/dokument_id-8798/ (January 17, 2007) (Layla Bahmad)

accountability with regard to NGOs as discussed earlier. Because of their commitment to the donors, it lets most of them look incredible in front of the local population who faces them with more and more distrust. The total picture rather looks like as if the fissure between the Palestinians and the NGOs has grown. The demands and conditions on the part of the donors are becoming increasingly difficult to comply with which in turn impinge on the needy. It is a sort of vicious circle in which the NGOs seek funds from donors in order to finance projects and provide the services which are in most of the cases appointed by them.

This does not give the NGOs real latitude to make their decisions. It is out of question that there are NGOs that try hard to remain with their mission and aims, but the external influence (insofar NGOs depend on it) is sometimes stronger.

7.2 Comparison with Islamic NGOs

In contrast the Islamic NGOs and charities seem to have a broader range compared to the secular organisations because they are self-determining and independent of external (western) funds. They are self-efficient and experience support by a large majority of volunteers. This kind of support is embedded as discussed above in Islam in form of waqf structures, which have been social and religious institutions that served their communities. They loomed large in a social, cultural and economic context in the Islamic world. Hamas has also dedicated itself and built a social welfare division. These endowments have even been very popular among the Palestinians in particular in Gaza. The impact religion has had, demonstrates how strong the social cohesion has been in Palestinian society and the assistance it obtained from Palestinians in the Diaspora which was also gain in terms of fundraising through zakat donations. Mustafa Osman confirms that

“as a result, unlike their secular counterparts, the bulk of their (Islamic NGOs L.B.) funding comes from individual donations from the general public, as opposed to the institutional funding received from large governmental or multilateral donor organisations.”⁵⁴²

This is also based on trust and the positive relations between both – the community and the benefactors. Their social work is appreciated and they are rather seen as genuine in terms of humanitarian assistance compared to their secular counterparts who have their own agenda.

It is often claimed that Islamic NGOs prefer their own “brothers and sisters” than other beneficiaries. “Moustafa Osman, programme manager of Islamic Relief, explains why such criticism is unfair and argues that Muslim NGOs have a special role to play in peacekeeping and fundraising for humanitarian

⁵⁴² Osman, Mustafa (2003): Muslim NGOs can help bridge culture gap on <http://www.globalpolicy.org/ngos/aid/2003/0124muslim.htm> (February 2, 2007) (Layla Bahmad)

projects.”⁵⁴³ He argues that Islamic NGOs have a prominent role in the sense that they do not look at the affiliation aspect regarding their beneficiaries. Their assistance and programs are open to all in need as confirmed by Brigitte Rieger’s example of Hizbullah and by the Islamic Relief branch in Germany who attempts to live up to the expectations of the aid recipients as well. There are also other secular NGOs whose assistance and services are accessible to anyone in need and no difference is made. Osman signifies that *“the help extended by Muslim organisations is not limited to assisting other Muslims but upon helping whoever is in need. Nevertheless, as religious organisations operating in today’s virulently secular world, the motives of Islamic NGOs are often mistrusted.”*⁵⁴⁴

⁵⁴³ Osman, Mustafa (2003): Muslim NGOs can help bridge culture gap on <http://www.globalpolicy.org/ngos/aid/2003/0124muslim.htm> (February 2, 2007) (Layla Bahmad)

⁵⁴⁴ Osman, Mustafa (2003): Muslim NGOs can help bridge culture gap on <http://www.globalpolicy.org/ngos/aid/2003/0124muslim.htm> (February 2, 2007) (Layla Bahmad)

The Christians living in the Occupied Territories are a minority (of 1.8%). The political cooperation between Christians (primarily the PFLP, who has similar positions like Hamas) and Hamas at the local election has been very relevant as for instance in Bethlehem, Ramallah and other traditional Christian places, which had a large ballot. (Cp. The statistics of the Palestinian Central Elections Commission on http://www.elections.ps/pdf/final_results_Map_Votes_for_the_list_per_districts_EN.pdf) and (http://www.elections.ps/pdf/Polling_statistics_for_the_distric_level_ENG.pdf) (February 22, 2007)

Helga Baumgarten addresses interesting questions: Why did the Palestinians elect Hamas? Who are these 100.000 Palestinians who voted for Hamas without being a Hamas “client”? Was this decision taken by protest voters who intended to demonstrate their dissatisfaction with Fatah? Or was it the sense of “rotating democracy” which let them give Hamas a chance? She argues that the Palestinians have had considerable experiences on the socio-political levels with regard to the various organisations (e.g. trade unions, professional associations, universities, women’s groups, NGOs, political movements of all shades,) and at the municipal council elections in 1976. (Cp. Baumgarten, Helga (2006): Die Hamas: Wahlsieg in Palästina 2006. In: Orient – German Journal for Politics and Economics of the Middle East, Vol. 47, p.41.)

Unlike Fatah, Hamas understood the electoral victory as mandate of its voters in order to transform the Hamas philosophy into the basis for (future) Palestinian politics. Hamas’ aptitude proved to be efficient in a way that it was able to compensate for the Palestinians and to bypass the “Western” (Israeli, U.S. and European) boycott. (Cp. Neue Zürcher Zeitung (2007): Bruderkrieg in Palästina on <http://www.nzz.ch/2007/02/06/al/kommentarEW904.print.html> (February 27, 2007) (Layla Bahmad)

Here again the western and Orientalist biased glance shines through which sheds a negative light on both “types” of NGOs where on the one hand the Islamic NGOs are mistrusted and by the same token the more secular “Arab” NGOs are viewed and rated as insufficient and as not being correspondent to the western “standards”. Edward Said was not far off by his view stating that “[...] *the Orientalist has become the representative man of his western culture, [...]*”⁵⁴⁵ who is trying to assert and confer his views and attitudes on others. This reflects the western supremacy which attempts to put its patterns on the concerned “oriental” societies since the West considers itself as “*rational developed, humane, superior,*” whereas “*the Orient is aberrant, underdeveloped, and inferior.*”⁵⁴⁶

With regard to these so-called “oriental” societies including their civil societies and actors, the West deems it as necessary that these actors need to perform in accordance to its standards. Otherwise as in the above given quote of Osman this means that there is negative notion, which gives rise to doubts and suspicion. But Osman contradicts this and alleges the example that they (referring to Islamic Relief)

*“feel that secular organisations concentrate exclusively on improving the material well-being of their target communities, often quite unsuccessfully, and that the model being aspired to -- subconsciously or otherwise -- is that of the Western way of life. [...] Muslim NGOs have a significant role to play in building bridges between Western culture and its concept of development and Muslim communities. Non-Muslim NGOs often inspire mistrust and suspicion in Muslim communities as a result of the negative effects of colonisation in previous centuries.”*⁵⁴⁷

⁵⁴⁵ Said, Edward, (1979), op. cit. p.246.

⁵⁴⁶ Said, Edward, (1979), op. cit. p.300.

⁵⁴⁷ Osman, Mustafa (2003): Muslim NGOs can help bridge culture gap on <http://www.globalpolicy.org/ngos/aid/2003/0124muslim.htm> (February 2, 2007) (Layla Bahmad)

The Islamic NGOs not only feel obliged to contribute on a tangible level but also to develop a social infrastructure within the communities they assist, and this is also due to the embedded sense of civil society to speak with al-Farabi who emphasized its importance based on

*“the need to balance the desires and needs of the individual with the will and needs of society. Where civil society is present, an individual is a part of the body, joined to other members to form an organic whole.”*⁵⁴⁸

Unlike their international counterparts the local organisations (including the Islamic NGOs) have the advantage that they know the cultural and local background which facilitates their work. This aspect sometimes passes unheeded by the international donors and their organisations, which is an additional issue to their exacting agendas. However, the international organisations and their representatives try to establish contacts to local partners in order to ease their work and to receive the information needed. Thereby they obtain access to the concerned communities in order to carry out their particular agendas. Others (meaning the international donors) provide the complete package including the necessary budget for their agenda-specific project and the local NGOs implement the project.

Though they are aware of the relevant details and specific needs regarding the local population, they cannot change the agenda. A few NGOs that are not dependent on donor funds may correspond to such needs, but others who depend on the financial shots may not really have such an ample and financial scope.

⁵⁴⁸ Al-Farabi in: Hanafi, Hasan (2002): Alternative Conceptions of Civil Society – A Reflective Islamic Approach. In: Chambers, Simone; Kymlicka, Will (Eds.): Alternative Conceptions of Civil Society, (Princeton) p.180.

Islamic NGOs (or even religious organisations in general) in turn have a different position. Osman concludes and underlines that

*“No one can deny the size and the wealth of many Muslim countries. They are often enthusiastic about helping others as part of their religious beliefs. It is potentially much easier for Muslim charities to gain access to those countries and communities and to raise funding for large aid programmes.”*⁵⁴⁹

Not only the aid the beneficiaries receive has to be coordinated with regard to their needs, but it is also important that there is a sense of tactfulness in relation to the local habits and rules.

⁵⁴⁹ Osman, Mustafa (2003): Muslim NGOs can help bridge culture gap on <http://www.globalpolicy.org/ngos/aid/2003/0124muslim.htm> (February 2, 2007) (Layla Bahmad)

7.3 Concluding remarks

According to that the results of the survey do not state formally anything about the reality regarding the NGOs' and donors' view on the ground. Nonetheless, the more interesting and important aspect is that the investigation revealed the apperception of the Palestinian people (aid recipients), who are quasi the ultimate consumer of the entire cycle. Looking at it from an NGO perspective it can be said that the whole process has developed itself in the direction of an "NGO business", which has been in contrast to the basis because it is closer to the donor sphere than to that of the needy. From a political point of view this sort of aid, which is considered as "assistance" is a decisive factor, which contributes and increases the incredibility of the West.

The western governments through their stooges (the NGOs) that are funded by them are induced to watch political interests. The mistrust that emerges through such behaviour is intensified by the character of the conflict itself and the conditionality for aid.

The following quote: (which has already been given above) makes a clear statement regarding the donors' position in the occupied territories.

*"It is a dilemma as a donor to contribute to an occupation. It is also a dilemma to ask for certain behaviour if you know that you support an occupation. There are many more dilemmas."*⁵⁵⁰

Nicola Nasser also realized that

"The Palestinians have been too grateful and too helpless for too long to be critical of the political agenda of their donors who have practically nailed them down as political hostages to the donors' money, which was promised

⁵⁵⁰ Interview with Ingrid Schøyen (Desk Officer Middle East at the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Oslo, (September 27, 2005)

initially to help build an independent Palestinian state, but ended as a political instrument effectively used by the Israeli occupying power.”⁵⁵¹

Further she blames the donors’ behavior and considers them as responsible for the current situation with regard to their antipathy against the Hamas-led government.

“Donors have embroiled themselves in an internal Palestinian political crisis they themselves created when they withheld their aid as a collective punishment to squeeze out of power a political movement not of their liking, which ironically came to power in a fairly and transparently democratic elections that were financed and monitored by none other than themselves. The internal political crisis is only a result of the deeper economic and humanitarian crisis, which is crushing the Palestinian people to the brink of a “social revolt,” especially in the “ticking time bomb” of Gaza Strip, (1) and the donors-sustained Palestinian Authority (PA) to the brink of collapse since the donors tightened the Israeli military siege by imposing a suffocating financial blockade early in the year.”⁵⁵²

These above-given statements address crucial points and established fact is that the so-called “philanthropic” or “altruistic” donors know for sure that there is more behind the “helper syndrome”, which are particular interests they seek or the purposes they get the money for from public budgets.

⁵⁵¹ Nasser, Nicola (2006): Western Donors to Palestine: What Mission? “Aid has turned into a tool which supports Israeli ambitions on <http://www.globalresearch.ca/index.php?context=viewArticle&code=20060906&articleId=3161> (February 14, 2007)

⁵⁵² Nasser, Nicola (2006): Western Donors to Palestine: What Mission? “Aid has turned into a tool which supports Israeli ambitions on <http://www.globalresearch.ca/index.php?context=viewArticle&code=20060906&articleId=3161> (February 14, 2007)

The Nazaha public opinion poll demonstrated clearly that a vast majority (36%) is convinced that the donors are the determining link in the entire chain and are those who decide upon “who gets what”. It is a sort of “toing and froing” of the donors between the single actors on the terrain. This is based on the reason that the NGOs who receive the assignment do not act independently since their behaviour is welded on the conditions the donors dictate to them as already discussed earlier. Further, the more alarming matter of fact is that all this happens at the expense of the aid recipients. The donors know the circumstances well and they are aware of what they do as stated in the interview above.

Of course there are a few among them who are really interested in supporting the peace process and the Palestinian people, but nonetheless the donor policies determine the game and so the NGOs’ direction. It has to be differentiated between that type of NGO who relies on foreign funds whereas others have their own private fundraising strategy, mostly there is a combination of the two and finally the religion oriented organisations Christian as well as Islamic ones. Whereat the Christian organisations may receive funds from western governments and Islamic ones do not.

As previously mentioned the Christian (faith based NGOs) are also dependent on contributions from the local Christian community, Christians in Diaspora and churches that they belong to in the world. With reference to the evidence given above the Christian organisations are less in number and based on this they seem to have more financial resources. Nonetheless, as it was assumed they could access USAID and EC funding.⁵⁵³

⁵⁵³ Compare Interview (October 9, 2006)

This does not alter the fact that the NGOs are subject to donor policies and thus a means to an end as for instance the U.S. and Japan who channel their funds through broker organisations. According to the NGO Monitor⁵⁵⁴

“the international community is debating how to continue to provide aid to Palestinian society in the wake of Hamas’ election victory. European leaders recently announced that they will avoid giving money to those classified as terrorists, and will instead channel more funds via NGOs. However, evidence shows that NGO partners must be picked carefully and continually monitored. USAID presents a good model of how to direct funds towards humanitarian needs and development, while generally avoiding NGOs involved in extremist political campaigning or incitement. Despite this, even USAID was found to be supporting the biased anti-Israeli political activities of ANERA⁵⁵⁵, and funding its publications that erase the context of terrorism and promote the Palestinian narrative.”⁵⁵⁶

⁵⁵⁴ NGO Monitor is the central project of the Organization for NGO Responsibility, which is an independent non-profit organization registered in Israel. The aim of NGO Monitor [...] is to generate and distribute critical analysis and reports on the output of the international NGO community for the benefit of government policy makers, journalists, philanthropic organizations and the general public. We intend to publicize distortions of human rights issues in the Arab-Israeli conflict and provide information and context for the benefit of NGOs working in the Middle East.

⁵⁵⁵ ANERA is the American Near East Refugee Aid, which was founded in 1968 in the aftermath of the 1967 Arab-Israeli War, to help the hundreds of thousands of displaced Palestinians. Initially providing emergency relief, ANERA determined the effects of the war on Palestinian society would last well into the future and therefore began implementing projects that would establish a foundation for social and economical growth. ANERA’s work is made possible through the support of thousands of private donors, in the U.S. and abroad, and grants from numerous public and private institutions. (Cp. www.anera.org) (March 20, 2007) (Layla Bahmad)

⁵⁵⁶ Detailed information on which these NGOs are was not given. Most likely, the U.S. government for instance channels its funds through the U.S. Agency for International Development. Cp. NGO Monitor Digest (2006): Europe intending to channel more funds to Palestinians via NGOs-Article: Funding NGOs is no solution (Op-ed, Gerald Steinberg) (Vol.4, No.6) on <http://www.ngo-monitor.org/article.php?operation=print&id=794> (March 20, 2007) (Layla Bahmad)

“NGOs in the region have become parties to the conflict, and not neutral engines of development and peacemakers. If international donors want to provide humanitarian assistance they will have to develop their own organisations and monitoring systems, rather than using the existing network of NGOs.”⁵⁵⁷

Regarding Steinberg it is wishful thinking for many NGOs that have found themselves under the donors' spell to remain faithful with their mission since the rules have changed and are determined by the financiers. This again reshapes or even transforms the NGOs' philosophy and hereby they resort themselves into dependency on the donors. The situation the NGOs face is dichotomous, because they are caught between the reality on the ground and the demanding “donor sphere”. Hence, it can be concluded that the deliberate guided competition (by the donors) for funds decreases and at the same time dilutes the solidarity with the „basis“, which at least was confirmed on part of the needy. The discontentment of the Palestinian society is a sure sign for the prevalent conditions. Neither through the current Hamas-led government nor through the over and over perpetual attempts by the U.S. and the so-called Quartet to apply leverage to the negotiations of the ongoing conflict, has the NGOs' situation not undergone modifications. In particular now, they do not know how their surrounding political environment will develop und what this results in.

In December 2006, UNRWA launched the largest appeal in the occupied territories stating that

“The poorest are getting poorer, and the poor more numerous.”⁵⁵⁸

⁵⁵⁷ Steinberg, Gerald M. (2006): Funding NGOs is no solution in: The Jerusalem Post, February 12, 2006.

⁵⁵⁸ UNRWA's Deputy Commissioner General, Filippo Grandi on http://www.un.org/unrwa/news/briefings/cap_dec06.html (February 5, 2007) (Layla Bahmad)

Cp. Consolidated Appeal for occupied Palestinian territory 2007 (Vol. 1 & 2) on <http://ochaonline.un.org/cap/webpage.asp?Page=1495> (February 5, 2007)

A total of 26 participants (involving 12 UN agencies and 14 NGOs) voiced their concern about the aggravated situation in the occupied territories. According to UNRWA an amount of US \$ 453.6 million is needed to cover the costs for humanitarian assistance. Unfortunately, the Palestinians' situation and particularly that of children has worsened. The problems begin with the insufficient provision of food and the agencies also remarked the impaired situation regarding the primary health care services and the education sector.⁵⁵⁹ This is largely owing to the situation Palestinian staffs⁵⁶⁰ have been facing for months when tax revenues were retained by the Israeli government instead of being returned to the PA. Since then the situation of the Palestinians has worsened. They had not only to live in narrow circumstances but also to suffer from the ongoing and increased restrictions that are imposed on them through the Israeli regime.

"Israel systematically assaulted the Palestinian people in all aspects of their lives and it even escalated its aggressions during the second Intifada as it resorted to a policy of house demolition; infrastructure, farm and facilities destruction; extrajudicial killing and mass detention of activists and systematic torture."⁵⁶¹

Further,

"the disillusioned Palestinian population is witnessing daily the infrastructure of their promised state either being demolished by Israeli military bulldozers or bombed to rubble by the US-made Israeli Apaches and F-16s."⁵⁶²

⁵⁵⁹ UNRWA Report (2006): Largest emergency humanitarian appeal for Palestinians on http://www.un.org/unrwa/news/briefings/cap_dec06.html (February 5, 2007)

⁵⁶⁰ According to UNRWA these were about 160.000 staff members.

⁵⁶¹ El-Sarraj, Eyad Dr. (2007): The Psychosocial causes for the Palestinian Factional War. On http://www.gcmhp.net/File_files/Arti14feb2k7.html (February 14, 2007).

⁵⁶² Nasser, Nicola (2006): Western Donors to Palestine: What Mission? "Aid has turned into a tool which supports Israeli ambitions on <http://www.globalresearch.ca/index.php?context=viewArticle&code=20060906&articleId=3161> (February 14, 2007)

The Palestinians as well as the local organisations have become a pawn in the hands of the powerful, who are in this case the international donors and the Israeli authorities. The latter determine the “external” parameters for the donors and their governments and the international funders set the terms for their content-related financial assistance for the local organisations.

“All of these factors led to a state of polarization and division which has been aggravated by Hamas coming to power. [...] Under deteriorating social, economic, political and psychological conditions, it is only natural, as we have already warned that violence will prevail in the Palestinian society and among its individuals and groups. This situation further worsened with the proliferation of arms and plenitude of funds in the hands of contending parties and militias.”⁵⁶³

The visit of Prime Minister Haniya in Iran brought him a pledge of US \$ 250 million (for 2007) in order to compensate the financial crisis that had dominated the Palestinian economy. Almost half of the amount is supposed to be directed to the PA.⁵⁶⁴ But Haniya decided after his successful visits in Syria and Iran to take some of the money with him back to Gaza. Abbas anticipated Haniya’s entry and informed the Israeli authorities about it. After that the Israeli minister of defence Peretz induced the closure of the Rafah and the Kerem Schalom checkpoints so that Haniya and his men could not re-enter Gaza. After the dispute both parties negotiated and Haniya was allowed to cross the border but without his solid financial support. So far Hamas had no problems to convey about US\$66million into Gaza and it is not illegal as long it is declared. But this time it seemed to be a conspiracy against Hamas controlled by Israel and the donor countries, which have been backed by Abbas.⁵⁶⁵ Their aim was to stop

⁵⁶³ El-Sarraj, Eyad Dr. (2007): The Psychosocial causes for the Palestinian Factional War. On http://www.gcmhp.net/File_files/Arti14feb2k7.html (February 14, 2007)

⁵⁶⁴ Gulf Daily News (2006): Iran pledges \$ 250 million aid to Palestine (December 12, 2006) on http://www.gulf-daily-news.com/1yr_arc_Articles.asp?Article=164306&Sn=WORL&IssueID=29267&date=12/12/2006 (February 5, 2007)

⁵⁶⁵ Needless to say Abbas attracted support from Washington in form of weapons and money in order to strengthen his Fatah forces. Insofar the Europeans contributed their share in a way that

the cash flow and to hold the reins of the Hamas-led government. From the Palestinians' point of view Hanija at least attempted to remedy and alleviate their suffering, which has dominated their lives for months since the western donor countries stopped their financial assistance to the PA. Whereas Abbas was accused of his ignorant and deliberate attitude towards them and that he did not begrudge Hanija his "financial success" despite the western restrictions.⁵⁶⁶ According to the Al-Ahram weekly newspaper

*"Iran will pay the unpaid salaries of employees of three ministries (Labour, Welfare and Culture) as well as six-month stipends to the estimated 10,000 Palestinian political prisoners languishing in Israeli jails. Iran also agreed to pay for the next six months a stipend of \$100 a month to 100,000 Palestinian civil servants and the same for 3,000 Palestinian fishermen."*⁵⁶⁷

Iran's Foreign Minister Manouchehr Mottaki indicated and warned that

*"if the aid is cut and if this continues in the near future, this land will witness a humanitarian disaster."*⁵⁶⁸

they made the Palestinians a plaything of the U.S.-Iranian dispute. (Cp. Der Tagesspiegel online (2006): Geld und Terror on <http://archiv.tagesspiegel.de/drucken.php?link=archiv/18.04.2006/2476311.asp> (February 27, 2007)

⁵⁶⁶ Bremer, Jörg (2006): Schüsse auf Hanija: Hamas gegen Fatah on <http://www.faz.net/s/RubB30ABD11B91F41C0BF2722C308D40318/Doc~E8090B565FBA944278500FFA9A6CFC259~ATpl~Ecommon~Scontent.html> (February 28, 2007)
Egyptian officials confiscated the money. Finally, two Hamas officials remained behind and decided to transfer the money on one of the bank accounts of the Arab league. The money was supposed to be transferred to the Palestinian ministry of finance.

⁵⁶⁷ Amayreh, Khaled (2006): Beyond imagination (14 - 20 December 2006, Issue No. 824) on <http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/2006/824/re71.htm> (February 5, 2007)

⁵⁶⁸ BBC News (2006): Iran pledges \$50m aid on http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/4914334.stm (February 27, 2007)
At that moment the new Hamas-led government saw itself confronted with the difficult and deteriorating situation due to the suspension of the western donors and their financial assistance to the PA. Hence, Iran felt obliged to support Hamas and offered them aid.

7.4 Other insights and perceptions regarding the situation

The prediction made earlier by Iran's Foreign Minister Mottaki was also confirmed by UNRWA who put emphasis on the deteriorating situation of the Palestinians. Hence, a central figure in the Hamas movement Khaled Meshaal perpetuated his talks in Iran about financial assistance from the Islamic world. Mottaki added that Iran together with the Organisation of the Islamic Conference would make sure that the Islamic world continues its annual contribution to the Palestinians.⁵⁶⁹ At the same time Mahmoud Abbas has hoped to achieve developments in his talks with the EU/the U.S. and Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert.⁵⁷⁰ Whereby

“the United States, along with Israel and some Arab regimes such as Jordan, has been trying to strangle the Hamas- led government, employing some of the most draconian and sinister measures yet seen, such as bullying Palestinian and Arab banks to refuse to service the government, including transferring Arab and Muslim aid money from abroad into the impoverished and cash-strapped occupied territories. [...] This harsh and cruel blockade was aimed at achieving two mains goals:

⁵⁶⁹ Stern (2006): Nach Hamas-Sieg – Palästina geht das Geld aus on <http://www.stern.de/politik/ausland/:Nach-Hamas-Sieg-Pal%E4stina-Geld/556414.html> (February 27, 2007)

⁵⁷⁰ According to Aljazeera “the Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert agreed Saturday, following talks with the Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas in Jerusalem, to release \$100 million in frozen Palestinian funds, Palestinian negotiator Saeb Erekat said.” Aljazeera (2006): Israel releases Palestinian funds on http://www.aljazeera.com/me.asp?service_ID=12656 (February 5, 2006)

The Jerusalem Post likewise reported that “Israel will turn over US\$100 million in tax revenue that it has collected on behalf of the Palestinian Authority but held up since Hamas came to power earlier this year. Israeli officials said after a surprise meeting in Jerusalem Saturday night between Prime Minister Ehud Olmert and PA Chairman Mahmoud Abbas.” The Jerusalem Post (2006): Olmert agrees to release \$ 100m. PA tax revenue (by Keinon, Herb; Abu Toameh, Khaled) on <http://www.jpost.com/servlet/Satellite?cid=1164881959723&pagename=JPost%2FJPArticle%2FShowFull> (February 5, 2007)

*First to induce an implosion inside Palestinian society aimed at triggering a popular revolution against Hamas. This goal has not been reached as most Palestinians continue to blame the US and Israel, not Hamas, for their plight. Indeed, Hamas' popularity has not suffered significantly, evidenced in PA reluctance to hold early general elections in the West Bank, Gaza Strip and East Jerusalem as a means of overcoming the crisis.*⁵⁷¹

In the first place this confirms the pressure the western governments exert on the participating actors among them NGOs and secondly, it does not show antipathy against the Hamas-led government on the part of the Palestinians in the occupied territories. It unveils and underlines the attitude of the Palestinians towards the West and how they distrust the “external influence”.

For 2007, UNRWA nourishes hope to improve the situation of the Palestinians in form of programs which support employment and secure the loss of wages. In this way basic needs can be covered in order to support the needy though the situation in general remains unforeseeable.

⁵⁷¹ Amayreh, Khaled (2006): Beyond imagination (14 - 20 December 2006, Issue No. 824) on <http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/2006/824/re71.htm> (February 5, 2007)

According to Helga Baumgarten after Yassir Arafat's death, his successor Abbas (Abu Mazen) attempted to boost the Peace process with the Israelis and at the same time to take hold in the Palestinian society, which he tried to reach through elections. At the beginning of 2005 he had won the elections due to the reason that there was no “genuine opponent”. A year earlier he had induced local elections (four turns) because he feared an eventual victory of Hamas which again could vote down Fatah and take a strong place within the Palestinian society. His worry proved to be true and in fact Hamas came out ahead on the local level in the major cities. In spite of this outcome he held fast to the upcoming elections and to that effect U.S. President George W. Bush bolstered him in his plans. His idea was that the elections would result in an achievement that could push the peace talks, which the Israelis wished to conduct on a unilateral basis without the relevant people – the Palestinians. Vicariously, he aimed to cajole the U.S. government, which again could enjoy his method and approach for the realization of democracy in such a contentious region. (Cp. Baumgarten, Helga (2006): Die Hamas: Wahlsieg in Palästina 2006. In: Orient – German Journal for Politics and Economics of the Middle East, Vol. 47, p.27-28.)

International assistants have been aware of this long ago.

“Humanitarian assistance can cushion a deteriorating situation, but it ultimately cannot stop the decline,” said David Shearer, head of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). “Ultimately only a political settlement can generate a significant improvement,” he added. We are anxious to help the most needy maintain their dignity and have income. But the humanitarian community is not in a position to provide the full range services offered by the Palestinian Authority – and has no ambitions to do so.”⁵⁷²

Referring to David Shearer’s statement it reflects that for all the efforts the humanitarian community is attempting to undertake, these are not sufficient to meet the obligations on the Palestinian terrain. His view has the connotation that the sense of responsibility and liability towards the Palestinians are somehow lost. The situation in both territories not only worsened in terms of a declining economy, advancing indigence, exacerbated living conditions, internal disturbances and an international community who imposes sanctions on a government which does not suit its plans.

Further, a more significant aspect is the neglect and the progressive divide between the “aid sphere” and the “basis”. Referring to the latter, the international community is conscious of the aggravated circumstances, but paralyzes the entire “cycle” by its behaviour. Aid for the Palestinians has been pledged over years on the various donor conferences that took place sometimes more, sometimes less. Large amounts were poured into the PA, but with the recent change in the political landscape and Hamas in a dominating position, the international community altered its strategy with the aim to sanction the current government but totally disregarded the majority – the Palestinian society.

⁵⁷² David Shearer, head of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) on http://www.un.org/unrwa/news/briefings/cap_dec06.html (February 5, 2007)

Certainly, the international donors wanted the NGOs to continue their work but the civil societal actors were uncertain in their position and which side they shall take.

Nonetheless not only the PA shall be held for accountable but also the large number of NGOs who so to speak “blustered” with their great projects and contributions to the Palestinian (civil) society, and finally the international donor community which has had a voice in the agenda-making process and the financial means. The more alarming fact is that there are “no ambitions” on the part of the humanitarian community to provide the services needed at a full volume. The victims of this vicious circle are the Palestinians who have not only suffered for decades from the occupying regime and its restrictions but also from poverty and violence in their environment. The appeal of the UN for funds for this year is a further and clear signal for the aggravated situation in the occupied territories which could last for an indefinite period of time. The following interview confirms the dilemma.

“As you are aware of the development of the situation (after the January elections last year), it has become very difficult. Several of the international elements such as the relationship and the donations to the Palestinian government (including NGOs and other institutions) were cut off. The internal situation gets so much the worse resulting in the fact that no salaries are paid to the employees, and the ministries went on long strikes, subsequently, nothing moved. Besides that the internal conflict between the Palestinian factions, especially the Hamas and Fateh movements, these events have affected the people’s security and their safety, where many were killed (January 2007 were killed 76 people in Gaza Strip). The project for a national government did not succeed right after Saudi Arabia’s call for a summit in order to stop the fighting and killing.

So, last week the two movements had agreements in Mecca, agreements for a national government, and there is hope this time that it will remain. After this development many countries plan to resume a relation with the government and Palestinians at all.

Next week on 19 February 2007, a meeting between Mahmoud Abbas, Olmert and Rice will be held in order to resume possible negotiations, three days after this meeting the Quartet Committee will meet and discuss the Palestinian issue with their requests. Then the Palestinian government has to meet and implement the international community's requirements.

Since last week the situation has been quiet so far, moreover, internal negotiations could take place a few days after the national government will be established. Last week the Israeli government has started digging construction work near the Al-Magharebah Gate (next to the Al-Aqsa Mosque) in the Old City of Jerusalem. Israel is looking for archaeological pieces in that holy part) and these on-going constructions faced rejections by Palestinians. Last Friday Israeli authorities prevented people to get to the mosque to pray, which resulted in demonstrations that were taking place in different places, because of that the situation is still very tense.⁵⁷³

“Many questions even after Mecca meeting remain ... what has become of us? Our people have suffered for 59 years from displacement, homelessness, discrimination, impoverishment and expatriation, but they withstood that suffering and never killed each other; so what happened to us? [...] There are several additional social and psychological factors for what is befalling this society. A safe and stable environment is one that produces normal children, while the environment we have been living in since the occupation is one in which violence proliferates and becomes rampant.⁵⁷⁴

“Israeli renovations to the Al Aqsa Mosque area sparked riots and clashes between Palestinians and Israeli security forces.⁵⁷⁵

⁵⁷³ Interview with a staff member of the Civilian Personnel Section at the UN in Jerusalem (February 12, 2007)

⁵⁷⁴ El-Sarraj, Eyad Dr. (2007): The Psychosocial causes for the Palestinian Factional War. On . On http://www.gcmhp.net/File_files/Arti14feb2k7.html (February 14, 2007)

⁵⁷⁵ Frykberg, Mel (2007): Pots and Kettles. In: The Middle East, No. 376, Vol. 33, p.12-16.

This reflects the reality which has dominated the Palestinian society and its life for almost six decades and for about three generations. Through the increasing incredibility with regard to the “western apparatus”, its incomprehensible opacity and fungous comportment the people are suspicious and have almost lost faith with regard to amelioration of their situation. This may explain why the Islamic organisations experience great support and enjoy a large clientele. They can defer to achievements of which the PA was not in a position to do so despite the broad external support it has received over a decade since the conclusion of the Oslo Accords. Hence, there is no difficulty for them to gain more activists for their work and service provision.

The “helping” effect the international community has been striving for in order to support the Palestinians rather caused a centrifugal than a cohesive impact. Nonetheless, the ongoing occupation with the expansion of settlements and the ongoing construction of the wall curtailed the Palestinians in any aspect of life. All this supervenes to the already extraordinary circumstances which determine the Palestinians’ everyday life.

8. OVERALL RESULT

“The Arab regimes have always been a dab at sending blandishments and granting relief towards the Palestinians; whereby they relinquished the pecuniary matters to the West. The regimes in the region have no particular interest in a change of the current situation in the occupied territories and in the first Arab Islamic government experiment.”⁵⁷⁶

Taking the above given statement from a western point of view

“It is a story that the Western world tells with western eyes. And that story does not comprehend the scale of the gap and the scale of the problem. We, too, are sweeping it under the carpet.”⁵⁷⁷

“Right now we see no future at all. NGOs are taking over the role of the PA, and donors want it this way since Hamas won the elections, and we will go back to the dark ages of the first Intifada. The problem is that we all see it but most NGOs are running after it as it involves lots of money and lots of jobs.”⁵⁷⁸

Not only in the mid-1990s the Palestinians have been exposed to the severe economic situation and difficulties, but also through the recent change in the political landscape based on Hamas’ victory in the Palestinian legislative elections, which motivated the international community to stop their aid

⁵⁷⁶ Der Tagesspiegel online (2006): Geld und Terror on <http://archiv.tagesspiegel.de/drucken.php?link=archiv/18.04.2006/2476311.asp> (February 27, 2007)

⁵⁷⁷ Le More, Anne (2005): Killing with kindness: funding the demise of a Palestinian state. In: Foreign Affairs, Vol. 81, No. 5, p.981.

“The international community has collectively sought to support this state building enterprise by injecting a considerable amount of cash. More than US\$7 billion have been disbursed to the occupied territories over the last twelve years (since Oslo)-with an average of a little under US\$ 1 billion per annum over the last four years. The *European Union* (Commission and member states combined) has been far the largest aid contributor to the Palestinians. The *Arab League* states have also been substantial donors, notably through budgetary support to the PA during the Intifada. [...] The reality of the whole period has been one of increasing territorial, socio-economic and political fragmentation, which intensified with the onset of the Intifada.” (Le More, Anne (2005), op. cit. p.982-983.)

⁵⁷⁸ Interview (anonymous), (October 2, 2006)

contribution to the Palestinians.⁵⁷⁹ Therefore the international community pulled out all the stops and attempted to mobilise the NGOs for their interests and let them do the job.

“Unfortunately, this solution is based on wishful thinking, rather than careful analysis. The hundreds of NGOs that function in the region have become parties to the conflict, and not neutral engines of development and peacemakers. In considering NGOs as alternative channels for funding Palestinian aid while the government is under the control of Hamas, the funding agencies – particularly the government aid groups throughout Europe – appear to be unaware of this reality. But a closer look at these NGOs demonstrates that their activities are often highly inconsistent with claims of promoting development and human rights. If international donors want to provide humanitarian assistance they will have to develop their own organisations and monitoring systems, rather than using the existing network of NGOs.”⁵⁸⁰

Not only that the NGOs have become “instrumentalised”, but also the entire “humanitarian issue” has been transformed into a commercial activity. Hence, the NGO world nowadays is becoming a business, a pure business, and in the end it is all about the money and the visibility. They do not really care anymore of the beneficiaries. Many poor people can get crushed under the harsh feet of competition amongst NGOs, and sometimes it is painful, very painful.

“It is sad, but the world is moving in this direction, it seems this is part of globalization, less humanity, and the poor are becoming a part of the business of the rich, at all levels.”⁵⁸¹

⁵⁷⁹ “The victory of Hamas has raised new dilemmas for the main funders – Europe, the US, Canada, Japan, Australia and the World Bank. Many donor countries have demanded that Hamas renounce violence and accept Israel’s right to exist as a condition for continued aid. These terms were rejected by Hamas leaders who realize that many of the donors are reluctant to implement their conditions. [...] In the face of this dilemma, some European diplomats have begun discussing the option of routing development funds through the network of NGOs involved in human rights and humanitarian work.” (Steinberg, Gerald M. (2006): Funding NGOs is no solution. In: Jerusalem Post, February 12, 2006)

⁵⁸⁰ Steinberg, Gerald M. (2006): Funding NGOs is no solution. In: Jerusalem Post, February 12, 2006

⁵⁸¹ Interview (anonymous), (October 2, 2006)

“Many donors do not really relate to Palestinian demands and a good donor would do that. The responsibility is to contribute to the Palestinian community to organize itself.”⁵⁸²

These statements reflect the chagrin as a matter of fact, which determines the NGO scene in the occupied territories. The empirical research revealed the rules and actual facts that are dominating the terrain. The NGOs and in particular the Palestinian ones feel to be caught among the donors and the basis; not the real needs on the ground matter rather other interests dominate the agenda. A salient point is the large activism that has been carried on by the international community (and at the same their role as donors) in order to finance the “democracy wave” which deluged the Palestinians prior to the recent elections. The staffs of the various (mostly secular) organisations are aware of the circumstances and they know that the NGO scene is a good source of work opportunities, trainers and consultants, markets. But they also know that the services provided do not align well and truly with the needs of the “basis” since the donors set and control the agenda in most cases. A further study conducted recently revealed that

“the demand for NGO services is, as one would expect, influenced by the availability and the relative cost of alternative channels of service delivery. PNGO services are used when the PA has a limited role or weak capacity [...]”⁵⁸³

⁵⁸² Interview with Ingrid Schøyen (Desk Officer Middle East at the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Oslo, (September 27, 2005)

⁵⁸³ World Bank in cooperation with Bisan Center for Research and Development (December 2006): The Role and performance of Palestinian NGOs – In Health, Education and Agriculture.

According to this study the scale of PNGO service provision is largest in agriculture, followed by vocational training and pre-school education; it is less significant in the health sector. Despite of this the PNGOs account for up to 20% of donor funding in this sector. Within sectors, however, PNGOs seem deliver specific services that are otherwise unavailable or inaccessible, and have thereby developed specific niches of specialization. However, a much higher rate of utilization of NGO services is reported for specialized services, including rehabilitation, psychological counselling.

On

[http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/RWFiles2006.nsf/FilesByRWDdocUnidFilename/0737BD2D6C5DBF81C1257259004D7574-Full_Report.pdf/\\$File/Full_Report.pdf](http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/RWFiles2006.nsf/FilesByRWDdocUnidFilename/0737BD2D6C5DBF81C1257259004D7574-Full_Report.pdf/$File/Full_Report.pdf) (February 8, 2007)

Nonetheless, the Palestinian NGOs have found themselves in a specific role to serve the Palestinians, but this did not ease their anxiety for financial assistance which most of them have been depending on in order to provide the services needed. Furthermore, it is interesting that

“the services offered by PNGOs are not equally accessible to the poor in the three sectors (health, education, and agriculture/vocational training). PNGOs have to charge a fee for the services they deliver, and therefore when they have the option of receiving the same service, but for a lower price, the poor will generally not choose to utilize PNGO services. [...] The beneficiaries of PNGO services are largely from households with higher income levels.”⁵⁸⁴

This again confirms that the services provided by the NGOs do not align hundred per cent with the needs. Hence, a certain part of the aid recipients is excluded from their “client” list. This resembles to the existing difficulty in the West Bank and Gaza that the distribution of funding by districts does not happen equally, which again is not proportional in respect of population and needs.

“NGOs’ priorities are certainly guided primarily by a social logic rather than a political one. In this sense, to speak of NGO priorities does not mean that a consensus exists in the society or within the NGO sector, the state, the private sector and the other institutions of civil society. [...] This diversity of actors, animated sometimes by the games of personal powers, political rivalry and donor driven priorities, makes coordination difficult.”⁵⁸⁵

With regard to the specific services Dr. Eyad El-Sarraj (a psychiatrist) works in the mental health sector. He treats a large number of Palestinians who have suffered from traumas, insomnia, painful memories and other afflictions. On http://www.gcmhp.net/File_files/Arti14feb2k7.html (February 14, 2007)

⁵⁸⁴ World Bank in cooperation with Bisan Center for Research and Development (December 2006): The Role and performance of Palestinian NGOs – In Health, Education and Agriculture. On [http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/RWFiles2006.nsf/FilesByRWDocUnidFilename/0737BD2D6C5DBF81C1257259004D7574-Full_Report.pdf/\\$File/Full_Report.pdf](http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/RWFiles2006.nsf/FilesByRWDocUnidFilename/0737BD2D6C5DBF81C1257259004D7574-Full_Report.pdf/$File/Full_Report.pdf) (February 8, 2007)

⁵⁸⁵ Hanafi, Sari, Tabar, Linda (2005), op. cit. p.71.

The funds are not only constrained by various influences on part of the donors but also by their specific interests, which could be of political or economic nature.

“In short, all the money poured into the country quickly runs back home, one way or the other.”⁵⁸⁶

Using the example of Tamkeen⁵⁸⁷ who as discussed earlier announces a call for proposals, sends out its experts who conduct field visits and evaluate the single “applicants”, but the decisive point is that a large part of the money needed is deducted from the funds available. This money is used in order to pay these experts who create this substantial evaluation on the NGO applying for financial assistance. Hence, a certain amount primarily intended for the organisation is spent on such things, which is completely needless. Hanafi and Tabar also confirm this by stating that

“in the Palestinian context it is apparent that the larger donors often choose to work with large NGOs. Moreover, with the rise of professionalized international NGOs, there are new stringent criteria that the local NGOs are expected to meet, that can exclude certain organisations. In an extreme case, [...], USAID contracts consultants to audit and evaluate the structure of grant candidates, to ensure the organisation meets or approximates international standards as per administrative and financial management. In this respect, the emphasis of the donors is on the professionalism of the organisation, not necessarily on its work on the ground. By implication, the donor’s decision whether or not support the project proposal (which was advertised by the donor himself L.B.) does not give much consideration to the broader context. Moreover, donors tend to neglect the smaller organisations that may be doing good work on the ground.”⁵⁸⁸

⁵⁸⁶ Interview (anonymous), (October 2, 2006)

⁵⁸⁷ USAID awarded Tamkeen in September 2000 for five years. Tamkeen is managed by Chemonics International.

⁵⁸⁸ Hanafi, Sari, Tabar, Linda (2005), op. cit. p.197.

But once the NGOs receive the affirmation for funds, further controls accompany them throughout the projects in form of reports, visits, etc. Hence, the donors' insight does not correspond to the Palestinian concerns since the specific criteria expel a number of NGOs a priori though they could have done a good job. Consequently, this may entail the competition for funds among the NGOs once again.

“The intrusion of market logic into development processes fuels the rise of a global elite and conversely the marginalization of other organisations.”⁵⁸⁹

Mostly, the reasons given by the donors for such behaviour are that they do not have the capacities to address any NGO that is working on the Palestinian terrain. The other and more interesting aspect is that the donors favour those NGOs who are in favour of the state, in this case the PA (but not the current Hamas-led government); and that type who proved to be capable, useful and popular in the eyes of the financiers. The empirical research also revealed that the donors have a sort of regular customers they work with based on the reason that they know how their “clients” work and they can rely on their experiences. ECHO for instance has particular partners they work with. This method applied by the donors triggers the formation of a particular circle, which is assisted and supported. Moreover, as the interviews confirmed great importance is attached to the reputation of the NGO, and not only to the organisation itself, but also the person, who is running it. This seems to be a significant characteristic in the Palestinian NGO scenery, which the donors are fully aware of.

In addition, the contemporary situation with the new Hamas government represents more obstacles in view of the donors since they avoid providing financial assistance to the PA and bypass it. The entire picture is blurry and at the same time doubtful since the NGOs on one hand feel uncertain with whom to take side and on the other pressured and controlled by the donors.

⁵⁸⁹ Hanafi, Sari, Tabar, Linda (2005), op. cit. p.196.

Mostly, NGOs and with them donors consider their support as a positive and efficient contribution though the divide between the aid providers and their beneficiaries has grown. The NGOs determine their area of responsibility in the field of humanitarian development and in the response to the populations' needs regardless to the political environment. They rather accept the situation and thus try to adapt their projects as best as they can to the situation and at the same time with the donors' agendas that fund them.

Throughout my research it has become clear that those concerned do not really have a positive perspective with regard to the prospective Palestinian state though they did not expect Hamas to win the elections and take over. These conditions lead to a situation of "muddling through" in which the needs of the population are more and more marginalized while the NGOs fight each other and contribute, by this way, to the further disaggregation of the Palestinian society and its decomposition and slipping into civil war.

8.1 Political Facts

The NGOs view the political situation as a prevailing problem and the donors' pressure as an additional element. The donors are fully aware of the facts on the ground and what happens within the NGOs. NGOs confirmed that the donors have stringent policies with regard to their funds and most of the donors send out their staffs to inspect and supervise the organisations as discussed earlier. Nonetheless, the NGOs attempt to position themselves on the "donor market" and how they can present themselves as the best or even "docile" broker between the aid sphere and the basis. Whereas a financial gap in the NGOs' "wallet" may cause a quick perdition in case there are no other financial cushions.

"USAID created huge organisations in Latin America and Africa and made them collapse with its changes."⁵⁹⁰

This problem was also addressed in the interviews that once the donors all of a sudden change their interests, the NGOs who have been depending on them suffer from the consequences. They either look for another financier or at worst they dissolve, where it has to be emphasized that most NGOs automatically change their "mission". If they see a need in their continuity, then they adapt to the "new" environment and its demands. Demand is the keyword, which determines a lot and sets the conditions for the funds that are distributed by the donors. But it could also be the other way round. Hanafi and Tabar use the example of:

"The Norwegian People's Aid (NPA) has a policy of changing its partners regularly to avoid NGOs developing dependency on one funder. One of the mega-NGO leaders did not agree with this policy and find it useful for NGOs, and sent a letter to the Norwegian Representative Office, complaining about the NPA representative."⁵⁹¹

⁵⁹⁰ Hanafi, Sari, Tabar, Linda (2005), op. cit. p.198.

⁵⁹¹ Hanafi, Sari, Tabar, Linda (2005), op. cit. p.198.

The donors' presence on the NGO market from their point of view is that they are convinced "just to food the bill". The above given example of the NPA is a little step towards the right direction in terms of support, but it does not weaken the fact that the fundamental circumstances with regard to the occupation will change. The Norwegian position (in the interview) clearly indicated that the donors' behaviour is not a durable solution in the long run. It has become obvious that the Palestinian "needs" have neither really been addressed on the political nor on the "basic" levels. The Palestinians are weary of their situation which seems to be dead-end. It is simply the maintenance of an occupation, which equals a vicious circle and there is no close end in sight. Further, the NGOs involved are in conflict since they have to sustain their presence on the "funds market" with regard to the donors and at the same to establish themselves as flexible "partners".

The donors are aware that any step undertaken depends on the Israeli government, which is finally backed by the US and the EU as well. The long-term perspective was that the conflicting parties – Israel and the PA - would sit down together at the negotiation table and conduct a political dialogue. But since the political landscape has changed through Hamas' victory, this seems for the near future far away. The majority of the activists on the ground are sceptical based on the ongoing building of the wall and the related separation of the Palestinian territory, the explosion of the settlements and the international acceptance of the Israeli policy.

*"According to a recent survey carried out in Israel more than three quarters of the public are not satisfied with the country's political leadership. The poll, initiated by the state president's office, found that of the 78% who said they were unhappy with their leaders, the reasons cited included corruption (32%), inexperience (12%), self-centeredness of the leadership (10%), weakness (9%) and caring only for the rich (5%). [...] Our political system is sick. It suffers from the plague of political appointments that defile everything they touch."*⁵⁹²

⁵⁹² Frykberg, Mel (2007): Pots and Kettles. In: The Middle East, No. 376, Vol. 33, p.13.

The latter quote reflects clearly the reality and the attitude the Israelis have with regard to their political leadership. Thus, dissatisfaction not only exists on the Palestinian side, but also there where the strings are pulled.

Particularly with regard to the NGOs will find themselves in the same or in an even worse position because the donors' pressure will not diminish and the Palestinians' situation with regard to the political status will not be solved overnight. This position will let the NGOs look as centrifugal forces that are not able to strengthen the Palestinian society. The chasm between both is going to get broader and the NGO "camps" are going to separate themselves from each other. With regard to the Islamic NGOs these might be in a different position since they also receive financial aid but mostly from their Arab brethren in the wealthy Gulf States. And not only that, the Islamic organisations have also experienced authenticity over the years from their beneficiaries.

Hamas not only stood up to Fatah in the electoral campaign, it has also proved to be successful with its work in the social and education sectors.

"The particular experiences and values demonstrated the Palestinians that Hamas is rather able to mobilize and organize than Fatah did before."⁵⁹³

It has to be underlined that it is not bigotry, which earned Hamas a victory.

"Religion has a less relevant reason in the vote (which was confirmed by many pollsters L.B.)."⁵⁹⁴

According to the survey of the Birzeit University the majority of 43% voted for Hamas based on the fact that they did not tolerate the ongoing corruption within the PA structures. Interestingly enough that the decision taken by the Palestinians was not related to their religious affiliation⁵⁹⁵ more probably in

⁵⁹³ Baumgarten, Helga (2006): Die Hamas: Wahlsieg in Palästina 2006. In: Orient – German Journal for Politics and Economics of the Middle East, Vol. 47, p.41.

⁵⁹⁴ Baumgarten, Helga (2006): Die Hamas: Wahlsieg in Palästina 2006. In: Orient – German Journal for Politics and Economics of the Middle East, Vol. 47, p.43.

⁵⁹⁵ By comparison 19% voted for Hamas based on religious reasons.

connection with the entire situation. Nonetheless, nothing could really agitate Hamas.

“The more Hamas was discredited and attacked at the outside, the stronger it was backed and received an impulse from within.”⁵⁹⁶

The media and the international community took advantage of the situation to influence the vote and they had already done so ahead of the elections through their “democracy” campaigns via the NGOs. In fact, it is difficult for the NGOs in such a confusing environment where things change from one moment to the other and where a serious conflict has determined people’s life for decades. The more crucial and alarming point is that the NGOs’ work has become a great business being part of the complex structure called globalization. As previously mentioned above the donors’ behaviour and influence on the funds market have shaped a „global elite“ through their selective criteria in terms of NGOs. Hanafi and Tabar point out that

“If one were to plot the main types of Palestinian NGO formations along a line, ranging from the elite to the more marginalized organisations, the classification would appear as follows: on one end there would be the globalized NGO elite and the Islamist NGO elite, and at the other end of the spectrum, there would be the voluntary initiatives and the marginalized charitable societies.”⁵⁹⁷

On the one hand there are NGOs who are assisted by international donors and on the other those who are backed on a local basis and by Palestinians in the Diaspora. Both the international-oriented organisations and the Islamic-oriented ones have their own patterns, and as already mentioned different sources of funding, which play an important role. Due to the fact that the international ones have to apply for funding whereas the Islamic ones have other channels for funds, which they use. A clear line is drawn, which separates and distinguishes

⁵⁹⁶ Baumgarten, Helga (2006): Die Hamas: Wahlsieg in Palästina 2006. In: Orient – German Journal for Politics and Economics of the Middle East, Vol. 47, p.43.

⁵⁹⁷ Hanafi, Sari, Tabar, Linda (2005), op. cit. p.251.

the two spheres regarding their course of action, their addressees, and their source of capital of course, and finally their political networks.⁵⁹⁸

Further components such as reputation, connections and networks determine the Palestinian NGOs' standing within the donor sphere and society as well. Referring back to this so-called "globalized elite", according to Hanafi and Tabar 20% of the Palestinian NGOs depend exclusively on western funds. They count the largest NGOs, also known as MEGA-NGOs. A few of them have even monopolized certain sectors.⁵⁹⁹ Hanafi and Tabar point out that

*"the (L.B) problem of mega-NGOs is also fuelled by the NGOs themselves. For instance, a large NGO in Gaza pressured the donors to try to deter them from changing funding arrangements."*⁶⁰⁰

Hence, not only the donors with their strict agendas contributed to the conflicting chasm but also the increasing external influences and expectations have had an impact on the NGOs' behaviour. The NGOs have become a sort of instrument for the donors' interests. And the donors are not neutral; they are disguised and function as governmental vehicles. The donors are conscious of the fact that something in terms of a peace process has to be done in order to take the entire process a step ahead.

*"If you have no PA, you don't have a negotiation partner for Israel. There is nothing we can compare the situation with in order to say that we could have done it better or worse."*⁶⁰¹

⁵⁹⁸ Hanafi, Sari, Tabar, Linda (2005), op. cit. p.251.

⁵⁹⁹ Hanafi, Sari, Tabar, Linda (2005), op. cit. p.252.

⁶⁰⁰ Hanafi, Sari, Tabar, Linda (2005), op. cit. p.198.

⁶⁰¹ Interview with Ingrid Schøyen (Desk Officer Middle East at the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Oslo), (September 27, 2005)

Independently, the NGOs still might continue to fill the gap the PA had left open and continue to complement the PA's functions based on their broader knowledge and experiences, which they gained throughout the years. But nevertheless, they arrived at a point where they (not all of them, but a large majority) cannot justify being a "Non-Governmental Organisation" anymore since they are not. And in addition to this, the international community including the donors have neglected their responsibility to admonish the occupying power who did not meet its obligation in accordance with *Article 55 of the Fourth Geneva Convention (Supplementary Protocol I)*, which declares that

*"to the fullest extent of the means available to it, the Occupying Power has the duty of ensuring the food and medical supplies of the population; it should, in particular, bring in the necessary foodstuffs, medical stores and other articles if the resources of the occupied territory are inadequate. The Occupying Power may not requisition food stuffs, articles or medical supplies available in the occupied territory; except for use by the occupation forces and administration personnel, and only if the requirements of the civilian population have been taken into account."*⁶⁰²

And definitely that is not the case and corresponds to the reality. As a result of the empirical data gathered it has been reported very often that equipment was confiscated by the Israeli authorities at the checkpoints, NGO staffs have had difficulties to move within the occupied territories, their offices were destroyed and numerous other incidences withheld the NGOs from their work. But nonetheless, the crucial point remains the default of the Israeli authorities and furthermore their hindering line of action with a particular purpose, which again is supported by the donor community. Here, the statement

*"It is a dilemma as a donor to contribute to an occupation. It is also a dilemma to ask for certain behaviour if you know that you support an occupation. There are many more dilemmas."*⁶⁰³

⁶⁰² (on <http://www.icrc.org/Web/Eng/siteeng0.nsf/htmlall/genevaconventions> ,(March 6, 2007)

⁶⁰³ Interview (anonymous), (September 22, 2006)

takes effect and reflects the actual facts. Hanafi and Tabar argue correctly that

*“the importance of international humanitarian law is that it makes specific reference to the Fourth Geneva Convention and to the responsibility of third party states. In this regard, it is not simply appealing to the state’s moral obligation but grounding its claims in international treaties, which stipulate certain practices that states involved in conflicts (as occupying powers) are obliged to obey.”*⁶⁰⁴

This was not always the case, but in time the Israeli regime did not comply anymore with its duties. With the creation of the PA, this obligation faded away and the only fact that counted was the control of the money flow towards the new quasi-government and anything else has become less important.

*“The international donor community has financed not only Israel’s continued occupation but also its expansionist agenda – at the expense of international law, of the well-being of the Palestinian population, of their right to self-determination, and of the international community’s own stated developmental and political objectives.”*⁶⁰⁵

All these facts are reflected in the Palestinians’ dissatisfaction, which let them change their mind about the PA and its heads. They did not only feel neglected and marginalized but also misused. One of the major aspects was that the

*“public revenues and the opaque allocation of business contracts notably in the case of the PA monopolies also became a political resource to buy support for the regime, leading to the waste and misuse of public funds and the growing perception that the PA was not only a bloated and inefficient administration but also a corrupt one. [...] The PA regime was built with international funds at the cost of democracy, transparency, accountability, the rule of law and respect for human rights.”*⁶⁰⁶

⁶⁰⁴ Hanafi, Sari, Tabar, Linda (2005), op. cit. p.147.

⁶⁰⁵ Le More, Anne (2005), op. cit. p.983.

⁶⁰⁶ Le More, Anne (2005), op. cit. p.985-986.

Hamas against that earned a victory in the recent elections and has enjoyed the population's trust and confidence, which have contributed by and large to its solid standing. Its social activism in terms of service provision to the Palestinians has been very important since aid for the needy has been provided without any particular conditions.

Thus, this has been rooted in the waqf system, which is part of the culture as explained earlier. This stands for solidarity within the society (community) as al-Farabi pointed out as well. But the more significant point is that this is not under suspicion of any external interests that are being sought by a third party, they rather serve the public welfare.

8.2 *Final concluding remarks*

All in all it can be clearly emphasized based on the prior thoughts and outcomes that firstly, the NGOs on the Palestinian terrain are not the “angels” or “helping hand for the poor” as assumed at the beginning of this investigation. They are rather politically dependent organisations, which are “instrumentalised” by their funders in order to pursue and achieve specific political interests. The debate on the concept of Orientalism was in so far indispensable in order to show that the images shaped by the various prejudices and characteristics have had a fading effect on the NGO scene in the occupied territories as well.

Secondly, in such precarious situations as in the case of Palestine, the local NGOs also have the function to secure the existence of their staffs. Thus, this makes them more susceptible for the implementation of the organisations’ aims, which stand behind the national NGOs.

Thirdly, with regard to the Palestinian case, the survey clearly revealed that the NGOs on the ground contribute heedlessly onward to the fragmentation of the Palestinian society based on the reason that these results in dependency which let them become aliment-recipient. Compared to the first Intifada the then existing cohesion, solidarity and individual initiatives are not on the spot anymore, since they have been paralysed by the exogenous influences.

Fourthly, and one of the significant notions is that NGOs are perceived as agents of the West. This applies even more and in particular to the recent boycott action of the U.S and the European Union in consequence of Hamas’ electoral victory at the beginning of last year. The positive election returns for Hamas are not only based on the dissatisfaction of the Palestinians by the prior dominating Fatah, but also due to the growing pressure by the West. The attempted exertion of influence on part of Fatah did not receive any positive feedback from the Palestinian constituents, which also confirmed Hamas’ position. Hamas’ longstanding dedication found great popularity among the needy and the aid recipients in general. In view of Fatah a large number of

Palestinians did not really feel to be represented by them, also due to the augmented occurrences of corruption and nepotism.

According to that the Islamic NGOs were ahead of their secular counterparts because their aid system is closely related with the tradition of the waqf structure as discussed earlier. The particularity is that this form of solidarity is not under strong suspicion of being connected to western money or interests, which could be understood as atomisation and paralysis of the social and political articulation with regard to the Palestinians.

In view of the situation of the Palestinian NGOs and the international donors, it is supposed to be a reciprocal relationship, a sort of “give and take”, but the current status is that it has shifted into a “take and expect” attitude on part of the western donors. Through the increasing polarisation due to the west regarding “the Islam” and the earlier debates on Huntington’s view on “cultural differences”, it can be observed that a simultaneous “instrumentalization” of the actors – in this case that of the Palestinian NGOs - is taking place. And this rather hinders a cohesive effect on the Palestinian society and thus has a centrifugal dimension on it, which does not allow solidarity with the basis.

In this way the cohesive impact of the Islamic NGOs within the Palestinian society is strengthened and confirmed, because of their independence from external and financial support on the one hand and on the other for the reason that their services and social structures are anchored in religion, tradition and culture. Though according to international law (as explained above) the occupying regime is obligated to compensate for the population’s sustenance in the concerned territories, but the form of “aid” supplied is per se backing the occupation.

Taking a look at this constellation with regard to the contemporary international context the following argumentation emerges: The enmity of the West in the face of “the Islam” produces the very antithesis of what the West considers as its objectives and eventual achievements. The focal problem is that of the double standards of western politics on all stages, which seem to have found their way into the Palestinian society and into the NGO scene.

9. APPENDIX

9.1 NGO-Law

Palestinian Legislative Council

Law of Charitable Associations and Community Organisations

Law No. 1, Year 2000

- Chapter One:
- Chapter Two: Registration of Associations and Organisations
- Chapter Three: Rights and Duties of Associations and Organisations
- Chapter Four: The Board of Directors
- Chapter Five: The General Assembly
- Chapter Six: Merger and Unification
- Chapter Seven: Financial Affairs of the Associations or Organisations
- Chapter Eight: Charitable Associations and Foreign Organisations
- Chapter Nine: Dissolution of the Association or Organisation
- Chapter Ten: General and Transitional Concluding Provisions

Chapter One

Article (1)

Palestinian citizens have the right to practice social, cultural, professional and scientific activity in all freedom, including the right to establish and run Associations and Community Organisations.

Article (2)

Definitions

The following terms and expressions that are used in this Law have the following meanings, unless otherwise indicated.

The Ministry: The Ministry of Interior.

The Competent Ministry: The Ministry under the competence of which the activities of the Association would fall.

The Minister: The Minister of Interior.

The Competent Department: The Department set up as part of the Ministry under the competence of which the activities of the Association would fall.

The Association or Organisation: Any charitable Association or Community Organisation with an independent judicial personality, established upon an agreement concluded among no less than seven persons to achieve legitimate objectives of public concern, without aiming at attaining financial profits to be shared among the members or achieving any personal benefits.

The Foreign Association or Organisation: Any foreign charitable Association or Community Organisation which has its main headquarters or center of activities outside the Palestinian territories, or the majority of whose members are foreigners.

The General Assembly: The general body made up of all the members of the Association; it is the highest authority in the Association or Organisation.

The Board of Directors: The Board of Directors of the Association or Organisation.

Merger: Unification of two or more Associations or Organisations into a single Association or Organisation with a new judicial personality.

Union: Unification of two or more Associations or Organisations whereby a single representative body is established, but each Association or Organisation maintains its independent judicial personality.

Community Activity: Any social, economic, cultural, community, developmental or other service or activity, undertaken voluntarily, that would lead to the improvement of the social, health, professional, material, spiritual, artistic, sports, cultural or educational conditions in society.

Chapter Two

Registration of Associations and Organisations

Article (3)

The Ministry will set up a Competent Department for the registration of the Associations and Organisations in coordination with the Competent Ministry, and for purposes of implementation of this Law the Competent Department will keep the following registries:

- 1 A registry recording all registration requests, using consecutive numbers in accordance with the dates of request.
- 2 A general registry of all Associations and Organisations that have been registered, in which the names, fields of activity, objectives and any other facts that the Competent Department considers necessary for the information of all competent bodies, are recorded.
- 3 A registry in which the names of the Associations and Organisations whose requests for registration were refused are included, indicating their objectives and the reasons for the refusal, and any other additional information that the Competent Department considers necessary for the record.

Article (4)

Registration Procedures

- 1 The founders of an Association or Organisation submit a written application to the Competent Department for registration in compliance with all relevant

conditions, signed by no less than three of the founding members authorized to register and sign on behalf of the Association or Organisation. The application needs to be accompanied by three copies of the By-Laws signed by the members of the Founding Committee.

- 2 The Minister of the Interior has to issue his decision regarding the compliance of the application with the conditions of registration within a period not exceeding two months from the date of submission of the application. In case of submission of additional data or missing documents needed for the registration, the two-month period starts from the date of submission of the missing documents.
- 3 If the two-month period following the submission of the application for registration expires without a decision being taken, the Association or Organisation is considered registered by law.
- 4 In the event a decision is issued by the Minister rejecting the application for registration, the decision should specify the reasons for the rejection. The applicants have the right to contest the decision before the competent courts within a period not exceeding thirty days from the date they are notified of the rejection of their application for registration.

Article (5)

Taking into consideration the Provisions of the Law, the By-Laws should include the following information:

- 1 The name of the Association or Organisation, its address, its purpose and its main headquarters.
- 2 The financial resources of the Association or Organisation, the manner in which they are to be used or dispensed with.
- 3 The conditions for membership, kinds of membership, reasons for termination of membership and membership fees.
- 4 The organisational structure of the Association or Organisation, rules governing the amendment of its By-Laws, its merger or unification [with other Associations or Organisations].
- 5 Procedures for convening the General Assembly.
- 6 Methods of financial supervision.

7 Rules governing the dissolution of the Association or Organisation, and methods of dispensing with its finances and holdings upon dissolution.

Article (6)

The Ministry will be responsible for monitoring the work of the Associations and the Organisations in accordance with the Provisions of this Law. The Ministry may scrutinise the activity of any Association or Organisation upon a substantiated written order issued in each instance by the Minister to ascertain that its funds have been spent for the purposes for which they were allocated in accordance with the Provisions of this Law and the By-Laws of the Association or Organisation. The Association or Organisation should enable the Ministry to implement this order to ascertain that it is conducting its affairs in accordance with the Provisions of this Law and the By-Laws of the Association or Organisation.

Article (7)

The Associations and Organisations are independent judicial persons, enjoying an independent financial status, upon registration in accordance with the Provisions of this Law. They may not practice any of their activities before completing registration procedures.

Article (8)

The decision to register an Association or Organisation is published in the Official Gazette.

Chapter Three

Rights and Duties of Associations and Organisations

Article (9)

In accordance with the Provisions of the Law:

- 1 an Association or Organisation may hold transferable or non-transferable funds for the attainment of its objectives;

- 2 a foreign Association or Organisation may hold non-transferable funds, on condition it obtains permission to that effect from the Ministerial Council upon the recommendation of the competent Minister;
- 3 no foreign Association or Organisation may dispense with non-transferable funds without the agreement of the Ministerial Council.

Article (10)

The relations of the Associations and Organisations with the Competent Ministries are established on the basis of coordination, cooperation and complementariness for the public good.

Article (11)**Records of the Association or Organisation**

The Association or Organisation keeps at its main headquarters its official financial and administrative records that include the following financial transactions, administrative decisions and data:

- 1 Incoming and outgoing correspondence, in special files and organized records.
- 2 By-Laws [of the Association or Organisation], names of the members of the Board of Directors in each electoral term and the date of their election.
- 3 Names of all members of the Association, Organisation or Institution, along with identification, age and date indicating when membership commenced.
- 4 Minutes of the Board of Directors meetings, in chronological order.
- 5 Minutes of the meetings of the General Assembly.
- 6 Record of revenues and expenditure, detailed according to financial rules.

Article (12)

Every Association or Organisation will deposit with the Competent Department a statement regarding any amendment or change regarding the location of its headquarters, By-Laws, objectives, or purposes, or any complete or partial change in its Board of Directors, within a period not exceeding one month from the date the amendment or change took place.

Article (13)

The Association or Organisation will present to the Competent Ministry, at a date no later than four months after the end of the financial year, two reports approved by the General Assembly:

- 1 an administrative report containing a full description of the activities of the Association or Organisation during the last year;
- 2 a financial report signed by a legal auditor, and containing a detailed revenue and expenditure account of the Association or Organisation finances in accordance with the accepted principles of accounting.

Article (14)

Associations and Organisations are exempted from taxes and customs duties on the transferable and non-transferable funds necessary for the implementation of its objectives, provided they are not disposed of within a period of less than five years for purposes incompatible with the purposes [of the Association or Organisation] unless the due taxes and customs duties are paid.

Article (15)

- 1 Associations and Organisations are entitled to organize activities and establish income-generating projects provided the revenues are used to cover its activities for the public good;
- 2 Associations and Organisations are entitled to set up branches inside Palestine.

Chapter Four**The Board of Directors****Article (16)**

- 1 Every Association or Organisation should have a Board of Directors made up of at least seven and no more than thirteen members; the By-Laws of the Association or Organisation determine the procedures for setting up this Board, for choosing its members and for terminating their membership.

- 2 The Board of Directors may not include more than two members bound by family relations of the first or second degree.

Article (17)

- 1 The Board of Directors of any Association or Community Organisation is responsible for all its operations and activities.
- 2 The Chairman of the Association or Organisation represents the Association or Community Organisation before other parties, and signs all correspondence, contracts and agreements concluded between it and other parties on its behalf.

Article (18)

Rights of the Board of Directors

The Board of Directors is entitled to:

- 1 Administer the affairs of the Association or Organisation, and establish the necessary rules, regulations and instructions.
- 2 Appoint the staff necessary for the Association or Organisation, to define their job or to terminate their services in accordance with the Provisions of the Law.
- 3 Set up committees it deems necessary for the improvement of operations, and to define the competence of each committee.
- 4 Draw up the final statement of accounts for the past financial year and the draft budget for the following year.
- 5 Present the annual administrative and financial reports, and any future plans and projects before the General Assembly.
- 6 Call the General Assembly to an ordinary or extraordinary meeting session, and implement its resolutions in accordance with the Provisions of the Law.
- 7 Follow up any observations presented by the Competent Department, Ministry or other official bodies regarding the activities of the Association or Organisation, and respond to them.

Article (19)

The rights of the Chairman, the Vice-Chairman, the Secretary, the Treasurer and the rest of the Board of Directors of any Association or Organisation are

defined in accordance with its By-Laws and regulations in a manner not contravening the Provisions of this Law.

Article (20)

It is not permissible to combine membership of the Board of Directors with paid work for the Association or Organisation in question.

Article (21)

- 1 The Board of Directors holds an ordinary meeting at least once every three months upon the invitation of the Chairman or the Vice-Chairman.
- 2 The Board of Directors holds an extraordinary meeting when necessary upon the invitation of the Chairman or the Vice-Chairman, or at the request of one third of its members.
- 3 The meeting of the Board of Directors has a quorum when two-thirds of its members are in attendance.
- 4 Decisions of the Board of Directors have to be taken by an absolute majority to be valid.

Article (22)

- 1 When it is not possible to convene a meeting of the Board of Directors as a result of resignation or death, the remaining members of the Board of Directors (in their capacity as a transitional committee) take over the tasks of the Board of Directors for a period of time not exceeding one month, and they call the General Assembly within the above period of time to elect a new Board of Directors.
- 2 In the event of collective resignation, or in the event of the transitional committee failing to carry out its tasks as set out in the first paragraph of this Article, the Minister will appoint a transitional committee from among the members of the General Assembly to carry out the tasks of the Board of Directors for a period of time not exceeding one month, and to convene the General Assembly within the same period of time to elect a new Board of Directors.

Chapter Five

The General Assembly

Article (23)

Formation and Rights

- 1 The By-Laws of the Association or Organisation define the manner, in accordance with the Provisions of this Law, according to which the General Assembly of the Association or Organisation is to be established. It is to be made up of all the members who have fulfilled their commitments as outlined in the By-Laws. The General Assembly convenes at least once every year to review and approve the report submitted by the Board of Directors on the activities of the Association or Organisation, as well as the report of the financial auditor on its financial position, and to appoint the financial auditor, and any other matters the Board of Directors may include as part of its agenda.
- 2 The General Assembly is entitled to draw up general policies and guidelines for the Association or Organisation and to elect the members of the Board of Directors; its decisions are reached by a simple majority of the members present, unless otherwise stipulated in the By-Laws of the Association.
- 3 Decisions are taken by the absolute majority of the members of the General Assembly as regards amending the By-Laws, and by a majority of two-thirds of the members of the General Assembly as regards the dissolution of the Association or Organisation, or the introduction of an amendment to its By-Laws related to the purpose of the Association, the dismissal of members of the Board of Directors, or its unification or merger, unless the By-Laws stipulate a greater majority in those cases.

Article (24)

The Extraordinary Meeting

One-third of the members of the General Assembly of any Association or Organisation may call for an extraordinary meeting.

Article (25)

The General Assembly of the Association or Organisation has a quorum if an absolute majority of the members attend. If the absolute majority is not in attendance, the General Assembly will be postponed and reconvened within a period not exceeding fifteen days of the date of the first meeting. The reconvened General Assembly will have a quorum, provided the number of members present is no less than one third of all the members of the Association or Organisation.

Chapter Six**Merger and Unification****Article (26)**

- 1 Two or more Associations or Organisations may merge or unite, without prejudice to the rights of other parties towards each of these Associations or Organisations obtained before the merger.
- 2 The representatives of the Associations or Organisations joining a merger should turn over all their funds and special records to the new Association resulting from the merger.
- 3 The new Association or Organisation is not liable for the commitments of the Associations or Organisations it merged with, except within the limits of the funds handed over to it by those Associations or Organisations, and rights accruing to it as per the date of the merger.

Article (27)

Three or more Associations or Community Organisations may form a single Union, and these Unions in turn may form a General Union provided joining the General Union is a voluntary undertaking.

Article (28)

Any Association or Organisation may join or be affiliated with any Arab or regional or international Organisation or Union outside the Palestinian territories, as long as it keeps the competent party informed.

Article (29)

All procedures and provisions stipulated in this Law with regard to registration, basic regulations and related statements, will also apply to each union concluded among a group of Associations or Organisations or any unified Associations or Organisations established according to its Provisions.

Chapter Seven**Financial Affairs of the Associations or Organisations****Article (30)**

Every Association or Organisation should have an annual budget supervised by a legal accountant, unless its expenditure is less than 1000 Jordanian Dinar or its in another currency legally in circulation. The auditor submits a report on the financial position of the Association or Organisation for the past financial year to the General Assembly for its approval at its annual meeting.

Article (31)

The Association or Organisation should deposit its cash funds under its own name with an accredited bank, and inform the Competent Ministry of the details of the above. The Association or Organisation may not keep cash funds exceeding its expenditure for one month.

Article (32)

In a manner not contravening the Provisions of this Law, Associations or Organisations may receive unconditional assistance to carry out their work.

Article (33)

Associations or Organisations may collect contributions from the public for the social purposes for which they were established by, among other things, organizing parties, charity bazaars, and sports competitions, after informing the Competent Ministry.

Chapter Eight

Charitable Associations and Foreign Organisations

Article (34)

In accordance with the Provisions of the Law:

- 1 Any foreign Association or Organisation may submit an application to the Minister to open one or more branches of the Association or Organisation in the Palestinian territories to carry out any social services provided these services are compatible with the developmental priorities of Palestinian society, and provided the request includes the name of the foreign Association or Organisation, its main headquarters, address, names of founders and members of its Board of Directors, its main purposes, and the names of the persons in charge of the proposed branch and their nationalities, and the manner in which the funds of the branch will be disposed of upon the dissolution of the branch or the liquidation of its operations or its withdrawal, and this will not exceed a period of two months from the date of the submission of the application.

- 2 The Competent Ministry must take into consideration the opinion of the Ministry of Planning and International Co-operation regarding the registration request of foreign Associations and Organisations.

Article (35)

The persons responsible for any of the branches of the foreign Association or Organisation should inform the Ministry of any changes involving the information specific to the branch they are managing within a period not exceeding one month of the date of the change.

Article (36)

Every branch of the foreign Association or Organisation presents to the Ministry a periodic report covering all its activities, including the funds spent to achieve its objectives.

Chapter Nine

Dissolution of the Association or Organisation

Article (37)

The Association or Organisation is dissolved in the following cases:

- 1 If the decision to dissolve the Association has been taken by the General Assembly, which immediately needs to be brought to the attention of the Ministry.
- 2 If it [the Association or Organisation] does not commence its actual operations within the first year of its date of registration or of obtaining its license, unless the inactivity is the result of circumstances beyond the control of the Association or Organisation.
- 3 If proven that it [the Association or Organisation] has committed a substantive violation of its By-Laws, and not rectified the above conditions within three months of the date of notification to that effect by the Minister or the Department.

Article (38)

- 1 In the event a decision is issued by the Minister to repeal the registration of any Association or Organisation, it [the decision] should state the causes in writing. The Association or Organisation has the right to contest the decision before the competent court.
- 2 If a decision to dissolve an Association or Organisation is contested before the competent court, the Association or Organisation may continue its work until a temporary or final judicial decision is issued to halt its activities or to dissolve it.

Article (39)

- 1 In the event an Association or Organisation is dissolved, a paid liquidator is appointed who prepares an inventory of its funds and assets so that they may be dispensed with in accordance with the procedures specified by its By-Laws and the Provisions of this Law. In the event, the By-Laws make no reference to the manner in which the funds [of the Association or

Organisation] are to be dispensed, the Ministry will transfer the funds of the dissolved Association or Organisation to Associations and Organisations of a similar purpose, taking into account the pensions, allowances and entitlements of the employees of the dissolved Association, which would be exempt from the transfer.

- 2 In the event an Association or Organisation is dissolved, all its monetary and in-kind funds and assets will be transferred to a Palestinian Association similar in its objectives, to be named by the dissolved Association or Organisation.
- 3 Under all circumstances, the funds and assets of the dissolved Association or Organisation should be spent in accordance with its purposes within the borders of the Palestinian territories.

Chapter Ten

General and Transitional Concluding Provisions

Article (40)

While adhering to the Provisions of this Law, it is the duty of Associations and Community Organisations that provide specialized professional services to implement the professional registration instructions specified by the Competent Ministries.

Article (41)

It is not permissible to take possession of the finances of any Association or Organisation, or to close or conduct a search of its headquarters or any of its premises or branches without an order issued by a competent judicial body.

Article (42)

Every Association or Organisation that was licensed before this Law came into effect is considered to be officially registered, provided it adjusts to the Provisions of this Law within a period of nine months of the laws coming into effect. Otherwise it will be considered in contravention of the Provisions of the Law.

Article (43)

The Ottoman Law of Charitable Organisations issued on 29 Rajab 1327 A.H. and the Law of Charitable Organisations number 33 for the year 1966 effective in Palestine, and any provisions contravening the Provisions of this Law, are hereby repealed.

Article (44)

The Minister will issue the forms necessary for the implementation of the Provisions of this Law.

Article (45)

All parties, each in its field of competence, should implement the Provisions of this Law, and comply with them immediately after their publication in the Official Gazette.

PRESIDENTIAL DECREE

Presidential Decree no. (4), of the year 1999 Concerning designation of competencies of the Ministry of NGOs Affairs

We: Chairman of the executive Committee, the PLO. We: President of the Palestinian National Authority. After perusal of the law No (13) of the year 1995 concerning the elections and their amendments.

And the presidential decree No (2) of the year 1998 for forming the cabinet of ministers and what is presented by the Minister of NGOs affairs and according to the exigencies of the public we interest and we issue this decree.

Article (1)

The Ministry of NGOs Affairs aims at coordinating and organizing work between all Palestinian NGOs and foreign NGOs and other various governmental Parties. This stems from the principles of complementary, participation and transparency in planning and execution in order to achieve the comprehensive national plan for the service of the Palestinian community.

Article (2)

The ministry undertakes to exercise, in order to achieve its objectives, these competencies:

- 1 Coordination and cooperation with The Ministry of Interior and the Ministries related to the registration and follow-up of activities of Charity societies and non-government institutions.
2. Coordination and consolidation of work between NGOs and the various governmental institutions, and setting suitable mechanisms to achieve that.
- 3 Guarantee of freedom and independence of NGOs work to complement and integrate the governmental work for the service of the various work sectors.

- 4 Reviving and promoting the voluntary work and developing its concepts and principles.
- 5 Contribution in setting the charters of honour and mechanism of work, and the coordination between the NGOs working in the same sector.
- 6 Contribution in setting and designating the national priorities in various sectors in association with the NGOs and related ministries to present them to foreign parties.
- 7 Contribution in setting the programs and mechanisms of reviving the social solidarity.
- 8 Development of the resources of the financial local, Arab, and international support to the NGOs.
- 9 Assurance of the utmost cooperation between the NGOs and various Ministries to formulate mutual national orientations, especially in the development of the different fields.

Article (3)

All the concerned parties, each in its field, should enact this decree from the date of issuance. It should be published in the gazette.

Issued in Gaza city, 6 October, 1999.

Yaser Arafat Chairman of the executive committee, Palestine Liberation Organisation. The President of the Palestinian National Authority

Having these two approaches in mind and applying them to the Palestinian case study, one recognizes that neither of them really applies to the Palestinian case for the reason that the developmentalist view tends to see NGOs as impartial and as a kind of reformist group and the second viewpoint represents Arab society as incompetent and incapable of acting and operating in a civic manner.

On the contrary, especially during the First Intifada, the Palestinians engaged heavily in the resistance of the occupying power by building up national committees and creating different civic associations. It cannot be denied that the “concomitant” of the struggle did not involve violence, but the circumstances are different in Palestine than in any other Arab society.

It is easier said than done, but throughout my field research it has become obvious that the NGOs are in need of the funds and that these provide an essential basis for them without which they would not be able to exist and on top do their work efficiently and provide the services to the Palestinian society.

Source: ⁶⁰⁷

⁶⁰⁷ <http://www.pngo.net/pngo.htm>

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11. LIST OF INTERVIEW PARTNERS

Name (Position)	Name of NGO (Location)	Date
Tarek Abdelalem (Office Director)	<i>Islamic Relief</i> (Cologne)	4/18/05
Izzat Abdul Hadi (Director General)	<i>Bisan Center for Research and Development</i> (Ramallah)	2/6/05
Tanya Shawar Abu Ghosh (Head of International Cooperation Unit)	<i>Palestinian Red Crescent Society (PCRS)</i> (Ramallah)	11/29/05
Luna Abu Swaireh (Former staff member)	<i>UNVP & UNDP in Gaza</i> (Bonn)	6/3/05
Mohammed Albaid (Chief of Party)	<i>Tamkeen/USAID</i> (Ramallah)	2/7/05
Dr. Sana Ashoor (Institutional Development Manager)	<i>Islamic Relief</i> (Cologne)	4/26/05
Martin Geukes (Director)	<i>Hammer Forum</i> (Hamm)	4/12/05

Name (Position)	Name of NGO (Location)	Date
Mohammed Khaled (Program Director & Supervisor)	<i>CARE International (West Bank/Gaza)</i> (Ramallah)	8/30/05
Julia Koch (Desk Officer Middle East) (ECHO)	<i>European Commission Humanitarian Organisation</i> (Brussels)	5/27/05
Tarek Abdel Ghany Kotob (Country Program Director)	<i>Near East Foundation</i> (Jerusalem)	10/13/05
Khalil Marouf (Country Representative)	<i>Terre des Hommes, Switzerland</i> (Palestine)	10/21/05
Ingrid Schøyen (Donor Coordinator/ Desk Officer Middle East)	<i>Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs</i> (Oslo)	9/27/05
Mohammed Shadid (PMO Director)	<i>Welfare Association Project Management Organisation (PMO)</i> (Ramallah)	3/28/05
Helene Vikan (Relief Coordinator)	<i>Norwegian Red Cross</i> (Oslo)	9/28/05

Name (Position)	Name of NGO (Location)	Date
Renad Al-Qubbaj (Program Coordinator)	<i>Palestinian Non-Governmental Organisations' Network (PNGO)</i> (Ramallah)	02/04/05
N.N.	<i>There are three interviews where the interview partners attached great importance to remain anonymous.</i>	05/08/05 09/22/06 10/09/06
Union of Palestinian Medical Relief (UPMRC)	<i>Interviews with these organisations were planned, but for the first two it was difficult to reach Dr. M. Barghouti in his office. And for the latter there was no contact person available</i> (Ramallah)	02/02/05
Health, Development, Information and Policy Institute (HDIP) Treatment and Rehabilitation Center for Victims of Torture (TRC)	<i>(This organisation denied an interview)</i>	/
Al-Aqsa Charitable Society	<i>MSF offered material but no interview</i> (Jerusalem)	/

12. INTERVIEWS

The following chart is an overview on the interviews that were conducted with various partners.

a) *Palestine Children's Relief Fund (PCRF)*

Sectors

- Health and Emergency Relief
- Treatment for injured or sick children abroad
- Medical Relief Missions (provision of free medical care)
- On-site cooperation with other NGOs (such as ANERA, UPMRC, PRCS, MSF, PFS etc.) makes the work easier
- Active networking (mails, security situation on the ground, checkpoints.)
- Meeting once a month with AIDA (Network for international NGOs in Palestine)

NGO Profile

- Non-profit Humanitarian Relief organisation
- Annual Report
- Local & international NGO (registered in the U.S. & Palestine)
- Established in 1992 (U.S.), since 2004 local office in the West Bank and Gaza
- Board of Directors with 11 members
- Staff: 15 full-time (12 on terrain)
- 200 volunteers/year (doctors)
- Success rate of projects: 95%

Budget

- US\$ 300.000- 400.000/year
- Fundraising activities. There is a different size of activity from small gathering within the community (e.g. women meeting) over fundraising in the mosques and other big events like the Gala in May 2004 in Washington D.C. No government support or any official institution related to the state. The PCRF is a self-financing organisation.

b) *Bisan Center for Research and Development*

Sectors

- Community Development
- Vocational Training
- Numerous Programs and Projects in the West Bank and Gaza
- Strengthening institutional and organisational capacity of Palestinian projects and social movements as a means of promoting sustainable development
- Education, finance, women/gender issues, democracy/good governance and technical assistance
- The projects are carried out by the local Community Based Organisations (CBOs)
- Project managers and animators monitor the projects on the ground
- Working with 45 communities (2005)
- Member of Social Watch (umbrella of 50 organisations) that works on poverty alleviation
- Bisan is the founder of the Palestinian NGO
- Network (PNGO) and the Arab NGO Network (regional network). Bisan is in both networks part of the steering committee

NGO Profile

- Established in 1989 as independent Non-profit organisation
- Local NGO based in Ramallah
- Staff: 16 full-time
- Bisan manages further branches in Nablus and Bethlehem. Covers all of the West Bank since 1998 and Gaza since 1995
- Successful initiation of 50 community centres in the West bank and Gaza.
- Bisan is pursuing a comprehensive approach to community development in Palestine
- Bisan is registered with the Ministry of the Interior (MoI)

Budget

- US\$ 900.000/year from twelve different donors
- The staff also manages relationships with the different donors
- Its first project was funded by CIDA (Canadian International Development Agency) with \$ 1.1 million

-
- Projects in Gaza are co-financed with the Welfare Organisation and the Ma'an Centre
 - In some cases project-specific funds are provided to Bisan that are limited in amount and time

List of Donors:

- Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) since 1992
- Oxfam Québec Canada (through CIDA) since 1992
- US Agency for International development (USAID) which channels its funds through the Chemonics Company. Chemonics was founded by USAID and it is a Private Voluntary Organisation (PVO); a sort of NGO. USAID does not distribute directly money to the NGOs. It first goes to the US PVOs/NGOs and these allocate the money. USAID/Chemonics have their own objectives
- The European Union (EU) has supported Bisan since 1999 and has a long-term relationship with it. The funds for a project (Youth activity centres in the refugee camp in Ramallah) reached Bisan through Terre des Hommes Italy
- The Belgium Government with its partner called Société Solidarité. Bisan received 250.000€ (US\$ 320.500) for five-year program in the southern area of the West Bank (2005) in three refugee camps close to Bethlehem
- The Ford Foundation (related to USAID) financed a five-year project ("Domestic Violence against Women") once. "What we need is something else. The Ford Foundation has good funding and it is easy to get.
- The Joyce-Mertz-Gilmore Foundation is a US donor. "They only supported us twice with US\$ 80.000 (1999-2001). We did not continue with them, because they changed their Focus to human rights (shifting their own priorities)."
- The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) has a lot of programs and Bisan has a strong relationship with them, but it is not continuous. "They supported us financially with US\$ 125.000 in order to support household and economic projects for women. We produced a study on the poor during Second Intifada. It was on the micro finance project with UNDP. We only have short-term projects, one year is the maximum. They sent us Palestinian experts from the US, who came for six months to help us to build social capacities."
- "The Welfare Association Consortium is a business development project for vocational training to start businesses, which is funded by the World Bank.

-
- “The World Bank was interested in funding Palestinian NGOs in particular after Oslo. We were left with a lack of resources, so the World Bank took the initiative to fund NGOs in Palestine. They needed an implementing agency, they needed a local organisation or international NGO to do or better to advertise and run the fund. Then five consortia (the Welfare Assoc., the British Council, Charity’s Aid foundation and others) are the ones who won the bid in the first phase after Oslo. And they gained on their comparative advantage in order to run US\$ 18 million projects.”
 - The Italian Government through CESVI (World Aid from Italy) ran a business development project for vocational training to start businesses and to strengthen their own capacity, skills (finance, management etc.). Phase I lasted five years (March 1999 – March 2004) and was supported with US\$ 350.000 and Phase II is supported with US\$ 500.000. It started March 2004 and ends July 2005.
 - AUSAID (Australian Aid belongs to the Australian Government) and its partner AUSTCARE supported a community development project in Qalandiya refugee camp (close to Ramallah) and the Jalazon refugee camp.
 - “It was started in 2003 and it will finish this year (2005), we received US\$ 350.000 from AUSTCARE. They wanted us to develop a concept paper in order to receive the money, an amount of US\$ 1 million for the second phase. This is what we call a “Cluster Approach” – we want joint activity.”
 - There are further donors who support the Bisan Centre such as the German Friedrich-Naumann Foundation, the German Heinrich-Böll Foundation, and the GTZ.
 - Bisan also works with other local as well as regional partners. There also internal and external auditors.

c) *Tamkeen (Empowerment)*

Sectors

- Democracy and Governance (Civic Forum Institute)
- Health
- Water and Environment
- Economic Development
- Education

NGO Profile

- Tamkeen is a local NGO and seeks effectiveness through its projects. “Effectiveness it is not really easy. It is very difficult and complex to measure the impact because the variables lie beyond our possibilities. We provide the trainer, the time and the necessary facilities) in order to ensure that it is a successful project.”
- “We also receive feedback from the people. We usually ask them. Fairly positive they appreciate the services they receive.”
- (In a Tamkeen brochure) A Gaza university student on a Tamkeen-funded training program: “I was uncertain about the notion of democracy and civil society. At the university, at home, and in the street, I heard contradictory opinions. My thoughts and preconceptions about democracy and civil society would not have changed without this training.”
- Established in November 2000 (right after the outbreak of the Second Intifada). With two main offices in Ramallah and Gaza City, the project also has satellite offices in Bethlehem, Nablus, and Khan Younis, ensuring wide geographic coverage across the West bank and Gaza.
- It is a project that is funded by USAID. Tamkeen is managed by Chemonics International (a leading international development consulting firm based in Washington D.C.) and its partners: U.S.-based non-profit organisations AMIDEAST and CARE International, and Palestinian consulting firm Massar Associates. Chemonics started its work 50 years ago. Its projects now span five continents and all sectors of international development
- Tamkeen is a member of USAID and there 50 to 60 partner organisations. For instance it works with the Arab Thought Forum “Jouhoud” and many other (just local) charitable organisations

-
- Staff: 35 full-time in different positions (salaries vary from US\$ 700-4000)
 - Tamkeen works with civil society groups to promote more accountable democratic governance in the West Bank and Gaza. Beyond that it assists 70 civil society organisations

Budget

- Tamkeen has a total budget of US\$ 33 million for five years. “We have to budget accordingly.”
- Tamkeen: “Funded by the United States Agency for International Development and implemented by Chemonics International Inc., AMIDEAST, CARE International, and Massar Associates, the Civil Society and Democracy strengthening project is a five-year effort to strengthen Palestinian civil society organisations and elevate their role in public discourse.”
- Tamkeen: “Approximately \$ 16 million of all Tamkeen funding goes to Palestinian civil society organisations in the form of grants. As of the end of 2003, the project had awarded about US\$ 10 million in grants to more than 70 organisations throughout the W. Bank & Gaza.”
- Tamkeen encourages to share costs (“Co-Financing”) for the projects with other donors
- All grant-funded activities are designed by civil society organisations, with help from Tamkeen, and approved by the project’s Grants Committee. Grant opportunities are widely advertised and applications go through a rigorous screening process based on transparent and objective criteria

d) Al-Haq

Sectors

- Human Rights
- “Al-Haq’s mission is to protect human rights in the Occupied territories and to promote the rule of law and to document/to monitor human rights violations. The beneficiaries are the Palestinian people in the West Bank.”
- “Al-Haq used to work in Gaza and stopped working there because of the siege, but they still work with other human rights organisations like Al-Mizan, the Palestinian Center for the main human rights organisations.”

NGO Profile

- Al-Haq is a local NGO and an apolitical, non-partisan human rights organisation.
- Staff: 23 full-time and 2-3 volunteers (just in the office)
- Since (established in 1979, Al-Haq has defended human rights in the Occupied territories by a group of Palestinian lawyers. They have followed an extended debate over how best to address the lack of human rights protection mechanisms in the Occupied territories.
- During the first years Al-Haq was largely limited in scope and action to analysing the legal status and legal structures imposed over the Occupied territories. Al-Haq produced some of the first studies on the human rights situation in the Occupied territories.
- In 1986 had developed to a point where it was ready to expand. The First Intifada was a peak period for Al-Haq. By the early 1990s Al-Haq had approximately 40 members in staff. Its size and capacity increased and helped it to successfully raise awareness of human rights abuses in the Occupied territories. With Oslo in 1993 Al-Haq ushered into a new period of Palestinian history and greatly effected changes.
- Al-Haq is affiliated to the International Court of Justice, to the International Commission of Jurists based in Geneva, to the FIDH (International Federation for Human Rights), a member in the EUROMED human rights network and in the Habitat International Coalition (HIC).
- It has a consultative status with ECOSOC since 2000. On a local level Al-Haq is a member of the PNGO Network.

Budget

- Al-Haq is supported by individuals, foundations and other donors.
- The yearly budget is about US\$ 650.000; it sometimes increases by 5%-10%, but the amount of US\$ 600.000 is the average. Al-Haq is supported various donors.

List of Donors:

- The Representative Office of the Kingdom of the Netherlands
- The Royal Danish Representative Office
- The Ford Foundation
- Diaconic – Sweden
- International Community of Jurists – Sweden
- CIDA (Canadian International development Agency)
- British Council
- European Union
- The German fund for Palestinian NGOs (Friedrich-Naumann Foundation)
- The Representative Office of Switzerland
- The Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation
- Global Ministries of Protestant churches in the Netherlands

e) *Hammer Forum*

Sectors

- Health and Emergency Relief
- Treatment for injured or sick children abroad
- Medical Relief Missions (provision of free medical care)

NGO Profile

- The Hammer Forum is an international NGO. The main emphasis in Palestine is put on the medical care of children.
- Mr. Martin Geukes has worked for the Hammer Forum since 1997 and he is the director. He is in charge of fundraising and he manages the contacts abroad with the partner organisations.
- Since 1996 the Hammer Forum started to treat children also treated abroad. It started its activities in Palestine in 2000/1.
- “But sometimes it is difficult to have the adequate supply. In 2002, we worked with the Union of Palestinian Medical Relief Committees (the UPMRC was founded by Mustapha Barghouti) who helped us to “import” two mobile clinics into the occupied territories since we had difficulties with the Israeli authorities. The UPMRC was a good mediator between us and the Israeli Authorities in order to introduce the mobile clinics into the Gaza Strip.
- The UPMRC helped us to establish ourselves on the difficult terrain. It is a well-known and conscientious NGO we work and cooperate with.”
- “We did not succeed to introduce the mobile clinics ourselves. The UPMRC is the parent organisation of the NGOs working in the health sector. We need them for close contacts and information on the situation. But we have also contacts to the Ministry of Health (MoH). They were informed about all our activities there and our teams were accommodated in the guest house of the MoH.”
- The Hammer Forum has a local office in Jerusalem where a colleague works. He coordinates and monitors the projects. On-site there work volunteers except for the project coordinator (monthly salary US\$ 2000).

Budget

- There is an annual budget of € 70.000-80.000 (US\$ 90.000-100.000) for the projects in Palestine
- The Hammer Forum is dependent on its donors (private individuals and public sources such as the GTZ, the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs and others. But the Hammer Forum is largely financed through private donations.
- “We would like to increase our lobby and cooperation with public sources and not only on a financial but also on an administrative level in particular with the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs.”
- “We also want to reach more awareness among the Palestinians for instance through an internet website in order to make the access for prospective patients easier and to attract donors.”

f) Islamic Relief (IR) Germany

Sectors

- IR: Alleviation of suffering, hunger, illiteracy and diseases worldwide. The provision of aid in a compassionate and dignified manner
- Emergency relief as well as long-term development projects including: health clinics, water and sanitation projects, orphan support, education, micro credits and more
- “Our main emphasis in Palestine is
 - a) Emergency relief (food, water and sanitation and medical care in the refugee camps)
 - b) At times of Ramadan: the purchase of food (in Palestine) in order to strengthen the Palestinian economy. We also have special Ramadan (Kurban sacrifice) projects where we do special fundraising for the poor.
 - c) We assist in the health sector where we established a centre for traumatized children in Rafah, further we built hospitals and provided them with medical equipment and service provision for patients through mobile clinics.
 - d) Then we have a program for orphans in combination with a school program. We look after them and are responsible for the children.
 - e) Beyond that we provide micro credits for families with the idea of self-help.
 - f) Then we assist students in their education through materials like books and there we have a special project called “schoolbag project” which starts to accompany the children a year before they start school.
 - g) In the refugee camps we offer water supply in form of big containers.”

NGO Profile

- Islamic Relief: “(We are) helping the world’s poorest people.”
- Established in 1984 in Birmingham as a reaction to the famine in Ethiopia and Sudan at that time. The founder of IR is Dr. Hany El Banna.
- IR is an international NGO. IR is active in 26 countries with numerous local offices.
- “Our task and goal is to support the poor in particular in disaster areas, at times of war, famine, natural disasters. We also work in our fundraising and local offices.”

- IR is partner with the ECOSOC (consultative status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations), code of conduct with the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, with the NGOs for disaster relief, member of the charity committee of the British Government, member of BOND (British association of Development NGOs that work overseas)
- IR Germany started officially in 1996 and it was the first Islamic organisation in Germany. It has 8 full-time employees and 80 volunteers (50% females and 50% males).

Budget

- complete and detailed project application. For instance in Palestine there are projects that IR wants to take care and which require the fourfold budget.”
- “We also applied for funds from the German Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and the GTZ. This form of fundraising just started recently (March 2005). Currently, we are being in the presentation phase and we understand that these institutions have their guidelines and rules so what we try to match ours with theirs. Beyond that the purpose for IR’s foundation in Germany is fundraising.”
- “As already mentioned earlier the donations are bound to a specific purpose or project in case the donor wishes to support a particular project.”

g) (Former staff member of the) Palestinian Ministry of Planning

Sectors

- The Ministry of Planning is an institution of the Palestinian Authority

NGO Profile

- “My personal experience in the Ministry of Planning is that it was very hard work. I felt that I did something. It was one of the most important parts in Palestine and for the PA. I had the feeling I made an impact.”
- “With regard to the feedback from the Palestinian population, I would say that NGOs are closer to the people than the Ministry or than we were. We just had contacts to other Ministries on that level or other NGOs.”

Budget

- After Oslo a donor conference was launched in order to pledge money for the new Palestinian Authority. The amount was about US\$ 2.2 billion.
- “The Ministry of Planning has been structured in two parts: the first one has been responsible for planning and the Palestinian Development Plan which was a five-year plan. This plan was mainly done for the coordination with other ministries (and their strategies). We wanted to have a guideline what to use the funds for when it comes.”
- “The second part of the ministry has been responsible for the fund coordination and being in contact with the donors (fundraising). All the money that was channelled (after Oslo) to the PA had to go through the Ministry of Planning.”
- “Other Arab donors mainly Saudi Arabia pledged a lot of money at that difficult time of the Second Intifada and supported emergency projects, took over the payment of Palestinian salaries and family projects. And the governments of Qatar, Bahrain, Algeria, the United Arab Emirates and Kuwait are assisted Palestine. There were also donations from individuals through campaigns in the media like Dubai TV.”
- The relationship the staff (of the MoP) had with the donors on a private level was a sort of friendship, whereas on the working level the donors had certain expectations on how they had to work.

h) Palestine Red Crescent Society (PRCS)

Sectors

- Emergency Medical Services
- Primary Healthcare
- Rehabilitation and Social Services
- Youth and Volunteers
- Dissemination of movement's principles
- Health and Welfare
- International Humanitarian Law

NGO Profile

- The PRCS is a national humanitarian society that provides a wide range of health, social and other humanitarian services for the Palestinian People throughout the Middle East.
- In 1968, the PRCS was founded in direct response to the health and welfare needs of the Palestinian people in both the Occupied territories and the Diaspora
- Staff: 3800 employees, 20.000 volunteers in 27 branches in five countries (Occupied territories, Lebanon, Syria Egypt and Iraq). It maintains 15 hospitals and 80 clinics.
- The PRCS is providing services through its numerous departments. Besides medical and social services, the PRCS also focuses on International Humanitarian Law in addition to the Youth Programs

Budget

- “When we plan the projects, then all requirements for the project would be included within the budget of that project. This may include salaries, materials etc. As for administrative costs these are already calculated within each project with a certain percentage of the total budget.”
- West Bank/Gaza (2001) Income Statement, Income (US\$ 13.147.354), Total Expenditures (US\$ 13.073.109), Surplus (US\$ 74.245)
- Sources of Income (2001) Total (US\$ 13.07 Million), West Bank/Gaza Total Expenditures (US\$ 13.15 million)
- The PRCS is supported by 94 donors

i) Terre des Hommes (TdH) (Switzerland)

Sectors

- Health and Nutrition
- Protection of children
- Children's rights
- Education
- Psychosocial support
- Malnutrition

NGO Profile

- In 1959/60 (in Lausanne), Edmond Kaiser established Terre des Hommes in direct response to the war in Algeria at that time. He built camps for the Algerian refugees (children). Later he did so in Vietnam, Bangladesh and Palestine. The areas of intervention are Khan Younis (Gaza) and the Hebron and Jenin Districts (West Bank).
- “The TdH is an international NGO, but it transforms its projects into local NGOs, specifically it works with children and their mothers. In Palestine, TdH has been active since 1973. Currently, TdH has a total of 145 staff members in the different projects of the West Bank and Gaza Strip.”
- “Strategic partners are Ard El Insan wa Ard El Atfal. These two organisations have 62 employees based respectively in the Gaza Strip and on the West Bank since 1999 and 2001. They result from the former local teams of TdH.”
- “One of the main projects I was directly responsible for was the transformation of the TdH project in the West Bank into an independent local Palestinian NGO, now called Ard El Atfal. The process involved a series of evaluations and an organisational and capacity building plan for the new independent NGO to be created at the time. Currently, Ard El Atfal is a fully independent NGO.”
- “Tdh has volunteers especially in the psychological support projects. The volunteers are usually undergraduate psychology students who need to volunteer for a certain number of hours before they graduate. In some cases, graduates from the same field are looking for jobs and they volunteer temporarily until they find jobs, and it is good for their CV's.”
- “The general objective of our projects is to promote the basic rights of children and their mothers through access to health, education; the awareness and the improvement of the nutritional and psychological status of women and children in the West Bank and Gaza.”

-
- “In Palestine TdH focuses on children and their families. But the main focus is the child. In the mother and child health projects, the focus is on children up to 59 months. In the psychological support projects, it is focused on children up to the age of 18. This means that just certain projects/fields are targeted by TdH, and not every sector is covered.”
 - “The success of our projects is evaluated against very specific Terms of Reference that are set on a basis of the general and specific objectives as well as the expanded achieved results in accordance with the project document.”
 - “The procedure or process how a project is planned is the following, for TdH, at a global level, follows a “Project Cycle Management” (PCM) process. The process is documented and followed by all TdH projects. The PCM is directly managed by TdH Lausanne by a special department. There are certain criteria which determine the process of a project in the PCM handbook, which is strictly followed, with marginal flexibility to meet changing conditions so that the projects do not lose dynamics.”

Budget

- “The annual budget (for Palestine) per year is ranging between 1 to 1.5 million Swiss Francs (US\$ ~ 800.000 to 1.2 million)”
- “The core finances of TdH these days come from institutional donors including the different aid departments of the Swiss Government, the EU and EU member countries. Another but smaller part of the finances comes through public donations specifically from the Swiss Public. The funds are used for managing and implementing the projects, so the budgets of projects include staff salaries, administrative expenses and community support.”
- Source of finance: funds for the activities and projects which we support come essentially from
 - a) Newsletter that is sent four times a year to our donors and fundraising events
 - b) Grants from the county of Geneva and various local communities channelled through the Geneva Federation of Cooperative Swiss Solidarity and the DCC. Even regional activities are successful
 - c) Private donations and gifts
 - d) Sponsorships, which reflect the fidelity of our donors
- Just through appeals for funds 28.1 million Swiss Francs (US \$ ~22.5 million) have been collected, which means that the amount increased by 5.9 million Swiss Francs (US\$ 4.7 million) compared to 2004. In 2005 the

Total income was about 47.3 million Swiss Francs (US\$ 37.9). The goal for 2006 is to increase the cooperation with foundations and companies.

- “Our budgets are usually separated into two categories. The first budget is country representation, monitoring, partner capacity building and support budget. The first includes consultancy fees, external evaluation costs and the expenses of the TdH representation. This budget is usually between 19%-21% of the total annual budget.
- The second is the budget for projects. It includes the salaries of the doctors, nurses, educators etc. in addition to food, medications, lab tests, community support and so forth. This is usually the remaining balance and so is between 79% the ratio and of salaries and administrative costs (doctors, nurses, clinics, rents and overheads) is 40% while the other 60% is in other direct budgets that go to the beneficiaries.”
- * CHF 1= US\$ 0.80212
- “In case of financial constraints, projects are chosen according to the priority needs and at the same time the availability and willingness of donors to fund these priority projects. Usually the field sets up the priorities according to short to medium terms strategic plans that are eventually approved by the headquarters.”

j) Norwegian Red Cross NORCROSS

Sectors

- Humanity against weapons
- Rescue and Disaster Preparedness
- Relief
- Development

NGO Profile

- “In the sense that we are part of a worldwide network of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, there is dependence.”
- Established in 1859 by businessman Henry Dunant who came across a battlefield, Solferino in Italy and initiated relief work for wounded soldiers.
- “The total organisation includes about 200 staff members in the headquarters and the 19 districts. I have been working for NorCross since early 1999. As a relief coordinator. My most important tasks are to secure timely response to disasters within my area. The annual program for the International Department has approx. 500 million Norwegian Crowns (US\$ ~77.8 million).”
- “NorCross is a volunteer based organisation. The volunteers are mainly connected with domestic activities. NorCross employs professionals (called delegates) for the period needed. The reason is that every National Society has its own volunteers who live in the affected local community and know their society best. When international assistance in the form of personnel is requested, it is because of the technical skills and professional competencies of the delegates. Internationally, volunteers meet through exchanges, various meetings and competitions (1st aiders).”
- “The background of our staff is multifaceted. In the international scene experience is an important factor.”

Budget

- “NorCross’ main sources of income for international activities are the Norwegian Ministries for Foreign Affairs (MoFA) and the Norwegian Agency for Development (NORAD). NorCross always supports the activities with 10% from own funds. Other sources are public fundraising campaigns and donations/sponsorships from private persons and companies. The money is used accordingly to the operational budget of

the project/program. From the MoFA grants a certain percentage is allocated for NorCross administration (MoFA from 3%-5% and NORAD with 8%).”

- NorCross functions as NGO and at the same time as donor for local organisations.
- Local aid work of the Red Cross is primarily funded by contributions made by private individuals and companies. No more slot machines that were banned from the Norwegian Government. Other sources of income are membership subscriptions which are exclusively used for domestic work.
- “In many projects/programs we are not the only donor and the international support is then coordinated by the International/Red Crescent component.”
- “NorCross can apply for MoFA funding which extends up to one year, or for NORAD funding (development funding) which extends up to three years. When support is needed for a longer term, we can apply for the same time period.”

Donations by the Norwegian Government (NOKs):

- 1993 = 46.491
- 1994 = 89.730
- 1995 = 254.399
- 1996 = 325.121
- 1997 = 289.647
- 1998 = 302.752
- 1999 = 216.833
- 2000 = 245.678
- 2001 = 336.860
- 2002 = 407.000
- 2003 = 379.000
- 2004 = 350.500

NOK 1 = US\$ 0.15573

k) *Near East Foundation (NEF)*

Sectors

- Community building for local NGOs
- Capability building for local NGOs

NGO Profile

- The Near East Foundation (NEF) was established in 1915 in New York as the first overseas philanthropic American Organisation in America. It started in the Middle East in 1930 and in Palestine as a separate program only in 1996.
- The NEF is an international organisation, which enables local organisations to replace the role of international NGOs in managing local development process. The goals are long-term sustainable development and capacity building of local organisations.
- “Palestine office staff number is 15 people all of them except myself are locals.”
- “We do have a very good working relationship with our community that we work in. NEF is working with a strategy called cluster development approach in which we go and work with a group of communities of about 45.000 people for a long period of time, at least 7 years in various fields of development in order to make real, tangible and sustainable change.”
- “Our approach is different than that project approach that only works for the short life of the project. For this reason we tend to build a strategic partnership with our donors to maintain this long-term need of funds as well as look for new donors to participate in the same strategy.”

Budget

- “The annual budget is about US\$ 2.5 million.”
- “We are dependent on the donor... this happens by default when we do good work for one donor and they like to continue the same success, but our organisation strategy is diversifications of funds and donors.”

- “It used to channel funds before (1996) to Palestinians through other international agencies. This differs from one agency to another, for us we have established an overhead rate of 12% for managing any project no matter what the size is, this should cover the office costs, electricity, water and office related costs. In addition, we charge staff time for any project larger than US\$ 20.000. We will designate a staff member time about US\$ 600 per month and this for a year. This is our cost.”
- “Every donor allows a certain overhead cost, certain staff cost (local or international), transportation or other expenses. In general for large projects US\$ 500.000 and other agencies tend to build up more costs like salaries, a portion of the rent, transportation etc. and then overhead cost on the top of all this.”

I) European Commission Humanitarian Organisation (ECHO)

Sectors

- ECHO works closely with numerous operational partners who implement projects financed by the European Union.
- ECHO is active there in three areas:
 - a) Emergency job creation, Food and food security for targeted groups as children, protection and psychosocial projects in which the victims are treated and supported.
 - b) The provision of primary and emergency healthcare, sanitation/ the improvement of hygiene conditions
 - c) Political relations, the Red Cross family and UN-Agencies (UNRWA and UNFP)

NGO Profile

- The European Commission Humanitarian Organisation (ECHO) is a donor organisation of the EU and it was established in 1992. It has been active in Palestine since 1996.
- “Our main task is to help the suffering Palestinians in such a difficult crisis. Every year we develop a new strategy which we determine with the local technical experts in order to decide on the needs of specific sectors. Together with them we look for suitable partners with whom we can intervene.”
- “We do field visits (on-site inspections) 3 to 4 times a year for the purpose of monitoring. Specific components are part of the monitoring process: implementation status, operational management, and coordination with other NGO, visibility, comments and recommendations (on progress. ECHO has the authorization to determine anything regarding the projects. The technical experts just carry out the projects and they have the expertise with the local population. Their task is (except for strategic planning) to discuss and conclude the concepts and projects.”
- “The psychosocial and protection projects are less important and therefore less supported. The technical experts/ field experts who work for ECHO on the terrain.”
- “The projects we carry out are open to anyone, since ECHO represents a neutral position. Those who are in need receive our support. We also get

a positive feedback from the recipients about our work during the monitoring process.”

Budget

- ECHO respectively the Humanitarian Aid Office assisted the needy Palestinians in the Occupied territories with € 97 million since the start of the Second Intifada. A large part of the financial aid went to the West Bank and Gaza but other projects in the surrounding refugee camps in Lebanon, Jordan and Syria were financed as well.
- “We do not work and cooperate with the Palestinian Authority anymore. The funds go directly to the NGOs, to the local partners and the UN Agencies.”
- 2001= 30 million € (US \$ 38.4 million)
- 2002= 35 million € (US\$ 44.8 million), whereas € 75 million went to the international donor community for food aid
- 2003= 38 million € (US\$ 48.6 million)
- 2004= 38 million € (US\$ 48.6 million)
- “The initial allocation for this year (2005) was about 34 million € (US\$ 43.5 million), but I assume it will be less.”
- * € 1 = US\$ 1.28169

**m) (Former Staff Member of the) United Nations
Volunteers Program (UNVP) and the Palestinian
Center for Human Rights (PCHR)**

Sectors

- Human Rights (PCHR)
- Areas of Work (UNVP):
 - a) Agriculture
 - b) Children and Youth
 - c) Civil Engineering
 - d) Cultural Heritage
 - e) Economics
 - f) Education
 - g) Environment
 - h) Gender
 - i) Health Care
 - j) Human Rights
 - k) Information technology
 - l) Natural conservation

NGO Profile

- “The Palestinian Center for Human Rights (PCHR) Gaza organisation is accountable, credible, and transparent.
- It has the experience in the field, good fieldwork and good results...these are the conditions, which donors set and if these are fulfilled, then the NGOs should not have a problem to receive the funds and sustain themselves.”
- “UNDP started its operations in the Occupied territories (OCT) beginning 1994. Ever since it started in operating in the OCT, the UNVP has been instrumental in responding to the needs and encouraging the enhancement of the Palestinian Society in terms of capacity and institutional building. By contributing their skills and knowledge, national and international UN Volunteers have helped to build capacities of many government ministries as well as NGOs and Civil Society Organisations.” (UNV, www.unv-pal.org, November 2006)

Budget

- “The funny thing in Palestine is that it is a concentrated society and sometimes if a certain person is on the board of NGO X either it is good for the NGO and its reputation or as we say...you are thrown to hell and nobody will support you...the image is drawn by the person who is running the NGO or better by people managing it and that is important. If you have an Islamic board from Fatah, then it is Fatah who is running it.”
- “The donors have local offices and in that way they get to hear about the local NGOs, their images and how their decisions are made as mentioned before on who is running the NGO and who is corrupt and who is not.”
- “The Ministry of Social Affairs and the Ministry of the Interior are responsible for the registration of NGOs in order to get the permit and to be allowed to work there.”
- “Despite all these efforts, however, due to the prevailing security situation, donor countries have been hesitant to dispatch their volunteers to the OCT.” (UNV, www.unv-pal.org)

n) CARE International (West Bank and Gaza)

Sectors

- Emergency medical assistance
- Water and sanitation projects
- Sustainable access to food and economic security
- Emergency assistance to sustain health care services
- Civil Society and democracy strengthening projects
- Livelihood improvement in the Occupied territories

NGO Profile

- CARE is an international non-profit secular confederation of 11 member organisations committed to fighting global poverty and delivering emergency aid in times of humanitarian crisis.
- “CARE International (CI) is an independent NGO.”
- CARE’s international secretariat is based in Geneva
- CARE has been active in the West Bank and Gaza since 1948
- “Our humanitarian and development assistance program currently reaches over 800.000 people in the West Bank and Gaza.”
- “We develop our vision, mission and values. In addition, CARE International and each CI member have a strategic plan. Each country office has its strategic plan, which is developed based on analysis of the country.”
- “CARE is one of the largest NGOs in the world; we work in about 75 countries. Last year (2004), CARE USA was identified as one of the most known humanitarian agencies in the US. CARE is highly appreciated by beneficiaries, host governments and donors.”
- “We also have partners local NGOs, government institutions or community based organisations. We work with local NGOs like PHG, MAAN, PAAR, UPMRC and many others. There is network of international NGOs which meets to discuss common issues to NGOs; it is not a decision-making body.”

Budget

- **“Availability of funding is a factor to consider while developing a strategy.** Though, it is not the only factor. We may refuse a grant from a donor if it does not fit into our strategy.”

-
- “As mentioned earlier **we cannot ignore donors**, but we will not compromise our values, mission or vision. This is why is each country office tries to diversify its donor base in order to avoid dependency on one donor.”
 - “Any CARE mission received some funding from the Headquarters in Geneva to cover some costs that are not covered by donors or to match donor’s funding. Normally this is not that big. However, the donors normally cover personnel (project staff, percentage of finance and administration, and support staff).”
 - “In addition, we change projects; a percentage of the office administration depends on the complexity and the required management support needed by the project. Each office uses a formula to calculate this percentage. Moreover, lead CARE country in our case CARE USA has a management cost to cover the support cost that comes from the Headquarters. This is a percentage that donors agree on with each Headquarters. For example, USAID agrees that CARE USA changes 7.82% of a project budget as cost covery. Any budget residual after implementing a project goes back to the donor, unless we ask them to utilize it in advance to extend the project.”
 - “We are dependent on donors for funding (donors can be institutional as USAID, European Community, ECHO, DFID, SIDA, CIDA etc., and private companies and individuals). There is collaboration with other aid agencies including NGOs but not dependency.”

List of donors:

- Australian Aid (AUSAID)
- CARE Global
- CIDA
- ECHO
- European Community (various donors and projects)
- MEDA (Euro-Med Participatory Water Resources)
- United Kingdom (UK)
- USAID
- “The money is used for project implementation this includes direct project materials, transport, salaries and management costs. We choose our projects based on priority needs of the community or government, our internal capacity and expected impact on community. The priority is determined by the communities and local governments, but it has to be within our capacity and in line with our values, mission and vision.

**o) Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) -
Norwegian Agency for International Development
(NORAD)**

Sectors

- Coordination of financial assistance

NGO Profile

- “Responsibility for us as a donor to contribute to the Palestinian internal coordination
- “The MoFA gives the policy guidelines and the Norwegian government to provide the political assistance: it is not something to neglect.”

Budget

- “The Norwegian assistance goes to the Palestinian Ministry of Finance. It is the single treasury is reflected in the national budget. Project clearance and coordination takes place with the Ministry of Planning. They have a coordinating unit and we help them to coordinate their donor assistance.”
- “The Palestinian Authority is a **client-state**. It can’t survive without donors. They can be dependent on financial support from donors but not institutionally.”
- “In 2005, a total of 31 international organisations and networks allocated funds of NOK 120.467.000. In 2006, there have been applications of 53 organisations for a total of NOK 178 million. NORAD is now allocating NOK 120.500.000 to 30 international NGOs and networks. In 2006, consequently, no support was allocated for new organisations.”
- “Each agreement would be for 2-3 years, but not longer. The contribution to the NGOs is once a year and depends on the size of disbursement. There are contributions for dialogue projects, regional studies (refugees) that are conducive for the peace process and information on the ground.”
- NOK 1 = US\$ 0.15573
- “There is always a very detailed agreement, expected results, outputs, time frame(s), reports, indicators. There is also a very high level of bureaucracy in the whole process.”

p) Welfare Association (Consortium) PMO-Project

Management Organisation

Sectors

- The Welfare Association works by strengthening local organisations and assisting them in improving their services to the community and in promoting Palestinian culture, heritage and identity.
- Emergency Programs
- Capacity strengthening of NGOs to deliver sustainable services
- More strategic role in capacity building (service delivery, advocacy, policy reform)

NGO Profile

- The Welfare Association is a private non-profit foundation
- Established in 1983 in Geneva to support the Palestinian society in sustainable development
- The Welfare Association beneficiaries are more than 4 million Palestinians (in the West Bank and Gaza, Galilee, Jaffa, Akka, Nazareth and Naqab as well as refugee camps) who are served by Palestinian NGOs
- More than 600 NGOs, Civil Society organisations and charitable institutions, large and small have received grants for implementing development projects or for providing humanitarian relief for Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza, in needy Palestinian communities in Israel and in refugee camps in Lebanon.
- The Welfare Association also partnered with Palestinian ministries and local councils for building or upgrading of schools, parks and cultural centers, and equipping hospitals and clinics.
- The Welfare Association designed and implemented emergency programs for external donors that used rigorous criteria to ensure that assistance reaches the neediest monitored procurement procedures for supplies, and guaranteed efficient and rapid disbursement of relief aid.

Budget

- Distribution of committed grants by type:
 1. Partnership grants
 2. Development grants
 3. Emergency grants
 4. Special grants
- The PNGO-Project was funded by the World Bank with co-financing by Saudi Arabia and Italy. There have also been sub-projects in the West Bank and Gaza (1997-2002).
- Since 2000, urgent relief and emergency development projects in health, education and housing have been supported under emergency programs.
- Funding partnerships:
 - a. Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development
 - b. Arab Monetary Fund
 - c. Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa
 - d. Kuwait Fund
 - e. Arab Gulf Program for UN Development organisations
 - f. Islamic Development Bank
 - g. World Bank
 - h. OPEC Fund
 - i. Development Agencies of Britain, France, Italy, Saudi Arabia and Canada
 - j. UN Agencies (UNESCO, ESCWA, UNRWA)
 - k. The European Community
 - l. The Ford Foundation
 - m. Karim Rida Said Fund
 - n. Princess Diana Memorial Funds and other UK trusts
- USAID has funded several projects through partnerships with the International Youth Foundation
- There are also resources from its members and from Palestinians in the Diaspora. It raises funds from the region through support committees and public campaigns. At a fundraising dinner 1.3 million pounds were donated to Palestinian children.

q) *Palestinian Non-Governmental Organisations'*

Network (PNGO)

Sectors

- Agriculture
- Business Development
- Children and Youth
- Community Development
- Consumer Protection
- Counselling & Mental Health
- Culture
- Democracy, Research, Media and Communication
- Education
- Elderly People
- Environment
- Health
- Human Rights and Legal Aid
- Special Needs
- Women
- Organisations, not individuals, are eligible for membership.
- PNGO has an Executive Committee & General Assembly

NGO Profile

- The Palestinian NGO Network is a civil and democratic gathering, which strives to support, consolidate and strengthen Palestinian civil society on the basis of the principles of democracy, social justice and sustainable development. It strives towards the attainment of the legitimate the national rights of the Palestinian People. It is a Palestinian NGO umbrella organisation comprising **92 member organisations** working in different developmental fields.
- PNGO was established 1993, after the signing of the Oslo Accords, with the objective of enhancing coordination, consultation and cooperation among the different sectors of civil society. Since then PNGO has become an important component of Palestinian society and serves as an essential coordination mechanism for the NGO sector at the local, regional and international level.

-
- PNGO's overall goal is to reinforce the role played by NGOs through contributing to the development and empowerment of civil society within an independent Palestinian state based on the principles of democracy, social justice and respect for human rights.
 - PNGO looks forward to the establishment of an independent and democratic Palestinian state based on the rule of law, social justice and the respect for human rights. In order to support the above process, PNGO will:
 - Contribute to the national resistance to end the occupation
 - Strengthen coordination within the NGO sector
 - Strengthen democratic values within society
 - Strengthen civil society's organisational capacities
 - PNGO believes that the above-mentioned goal can be achieved by addressing the following the objectives:
 - Establishing international public education & solidarity groups in support of the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people
 - Strengthening the coordination & cooperation among the different Palestinian NGO networks and civil society organisations. Providing policy analysis with regard to legislation and developmental planning, Enhancing the managerial & institutional capacity of PNGO's members.

Budget

- PNGO's work is based on transparent administrative and financial systems which stipulate the production of regular administrative and financial reports
- The annual subscription for the PNGO members is an amount of US\$ 150
- "There are various donors who support PNGOs' work (British NGOs, Oxfam Québec, for 8 years the Ford Foundation has assisted the PNGO network, and the German DED who sent personnel to the PNGO main office in Ramallah to the administrative work."
- PNGO has 2 full-time and 1 half-time staff members, 1 external staff member (advisor) and 1 volunteer.

r) **Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF)**

Sectors

The current MSF intervention: medical and psychological emergency

In the **Gaza Strip**, **Hebron** and **Nablus** districts, MSF doctors, psychologists and social workers, work with individuals, families and groups who are the most vulnerable for several reasons:

- Living permanently in exposed areas: near settlements, border lines, checkpoints, watchtowers, occupied houses or in usual targeted areas
- Hyper reactive to the traumatic events and weakened by a previous conditions as chronic psychological disorders
- Families living in an area under a military operations
- The general objective is to alleviate the suffering and preserve the dignity of the population towards:
- The most affected by direct or indirect violence resulting from the Israeli occupation
- The most affected by the restriction of movements and access to health – treatment and facilities resulting from the occupation through psychological, medical and social support

MSF aim to:

- To prevent and reduce the disruptive psychological effects following exposure to violence (direct or indirect) resulting from the Israeli occupation and / or confrontation between Israelis and Palestinians and / or amongst Palestinians.
- To provide medical care and improve access to medical care to patients and their relatives, as well as people with very difficult access to health facilities (for objective or subjective reasons)
- To support patients and their family in covering their basic needs and re-integrating the medico-social network.

History of MSF in the Palestinian Territories

- MSF have been working in the Occupied Territory since 1989 with training programs for physiotherapists, mental health programs, primary health care and preventive medicine projects. Mental Health program have included projects in Jenin, Hebron districts using a therapeutic approach to relieve the suffering of mothers, children, ex-prisoners and families affected by the situation. Primary health care programs have encompassed health room rehabilitation, training of Community health

workers and improvement of the surveillance system in underserved areas.

- In September 2000 started the Al-Aqsa Intifada, to which MSF responded with a medico-psychological intervention in Hebron and Gaza. In 2002, MSF set up a program in Jenin just after the destruction of the refugee camp. In 2004, MSF have moved from Jenin to Nablus where the situation is extremely tense and volatile.
- MSF runs a joint medical and psychological intervention for the most affected populations focusing on those who suffer psychologically from the effects of the current occupation. MSF visit families who live in exposed areas (proximity with settlements, bypass roads and checkpoints, occupied houses and/or under incursion), and often fear to go to the closest health structure for care. Families who are afraid to leave their houses for fear of having it bulldozed or do not want to risk their lives by going to health centers are visited at home, which allows MSF to closely follow-up their cases.
- In the **Gaza Strip**, in addition to exposed places, MSF intervenes in the enclaves under total Israeli control and in occupied houses. After the Rafah massive destructions in May 2004, a third psychologist has been added to the team.
- In **Hebron**, MSF focus is in the Old City (H2) under Israeli control. Due to the presence of settlers the tension in this part of town is always high and source of many traumatic incidents. MSF has established a consultation rooms in H2 and another two, located in the western part of the district in Dura and Yatta (in partnership with local organisations) to improve its accessibility to the populations.
- In **Jenin district**, MSF set a program to address the aftermaths of the camp destruction of April 2002. After a while, MSF extended their activity in the entire district. Two years later, the psychologists noticed a drop of severe symptoms and a large decrease of patients who fitted the frame. Meanwhile, the security situation became more precise and the reconstruction of the camp played a major role to stabilize the living conditions of the population.
- Due to these reasons, MSF closed the program in November 2004 and decided to move to Nablus. Nevertheless, due to the volatile situation, MSF keeps an eye on Jenin area in order to be able to react.
- In **Nablus**, the program has started in November. Until now, MSF teams focus their activities in the most targeted areas (by Israeli Army and/or bear isolation provoked by curfews): the old city and the 3 refugee camps

«Balata», «Askar» et «Eim Beit El Ma» that were built in 1948-1950 and host displaced persons from the current northern part of Israël (Haïfa, Jaffa, etc.) In the coming future, MSF expect to extend their activity to the district where the Palestinian psychosocial NGOs cannot work.

Jerusalem office

- With a general coordinator and medical, logistics and financial coordinators, this office supervises the three projects and supports their technical needs. The Jerusalem office handles relations with the Israeli government, the Palestinian Authority, the media, donors and international and national institutions.
- **MSF has been active in Palestine since 1989, carrying out the following programmes:**
 - **Primary health care:**
 - **1989 - 1993** Training of physiotherapists in Gaza
 - **1997 - 1999** Community building rehabilitation with the UPMRC in Gaza
 - **1996 - 2000** Primary Health Care (PHC) project in Hebron district with the Ministry of Health
 - **2000 - 2001** Integration of PHC levels I, II and III in Yatta, Hebron district, with the Ministry of Health
 - **Mental Health:**
 - Mental health project with the Gaza Community Mental Health Programme
 - Opening of a mental health centre in Jenin
 - Mother and Child project in collaboration with Terre des Hommes in Hebron
 - **1996 - 2000** Ex-detainees mental health project in collaboration with the Ministry of Detainees
 - **2000 - 2002** Psychological assistance to mothers and children in the Women's Centre of Nusseirat (Gaza)
 - **2000 - present** Psychological/medical emergency intervention, including a witnessing component, in Gaza, Hebron, Jenin and Nablus.

NGO Profile

MSF: the largest independent medical and humanitarian organisation

- Médecins Sans Frontières is an international humanitarian organisation, having two million supporting members the world over. MSF sends 3000 professionals to crisis situations and is present in nearly 80 countries.

Independent action

- Médecins Sans Frontières help the populations affected by natural or man-made disasters regardless of their nationality, race, religious beliefs or political affiliation. MSF is a private, independent, apolitical and a confessional organisation.

More than 30 years gaining experience

- Floods, earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, armed conflicts, population displacements, famine, refugee camps, epidemics, marginalized populations are the intervention areas in which MSF has been specializing since 1971.

Advocacy, a natural extension of Médecins Sans Frontières' humanitarian action

- MSF bear witness to the situations deprived populations have to endure. Through advocacy based on either reporting or denunciation, the organisation fights against the oblivion into which these people have fallen, seeking to raise awareness among society on the right to humanitarian assistance and to exert pressure to trigger a response at an international level.

Effective logistics to respond to emergencies

- Two hundred twenty six specialized kits, warehouses in free trade zones, standardized action protocols and an international emergency team enable MSF to respond to the most pressing needs in a rapid, effective, flexible way.

With Médecins Sans Frontières aid reaches its destination

- MSF closely monitors the entire aid distribution chain from its starting point to its final destination, i.e. the populations in danger. The global budget of the international movement as a whole in 2002 amounted to 365 million €.

MSF, bearing witness to the major disasters in the last thirty years

- Among others: war in Afghanistan 1980, famine in Ethiopia 1984, disintegration of Yugoslavia 1991, Rwandan refugees 1994, war in Chechnya 1995, crisis in the Great Lakes area 1996-97, famine in Sudan 1998, hurricane Mitch in Central America 1998, crisis in Kosovo and East Timor 1999, war in Afghanistan 2001, nutritional emergency in Angola 2002 and crisis in Iraq 2003.

Rescuing from oblivion the populations who are not front-page news

- March for Cambodia 1980, forced displacement in Ethiopia 1985, campaign for Somalia 1992, crimes against humanity in the former Yugoslavia 1992, genocide in Rwanda 1994, disappearance of 8000 people in Srebrenica 1995, indiscriminate bombardment on the civilian population in Chechnya 1996, escalation of the war in Angola 1998, war in Chechnya and refugees in Ingushetia 2000-2001.

An organisation whose work has been acknowledged worldwide

- Prince of Asturias Concordia Prize, 1991; Council of Europe Human Rights Prize, 1992; Nansen Medal for Refugees, 1993; Transparency Prize, 1993; Roosevelt Four Freedoms Award, 1996; Indira Gandhi Prize, 1996; Conrad N. Hilton Award, 1998 and the Nobel Peace Prize in 1999.

Today, the MSF international network is made up of:

- five operational sections based in Belgium, France, Holland, Spain and Switzerland
- an international office in Geneva
- two UN liaison offices in Geneva and New York
- 13 partner sections in Australia, Austria, Canada, Denmark, Germany, Hong-Kong, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, Norway, Sweden, UK and USA
- 1 representation office in the United Arab Emirates.

Budget

With Médecins Sans Frontières aid reaches its destination

- MSF closely monitors the entire aid distribution chain from its starting point to its final destination, i.e. the populations in danger. The global budget of the international movement as a whole in 2002 amounted to 365 million €.

Financial Resources:

MSF receives private and institutional funds, ensuring its financial independence by the sheer number of its private donors (over 2,000,000 around the world), who provide for roughly 80% of expenses. MSF also insists on a diverse base of institutional funds – EU, UN agencies, and governments – in order to ensure that none are able to leverage its financial contribution to influence our action.

ERKLÄRUNG

Hiermit versichere ich, dass ich die vorliegende Dissertation selbständig und ohne unerlaubte Hilfe angefertigt und andere als die in der Dissertation angegebenen Hilfsmittel nicht benutzt habe. Alle Stellen, die wörtlich oder sinngemäß aus veröffentlichten oder unveröffentlichten Schriften entnommen sind, habe ich als solche kenntlich gemacht. Kein Teil dieser Arbeit ist in einem anderen Promotionsverfahren verwendet worden.

34127 Kassel, den 16. Mai 2007

Layla Bahmad

„ Nothing is more honorable than a grateful heart. “

(Lucius Annaeus Seneca - Roman Stoic philosopher, dramatist, and statesman ~ 4BC - AD65)

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**„ Dankbarkeit ist nicht nur die größte aller Tugenden,
sondern auch die Mutter von allen. “**

(Marcus Tullius Cicero, 106-43 v. Chr., römischer Redner und Staatsmann)

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