THE EMERGENCE OF A PALESTINIAN GLOBALIZED ELITE

DONORS, INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS AND LOCAL NGOs

Sari Hanafi and Linda Tabar

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Summary

Acknowledgments

Abbreviations

ANERA	American Near East Refugee Agency
CARE	American Remittances to Europe
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
Danida	Danish International Development Agency
DFID	Department for International Development of the British Government
DFLP	Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine
ECOSOC	Economic and Social Council of the UN General Assembly
ENDA	Environmental Development of the Third World
FES	Friedrich Ebert Stiftung
GAD	Gender and Development
GUPW	General Union of Palestinian Women
HCR	High Commission for Refugees
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IGOs	Inter-governmental organizations
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INGOs	International NGOs
LFA	Logical Framework Analysis
MAP-UK	Medical Aid For Palestine – UK
MDM	Médecins du Monde (Doctors of the World)
MOPIC	Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation
MSF	Médecins sans Frontières (Doctors Without Borders)
NGOs	Non-governmental organizations
NICs	Industrialized East Asian Countries
NNGOs	Northern NGOs
NORAD	Norwegian Agency for Development and Co-operation
PARC	Palestinian Agricultural Relief Committees
PCBS	Palestinian Central Bureau for Statistics
PFLP	Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine
PHRMG	Palestinian Human Rights Monitoring Group
PLO	Palestine Liberation Organization
PNA	Palestinian National Authority
PNGOs	Palestinian NGOs
PRA	Participatory Rapid Appraisal
PWWS	Palestinian Women's Working Society
SAPs	Structural Adjustment Programs
SNGOs	Southern NGOs
UNHCR	UN High Commission for Refugees
UPMRC	Union of Palestinian Medical Relief Committees
WATC	Women's Affairs Technical Committee
WCLAC	Women's Center for Legal Aid and Counseling
WID	Women in Development

INTRODUCTION

Introduction

With the outbreak of the second Intifada in September 2000, the Palestinians have returned to a period of direct anti-colonial struggle against the Israeli occupation. The Intifada has also created conditions of possibility for Palestinian independence, and so poses practical and theoretical challenges to researchers and practitioners alike.

The Intifada presents a direct challenge to Palestinian non-governmental organizations (NGOs) as well as to their counterparts among donor and international non-governmental organizations (INGO) and donor to intervene and 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 against the Palestinian, population and to support the Palestinian struggle for self-determination. In making this call, the Palestinian uprising provides the occasion to unequivocally expose the manifold contradictions that have underpinned the growth of NGOs in the West Bank and Gaza,[1] and to reveal the tensions in their relationships with the donors.[2] The Intifada exposes a disconnection between NGOs and popular movements in Palestine. It reveals Palestinian NGO activists as not being able to articulate between their own professional and development requirements and Palestinian national aspirations for independence as framed by the overarching national

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[1] The process of Intifada is an attempt to overturn the existing order and to create a new order, but because this process cannot be completely controlled it therefore reflects both crisis and potential as complex forces and inherent contradictions come into play (De Certeau, 1998: 4).

[2] There are more than 230 foreign donors actively assisting Palestinian NGOs today; the majority do so through established local contacts in Palestine. Most donors represent Western governments and Northern and international organizations. However, there are a few Arab and Islamic donor organizations that are very active.

agenda. This raises further questions: how does one conceptualize and explain the relationship between NGOs, INGOs and donors, what are the overriding structural relations between them, and how have they been shaped by historically contingent factors?

This study looks at the paradoxes illuminated during the uprising as well as during the transition period that began with the Oslo Accords. Based on empirical research and interviews conducted prior to and after the outbreak of the second Intifada, the study analyzes the relationship between Palestinian NGOs (PNGOs), INGOs and donors, as determined by the processes within Palestinian society, as well as by mechanisms and structural relations within the aid community.

This introduction presents our understanding of the multifaceted dynamics that frame NGO, donor, and international NGO relations within the context of recent Palestinian history. The first section analyzes the uprising in order to unravel and define the problematic of NGOs in Palestine. The introduction then goes on to describe the conceptual framework of the book, and content of the chapters.

I. The Intifada and Palestinian NGOs and Their Limited Roles

The second Intifada has been viewed by much of the world as a bold, collective act of resistance against Israel's occupation and its colonial system of control. During the ten years following the conclusion of the Oslo Accords, Israel's exercise of control over the Palestinians not only deepened, but metamorphosed into an apartheid regime of checkpoints, permits system, settler by-pass roads, and settlements, encircling and besieging Palestinian cantons of 'territoriality' (Mansour, 2001). By late 2003 there were 83 separate 'Bantustans' in the West Bank and Gaza from which travel to and from is possible for Palestinians only with permits.

As the Palestinian uprising enters its fifth year, a sense of crisis is evident. Not only has Israel's siege on Palestinian towns, its repeated military invasions and its reoccupation of the West Bank exacted a heavy humanitarian, social and economic toll, but there is growing disquiet and confusion over what the uprising has accomplished. Questions are being raised in closed circles about the capacity of the Intifada to realize Palestinian political aspirations, especially given the great divergence in tactics and strategies espoused by different factions and the difficulties of harmonizing societal energies and marshalling them to achieve a common goal. In addition, there is the colonial strategy of the Sharon government and its use of armed provocations, particularly its assassinations of Palestinian leaders, not only as a way to escalate the conflict, but also to

create internal havoc within Palestinian politics and thwart Palestinian national unity.

There are three separate challenges facing Palestinian society today: the challenge to the leadership of the Intifada, the challenge of articulating together development and anti-colonial struggle, and the challenge to the role of international organizations to act as witness. Serious consideration of each will elucidate the disjunctures and antagonisms within the NGO sphere that bear on the current crisis, as well as illustrate the overarching issues framing NGO, INGO and donor relations in Palestine.

Leadership of the Intifada

Firstly, from the outset, the Intifada has been weakened by the absence of a unified leadership, a consequence of, among other things, the decision of the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) to shun the command role in order to avoid the international repercussions of asserting formal leadership over the uprising (Rabbani, 2002). This exposes a central paradox. While Palestinian NGOs have undertaken very successful forms of professional action, such as providing medical services and issuing reliable reports on Palestinian casualties and damage caused by Israeli military operations and other human rights violations, they have not developed a synergy with the political forces (whether the political parties, Islamic and National Committee for the Intifada or unions) or with the population. Therefore, while NGOs have used their international recognition for advocacy and to make available strategic information about the Israeli attacks, locally they have contributed little to harnessing society's energies during a period of national struggle, nor have they had a significant impact on the direction, or lack thereof, of the uprising.[3] While the PNGO Network plays a major role in organizing international popular protection (under the form of international civil missions), they were not able to work with these missions toward a strategy of non-violent resistance.

This raises a number of questions. Why have PNGOs not taken a more active leadership role during this Intifada compared to the first uprising, by mobilizing popular classes and organizing collective resistance efforts? Why, for instance, have Palestinian non-governmental organizations not given more vocal support for the local and regional boycott of Israeli

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[3] NGOs have tried to create a space for a national debate on the Intifada. Muwatin, the Palestinian Institute for the Study of Democracy, was a pioneer in initiating debates on the Intifada. It sponsored a large conference attended by about 600 people, with representatives from the PNA present. However, this and similar public forums have yet to channel societal energies in any particular direction. In terms of the next step and how to go beyond the conference mode of action, as well as how to raise issues in a systematic and strategic fashion in order to impact on the national agenda, little follow up has been pursued.

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goods? Similarly, why have these organizations not attempted to strengthen community initiatives and encourage popular committees to sustain the socio-economic steadfastness of the population as was done during the first Intifada? How have Palestinian NGOs possibly contributed to disengaging the grassroots since the uprising began? Two examples serve to illustrate the complex issues and processes that are bound up within these questions.

As mentioned, since the beginning of the Intifada, NGOs have generally been absent from the popular demonstrations that have been taking place in the West Bank and Gaza. After a long hiatus, however, the NGOs did begin to play a major role in mobilizing the population, for example, after Israeli forces closed the road leading to Birzeit University. Many organizations used their email lists and took out advertisements in the local newspapers to mobilize people for a demonstration from Ramallah to the new Surda checkpoint that was blocking the road leading to Birzeit. However, the NGO actors often emphasize the importance of being apolitical and maintaining a 'neutral' position on a national political question in the middle of an anti-colonial nationalist struggle. At issue here is the way numerous NGO leaders confuse the 'political' with the 'national' and recoil from the national agenda under the pretext of refusing to engage in 'politicized' activities.

This transformation is not a result of the internal process that the PNGOs have undergone but is related to external factors. This baffling observation only becomes intelligible when one recognizes that the aid industry constitutes what Foucault has called a 'regime of truth.' The Palestinian case reveals the banality of aid systems and their 'conceptual maps' that envision the social field as neatly divided up into political and civil societies, embedded within the public sphere - an assumption, we would argue, in need of questioning. Retreating from the challenge of imposing their own conceptual map, Palestinian NGOs have internalized the conceptual vision that conflates the 'national' and the 'political.' The Intifada provides the occasion that reveals the absurdity of this vision given the social reality of the occupied territories, since it illustrates how the internalization of this vision places the majority of the PNGOs in a contradictory and potentially antagonistic relationship to the Palestinian national struggle against the Israeli occupation.[4]

While the majority of the NGOs are careful to demonstrate their political neutrality, these organizations exhibit increased internal politicization in their alliance building, and individualization of power and charismatic authority. For instance, the communiqué released on October 7, 2000, entitled "Unifying the Efforts for Ending the Occupation and

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[4] One cannot ignore the role of bilateral donor agencies during the Interim period in promoting the conflation of national and political agendas in a contrived fashion in order to neutralize the opposition and leftist forces known to occupy the NGO sphere.

Realizing Independence: All Efforts for Supporting the Popular Intifada for the Independence," was circulated for signature among NGOs and political parties. The petition, however, requested the endorsement of individual leaders rather than organizations. This reinforces the argument that these leaders do not view the NGOs as institutions which should have a leadership role in national issues.

An additional example elucidates further contradictions. On June 19, 2002, a petition was published in *al-Quds*, a daily Palestinian newspaper, signed by academics, public figures and many prominent NGO leaders. The signatories launched a critique of suicide bombings and called for a reconsideration of operations that target civilians: "We think that these bombings do not contribute towards achieving our national project which calls for freedom and independence. On the contrary, they strengthen the enemies of peace on the Israeli side and give Israel's aggressive government under Sharon the excuse to continue harsh war against our people."

Released in the direct aftermath of the Israeli invasion in April, during which Israeli forces re-occupied the West Bank, the petition was intended to spark an internal debate on Palestinian resistance regarding whether there were inconsistencies between the means and aims of the Intifada. However, the debate quickly subsided. The credibility of the petition was questioned and the initiative was critiqued on a number of counts, but in general it was read as an affront to those who have sacrificed for the resistance. In this regard, the petition met with reproaches and disapprobation (Allen, 2002). One of the reasons for this, as Azmi Bishara, an Arab nationalist member of the Israeli parliament, has argued, is that in a moment of intense national crisis, as the one in which Palestinians now find themselves, it is not enough to merely critique resistance practices but it is incumbent upon activists, intellectuals and political forces to also promote alternatives (2002).

By criticizing armed resistance without a sustained critique or strategic analysis of the occupation upon which to firmly advance a viable practical and theoretical alternative mode of resistance, the NGO activists and intellectuals who signed the petition left themselves open to counteraction and de-legitimation. In contrast to the first Intifada, when activists, intellectuals and community leaders were embedded within the popular struggle and bound up in a mass-based national movement, the incident of the petition reveals much about the location of Palestinian NGOs today within the social and political fields. The petition reveals these actors as *spectators* in the Intifada, unable to make the necessary linkages and *articulate* between their own aspirations for Palestinian freedom and independence, the objectives of their organizations that promote democracy and social justice, and the overarching national agenda and strategies of the Intifada. As such, it also reveals the NGOs as isolated and lacking an organic base in society. This isolation is not necessarily due only to the responsibility of the NGOs but also to a context characterized by the early militarization of

the Intifada and the Israeli reaction to it that marginalized most people and institutions and robbed non-military action of its subversive potential.

These observations are inseparable from a number of trends and the overall transformation of Palestinian non-governmental organizations beginning in the early 1990's, concomitant with their entry into the 'aid industry.' The Oslo process, which allowed for the creation of the Palestinian National Authority and the commencement of 'state-building' supported by the intervention of donor countries and their peace-building initiatives, also consolidated a space for the growth of Palestinian NGOs and civic institutions. Paradoxically, however, the consolidation of this space was accompanied by a dis-embedding of local organizations from within the society and their base in popular movements. Moreover, this ongoing consolidation process is marred by fractures and disjunctures, as the 'national' agenda has been re-conceptualized and conflated with 'politics' and hence redefined by both local and international NGOs actors as too politicized for 'civic' organizations.

These are examples of the problematic of NGOs in Palestine; the complex issues touched upon here will be further explored and explained in the conceptual framework outlined below and the ensuing chapters.

Defining 'Development' in the Midst of an Anti-Colonial Struggle

The second major challenge facing Palestinian society today concerns the task of defining development in the midst of a national uprising. The immediate post-Oslo 'Interim period' before final status negotiations was not acknowledged by many donors and international organizations as the beginning of a process of decolonization. The situation in the Palestinian Territories was already classified by the donors and international NGOs (INGOs) as a post-conflict area rather than a conflict zone.

This characterization has a tremendous impact on donor aid, at both the conceptual and procedural levels. At the first level, the vision of post-conflict assistance becomes linear, when in fact conflict is invariably cyclical. On the procedural level, donor agencies and international organizations take on the role of a 'neutral' mediator, a role which ignores the root causes of the conflict and its colonial nature.

Aid invariably follows the modality of colonial control; thus within Palestine, as a new site of 'peace-building,' the international order is superimposed over the colonial order. As Brynen explains, new peace-building efforts have been devised which not only entail regularly established patterns of diplomacy and military peacekeeping, "but also a variety of social and economic objectives and instrumentalities, underpinned by substantial commitments of financial support" (Brynen, 2000: 6-7).

The problem that results in practice is that the peace-building

assistance, which buttresses a wide range of interventions, including supporting the start-up costs of establishing the Palestinian National Authority, infrastructure projects and a range of social and economic initiatives, is based on the assumption that the conflict is ending, when as we have witnessed in Palestine, the conflict has renewed. On the NGO level this perception shapes the nature of NGO programs and projects. These developmental projects lack any emergency plan in the event of the accentuation of the national conflict. As a result the majority of the NGOs were shown incapable of articulating the civic with the political or to separate the 'political' from the 'national.'

It is quite clear that the Intifada shattered the veneer of the Oslo process and the euphoria of donor projects that portrayed Palestinian political as well as social and economic development as linear processes, while masking the transformations on the ground and the Israeli practices that have obstructed Palestinian development options and political independence. In contrast to these linear projections, during the Interim period, Israeli settlements increased by sixty-five percent (Mansour, 2001) and Israel's mechanisms of control expanded.

With the outbreak of the Intifada, Palestinian governmental, non-governmental and international development agencies have been grappling with the task of responding to the growing humanitarian crisis, the potential for economic collapse and the physical destruction caused by Israeli military operations and the siege imposed by the occupation power. According to a recent World Bank report, the GDP per capita shrank by 50% and as a result 60% of the population now lives below the poverty line. The overall losses that the Palestinian economy has endured is estimated at $5.4 million per day (World Bank Report, 3 March 2003).

Confronted with a significant influx of emergency assistance,[5] Palestinian NGOs have also faced an additional challenge, the need to maintain a modicum of space from which to define Palestinian development needs and develop strategies for the medium term, while retaining a focus on the dialectic relationship between socio-economic development and resistance.

The lessons of the Oslo period have not gone unheeded: Palestinians now look upon aid somewhat more warily, realizing the way donor assistance can undercut and prefigure local development strategies, options and vision, often according to donors' practical and political agendas. For

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[5] Since the Intifada began, the majority of donor assistance has been redirected into budget support for the Palestinian Authority and emergency relief. The World Bank estimates that by mid-2001, Arab League donors have been contributing US$45 million per month in budget support, while the European Union has been providing US$9 million per month (World Bank, 2002). In this report the World Bank report outlines that disbursement on growth-oriented infrastructure and capacity-building projects have dropped from US$400 million in 1999 to US$175 million in 2001. In effect, long-term investment has been sacrificed for short-term survival.

Palestinians the immediate concern is one of priorities, and the issue is as follows: should donor emergency projects simply be channeled into short-term efforts, such as food aid, that alleviate the immediate humanitarian suffering, but also bear the costs of Israel's anti-insurgency war? Or can aid support more proactive strategies, linking socio-economic development to forms of resistance, such as creating new enabling governmental structures, or promoting alternative forms of grassroots community empowerment? Just as important, from the Palestinian perspective, is the 'voice' of the donors. Are donors going to bear the financial costs of Israeli military campaigns as well as the humanitarian crisis facing the Palestinian people, without addressing the root causes?

Palestinian organizations such as the Development Studies Program (DSP) at Birzeit University have been theorizing alternative development strategies that re-conceptualize the relationship between socio-economic development and national resistance. A recent study commissioned by DSP envisions the creation of new linkages between the PNA, NGOs and grassroots in order to facilitate a strategy of resource mobilization that addresses the basic needs of the population, while empowering the grassroots through collective action.[6] But a brief survey of Palestinian attempts to apply such innovative strategies to donor emergency assistance programs exposes the tensions underwriting the relationship between PNGOs and donor agencies, as well as underscoring some of the limits of 'partnership.' For instance, in the aftermath of the Israeli invasion and reoccupation of the West Bank in April 2002, donors and aid agencies were focusing on the massive physical destruction and damage to infrastructure. PNGOs, aware of the human suffering, responded by urging the donors to recognize the humanitarian consequences of the Israeli invasion. The NGOs not only wanted the donors to recognize the grave human rights violations committed by Israel, but also to acknowledge the moral and legal responsibilities of the occupying power, as defined in the Fourth Geneva Convention.

NGO activists expressed the view that if the donors focused attention on the root causes of the humanitarian crisis, namely the assault by the occupation forces, this would support the calls by the Palestinian leadership for international observers. On the other hand, the NGOs hoped the donors would support broader multi-leveled development strategies to empower the Palestinian people in their resistance to the occupation. Yet, as a woman's activist and health practitioner explains, many donors were very quick to 'co-opt' the humanitarian argument and reduce it in both scope and intent to a narrow focus on 'food aid.'

Exemplifying this trend, shortly after the Israeli reoccupation of the West Bank, an international humanitarian organization released a report

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[6] See Sufyan Alayasa, *Resource Mobilization, Collective Action and Community Development: the Experience of the West Bank and Gaza*, Ramallah: Development Studies Program, Bir Zeit University (forthcoming).

on malnutrition in the Palestinian Territories. While the report identified a serious problem facing the Palestinian population, it failed to discuss the causes. USAID, UNRWA and other donor agencies began delivering food aid for the Palestinian population, and the root causes of malnutrition, that is, the occupation, closures and curfews, were not treated.

These examples illustrate one of the constraints NGOs come up against as they attempt to harness the support of donor and aid agencies and direct this assistance into local development strategies that have been defined by PNGOs. At issue is the antagonism and conflict that arises when donors possess a contrary set of interests. The Intifada, as an occurrence of renewed conflict, is precisely an occurrence that reveals the limits of donor support. Faced with a Palestinian struggle for their collective national rights, aid agencies have opted for the dispensing of controversial food aid, instead of offering any meaningful support for the rights of the Palestinian people, and thus invariably leaving the root causes of the crisis in place. In this situation the uprising has laid bare the interests and agendas that underwrite donor-NGO relations, enabling one to observe its effects on PNGOs. A conflict of interests represents one of the central dynamics that underpin the relationship between NGO, INGO and donors. This and other factors will be further elucidated and examined in this book.

The Role of the Witness:
Raising Palestinian Rights in the International Arena

The current Intifada also represents a unique moment to observe the modes of moral-political action of the international NGOs, humanitarian organizations and donors during a quasi-war period and the interaction between them and the Palestinian NGOs, especially given the withdrawal by both from the national-political question during the peace process, including the occupation. We find different forms of humanitarian actions in the Palestinian Territories: passive intervention (International Committee of the Red Cross, UNRWA), humanitarian action which combines intervention with the duty of witness (MSF, Oxfam, etc.), and finally the new form of activism which is popular protection of the population under occupation (civil missions, Ta'ayush, PHR-Israel, etc.).[7]

The Intifada has revealed the incapability of the international

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[7] During the second Intifada a growing number of individuals from European and North American countries have come to "visit" Palestine to demonstrate solidarity and call for protection of the Palestinian people; in a period of 18 months around 4000 persons have come for an average sojourn of 10 days to 2 weeks, while 10,000 "internationals" have been denied entry to Israel at Lod airport, and 800 of them have experienced detention. At the same time, the Ta'ayush movement composed of Israelis and Palestinians from Israel, emerged as a protest movement working to protect the Palestinians from occupation practices.

organizations (INGOs) to confirm themselves as witnesses during a period of crisis and war. In comparison to the solidarity model of the first Intifada, the synergy between local and international organizations has been slow to develop. In this Intifada, few of the INGOs remaining in the Palestinian territories are acting as solidarity groups. The majority are closer to the model of the professionalized INGOs. However, the issue is not that all INGOs should function as solidarity groups, but rather the manner in which they articulate their roles. Some organizations in the health sector, such as some Italian INGOs, are highly professionalized and thus they are able to receive tenders from the EC for health projects. But when it comes to being a witness to the human crisis in Palestine, they fail to document what is occurring or to report on behalf of local NGOs to their political leaders and media in their own country. Even international organizations such as Médecins sans Frontières (MSF), which is known for their focus on the duty of witness, suggest neutrality concerning the current conflict. (see: www.msf.org)

II. The Conceptual Framework

For several decades, intense debate has been ongoing in the Palestinian Territories, as well as in other Arab countries, regarding the issue of agenda setting. Within this debate the question of 'agendas' is usually posed in terms of opposition between 'local' agendas and agendas of 'others', usually those of the West. Socially and politically contentious topics often turn into discussions about agenda priorities. On many occasions, Palestinian National Authority (PNA) officials have considered sectors such as human rights, democracy and gender as over-funded and a response to donor-set priorities. An uncritical emulation of donor agendas is criticized, not only by PNA officials but also by some intellectuals who consider it as serving alien political interests. In June 1999, a crisis between NGOs and the PNA erupted concerning funding, leading to the creation of the Ministry of NGO Affairs (later changed to a Commission). NGOs are often regarded by the PNA with suspicion for two reasons: firstly, because of their foreign ties (in terms of funds and contacts); secondly, because their activities sometime substitute for state service provisions or enter into harsh competition, thus reducing state control over resources and services.

In this context, this book began as a research project with a twofold objective: firstly, to inquire into the ways in which external actors influence Palestinian NGOs in terms of their development policies and their relative promotion of democratization and, secondly, to investigate the capacity of Palestinian NGOs to contribute to the elaboration of global agendas through transnational activism and global conferences.

In order to circumscribe this broad problematic, the empirical data was drawn from organizations working within three sectors: *in health, in gender and development, and in human rights and democracy.* As the empirical investigation for this study proceeded, we became aware that an examination of the sites where the 'global' and the 'local' intersect and intertwine is inseparable from an analysis of the effects of the new transnational relations, specifically the aid system, and their role on local social formations. This is to say that local actors and social structures do not remain static but are transformed as they are drawn into new transnational relations, and then seek to negotiate their place within the aid industry and their relations with donors and international NGOs.

A central premise of this study, therefore, is that there is a restructuring of knowledge and practices and a new process of elite formation underway in the Palestinian NGO sector today. As such, the aim of this book is to shed light on the agenda-setting process between donors and their local recipients by investigating the relationships between donors, INGOs and Palestinian NGOs, illuminating the significance of networking, and exploring the encounters between global trends and the local society. It is also essential to chronicle the emergence of what will be termed a 'globalized Palestinian elite,' composed of an important part of the leaders of NGOs, and the local leaders of international NGOs.

In the following discussion, we focus on the emergence of a new elite that is being constructed through the increased entry of Palestinian organizations into the aid industry. Largely composed of new urban middle class activists that emerged in the 1970-80's as participants in the popular movement of the first Intifada, we suggest that they can be increasingly characterized as a *globalized elite* due to their connectivity to international NGOs, actors and agendas. (See Chapter 5)

In the literature much has been written on the way salaried positions in the NGO sector attract skilled and educated individuals, often to the detriment of the public sector. The notion of elite used here is much broader and includes the way in which the rise of a new social formation disrupts the embeddedness of local organizations within local social networks, concomitant with the rise of the neo-liberal paradigm which transforms the relationship between the individual and social institutions.

These changes not only have a direct bearing on collective action, but also reconfigure the ways subordinate classes are incorporated into emerging state-society relations. These transformations are intrinsically linked to three complex processes. Firstly, there was a fundamental shift in the political economy of aid to Palestinian NGOs in the early 1990's. Internationally, this moment coincided with a significant transformation in the sources of aid: solidarity-based support between northern and southern NGOs withered and was replaced by bilateral and multilateral relations between Southern

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NGOs (SNGOs) and European as well as North American governments and development agencies. Regionally and locally, this period coincided with the 1991 Gulf war and the onset of the Madrid peace talks, through which Palestine's geo-political status was reconfigured and the West Bank and Gaza Strip recaste as a site of 'peace-making.' These developments must be understood as part and parcel of the Arab world's integration into a unipolar world system; globalization, which is both a process and a project, is the harbinger of this system.[8]

It is worthwhile to reflect on the meaning of *globalization* within the experience of modernity in the Arab world. The mid-1980's brought a harsh economic downturn in most of the non-oil-producing countries, resulting in many of these nations accepting loans from the World Bank. Through this process these countries were integrated into a neo-liberal order; many of these nations were told to implement Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs), privatize state industries, and reduce social spending. At the same time, following the collapse of the former Soviet Union, the Arab countries were incorporated more firmly into the Western sphere of influence: with the fall of the Soviet regime, Arab leverage with the United States was reduced and Arab states became much more dependent on Western financial and military assistance. Furthermore, the 1991 Gulf war consolidated the hegemony of the United States in the region. Therefore, in its political and economic moorings, globalization has been associated with a feeling of frustration and a sense of powerlessness in the face of structural transformations that have increased the vulnerability of the region to economic and political actors external to the Middle East (Dodge, 2002: 8).

Secondly, the shift in the political economy of aid to NGOs in Palestine created new internal forms of social and political capital, as well as new forms of exclusion. It is essential to recognize that the availability of new forms of bilateral and multilateral assistance to NGOs induced a state of competition between Palestinian organizations. This resulted in a struggle for organizational survival between the urban middle class activists in the NGOs and the traditional elite in the charitable societies and grassroots leadership within the committees. Western donor funding introduced new criteria of funding and new conditions for dispersing aid. This established a hierarchy among organizations in terms of access to funding, and invariably it was the charitable societies and popular committees that lost out and were subsequently marginalized. Therefore,

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[8] Globalization as a *process* is typically understood as new sets of relations that are restructuring the international order, in particular the reordering of the global economy and the redistribution of power between states, international organizations and capital (Ould-Mey, 1996; Auroi, 1992). However, the process of globalization is buttressed by a historically specific *project*, a new process of modernization, centered around increased differentiation and rationalization in the economic sphere, which displaces the institutional and social forms of the industrial society (Beck, Giddens and Lash, 1994: 2-6). The result is the ushering in of a new neo-liberal order.

just as there was a reduction in the overall availability of funding, there was also a concentration of funds within a few highly competent and professional organizations.[9]

As a result of this logic of competition, introduced by new sources of funding, new cleavages have emerged. The middle class actors represent an emerging elite that has overturned the old elite of the voluntary charitable societies. Moreover, internal divisions such as urban/rural, pro-Oslo/anti-Oslo, English/Arabic speakers, professional technocrat/militant activist, have been reproduced and become more pronounced. The divisions represent markers or fissures, which reflect the process out of which this new elite is emerging.

Thirdly, the entry of local NGOs into aid channels involves a process of new subject formation as well as changes in the conceptual and institutional foundation of NGOs. NGOs represent *fragmentary sites*; they are positioned locally, within development channels and outside their own borders. As such, knowledge and practices of NGO actors are the result of *complex subject formation* and a negotiation of these different positions (Fisher, 1997). In this regard, the notion of globalized elite refers to a type of transnational subjective formation, in which the actions of local actors are fore-grounded by debates, development paradigms and international standards, which are not bound to their local context.

In one sense, this suggests that a more complex notion of NGO-donor relations is needed. The notion of dichotomous donor-NGO relations, which is usually assumed in investigations of agenda setting, is challenged by the way in which both sets of actors occupy and move within the same local spaces as well as international sites, particularly global forums and UN conferences.

Secondly, and more importantly, this transnational subject formation alerts us to new disruptions, as well as to a process of disembedding and disassociation which accompanies neo-liberalism and its focus on 'empowering' individuals to fend for themselves in the face of reduced government services and increased economicability within social life. It is precisely this logic that underpins the historical shift among activists within the Palestinian NGO sphere, from their role as the nexus of the popular movement of the first Intifada, to their role today in espousing the importance of advocacy (advocating internally in favor of new systems of education, health, etc., and internationally concerning the occupation), workshops and training programs. As Qassoum argued, the advocacy approach arrived

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[9] Clark and Balaj summarize these two processes in noting that since the Gulf war, the charitable societies' external support has been halved, and the committees have lost even more funding. Furthermore, they note, "in spite of the large number of NGOs it is estimated that 30-40 of them receive up to 70 percent or 80 of total NGO funding" (Clark and Balaj, 1994: 3). In other words, while there has been an overall contraction in funding to the NGO sphere, a large number of organizations have been marginalized with a minority acquiring a large share of the funding.

on the global scale to "put an end to mass social movements, dismantle the 'triad affinity' between the intellectual, the masses and the progressive and revolutionary ideas. In other words, exporting and applying advocacy at the global scale aims at demobilization, de-radicalization, de-politicization in order to maintain the emerging global neo-liberal order" (Qassoum, 2002: 51).

Having outlined these three complex processes, we will present our conceptual framework for understanding the encounter between the global and the local in an era of globalization as it relates to the disruptures produced by new institutional arrangements of neo-liberalism.

Globalization, Aid and Transformations of the Social Field of Action

Globalization is deeply intertwined with, if not embodying, a new phase in Western 'modernity.' The process of modernization that accompanies globalization has generated what can be loosely labeled as *new forms of modernity*, new institutions, social categories and concepts that not only manifest in a particular form but also perform a functional role within the post-industrial society. The most important of these include the new institutional arrangements associated with neo-liberalism: the dismantling of the state associated with neo-liberal responsibilities, new social spatial configurations, redefinition of 'society' and 'market,' and a process of differentiation within the 'life-world' and the rise of new institutions within civil society (Arato and Cohen, 1992). The aid industry is the conduit through which this new institutional arrangement arrives locally and affects NGOs.[10] As we will argue here, there are two forms of ruptures accompanying this process which creates shifts and displacement within the local field of action. [11]

In contrast to the generalized view that describes neo-liberalism in an abstract manner as a retreat of the state and an expanse of the market, neo-liberalism has been explained in some quarters as a new political rationality of rule that corresponds to the deepening of the capitalist system. In this argument, while neo-liberalism appears to represent a 'degovernmentalization of the state,' this is not necessarily a 'degovernmentalization of government' (Barry, Osborne and Rose, 1996:

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[10] This is reflected in the new norms of political and economic management evident in the World Bank and new Western donor agendas, defined by the twin poles of liberal democracy and the capitalist economy which form the new horizon in which development is envisioned. (Jefferies, 1993; Nunnenkramp, 1995; Robinson, 1994; Young and Williams, 1994).

[11] It is central to note that the rise of neo-liberalism has coincided with a collapse of what constitutes the political, reflected in the loss of the conceptual purchase of concepts such as the 'left,' 'socialism' and 'revolution'. At the same time there has been increased emphasis on the role of non-governmental organizations and building 'civil society' in developing countries within aid and development cooperation.

11). A range of techniques are deployed within the neo-liberal model which produce 'governmental/disciplinary' entities within the social field. While separate and distinct from the state, these techniques are tied to it through complex relations and shaped through a particular economic model of action (Burchell, 1996: 27-29). This brings into view the logic of neo-liberalism as a modern way of organizing power that governs by shaping possibilities for action. This represents a liberal rationality of rule that responds to a new process of modernization.

At the same time, the development of civil society has also been attributed to processes of modernization and to structural differentiation within the life-world as well as to processes of differentiation within the economy and the modern bureaucratic administration (Arato and Cohen, 1992). Along with Habermas, Arato and Cohen identify the functional role of civil society as being linked to communicative action and facilitating a new reflexivity on social norms and values within a democratic society, both of which are facilitated by and allow for a response to certain processes of social change and economic transformation.

Studying the aid industry in the Palestinian Territories, therefore, is part of a more complex assessment of the spread of institutional forms that accompany the process of globalization, which is being accepted by many as unproblematic. The Palestinian Territories, like other non-Western societies, has undergone two distinct processes in this regard: first, the disembedding of social relations from the local context, such that the interaction and restructuring of relations occurs across an indefinite span of time/space (Hanafi, 1990; Giddens, 1990:21). The second process is the re-embedding of social relations with international organizations, financial institutions and European and North American governments. Within these relations, the neo-liberal model and its reordering of *arrangements within* and *relations between* state-society-market constitute a new reference for the organization of social and political life in non-Western societies.

In this context, there are those such as Giddens who suggest modern institutions are being extended and spread through globalizing processes in universalizing fashion (Beck, Giddens and Lash, 1994: 57). However, this view obscures more than it explains. In contrast, Deleuze and Guattari theorize the expansion of capitalism as operating through a double movement: a decoding and deterritorialization of indigenous institutions as well as cultural and legal systems, followed by an artificial reterritorialization that disables these systems and institutes all sorts of "residual and artificial, imaginary or symbolic territorialities" (1984). It is precisely this double movement of deterritorialization and reterritorialization which we observe in the PNGO sector. In this regard, it is central to recognize, as the French sociologist Alain Touraine suggests, that one of the features of late capitalist modernity is 'disassociation'; this refers to a state in which social, political

and economic structures no longer cohere together but are fractured by forms of disconnectivity, as old life forms have been disabled but have yet to be replaced by new institutions and social norms. Disassociation not only impedes social cohesion but it induces fragmentation.

Our study emphasizes the importance of inquiring into the configuration of institutional forms and social practices that are emerging in non-Western society through aid relations. Moreover, this book supports the arguments that have already been made against the notion of a process of homogenization accompanying globalization. As studies have noted, transferred institutions do not necessarily carry the same normative dimensions or functions that they do in the original societies. Through a process of decoding and recoding of symbols, the new "imported" institutions are re-appropriated and acquire a new meaning. As some argue, the transfer of institutions or ideas to a local context should not be assumed but described, for even if the same phenomena is transferred to different localities it will be interpreted and articulated in a unique manner in each context (Ahmed and Donnan, 1994: 3). Others emphasize the importance of questioning and looking beyond the discourse of international organizations that implies uniformity between the global form and its local manifestation (Miller-Adams, 1995: 11). The process varies by which concepts and institutions are transferred and emerge locally. Therefore, while the neo-liberal model forms a new horizon in the period of globalization, one should not disregard the different modalities characterizing the way ideas, categories and institutional forms are transferred and articulated locally or the need to account for why and how this occurs.

To this end, this book focuses on the micro level of relations between donors and NGOs. The study aspires to provide a differentiated conceptualization of agenda setting between donors and NGOs, while illuminating the process of decision-making that underlies the structured interaction between donor agencies and Palestinian non-governmental organizations. The findings also provide a view of the changing global sets of relations and new development paradigms from the perspective of peripheral global actors, namely Palestinian NGOs. In the following, we provide three case studies that illustrate different encounters between NGOs and the aid industry, illustrating the agency of NGOs as evident in the way NGO actors internalize, resist or re-articulate donor agendas.

One of the overarching objectives of this book is to map the alterations in the institutions and practices that structure political and social life in a non-Western context and to examine the transformations that occur in a field of action. In this manner, we accept Scott's basic premise that post-colonial inquiry, insofar as it focuses on the formation of a colonial subject and thus on 'decolonizing representation,' has reached the limit of its use in addressing questions of the present (Scott, 1999: 12-15). Following Scott's lead, we will attempt to redirect thinking about neo-colonialism towards

an inquiry into encounters with the *conceptual* and *institutional* dimensions of modernity. Scott understands the transfer of institutional and political rationalities to the non-Western context in a colonial encounter as a process in which modern power becomes inscribed in the social terrain of the local society, *transforming and reorganizing a field of action* (idem: 15-16). A Foucauldian view of power guides this conception, which recognizes power as, "an action which influences another action by determining a field of possibility for it" (Al Amoudi, 2000: 18).

For Scott a transformation in a field of action occurs because the institutions which organize political life and the *means through which actors relate* to a political experience are altered. For example, in the context of colonialism, as the structures of the project of political sovereignty were set in place, a new legal system, a judiciary, and an economic field with property rights led to the transformation of the overall rules of the game of action: Two movements sequentially underlie such an alteration of a field of action; the establishment of new structures that reorganize a social space, in turn *disable* old life forms and *oblige* new forms to come into being (Scott, 1999: 26).

One can observe a similar process at work in the Palestinian context. Among the changes that have occurred in the organizations that formed part of the liberation movement, one observes a displacement of a political mode of action, in the form of mobilization by a civic mode of action, promoting new subjectivities and a new reflexivity on social norms. Following a process of professionalization and institutionalization in relation to their increased entry into development cooperation, Palestinian NGOs have taken on new practices in the form of civic education training programs, as well as awareness raising activities. This type of activity is linked to a notion of the 'public' and is meant to facilitate reflection on social and political norms. One observes new knowledge claims in the form of statistics and surveys produced by local research centers, illustrating the efficacy of this type of action in producing effects in the body-politic, hence legitimizing it over old modes of action.

III. This Book

This book is composed of three parts. The first part begins by conceptualizing global and local agendas and the encounter between these two spheres in light of the Palestinian experience. In *Chapter 1*, the historical transformation of PNGOs is reviewed, the new development paradigms in the aid industry are analyzed, and a brief overview of World Bank and Western donor policies is provided. *Chapter 2* presents an overview of donor assistance to PNGOs, classified according to its sectoral and geographical distribution. This overview sheds light on the relationship between

supply and demand, considering the needs assessments produced by some Palestinian NGOs.

In the second part of the book, the agenda-setting process is reviewed. *Chapter 3* includes three case studies: women, human rights and health sectors; each identifies a type of encounter between global and local agendas and how donor programs are articulated locally, and are contested, re-interpreted, or integrated into the local context by the actors involved.

In *Chapter 4*, we deal with some of the issues related to negotiations and the agenda-setting process between donors and recipients. This includes: the donors' criteria for funding a project, the space for negotiations, setting the rules of the game and structural parity. The analysis asks whether local NGOs have sufficiently invested in the space for negotiation. Finally, the examination considers the changing mode of operation of both international and local NGOs (funding projects versus core funding; funding of advocacy versus services), as well as the implication of the emergence of techno-bureaucratic and expert actors in international organizations. *Chapter 5* ties together many of the loose strands of the preceding sections with a cross-cutting inquiry into the changing role of Palestinian NGOs in their society. It reviews the role of PNGOs as service providers and as agents of social change, in light of donor trends and the 'new policy agenda.' Using the example of the women's model parliament project, some of the difficulties of pursuing social change through donor frameworks are examined. Overall this chapter argues that although the local organizations have made amendments to take into account donor approaches to development, other mechanisms are available to NGO actors to redefine their relationship with the donors and reconstitute organizational practices.

The third part of the book deals with transnational networking and the way PNGOs participate and insert themselves into advocacy networks. *Chapter 6* reviews a range of examples, including the Seattle protests against the WTO and NGO networks organized around UN global conferences as well as regional (Mediterranean) and sub-regional (Arab) networks. The objective here is to classify different types of transnational networks and record the different functions they perform with a view to the role of SNGOs and Palestinian NGOs in this new form of activity. Finally, *Chapter 7* uncovers some of the structural dimensions of networking, such as the role of the mediator and the organizer of the network; such factors impact on the constitution and efficacy of the NGO network. The conclusion defines the main characteristics of the emerging globalized Palestinian NGO elite.
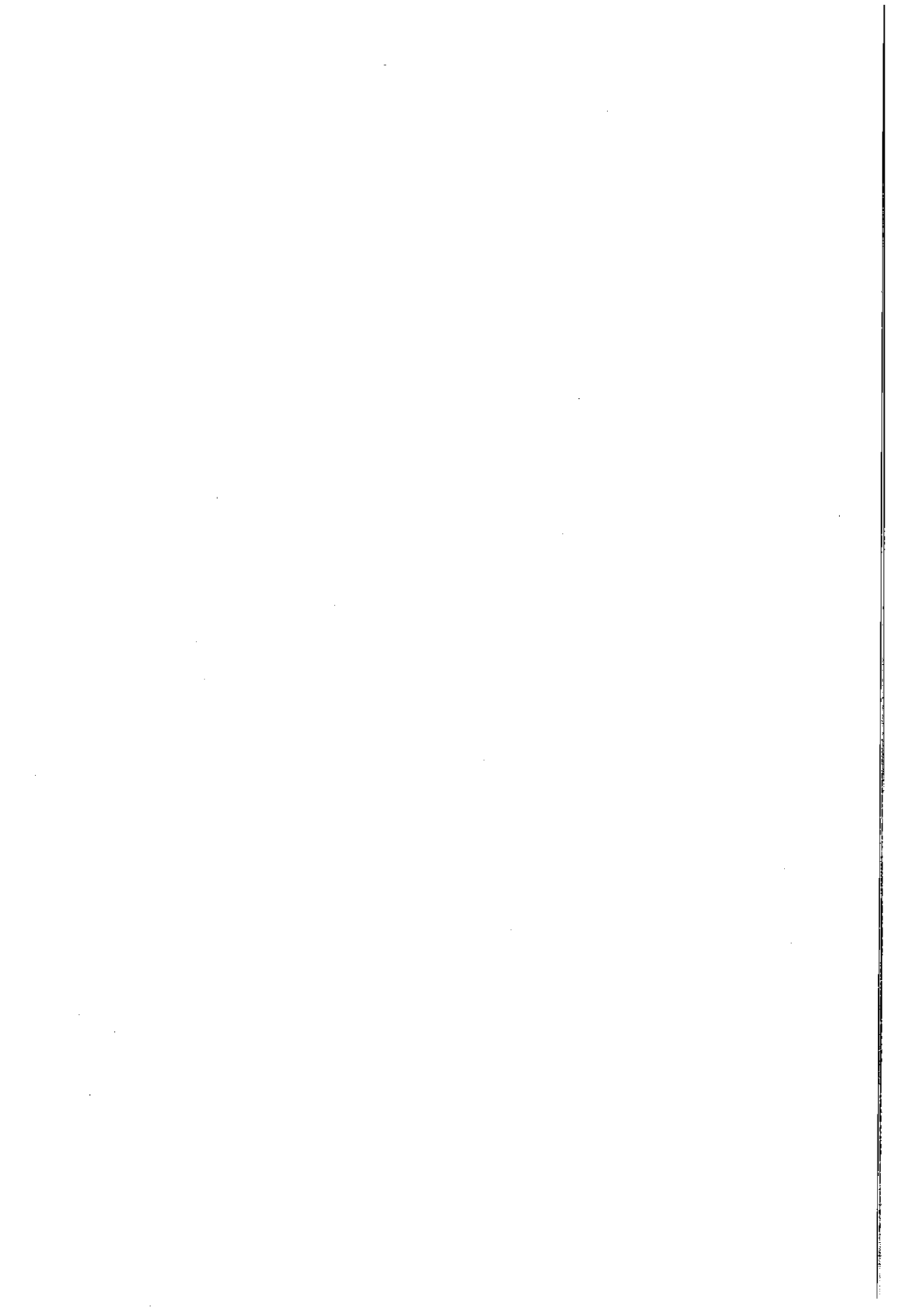
PART I

CONCEPTUALIZATION OF THE MEETING
OF GLOBAL/LOCAL AGENDAS
AND
THE PALESTINIAN CONTEXT

Chapter 1   # Conceptualizing Global
and Local Agendas

"[The] real political task in a society such as ours
is to criticize the working of institutions which
appear to be both neutral and independent, to
criticize them in such a manner that the political
violence which has always exercised itself obscurely
through them will be unmasked."

(Foucault, 1984: 6)

"We don't know whether words save lives, but we
know for sure that silence kills."

Médecins sans Frontières, from their acceptance
speech for the Nobel Peace Prize (1997)

Along with broader changes in the international system brought
on by the end of the cold war, Western development assistance has been
restructured in the last two decades. Historically, the 'development industry'
arose out of the WWII reconstruction process and the beginning of a new
international order, with the US at the helm. While the US subsidized
the European post-war reconstruction effort, the political fate of the
non-industrialized world was negotiated in the UN. Belief in a linear
process of modernization, and that capital accumulation was needed to
improve the socio-economic and political situations in the Third World,

propelled Western forms of development assistance and the establishment of international development institutions such as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the UN technical agencies. Within the scramble for new markets and the competition of the cold war period, development had been understood as the responsibility of the state, with conceptions of development influenced by modernist tenets, including a faith in science and technology as the handmaiden of progress.

International NGOs (INGOs) also emerged in large numbers in the aftermath of the Second World War. Private, non-profit organizations such as Oxfam and Médecins sans Frontières have traditionally refused to receive funding from governments. Their growth and proliferation, which occurred largely under the banner of a humanitarian ideology, took place as decolonized nations were incorporated into the interstate system and the world economy (Boli and Thomas, 1999: 30). Over time, INGOs were accorded a greater role in the field of international development. Yet American and European NGOs entered into formal development cooperation from different starting points. While in the 1970's the European NGOs were more politicized and focused on long-term development and social change, the American NGOs concentrated on relief and humanitarian assistance (Biekart, 1999: 72). However, in the Palestinian context the European NGOs that supported local NGOs during the 1970's and 1980's were primarily solidarity groups that played a major role during this period in the focus on relief.

The end of the cold war coincided with broader economic and political changes, which together ushered in a new era in the international system marked by a reconstitution of Western development assistance. Two major changes are discernable: the restructuring of aid channels and expansion of the scope and function of aid, and the rise of new development partners with new policy priorities.

1.1. Restructuring of Aid Channels, Scope and Function

Since the 1970's there has been an increased reliance on government funding by INGOs and a greater role for INGOs in distributing official government assistance. Over these last three decades, national NGO-donor relations have shifted from grants to matching grant programs and most recently to contracting arrangements. With the popularity of contracting, Northern NGOs (NNGOs) have become major deliverers of bilateral aid. One factor behind this trend is the preference of Western governments to channel official emergency assistance through INGOs. At the same time, governments shifted development funds to emergency assistance and short-term relief, away from past areas of interventions, especially as they were confronted with disasters such as famines in the mid-1980's. In Europe,

from 1970 to 1990 government grants grew from 2% to 27% of INGO budgets (Biekart, 1999: 62). The author notes that as a consequence of this greater reliance on government funds, INGOs have come under pressure to verify their efficiency in order to maintain financial support. Many have hired external management groups to create modern assessment methods and marketing strategies.

The greater reliance of INGOs on Western governments for support blurs the boundary between governmental and non-governmental intervention in development. Among NGOs, it also obfuscates the distinction between non-governmental organizations and private for-profit enterprises that increasingly compete for sub-contracting arrangements, for example, with USAID. This may call into question past solidarity relations between INGOs and Southern NGOs (SNGOs). The solidarity relationships formed between INGOs and SNGOs, such as those in Palestine, will in many cases become eroded or reconstituted under these conditions. At the same time, these changes have been accompanied by an extension of relations in aid channels, with bilateral agencies entering into new forms of development cooperation and their own direct relations with SNGOs. These issues will be considered more thoroughly in Chapter 4 on the negotiation process between donors and NGOs.

Since the end of the cold war, Western governments have increased their involvement in conflict areas, either in humanitarian relief operations during the conflict or in reconstruction efforts after the cessation of hostilities. This has altered and expanded the form, scope and function of development assistance to include short-term relief and post-conflict reconstruction efforts. As noted previously, Western governments have allocated a greater share of bilateral aid towards short-term relief. At the same time peace-building efforts not only entail regularly established patterns of diplomacy and military peace-keeping, "but also a variety of social and economic objectives and instrumentalities, underpinned by substantial commitments of financial support" (Brynen, 2000: 6-7). As the Palestinian case reveals, here donor involvement in post-conflict reconstruction projects fuse development-oriented initiatives with overarching political objectives. Donor support for the Palestinian-Israeli peace process and concern about political stability in the region have buttressed a wide range of interventions, including supporting the start-up costs to establish the Palestinian National Authority and cover its initial budgetary expenditures.

1.2. New Partners and New Policy Priorities

Overlapping these changes, in the post-cold war period the policies of Western bilateral donor agencies and multilateral institutions came to be dominated by new priorities. Closely connected to this, multilateral institutions such as the World Bank and bilateral agencies began to acknowledge the role and contribution of non-governmental organizations in the development process. These changes have accompanied the *new policy agenda* affirmed in the literature as a central benchmark in development and aid policies over the last two decades (Robinson, 1994). The new policy framework is organized around the twin poles of neo-liberal economics and liberal democratic theory (Moore, 1993). This agenda is clearly not monolithic: its details vary from one official aid agency to another. In this regard, it is useful to draw a distinction between the policies of the World Bank, whose good governance programs emphasize state reforms and macro-economic fundamentals, and the focus of bilateral donors, which is more politically oriented and includes democracy and civil society building initiatives. Before further examining these new priorities, it is essential to outline the broader context within which they have emerged.

The policy parameters set by this new agenda have arisen out of a set of historical conditions, which have been hastened in part by the end of the cold war. These policies reflect a restructuring of the relations between Western countries and the developing world within a newly unfolding global order. Some characterize this global change as the transition from a bipolar to unipolar world, in which the axis along which international antagonisms are articulated have shifted from capitalism/socialism to North/South, and multilateral institutions such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) have increasingly become tools for the industrialized Western powers. At the macro level, the pertinent historical developments framing this transition include the demise of communism. But a more central factor is the restructuring of the global economy, accelerated by the crisis in the capitalist system during the 1970's and its resolution in the 1980's through a new capital-friendly international regime (Arrighi and Silver, 2000).

On another level, some observers have identified ideological factors as playing a role in prompting these policy developments. For example, some identify the sway of the New Right in the US and Britain, specifically the rise to power of the Reagan and Thatcher governments, which advocated a return to classical liberal economics (Vashee, 1995). Similarly, others have shown the influence of the 'New Political Economy' and 'Rational Choice Theory' in precipitating the shift in World Bank policies. Finally, it is also interesting to note the particular forms of discursive strategies deployed to support the construction of the new policy agenda. For instance, Western multilateral development agencies have credited the success of the Newly

Industrialized East Asian Countries (NICs) to neo-liberal practices as part of a broader discursive construction of the liberalization paradigm as the sole salvation for third world societies. In contrast to this, East Asian regional specialists, such as Robert Wade and Alice Amsden, have confirmed the leading role played by the state in facilitating the economic development of the NICs.

It becomes evident that both the process of global economic restructuring, as well as the new sets of relations between development actors that are structured by the new policy agenda, raise two crucial issues for developing societies. The first centers on the positioning of peripheral states in the new economic order characterized by both trade expansion and deregulation; and the second concerns the role of the state in development and the relationship between state-market-society. It is the second which concerns us here: by examining the new policy agenda, and comparing the policies of the main donor agencies, we hope to delineate some of the main debates about the interrelationship of these sectors in development.

New Orthodoxies

For some analysts, for example, Imco Brouwer (2000), the new policy agenda represents a broad consensus among international actors on how to promote political and economic reform in countries in transition. Indeed, certain tenets have taken on the status of a new orthodoxy, which has wide-reaching implications for thinking about social and political change and ways to approach long-term development.

Firstly, NGOs are now seen as central actors in the development process. Some NGOs represent more effective, efficient, and less costly service-providers than governments; at the same time they are perceived as having closer access to marginalized groups (Van Rooy and Robinson, 1998). NGOs are also viewed as vehicles for democratization and essential components of civil society — so essential, in fact that today NGOs deliver more official development assistance than the entire United Nations system (excluding the World Bank and the IMF) (Silliman, 1999: 134). The World Bank has already identified NGOs as central partners in social and economic development. Between 1994 and 1997, half of the projects approved by the World Bank included some form of NGO participation (Miller-Adams, 1999: 79). Secondly, markets and private initiatives are seen as the most efficient mechanisms for achieving economic growth, as well as representing accepted means for distributing services to people. Finally, the state is expected to support market growth but minimize its intervention in the economy. This in turn rests upon an emphasis of state administrative reform.

Together the new policy priorities of the World Bank and the bilateral

donor agencies are based on a three-component model: a competitive market economy, a lean well-managed state, and a democratic civil society. Scholars vary in their opinion of the extent to which this model is shaped by neo-liberalism. Insofar as neo-liberalism can be understood as a way of organizing state-society-market relations, which privileges the role of the market in achieving economic growth and distributing goods, it challenges the role of the state in development and calls into question the future modalities of dispensing public goods. Therefore, neo-liberalism significantly affects how development and the actual political and economic models in the developing society are conceived. Carapico among others associates the increased role of NGOs with a reduced role for the state. As she explains, "The notion of development through non-governmental organizations is also consistent with neo-liberal or global-liberal private sector solutions to social problems, and more generally with the privatization of social services to institutions and investments" (Carapico, 2000: 14). While some agree that this model can be seen as embedded in neo-liberal thought as a market-driven and consumer-led model (Clayton 1994:7), Archer sees the model as marking a break with neo-liberalism. According to him, this model recognizes that the market is not the whole answer. It rehabilitates the state and tries timidly to promote human rights and democracy, both seen as requirements for the modern market economy and a well-managed state. So where neo-liberalism exploded the relationships between government, the economy and society, good governance re-unites society's political, economic and social dimensions (1994:7-34). In this view, the increased role of NGOs in development is complimentary, as opposed to alternative to the state.

Recognition of Dialectics of Reform and Refashioning within the Paradigm

The notion that the state-market-society relations underlying aid and development policies can be considered a break with neo-liberalism neglects the near hegemonic influence of the liberalization paradigm in redefining concepts of development. Some suggest that the ideological changes in Western countries over the past few decades, specifically the return to classical liberalism at the end of the cold war, have pervaded and restructured North-South relations. Basker Vashee states, "This ideological shift permeated international dialogue, especially on North-South issues." Moreover, she argues that in this context the failure of development was placed on the post-colonial state and the nationalist projects were delegitimized as socialist — in advance of the arrival and expansion of the neo-liberal model. For her, "The crucial shift in this project was the conversion of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank

to the free market and monetarist ideology, instigated by the Reagan administration and supported by the European powers" (Vashee, 1995: 201-202). Others claim that the negative influence of the neo-liberalism project is increasingly becoming apparent. Some would even argue that economic liberalization has altered the problematic of collective action in the South, exercising an atomizing impact on individuals, manifest through new heightened, individuated, struggles for survival (Patron, 1998: 174). Neo-liberalism has even generated responses in the form of studies written with the objective of reasserting the notion of the indivisibility of public goods.

As the review of the World Bank's policies below will reveal, a new concern for social goods and stabilizing the effects of the market is evident within development circles. For instance, the Bank has acknowledged that coordination between government, society and the market is needed to promote an overall delivery of public goods. Moreover, others point to a 'post-Washington consensus,' which admits to *market imperfections*, and supports social capital and institution building to stabilize imperfections. Yet many of these revisions remain within the sphere of the liberalization paradigm, insofar as they represent different ways to extend a model consisting of a reduced role for the state and the expansion of markets as a mechanism for distributing and allocating goods. This seems to indicate that while one should recognize the definitive influence of neo-liberalism within development and aid policies, one should, however, resist the temptation to *read* the changes in development models in the post-cold war period solely to chart the advance of a neo-liberal model on a global scale. This is based on the fact that, although highly influential, neo-liberalism is not a monolithic or static model; rather it is best understood as being reworked and modified as it expands. In short, the vision of state-market-society relations, buttressing donor aid and development policies, is not fixed but is being reformulated in practice. Therefore, what is required is to understand the different positions and perspectives within development circles and among the donor agencies. Through their policies and the revision of their funding schemes, they set the terms of the debate surrounding questions such as the distribution of responsibilities between state and non-state actors in the development process. In the following, we will review the policy priorities of the World Bank and the bilateral donor agencies, the former being economically focused and the latter political. Further to this, we will delineate the changes in the World Bank's policies and also distinguish between the priorities of the World Bank, the IMF and UN agencies.

1.3. The World Bank:
Economic Fundamentals and Social Agenda

A review of the World Bank's policies from the 1980's to the present reveals that while the focus on macro-economic fundamentals has remained constant, the emphasis on state reform and privatizing state functions has been supplemented with a recognition of the need to factor in the social dimension. At the very least, this is linked to the understanding that attention to social costs is necessary for political stability. A brief overview of the Bank's policies will illuminate this.

Good Governance

The World Bank was the first to introduce the idea of 'good governance,' in its 1989 report on sub-Saharan Africa. Guided by a disdain for the inefficient and overdeveloped character of public administrations in the South, problems of corruption and the difficulties African countries were having with Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs), the World Bank's policies shifted from a focus on economic prescriptions to a concern for political matters. In this report the Bank reached the conclusion that sustainable development would require improvements in political management: in effect, good government. To this end, the World Bank endorsed a twin pillar reform program consisting of: *state capacity building* and a *decentralization of decision making* as pertaining to socio-economic development, through the empowerment of society and the activation of NGOs and social organizations (Williams and Young, 1994: 87).

Despite the unprecedented nature of this policy shift, the underlying thrust of this policy agenda remained market-oriented. The central priority continued to be to correct market distortions, build an effective financial system, and ensure regulatory laws and adherence to systems of transparency and accountancy: in short, macro-economic fundamentals. The Bank's concern for state reform should be understood in this light. In fact, the Bank approached the state with a vision of a leaner, more efficient state, playing an enabling role for the market. In its 1997 Development Report, the World Bank defined the role of the state as being to define and secure property rights, provide an effective legal, judicial and regulatory system, and improve the efficiency of the civil service and protect the environment (World Bank, 1997).

Of the two main arms of the governance programs, the focus on state capacity building prioritizes developing bureaucratic capabilities. The other focus, which aims to decentralize decision making by bolstering civil society and NGOs, is more politically sensitive. Williams and Young

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link the support of NGOs and social organizations to the "promotion of accountability, legitimacy, transparency and participation as it is these factors which empower civil society and reduce the power of the state" (1994: 87). Clearly while these policies are directed at civil society, they touch on state management of development, implicitly delving into distribution of power between state and society and the type of relationship between the two. Lest we forget, it was the rational choice theories and new political economy that conceived of state actors as guided by narrow self interests and engaged in rent-seeking behavior that contributed to this latter policy focus.

One cannot ignore that the Bank's initial governance program brought into view, in a more focused manner, both the *state* and *society* as actors in development in the South. Abstracting from the Bank's main policy concerns for a reformed and *reduced state* playing an enabling role for a strengthened market and an *empowered society* taking part in development processes, it is evident that the governance programs tackle relations *within* as well as *between* the three sectors: market, state and society. This is not only reflected in the Bank's definition of governance, but it sheds light on an implicit contradiction that exists within this policy formulation. As Susan George outlines, the World Bank defines governance as how "power is exercised in the management of a country's economic and social resources for development." Good government equals sound development management. The problem or the contradiction within this formulation, as she points out, is that "as an essentially political arena, *governance* appears now as completely non-political, as something more technical-administrative" (George, 1995: 207). This brings to light a new tension that underlies multilateral and bilateral donor development policies in the post-cold war era: the fact that their programs encroach upon social and political spaces yet there is no acknowledgement of the peculiarity of this. Rather the whole process is normalized through the technical language of development and the expanding logic of the project framework. (See Chapter 4 about the technical approach of the donor agents.)

Towards A Concern for Social Costs?

A social agenda was largely absent from the World Bank's initial governance program. Insofar as marginalized and vulnerable social groups were given consideration, it was through the intermediary presence of NGOs. The NGOs were expected to represent marginalized groups as well as to extend services to segments of the population in remote areas. As the definition above indicates, the governance program was more concerned with reformulating the exercise of power in the management of development than with serving vulnerable groups or facilitating the delivery of public goods.

It was clear from the mid-1980's and onwards that strong criticism was being raised against the social consequences of the World Bank's structural adjustment programs (SAPs). UNICEF led this reproach with its report, *Adjustment with a Human Face*, which outlined the adverse impact of SAPs on children and women. The UNDP followed suit with a report on the negative effects of SAPs in sub-Saharan Africa and the European Community also voiced concerns over the social problems caused by adjustment programs. In response to these objections, the World Bank established the Social Dimensions of Adjustment (SDA), a unit formed inside the Bank to design social policy to be integrated into adjustment programs. However, as some point out, SDA was established as a complement to SAPs rather than as an independent entity to evaluate adjustment programs.

Today a slight shift can be discernable in World Bank policies based on the changes noted in policy documents used in developing the Comprehensive Development Framework (CDF). Although this framework is in its conception phase as a pilot project and not yet formal policy, it is relevant since the CDF is the blueprint for future policy orientation. Of course, policy implementation is always much more complex and initial formations and objectives may be eschewed, including those directed by organizational issues and individual agencies.[12]

Comprehensive Development Framework

In the end of the 1990's, policy documents were circulated in the World Bank that culminated in proposals to forge a new approach to development cooperation, known as the *Comprehensive Development Framework* (CDF). In its pilot project phrase, the CDF currently provides the basis for the Bank's assistance to different recipients, including the Palestinians. As an indicator of the World Bank's policy thinking it is significant and presents interesting findings. Firstly, as an approach to development cooperation, the CDF builds on and extends the governance program with the inclusion of a social component. Moreover, in contrast to the SDA, which was developed as a social policy unit inside the framework of adjustment programs, the social focus raised here applies in a general sense to all forms of cooperation between the World Bank and developing countries. Secondly, the CDF attempts to move beyond the

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[12] In 1997, when one of the Vice Presidents of the World Bank declared for the first time that desertification is a social problem and not only an economic one, the Swiss sociologist Jean Zeigler commented that: "This does not mean that this is necessarily the World Bank's policies." According to him, "There are 21 Vice Presidents in the Bank, and for such a statement to become official World Bank policies requires complex process decision making inside this organization" (ENDA Electronic Newsletter no 12, 1999).

notion of partnerships inside the project framework, and introduces the importance of coordination between local and international development actors around an agreed upon framework.

An inspection of two policy papers written by World Bank President James Wolfensohn illustrates the new priorities of the CDF approach. It is useful to begin by pointing out that within these documents the one-sided orientation of past policies in favor of the market is acknowledged. Moreover, a distinction is made between the past and the need to move towards a new strategy which includes a social agenda. Illustrative of this, state capacity building initiatives are acknowledged as having been guided by the economic logic of restoring investor confidence: "Working with governments on financial, judicial, and regulatory reform, on bankruptcy laws, anti-corruption programs, and corporate governance – so essential to the restoration of private sector confidence" (Wolfensohn, 1998: 3). Or consider this admission which recognizes the neglect of social concerns in donor policies: "The notion that development involves a totality of effort – a balanced economic and social program – is not revolutionary, but the fact remains that it is not the approach that we in the international community have been taking" (Wolfensohn, 1998: 6).

Coordinating Public Goods

The policy papers leading to the CDF are specifically important in helping to delineate the axis around which questions related to future modalities of public goods and the role of the state in development will unfold. Firstly, concerning a social agenda, Wolfensohn explains that in addition to economic reforms and state capacity building, social concerns or more pointedly public goods must also be put on the agenda. He establishes a link between equity, social justice and political stability in which the former are presently viewed as being essential for maintaining political stability (Wolfensohn, 1998: 3). Exactly what the World Bank means by social justice is unclear but, according to Wolfensohn, "Our framework would call for policies that foster inclusion – education for all, especially women and girls. Health care. Social protection for the unemployed, elderly, and people with disabilities. Early childhood development. Mother and child clinics that will teach health care and nurture" (Wolfensohn, 1998: 7).

Although at the conceptual level the implications of this framework may be unclear, our empirical research shows that it translates on the practical level into a concern for coordination to ensure effective delivery of public goods. Other empirical studies such as our own may increasingly find that the World Bank's previous emphasis on state reform and reducing the role of the state has been amended to include a strong concern for

coordination between development actors to safeguard the delivery of social goods. While neo-liberalism does not address how to reconcile public goods with an increased role for the market in allocating resources, and the Bank's own policies have eluded this question, 'coordination' has become the new priority which addresses this gap. This illustrates how policies and the vision of state-society-market underlying donor assistance are reformulated in practice. Moreover, the CDF suggests that the vision of a reformed state, market economy and democratic civil society is possibly being amended and expanded through the new priority on coordination to ensure delivery of social goods.

Long-term Cooperation

The second item of importance in the CDF policy papers is the move beyond the project approach. The vision presented is one of long-term development cooperation between international and local actors around a framework which prioritizes both macro-economic fundamentals and social concerns (Wolfensohn, 1999: 3). The actors among which this cooperation is envisioned include local governments, multilateral and bilateral agencies, civil society in all forms, and the private sector, both local and foreign (Wolfensohn, 1999: 10). In effect, the CDF is meant to facilitate coordination under the lead of the state as well as serve as an information tool in evaluating progress and scope of long-term development. The focus is on a long-term, holistic, strategic approach to cooperation in which all players are included. Wolfensohn describes it as follows, "What is new is the commitment to integration of effort, essential in today's global economy where overseas aid is declining significantly. It is also a commitment to expanded partnerships, transparency, and accountability under the leadership of the government" (Wolfensohn, 1999: 15).

Although coordination is important for the delivery of public goods, some observers are skeptical about this long-term cooperation especially since what is being proposed incorporates international actors, including foreign capital, as long-term development players into *local development* processes. Undoubtedly, this has important implications for the nature of local policy formulation, development strategies and even fiscal management. Some have already raised the question about the implications of this for the influence and autonomy of local state actors, suggesting the concept of the *denationalization of the state* to capture the significance of such changes, especially for periphery states and quasi-states (Ould-Mey, 1996).

1.4. IMF, World Bank and UN Agencies

Before turning to review bilateral donor agencies' policies, it is essential to highlight some key distinctions between the IMF, the World Bank and UN agencies. It is commonplace for the IMF and the World Bank to be lumped together as the two financial arms of Western industrialized nations, particularly of the G8. Nevertheless, the policy changes as well as the modifications in the operations of the World Bank necessitate that closer attention is paid to emerging differences between these two institutions. Differentiating between these organizations in this way is not only central to understanding the practical operation of these institutions on the ground, but it sheds light on the self-definition and perceptions of these institutions.

Interestingly, with the World Bank's development of the CDF, the Bank moves closer to the UN and other development agencies in sharing a concern for the structural, social and human agenda, while retaining a close working relationship with the IMF. As Wolfensohn describes, "broadly, our sister institution (IMF) has the responsibility for macroeconomic stabilization for our client countries and for surveillance. We have the responsibility for the structural and social aspects of development. Obviously, these are not two isolated roles and we will work together very closely" (Wolfensohn, 1999: 2). Clearly this delineation of responsibilities is something new. An example of new forms of cooperation between the Bank and the IMF around this redefinition of their responsibilities include their joint efforts to link debt relief to poverty reduction strategies for loan recipient countries.

The self-declared position of the Bank as a development agency alongside other actors such as the UN agencies raises questions about the relationship between them. Bruce Jones, formerly responsible for policy issues related to post-conflict peace building in the UN Office for Co-ordination of Humanitarian Affairs in New York, makes some illuminating observations on the differences and the relationship between the UN actors, the World Bank and the IMF. His observations indicate the need to pay close attention to the relationship between these institutions. On the differences between the UN and the IMF and the Bank, Jones makes an important distinction in terms of the actual actors that determine the policies of these institutions. As he explains, the UN's development work is legislated by a framework which is overseen by the Economic and Social Council of the UN General Assembly (OECD) and the Executive Board of various agencies. In this regard, the policies of UN agencies reflect a 'careful consensus' between OECD (mostly aid donors) and the G77 (mainly aid recipients). Therefore, as he outlines, "unlike in the international financial institutions, the G77 states carry a lot of power in UN decision making, and among some of these states, greater UNDP involvement in crisis and post-crisis settings is seen as tantamount to interventionism, and is sharply

resisted" (Jones, 2000: 7). This implies that the UN's development work is based on a clear commitment to both social and economic development. Jones attributes this to the influence of the G77 as well as of Europe that continue to regard the state as playing an important role in development (Jones, 2000: 8).

A second issue raised by Jones concerns the relationship between the World Bank and the UN. Here he hints at tensions between the two institutions, suggesting that the distribution of responsibilities between the two actors could become problematic in the future. As he explains, the UN's once dominant role in economic reconstruction in post-conflict settings has been greatly reduced, in part because of the transformation of the Bank into a development actor and its intervention in post-conflict situations. Today the World Bank is moving to take over the lead role in coordinating post-conflict reconstruction efforts from the UN (Jones, 2000: 8). Understanding the differences as well as the tensions between the main development organizations is important for a deeper understanding of the motivations and implications of their intervention.

Relief versus Development

The question of whether humanitarian relief is opposed to long-term development cooperation, or is in harmony with long-term social and economic development in recipient countries, has lately become a debated issue in development. In the early 1990's, relief came under scrutiny in international forums that debunked the notion of a linear progression from relief to development since conflict often takes a cyclical form. Reflecting the new understandings of the complex relationship between relief and development, conflict and emergency assistance are beginning to be conceptualized within a broader development framework in the design of assistance for countries in a conflict situation.

Jones identifies four factors that complicate the debate: *technical* issues – donors have very rigid administrative distinctions between relief and development budgets, which make it difficult to respond quickly or to coordinate both types of aid; *conceptual* issues – often development agents prioritize long-term initiatives and focus on state cooperation, which is not the case with humanitarian relief agencies; *coordination issues* – both development and humanitarian aid; and the *political* questions – the possibility that the donor is unwilling to support a particular political regime (Jones, 2000:9-18).

William Reuben, Coordinator of the NGOs and Civil Society Unit at the World Bank, sets this debate within its international context in relation to trends among donor disbursement of aid. He identifies three trends: first, there is an overall reduction of aid due to the adjustments of fiscal policies in

developed countries.[13] Second, there is a proportional increase in short-term relief aid at the expense of long-term development cooperation. Finally, the donors usually switch to multilateral channels when political conflict gives way to peace and reconstruction. He adds that channels used by cooperation agencies during the conflict are mostly NGOs (Reuben, 2000: 65).

1.5. Donor Policies: Conditionality and Motivations

Having reviewed the World Bank's policies, and highlighted some of the distinctions between the IMF, the World Bank and the UN, it remains to examine the policy concerns of the donors. In contrast to the World Bank's focus on the economic side of the new policy agenda, bilateral donors have adopted an overtly political focus in their aid programs, aligning on the liberal democratic side of the new development paradigm. Like the World Bank, Western governments have also incorporated a concern for good governance into their funding and aid programs. In the case of donors, however, good governance is defined in an overtly political manner, and is linked to the development of multi-party elections and the protection of civil and human rights. This direct encouragement of liberal democracy followed a number of overlapping political events and trends, including the resurgence of neo-liberalism in the West, the collapse of official communist regimes, and the rise of pro-democracy movements in the developing world (Leftwich, 1993: 606-610). Through their aid programs and funding schemes, donors began targeting human rights groups and civil society organizations that have the potential to play a proactive role in shaping their polity and increase popular participation in political life, thus establishing a foundation for democratization. Donors are also conditioning aid on the development of an enabling environment for civic groups.

The effect of donor efforts to advocate for an 'enabling environment' for NGOs and other social organizations is already observable in the local Palestinian context. Following the establishment of the Palestinian National Authority (PNA), a conflict arose between the PNGOs and the PNA over the drafting of a controversial NGO law. The conflict spanned a five-year period and climaxed in the summer of 1999, with PNA officials accusing the NGOs of corruption and threatening reprisals. In the midst of this debate, the representatives of European and other governments intervened on the side of the NGOs, urging the PNA to pass a law preserving the autonomy of social organizations. Early intervention from

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[13] However, if one understands aid in a generalized sense, including democracy and civil society building programs, it is not clear if there really is an aid reduction. In relation to Europe, one can make the opposite claim, that aid to NGOs has actually increased.

donor representatives was widely credited as a major factor in the PNA's decision not to pass a repressive NGO draft law proposed in 1995 that had been modeled after the Egyptian civil associations law (Sullivan, 1996). Eventually a compromise was reached and a revised NGO law was passed in 2000.

In addition to democracy building initiatives from donors, we can see that, as already outlined above, Western governments are also increasingly becoming involved in post-conflict rebuilding efforts. In Palestine, donor civil society and democracy programs overlap with their political support for the peace process and their concern for political stability in the region. As part of post-conflict reconstruction efforts and peace-building initiatives, donors have supported the Palestinian state-building process and covered the initial budgetary requirements of the PNA. They have also provided assistance for social, political and economic development projects, ranging from infrastructure development to projects promoting the rule of law (Brynen, 2000). According to the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation (MOPIC), donor aid to the PNA and NGOs from only government agencies was $ 549.414 million in 1996 and $ 432.259 million in 1997 (see Table 1). At the same time, a peace-building mechanism that has become increasingly prominent and for which donors have allocated funds is the People-to-People program. This program funds "joint" projects that bring together groups from Israeli and Palestinian civil societies, promoting dialogue and cooperation at the grassroots level.

While there is a broad measure of agreement between various donors on the priority of the good governance agenda, their specific programs exhibit differences in the emphasis accorded to democracy and governance issues. Archer notes that the British government has a very broad definition of good government and emphasizes public sector competence, while the German government is interested in promoting popular participation in the political process. Canada, Denmark, Norway and the USA all place particular stress on the promotion of human rights and democratic reform (1994: 12-17). Democracy building is promoted in many contexts through the allocation of specific funds for programs related to institutional reform and civic education; it has become rather fashionable, in fact, to support human rights and democracy through civic education. The specific forms of democracy and civil society building initiatives supported by donors in Palestine will be examined below in Chapter 5.

On the receiving side of bilateral donor policies, it should be noted that human rights groups are among the most prioritized civic organizations in donor civil society building initiatives. As Van Rooy and Robinson explain, "Data on the EU, OFID, SIDA and USAID indicate that human rights organizations (human rights NGOs, advocacy groups, legal assistance organizations) are the most popular, followed by

pro-democracy groups, the media, civic education groups and women's organizations" (1998: 65). Donor emphasis on human rights organizations was clearly evident in our survey of Palestinian NGOs. On the one hand, there is clearly an ample amount of funds available to support human rights NGOs, relative to other sectors. Danida operates a special fund that directly supports human rights PNGOs with US$550,000 per year and approves the projects locally. In the case of the Norwegian Representative's Office, funding for human rights organizations is channeled through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and is approved in Oslo, whereas all other support for PNGOs is managed by NORAD. This is primarily because of the politically sensitive nature of human rights issues.

Motivation of the Donors: Ideas and Knowledge or Interests?

In the discipline of international relations, much research has been done on the motivation of donors and differences between officially stated goals and hidden objectives (opening up new export markets, staying in government, etc.), which revolve around two approaches: an idea-based approach and an interest-based approach. The first approach postulates that there is a principal explanatory power for the behavior of actors (Brouwer 2000). In this spirit, Peter Haas has talked about "epistemic communities" which exert political influence by "diffusing ideas and influencing positions adopted by a wide range of actors" (Haas, 1992). In the second approach, actors' behaviors can mainly or exclusively be explained on the basis of their direct and indirect, declared and non-declared, political and economic interests. Let us consider each approach further.

The first approach uses the level of ideas as a way to gauge donor interests and locate effects on the recipient societies. This is a novel approach, and relevant given the multi-layered nature of donor assistance. As outlined above, donor policies are situated within a broader policy agenda, which is buttressed by knowledge developed within institutions, themselves located within a specific historical and cultural context. Moreover, it has been increasingly recognized that donors and NGOs share the same language, in addition to many similar organizational features. Closely linked to this is a range of issues, including the production of knowledge, the circulation of ideas, and the conceptual apparatuses that come to be shared by donor and recipients alike. This has deep implications for the influence that donors have in the local society, as well as affecting donor-NGO relations. For some, 'development' has an undeniably discursive dimension and represents a way of *knowing* and ultimately acting upon the third world (Escobar, 1995). Yet others

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understand 'concepts' as containers that are given meaning by the actors and inevitably come to reflect the broader context they are transferred to. Moreover, the particular meaning attached to a concept can be inquired into, and in many ways the local connotation will reflect the process out of which the concept enters the local society and its discussions. In the Palestinian case, for example, some have begun to inquire what the concept of 'civil society' means to the local actors in the NGO sector (Shawa, forthcoming).

In the interest-based approach, an investigation of donor assistance inevitably leads to a discussion of the donor's stated aims and unexpressed interests. In fact, the polemic about the objectives of donor assistance has not only been raised by the recipient society (Hammami 1996; Nakhleh 1998), but also by the donors themselves. Robert Zimmerman, an ex-officer of USAID, conducted a study on the uses of US economic assistance to advance US foreign policy objectives. His analysis identifies tension between an array of goals that range from those dealing with democracy, human rights, conflict resolution, strategic and military concerns, to economic, humanitarian, and commercial interests. Weighing the long-term costs and the short-term successes, he concludes that while economic assistance to the Third World and ex-communist countries may have achieved its diplomatic goals, it has failed to apply effective development-oriented criteria (1998).

In the Palestinian case, multiple, competing and at times conflicting donor interests are apparent. In donor democracy building programs, such as those of USAID, broader geo-political interests are factored into funding considerations. For instance, the USAID mission in Palestine does not support the development of political parties, primarily because some voice opposition to the Oslo process and the US government's role as broker of the peace process. This is in contrast to USAID practice in other contexts where parties may qualify for grants. Further to this, others concur that donor interests, both geo-strategic and economic, often overlap with and sometimes override governance programs. Reviewing donor support for civil society in Palestine and Egypt, Brouwer argues that there are more far-reaching objectives involved than simply promoting civil society and democracy. The top priorities of the US, the EU, and most European governments are the security of Israel, Palestinian support for the peace process, and economic liberalization (2000: 29).

No matter how one views the motivations and influences of donors, it is clear that donor funding is often controlled by conditionality.[14] Even when funding is channeled through INGOs, there are still conditions

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[14] Since President François Mitterrand's speech to African leaders at the Conference of La Baule (France) in May 1990, donors have been clear about the new political conditions that would be attached to the allocation of aid.

attached that stem from the asymmetrical power relations between them and the Southern organizations that they support. This conditionality has often been critiqued by many SNGOs, mainly on two accounts. First, some consider conditionality as an attempt by the donors to impose their world view on Southern societies. However, other NGOs have recognized a positive value in conditionality as a lever for democratic change and improved human rights. Second, the double standard that is applied by some Western donors was also criticized. Morales and Serrano give the example of the aid given by Western countries to Indonesia in the 1980s and 1990s, revealing the duplicity of donors who linked aid to democracy in their policy statements, but ignored it when it come to practice (Robinson 1994).

Donors in the Palestinian Context: Support for the Peace Process

In the 1990's, Palestinian society was confronted with a rapidly changing national and regional political environment. This included the waning of the first Palestinian uprising and the onset of the US-initiated Madrid conference, followed by the signing of the Oslo accords and the staged peace process between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). These changes in the Palestinian context coincided with the restructuring of Western development assistance in the post cold war order, and new donor and World Bank priorities. During this period of transformative political developments, the support that Palestinian social organizations were receiving from Western INGOs and donors was in turn undergoing significant change. The Palestinian case study is a most relevant model of donor, INGO and NGO relations, since it exemplifies and illustrates the effects of the many changes that have occurred in Western development assistance.[15] Beginning in the 1990's a clear shift can be seen in the forms of external support available to the Palestinian NGOs. While Arab sources and solidarity funds diminished, Western development assistance, which was attached to broader development paradigms or politically impelled post-conflict assistance to support for the peace process, increased.

In the local NGO discourse, the changing relationship between Palestinian NGOs and INGOs, and donors from the first intifada to the present, is often described as a transition from *solidarity* forms of support

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[15] Indeed the Palestinian case is an interesting and important example of donor, INGO and NGO relations. This is also partly due to its anomalous historical development. During the period of direct Israeli military control over the Palestinian territories, social organizations became the main service providers and took on a leadership role in the absence of a central authority. This will be discussed further below.

to *politically driven aid* to bolster the peace process with Israel.[16] Indeed, with Western government involvement in post-conflict reconstruction efforts becoming more common, development assistance inevitably reflected political motivations. One problem with local conceptions of the evolution of donor intervention in Palestine is that often different factors are lumped together, instead of being disaggregated and examined individually for the way each has contributed to the changing relationship between PNGOs, INGOs and the donors.

Thus while it is true that overall solidarity funds prevailed during the first intifada and have declined since, one cannot separate this from the broader restructuring of aid channels identified above, and the new relations and dependencies developing between INGOs and Western governments. What does increased dependency on government funding mean for the relations formed between INGOs and SNGOs? Clearly the relations between INGOs and SNGOs are influenced by many factors and cannot be determined by the funding factor, nor should one assume this factor alone will lead to a shift away from the solidarity model. For example, MAP-UK,[17] which continues to retain many aspects of the solidarity forms of support, heavily relies on government funds. With a budget of £1.342 million, 72% of its funds derive from governmental institutional resources (63% from EU and 9% from the Department for International Development of the British Government-DFID).

More importantly, one cannot ignore the changes in donor priorities and the new forms of donor aid to support the peace process, or assistance attached to overarching development paradigms, with donor themes or areas of concern and intervention clearly delineated. In support of the peace process, many bilateral donor agencies and some INGOs working in Palestine prioritize joint Palestinian-Israeli projects as part of post-conflict assistance, insofar as these types of projects are viewed as a contribution to conflict management. The Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES) funds cross-border cooperation between Palestinian and Israeli local authorities in the northern part of the West Bank and adjacent Israeli towns. Before the outbreak of the current uprising FES had been planning to expand this project which it calls "Cooperation North." with considerable funding

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[16] For instance, the leader of the Union of Health Care Committees pointed out that: "In 1989 we entered into an agreement with the Norwegians to develop a health center. It was a very real and good relationship. We had ties to other organizations, including the Red Cross, Medicine without Borders, and Canadian, German and Italian INGOs. Before the 1990's, funding was clear and tied to political support of the national cause: there was funding from the PLO-Jordanian fund and Arab and some European countries supported us. When the peace process started the donors adopted a clear stand: funds were conditional on support for the peace process and were also conditional on cooperation with Israel." (Interview)

[17] MAP-UK has mainly supported a program for improving the skills of Palestinian health personnel (doctors, nurses) in cooperation with the Red Crescent Society and the Ministry of Health since 1984.

from the European Commission, it had planned to expand into the fields of environmental protection, business development, cooperation between schools and universities, and also meetings between NGOs, youth, women and other groups (Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, 2000). For the donors and supporting INGOs these projects represent a means to enhance conflict prevention and establish institutional mechanisms to facilitate ways of ameliorating the conflict. Meanwhile Palestinians have been increasingly critical of 'people-to-people' initiatives that promote dialogue between Israeli and Palestinian civil society groups, arguing that they often result in an obscure form of post-modernist politics, with each side airing their own narrative, and ignoring the structural roots of the conflict and the broader power relations that perpetuate it.

Other forms of donor support for the peace process overlap more directly with developmental issues, with donors often channeling assistance to the PNA or to PNGOs for social, economic and political development projects. Many of the donors working in Palestine acknowledge that the socio-economic conditions of the local society do not warrant or justify the level of aid that has been allocated to it. Some readily acknowledge that the purpose for the assistance is political, with the primary objective being to support the peace process. For instance, Danida defines its cooperation with the Palestinians as 'transitional development assistance' that is tied to the broader political objective of reinforcing the peace process. Normally the bulk of its assistance used to go only to Africa. William Reuben of the World Bank has already highlighted one implication of this for Palestinian NGOs: the NGO channel is one of the main ways cooperation agencies and donors channel their assistance in conflict areas. Thus, as he warns Palestinian social organizations, NGOs can expect a sharp decline in funding when conflict is over.

The programs of donor agencies are increasingly based on broad development paradigms, in addition to donor assistance aimed to bolster the peace process. A contingency factor should be recognized: Palestinians have entered into the state-building process at a historical juncture when NGOs are recognized as genuine development partners. Had this not been the case, the fate of independent Palestinian social organizations might have been similar to that of NGOs in post-colonial Africa. At the same time, the prominence of NGOs is also related to the influence of the neo-liberal ideology on the development paradigm, and its vision of a reduced role for the state in development. Finally, the most noteworthy factor influencing PNGO-PNA relations is the increased arrival of donor funding with pre-defined thematic concerns and pre-established sectors of intervention. Brynen describes the environment PNGOs find themselves in today, and the funding arrangements they are entering into, as follows: "Typically, donor support was most easily available for new programs in sectors relating to the contemporary thematic concerns or bilateral programming of agencies

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— human rights, democratic development, gender, the environment, and so forth…. NGOs were often forced to fund their regular activities and operating costs by securing a series of special project grants from donors and international NGOs. To do so, many responded to the thematic priorities of funders less out of conviction than out of the imperatives of fund-raising" (Brynen, 2000: 188).

As Brynen suggests, in contrast to the solidarity support of the past, and the previous relations between donors and PNGOs, today funding largely arrives with predefined priorities that orient the way development assistance is to be spent in the local society. This issue is a central one for this book and will be examined carefully in Chapter 3 and 4.

Overall, it is clear that donor funds both to support the peace process and to assist development not only structure the type of cooperation formed between NGOs and donors, but determine the impact the donor has in the local society. Drawing on the idea-based approach referred to above, we will conclude this section by briefly outlining the implications of both forms of intervention in the Palestinian society.

Donors and the Idea Construction of Reality

The idea-based approach looks at donor motivation as well as the effects of donor assistance through the prism of ideas, and considers the consequences of a conceptual apparatus and lexicon shared by donors and NGOs alike. Ferguson adds insight to this approach. Scrutinizing the banal characteristics of donor agencies' intervention in developing societies, he reminds us that the donors construct an interpretation of reality in the recipient country upon which their intervention is based. One aspect of this, as he shows in his study of Lesotho, is that in a bid to move the money they have been charged with spending, donor agencies opt for standard development packages and portray developing countries in ways that make them appropriate for such packages. He argues that country profiles used by such agencies usually refer little to social and economic realities in the recipient society in a substantive manner. Moreover, he deduces that in the case of societies enmeshed in political conflict, invariably donors 'construct' a reality in their profiles and programs that suspends all political questions. In the case of Lesotho, the political and economic marginalization it suffers at the hands of South Africa is ignored in development plans, even when relations with South Africa have direct bearing on the project or program (Ferguson, 1997:224-227).

Ferguson's analysis illuminates an important dimension about the way in which donor agencies operate when working with nations in the midst of national and political conflict, such as Palestine. His work rightly points out that there is an idea level to donor programs which is often ignored by

scholars and practitioners alike. Donors construct a conception of reality from their standpoint as outside observers, assuming aspects about the local society that fit with the broad prescriptions they are promoting. This construction of reality usually excludes political questions even when they have a strong impact on development.

In the Palestinian case, one observes a similar pattern. Importantly, the donor construction of reality in Palestine, and the practice of abstracting the 'political,' often have an inadvertent negative political consequence of leaving the imprint of the occupation on the developmental project being undertaken. For instance, in the last few years an infrastructure project has been underway to develop a water management system for towns and villages in the West Bank with the support of USAID. Rather than develop a single system linking the villages together, the project adopted a piecemeal approach, establishing water conservation and management systems in each village. While indeed water conservation and management is needed in the Palestinian territories, especially considering the outdated or non-existent infrastructure, the approach of this project is more costly than developing a single system. The disjointed system resulting from the project reinforces the present realities of the Israeli occupation and its segmentation of Palestinian territory into separate geographic units.

Finally, it is to be expected that the idea dimension of donor assistance will enter the life-world of the recipient society and the complex subjective layers of collectively shared beliefs. In the case of the Palestinians, the society is in a transition phase: the conflict remains a distinct part of reality yet a process of reconstruction has begun. During the Oslo process, donor constructions that bracket the political invariably serve to support the discursive narrative of peace building, reconciliation and state-formation.

In fact, since the signing of the Oslo accords the Palestinians have entered into a new phase in the state and nation-building process, ushered in by the establishment of the PNA. In general the international community has played a supportive role by providing financial and technical assistance in helping this process along. However, donor post-conflict assistance in Palestine also illustrates how the mobilization of such support for an internal social and political project can facilitate politically-motivated campaigns to be initiated and directed at internal processes such as nation-building. One example is the controversy surrounding the development of the Palestinian curriculum.

In 1995 the Palestinian Center for Curriculum Development was set up with the assistance of UNESCO to develop the Palestinian school curriculum and textbooks. Recently, many articles have been published in the Western press, including by Israeli political scientist Hillel Frisch, charging that the Palestinian curriculum propagates anti-Jewish sentiments and does not promote co-existence with Israel. This in turn is linked to the controversy generated over the Palestinian curriculum by a right-wing

anti-peace Israeli organization based in the US, known as the Center for Monitoring the Impact of Peace. This group has written reports scrutinizing the curriculum developed thus far for Palestinian children in grades one and six. Moreover, it has lobbied European governments and succeeded in deterring the Italians from continuing to provide support for the Palestinian Center for Curriculum Development.[18] In doing this, the group spotlights Palestinian internal interpretations of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. Yet this is clearly a subjective question of interpretation and perspective and cannot be easily measured in objective terms. Some Israeli academics have themselves pointed out that the Palestinian textbooks are far better than the stereotypical representations of Israelis in the Jordanian and Egyptian textbooks in the Palestinian schools which these replace. Some of these academics have asked whether it is fair to expect a nation recording its history for the first time to meet the demands placed upon it (Morena, 2001). The Palestinian Ministry of Education has responded to all of this attention with a public statement pointing out the many of the criticisms ignore the task of the Palestinians: namely, writing their history within an ongoing colonial context and as they continue to bear the suffering of the occupation. At the same time the Ministry notes that similar attention has not been directed at Israeli curriculum and at the latter's representation of the conflict.[19]

The importance of the controversy generated about curriculum development illustrates the way in which donor intervention can become the forum in which political claims and contests are played out in new forms and arenas. This is especially significant here since the contest area is the internal arena of nation building, collective forms of self-representation and the writing of history.

Donors and the Hegemonic Pattern

Our research indicates that the conceptual framework underlying donor assistance has a great bearing on donor-NGO relations and the projects undertaken by organizations in the local society. Based on observations of donor programs in Palestine, and here in particular those in the women's sector, it is evident that donor assistance is often based on a conceptual framework derived from Western historical experience. In the case of projects supporting women, it is necessary to pose the question: is there one form of empowerment that donors are willing to fund, or many?

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[18] See the Center for Monitoring the Impact of Peace, Newsletter, April 2001 (www.edume.org/news/april01.htm) Morena, Elisa. "Israel or Palestine: Who Teaches What History?" *Le Monde Diplomatique,* July, 2001 (www.en.monde-diplomatique.fr/2001/07/11textbook)

[19] www.pna.net/events/textbooks.htm

As we explain in the case study on women's projects and throughout the rest of the study, it is true that certain factors coalesce and reinforce a certain type of project. For example, the multiplied effects of neo-liberalism in combination with the project framework and liberal feminism have resulted in a hegemonic and narrow focus in favor of certain types of women's projects, specifically those that promote women's equality in the public sphere. Palestinian women's organizations' activities outside of this type of project often do not appeal to the donors or receive the latter's support. Undoubtedly, an important aspect of this is the conceptual framework underlying donor projects that often reflects classifications and hierarchies derived from the Western experience with modernity. In this case, women's equality with men in public life is prioritized over other forms of women's empowerment reflecting a hierarchical notion of strategic over practical empowerment.

Speaking on behalf of many of the voluntary charitable societies and also the General Union of Palestinian Women, a women's activist stated that the organizations she represents are "misunderstood and misperceived" by outsiders who tend to view them as "traditional" and stagnant. In fact, she explains, they are involved in work that concerns topics often promoted by the Western donors such as 'democracy' and 'human rights,' yet they are excluded from aid by these donors. This raises the extremely important issue of whether organizations are being cast aside and excluded by what this activist calls the recent "onslaught of donors" in Palestine. Michel Foucault has written about 'subjugated forms of knowledge' and the manner in which they resist being subsumed and assimilated into scientific forms of knowledge. In a similar manner, the women's activist we interviewed describes many Palestinian women's groups that face funding exclusion as employing forms of resistance to counteract being disregarded simply because they do not 'fit' a particular project mold.

These remarks dovetail with the recommendations made by some academics who argue that the way in which the production of knowledge is itself implicated in power relations should be acknowledged as a way to move towards more equitable relations between donors and NGOs. For instance, Tvedt argues that the way to improve NGO-donor relations is to foster communication that transcends power relations. Yet, as he explains, ultimately the problem of establishing real communication is linked to a willingness to accept difference and the "other." He concludes that only by "liberating ideas of representation can NGOs develop communication" (1998: 226). This in turn reiterates what we have been illustrating: namely, the idea dimension that inevitably accompanies donor assistance not only impacts on donor-NGO relations, but also produces effects in the recipient society.
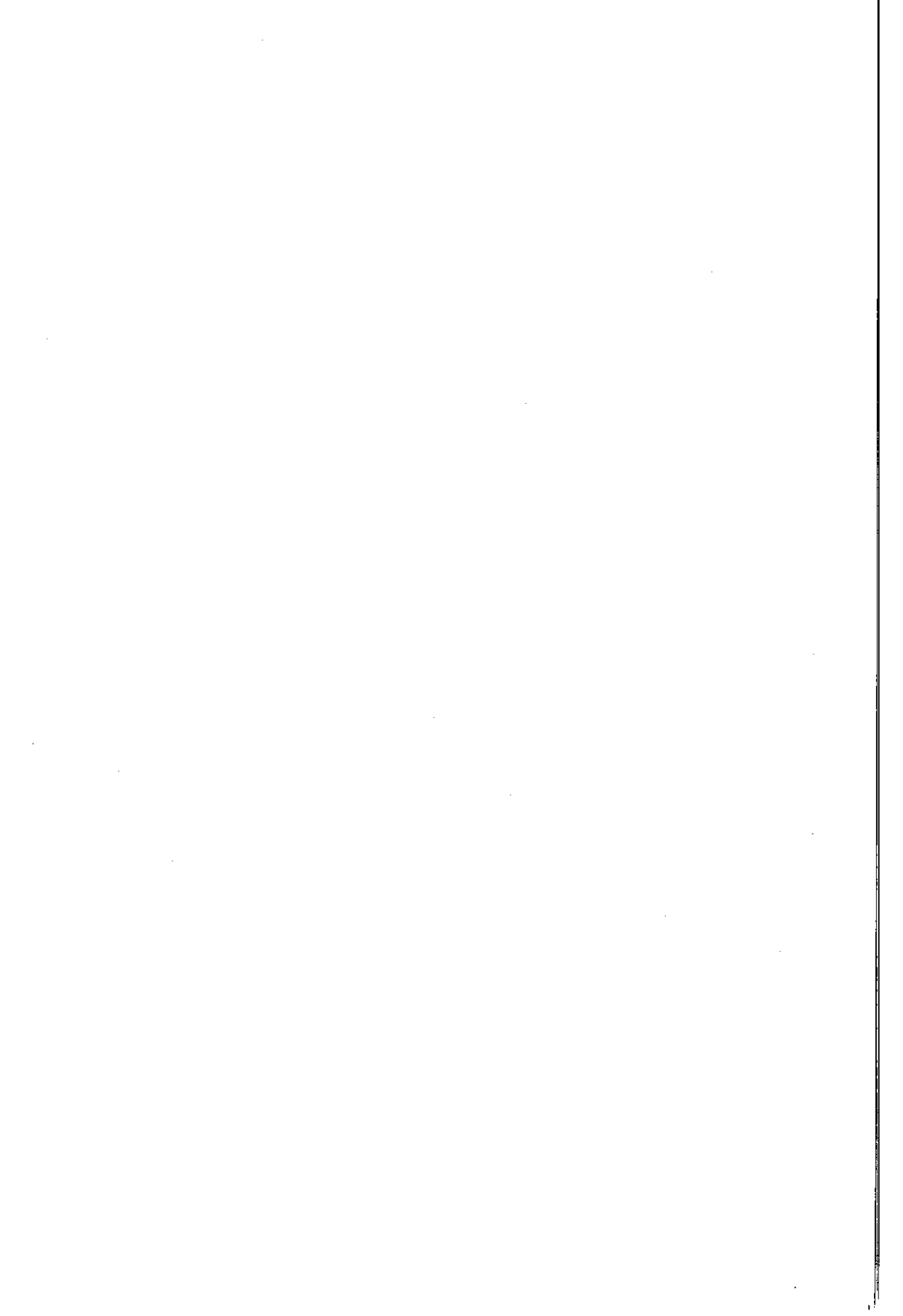
Chapter 2 **Donor Assistance to Palestinian NGOs: an Overview**

During the first Intifada against Israeli military occupation, Palestinian NGOs played a crucial role in supporting the society through social and developmental activities and, to some extent, even promoting the economic survival of the population, given both the paralysis of municipal services and the weakness of the private sector. Paradoxically, the number of PNGOs did not decrease after the formation of the Palestinian National Authority. In fact, a boom was encouraged by a doubly restrictive political and economic situation: the persistence of the Israeli occupation in many areas, and the newly formed Palestinian Authority's mismanagement of public affairs. However, this context does not fully explain the Palestinian 'association revolution,' to use Salamon's terms (1993:1). This phenomenon, as mentioned in the previous chapter, is also a reflection of a new international paradigm whose constitutive elements have their roots in the neo-liberal ideology.

. In the context of the peace process and the transitional status of the Palestinian territories, international donor support and contributions to Palestinian NGOs have been vital. There are approximately 130 foreign donors assisting Palestinian NGOs today. Although these donors play a pivotal role locally, there remain no reliable statistics or data on the scope of their activities and the level of assistance provided to NGOs, except the Welfare Association survey (Hanafi, 1999).[20]

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[20] MOPIC's Monitoring Report of Donor Assistance which primarily bilateral assistance between governments or government-source assistance.

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The Welfare Association[21] chose to conduct a survey of donor organizations that assist the Palestinian NGO sector in order to compile systematic information about policies, projects, and funding sources.[22]

The survey gathered information from about 100 organizations. Despite the reluctance of a few organizations to release detailed information, generally the information obtained provides a sound basis for a database on PNGO projects funded by donor agencies and international NGOs. Together these donors contributed annually more than $62 million to the NGO sector, a total of US$248 million, during the four years, 1995-1998. This contribution constitutes an estimated 10-20% of the total international donor assistance to the Palestinian people. (See Table 1.)

The Welfare survey's figures definitely under-represent the funding provided to PNGOs, since the survey was limited to those donors that have their headquarters or an office in the Palestinian territories or in Israel; only a few foreign-based donors were included, such as the Ford Foundation and Arab Fund. A second qualification is that information was made available only for about 75% of the actual amount of funding. A more accurate assessment (based on the Welfare survey's findings) is that the total funding for PNGOs was approximately US$ 331 million for the period 1995-1998 or about US$ 83 million annually. Before beginning a factual analysis of the funding received by the PNGOs, we should contextualize it in historical perspective.

2.1. Historical Review

The history of social organizations in Palestine is quite rich. Despite a succession of encounters with foreign rule, indigenous social and political formations have arisen to advance Palestinian national and social agendas. The establishment of Israeli military rule in the West Bank and Gaza Strip following the 1967 war challenged Palestinian national identity and national existence by its exclusionist claims to the land and resources (Masalha, 2000). At the same time, local development was constrained given the absence of structures for the local Palestinian population to determine their social and developmental options outside of the apparatus of the military authority. Events in the 1970's, in particular the signing of the Camp David Accords between Egypt and Israel and the recognition of the PLO as the sole representative of the Palestinian people, led to an

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[21] The Welfare Association is a privately funded non-profit organization established in 1983 by a group of prominent Palestinian business and intellectual figures and registered in Switzerland.
[22] The information collected was entered into a database that can generate statistical and graphic reports about the distribution of project funding by sector and sub-sector, geographical area (at the level of district, city, or village/hamlet), sources of funding, and direct and indirect beneficiaries. The database can provide cross-tabulated information for 30 different factors.

awareness of the need for greater Palestinian self-reliance and the need for a new strategy of resistance (Barghouthi, 1999: 76). Within this context a new generation of activists emerged. Characterized by some as new middle class actors, these individuals were educated in local universities and had been provided with opportunities for upward mobility through the channels of the political parties (Robinson, 1997a). This generation of activists created an infrastructure of mass organizations through the national movement, expanding upon the existing array of social organizations, including in particular the voluntary charitable societies, the oldest types of NGOs in Palestine. Popular organizations were formed, including women's committees, labor unions, student organizations and voluntary work initiatives. This was followed by the creation of developmental NGOs providing services in areas such as health and agriculture (Barghouthi, 1994).

Thus, the PNGOs established the basis for a system of service provision in the West Bank and Gaza. They also, however, took on a role within the broader national movement, forming an institutional network that enabled resistance against Israeli rule and sustained the first intifada for its first two years (Usher, 1995: 18). Having emerged within the national movement, Palestinian NGOs were linked to the Palestinian political factions; the parties PFLP, DFLP, PCP and Fateh each set up their own women's, students', labor, medical and agricultural committees (Hilterman, 1990: 47) and in this regard the PLO as umbrella organization played a major role (George Giacaman, 1998). Organizational forms reflected the broader effort to organize the grassroots; organizational structures were informal and there was an emphasis placed on voluntary work. Also organizations had a popular character and the attempt to incorporate the masses into these new structures was evident in the way the committees and organizations grounded themselves in diverse social groups and regions (Taraki, 1993). To this end, the organizational practices of these organizations were shaped by a combination of nationalist and development goals. For instance, the faction's service organizations were seen as being guided by the populist and nationalist philosophy of extending services to marginalized social groups to empower them and mobilize them politically within the national movement (Rita Giacaman, 1988: 14). At the same time, independent NGOs also proliferated; professionalized centers such as research institutes and media centers were set up, a trend that accelerated after the decline of the national movement in the 1990's.

As is well documented, after the first two years of the intifada, the popular-based NGOs underwent rapid changes. Hammami's work is illuminating in this regard. She describes the transformation of PNGOs over time as a complex process characterized by three phases. Firstly, the initial drive to mobilize the grassroots in the 1970's was organized across factions. Secondly, this was quickly succeeded by the rise of factionalized committees in the mid-1980's that operated their own popular and development

organizations. Lastly, party-affiliated NGOs became institutionalized over time and by 1991 were run by professionalized staff, with activists identifying themselves as professional development practitioners seeking to empower the population through development rather than through mobilization (Hammami, 1995: 54-55). How does one explain the transformation of PNGOs into professionalized organizations with a formalized and somewhat detached relationship to the grassroots, and what effect did the arrival of Western funding have on the restructuring of local NGOs?

In their own discourse PNGOs often explain their historical evolution as being directly linked to increased availability of donor funding. As some describe, increasing financial resources enabled the expansion of activities and/or service provision. However, it also placed new demands on NGOs, creating the need for complex administrative and financial structures that transformed them into large professional institutions with a heavy bureaucratic burden.[23] This in turn altered the nature of their relationship to the grassroots.

Although this perspective is relevant, it is insufficient since it ignores the context and the actors (agency) involved that also impact upon this restructuring. Furthermore, this view suggests a one-to-one cause-and-effect relationship between bureaucratic growth and reorientation of the organizations that ignores the nuances and logical connections through which this process occurs. In actuality, the process by which PNGOs changed over time is quite complex. The process was shaped by factors in the local context, including the decline of the national movement as well as contradictions that surfaced within the national movement. The refashioning of local NGOs reflects a broader process in which local structures were negotiated and modified within a new international juncture. More importantly for our purposes is that, with increased access to Western funding, a new structuring of knowledge, practice and elite formation among PNGOs is evident; it has become more pronounced in relation to increased entry into development channels and frames contemporary NGO-donor relations.

Arrival of Western Funding for NGOs

The historical evolution of PNGOs must be understood within shifting funding patterns. It is well recognized that the funds available to the political factions through the PLO in the mid-1980 first enabled the nascent institution-building process led by the committees. At the same time, it is also clear that PNGOs have followed different funding patterns. For instance, the Communist Party, which was not a member of the PLO,

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[23] Interview, Arab Center for Agricultural Development, Ramallah, July 17, 1999.

was oriented towards Western sources of funding much earlier than the other factions. They were pioneer fundraisers, focusing primarily but not exclusively on France and Germany. These organizations, such as the Union of Medical Relief Committees, Palestinian Agricultural Relief Committees and LAW, not only accumulated experience in fundraising but also formed long-term relationships with INGOs. INGOs, mainly the solidarity groups with leftist orientations, provided generous support to leftist local organizations. At the same time, Islamist NGOs, which also emerged in the 1980's, raised most of their funds locally but also drew on their own external networks, with aid being provided from the Palestinian diaspora but also from foreign, primarily Arab, states.

The general trajectory of the type of funding available to NGOs was as follows: in addition to the funding available from the PLO, significant aid began to be provided from Arab and Western countries with the outbreak of the first intifada. In the period until the Gulf War of 1991 there was a diversity of funding sources. At the Baghdad summit of the Arab League in 1979, Arab countries pledged $150 million in annual support (Brynen, 2000: 47). It has been estimated that Arab states' actual support was approximately $30-100 million yearly until 1991 (Clark and Balaj, 1994). At the same time, the zakat organizations and charitable societies were mobilizing approximately $30 million locally (Clark and Balaj, 1994). Some trace Western aid to PNGOs as far back as the 1970's (Brynen, 2000: 44). Yet during the first few years of the Intifada a significant amount of solidarity funding also became available. It is evident that Western forms of solidarity funding and funding based on formal development paradigms overlapped with one another with the latter becoming more prominent over time.[24]

After the Gulf war, Arab funding dropped to near zero and PLO funding steadily decreased. At the same time, Western donor funding continued and since the 1990's has become the main source of assistance to PNGOs. Yet many observers agree that from the early 1990's to the present, funding to PNGOs has been cut in half. While receiving from $170-240 million yearly in the early 1990's (Brynen, 2000: 187), NGOs now recieve approximately $60-90 million yearly (Hanafi, 1999). This is due to the effects of the Gulf war on Palestinian-Arab relations as well as to the establishment of the Palestinian National Authority, which is taking on greater responsibility for services, including a shift towards large-scale development projects not easily implemented by NGOs. Finally, the peace process and the Oslo accords have ushered in a new funding trend with a significant amount of aid being channeled to the Palestinian territories as part of donor peace-building efforts.

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[24] Many of the interviewees reported that by 1990 solidarity funding had seriously declined. Thereafter most Western funding was accompanied by stricter criteria for funding (Interviews with Union of Health Care Committees, and with Union of Charitable Societies).

2.2. Funding Distribution: Sectoral and Sub-sectoral Profile

The Welfare Association survey attempted to record the amount of funding to NGOs according to different sectors from 1994-1998.[25] Irrespective of the various peaks and falls in funding over the years, an overall sense of the direction of funding for the period can be ascertained (See Table 2).

1.   Education and health remained the most important NGO sectors, even though formal responsibility for these areas had been transferred to the Palestinian National Authority more than four years before. Education received 23.3% of donor funds to NGOs (about $56 million) from 1995-1998, while health received 19.6% ($50 million).

2.   Other sectors shared smaller percentages of the remaining 57.1% in donor funds. Although the largest Palestinian economic sector is agriculture, it remains neglected or ignored by donors, with only $18 million (7.4%) directed to the sector in the four-year period. The Palestinian Agriculture Relief Committee (PARC), the main NGO working in the sector, alone has received $12 million in support of agricultural activities.

3.   The traditional NGO sectors of culture and social services also had small shares of total funding with $20 million each (about 8%) for the period 1995-1998.

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[25] Agriculture: includes fishery, forestry, livestock, and agriculture production.
Democracy development: includes civic education and awareness for electoral activities.
Education: includes educational programs and their development and support.
Environment: includes water supply, sewerage, and solid waste treatment, environmental law, policy and resources.
Health: includes health care and medical equipment.
Relief: assistance for humanitarian needs.
Institution-building: includes institutional support and development, technical assistance (exclusive of project component), equipment supply, human resource management, and training and institutional scholarship; excludes projects outside institutions.
Development: includes unspecified projects or projects that relate across sectors.
Private sector: includes financing for industry, private business, and small-scale enterprise development.
Tourism: includes preservation and renovation of historical sites.
Micro-credit: includes funding allocated for employment and income generation.
Subsectors
Women: includes projects that relate to women and gender awareness development but not the projects conducted by the women organizations for specific target groups such as children or handicapped people.
Water: includes projects that relate to water treatment, supply, and sewerage.

4. Micro-credit and the private sector in general lagged far behind other sectors, indicating the lack of NGO activity in the economic sphere. Only 3.9% of total funding ($10 million) were devoted to these activities. Additionally, tourism, while important in the region, remained very marginal in the activities of the Palestinian NGOs with only 0.4% of total funding ($1 million).

5. It is very clear that there had been a dramatic shift in the orientation of both donors and Palestinian NGOs from relief assistance to development assistance. There was a very small percentage of relief activities in terms of total funds ($2 million or 1%) for the period 1995-1998. This rapid shift from relief to development has important consequences with many negative effects. This will be dealt with in the chapters that follow.

6. There was a new interest and awareness among Palestinian NGOs in the environment, which may have been encouraged by INGOs and international debate on environmental issues and the decentralization of state efforts to combat environmental degradation. Such initiatives represent core development issues for the Palestinian society, since most environmental projects concern water supply, sewerage, and solid waste treatment. Environment constituted 2.9% of the total funds ($7 million).

7. Human rights and democracy absorbed an increasing proportion of funding over time. In 1998, this sector constituted 9.5% of funding ($5 million). Over the preceding four years (1994-97), however, this area averaged only 4.4% of total funding (about $11 million). Furthermore, the actual figures may be greater than this, since some donors did not provide full information concerning the projects in this sector.

8. According to the survey, the research sector received 1.9% of funding ($4.6 million), however, since this sector was funded by international foundations, some of which do not have a local presence, the percentage of funding it received is assumed to be somewhat larger.

A classification of the distribution of funding by sector is not always sufficient to understand the orientation of the project on the ground. In this regard, we have listed the target groups to help clarify this, categorized as sub-sectors (See Table 3), although it was not always possible to determine the target group for all of the projects. The most useful sub-sectors proved to be women and development, and the disabled. Projects for women received 7.2% of total funding, or $18 million over the four-year period, while 11.4%

of total funding was directed to the needs of the disabled ($28 million). For other target groups such as early childhood or youth, it was difficult to identify whether a funded project was oriented toward these groups.

2.3. Distribution of Funding by District

The distribution of funds for NGO projects was found to be extremely lopsided between the Gaza Strip and West Bank, with $26.4 million for Gaza (only 19%) and $111.5 million for the West Bank (81%).[26] This is disproportionate both in terms of population and in terms of needs: according to the latest census findings, the population of the Gaza Strip is 1,022,207 (35% of the Palestinian population) and Gaza has a far higher poverty and unemployment rate than the West Bank (See Tables 4-6). This imbalance in funding may be explained by structural factors such as the historical weakness of the PNGO sector in Gaza compared with that of the West Bank. PNGOs were legally recognized in Gaza only after 1967. Previously, the Egyptian military authorities simply banned the formation and registration of local organizations and professionals unions, with the sole exception of the Lawyers' Union.

Currently, according to a survey conducted by the Welfare Association Consortium (Ayed, 1998), 25% of Palestinian NGOs (186 NGOs) are located in the Gaza Strip (See Table 7). Logistical factors may also play a part since the overwhelming majority of donors are based in the West Bank, and especially within Jerusalem. This also suggests a kind of client-ism. Jerusalem and Ramallah alone account for 45% of the Palestinian NGOs (respectively 208 and 130 NGOs),[27] according to the same survey. This percentage increases to 57% when Bethlehem is added (with more than 90 NGOs), therefore revealing the unbalanced distribution of the NGOs between centers and peripheral areas. It is also true, however, that some donors hold the view that the PNA invests proportionately more in Gaza than in the West Bank (although this is not verified by statistics on funding), and choose to compensate for this by directing more funding to NGOs in the West Bank.

In looking at the distribution of funding by district within the West Bank, Jerusalem enjoyed a relatively larger share of total West Bank funding (25%). This finding does not support the general view that Jerusalem is ignored by the donors. While some do not support projects in Jerusalem

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[26] The categorization of projects by localities concerns the project location and not that of the PNGO itself, or the implementing agency. When accurate data was not available on the geographical distribution of funds, the funds were considered as distributed for all Palestine. If the implementing agency or beneficiary operates only in the Gaza Strip or only in the West Bank, their projects were considered to be located only in that area, lacking further detailed information.

[27] Of course, some of these organizations have branches outside of Jerusalem and Ramallah.

for reasons of "political sensitivity," other donors have given it priority due to the city's religious importance or as a means to support the Palestinian residents of the city. The second most popular location for funded projects was Ramallah (7% of total West Bank) followed by Bethlehem (6 %), Nablus (4.8%), Hebron (4.8%) and Jenin (3.8%). Bethlehem benefited from funding disproportionately to its population, especially when compared to larger cities such as Hebron and Nablus, which was probably due to the development efforts and special projects associated with the Bethlehem 2000 initiative. Tulkarem and Qalqilya represent marginalized districts. In the distribution of funding by districts in the Gaza Strip, Gaza City represented 30% of the total funding to the region.

In comparing the percentage distribution of funding to population according to districts (based on the Palestinian census for 1998), the survey findings were significant. Table 7 shows us that the share of funding for Jerusalem was equal to its share of population (11%), while Hebron, Tulkarem, Qalqilya, Tubas and Salfit were under-funded compared to the size of their population. In the Gaza Strip, the cities of Deir Balah, Khan Younis and Rafah are very poorly funded compared to the governorate of Gaza.

Overall, the distribution of funding not only revealed an imbalance between center 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 a small percentage of funding.

2.4. Supply/Availability Compared to Needs Assessment: Relative Sectoral Symmetry, but …

To what extent does foreign funding that is constrained by administrative, economic and political factors promote the priorities of PNGOs? How can one compare donor supply with local perceptions of developmental needs? One way to attempt the latter is to analyze donors' adherence or non-adherence to the priorities presented by local needs assessments. In this spirit, the Welfare Association Consortium, which manages the World Bank-supported PNGO Project, conducted a survey to identify local needs in areas that provide services for the poor and marginalized in Jerusalem, the West Bank and Gaza (Ayed, 1998). This study identified separate priorities for Jerusalem, the West Bank and Gaza.

Interestingly, by focusing on sectors, one finds that the projects funded by donors as recorded in the Welfare survey (the supply) are not very different from the needs assessment, referred to above, that outlined local demand. Does this indicate a consensus between the donors and the local partners about the politics of development? As will be shown below,

it is not enough to examine sectors alone, as the content of the projects is very important and may provide a contrary picture. The following compares the Consortium's local needs assessment with the Welfare survey on donor funding patterns:

1. One of the findings of the local needs assessment was that a priority common to all areas is "non-formal and community education." According to the Welfare Association survey, education, both formal and non-formal, received the greatest part of funding with 23.3% ($58 million).
    Early childhood education was well-served especially in 1998 with 4.5% of total funding and 2.4% in the period from 1995-1998. Vocational training did not receive a significant amount of funding, about $5 million during the four years or 2% of total funding. For Gaza, the needs assessment identified community education on health issues as a priority, which was, in fact, well-served, especially in terms of education on family planning and reproductive health.
    Concerning education in reproductive health, some experts complained that this sub-sector is actually over-funded and has surpassed the absorptive capacity of Palestinian society. While there is a near consensus among social scientists that education and job opportunities for women are the major factors in reducing fertility, donors still tend to focus on culture as the determinant factor of a high fertility rate.

2. Health was also listed as a priority for all three areas in Palestine. According to the Welfare Association survey, 19.6% of total funding was oriented to this sector ($50 million).

3. Income-generating and micro-credit projects, especially for women and orphans, the disabled and ex-political prisoners, were another priority in all three areas of Palestine. According to the survey, $8 million was disbursed to this sector constituting 3.9% of total funding, with most of it directed toward projects for women. Apparently the PNGOs adhere to this global trend without necessarily questioning it. (See Chapter 3 for the case study of women's organizations.) In any event, the impact of donor-financed NGO credit schemes is now so pervasive that society itself has changed: villagers expect NGOs to deliver credit as part of their programs. As some have argued, supply shapes demand: the experience of the Grameen Bank and others show that the poor are good credit risks (Hulme and Edwards 1997: 9).

4. Rehabilitation for the disabled was a priority for both the Gaza Strip and West Bank (excluding Jerusalem). Funding for this purpose, either in the field of health, social services, education or vocational training

for the disabled, was significant, with $28 million (11.4% of total funding). Funding for this sub-sector seems particularly disorganized, according to the main actors. The chief complaint was of an unbalanced distribution of resources by area. What contributes to this situation, as others explained, is that occupancy rates of some treatment centers are well below capacity, most probably due to restrictions on movement imposed on the population by the Israelis and the difficulties of entering Jerusalem. A survey conducted by the Palestinian Planning Center in Gaza reached the same conclusion. This survey also indicated that existing vocational training programs for the disabled are insufficient, especially in the West Bank.

5.   Housing was listed as a priority in the needs assessment survey. But this area is rarely the focus of projects funded by the donors (0.8%). Apparently the donors consider this sector to be the responsibility of the Palestinian National Authority or the private sector.

Two issues emerge here: the first concerns the correspondence between what the donors are willing to fund and local perceptions of needs, while the second relates to the assumptions made about NGO service provision and the needs of the society. Regarding the first issue, it is apparent that sectoral priority is not as important or as revealing as the actual services provided within the sector. That is, the issue is not whether there is too much focus on women, but whether or not this target group is assisted by the relevant projects. The question is whose agenda exists at the supra-sector level (at the level of general policies rather than the donor's specified sectors of intervention) and the intra-sector level rather than the sectoral level. What do we mean by intra-sector? This level, as will be illustrated, pertains to project design, methodology and approaches. To explain this perspective further we will discuss the following issues: project versus program, advocacy versus services, discourse versus real practices.

Concerning the legitimacy of who determines needs, the literature on NGOs recognizes that the social services offered by NGOs responds to a heterogeneity of demand formulated by different communities (Salamon, 1993:1). Generally this conception understands that such services rarely consider the population at a national level. Thus certain places are (deliberately or not) left without being served. Moreover, these services are understood as targeting groups chosen in a rational manner (the marginalized groups, unemployed people, etc.). However, this version neglects the pragmatic reasons that often impel the selection of the target group (over and above rational factors), like the geographical proximity of the beneficiaries, the relations with a specific group, and the relationship to a political party and the impact this has on the selection process. Thus the NGO selection of beneficiaries, which is often guided by factors other than

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overarching societal or national interest, has replaced the standardization of services at the national level previously carried out by the state; the studies and decisions taken by the NGO sector have replaced state planning.

In the Palestinian case, it is problematic to talk about priorities for the NGO sector, because the NGOs are so fragmented, reflecting a political and social plurality. The relationship between these organizations can vary from cooperation to rivalry and competition. These actors choose what they consider to be priority sectors, according to their perception of the needs formulated by the target groups at the village or city level. But who specifically determines the priorities for the NGOs: the state, NGO coalitions, sectoral coordinating bodies, private consultants or other institutions? If it is the state this means that the raison d'être of the NGOs may be called into question; the relative autonomy of NGOs in relation to the state allows them, for instance, to promote services that can provide an alternative to state policies. Even though the NGO conceives its mission as being complementary to that of the state, the latter should not impose its own priorities. Besides, since it may be legitimate that the PNA maintains security strategies (since these territories remain again largely under occupation), an NGO's 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, or between this sector, the state, the private sector and the other institutions of civil society (unions and political parties).

The needs assessment survey of the Welfare Association Consortium is certainly the most reliable survey produced in the Palestinian territories to date, although perhaps insufficient attention was paid to the actual volume of funds donors are disbursing in certain sectors. For example, whereas community health education was recommended in Gaza, the investigation conducted in 1998 on research and awareness programs in family planning and reproductive health indicates an excess of this kind of program (Hanafi, 1999b). The emphasis of this type of program is on the family's awareness of contraceptive methods, family planning and the like. In a similar way, the Consortium's needs assessment identifies the rehabilitation of the disabled as a priority without sufficiently considering the volume of assistance directed at this sub-sector. Indeed, the different PNGO and INGO actors interviewed in the Palestinian territories insisted on initiatives being carried out in some regions while there is a lack of rehabilitation centers in others. The actors on the ground are very fragmented: UNRWA looks after the refugee camps, there are organizations which are pro People's party such as the Union of Medical Relief Committees, or the Palestinian Red Crescent Society (which remains an organ of the PLO and not of the PNA), and finally a string of small Christian and Islamic health associations. This diversity of actors, animated sometimes by the games of the personal powers, political rivalry and donor driven priorities, makes coordination very difficult.

2.5. Donor Community Profile

Historically many INGOs operated as implementing agencies.[28] This was justified by the fact that, on one hand, they have the technical expertise to provide social services in developing countries and could transfer their experience and skills to Palestine. At the same time, as foreign organizations, supported in many cases by their own governments, they were able to maneuver under the Israeli occupation.

Some of these INGOs have gradually transformed their role to that of a donor agency and have assisted the establishment of substitute local NGOs as implementing agencies. This was the case with Civic Forum, which detached from the US INGO, National Democratic Institute, and became a PNGO. Similarly Ard al-Insan began as the Gaza branch of the Swiss INGO Terre des Hommes but became independent in 1996. Some Palestinian counterparts have complained that the implementing INGOs have not helped build Palestinian capacity, but substitute for it. However, there is only a small proportion of INGOs that act as implementing agencies and their function in this capacity appears to be justified until now, if one takes into account their actual work on-the-ground and the continuing political uncertainty in Palestine.

Coordination between donor agencies and INGOs range between *ad hoc* to non-existent. As a former UNSCO Director, Francis Dubois, commented: all organizations recommend coordination but do not want to be coordinated. Brynen et al. (1998) argue that one of the reasons inhibiting the development of effective mechanisms of donor coordination is the unfair allocation of the financial burden among countries. At the level of the NGOs, there is the Association of International Development Agencies (AIDA) which attempts to coordinate about 40 INGO members. But as the President of AIDA declared, the meetings have often turned more towards a general discussion of the impediments imposed by Israel and sometimes by the PNA against the work of the NGOs rather than genuine coordination.

The United States has been the largest donor to the PNGOs, with $44 million disbursed from 1995 to1998 (19% of total funding). However, compared with the size of its economy and the length of its support to NGOs in Palestine, the US share is very small. Germany was the second largest donor during this period, with $32 million (14% of total funding), followed by Norway with $28 million (12% of total funding), Sweden with $22.5 million (9.7%), Switzerland with $17 million (7.4%), and Netherlands $15 million (6.6%) (For full data see Table 8). In this respect, Norway stands out as the most generous, if we calculate

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[28] For a discussion of the history and structure of donor coordination, see Brynen and al. (1998).

its contribution relative to the size of its economy or GNP. It certainly reflects a willingness to complement its political initiative with economic aid to Palestinians.

These figures concern funding given by different categories of institutional donors: governmental agencies and INGOs. If the first type constitutes only one quarter of the total number of organizations, this does not mean that government funding is marginal, since the budgets of the INGOs and Northern NGOs are not necessarily collected solely from the population through charity or philanthropy, for instance. In this respect, two models of INGOs were identified: Anglo-Saxon and French. The first is characterized by closeness between the state and the NGOs working in foreign countries that are mainly funded by the state or by international agencies. In the French model, the NGOs remain relatively autonomous and do not depend on state funding. However, with globalization and the creation of supra-state organizations such as the Europe Community, even these organizations intend to eventually procure their funding from the French government or the European community, as is the case of Pharmaciens sans Frontières or Vétérinaires sans Frontières.

Table 1: Donor Assistance to the Palestinian National Authority and PNGOs, 1996 and 1997 (USD millions)

Total Contribution	1996	1997
Donor aid to the PNA and NGOs from only government agencies	549.414	432.259
MOPIC's Report: donor aid to NGOs from only government agencies	58.069	45.995
MOPIC's Report: percentage of donor aid to NGOs	10%	11%
Welfare Survey: donor aid to PNGOs from government agencies and INGOs	54.804	76.897
Welfare Survey: percentage of donor aid to PNGOs	10%	18%

Table 2: Distribution of Funding By Sector (USD thousands)

Sector	1995	%	1996	%
Agriculture	3936.2	6.5%	5717.8	10.5%
Culture	2899.4	4.8%	3074.4	5.7%
Democracy	331.0	0.5%	146.0	0.3%
Education	12206.2	20.2%	14321.0	26.4%
Environment	653.9	1.1%	2035.6	3.8%
Health	9710.6	16.1%	10621.6	19.6%
Human Rights	301.9	0.5%	537.4	1.0%
Infrastructure (except water)	2000.0	3.3%	2106.0	3.9%
Institution Building	6527.5	10.8%	3343.5	6.2%
Micro-credit	3389.2	5.6%	1960.5	3.6%
Multisectoral	12446.9	20.6%	533.9	1.0%
Relief	352.3	0.6%	352.3	0.6%
Research	661.5	1.1%	923.8	1.7%
Social Services	2324.8	3.8%	4826.4	8.9%
Tourism	33.0	0.1%	60.0	0.1%
Trade and Industry	1813.0	3.0%	1820.0	3.4%
Vocational/Technical Training	868.8	1.4%	1898.8	3.5%
Grand Total	60456.3	100.0%	54279.1	100.0%

1997	%	1998	%	Total	%
4603.8	5.9%	3843.7	6.7%	18101.5	7.4%
7054.3	9.0%	7579.9	13.2%	20608.0	8.2%
1741.0	2.2%	1800.0	3.1%	4018.0	1.5%
16771.4	21.5%	14340.8	25.0%	57639.5	23.3%
2367.6	3.0%	2138.4	3.7%	7195.5	2.9%
18230.2	23.4%	11202.1	19.5%	49764.5	19.6%
2891.9	3.7%	3682.8	6.4%	7414.0	2.9%
2937.0	3.8%	193.3	0.3%	7236.3	2.8%
1796.5	2.3%	1838.0	3.2%	13505.5	5.6%
2402.5	3.1%	1817.0	3.2%	9569.2	3.9%
567.7	0.7%	1156.0	2.0%	14704.5	6.1%
1066.0	1.4%	699.0	1.2%	2469.7	1.0%
1338.6	1.7%	1685.1	2.9%	4609.0	1.9%
8390.9	10.7%	3700.4	6.4%	19242.5	7.5%
67.0	0.1%	880.0	1.5%	1040.0	0.4%
4197.0	5.4%	235.4	0.4%	8065.4	3.0%
1634.5	2.1%	656.8	1.1%	5059.0	2.0%
78057.9	100.0%	57448.7	100.0%	250242.0	100.0%

Table 3: Distribution of Funding By Sub-sector (USD thousands)

Sub-sector	1995	%	1996	%
People-to-People	627.0	0.8%	599.0	1.1%
Childhood	3,321.0	5.5%	562.5	1.0%
Early Childhood	1,564.3	2.6%	1,211.3	2.2%
Exchange Program	3.5	0.0%	3.5	0.0%
Gender	2,641.7	4.4%	3,597.1	6.7%
Disabled	7,038.0	11.7%	6,085.3	11.3%
Housing	2460.0	3.2%	2460.0	0.8%
Awareness	34.8	0.1%	34.8	0.1%
Youth	85.0	0.2%	169.0	0.2%
Reproductive Health	23.3	0.0%	48.3	0.1%
Restoration	75.0	0.1%	75.0	0.1%
Sport	46.0	0.1%	48.0	0.1%
Trade Unions	45.0	0.1%	210.0	0.4%
Training	2,727.0	4.5%	3,243.1	6.0%
Water	472.6	0.8%	1,844.6	3.4%
Legal Defense	53.4	0.1%	67.4	0.1%
No Classification	41,992.6	70.0%	37,021.1	68.7%
Grand Total	**59,989.7**	**100.0%**	**53,875.5**	**100.0%**

1997	%	1998	%	Total	%
1,226.0	0.5%				
4,152.4	5.4%	4,029.7	7.1%	12,065.6	4.8%
360.3	0.5%	2,477.8	4.4%	5,613.7	2.4%
7.0	0.0%				
5,577.8	7.2%	5,972.2	10.6%	17,788.8	7.2%
7,134.8	9.3%	7,413.2	13.1%	2,7671.3	11.4%
87.8	0.1%	50.0	0.1%	207.4	0.1%
181.7	0.3%	435.7	0.2%		
40.0	0.1%	38.8	0.1%	150.4	0.1%
135.0	0.2%	60.0	0.1%	345.0	0.1%
94.0	0.0%				
255.0	0.1%				
3,913.8	5.1%	1,810.2	3.2%	11,694.1	4.7%
1,991.6	2.6%	1,915.6	3.4%	6,224.4	2.5%
317.4	0.4%	258.0	0.5%	696.2	0.3%
49,936.0	64.9%	31,470.5	55.7%	16,0420.2	64.8%
76,999.4	100.0%	56,490.2	100.0%	247,354.8	100.0%

Table 4: Distribution of Funding By District (USD thousands)

District	1995	%	1996	%
Jenin	217.0	0.4%	1,310.0	2.5%
Tubas	100.0	0.2%	100.0	0.2%
Tulkarem	304.4	0.5%	438.0	0.8%
Nablus	783.7	1.3%	1,746.7	3.3%
Qalqilya			70.0	0.1%
Salfit	100.0	0.2%	114.0	0.2%
Ramallah	1,246.2	2.1%	725.3	1.4%
Jericho	75.0	0.1%	80.0	0.2%
Jerusalem	5,508.3	9.2%	5,849.0	11.0%
Bethlehem	796.8	1.3%	1,079.3	2.0%
Hebron	1,418.0	2.4%	1,436.2	2.7%
North Gaza	450.0	0.8%	450.0	0.8%
Gaza	1,345.9	2.3%	1,110.1	2.1%
Deir Balah				
Khan Younis	100.0	0.2%	205.0	0.4%
Rafah				
Gaza Strip	3,538.2	5.9%	2,556.5	4.8%
West Bank	7,163.9	12.0%	12,342.9	23.3%
Palestine	35,986.7	60.3%	22,777.9	43.0%
Israel	127.5	0.2%	163.5	0.3%
Lebanon	393.6	0.7%	393.6	0.7%
Grand Total	**59,655.2**	**100.0%**	**52,947.9**	**100.0%**

1997	%	1998	%	Total	%
2157.0	2.8%	776.0	1.4%	4,460.0	1.8%
300.0	0.4%	100.0	0.2%	600.0	0.2%
446.5	0.6%	497.2	0.9%	1,686.1	0.7%
1,894.7	2.5%	989.0	1.8%	5,414.1	2.2%
66.0	0.1%	49.3	0.1%	185.3	0.1%
131.0	0.2%	100.0	0.2%	445.0	0.2%
3,636.8	4.7%	2,357.8	4.2%	7,966.1	3.1%
500.5	0.6%	147.4	0.3%	802.9	0.3%
10,088.5	13.1%	6,046.6	10.8%	27,492.4	11.0%
2,251.3	2.9%	2,571.6	4.6%	6,699.0	2.7%
1,621.0	2.1%	458.6	0.8%	4,933.8	2.0%
464.0	0.6%	756.1	1.4%	2,120.1	0.9%
3,098.8	4.0%	4,212.8	7.6%	9,767.5	4.0%
17.0	0.0%	7.0	0.0%	24.0	0.0%
262.5	0.3%	129.0	0.2%	696.5	0.3%
137.0	0.2%	148.0	0.3%	285.0	0.1%
4,930.6	6.4%	3,108.6	5.6%	14,133.9	5.7%
16,654.3	21.6%	10,785.4	19.3%	46,946.5	19.1%
27,094.6	35.1%	21,119.1	37.9%	10,6978.3	44.1%
733.8	1.0%	416.5	0.7%	1,441.2	0.6%
693.0	0.9%	1,019.1	1.8%	2,499.3	1.0%
77,178.8	100.0%	55,795.1	100.0%	24,5577.0	100.0%

**Table 5: Distribution of Funding By District for the West Bank
(USD thousands))**

District	1995	%	1996	%
Jenin	217.0	1.2%	1,310.0	5.2%
Tubas	100.0	0.6%	100.0	0.4%
Tulkarem	304.4	1.7%	438.0	1.7%
Nablus	783.7	4.4%	1,746.7	6.9%
Qalqilya			70.0	0.3%
Salfit	100.0	0.6%	114.0	0.5%
Ramallah	1,246.2	7.0%	725.3	2.9%
Jericho	75.0	0.4%	80.0	0.3%
Jerusalem	5,508.3	31.1%	5,849.0	23.1%
Bethlehem	796.8	4.5%	1,079.3	4.3%
Hebron	1418.0	8.0%	1,436.2	5.7%
West Bank	7,163.9	40.4%	12,342.9	48.8%
Grand Total	17,713.3	100.0%	25,291.4	100.0%

1997	%	1998	%	Total	%
2,157.0	5.4%	776.0	3.1%	4,460.0	3.7%
300.0	0.8%	100.0	0.4%	600.0	0.5%
446.5	1.1%	497.2	2.0%	1,686.1	1.6%
1,894.7	4.8%	989.0	4.0%	5,414.1	5.0%
66.0	0.2%	49.3	0.2%	185.3	0.2%
131.0	0.3%	100.0	0.4%	445.0	0.4%
3,636.8	9.1%	2,357.8	9.5%	7,966.1	7.1%
500.5	1.3%	147.4	0.6%	802.9	0.6%
10,088.5	25.4%	6,046.6	24.3%	27,492.4	26.0%
2,251.3	5.7%	2,571.6	10.3%	6,699.0	6.2%
1,621.0	4.1%	458.6	1.8%	4,933.8	4.9%
16,654.3	41.9%	10,785.4	43.4%	46,946.5	43.6%
39,747.6	100.0%	24,878.9	100.0%	10,7631.2	100.0%

Table 6: Distribution of Funding By District for Gaza Strip
(USD thousands)

District	1995	%	1996	%	1997	%	1998	%	Total	%
North Gaza	450.0	8.3%	450.0	10.4%	464.0	5.2%	756.1	9.0%	2,120.1	8.2%
Gaza	1,345.9	24.8%	1,110.1	25.7%	3,098.8	34.8%	4,212.8	50.4%	9,767.5	33.9%
Deir Balah					17.0	0.2%	7.0	0.1%	24.0	0.1%
Khan Younis	100.0	1.8%	205.0	4.7%	262.5	2.9%	129.0	1.5%	696.5	2.8%
Rafah					137.0	1.5%	148.0	1.8%	285.0	0.8%
Gaza Strip	3,538.2	65.1%	2,556.5	59.2%	4,930.6	55.3%	3,108.6	37.2%	14,133.9	54.2%
Grand Total	5,434.1	100.0%	4,321.6	100.0%	8,909.9	100.0%	8,361.4	100.0%	27,027.0	100.0%

Table 7: Distribution of Funding Compared to Population, 1995-1998 (USD thousands)

District Name	Population	Percentage of Population	Funding Total: 1995-1998	Funding (%)
Jenin	203,026	7.0%	4,460.0	1.8%
Tubas	36,609	1.0%	600.0	0.2%
Tulkarem	134,110	5.0%	1,686.1	0.7%
Qalqilya	72,007	2.0%	185.3	0.1%
Salfit	48,538	2.0%	445.0	0.2%
Nablus	261,340	9.0%	5,414.1	2.2%
Ramallah	213,582	7.0%	7,966.1	3.1%
Jerusalem	328,601	11.0%	27,492.4	11.0%
Jericho	32,713	1.0%	802.9	0.3%
Bethlehem	137,286	5.0%	6,699.0	2.7%
Hebron	405,664	14.0%	4,933.8	2.0%
North Gaza	183,373	6.0%	2,120.1	0.9%
Gaza	367,388	13.0%	9,767.5	4.0%
Deir Balah	147,877	5.0%	24.0	0.0%
Khan Younis	200,704	7.0%	696.5	0.3%
Rafah	122,865	4.0%	285.0	0.1%
Total	2,895,683	99%	73,577.8	30%

Table 8: Distribution of Donor Funding by Country (USD thousands)

Country	1995	1996	1997	1998	Total	%
Australia		22.1	40.3		62.4	0.0%
Austria	1,796.6	2,437.1	1,813.7	1,093.2	7,140.6	2.9%
Belgium		.0	7.5	117.0	124.5	0.1%
Canada	148.0	613.8	1,094.4	604.5	2,460.6	1.0%
Denmark			450.0	285.0	735.0	0.3%
Finland	69.3	69.3	1,331.1	432.4	1,902.0	0.8%
France	2,387.3	3,755.3	3,750.3	2,140.0	12,033.0	4.9%
Germany	9,870.3	9,870.3	9,678.8	2,956.5	32,376.0	13.2%
Greece			94.0	94.0	188.0	0.1%
International	1,857.8	6,348.7	12,974.6	7,069.4	28,250.5	11.5%
Italy	266.7	266.7	421.7	3,298.0	4,253.0	1.7%
Japan	855.0	855.0	855.0		2,565.0	1.0%
Netherlands	2,029.8	5,932.3	4,904.8	2,305.0	15,172.0	6.2%
Norway		3,073.0	5,744.5	3,706.5	12,524.0	5.1%
Palestine	3,270.7	3,270.7	4,111.0	9,044.1	19,696.5	8.0%
Portugal			800.0		800.0	0.3%
South Africa	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	40.0	0.0%
Spain	2,090.0	3,730.0	5,305.0	745.0	11,870.0	4.8%
Sweden	3,093.5	3,125.2	6,195.2	10,043.8	22,457.7	9.2%
Switzerland	3,757.4	3,868.4	4,247.7	2,645.9	14,519.3	5.9%
United Kingdom	90.0	90.0	1,222.0	893.0	2,295.0	0.9%
United States	26,719.5	4,617.7	12,753.7	9,340.7	53,431.5	21.8%
Grand Total	58,311.9	51,955.4	77,805.2	56,824.1	244,896.6	100%

PART II

AGENDA SETTING

| Chapter 3 | **Donor Agenda Setting Three Sectoral Case Studies: Women, Human Rights and Health** |

3.1. Introduction

We can conceptualize the agenda setting process between donors, INGOs and PNGOs in Palestine as a process in which global agendas and donor-promoted programs are articulated locally, and then are contested, re-interpreted, or integrated into the local context by the actors involved. Since this multi-layered process is best examined over the long-term in order to be fully understood, we will attempt to deconstruct the way agendas enter the local context, and then examine this process at various levels and in its manifested forms and relations.

Two main factors affect the context in which agenda setting between donors, INGOs and Palestinian NGOs occurs. Firstly, given the restructuring of aid channels reviewed above, and the fact that donor assistance is often attached to broader development paradigms, donor aid frequently arrives with predefined funding priorities. One implication of this, as a representative of the INGO ANERA explained, is that today if a local actor approaches the organization with a project idea, the success of the initiative will depend on whether the idea falls under one of the donor's identified thematic areas of concern or funding priorities. If not, the local actor will have to modify their course of action, either by finding

independent sources of funding or by redefining their project approach.

On the one hand, this suggests *inflexibility* on the part of some of the donors, which is a result of the way they are structured, and inhibits real debate between donors and NGOs over agendas within sectors. On the other hand, as the representative from ANERA suggested, it also means that agenda setting is a process that occurs over a *longer* time frame than what is usually acknowledged. If the local actors possess the organizational capacity and skills to engage with the donor, in time they may overturn a donor's priority or, at the least, facilitate negotiations over what sort of agendas are appropriate in the particular sector.

Secondly, it is apparent that within NGO sectors such as health care, as well as among NGOs working to empower women or advocating human rights, there are globalized debates among the actors in each field about strategies and objectives, and on how to promote social progress within a development framework. Moreover, international forums and UN world conferences facilitate consensus building and the formation of global agendas within these sectors by establishing international standards; these form an important reference for governments, activists and development professionals alike. Thus, in contrast to perceptions of dichotomous donor-NGO agendas, it is more accurate to acknowledge the *common ground* shared by NGOs and donors, and the way NGOs and donors move within the same spaces both locally and globally. Indeed, this reflects the fact that NGOs occupy multiple positions, and this in turn implies a complex structuring of knowledge that extends beyond the boundaries of locality.

NGOs keep themselves well informed about international trends and global agendas. Clearly, they will not always arrive at consensus with donors, especially when NGOs are equipped with their own knowledge of international developments within their sector, and can recognize when donor programs represent a hollow interpretation of globally endorsed approaches. Our case study on the health sector exemplifies this, as illustrated by the critique by Palestinian NGOs of a local donor's reproductive health program.

Finally, it is also evident that what one means by 'agenda' is in fact dependent on context. While 'agenda' can be used to refer to a donor priority within a sector, it can also refer to a global agenda within the same sector, and while the two can be co-terminus, this is not always the case. At the same time, local NGO actors have their own explicit agendas as well as those that remain unstated.

The meeting of the global and the local

At one level, the case studies that follow examine the conceptual framework and the theoretical underpinnings of the global agenda and

local donor programs within each profiled sector. As we have argued, the ideational dimension of donor assistance is an essential part of the impact donors have on recipient societies, since knowledge plays a central role in structuring social interaction. At the same time, the conceptual biases of aid programs and the accepted hierarchy, such as those between scientific and local forms of knowledge and theoretical debates within the field, all feed into the agenda setting process.

At another level, the case studies aim to elucidate the way a global agenda or a donor-promoted program enters the local society. In this respect, it should be recognized that if an approach is adopted that assumes that unequal power relations between the donor and recipient determine the pattern of interaction, with the donor imposing an agenda onto the local society, then the possibility of affecting relations with donors through the positions and actions of local actors involved is negated. However, NGOs have different modes of agency available to them and can employ methods of resistance or re-articulation. Moreover, this meeting of global and local can take various forms. Besides being in a state of agreement with donors, local actors may internalize a global agenda, and accept without question its validity or relevance. Or they may resist and contest a donor priority in a particular sector. Further still, NGOs may utilize and try to transform an external agenda for their own aims and purposes, re-appropriating it.

Loyalty, exit and voice

In the case studies that follow, we have categorized the different postures of Palestinian NGOs in the sectors of women, health care and human rights corresponding to Albert Hirschman's model of *loyalty, exit or voice* (1970), respectively. In some cases NGOs may contest and openly confront the donor if they feel the donor's program does not meet international standards or if the program is inappropriate in the local context. The case study on the health care sector illustrates how PNGOs entered into negotiations with a local donor over its reproductive health program. Yet, faced with structural and organizational constraints on the part of the donor and a tenuous NGO coalition, the local actors exited, leaving the issue unresolved, possibly to be tackled again in the future.

In contrast to this, in the case study on the human rights sector one observes an interesting and unexpected set of relations. Palestinian human rights organizations have a strong relationship with the donors and many receive core funding, which has not only enabled them to develop their organizational capacity but also to maintain a long-term vision. Moreover, Palestinian human rights organizations can be observed voicing their own perspective and engaging in discussions about the character of the

international human rights agenda.

In addition, the case study on women's organizations examines how global agendas intersect with pre-existing structures in the local society. The women's organizations exemplify a case of loyalty, insofar as many of the international agendas on women's advancement have not only been quite relevant for the local actors, but many have met with resounding acceptance in the local society given the historical developments within the Palestinian women's movement. Yet our concern here is with the conceptual and theoretical underpinnings of certain programs and the effect they have on the restructured women's organizations and also on relations within the women's movement.

Looked at in this way, the topic of agenda setting has deep *sociological* implications, especially when one considers how global agendas become intertwined within local structures and unfolding social processes. In this regard, our approach to examining the exchange of agendas between the global and local society fits into larger debates concerning modernity and the transfer of ideas and social and political models from the West to the developing society.

The Sociological Perspective: decoding/re-encoding

Building on this, it is important to recognize that agendas mutually affect each other, through processes of re-articulation that are underway in the local society. In his book, *The Consequences of Modernity*, Anthony Giddens (1994) argues that modernity has facilitated the access to and the transfer of phenomena and life styles from industrial to developing societies through a process he calls "homologation." In other words, the whole world is now witnessing a process of 'McDonaldization' and computerization, as well as the transfer of modern medicine, science, and world music. These phenomena discreetly and subtly penetrate boundaries despite controls imposed by states and dominant social actors. This notion of transferred phenomena is especially relevant for conceptualizing the arrival of development models and global agendas to the developing society.

However, while Giddens describes the process of simple homologation, Dina El Khawaga (1997) and Jean-Noel Ferrié (1996) have criticized this concept and instead characterize the transfer process as quite complex. The complexity is introduced because the transferred phenomena do not necessarily carry the same normative dimensions or functions that they do in the original societies. These 'imported' phenomena are primarily symbols, which are dismantled and analyzed before they are incorporated into social structures, in conformity with dominant social and cultural processes. El Khawaga has named this process

"encoding," or the appropriation of symbols and the assignment of new meaning. The object transferred, or in our case agendas that pertain to development, undergoes a process of decoding from its original symbols, and re-coding with new symbols.

We can see that globalization does not entail the hegemony of one particular lifestyle, social pattern, or agenda, but rather the recognition of differences between societies, as Clifford has stressed in his description of the main features of 20th century anthropology (1988). To those who say that there is a "Coca-Cola colonialization" and that Coca-Cola does not recognize differences between societies, Maricio Marereo, a Coca-Cola executive, responded that: "If this drink is part of the rituals of friendship (i.e., two people chatting over a drink), then the meaning of friendship and this ritual differ from one country to the other" (Bayat, 1994: 16). In this sense, Coca-Cola reflects the values of the society that drinks it; it does not necessarily project the values of the original society on the societies that import it. In a similar manner, one can inquire into the implications of global agendas of donor programs inserted into the society, as situated within the broader structures and life world of the recipient society, with the aim of unearthing not only the new meaning that such an agenda may be 'encoded' with, but also the new significance it takes on in local social processes.

Aid Channels: complex encounters

Some analysts have already adopted this approach in analyzing agendas and relations between donors and recipients in aid channels. Tvedt ascribes to the view that NGOs must be analyzed and understood within complicated overlapping processes: international ideological factors and donor policies impact on NGO agendas, and the NGO must maneuver within overlapping historical and cultural contexts (1998: 4). Illustrative of this, Tvedt provides an interesting discussion of Norwegian missionary organizations, illuminating the contradictory influences at work when religious organizations are incorporated into secular development funding systems. He identifies the interaction between two impulses: in particular the religious organization's objective of conducting missionary work in the South, and the pressures of secular policies of agencies such as NORAD. Further to this, he illustrates that the missionary organizations have developed their own strategy to contend with the secular orientation of aid channels. For instance, two departments are often developed: one to deal with development agencies in donor language, and another department to engage in traditional missionary work. He also points out that these missionaries have an umbrella organization in Norway that insulates them from NORAD and state influences, allowing them to cultivate their own

values (Tvedt, 1998: 216-219). In this discussion of Norwegian missionary organizations, he provides an excellent analysis of contrary forces at work and how these organizations navigate their way through the agenda of the aid channels and maintain their own missionary agenda.

Yet in contrast to the resisting posture of these missionary organizations, the engagement of NGO actors with global influences is not restricted to simply resisting donor influences. In reality donor ideas, interests and policies may dovetail with local actors, concerns and interests, in some cases meeting up with and becoming involved in local power contestations. The process of observing and analyzing the meeting of global and local should be understood in a more fluid manner, keeping open the possibility for merging interests, or instrumentalization of the donor agenda toward local concerns. It is to be expected that the re-articulation of donor influences by local actors will in some cases feed into the local context of action and pre-existing power relations.

3.2. The 'Women and Development' Discourse and Donor Intervention in Palestine

This section investigates the articulation between the women and development discourse, donor programs and Palestinian women's organizations. One of the aims of this study is to address the view, expressed in local criticisms of Palestinian NGOs, that gender programs in Palestine are part of an externally driven agenda.[29] This view not only neglects the historical development of Palestinian women's initiatives, and effaces the agency of local organizations, but it also fails to adequately conceptualize the relationship between external and internal actors and forces.

In contrast, this study recognizes the necessity of pursuing two 'simultaneous projects' (Mohanty, 1998: 70). On the one hand, our approach is preceded by the recognition of the autonomous formation of Palestinian women's organizations, and the evolution of their concerns and strategic interests, as set within the historical contingencies of Palestinian society and the Palestinian national struggle. At the same time, our approach is cognizant of and emphasizes the necessity of critically

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[29] The survey commissioned by the Welfare Association found that the funds disbursed to women's organizations in Palestine, and to projects that target women, amounted to $14 million; this constitutes 6% of total funding for PNGOs (Hanafi, 1999). Some have questioned the capacity of women's organizations to absorb this much funding. More centrally, others have wondered whether donor priorities are in fact being adapted to the local reality: some criticize projects such as gender awareness campaigns, arguing that this is a luxury for a society reconstructing itself after decades of de-development and military occupation.

re-reading the dominant discourses of the aid regime, with specific attention to the way these discourses define women's interests and shape the conceptual horizon of local women's organizations.

Palestinian women's organizations have a long history dating back to the early decades of the last century. The first organizations were established during the British Mandate period by upper middle class women, and provided charity assistance, social welfare and relief work. In the 1960's and 1970's, a new generation of activist women's organizations emerged in the West Bank and Gaza, each association directly affiliated to a political faction of the PLO. During the popular movement of the first intifada, women's committees formed part of the popular front of mass mobilizing efforts. Today, the overall direction and institutional composition of the Palestinian women's movement has shifted: professional NGOs, consisting of research institutes and women's centers, now comprise the leaders of an emerging, autonomous women's movement. The relative marginalization of both the women's committees and the charitable societies today, however, signifies a hierarchical reorganization of the women's movement within the post-Oslo period.

This chapter reexamines some of the salient moments within the historical evolution of the strategic interests of Palestinian women's organizations, contextualizing this within the intersecting logic of development discourses. Using the example of Women in Development (WID) programs and good governance programs, we investigate the way income generating projects and gender equity projects define women's issues, priorities and strategic concerns. While this study identifies symmetry between Palestinian women's organizations' strategic concerns, and the timing of the arrival of global agendas, their simultaneous histories, however, do not preclude a disarticulation between the genuine objectives of local actors, and the theorization of women's interests by development discourses.

The first section of this chapter investigates the arrival of WID programs in Palestine. Focusing on donor income generating projects, it examines the way these programs have been superimposed over local women's initiatives, specifically, the women's cooperative schemes set up during the first intifada. This section maps the subsequent fissures and discontinuities that ensue within local organizations' own strategic options. The second part of the chapter examines the shift in donor agendas, signified by the arrival of Good Governance programs and a new aid regime, buttressing the Oslo process. It is within the Oslo juncture that one identifies a symmetry between local agendas and the objectives of donor development aid. This chapter argues that simultaneous transformations within the Palestinian national movement, new donor agendas and the reformulation of Palestinian women's movement's own strategic aims have all contributed to the hierarchical reorganization of the women's movement.

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The third section of this chapter examines the dissonance between women's 'practical' versus 'strategic' feminist interests. It is argued that, in the Palestinian case, many donor projects invariably assume 'women' are an already constituted category (Mohanty, 1998: 80). This facilitates an elision over their actual material realities, and a projection onto the 'third world woman' of certain western feminist interests and priorities. The chapter concludes by examining the way the logic of the western feminist discourse has interrupted and produced a disabling effect within the Palestinian women's movement and its relationship to popular forces.

In doing so, this chapter is informed by Michel Foucault's notion of genealogical research, a method he developed to explicate the struggle between hierarchically organized, globalized discourses, which circulate within institutions, and local, disorganized knowledge. While local knowledge is invariably disqualified and subjugated by these totalizing discourses, they, however, continue and remain present in discontinuous forms (Foucault, 1980: 83-85).

Short-term Interests and Long-term Dilemmas:
The Case of Income Generating Projects

In turning to review the emergence of the WID paradigm and its entry into the Palestinian context, our analysis is informed by and organized around the following four arguments. First, WID is characterized by a certain ambivalence in regard to its definition of, and prescriptions for, 'women's empowerment.' That is to say, and as we will illustrate below, by seeking the unproblematized incorporation of women into the economy, WID overturns one form of exclusion (from development programs) and re-inscribes women within another system of inequality (in the economy). Secondly, this ambivalence, which stems from WID's own theoretical and ideological underpinnings, is reproduced within local donor's projects. Thirdly, income generating projects were first introduced in Palestine within the framework of nationalist popular mobilization, and grassroots women's empowerment initiatives. Fourthly, the arrival of donor income generating projects, specifically, 'micro-credit' programs, introduced a destabilizing logic within the women's sector; not only did this result in fissures in women's organizations' strategic options, but it also interrupted local cooperative schemes, which began to be superseded by donor-funded NGOs and micro-credit agencies. These four arguments will be further explicated and developed in the following section.

The Women in Development paradigm first arose in the 1970's in response to the exclusion of women from international development programs. The literature and policies, which developed out of this approach,

thus represented the first systematic attempt to incorporate women into mainstream development initiatives.

Emphasizing women's role as economic producers, WID's initial focus was on increasing women's participation and integration in the economy (Moghadam, 1995). In the 1980's, WID was broadened to include increasing women's access to education and to private property, as well as facilitating women's vocational training, income generation and family planning (Abdo, 1995). Within the WID framework, income generating projects emerged as a major initiative. The aim of income generating projects is to expand women's access to credit, and increase their opportunities for self-employment through home economic projects or cooperative schemes.

As indicated above, there is ambivalence evident in the way WID defines women's empowerment for, while it overturns the exclusion of women from development projects, it re-embeds women within a new system of inequality in the economic sphere. Two factors have contributed to this ambivalence: the first pertains to the logic of incorporating women into development discourses dominated by mainstream liberal economic paradigms, and the second relates to the theoretical underpinnings of the WID approach. In regard to the first, it has been noted that in the 1980's, WID policy advocates sought the acceptance of mainstream economists, paying lip service to their concept of development, in order to enable women to emerge out of the social welfare category they had been placed in and, thus, to obtain more funds for women's advancement (Moghadam, 1995: 8). Thus for a long time, income generating projects have, and largely continue to, dovetail with the interests of multilateral institutions like the World Bank, particularly the latter's concern for increasing women's productive capacity (Simmon, 1997). When one recognizes the overlapping and contiguous influences operating on donors today, especially in the context of neo-liberal hegemony, such observations become particularly significant.

In regard to the second factor, it is important to emphasize that WID emerged out of both modernization theory and liberal feminism (Chowdhry, 1995). Simmons suggests that WID's association with modernization theory implies the acceptance of a teleological notion of progress that diverts attention away from structural relations within the economy, as well as away from gender and class differentials. According to Simmons, WID's assumptions are not only overly simplistic, and reduce the scope of power relations, but they also obscure particularities of third world women's interests. WID's assumptions include: economic growth is synonymous with development and improved standards of living for all; economic growth and the aims of women's movements are compatible; and women in the developed world have progressed further than women in the Third World towards equality with men (Simmons, 1997: 246).

While our focus is on WID, it is also central to note that new

perspectives have emerged which extend beyond the latter's narrow liberal feminist framework. In particular, the Gender and Development (GAD) approach, adopted by radical feminists, acknowledges gendered social norms, and the differential ways women and men are incorporated into political and economic structures. The difference between the two perspectives is that "WID puts emphasis on providing women with the opportunities to participate in male-defined and male-dominated social and economic structures, while Gender and Development (GAD), questions the assumptions implicit in these structures" (Rathgeber, 1995). In the 1990's a gender component was added to the WID approach, drawing attention to the ways gender social relations structure and constrain women's participation in development (Haider, 1995: 36). In terms of income generating projects, this revised WID approach now acknowledges the double burden of women's dual reproductive and productive responsibilities. However, the overall priority of this approach remains one of increasing women's productive role in the economy and in the development process.

Local Donor Priorities

As feminist scholars have pointed out, in the Palestinian context the WID paradigm has dominated donor approaches to women's empowerment and income generating projects have emerged as a central priority. Abdo argues that all women's organizations, ranging from the charitable societies to the women's committees and the professional NGOs, have taken part in WID programs with multilateral, state or UN agencies. The major focus of these projects has been income generating projects, including business credit centers (UNRWA) and credit/loan centers (NOVIB and Canada Fund) (Abdo, 1995: 37).[30] Similarly public health expert Rita Giacaman maintains that GAD has rarely been applied by aid agencies working in Palestine. According to her: "On the whole, the agencies use either welfare or equity approaches and, to a lesser extent, the empowerment approach which has been adopted by European NGOs working in this area, such as NOVIB

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[30] American bilateral aid agency USAID is currently one of the biggest financial supporters of income generation projects for women, particularly micro-credit schemes. In 1997, USAID provided $1.5 million in loan capital to expand Save the Children Federation's and UNRWA's micro-lending programs. In 1998, $3 million was provided to Save the Children for micro-lending activities for women. (www.usaid.gov.wbg) As such, the agency is reflective of a certain type of logic and orientation that these projects take when set up at the local level. USAID's approach to women and development revolves around two objectives: increasing women's productive capacity and increasing their participation in civic development and democracy building activities. According to its own literature, its main strategies include: enhancing the economic status of women; expanding educational opportunities for girls and women; improving women's legal rights and increasing their participation in civil society; and integrating gender considerations throughout USAID programs.

and Oxfam. With the recent and increasing involvement of the World Bank in the area, the anti-poverty and efficiency approaches (associated with productive projects for women) have emerged as major policy frameworks of development" (Giacaman, 1995: 53).

Entry into the Local Context: the Overriding National Interest

Using a genealogical approach, our aim is to locate the emergence of income generating projects in Palestine within grassroots women's initiatives, and map the entry of donor programs into the women's sector and the resulting fissures.

As indicated, income generating projects entered the Palestinian national landscape through the local initiative of Palestinian charitable societies and women's committees. While these projects predated the intifada by five years, income projects for women rapidly expanded following the eruption of the uprising in 1987. Economic cooperatives were set up by the women's committees, as part of the nationalist popular mobilization, and dovetailed with broader efforts to establish alternative services to those provided by the Israeli occupying power. In this context, income generating projects, such as embroidery and local food production, were a way to increase women's economic resources, facilitating the dual role of empowering women as well as sustaining the national struggle and meeting specific aims such as supporting the families of martyrs and of political prisoners (Jad, 1995: 231-234).

The significance of this should not be underestimated. While internationally, economic projects for women were being implemented in close association with structural adjustment programs as part of the polices and programs of institutions such as the World Bank, in the Palestinian context income-generating projects for women crystallized around the goals of the nationalist movement.

The original purpose and strategic aims of the income projects, as implemented by the women's committees, therefore, were not dictated by a singular logic, but were driven by a number of overlapping objectives. The economic cooperatives were sites for recruiting women to the national struggle and, as mentioned, these projects also promoted the national self-reliance of the Palestinian people, and the national economy, as part of resistance to the Israeli occupation (Kuttab, 1989; Giacaman and Johnson, 1989). The cooperatives thus provided a space within which to increase women's autonomy, as well as develop their gender awareness and political consciousness. According to some, however, while the cooperatives and the committees as a whole may have increased women's opportunities for political participation as well as their social and economic autonomy, these avenues of participation were contained within dominant patriarchal

structures of authority (Hiltermann, 1998).

Eileen Kuttab, a former leader in the committees, offers noteworthy comments on the role of the women's cooperatives. She begins her comments by noting that any attempt to look back and evaluate the role of the women's cooperatives of the first Intifada purely in terms of the economic criteria of productivity/efficiency, which are currently used to evaluate donor programs, is simply inadequate. Kuttab's comments, developed in hindsight after significant donor intervention in the women's sector, reveal the limits of the liberal feminist viewpoint as characterized by the WID approach. According to Kuttab, a narrow economic focus ignores what she labels: 'the interrelationship between the national context and the development option' during a period of popular national struggle. Also the search for 'profitability' neglects the empowerment women involved in these projects experienced, both in terms of their perceptions and their social and political awareness (Kuttab, 1995: 49-51).

Kuttab's comments prefigure our own findings which reveal shifts in the strategic options available for women's organizations following the arrival of donor income projects for women. Kuttab challenges the narrow economic focus of WID and indicates the importance of other goals, such as raising feminist consciousness and participating in the national struggle. In line with Simmons, quoted above, Kuttab questions whether economic logic of income projects and women's movement aims are always compatible. This is not to deny the importance of profitability as such, but rather to problematize its relationship to the broader goals and aims of feminist movements.

Beyond the National Interest

Thus far we have discussed the short-term interests buttressing the emergence of income-generating projects in Palestine. What about the long-term questions that arise when an agenda is set in this manner? Since the end of the first intifada, the women's sector has been overrun by donor funded micro-credit projects, superimposed over the grassroots popular initiatives and run by donor-established professional centers. Today, increasing criticisms have been made about the benefits of this type of project for Palestinian women. According to Abdo, available reports indicate a weakness or, more aptly, a failure of micro-finance projects. According to a report prepared in 1992 by Save the Children and Shu'un al-Mar'a (Women Affairs Committee, Gaza), 80% of the 15 income-generating projects surveyed in the West Bank had failed; either the micro-economic venture did not survive or was shut down not long after having been established (Abdo, 1995: 38). Other reports have also noted similar failures with this type of project (Holt, 1996: 59). Why does this happen?

We suggest this 'puzzle' should be explained with reference to both the shift in the strategic options available for women's organizations, and the introduction of a new logic in the organizations following the arrival of donor-prescribed income projects, particularly micro-credit.

Kuttab's perspective is illuminating in this regard. She underscores the interruption and the shift in options available for the women's committees following the onset of donor micro-credit projects. The problem pertains to the way the latter define women solely as individual economic units, eclipsing their multiple positions and their different locations within nationalist and feminist forms of agency. Kuttab explains the consequences of this: "(Today) some women produce pastries for the market. If you see the conditions they work in, they take on full family duties and the burden of the production center. They are exhausted and in a terrible state. We need to ask what kind of empowerment is this. The problem is there is little attention to the human side; it is not just about economic indicators. There should be protection for women against the exploitative nature of this type of incorporation into the economy. Before there was a buffer. As a part of the party, the committee creates a form of protection – a moral protection against the private sector. Today Palestinian Working Women's Society is the only organization to focus on women workers."[31]

Kuttab also questions the economic rationale of donor micro-finance projects for women, given the structural limitations on the Palestinian economy imposed by the occupation. Certain factors, however, continue to propel this type of activity. In particular, donors have focused on these projects as part of their concern for short-term employment solutions as a way to increase stability and produce visible 'peace dividends.'[32]

Projects and the Ideological Factor

This last point directs our attention to the ideological underpinnings of donor projects. Abdo's analysis is important in this regard; she locates the problem with the application of income generating projects in Palestine within the WID paradigm. This deserves attention, particularly given that the theoretical basis of donor programs is an issue that receives little attention by Palestinian organizations. The WID approach, based on liberal feminism and in keeping with liberalism, conceives of women as the sole agent of their destiny and considers *gender* as an *individual,* rather than a *relational concept* (Abdo, 1995: 40). As an extension of this, WID and liberalism suffer from the flaw of seeing society strictly as an "aggregate of atomized subjects," and therefore cannot provide solutions

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[31] Interview with Eileen Kuttab, Women Studies Program, Birzeit University.
[32] Ibid.

to problems which are structural in nature. Moreover, liberal feminism, in its close association with modernization theory, fails to see the contradictions in the capitalist system and is incapable of conceptualizing structures of oppression. In line with this, the fact that income generating projects integrate women into the informal economy, one of the most exploitative sectors of the economy, is ignored.

Local criticism mirrors Abdo's analysis. Kuttab's comments, referred to above, fall into line with Abdo's analysis, as do those of Sama Aweida of the Women's Studies Center. The latter conducted a study on micro-credit programs and uncovered that while the main indicator of success of these projects was loan repayment, women were actually selling their own gold as a way to repay these loans. One could argue that Aweida's study suggests a failure of appropriate indicators. However, the facts revealed by Aweida suggest the issue is much broader than this. The absence of an indicator to measure anomalies such as women selling their own property to repay micro loans itself stems from an ideological perspective that aims to integrate women into the economy, without attending to the modes or means by which this incorporation is realized. Such a view fails to see the potential danger of entrapping women in the exploitative informal sector. The indicators used to assess micro-lending projects are embedded within this economic paradigm, which evaluates the project strictly in repayment terms – ignoring the broader questions related to risks and exploitation within the market. The paradigm is pervasive: for instance, Faten, a donor-supported credit institution established in Gaza in 1998 by the Save the Children loan program, has provided $5.33 million in loans. When asked about indicators, Mrs. Amani Filfil, the Director of Faten in Gaza, said that the institution "did not have any figures or statistics about the extent to which women's projects were *successful*. But one of the indicators of success is the continued dealing of a group of women with this institution."[33]

Recently, more and more women's organizations are tackling difficult questions pertaining to the efficacy of economic projects for women. While some argue that Palestinian women's organizations have failed to see the politics behind donor-prescribed micro-credit projects (Abdo, 1995: 41), one cannot neglect the shifts in the strategic options available for women's organizations in the context of donor intervention and supply-driven micro-finance projects, which were superimposed over the work of the grassroots women's committees. Irrespective of this, today Palestinian women's organizations are faced with the challenge of re-articulating income generating projects in a manner which will reduce some of the risks involved for women.

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[33] WATC Newsletter #103, August 12, 2000.

Oslo, Good Governance and the Advocacy Paradigm

This section examines the arrival of the aid regime supporting the Oslo process; we look particularly at donor good governance programs as exemplified by their gender advocacy component. This section seeks to locate this shift in donor agendas in relation to the historical trajectory and strategic choices of the women's movement. The final section of the chapter will examine the implications of this donor paradigm for the women's movement.

The Palestinian Women's Movement in the 1990's: Towards a Feminist Agenda

Some argue that the women's movement in Palestine, straddling both nationalist and feminist movements, has faced specific challenges in developing its own feminist agenda (Glavanis-Grantham, 1996:173). As this author rightly states, during the first intifada, the Palestinian women's movement, "gave expression to a female and not a feminist consciousness, based on women's awareness of their rights within the prevailing division of labor and dominant ideology" (Glavanis-Grantham, 1996:173).

Glavanis-Grantham's observations are important since they orient our attention towards the period of the end of the first intifada, when women's activists were reevaluating their relationship to the political parties, and their role within the national movement. Of importance for our analysis is that the arrival of donor good governance programs and an advocacy paradigm were prefigured by a parallel shift in the women's movement towards the development of their own *agenda* and *strategy* for women.

Within the literature on the Palestinian women's movement there are five major factors recognized as shaping the strategic transformation of the movement, and its reorganization around the leadership stratum of women's activists employed in professional NGOs and research centers. These factors are:

1. The marginalization of women within the national movement. This was related to, among other things, the challenges the women's committees faced articulating their own women's agenda within the context of the male-dominated nature of the parties. The patriarchal nature of the party increasingly came to stifle the voicing of women's issues, especially as women's committees' programs were dictated from above by the party head (Jad, 1995:238-239).

2. The rise of the Islamists. In 1990 the Islamists, led by Hamas, spearheaded a campaign attacking women wearing western dress while

participating in demonstrations. A vicious campaign was launched which imposed an Islamic dress code on a large number of women in Gaza (Jad, 1995:241). The mainstream secular parties, including the leftists, did not respond to this campaign despite being urged to do so by female members of the movement. Women found themselves isolated, without support from national forces. For many this signaled a failure of the national movement, including its inability to serve as a mechanism to advance women's issues.

3. The waning of the national movement in 1991 and the retreat of the political parties in the post-Oslo period. With the weakening of the nationalist movement, there was increased recognition of the need to develop a women's agenda and new avenues of action and participation (Kawar, 1998:234).

4. The fostering of democratic participation within the emerging national political arena. Concurrent and pursuant to the last point, following the establishment of the PNA in 1994 and the beginning of the state-formation process, the aim was to contribute to democratic participation. (Kawar, 1998:234).

5. The large influx of foreign aid to Palestinian NGOs (Kawar, 1998:234).

These factors overlapped one another, often occurring simultaneously. Together they framed the period between the decline of the first intifada in 1990, and the beginning of the state-building era in 1994. Within this period, the women's movement shifted away from their position embedded within the nationalist movement, towards an autonomous social movement and participant within the nationalist struggle.

This change did not occur at once; it was a process which took place over time. With the commencement of negotiations between the PLO and Israel, women representing Fatah, Fida and the People's party came together with representatives from women's centers to begin for the first time to develop ways to address discrimination against women (Azzouni, 2000). Subsequently the Women's Affairs Technical Committee was established at the behest of women's organizations. Further to this, in the post-Oslo period new strategies were developed for the women's movement. In March 1995 a roundtable discussion was organized by the Women's Studies Center at Birzeit to consider the future of the women's movement. Some of the priorities agreed upon were: to contribute to the development of a democratic society; to train women to participate in the democratic process; and to focus on the drafting of Palestinian laws (Holt, 1996:54). Overall, this brief account charts the changing nature of the women's movement and

the process by which it developed its own agenda separate from the political parties and the national movement.

This shift should not be underestimated; it is important in explaining the rise of gender advocacy programs and gender training schemes. Clearly, the Palestinian women's movement had similar agendas, which brought them in line with donor priorities. Not only was the women's movement looking to increase women's equality, but the beginning of the state-building process meant that donor governance and civil society schemes resonated with the actors' aims to contribute to democratic processes.

Beyond the shift in the women's movement, there were also ideological factors at work which increased the convergence between donor and women NGO interests. Some committees and specialized women's centers began to devalue service programs after the first intifada. This occurred along with a broader shift towards a more 'feminist' orientation, which prioritized advocating for women's rights. As well, with the establishment of the PNA, many activists felt that the future Palestinian Authority should assume responsibility for offering basic services for women, such as kindergartens, nurseries, income-generating projects, health services, and education (Jad, 1995:243). Moreover, this type of ideological position also brought women's organizations in line with donors' program focus on advocacy projects.

Gender and Governance: the Impact of the Donors

The aid regime that has buttressed the Oslo process has facilitated the arrival of a new type of project in Palestine: democracy and civil society building programs, and broader 'good governance' agendas (Williams and Young, 1994). As Taraki suggests, donor governance programs overlap with and re-embed liberal feminist agendas (1995). These programs prioritize women's strategic gender interests and promote gender equality in the public sphere. In donor democracy schemes, women's organizations are looked at to participate in civil society building by articulating specific group interests, supporting gender mainstreaming initiatives, and advocating for the rule of law. Moreover, it is assumed that women's organizations will take up the advocacy paradigm and extend it to women on a mass scale through gender training projects as well as projects that teach women lobbying skills.

Our aim in this section is to highlight the logic of this shift to advocacy as a new type of project approach, tied to the global governance paradigm, and explore its implications for social relations and organizations.

It is important and necessary to see the changes in donor programs in the context of the rise of the neo-liberal paradigm. According to Carapico, the significance of the neo-liberal paradigm is that it has been

followed by a shift in *project approaches*. As she suggests, the neo-liberal paradigm has resulted in a changing role for Southern NGOs, away from providing services to the marginalized groups, and towards 'empowering' them to change their own situation. This represents a shift from *services* to *workshops, training and advocacy*. Furthermore, as she outlines, this also represents a movement towards projects which seek to inculcate self-help techniques, and put the onus for change on the individual as opposed to structural factors: "Women, landless peasants and marginal classes are encouraged to organize as interest groups....Social problems like female unemployment are attributed to attitudes and lifestyles, not political or economic constraints, so solutions are to be found in individual voluntary behavior" (Carapico, 2000:14).

The literature on NGOs indicates when a donor paradigm coalesces around a certain priority, such as a particular type of project, the local society begins to take on supply-driven features. For instance, the over-abundance of NGOs providing credit in Bangladesh is viewed as an example of a supply-driven formation in the local society (Edwards and Hulme, 1997).

In Palestine it is clear that the arrival of donor good governance programs has been associated with a shift in the type of projects available for women. Professional women's NGOs now concentrate on activities that include gender training and awareness campaigns as well as lobbying. This is explained by both a change in donor programs, but also a shift in the strategic interests of the Palestinian women's movement. Taraki underscores this meeting of global and local agendas, highlighting the intersection of donor liberal feminist prescriptions with the strategic agenda of the Palestinian women's movement. "[E]ncouraged by international aid agencies and propelled by their own search for an effective women's agenda, Palestinian women activists and some academics began the task of identifying the obstacles in these various areas" (Taraki, 1995:30).

This notwithstanding, the prevalence of advocacy-oriented projects which privilege the individual and self-help strategies raises questions about the interruptive logic of donor liberal feminist prescriptions and more specifically about what forms of empowerment are being made available to Palestinian women.

Local-Donor Priorities

Promoting women's equality in the public sphere is a big priority among donor agencies working in Palestine. Such projects are mainly funded through two different types of donor programs: the first, democracy and civil society building programs, and the second, gender

mainstreaming programs which promote women's participation in decision-making processes. It should be recognized, however, that the concept of 'gender' and gender training projects were introduced into the local context by donors as early as the 1990's (Hammami, 1995), that is to say, before the arrival of democracy programs, yet as part of the changing international development paradigm outlined above.

Starting with donor democracy and civil society programs, it should be stated that following the arrival of the PNA, a new type of donor arrived in Palestine or, in the case of existing agencies and INGOs, a new program began to receive attention, that of democracy development programs. This was a donor priority that had existed for some time internationally and predated the establishment of the PNA (see the section on World Bank and donor priorities, above). Within this program logic, women's demands for equality are viewed as part and parcel of the process of democratization; such activism should be channeled through civil society building and enhancement of democratic processes. Moreover, in Palestine one finds that most donor democracy and human rights programs include projects specifically targeted for women or are open to projects for women. Let us take the case of the USAID.

USAID has one of the largest democracy programs of donor agencies. In FY2000 it spent $17 million on democracy building projects. (www.usaid-wbg.org/) The aim of its program is to enhance the capacity of citizens to participate in and influence governing processes. As part of this program there is one large project for women, *Advocacy for Equal Rights for Women Project Through the Grassroots*, implemented by WATC. The project targets rural women, including those in the women's committees, through civic education sessions in gender, lobbying, computer and administrative skills. Note the approach: training with the purpose of impelling future advocacy by rural and grassroots women. (See WATC Annual Report, 1998). This is linked to USAID's democracy program goal of increasing participation of civil society in public decision-making. (www.usaid-wbg.org/) Underlying this type of project is a focus on perceptions: informing women of their right to act to defend their interests. Insofar as the focus is on the committees, presumably this is the site which serves as the structure through which women will act; however, the question of what structures women will act through and who will organize them is left ambiguous in the project. Without attention to such issues, the project becomes more of a self-help initiative.

This example raises a noteworthy point, relevant for our understanding of the implications of this type of advocacy/training project. Firstly, critical questions have been raised about training projects and their disregard for directing the participants into sustainable networks of action or avenues of participation. Discussing USAID civic education programs in Palestine and Egypt, Brouwer notes that a program in Egypt

to raise women's awareness about elections and increase their participation in the process actually served to increase the pessimism of the women involved. This was due to the women's high expectations of the impact of their vote, raised by the civic education. Highlighting the problem of focusing on the individual over organizing people into action, Brouwer notes, "In such conditions, it might be more productive to help citizens mobilize against the regime, instead of educating them how to vot" (Brouwer, 2000: 13).

Regarding the civic education program in Palestine implemented through Civic Forum, Brouwer points out that, "They might not need additional 'technical' knowledge about democracy or advice about how to change their *values*. What they might want to learn is how to mobilize, not under a foreign occupier, but under a Palestinian authoritarian regime. But they might especially want support for doing so" (emphasis added) (Brouwer, 2000: 14).

Building on Brouwer's observations, we can identify that the first implication of this type of project is that it privileges the 'individual' while neglecting to emphasize the centrality of organizing people, and bypasses questions such as through what structures should people act.

The second implication of this type of project is a shift to an advocacy project approach and an emphasis on strategic women's interests. This may imply that practical interests – those related to everyday existence – are given less priority. In general this represents a move from questions of daily life towards questions of position and rights in the social realm.

The second type of donor programs that promote women's equality in the public sphere and are being funded are the 'mainstreaming' initiatives. Mainstreaming has been defined as either donor efforts to incorporate women *into their development plans*, or donor attempts to increase women's *access to decision-making*, for example, establishing a women's unit (Jahan, 1995: 10). It is the latter which concerns us here. Let us briefly consider UNDP and UNIFEM policies.

If we review UNDP policies, it is evident that their gender mainstreaming projects have included supporting the establishment of Women's Units within the PNA ministries, with the aim of advocating gender equality within decision-making structures and policy-making processes. As well, they advocated for the Inter-ministerial Committee for the Advancement of Women. Similarly the UNDP has funded gender training courses and workshops for heads of departments within the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation (www.papp.undp.org/shr/gender.html).

With regard to the UNDP mainstreaming policy in Palestine, it has been stated that after supporting the establishment of women's directorates: "The UNDP project also facilitated networking among these women by providing them with a framework of ongoing communications

through the ad hoc committee" (Kawar, 1998: 241). Discussing the effectiveness of this project, Kawar states: "These directors have a common vision to lead in the development of gender-sensitive policies in the ministries and in strategic planning for women's development" (Kawar, 1998: 241).

This UNDP project also reveals the manner in which the shift to gender equality projects is very strongly strategically oriented. This type of project follows a top-down approach to empowerment. Within this new framework women's units are created from above with donor funding. Coupled with the type of projects discussed above, which focus on training women to lobby for their gender interests, the policy-making process is ultimately prioritized. There are clear advantages and gains associated with this approach especially in terms of avoiding discrimination against women in laws and legislation. Indeed, Palestinian women's organizations have made many gains through their lobbying efforts: for instance, they have reversed legislation requiring women to obtain a male guardian's consent to obtain a passport (Azzouni, 2000). Yet one cannot avoid the question, what about the rural women embedded in multiple struggles in her daily existence?

One should be alert to some of the corollary changes accompanying this new project focus. What can be termed *the rise of the advocate* raises questions about the relationship between women's organizations and Palestinian women, which underlies and is affected by such changes. Consider the comments of the UNIFEM office in Palestine: "Why do such organizations need a wide popular audience? As NGOs, they work as advocates: therefore their relationship is with policy makers. Having said this, however, it is important NOT to forget who you are working for, or on behalf of. Obviously, the situation varies depending on the organization, its activities and its orientation, what they are trying to do, how they do it, and whether they are geared to policy level or grassroots. But in general one can say that what has been happening in Palestine is that NGOs have become advocates: people are not being empowered to speak out on their own."

Global to the Local:
'Gender' and the New Phase in the Palestinian Women's Movement

Palestinian academics have reconfirmed the general hypothesis we have presented thus far, and have alluded to the converging global and local factors underlying the insertion of training and advocacy projects into the local society. Hammami and Taraki have both discussed the insertion of the concept of 'gender' by donors into the local context and the parallel concerns among women activists that made this global agenda meaningful

to them. Rema Hammami has argued that 'gender' was introduced into the Palestinian society under the guise of gender awareness or gender training within the women's movement in the early 1990's and onwards. She goes on to argue that, at the time, "The women's movement (factional activists as well as independent NGOs) realized it was necessary to work on women's issues as women's issues, and attempt to mobilize women around their shared oppression as women. 'Gender' awareness became perceived as the appropriate method within a general craze for training occurring simultaneously." (Hammami, 1995: 25)

Moreover, in line with Hammami's explication, in the local context gender became the means for focusing on women's rights or their lack of rights. Although, as Hammami notes, gender was used as equivalent to "women," as opposed to a theoretical notion of gender inequalities being sustained by complex systems of power and discursive structures. (Hammami, 1995: 25)

Both Hammami and Taraki's comments are useful in enabling us to locate the meeting of global and local priorities and how gender training and advocacy projects were inserted into the national landscape.

Clearly, in considering the arrival of gender projects in Palestine, there are overlapping developmental, social and political agendas at stake. The shift in the women's movement towards a more concrete social agenda for women was met by expanding donor developmental spaces. There are complex questions: what issues can be raised about this process? Who were the actors in the women's sector that directed this shift? What about the other organizations in the women's sector? Overall, it is clear that the meeting of global and local agendas has served to carry the women's movement forward, and facilitated the development of a women's agenda centered around tackling discrimination against and inequality of women. Simultaneously, however, this has occurred as women's organizations beyond the professional NGOs have faced increasing marginalization. Moreover, one can identify two characteristics of the women's sector today. Firstly, it is clear to observers that the activities of the professional women's NGOs and specialized centers, which have adopted gender training projects and an advocacy approach, have become the focal point of the women's movement and center of women's activism. They have been described as follows: "The women's centers movement is made up of well-educated, politically sophisticated and feminist women" (Kawar, 1998: 237). Kawar goes on to explain, "The strategic goals of the women's centers movement is women's empowerment, and the agenda's focuses are women's political education and women's rights. They conduct research, publish, hold workshops and provide forums for issues to be discussed and leadership developed" (Kawar, 1998: 237).

Notice that the author uses the term "women's centers movement" to describe the activism of the women's NGOs and centers. This is

reflective of the second change that has occurred in the women's sector since the shift in the women's movement and the meeting of global and local agendas around the theme of gender projects. This second change is that there is a state of relative marginalization of women's organizations, specifically some of the women's committees and the women's charitable societies. In this regard, it remains to ask whether this meeting of global and local agendas is accompanied by unintended changes or a reorientation of the women's sector.

Donor Priorities, Systems of Representation and Women's Empowerment in Palestine

As stated above, in contrast to the professional NGOs, the women's committees and charitable societies are in fact quite marginalized. In this section, it will be argued that the current predicament of these organizations is related to many factors. According to some, professionalism and the donors' political agenda have played a role in determining the fate of these organizations. In contrast to this, we will argue that one needs to consider the donor priorities, as reflected in their conceptual frameworks: more specifically, the manner in which donors represent third world women in their development frameworks and how they define women's interests. Here, we are referring to donor prioritization of strategic women's interests over practical women's interests. On one level, this is the result of a narrow definition of 'feminism,' one that does not consider the possibility of a diversity of 'feminisms' (Sen and Grown, 1987: 18-19). At the same time, such donor conceptualizations often reflect a particular (western) historical experience. However, the prioritization of strategic gender interests is not only reflected in donor discourse, but to some extent it is mirrored in the position of professional women's activists.

In addition to this, at another level, inside the women's sector one discerns discursive structures which operationalize/materialize the prioritization of strategic over practical interests and give it tangible form while also furthering its expanse. In this sense, Hammami has argued that the concept of "gender" has been translated and used in the local context to mean "women" and has been associated with the expanse of a knowledge of women's rights (Hammami, 1995: 25). We will introduce the idea that "gender" represents a discursive formation that has been used in the local context in settings of workshops, conferences, training sessions, etc., in settings where there is a meeting of different types of women actors. It is often introduced in a manner which facilitates the "creation of advanced/backwards binary constructions" (Puar, 1996: 86). This is to suggest that the idea of gender is introduced in encounters between

women of different class, educational backgrounds or different urban-rural origins in such a way as to privilege those that identify empowerment with women's rights, while the experience of those concerned with basic rights, such as concern for economic security, are somehow devalued. This will be discussed further below.

Before continuing, some qualifying statements are in order. In the literature on the Palestinian women's movement, the charitable societies have been represented as 'traditional,' suggesting somehow that they are outside the women's sector, or more accurately that they are incapable of contributing to the progress of women. It is true that such a differentiation has often been made on the basis of the women's committees' outreach capacity and their mobilization of women and the younger more activist orientation of their leadership (Jad, 1995; Kawar, 1998). At the same time, it has been agreed that in practical terms, and in terms of their actual projects, the difference between committees and charitable societies is minimal. Here one cannot avoid the question, what or, more pointedly, whose notions of empowerment inform such perceptions about the charitable societies?

Demystifying Essentialist Constructs

Views on the Palestinian women's charitable societies are often situated within a dichotomous classification of tradition versus modernity. This will be challenged here. Such a classification is premised on teleological assumptions similar to those of modernization theory; it posits a linear view of progress, which has been effectively challenged by post-modernist thinkers. Such static notions of 'tradition' have been challenged by Palestinian women academics (Taraki, 1997: 20-21). Yet some of the criticisms raised against the charitable societies in the local context are clearly guided by this false assumption of a negative notion of 'tradition' existing in diametric opposition to modernity. For example, it has been said that the societies are run by an 'old guard' that is happy to keep monopolization of power with the head of the organization. This, however, ignores the fact that the problem of personal power pervades the NGO sphere as well, and is not restricted to one type of organization. As well, this position neglects that there is a new generation involved in the charitable societies that desires a change in leadership of these organizations (Interview with younger staff at Hebron Women's Charitable Society). There are more problematic biases than these: for example, the societies are not recognized for their ability to provide a positive women's space for poor and under-privileged rural women. In many cases, the practical needs that the societies try to meet are barely acknowledged as relevant for women's advancement. Finally, it should be added that today there is a need for a reexamination of the charitable

societies, since these organizations are still apart from the women's movement yet they remain relevant in that they are closer to the rural women than the professional NGOs.

The View from the Ground Up, Three Examples from the Grassroots

The following examples illustrate the conditions of charitable societies and women's committees today. More importantly, they also provide an alternative perspective on the changing priorities of both the donors and the professionalized women NGOs.

Inash el Usra

Inash el Usra, established in 1965, operates a home for destitute girls and provides vocational training programs for young women. With Arab funding and solidarity support from Europe, the organization grew into a large national institution with over 100 employees. Today, the Inash is in a deep financial crisis; its main sources of funding have dried up and its income generating schemes rendered unprofitable due to increased competition with the opening up of the market to cheaper products from Asia.

The importance of this example is that it reveals the tension between practical and strategic feminist agendas and the difficulty of separating the two. Consider the comments of the Inash's Director; she asks whether women can be expected to look towards their strategic interests, in terms of their rights as women, if the practical daily questions related to their existence, remain unsettled: "I cannot talk about gender before giving a woman the means to eat. The first step is to empower women, for example, to increase illiteracy and then give her some independence. When she is independent she can then think independently."

This comment is significant, especially given the priority placed on strategic goals among the donors and the professional organizations. Moreover, the director of Inash seems aware of the shift in priorities overlapping the arrival of a new type of funding, and she hints that the donor's have a hierarchical understanding of women's forms of empowerment: "I have my role, others have their role. Why do donors put funding into one channel and not the other channel? I want to make women independent, this is our work.....We cannot all appeal to them or all play the same role. We are not neglecting any issues in Inash: women, gender, democracy or anything else. If they want to help an institution they should get to know it and help develop it. We need to improve our sewing machines. They are old and outdated, from the1970's. They should understand this aim, not say "oh, machines....for women." Let me tell you

these machines will help increase the independence of individual women and enable them to buy food and not be a beggar in the streets."

Hebron Charitable Society for Women

As outlined above, the charitable societies are the oldest type of NGO in Palestine and are often cast off as traditional organizations. This example, however, illustrates how an organization which addresses women's practical needs can also develop into a *women's space* – a positive domain for women where they receive support issues related to their daily lives. Therefore, such an organization can represent a site for a different form of empowerment.

We spent a day at this society; and it was truly a positive space for women. On that day they had organized a fundraising lunch for Iraq. Women were coming and going, bringing children to the day care. One important example, which challenges some of the perceptions of the societies, is the following: a woman police officer came in to leave her daughter at the day care. In a sense, this incident alone challenges the tendency to cast the societies into some abstract category labeled as 'traditional.' A woman police office is a rarity in Palestine, especially in Hebron. In addition to important strategic forms of action such as lobbying for gender equality, this also represents a small *but* bold step that challenges gender boundaries through one's own life choice. This very modern, gender conscious step was taken by a woman close to the Hebron Charitable Society.

It is indeed true that the older women who run the society are not the sophisticated, highly educated, donor-savvy women of the NGOs or centers, but at same time they seem to have succeeded in creating vibrant space for women in Hebron. Moreover, there are younger generations of women that work in or are associated with this society, such as the female police officer. Furthermore, it may be that from the perspective of professional NGOs, the societies do not have enough of 'feminist' consciousness and fail to challenge patriarchal structures in the family, and society at large. But at the same time, one should not neglect that the society provides important services for women in Hebron and a form of empowerment, which while not related to women's strategic position in society, is still relevant. In this sense, this example shows that notions of empowerment need to be rethought and critically assessed for the possibility that a neglected complimentarity exists between what is viewed as strategic and what is perceived as practical matters of daily life.

This third example shows the significance of a woman's organization as a structure that enables women to act collectively to develop their own survival strategies. In contrast to the logic of the self-help notion that underlies projects that train women in gender and lobbying tactics, the importance of a structure that *facilitates a mechanism through which women* can act together remains very salient.

During our visit to this committee to meet with the Director, it was clear that women were coming in with their problems and seeking ways to address issues related to their daily lives with the other women of the committee.[34] One woman was in a state of despair, wanting to find a way to cover her daughter's transportation costs from the village to Birzeit University so the young woman could continue her education. The women in the committee discussed possible solutions. We were invited to help, and they asked us about possible support available from the ministries or NGOs.

This example illustrates the way that the women of the committee come together and solve problems collectively, therefore highlighting the relevance of the organization as a *focal point* for empowerment. Moreover, this raises the question that the projects, which focus on training, may *dislodge* women from the community, from essential organizational structures and networks that facilitate survival strategies and address the practical questions that are important for any strategic change in women's position. On the other hand, as will be discussed below, some of the project officers in the professional NGOs try to escape the logic of training schemes by cultivating informal social networks with the women that can facilitate longer-term relations with these women.

Possible Explanations for Marginalization of Women's Organizations

There are different views on what explains the marginalization of the charitable societies and the women's committees. According to one perspective, professionalization is one of the factors at work. Donors vary in the degree to which they assess administrative capacity when deciding to fund an organization. Nonetheless, in general, donor reporting requirements and the proposal writing process itself presupposes certain organizational capabilities. Some argue that the societies and the committees have been unable to keep up with, or to restructure themselves in order to meet these new demands. A director of an NGO describes the relations with donors today as follows: "On professionalization: now there is more reporting, documentation, transparency, in this era. This may not have existed before.

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[34] In contrast to the other committees, the Committee for Social Work is in better financial standing. One of the reasons may be its affiliation to the state party, Fatah.

There was not this strong demand to report everything, they would give funds and you would show where funds went. There were no specific conditions or set procedures to follow. I do not think reporting is wrong. Funds should be accounted for, it is the right of donors to do so....But these small organizations really have a problem....We are in a new era and the smaller societies lack the professionalism to meet the demands of this era. It is not enough to run an organization on *baraka* or the spirit of voluntarism."

Another perspective argues that in regard to the women's committees, the donors' political agendas combined with whether the organization was able to transform itself into an NGO had significant bearing on their development. According to one prominent female activist, the donor political agenda had direct impact on the future of the women's committees: "There is also the donor agenda to support the peace process. The PFLP and DFLP have not entered into cooperation with the state. They are a real opposition and oppose Oslo. This is a problem we face with the funders. The donor community has a clear agenda, to support the peace process, not the opposition. These same committees that are marginalized today were heavily funded by donors during the first intifada; then they were recognized as an important tool to democratize society. Today they are not."

The same activist acknowledges that some of the committees, which are supported by the donors today, have also undergone deep institutionalization and are more relevant for the donors than others: "The political parties that have cooperated with the PNA, including the left, namely the People's Party and Fida, are more professionalized than the DFLP or PFLP. The latter have maintained their grassroots, but have little funding. They could not transform into a professionalized NGO due to ideology and mentality; they have very limited access to funding."

As this quote suggests, the two factors, namely the ability of the committees to transform themselves and the donors' political agendas, overlapped and resulted in the configuration of marginalized grassroots versus professionalized NGOs that one observes today. This perspective is very illuminating but it neglects one point: the capacity of organizations affiliated to the communist (People's party) to transform themselves into professional NGOs may be explained by the experience these organizations have gained with the donors, for the communists historically entered into relations with foreign donors before any other party.

Donor Priorities: Practical over Strategic Interests

In contrast to both of these useful perspectives, we suggest that the women's sector in Palestine has been transformed in relation to *both* the

shift in the women's movement discussed above and the parallel arrival of a new donor agenda for women's rights. The marginalization of the women's organizations outside the NGOs is not just due to agendas of professionalism or political agendas. It also has to do with the effects of *a new type of funding* and manner in which *donors represent women* in their development frameworks, specifically in the way they define women's empowerment. This has much to do with the prioritization of strategic interests over practical interests and touches upon a complex set of issues: donor development frameworks, the frame of reference for donor programs, and the implications that the conceptional dimension of donor programs has for the local society.

According to Puar, donor development frameworks are produced within a specific historical and cultural context and therefore inevitably reflect Western biases (Puar, 1996: 74). As an extension of this, Puar and others have argued that within donor conceptual frameworks, practical and strategic women's interests are understood in a hierarchical manner, with the women's strategic needs prioritized over the practical ones.

Drawing on Molyneux's work, Puar defines practical versus strategic as follows: *practical* needs include access to health care, childcare, food, that is, matters that relate to daily survival. *Strategic* needs are those which try to change the patriarchal structures of society, related to re-conceptualizing society based on equality between men and women (Puar, 1996: 77).

In Puar's analysis donors, due to certain forms of historical and cultural biases, prioritize the strategic gender interests of women, for these interests are the central front along which women in the West waged their own struggles for gender equality. Moreover, interests that are associated with the articulation of a 'right' or, as she states, 'identity politics' are understood as those that will change women's condition. This has implications for ordinary and rural women and the way their experiences 'fit' into donor frameworks and funding schemes. As Puar states: "The positioning of Third World women within such oppositional frameworks (practical versus strategic) seems to privilege a middle-class status automatically understood as having a 'higher' or more 'feminist' consciousness revolving around identity politics. Strategic gender needs are thus understood as what 'will ultimately change society' and practical gender needs as the 'best one could hope for from poor women" (Puar, 1996: 77).

Marchand (1995) goes further than Puar, arguing that in the Latin American context, the dichotomy between practical and strategic needs is not only reflected in the development field, but within writing on Latin American women, and is reproduced by Latin American women feminists themselves. Marchand adds that this dichotomy is associated with a hierarchy of a 'feminist' (or strategic) over a 'feminine' (or practical)

agenda. Furthermore, in her view this ultimately serves to silence the majority of Latin American women, their voices and knowledge. She points out that poor or working class women knew that discrimination against women, while exploitative and painful, is not as painful as being without food, shelter, or being unable to afford health care. Therefore, some argue that gender-related survival needs of poor women should be just as much a part of a mainstream 'feminist agenda' as reproductive health or liberal feminist priorities (Marchand, 1995: 63).

What emerges from Puar and Marchand's analysis is that, implicit within the donor prioritization of strategic over practical gender interests, is a form of representation which devalues women's daily experiences, especially the poor and the rural women, and therefore silences the majority of women. Can the Palestinian women's movement be built on internalization of these forms of representation, which disempower the majority of women and their daily experiences?

Some of the points raised in the theoretical discussion are evident in the Palestinian context. For instance, the UNDP's gender program in Palestine, paints a picture of the Palestinian woman facing struggle on many fronts including access to basic services such as education and health care. This is definitely accurate. However, one can also argue that their portrayal of Palestinian women also falls in line with a static vision of the third world woman, the 'victim' of multiple and overlapping structures, including social norms and Islamic 'fundamentalism.'

Moreover, after identifying basic needs as being a critical part of the challenges women face in improving their condition in Palestinian society, the UNDP go on to discuss their program, which is overwhelmingly tilted towards furthering strategic gender interests. Obviously, activities which bolster gender equality are extremely important, such as UNDP's support for the development of a gender sensitive curriculum. This is not the issue, however, as strategic and practical interests are not diametrically opposed and can be advanced simultaneously. The point here is that the donor has prioritized the strategic agenda, and oriented its funding in that direction. (See, www.papp.undp.org/shr/gender.html)

At another level, if one maps the women's organizations, one observes divisions emerging and the broader effects of hierarchical notions of women's empowerment projected onto and re-articulated in the Palestinian society. Consider the comments of the General Union of Palestinian Women: "One thing I do want to say is that there is so much misinformation about women's reality, and the nature of organizations such as ours. There is an idea of "traditional society" which is very misleading. The former head of GUPW, Mrs. Khalil, was such a daring and creative woman. In the YWCA we were operating according to our constitution and holding regular elections (long before all of this talk about 'governance'). Some people view these organizations as traditional

and not moving forward. There is a grave misunderstanding here. The most important accomplishments have been made by such organizations. ... . Inash al-Usra is like a mini-state. This is a huge organization. Rawdat az-Zuhur has been so creative in its teaching methods, it is really innovative, and started teaching about democracy a long time ago. These organizations have done fantastic work."

It is true, as we have stated above, that there are other factors at work here contributing to a marginalization of these groups, such as the issue of professionalization. Nonetheless, the hierarchical ranking of strategic over practical women's interests has contributed to producing certain forms of exclusion among women's organizations, increasing stratification and gaps between groups. As implied by the quote above, many women's organizations find themselves excluded from definitions of women's advancement and some are trying to resist this.

One question which should be asked is: to what extent are the women's professional organizations reproducing a hierarchical and possibly dichotomous understanding of practical versus strategic interests? Is there a space for the women's committees, which are more strongly linked to the NGOs and women's centers, to maintain a type of women's organization that addresses basic rights, and serve as a space for women?

For example, the WATC, whose members include the women's committees, has two discernible positions vis-à-vis the committees. On the one hand, WATC encourages and tries to facilitate 'institution building' of the committees by providing training in organizational skills, including accounting procedures and computer skills. (See WATC Annual Report 1998.) Clearly this is quite important. On the other hand, WATC's other position is somewhat problematic; the organization seems to be pulling the women's committees down the path taken by the women's NGOs, namely, towards advocacy, training and adopting a self-help attitude towards women. (See, for example, WATC, Sanabel and Advocacy with Grassroots Women Projects, Annual Report, 1998.) The committees are encouraged to follow the project approach used by the women's NGOs, namely, the advocacy approach to empowerment. This is not in itself bad. As pointed out above, some committees choose to be more oriented toward women's rights due to their ideological considerations. Moreover, some women's activists argue that the committees themselves face a quandary in terms of their relationship with the grassroots population. The committee's own legitimacy is hurt by the waning of the national movement. The point here, however, is that without incorporating initiatives to maintain space for women's committees in which these organizations can adopt a more basic rights approach, professional women's NGOs reproduce and reinforce the dichotomy of strategic versus practical.

Finally, the idea was introduced above that the concept of 'gender' has manifested inside the women's sector as a discursive formation, which differentiates and sets up a ranking of women's experiences, valuing the posture which is directed towards equality and women's strategic position. This requires further explanation.

Foucault enriched our understanding of social relations through his work, particularly by identifying the interrelationship between knowledge and power and by explaining the way power operates. According to his work, a discursive formation not only represents a claim to truth but, when normalized, it supports an overarching regime of truth. In his discussion of Foucault's method, Al Amoudi explains that with the genealogical method, Foucault expands his ideas, arguing that discursive formations are both generated by, and also generate non-discursive practices (Al Amoudi, 2000:13).

In the Palestinian context, the concept of gender carries with it a hierarchical notion of women's empowerment. This emerges out of the complex meeting of global and local factors discussed above; in turn, this has a constitutive effect on local practices. Consider the feelings of exclusion expressed above by the GUPW or Inash el Usra. Some of the women from rural areas, whom we interviewed after they attended workshops in Ramallah, expressed feelings of alienation and dissociation with the conceptual tools used in the discussions. In contrast to this, consider the example of the ENDA organization that does not use the term 'gender.' This is somehow a very neutral approach, which escapes the hegemonic enforcement of a concept into a local context.

Conclusion

This section has examined the global and local factors underpinning the entry of two agendas into Palestinian society: income generating projects and gender equality programs. It has been argued that the women's case study exemplifies 'loyalty.' That is to say, one observes a complimentary meeting and connectivity between globally endorsed approaches to women's advancement and the strategic interests of women's groups emerging from their own historical development, as situated within their local context.

In regard to gender equality programs, we shed light on some of the biases and hierarchical classifications implicit within donor conceptual frameworks. Therefore, we have identified the importance of donor systems of representation as well as some of the implications of how they represent Southern women's interests.

Let us conclude with a few observations on the conditions of Palestinian women's organizations today, indicating the implications of

agendas becoming embedded in the local structures.

At a recent conference, a prominent Palestinian female academic critiqued the women's NGOs. According to her, today NGOs do not play a role in organizing women or in trying to build ties with them. Moreover, she sees the professionalized women's organizations as having less of an impact on women than the old model of *charitable society*, which at the very least has a general assembly, and people are members and are invited once a year to debate policies. The new organizations have a closed board: reflecting an elitist construction.[35] Similarly, another female academic and activist expressed to us that today there is a feeling among Palestinian women at the grassroots level that groups providing training have become like missionaries, and increasingly women don't want to listen. In her opinion, it is important not only to theorize about women's rights, but also to try to solve practical issues.

At the same conference referred to above, a paper was presented on the experience of the South African women's movement. The presenter from South Africa problematized the notion of a 'women's movement,' highlighting the fault lines inside the movement and the need for alliance building among South African women's groups. As she states, "Practical gender needs continue to be the major focus of black women, the majority of whom are African, poor, unemployed and living in rural areas.... Strategic gender struggles seem academic, remote, far fetched for the majority of women who are literally struggling to survive" (Mtintso, 1999: 10).

She discusses the gap between the popular 'feminine' movement and the more 'feminist' movement, which is led by academics and professionals. She stresses the importance of alliance building between the two groupings and asserts that gender activism should be strong and united: "Such activists should be organized in a strong woman's and feminist movement to act as a proper base for gender transformation. There should be no dichotomy between the Popular Women's Movement and the Feminist Movement but rather they should be seen as interdependent and complementing each other" (Mtintso, 1999: 15).

To what extent does a similar consciousness exist in Palestine? Why did the donor emphasis on strategic 'feminist' agenda find such resonance in Palestine? To what extent are the charitable societies considered apart from the Palestinian women's movement due to the fact that they address women's practical needs? What about the women's committees?

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[35] These comments were made by Islah Jad. See: "The Palestinian Women's Movement Problematics of Democratic Transformation and Future Strategies," *Proceedings of the 5th Annual Muwatin Conference held in Cooperation with the Women Studies Institute, Birzeit University,* Ramallah: Muwatin, 1999.

Let us conclude by looking at the nascent trends evident in the women's sector. A program officer at the Palestinian Women's Working Society (PWWS) described to us the way in which she tries to transforms her program, which is essentially a civic education project intended to train women in issues such as gender. As opposed to simply training women in a particular set of skills, the program officer uses the training schemes as a means to enter into the grassroots and form lasting relations with women. Since 1996 she has worked in the same rural locations and has become familiar with the women and their issues. She insists that this is not a typical training exercise in which women are met once and then never seen again. She points out that over the years through this program she has gained 78 volunteers from among the beneficiaries. She also points out that when the women, for example, raise an issue related to their health care needs, or that concerns agriculture matters she has brought the Palestinian Agricultural Relief Committees and Medical Relief Committees into the community.

In discussions with us, an important women's activist expressed her thoughts on the future of women's organizations in Palestine. As she explained, women's NGOs have taken up an extremely essential role and are creating a gender aware public. Yet she also revealed that some of the professional centers, for instance, that provide counseling on legal issues still have women coming to them and asking how to deal with poverty and daily survival. This women's activist foresees a dialectical development of the women's movement, and it is fitting to end with her observations:

"There is a kind of transformation happening. I think in 2-3 years there will be change in the women's movement, it will become more political — it will politicize daily life. The best outlet is to try to promote some projects that address practical issues. It is the only way to convince the grassroots and regain their confidence. I think that with a return to the grassroots, organizations will have to deal with a new agenda."

3.3. Health Agenda: a Model of Exit

Healthcare represents the largest sector of Palestinian NGO activity, and receives about 21% of total funding, according to the Welfare Association survey (Hanafi 1999b). A PNGO newsletter with updated information reported that in 1999 NGOs accounted for some 62% of all services in primary healthcare, and operated 123 health centers in rural areas (35% of all health centers). These health centers served a total of 258,200 patients per month. Fifteen of these clinics provided services to people insured by the Ministry of Health.

Concerning hospitals, the NGO sector operated 42% of secondary health services and 32% of all hospital beds in the Palestinian Territories, serving 300,000 patients (33%). Moreover, the Palestinian Red Crescent manages all emergency health services in the Palestinian territories and runs several specialized health centers. In terms of training, the NGOs produce an estimated 750,000 publications in the area of health education every year. During 1997-1998, 9,000 persons were trained in first aid. Many played a major role in dealing effectively with the injuries people sustained in confrontations with the occupation forces.

In regard to rehabilitation, the NGO sector is responsible for more than 90% of all rehabilitation services provided to the disabled. About 100 different rehabilitation organizations operate in the Palestinian Territories and employ more than 3,000 persons. Concerning community-based rehabilitation, NGOs run five programs serving 25,000 disabled in 200 locations (October 1999). Interestingly, the NGO health sector held the same level of importance in 1992 (Clark and Balaj 1994). This reveals that even after the setting up of the Ministry of Health, the importance of NGOs is still considerable. Different types of PNGOs operate in this field: large associations, Christian institutions, and small grassroots associations, especially Islamic ones.

In the beginning of this research, we assumed that the agenda issues in the health sector would be mainly technical matters (reform and privatization of health services, building a large hospital for a group of villages versus a small hospital for each one, etc.). However, this research revealed that agendas within the health sector directly relate to human rights issues. Moreover, the type of health program can have deeper political implications.

In this section, we will examine two issues related to the health sector: reproductive health and health insurance. We will investigate how the global agenda has been projected in the context of the Palestinian Territories and how Palestinian NGOs resisted, cooperated or were co-opted into this agenda.

Global Health Agenda

The modern view of what constitutes or compromises health is broad. It goes beyond specific diseases or conditions and includes all of the aspects of life that affect physical, mental, or social well-being: access to medical services, and the physical, biological and social environment (Bagnoud et al., 1999: 30). However, this all-encompassing notion of 'health' is not always transferred to the agenda for the Third World where health is often reduced to primary healthcare being considered the key to 'attaining the goal of health for all.' In 1978, the International Conference on Primary Healthcare defined the components of primary healthcare

as follows: educating the public on prevailing health problems and the methods of prevention and control; promoting food supply and proper nutrition; an adequate supply of safe water and basic sanitation; maternal and child healthcare, including family planning; immunization against major infectious diseases; appropriate treatment of common diseases and injuries; prevention and control of locally endemic diseases; and provision of essential drugs. Additional elements have been included since 1978: mental health, dental health and accident prevention. (Bagnoud, 1999: 33)

This global health agenda emphasizes the relationship between ill health and under-development. Poverty, illiteracy and poor infrastructure, particularly for water and sanitation, are major factors underlying the appalling health status of many developing countries, and particularly that of women and children (Green and Matthias, 1997: 9). However, one should not overlook the manner in which the primary healthcare strategy, by and large, does not follow a humanistic approach to health. Two issues are at stake here: firstly, the homogenization of healthcare and, secondly, the control of the cost of pharmaceutical drugs by multinational corporations. Concerning homogenization, it has been argued that international health NGOs impose methods for treating illness that are based on Western conceptions, heavily relying on medicalized treatment. Rony Brauman, one of the founders of the French humanitarian organization, Médecins sans Frontières - MSF (Doctors Without Borders), challenges this homogenization by demonstrating the impossibility of a universalistic code for healthcare (2000). For instance, a community-based program for healthcare is not always useful, especially when the community structures have been torn by war (Crochet, 2000).

Concerning access to medicine, there is growing recognition that multinational corporations are seeking to impose rules that challenge primary healthcare in developing countries. Protracted patents make medicine extremely expensive, and the developing world cannot fabricate generic drugs. To visualize the extent of the stakes, the treatment of AIDS is 16 times cheaper in South Africa,[36] where generic medicines are used, than in Western countries, where they are not. 39 multinational corporations specializing in pharmaceutical products launched a lawsuit against South Africa for not respecting the international treaty concerning drug manufacture. In March 2001, however, these companies abandoned their legal effort to prevent South Africa from importing and producing cheaper, generic AIDS drugs.

In 1999, MSF mounted a campaign to advocate for broader access to essential medicines, after finding that lifesaving medicines were not available or affordable for people in many of the countries where they work. Moreover, as part of its access campaign, MSF allocated its Nobel

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[36] There are 4.7 million people infected with HIV in South Africa (*The Globe and Mail*, April 21, 2001).

Peace Prize money toward fighting neglected diseases. Diseases such as tuberculosis, malaria, sleeping sickness and leishmaniases are called "neglected" for many reasons, but mainly because affordable treatment is not available.

Medicalization of Politics: a New Repertoire of Social Action

Some authors, such as Didier Fassin (1998), draw attention to the *medicalization of politics*. This is not the same as Michel Foucault's bio-politics: the disciplinary and individuating effects of power, and the overarching, totalizing concern for the biological well-being of the population, including disease control and prevention, adequate food and water supply, and sanitary shelter. Rather, it pertains to the increasing power of medical actors *within political processes*. In fact, the medicalization of politics reflects a new way of fashioning social change, one that challenges or resists dominant paradigms, without necessarily passing through the ruling elite or drawing on the classic form of political and social action. The actors in the health sector, in Palestine and elsewhere, are able to impose a language that carries with it a legitimacy that surpasses arguments framed in traditional political discourse. Similarly, the INGO specialist in humanitarian intervention has an impact on political change in the sphere of international relations, demanding from the negotiators the "right of intervention" and even the "duty of intervention" and from the belligerents "the humanitarian corridor."

In this respect, Fassin reformulates what is at stake politically in the medicalization phenomenon. He poses the question less in terms of power as Foucault did than in terms of legitimacy. According to him, medical language imposes itself as a legitimate mode on the social order's administration. If at a cultural level, the medicalization of the society corresponds to the reformulation of social problems in terms of the medical sciences, in political terms this implies the legitimization of this reformulation. (1998: 10)

In the field of regulating international migration, the impact of international organizations has been barely noticeable. Their intervention began by assisting candidates for expulsion or people inside the refugee camps in Europe. However, there are exceptional cases. Organizations such as Médecins du Monde were able to invalidate the decision of the French State to expel illegal migrants by imposing health examinations. While the measure restricts the arrival of foreigners into France, the medical associations were able to use the examinations to impose upon the state, at the very least, a temporary stay for the migrants, in order (and under the pretext) for them to receive treatment. As a result of this, some of these migrants were able to remain in France. In this example, questions

related to the political legitimacy of foreigners were ineffective, battled out on the legal terrain, largely due to the legitimacy of humanitarian language.

Another example concerns the intervention of the Médecins sans Frontières in Jordan to protect the Iraqi refugees in the country. Many international organizations were not able to approach the serious problem of the refugees' status in Jordan and their deplorable situation. The MSF, however, after long mediation efforts was able to convince the Jordanian authority of the importance of its 'purely' medical and humanitarian actions. In this case, the medical language is invariably received as a more legitimate form for expressing issues that are as related to the well being of individuals as they are entangled with broader political issues.

Generally speaking, when there are tensions and conflicts in the political and social spheres, the medical language supplies the conditions for a minimal agreement. It operates as a means of pacification of the society. In dealing with this phenomenon, it is important to analyze the advent of humanitarian aid. More specifically, the methods of medical treatment and investigation employed by humanitarian actors represent important instruments and tools that verify human rights abuses or massacres during complex emergencies. In this respect, the MSF uses a scientific medical method as a way to reinforce its role as a 'witness' (témoinage). According to Alison Marschner (1999), an interesting example can be seen in epidemiology, an area in which MSF has acquired much experience. By adapting its methods of epidemiological survey and analysis, MSF is now able to obtain quantitative information about human rights violations against populations in situations of violence.

Building on this, one can consider the medicalization of politics as a new repertoire of social action. Some of the theoreticians of *new* social movements, such as the French sociologist Alain Touraine (1984), pointed out the importance of the actors of the service sector (such as doctors, nurses, teachers, etc.) compared with the workers in the industrial production sector. The medical doctor is no longer a technical person who aids the sick by prescribing medicine, but is a kind of moral entrepreneur, whose conception of sickness constructs the social order and affects the lives of individuals. Normatively speaking, these entrepreneurs can play a positive or negative role.[37] While we find many examples in the European countries, it seems that the Palestinian medical NGOs have not as yet grasped the importance of this new repertoire.

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[37] The over-medicalization of a specific representation of a particular ailment by the medical doctor makes menopause, for instance, a state of illness. (Delanoe, 1998: 241)

Donor Health Policy in Palestine

Donor healthcare policies in Palestine generally focus on primary healthcare. Some assistance is channeled to secondary and tertiary care but this has generally been under resourced. It remains the case that individuals needing specialized treatment are often transferred to Israeli and Jordanian or other hospitals, and this is very costly for Palestinian society. One of the donor agendas for health in the third world focuses on one main aspect of primary healthcare: family planning. We will use this as an example to study how the agenda for developing countries is projected on the ground in the Palestinian case.

In the context of what some regard as a "too high" fertility rate in the Palestinian territories and with the highly political implications of Palestinian demography, some donors have chosen to prioritize and allocate funds to family planning delivery programs, with the help of international NGOs. Interestingly, the major organizations interested in family planning in Palestine are the American organizations: USAID, Care International, and the Population Council. While the American health agenda focuses on reproductive health, the European one is more diversified. The European Commission defines the area of cooperation as the following: action on raising awareness, information and prevention; development of public health services, particularly healthcare, primary health centers, maternal and child health care services; family planning; epidemiological supervision systems and measures to control communicable diseases; training of health and health-administration personnel; medical cooperation in the event of natural disasters.

This does not mean that all American or European organizations have the same agenda or a static one at that. For instance, MEAwards, a branch of the Population Council, was a pioneer in conducting research on reproductive health as a sub-set of population studies. In fact, MEAwards first initiated much of the work in the field of population studies that is defined narrowly as "fertility studies." Later the appropriate domain of fertility studies was extended to reproductive health. Recognizing the significance of such themes from the very start, MEAwards also incorporated these and other topics, such as migration and displacement, poverty and urbanization into its research agenda. It also sought to treat fertility and family planning issues in terms other than those of social engineering or purely technical terms (Shahinaz, 2000).

For the purposes of our research, the inquiry into family planning delivery programs in Palestine will focus on the USAID's new $36 million program for health called "Healthier Families." We will review the USAID health project, looking at both the design and implementation of the project and the role as well as the response of Palestinian NGOs during this process.

Many PNGOs leaders have critically assessed the purpose of the USAID health program in the Palestinian territories. The major point raised is that the program fragments health care in Palestine. More specifically, USAID is spending a huge amount of money, $36 million, for only one service, while in a 'normal country' the focal point of the healthcare system is the multi-functional clinic and hospital, in which all members of the family and all ages are served. Moreover, there is a consensus in Palestine that the primary healthcare system is well developed while secondary healthcare is in need of upgrading and enhancement. In this regard, the Palestinian Ministry of Health declared that it cost more than $500,000 monthly to send patients for secondary healthcare treatment abroad (*Al Quds*, March 2, 2000). Further to this, the ministry is also highly skeptical of the priority donors have placed on family planning programs and argues that this field is over-funded by the donors, and surpasses the absorption capacity of Palestinian society for programs. An actor in the health sector said, in the midst of the second Intifada, that "apparently the USA has two methods for controlling the Palestinian population: the Apache military planes and the family planning program." Certainly the fertility rate, according to the Palestinian Central Bureau for Statistics (PCBS), is high. Overall, the total fertility rate (the average number of children borne per woman under prevailing fertility conditions) is 5.93 for 1999.[38] Even if there is evidence that fertility has started to decline, at least in the West Bank, the family planning programs have their rationale, but the question concerns the methods persued.

Reproductive Health Agenda in Palestine

Freedman (1999a: 165-171) identifies three different paradigms for contraceptive delivery programs: demographic, biomedical and reproductive health. The first paradigm, shaped predominantly by demographers, is concerned in the first instance with population growth at the macro level. Little regard is given to the right of the individual woman to make her own decisions about reproduction and sexuality. Concerning the second paradigm, biomedical, in the late 1970s and throughout the 1980s – spurred in part by the need to find compelling reasons to promote the sale of contraceptive devices, demographers, epidemiologists, and health professionals began to demonstrate that birth spacing and reduced procreation are associated with immediate health benefits for the individual. Accompanying this, an important shift occurred from the neo-Malthusian approach (population control) to the quality approach

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[38] However, this figure masks the important difference between the TFRs of 7.41 in the Gaza Strip and 5.44 in the West Bank.

(population quality). Thus, family planning was incorporated into primary healthcare, child survival programs, and safe motherhood programs and affirmed as an essential component of each program. When family planning efforts are justified primarily as health programs, they are often understood as part of the biomedical model of health and attached to healthcare associated with conventional Western medicine.

In contrast to the demographic paradigm, the biomedical paradigm purports to privilege a woman's decision-making rights over her own body. However, when health is understood as a function of an individual's biological processes, as in this biomedical paradigm, the issue of contraceptive decision-making tends to be framed in terms of biological risks, which in turn are understood to be a function of an individual woman's physical characteristics. Moreover, once a biological risk is identified, the question of what value to attribute to that risk, in the context of contraceptive decision-making, is a judgment that cannot be detached from the wider circumstances of a woman's life. For example, childbearing is not simply a question of weighing biological risks and benefits; it is a complex social and economic undertaking that unavoidably affects multiple aspects of a woman's economic, social, and emotional life and the life of the family and community. In this respect, in the biomedical model the patient's behavior is considered in isolation from the broader social context.

Finally, the third paradigm is reproductive health. According to Freedman, reproductive health is defined as, "a condition in which the reproductive process is accomplished in a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and is not merely the absence of disease or disorders of the reproductive process" (1999a). Reproductive health, therefore, implies that people have the ability to reproduce, to regulate their fertility and to practice and enjoy sexual relationships. It further implies that reproduction is carried to a successful conclusion through infant and child survival, growth and healthy development. It finally implies that women proceed safely through the stages of pregnancy and childbirth, that fertility regulation can be achieved without health hazards and that people are safe in having sex.

With this wide definition, programs designed to promote reproductive health are based on an understanding of reproduction and sexuality both as a key to women's empowerment and as the site, historically, of women's vulnerability.

According to Freedman's perspective, reproductive health primarily focuses on the rights of women in the procreation process. While this is clearly warranted it also, however, suggests an eschewed perception of male-female dynamics and ignores the embeddedness of these actors within a larger social context. The idea underlying donor conceptions of family planning in Palestine is that somehow women do not have the

means or even the awareness to say no to childbirth or to adopt family planning. Associated with this, there is a dichotomous notion of the man as representing social pressures and forcing family development on the woman. Recognizing the merit of patriarchal arguments, and acknowledging that it may be true that women do not always have the means or the socially accepted room to reject, this dichotomy – of men pushing family development and women wanting to resist but not being able to do so – is problematic because it is reductionist. At the conceptual level, donors ignore the manner in which family planning is very much a 'family choice.' It might be more appropriate to complement an emphasis on a woman's right to decide, with a broader conception of family planning as concerning the couple as well. Family planning is a very complex decision or 'choice'; a choice highly embedded in, and constrained by, social structure and political factors like occupation, but also by the educational and occupational position of the couple.

Furthermore, these different paradigms of family planning delivery programs not only involve questions related to individual choice, but also have a bearing on the society's choices. Generally, health issues are conceptualized and presented as purely scientific matters in which there is only one possibility. International NGOs are fascinated by social engineering: in many areas of the world they impose certain types of healthcare, habitat, etc. For instance, some organizations impose on the assisted population to accept vaccinations before receiving food, which is what happened with Jehovah Witnesses in Malawi. Generally, it is evident that there is a contradiction between the assumption of social well-being and the application of family planning programs by international organizations. These organizations often do not adopt a perspective that looks at social structures and similar issues, but focus on narrow, one could argue irrelevant factors, such as the culture of personal perceptions.

Looking at the Palestinian context, and focusing specifically on whether family planning programs promote the right of the individual to 'choose,' one noteworthy observation emerges. Firstly, the issue of 'choice' covers a range of issues: from whether to use contraception and family planning techniques to what type of method to adopt. When one approaches family planning programs in this manner, one is faced with a paradox, centered around the issue of information and the extent to which access to information about these programs is made available to the local society, through various forms. Access to information not only provides local actors with the means through which to make an informed choice but also respects their right to do so.

The issue of access to information raises the associated query, what methods of communication are being utilized? There are very few efforts to raise awareness about reproductive health issues through the mass media (national radio and TV). The main mechanism used to distribute

information is the brochure, which addresses target groups in various areas. In a country like Syria, knowledge and information diffused by the mass media have a significant impact on the public, as Safouh Al Akhras, a Syrian sociologist, argues. Even in Palestine, one observes the centrality of the mass media in disseminating information, through examples such as the campaign against thalassemia. It is evident that campaigns that use radio and TV generate debates in the society. Two teachers reported to us that their pupils discussed and debated the campaign against thalassemia. In addition, in a radio program on thalassemia, the direct intervention of many listeners reveals the public's interest in this and similar health issues.

Finally, it is possible that the success of a family planning campaign may be related to its ability to generate public debate. Barrett and Frank (1999: 220) report that following the boom of world conferences covering the population issue in the 1980's and 1990's, campaigns flourished at the state or national level, usually driven by the state. In Palestine, pro-natalism has never been embedded in the national ideology; rather there is an absence of efforts to control population growth, buttressed by concerted opposition from both the mosques and the churches. Iran provides a revealing example; the country has surprised the world with a sharp decline in its fertility. According to surveys conducted by the Ministry of Health and Medical Education, the total fertility rate in Iran has dropped from 5.2 children in 1989 to 2.6 children in 1997. The success of reproductive health efforts in Iran stems from the integration of family planning with primary healthcare, through a process which involved many segments of society. It is interesting to mention that the religious leaders, for instance, were a part of this process. Typically, in their Friday sermons, the clerics called upon the followers to fulfill their social responsibility by seeking family planning services from government clinics and by having fewer children. Iran is the only country in the region that has a condom factory, which is governmentally approved and whose products explicitly involve men in family planning efforts (Roudi, 1999).

The major critique one can address against family planning delivery programs in Palestine concerns *the limited amount of knowledge and information made available to the general population* to enable individuals to make meaningful choices and implement decisions about their procreation. With a failure to utilize the mass media as a tool for building awareness, people become the instruments or tools of donor (and eventually local NGO) policies that deprive them of the requisite knowledge. Conceptions of reproductive health are usually presented in the language of statistics and science; this tends to disguise the human side of health. Trusting women means acknowledging their right to make decisions about reproduction and respecting their ability to do so. It also requires a commitment to ensuring that decision-making is based on full and appropriate access to information (Freedman, 1999a: 154).

While there is a near consensus in the social sciences that education and work opportunities for women constitute the main variables affecting fertility rates, donors still endorse a functionalist reading of culture (i.e., the culture is the cause of....) that *espouses an approach which overemphasizes culture as a determinant factor in propelling demographic growth rates*. (See the variation in the fertility rate according to PCBS) Specialists such as psychologist Sylvie Mansour and Rita Giacaman (Director of Public Health Institute at Birzeit University) affirm that in Palestine family planning is dominated by such an approach (see also Giacaman, 1997). Many international organizations have the perception that the Palestinian population disregards effective family planning methods. In contrast to this, recent Palestinian studies indicate an increase in the use of family planning services over time and that the cost of the service has not acted as an obstacle (Abdeen and Barghouthi, 1994). Dakkak (1997) emphasizes that it is not so much a question of 'technical' knowledge about family planning as the social situation of the family. On the other hand, Ismail and Shahin (1996) point out that most women have some knowledge about family planning methods, although some of the information available is of questionable value. Approximately 69.8 percent of their sample would like to postpone or stop childbearing.

The *accentuation of the role of culture* in determining fertility rates derives some of its force from the abstract notion of individualism. In fact, as Freedman argues, in human rights, health, as well as women issues, the underlying logic is that the individual must be empowered to make decisions about his/her life and well being. However, it is also critical to recognize that the decision to focus on individual behavior to the exclusion of other social determinants is a political and ideological choice. An individual's choices and behavior is embedded in a social structure and social conditioning. In contrast to this, however, there is an abstract vision of the individual as bearer of rights and agent who constructs their own behavior (1999b: 232). The neo-liberal notion of the actor as a free autonomous chooser does not necessarily provide freedom. Moreover, this vision presupposes that needs and interests have not been manipulated or imposed in some way, and constitute the citizen as a continuous consumer-style chooser. Furthermore, while this version treats people as consumers who make free choices in the marketplace, it generally ignores the role of economic interest for example pharmaceutical industries, agribusiness, etc., in the case of health.

Reproductive Health Projects in Palestine: The Case of USAID

USAID follows its own special procedures for conceiving and designing projects. The following points summarize these procedures as

they pertain to the USAID's "Healthier Families" project set up in the Palestinian territories:

- *Heavy Foreign Consultancy*: USAID sent in a team of experts to set up a program on health. These experts were contracted as short-term consultants. The first draft for the project was developed by the donor's team of experts and was discussed with USAID locally. This also resulted in a second draft.

- *Local Consultation*: USAID held a technical two-day workshop in Jericho, on March 8 and 9, 2000, to finalize plans for upgrading facilities and services in 27 health clinics in Jenin, Hebron and northern Gaza and to reformulate the second draft of the extension project. Those invited to the workshop included the Palestinian Ministry of Heath, PNGOs, INGOs, and members of the private sector in Jericho. Following this, USAID organized several meetings with existing and potential partners. Meetings were also held with other donors and INGOs working in the health sector (coordination council).

- *Conception of the Third Draft*: The USAID put the concept paper on the Internet and asked interested Palestinian or other organizations to comment on it and give their remarks.

- *Local Comments*: The Palestinian partners sent in their remarks.

Having briefly outlined the features of this process, a few observations are in order. Firstly, it is clear that it is the donor's team that developed the concept paper for the project, however, the consultations with local partners allow for local participation. Illustrating this, according to both USAID local staff members and Palestinian NGOs, the second draft was significantly modified to reflect NGO input; some of the changes included extending the number of beneficiaries, and expanding the target group beyond women in their fertile years. This notwithstanding, the third draft of the concept paper was not adjusted even though many criticisms were made against it by the PNGOs. In this regard, from the perspective of the local NGOs, in spite of the democratic semblance of the process the actual changes made to reflect their input were minor. In this sense, for the Palestinian partners the consultation process is more cosmetic than an opportunity for local NGOs to incorporate their voice into the project. Further to this, many PNGOs criticized the project for the disproportionate emphasis on the reproductive health component.

The discrepancy between the discourses of actors on both sides, USAID and the PNGOs, is very clear: for the donor agency responsible

for this project, a real attempt was made to establish a consultative process, and indeed the project was modified significantly from the initial inception to the second draft. In fact, USAID did adjust its normal procedures in designing this project: this is the first time that USAID accepted to work not only with clinics but also with hospitals. Another inconsistency between donor and NGO discourses pertains to the choice of locations for the implementation of the project. One interlocutor from a PNGO criticized the choice of locations, charging that USAID purposely excluded Zone C which remains under Israeli responsibility.[39]

Another interlocutor criticized the entire process: "American projects come from America pre-defined. They make cosmetic changes and re-design things; meetings and workshops are held to show 'consultation' has taken place. But in reality the project comes almost ready, with the concept paper, objectives, etc. Then 'negotiations' take place. ... As a whole American-designed projects change only slightly. The next program we did not enter, we told them they cannot present a project and just ask for our comments. They should ask us to define the project.... In the second phase after the pilot project, they put the project on the internet for comments. They asked for comments in order to consider changes if necessary. But in reality it should be noted that this airing of the project on the internet for a limited time with the possibility for one to give his input, was not known by the PNGOs. We were the only NGO that knew this was going on. They did not announce it. This is when we made the meeting with USAID and PNGOs and PNA. Unfortunately they admitted to us that there are *limits* to the changes they can make: some things must come from Washington as they are. We decided to re-enter the project to change the geographic priorities. Now the program continues and will be implemented with others, not by us. The danger is we feel USAID has its own agenda..."

Moreover, as some organizations point out, USAID's scientific conceptualization of healthcare does not take into account basic aspects of daily life that affect the healthcare system. Here one is referring to transportation and whether the location of the project reflects accessibility and the ability of individuals to travel to the clinic. CARE International conceded that they threatened to withdraw from the health project unless USAID adjusted the design to take this factor into account. CARE explained to USAID, over a two-month period, that the donor had neglected to consider the relationship between the location of a clinic and people's accessibility to the locality. According to CARE, USAID's selection of locations was guided by faulty assumptions insofar as the

[39] An NGO leader notes: "They focus on areas like Jenin. Why? It is politics; they avoid areas where Israel is still unclear about their future. USAID avoids community development in Area C and where Israel may want to retain control. This way people will want Israeli control for the plain fact that it will bring them services."

locations chosen by the agency neglect that it is easier for people to travel to Jenin than to the nearby village because there is no transportation between villages. When questioned about this, a USAID officer categorically denied CARE's allegations and declared that the choice of locations was based on the World Bank report on poverty. In this sense, however, choices are also guided by scientific criteria.

Beyond the respective discourse of each side, overall it is evident that the thrust of USAID's health project for Palestinian families, launched in 1999, is reproductive health and family planning. Taking into account the input mechanisms available to NGOs in the design of the project, outlined above, this appears as an example of the type of limits placed on NGOs by donors in agenda setting and the donor role in defining the boundaries of the negotiating space. Denied the right to redirect how money is being spent in a sector, what should PNGOs in the health sector do? They can 'exit' and disengage from the entire relationship, exercising their agency, but the larger question is how to stop a policy that is recognized by many local organizations as undesirable, to say the least, and unwanted? Through sub-contracting arrangements donors such as USAID can continue with the project and its top-down approach. For the Palestinian NGOs, this type of experience reflects the donor capacity to intrude and force policies such as family planning, which in turn may disguise an attempt to promote population control.

Overall, it is apparent that there is not only poor communication between USAID and Palestinian NGOs, but the space for negotiations is limited. There are obvious limits on what the local organizations are able to alter; the conception paper of the project and the broader conception of programs as well as identified priorities cannot be easily changed by NGOs. In reviewing the concept paper for the Healthier Families project, one can see an inconsistency in the project conception. While the title indicates an interest in improving the well-being of every member of the family (Healthier Families), the actual objectives focus explicitly on reproductive health. In addition, the project components at the level of the Process (Output-Level) Outcomes, Intermediate Results (IR), and Impact (SO-Level) Outcomes, all demonstrate a quasi-exclusive focus on reproductive health in its traditional sense. Thus USAID's priority on reproductive health is extended through and couched in language about the family and broader social well being.

The PNGOs that were involved in the pilot phase of this project considered that the emphasis on reproductive health was unnecessary since a significant amount of funds had been spent in this area over the last few years; in their view, USAID should change its area of intervention. These organizations, along with the Ministry of Health, held a meeting with USAID during the second phase of the pilot project to send them a message to change their policy on reproductive health. USAID responded

that there were limits to what can be changed, since some decisions came directly from Washington. Thus, despite the coordinated PNGO opposition, USAID's priorities remained unaltered. Some of the main local actors that had previously supported family planning programs in Palestine are skeptical about its importance today. An officer from the Palestinian Red Crescent pointed out that: "We are in favor of family planning but against the conception of population control. This is a political issue: the demographic factor is a political issue. Maybe now (during the Second Intifada) it is better to have a high rate of fertility…. At the same time, I no longer understand the priority placed on family planning: the fertility rate has dropped very quickly in Palestine. In Ramallah it dropped from 6.4 in 1993 to 5.2 in 2000; in all of the West Bank it dropped to 5.6. I think that poverty and the lack of education are the main factors affecting fertility rates. The Palestinians do not lack knowledge about contraception methods."

Finally, the weak negotiations exhibited by the PNGOs in their attempt to engage USAID is also a byproduct of the fragmentation of the NGO sphere in Palestine, a matter that will be closely examined in the next chapter.

The Absence of a Universal Healt Insurance Policy

Since the issue of sustainability is of vital significance for a healthcare system, we have chosen to focus on health insurance as it pertains to the Palestinian NGOs in the health sector.

In a 1987 report, the World Bank health policies were summarized as follows: 1- charge user fees for government health services; 2- provide insurance and other risk coverage; 3- use the NGOs effectively; 4- decentralize government services (Terris, 1992). Of course, in practice, the World Bank's policies will vary according to the context; for example, in Egypt both the World Bank and USAID have promoted health reform in a manner that increases the state's control over this sector (Chifellow, 2001). Chifellow underscores the politics underlying the health reform initiated by the World Bank, showing that the Bank minimized cooperation with, and therefore the inclusion of NGOs in the reform process because it views them as inefficient. Moreover, the health reforms in Egypt were conducted through the input and involvement of the state and the private sector. In Palestine, the donors still privilege PNGOs as these organizations are not only well established but are often highly effective and experienced service providers.

This notwithstanding, when one looks at the policies in the health sector in Palestine, it seems that in the meeting of global, international standards, and the emerging health system in Palestine, something has

gone amiss: in particular, the issue of sustainability is not receiving proper attention. This reflects an ambiguity in the vision of reforms promoted by the global agenda. In France the system of health insurance is constructed in such a way that the individual contributes to the system based on his or her own means, and taxes cover the remaining costs, while the challenge in the Palestinian context is greater. Hamdan and Al-Botmeh (1997) discussed the strengths and weaknesses of the current insurance system in Palestine. They concluded that "establishing a universal health insurance system in the West Bank and Gaza Strip is a challenging task because of the high start-up costs and the difficulty of collecting contributions from the unemployed and workers in the informal sector." But what sort of system will ensure sustainability and universal access to health in the Palestinian context?

As mentioned in the beginning of this chapter, the PNGOs are major health service providers. Given that the PNGOs are central actors in this sector, why have they not addressed the issue of health insurance?[40]

We asked one of the health organizations about their position on insurance, if it constitutes a priority and if they are advocating for the adoption of a unified insurance program for the emerging healthcare system. A leader of a prominent health NGO revealed by his answer that this issue is not really on the NGO's agenda, although he expressed his trepidation about the emerging health system and acknowledged the role of insurance in securing its sustainability: "We have two activities through which we work on this issue. First we worked with the PNGO Network on the insurance law. The role of health bodies and the rights of citizens need to be spelled out clearly. The law has been approved in its second reading. Second, we have had a dialogue with the Ministry of Health, together with insurance representatives and NGOs to try reformulating the insurance systems. Thus we are pushing for insurance systems via these two ways. Two points need to be stated: firstly, we need an independent insurance body. Secondly, the ministry's budget must remain under its own control and not under that of the Ministry of Finance, in order to avoid unnecessary loss of funds."

This stand of this important NGO on insurance and its attempts (albeit weak) to advance a unified insurance system can be discussed in terms of the paradox NGOs face, that is, how to avoid having their advocacy role

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[40] According to Hamdan and Al-Botmeh (1997), health insurance covered 12-17% people in 1994 and now covers 55-60%, but still there are problems. Part of the increase in coverage is due to automatic benefits for PA and public sector employees. Another part of the rise in coverage is due to social cases, i.e., prisoners and the poor (account for 30% of the rise). The MoH has a deficit of $65 million and this will grow. One issue is that the budget of Ministry of Health (MoH) continues to be controlled by the Ministry of Finance (MoF). The MoH receives funds yearly but this goes to the MoF and is distributed by them. (Interview with MoH official). There is an insurance system, which covers a good percentage of people but this system, according to many interviewees, is totally dysfunctional. Many reports that people who suffer from serious illnesses are overlooked by the hospitals and the doctors assigned by the insurance system.

blunted in the face of a neo-liberal agenda which incorporates them into a state system of service provision. In one respect, this example is a case of the problematic "co-optation or irrelevance" as outlined by Jenny Pearce (1997).

This question of neo-liberal paradox is problematic in Palestine since it takes on a different dimension because of the tensions between the PNGOs and PNA. The PNGOs want the role of service providers as in the neo-liberal model. But at the same time they shrug off the responsibility of advocacy for social justice issues because they view themselves as quasi-state actors, given their long history and experience as the sole Palestinian service providers prior to the PNA.

Another possibility is that the PNGOs suffer from the same neo-liberal paradox identified in the literature, and they cannot effectively negotiate their role as service providers with their role as advocacy organizations. Here one can ask, can the NGOs be outsiders and insiders of a system at the same time and effectively lobby for social issues? For Ian Smillie what appears as co-optation is the beginning of real influence for NGOs if they can find a way to use their strategic position as service providers to lobby effectively.

Conclusion: The Choice of 'Exit' by the Health NGOs

In this conclusion we will briefly review three relevant issues related to the problematic of this book: the choice of exit by the health actors, the interests of these actors, and finally the problem of the dissociation between the regulation of the quality of healthcare service, financing and the delivery of services.

It is clear that in the absence of an integrated national population and health policy, some of the burden for promoting the integrity of the healthcare system falls on the shoulders of the health NGOs. However, these organizations and especially the largest ones have chosen to exit, as per the Hirschman model, leaving the PNA with the responsibility to design and to implement the insurance plan.

In the case of the USAID project, some PNGOs also chose the exit option, but here they have exercised a different form of exit: they have chosen to either exit from the *project*, or exit from directly challenging the *donor's agenda* and remain a part of the project. For some interlocutors the latter form of exit enables them to negotiate with their international partners over the long-term, because according to these NGOs a strong campaign critiquing the donor will exclude them from the game. Thus they prefer to pursue reforms from within.

States generally explain or justify the manipulation of family planning information by reference to two goals. First, the enforcement of demographic targets (both anti-natal and pro-natalist) and, second, the enforcement of moral codes concerning sexuality and the 'proper' role

of women in society. However, analysts usually neglect the importance of organizational factors such as the actor's interests, even state officials' interests. In Syria, many initiatives on family planning were proposed by UN and international organizations. Syrian sociologist Safouh Al Akhras noted that the low fertility rate in Syria of 2.1 does not justify such programs. His opinion was supported by a French study conducted by a French population institute (INED) on fertility rates in Middle Eastern countries, which illustrated the dramatic drop in fertility rates in countries such as Syria and Algeria. When Al Akhras inquired why the international organizations were convinced that family planning programs were necessary in Syria, he found that executive officers in the Syrian Central Bureau of Statistics played a major role in convincing the organizations of this need because they were already employed in working in this field as consultants with high wages.

The changing system of delivering healthcare and the implications of this for the average citizen is a theoretical issue, not limited to Palestine but applicable to most developing countries. Green and Mathias argue that the donor policy agenda in health is to realize a splitting or separation of critical components of the health system. The consequence of this is that the main functions become disconnected: the regulation of the type of quality of service, the delivery of service, and finance. Furthermore, this represents a move away from the state assuming sole responsibility and toward the involvement of NGOs and the private sector, thus realizing a "Purchaser-Provider Split" (1997).

Green and Mathias' observation supports what others have argued. For instance, Wood posits that franchising out the responsibilities of the state to NGOs disturbs the public's recourse for services by separating the task of defining entitlements from implementing them: "This separation enables responsibility for policy to be side stepped by focusing accountability upon 'implementation.' In this way the meaning of participation is restricted to the management of outcomes. Citizens become *consumers* though often without meaningful access to a choice of suppliers" (Wood, 1997:85).

These authors highlight the issue of what recourse do citizens have to express dissatisfaction with the quality of healthcare, or to express dissatisfaction with service provision when the responsibility for public goods is divided up between different actors? Who determines the policies? Who looks after citizens' interests?

The splitting of health care services described in the literature is clearly a significant factor in Palestine and is affecting the emerging nature of the national health system. It may be that the separation between these essential components, especially the separation of financing the health system, has made crucial questions such as insurance, which is an important aspect of finance and of securing sustainability and equal access for all citizens, easily missed.

3.4. Human Rights Agenda in the Palestinian Territories: A Model of 'Voice' and Resistance

> "If people are not aware of the historical and contextual nature of human rights and are not aware that human rights become realized only by the struggles of real people experiencing real instances of domination, then human rights are all too easily used as symbolic legitimizers for instruments of that very domination."

> (Belden, 1992; cited by Stammers, 1999:980)

> "For the historically disempowered, the conferring of rights is symbolic of all the denied aspects of self and others, that elevates one's status from the human body to social being. For the blacks, then, the attainment of rights signifies the respectful behavior, the collective responsibility, properly owned by a society to one of its own."

> (Williams, 1991:153)

Introduction

The following case study on human rights NGOs in Palestine is relevant in light of two separate debates, each of which directly touches on the work of human rights groups. The first, set within emerging PNA-PNGO relations, concerns the charges animated by the PNA, especially pertaining to human rights groups that seek to de-legitimize the PNGOs because of their ties to "foreign" groups. While the PNA claims that Palestinian human rights organizations are extremely over funded, the Welfare survey (1995-1999) reports that only 5.5% of the total funding ($13 million annually) went to this sector (Hanafi, 1999). The second issue is set within recent scholarly debates that criticize and question the relevance of training programs and the awareness campaigns around democracy and human rights issues.

Following the third 'wave' of democratization, international donors' interest in supporting democracy has surged. The Development Assistance Committees (DAC) of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) adopted a consensus statement outlining donors' support for democratization in 1993. Similarly in the Bush era of the early 1990's, the 'democratic pluralism initiative,' one of USAID's four agenda points (USAID, 1991), reiterated US support for democratic political reforms. At the academic level, there has also been a mushrooming interest

in democratization, but the analysis produced has been mostly theoretical. Very little effort has been made thus far to connect the realms of theory and practice by constructing what has been called 'applied democracy theory' (Blair, 1997:23).

This research thus questions the positivism of the human rights global agenda and how the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as well as other international laws are applied according to political, cultural and social sensitivity of the international NGOs actors. Then we will see the implications of this agenda for the Palestinian one and how this agenda is interpreted on the ground by the Palestinian organizations. Two characteristics of the global agenda will be pointed out: its politicization, despite its deployment of legal-bureaucratic language, and its disregard for collective rights. The interpretation is highly subtle since these organizations have understood the politicization of international organizations and then *resisted* the semblance of the legal-bureaucratic discourse.

Human Rights Global Agenda

International human rights law emerged in the aftermath of World War II. The barbarity of the war elicited the recognition that human rights must be set within a universal frame of reference and should not be left solely to the protection of domestic legal systems.

Over the years, a comprehensive system of covenants, conventions, declarations and other international instruments were enacted to defend human rights. Through these treaties, states assume obligations vis-à-vis other states to respect and ensure human rights. The enforcement mechanisms include special committees established by treaties to address particular sets of rights, and international courts with jurisdiction to issue verdicts in certain cases of human rights violations. Such courts operate both at the international level (when dealing with international instruments) and in regional systems. In America, Europe and Africa, regional international organizations have established regional systems with the aim of defending and enforcing human rights. Within these regional systems, declarations and conventions were drafted and signed, and enforcement mechanisms implemented, some parallel to those of the UN. A unique feature of some of the regional courts is that individuals, and not only states, can appeal against state violations of human rights.

Within the international human rights system, the state is the primary address to direct demands to respect human rights. The state holds the primary power to deny or violate rights, on the one hand, or to enforce the enjoyment of rights through its police, armed forces, and courts, on the other hand. Therefore, human rights are viewed primarily as state violations as opposed to violations by private individuals.

Human rights are conventionally approached as a formal body of law, codified in treaties, conventions, and covenants. This body of law was first articulated in its contemporary form in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which was adopted by the UN in 1948. The declaration deals with all forms of human rights: civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights. Following the first few years of its founding, the focus was on civic and political rights (including life, liberty, security for persons, freedom of movement, and the right not to be subject to torture or to cruel or inhumane treatment, or arbitrary arrest and detention). But since the 1980's, the agenda has been expanded to include social and cultural rights (right to health, to work, to social security, to adequate food, to clothing and housing, to education). Today, one observes the beginning of a 'third generation' of rights, known as solidarity rights. These rights, which have not yet been formally recognized at the international level as legally enforceable, urge solidarity with the less privileged in order to rectify the unequal distribution of resources and to prevent as well as respond to human suffering. This category of rights includes the right to development, to proper environment and even to peace (Bagnoud et al., 1999: 25; Azzam, 1995). While the different categories of rights emerged successively in a historical sequence, *the problem of rights is often posed in international discourses as a series of oppositional dichotomies: universalism vs. cultural relativism; individual vs. collective; civil and political rights vs., economic social and cultural rights; North vs. South.*

Concerning the dichotomy between *individual and collective rights*, the body of formal human rights law deals primarily with the relationship between individual citizens and their governments. Its initial doctrinal inspiration is the concept of civil liberties founded, as Freedman argues, in the Western legal system, which, in turn, is derived largely from liberal political and economic theory. This theory in its classical formulations embraces an *ideology of individualism* that has been the lightning rod for much of the criticism of rights discourse. By privileging political and civil rights over other rights, its conception is closely associated with the theory and operation of a capitalist free market economic system: liberal individualism views people abstractly, as self-made, self-contained, separate individuals, isolated from others, pitted against the collective, pursing their economic self-interest without a reliance on the state (1999b: 236).

The dichotomy *universalism vs. cultural relativism* raises other relevant issues. The global agenda on human rights presents itself as universalistic, timeless truths blurring the social and political construction of this agenda. As Neil Stammers points out, in the global agenda human rights are portrayed in metaphysical terms, as abstract natural rights; this obfuscates the initial liberal formulations and allows for the appeal to universality. Moreover, the international human rights agenda is also shaped by *legal positivism*, which emphasizes legal codes, thus rendering non-legal forms of

human rights claims lacking in analytical import. In other words, it focus on the 'ends' of the trajectory of claims for human rights, the enforceable legal mechanisms, without considering the 'means,' that is the relevance, context, and origins of such claims in their non-legal forms (Stammers, 1999: 989-90).

International human rights law is indeed a part of a professionalized field regulated by its own legal language, but its application is embedded in broader political and social structures, and undoubtedly the field is also shaped by the human rights actors themselves. In this section we will deconstruct two dichotomies. The first is about *universalism versus cultural relativism*. We will see that universalism has a positivist discourse with a legal-juridical-bureaucratic standard which hides the *political sensibility of groups of interests behind the international organizations*. While what is called cultural relativism has very little to do with the cultural and is also related more to the political and social interests of the local human rights actors and their organizations. The second dichotomy concerns *individual rights versus collective rights* and the predominance of the first at the expense of the latter. In reviewing these dichotomies of the global human rights agenda, we will use the examples of the largest two human rights organizations: a membership organization, Amnesty International, and a non-membership organization, Human Rights Watch. (See Table 9 for a contrast of their characteristics.)

Historicizing and Contextualizing the Human Rights Agenda: Positivism But Also High Politicization

International human rights organizations represent human rights as a civilizational achievement that becomes universalistic and self-evident. Many authors have examined the religious, cultural and political nature of the debate that preceded the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Non-provable statements underpin the legitimacy and the rise of human rights from an idea initially developed, voted upon and adopted by the nations of the world, to its incorporation into the domain of international law. What has accompanied this ascent, however, has been a disregard for the interests of and the impact on social and political groups that interpret these rights. In addition, some critics point to an *inconsistency* in the calls of Western states for the protection of individual human rights: while some Southern countries are chastised others are only softly reproached. Moreover, while the debate over the universality of human rights versus cultural relativism has received scholarly attention and spilled over into many countries in the South, this issue has not received much attention among Palestinian human rights groups. This reflects that the Palestinian human rights organizations did not perceive an important

difference in human rights culture between the Western conception and the Arab and Palestinian conception.

Before continuing, let us define international human rights organizations as organizations that use legal-juridical standards for analyzing human rights conditions throughout the world. As will be illustrated below, the application of these standards is often influenced by political considerations and the constellation of forces inside of the organization. This means that the debate inside of international human rights organizations is not only academic or technical but also political.

The Case of Amnesty International

Amnesty International is a worldwide movement that campaigns for and works to promote human rights as enshrined in the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* and similar international standards. In particular, Amnesty International campaigns to free all prisoners of conscience; to ensure fair and prompt trials for political prisoners; to abolish the death penalty, torture and other cruel treatment of prisoners; and to end political killings and disappearances. It also pays attention to human rights abuses perpetuated by opposition groups. Amnesty International has around one million members and supporters in 162 countries. Activities range from public demonstrations to letter-writing campaigns; from human rights education to fundraising concerts; from individual appeals on a particular case to global campaigns on a particular issue. The organization is mainly financed by subscriptions and donations from its worldwide membership.

With regard to Arab countries, the role that Amnesty International is playing is invaluable. It is held as a credible institution by Western public opinion and states which in turn influences the Southern countries and makes it important, especially because of its use of the mass media to expose human rights violations. However, Amnesty's campaigns focus on some areas and disregard others, according to the political, social and cultural sensibility of the interest groups that Amnesty represents, and this cannot be explained only by its positivist and legalist basis. Many examples demonstrate that: gay rights were neglected by Amnesty for a long time because of conservative groups; there was lack of attention to Iraqi victims of the embargo; the slow delivery of information about the Rwandan genocide and other examples. We will demonstrate how decision making concerning the Palestinian territories was taken inside of Amnesty.

The case of Amnesty International is an interesting example of a human rights organization that has neglected the root cause of the violation of human rights of a collective nature in a colonized country. Its politicized position has evolved over time, but one notes a consistency in its leaning towards a focus on violations of individual human rights. A review of some

of Amnesty's publications on Israel and the Palestinian Territories will illuminate these points.

One of Amnesty's first publications, investigating Israeli violations of Palestinian human rights, is dated 1980 and follows an Amnesty mission to Israel. This document is quite revealing regarding a number of points. Firstly, the report barely mentions that the Palestinians live on land that is in fact occupied territories. Secondly, all of the Palestinians, including those in the West Bank and Gaza, are referred to as the Arabs in Israel. It reports on the West Bank as the occidental bank (*"la rive occidental"*). Further more, Jerusalem is portrayed as being an integral part of Israel although this city is recognized internationally as being occupied by Israel.

The second published report is dated 1991. In this publication, we find recommendations that apply to a 'normal' state and not an occupying power. For instance, there is no mention of the Israeli obligation to respect the Fourth Geneva Convention. In the introduction, the Amnesty report notes: "Amnesty International recognizes the context in which the Israeli authority confronts since many years. Since the launching of the Intifada, the Palestinians of the West Bank and Gaza have committed numerous forms of protest against the Israeli occupation, (...) many Israelis, civilian and military, were wounded and some were killed. Tens of Palestinians were killed, *apparently by other Palestinians.* Almost all of the time those killed people were suspected collaborators with the Israeli authority. In this context, Amnesty International considers that by controlling the situation in the Occupied territories, the Israeli authorities close their eyes to the violations of human rights committed by the military and maybe even encourage it" (translated from French and emphasis ours) (1991: 14). It is ironic that Amnesty International would represent the context of the Palestinian uprising during the first Intifada against Israeli military rule in such a manner. *The organization's discourse suggests that responsibility is shared by both parties, neglecting the occupied-occupier power equation.*

Over time, Amnesty's discourse has changed; the bias has lessened and the organization has become more critical of Israel but always without addressing the root cause of violence such as settlements and occupation. For example, Claudio Cordone, the head of an Amnesty International delegation visiting Israel and the Palestinian territories during the current Intifada, declared: "Human life is being cheapened by a mindset which seems to regard the killing of more than 130 Palestinians, including nearly 40 children, and the killing of two detained Israeli soldiers as an unavoidable and acceptable consequence of the current crisis.... Unlawful killings from excessive use of lethal force have been the result of the Israeli use of military methods to respond to riots and demonstrations since 29 September 2000. The current policy of not investigating such deaths should be ended."

However, one can still find a bias: first, the notion of parity between Israel and the Palestinians remains evident in many of their reports: "The

current lack of investigations by either side makes it virtually impossible to hold anyone accountable for killings resulting from violations of human rights standards."

One cannot understand the evolution of an organization like Amnesty International without moving beyond the institutional approach to understand the internal dynamics, and the role of the actors inside the organization.

Amnesty International is a membership organization with a very important constituency of over a million adherents. It is composed of national branches that are served by an International Secretariat in London. The final decision-making powers in policy matters rest with the International Council Meeting, in which all national sections are represented; a meeting takes place every two years. The Council elects an International Executive Committee, which has final responsibility in the periods between Council meetings.

This means that in theory a procedure exists within the organization to deal with conflicts arising between its local and international levels. The membership structure is such that all the national branches have at least one representative in the International Council. However, branches receive additional representatives in proportion to the number of Amnesty groups or individual members in their country. Thus the larger the branch, such as those of the United States, the United Kingdom, Sweden, France, Germany, and the Netherlands, the more representatives it is entitled to, which may add up to as many as six votes per national delegation (Baer, 2000: 10). The Western branches of the organization invariably dominate in terms of their representation, and this imposes certain politics on the organization and its decision-making processes. This is evidenced in Amnesty's policies vis-à-vis the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian Territories, and was especially obvious during the time of the cold war, where the dissidents in the former Soviet Union and Central Europe, who had a pro-Israeli sensibility, formulated shy criticism vis-à-vis Israel.

Moreover, the operational director also plays a central role inside an organization like Amnesty. When the activist Elizabeth Hodgkins, who had been on many missions over the years to and from the Palestinian territories, became a key person in Amnesty's Middle East Desk, the organization become more sensitive to the problem of the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territories. Some of Al Haq's former activists have also moved to Amnesty International, such as Mervat Rishmawi.

It was only in the 1980's that the Arabs, and mainly the diaspora in Europe from North Africa, began to influence Amnesty's policies on Israeli human rights violations. For instance, at the annual meeting of the Amnesty chapter in the USA, some Arab members discussed the necessity to denounce the effect of the embargo on the Iraqi population. However, their influence remained minimal as their numbers were small. The director

of Amnesty International in Morocco informed us during an interview that the majority of Arab human rights organizations do not yet have their own human rights discourse. Moreover, being Arab does not mean that one necessarily lobbies for more sensibility to Arab issues. The last head of Amnesty International's Executive Committee was of Tunisian origin but his views and positions reflected French sensibilities, according to some interviewees.

Finally, 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 subjectivity of actors inside of any institution, another representative of Amnesty's Brussels office at the Stuttgart Conference in 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.

Overall, up to now there is no correlation between the tentative suggestion that Amnesty International will become more 'multicultural,' to reflect the diversity of its branches and their constituencies and the organization's current practices. 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. Will the nomination of the new Amnesty Secretary General Irene Khan, a woman from the South, from Bangladesh, who is specialized in refugee issues, reinforce the organization's interest for the refugee issue as a human rights problem or address it?

The Case of Human Rights Watch

Human Rights Watch (HRW) is another example which confirms our analysis of the combination between positivism and the highly politicized agenda of international human rights organizations. This organization is an independent, non-governmental organization, supported by contributions from private individuals and foundations worldwide; it does not accept government funds, directly or indirectly. It is the largest human rights organization based in the United States. Human Rights Watch represents itself as the following: "The HRW researchers conduct fact-finding investigations into human rights abuses in all regions of the world. It then publishes those findings in dozens of books and reports every year, generating coverage in local and international media. This publicity helps to

embarrass abusive governments in the eyes of their citizens and the world. It then meets with government officials to urge changes in policy and practice – at the United Nations, the European Union, in Washington and in capitals around the world. In extreme circumstances, Human Rights Watch presses for the withdrawal of military and economic support from governments that egregiously violate the rights of their people. In moments of crisis, Human Rights Watch provides up-to-the-minute information about conflicts while they are underway. Refugee accounts, which were collected, synthesized and cross-corroborated by our researchers, helped shape the response of the international community to recent wars in Kosovo and Chechnya". (www.hrw.org)

In contrast to Amnesty International, HRW is not a membership organization.[41] Its board plays a central role in the decision-making process. Recently, one observes the organization has evolved in a positive manner and there is more of a consistency in its reports and press releases on Palestinian human rights. This may reflect centralization of their work in the headquarters, allowing for more influence of its legal advisors. A former officer at Human Rights Watch also explained to us that recently the organization has undergone a change: previously the board was dominated by a pro-Israeli lobby, but this is no longer the case.

To take an example, the Special Rapporteur on Violations of Human Rights to the Occupied Arab Territories visited the Palestinian Territories in the beginning of 1999 and delivered a report, much criticized by Al-Haq in a press release (Al Haq, 8 March 1999):

"Mr. Halinen's report on 'the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967' was marked in 1999, as in previous years, by a familiar pattern both in terms of the human rights abuses detailed and the political posturing surrounding the mandate in force since 1993. (...) the report included notable attempts to appease Israeli government criticism (Mr. Halinen reiterated frequently that his concerns 'should ... not be read as accusatory') and to redress the anachronistic focus of the mandate by offering a painstakingly evenhanded critique of, and advice to the Palestinian National Authority. While acknowledging the imperfect track record of the Palestinian National Authority regarding human rights violations, Al-Haq maintains that the ultimate responsibility to ensure respect for human rights in the Occupied Territories falls on the Israeli government as an occupying power. This drawback highlights the difficulties facing those who Mr. Halinen exhorted to work to realize the articles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in areas such as the Palestinian Occupied territories today, fifty years since its promulgation."

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[41] The Human Rights Watch Council is a membership body but they do not play a role in the decision making which remain in the hands of the chosen board.

Table 9: Comparison between Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch

	Amnesty International	Human Rights Watch
Range	International	International but with major American impact
Type	Membership organization	Board organizations
Decision making	By representatives of the members	Chosen board
Type of intervention	Focus on individual cases and principled position	Give policy advice for the governments and concerned people in the international community
Development of the organization's policies	By the annual congress of representatives of country general assembly	Annual Board meeting and evaluation every three years
Date of first position taken vis-à-vis the Palestinian right of return	March 2001	December 2000
Position vis-à-vis the right of return	Policy paper approving the right of return only for exiled Palestinians who can prove a genuine link to Israel or the Palestinian Territories. It also claims the right of return for a Jew who has fled from an Arab country. No reference to UN resolution 194.	Policy paper approving the right of return for a Palestinian exile. The director accepted this paper with the condition that the reference to UN resolution 194 be omitted.
Position vis-à-vis the settlements	No statement until now	There was an internal discussion without the ability to elaborate a statement
Reference to the collective rights of the Palestinians and reference to international humanitarian law	No reference	No reference

Individual Rights at the Expense of the Collective

Human rights are not only comprised of individual rights but include collective ones as well. In particular, collective rights are enshrined in social and economic rights but also the right of a people to self-determination. In the Palestinian case, the Fourth Geneva Convention, as part of a broader family of international humanitarian law, is very important for framing and governing the relationship between the Palestinian population and Israel. As Gasser (1998) outlined, the goals of human rights law and humanitarian law overlap. Both of these sets of laws are designed to restrict the power of the state authorities, with a view to safeguarding the fundamental rights of the individual. Human rights treaties (supported by customary law) achieve this objective in a comprehensive way insofar as they cover almost all aspects of life. Their rules must be applied to all persons and be respected in all circumstances.

Humanitarian law, however, applies only in times of *armed conflict*. Its provisions are formulated in such a way as to take into account the special circumstances of warfare. They may not be abrogated under any circumstance. Usually they apply "'across the front line' (...). In internal armed conflicts, however, human rights law and international humanitarian law apply concurrently" (Gasser, 1998: 7). In other words, humanitarian law is a specialized body of human rights law, fine-tuned for times of armed conflict. Thus there seems to be no substantial reason preventing human rights organizations from considering international humanitarian law when tackling violations of the human rights. Moreover, 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.

Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch do not generally make references to humanitarian law. Concerning HRW, it is an example of an organization which compiles excellent reports of Israeli actions in the Palestinian territories but views them as violations of human rights laws and not as violations of international humanitarian law. Further to this, the organization rarely uses the word 'occupying forces' and never calls upon Israel to abide by its legal obligations and its responsibilities under the Fourth Geneva Convention. In this manner, Human Rights Watch pretends that it is better for the Palestinian cause that Israeli acts are criticized in the human rights arena, rather than in the humanitarian arena. In fact, according to our interview with a member of this organization, the Israeli lobby inside of the organization refuses to use international humanitarian law as a reference to condemn Israel. For instance, the report

on the right of return for the Palestinians was accepted by the director of HRW with the condition that the reference to UN resolution 194 be omitted.

It is important to note that the question of Palestinian refugees and their *right of return* remains unaddressed properly for these international human rights organizations. The Awda network, a group of Palestinian diaspora activists and supporters of the Palestinian cause, is trying to lobby Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International to take a position in favor of the right of return for the Palestinian refugees. This reflects a rare case in which a Southern network undertakes to change policies of Northern organizations.

Considering both of the examples presented above it is evident that the major discursive trend among international human rights organizations is an *overriding liberal mainstream*. Human rights orthodoxy, using *legal-juridical-bureaucratic standards* which privilege individual civil and political rights, usually leaves aside collective rights. However, as we have indicated, in practice the positions adopted by these organizations oscillate between positivism and politicization. These positions are influenced at the same time by the actor's subjectivity inside the organizations as well as by interest groups.

Finally, one should be aware that the human rights global agenda cannot be reduced to the agenda of only these two international organizations. The International Federation of Human Rights (FIDH) as well as the World Organization Against Torture (OMCT) has more sensitivity to the impact of the occupation on the collective and individual violations of human rights. They have a clear position vis-à-vis settlements and colonial practices in many places in the world including the Palestinian Territories.

For some of the international human rights organizations, the second intifada was also a moment that induced reflection over their own silence vis-à-vis the occupation practices. One of the most important declarations was made by the head of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) delegation in Israel and the Palestinian Territories, René Kosirnik. He announced that the Israeli settlements constitute a violation of humanitarian law under the Geneva Conventions, the treaty intended to protect civilians in times of conflict: "The installation of a population of the occupying power in occupied territory is considered an illegal move; it is a grave breach [of law]. (...) In principle, it is a war crime." Israeli Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Yaffa Ben-Ari said the Israeli government was dismayed by Kosirnik's comment, and considered it a political statement that violates the neutrality of the ICRC. However, Kosirnik affirmed that the organization's position was based on international law, not politics: "The International Red Cross is not a prosecutor and not a judge, but we are certainly advocates in lobbying for respect of humane

standards and humanitarian law." After the Israeli protest, the American White House spokesman declared that the US would stop its contribution to the ICRC if this statement was not withdrawn. On the same day, the president of the ICRC in Geneva declared that the Kosirnik should not have made such a statement, however, the president did not clarify whether Kosirnik's statement was right or wrong. This again shows the politicization of the human rights movement.

Palestinian Human Rights Organizations: Resisting Agenda

The birth of the human rights movement in the Arab world was not a simple matter. The first human rights group, the Arab Human Rights Organization, from its inception defined itself as a humanitarian group, taking great effort to distance itself from politics and highlighting that it was not a political organization, hiding behind a legal profile, as the Syrian sociologist, Burhan Ghalyoun insisted (Abdella, 1996). This is why the Arab Human Rights Organization chose Geneva as its temporary headquarters. For a long time it did not have offices or branches in the Arab world. Only in 1983 did this organization establish a head office in Cairo, and its formal and legal presence there dates only to mid-1999, after which the movement spread throughout the Arab World (except Syria, Iraq and Saudi Arabia).

In Palestine, the human rights movement is mainly a leftist movement. One observes a similar trend in the Arab world, where human rights activists are comprised of actors recycled from the political parties. The human rights organizations in Palestine are characterized by an absence of individual memberships. It is true that they are afraid of state interference, as was the case in Egypt (the Egyptian Human Rights Organization) and in Tunisia (Human Rights League). Nevertheless, this movement has not been able to find a mechanism to substitute for individual memberships and to open up the movement at the popular level through voluntarism and involving individuals in the organization.

Genesis of the Idea of Human Rights in Palestine

The idea of human rights is a modern notion, which only became widespread at the end of the 1970s. Before then, few in Palestine acknowledged the importance of the international community; the latter was viewed with suspicion and considered a tool in the service of Israel. The first human rights organization, Al Haq, was established in 1979, by Raja Shehadeh and Jonathan Kuttab, as a branch of the International Commission of Jurists. Initially, some activists looked upon Al Haq

warily wondering whether it was a branch of the CIA, and some leftists perceived human rights as a form of cultural imperialism, in the service of Western interests. Over time, Al Haq's objectives have evolved as part of the broader metamorphosis and development of the idea of human rights in Palestine. The organization has a long history distributing important reports to the international community on issues ranging from administrative detention to deportation. Since 1985, the organization has observed and recorded human rights violations and provided legal consultation. As well, between 1985 and 1997, Al Haq focused on the occupying power's effects on the laws in the West Bank. Today this human rights organization is well recognized in the local community.

The first intifada served as a useful pretext for many political activists in Palestine to establish human rights centers. The legal form of the human rights discourse, however, was alien for the political activists: they were surprised by the neutral vocabulary, and the labeling of Palestinian and Israeli victims as 'killed persons.' The Palestinian Human Rights Information Center, as part of the Arab Studies Society, and then the Gaza Center for Rights and Law were the first centers to be established after Al Haq. After some organizational problems inside the board of the Gaza center, Raji Surani co-founded the Palestinian Center for Human Rights. Other centers followed: the Mandela Institute for Political Prisoners (which changed its name to Mandela Institute for Human Rights after the arrival of the PNA), Dameer, the Defence of Children International, then the Palestinian LAW organization.

In general, the human rights organizations are responsible for: following up on human rights violations, and Israeli violations, in particular; organizing visits and providing assistance, both material and moral, to Palestinian prisoners in Israeli and Palestinian jails; monitoring and disclosing news of torture, health and social rights violations; and finally publicizing information about closures imposed by the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territories. Many of these organizations work according to an action plan and very clear programs, thanks to the core funding that they receive. In fact, contrary to other sectors, donors provide core funding and long-term support as well as capacity-building grants to Palestinian human rights organizations. This has had a tremendous impact on these groups, enhancing their performance. Core funding allows them to develop technical expertise, credibility and a long-term perspective. Moreover, the availability of such funding enables the Palestinian human rights organizations to take on costly activities such as litigation. A court-based strategy has been used extensively to defend the rights of the Palestinians residing in Jerusalem, as well as to generate community support and raise consciousness.

During the first decade of work of Palestinian human rights organizations, there was an obvious lack of parity in the way human rights

principles were applied. For example, many human rights organizations did not criticize the murder of Palestinians by other Palestinians. While Al Haq denounced the killing of collaborators as against the right of life, others such as PHRIC remained silent on this issue. Secondly, during the Iraqi-Kuwaiti war, many human rights organizations were not convinced that the Fourth Geneva Convention should apply to this war. In this sense, it is apparent that nationalist and patriotic motives overrode the judgments taken by these human rights organizations. This is contrary to the notion of human rights conceived by the international community and the application of legal-juridical-bureaucratic standards.

Today, almost all of the Palestinian human rights organizations have developed a clearer position on the killing of collaborators. They consider that the continued use of the death penalty is a cruel and inhuman punishment. However, some of the human rights organizations choose to adopt a softer stance, one that opposes the absence of the right of appeal for the accused collaborator, rather than upholding the right to life as a fundamental right. For example, one of the Palestinian human rights organizations condemns acts of collaboration with Israel that cause harm to the Palestinian struggle against the Israeli occupation. However, its position on the death penalty for collaborators is not very clear, and has been reduced to calls for a fair trial. This, then, represents a divergence from the global human rights agenda.

Today the Palestinian *human rights discourse, like the human rights international organizations, oscillates between positivism and a politicized stance*. However, one can admire their capacity to take a positivist position on complicated issues in the context of occupation, such as the death penalty. For comparison, the majority of the Egyptian human rights organizations did not take such a decision. They denounced it only when the trial concerned political prisoners. The Palestinian organizations seem to be very well respected by the international organizations for their stance.

The positions of Palestinian human rights organizations have some impact not only in the international arena but in Israel as well. Cooperation between Israeli and Palestinian organizations has been very fruitful at times. For instance, the position of an organization such as B'tselem is very clear; its views are more progressive than those of Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch in terms of Israel's responsibility to apply the Fourth Geneva Convention to the Occupied Territories. B'tselem also calls on Israel to comply with not only the Hague Regulations but the Fourth Geneva Convention as well: "The refusal of the Israeli government to recognize this Convention's applicability to the Occupied Territories is a dangerous evasion from its obligation as a member of the international community," (according to one of the reports produced by this organization). However, B'tselem's stand concerning the

occupation of Jerusalem is at times not clear; for example, the group uses the term 'Jewish neighborhoods' when referring to Jewish settlements in Jerusalem, conjuring up an image of them being the Jewish counterpart to Arab neighborhoods.

One issue on which the Palestinian human rights organizations diverge regards the human rights violations committed by the PNA. Bassem Eid, the head of Palestinian Human Rights Monitoring Group (PHRMG), explained that the creation of his new Palestinian human rights organization was necessary because some segments of the human rights community in Palestine have become hesitant and treat the violations of the Palestinian Authority differently from those committed by Israel.

Another issue, which highlights an area of weakness among Palestinian human rights organizations, is the lack of attention directed beyond the legal realm. The work conducted by these groups could be made more effective if it reached beyond a narrow legal audience. Such work needs to be made public. This objective should be achieved not only with reports but also with research, because information and high-quality analysis can help nourish and stimulate public discussions about legal questions.

Finally, it is clear that *Palestinian human rights organizations have progressively become guided by non-partisan principles and professionalism*; they defend the rights of all persons and groups, regardless of the political affiliation or ideological orientation of the victims. However, this is a general observation; in practice certainly some still retain biased or partisan practice, at the very least in the recruiting of staff members. While the human rights organizations are now carrying out studies and research on the violation of human rights, often these reports are very empirical and lacking in in-depth analysis. Some of the more interesting and analytically rigorous studies do not list the author's name, like the study entitled: 'The Dormant Right: the Continuing Violation of the Right of Return' (LAW, 2001). But still, in this paper, the position moves between a politicized version of human rights and a nationalistic posture.

Here, we should be very clear that the dichotomy between the legal-juridical-bureaucratic standard and the politicized position is not synonymous with the dichotomy *universalistic versus nationalist*. We believe that the human rights discourse does not rely on abstract reasoning or logic. It hides a political sensibility. On the one hand, as we explain above, there is no pure universalistic idea of human rights. On the other hand, not all of the politicized discourse of Southern organizations is necessarily nationalistic. Human rights are socially and politically constructed, in the sense that, "ideas and practices in respect of human rights are created, recreated, and instantiated by human actors in particular socio-historical settings and conditions" (Stammers, 1999: 1). In the Palestinian context, the difference between a nationalist or politicized judgment by human rights actors is not always clear. Does one consider the refusal by certain Palestinian human

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rights organizations to denounce the Jordanian presence in the West Bank before the 1967 war as a form of occupation, to be a politicized posture or a nationalistic one? If one considers international law, then indeed Jordan was an occupying power, but if one heeds the vision of the population and their own sentiments, then it was not the case.

However, sometimes a politicized discourse hides unprofessionalism; for example, we noticed communiqués in which a reference to international law is made without mentioning which one, the Third or Fourth Geneva Convention, or at other times the structure of the argument is not well developed. Examining the communiqués of human rights organizations in Palestine we did not find any errata or clarification of any preceding communiqués as we find sometimes with those of Amnesty International. Does this mean that they do not make mistakes? There is also at times a lack of attention to detail or nuances. For instance, describing one incident, in which an Israeli car killed a Palestinian child, the communiqué identifies the car as a settler car, without actually knowing if it was in fact a settler. Generally, few of the communiqués use the word 'alleged' although the circumstances surrounding the event are unclear. On the other hand, one also finds instances of exaggeration: for instance, some use the word 'massacre' to describe an incident where several individuals have been killed.

Human Rights Organizations, Culture and Social Movements

As a whole, most human rights organizations in the Palestinian territories have taken on the role of providing reports and press releases on human rights violations, whether by the Israeli forces or the PNA. However, very little effort has been directed at developing a 'human rights culture' at the grassroots level. Human rights are approached in a juridical sense as the ends, and not the means, for social and political struggles. Two central factors have restricted the influence and role of Palestinian human rights groups. First, the work conducted by these organizations is often approached as the concern of a 'few activists'; little attention is directed at developing a culture of human rights. Human rights education is very important and should not only be addressed to a narrow 'target group' through informal education programs, but should be incorporated into the school system. Civic Forum and the Palestinian Center for Peace and Democracy have set up many informal education programs, especially focusing on workshops and summer schools. However the 'technical' emphasis of their approach, as mentioned in the discussion about women's NGOs, represents a drawback. Furthermore, it is also evident that educating people about human rights through short-term workshops, without forming a long-term relationship with the individuals, inevitably reduces the impact of the education program. That

is why human rights organizations cannot escape the need to develop some form of membership structure. Badil, the Resource Center for Palestinian Residency and Refugee Rights, represents an interesting case; the organization has created a new structure called the Friends of Badil to maintain a relationship with the refugee community.

Secondly, there is also an absence of a 'mode of action' to extend the struggle for human rights from international tribunes to the streets. Mass mobilization represents an important asset for human rights advocacy work; mass support would intensify the pressure on the PNA and the Israeli occupation forces to respect human rights. It is true that mobilizing the streets behind human rights principles is not an easy enterprise; the deep sense of insecurity and profound distrust of the international community among the Palestinian population is one of the obstacles inhibiting the emergence of a human rights culture at the popular level. This distrust is compounded by the reliance of Palestinian human rights organizations on foreign donors for funding.

In addition to this, it is evident that the Palestinian human rights movement has neglected women's issues in its agenda. One can argue that this has happened because of the proliferation of women's organizations. However, it is also possible to envision cooperation between human rights groups and women's organizations. Even women's groups recognize the importance of strengthening their link with the human rights movement (Abu Nahleh, 1999). But on the practical level, one rarely finds common communiqués between the two movements. The only notable exception is Al Haq, which released two publications on women's issues. One of them is the proceedings of the conference on 'Women, Justice and Law' which was held in Jerusalem between 16-19 September 1994. (See Rishmawi, et al.: 1995 [in Arabic]) This conference was attended exclusively by women. When one of the sessions was headed by a man, one of the participants protested (Rishmawi, 1995: 127 [in Arabic]).

The human rights movement's disregard for women's issues in turn reflects a lack of cooperation and alliance building between civil society groups. While one understands that professionalization and specialization has led to organizations that design their mandate as exclusively 'human rights,' this does not explain the absence of cooperation with other actors, especially with the unions and political parties.

Although the human rights movement emerged as a proxy of the political parties, and maintains some sort of allegiance to them, it has become the expression of the personal leadership within the organizations. It is noticeable, for instance, that local staff members are not highly involved in designing studies and the communiqués; instead it is the foreigner interns and the volunteers who are involved in this work. This reinforces the personal power of the head of the NGO.

Conclusion: Palestinian Human Rights Organizations, a 'Voice' Model

Despite the universalistic language and frame of reference used to locate human rights and anchor it as a global agenda, *both the debate on and the application of human rights have strong emotional and normative characters*.

The Palestinian human rights organizations possess an anti-hegemonic discourse that resists, or at the very least contests, the way human rights have been framed in the global agenda. *While international human rights organizations locate their work within legal-juridical-bureaucratic standards, Palestinian counterparts are skeptical of this discourse and they acknowledge its politicization*. As we explain in the beginning of this chapter and in Hirschmanian language, the human rights organizations in Palestine decided to articulate its *voice* strongly against the politicization of the human rights global agenda, contrary to health organizations that chose the *exit* strategy (acquiesing to the donor agenda) or women's organizations whose agenda encounters the global feminist agenda (a sort of *loyalty*). In his autobiography, Nelson Mandela recalls how, during his career as a lawyer and activist, he evolved, "from having an idealistic view of the law as a sword of justice to a perception of the law as a tool used by the ruling class to shape society in a way favorable to itself."

In a communiqué released 13 April 2001, the Arab members of the Euro-Mediterranean network of human rights identified that the principal challenge to the notion of the universality of human rights is not cultural relativism but the politicization of human rights and the double standard employed by Western governments and institutions. This is exemplified in the way Israel has been endowed with impunity and has not been held accountable for its gross human rights violations.

This situation begs the question: are we all in fact guided by the same universal principles and values? Are we all covered by the same human rights protection mechanisms? Theoretically the answer may be a yes, but the reality on the ground provides a different picture. This is what jeopardizes the efficacy of most human rights mechanisms. This does not mean that they are necessarily bad or good things. It depends on how the NGO discourse combines the reading of the law and the reading of the events. Some communiqués show weakness in their structural statements and are politically overdone; others are silent on certain issues. The position vis-à-vis collaborators is very difficult and an issue peculiar to the context of national liberation. While some dare to denounce capital punishment as a violation of the right to life, others only demand a fair trial.

In this respect, the second Intifada polarized the Palestinian human rights organizations. Two reactions were observed: the first position is

that the Palestinian human rights discourse should be closely compatible with the international discourse. The other position is that human rights issues cannot be disconnected from the deeply political context of the occupation, in which case their role is to expose and demystify the discourse and practices of the international human rights organizations. Consider the UN Commission on Human Rights meeting held in Geneva during October 2000. Palestinian human rights groups mobilized themselves and participated in the meeting. Two trends were observed among the Palestinian participants: some wanted a soft declaration, to gain European support during the vote, while others wanted a strong statement (like declaring Israel as a perpetrator of war crimes and crimes against humanity). The second group influenced the decision.

Moreover, the same internal rift between Palestinian human rights groups was observed at the "Third International Conference of the Human Rights Movement in the Arab World on the Future of the Palestinian Refugees under the Current Political Settlement' (Rabat Conference, 2000). The majority of the human rights groups at the conference chose a strong politicized statement, calling upon the League of Arab States to take the necessary practical measures for expelling Israel from the United Nations. This statement highlighted Israel's violation of one of the conditions for its acceptance as a member in the UN in 1949, that is, its failure to implement UN Resolution 194 of 1948 that requires it to allow the return of the Palestinian refugees to their homes and to pay compensation. The statement also called for a freeze on Israel's membership in all UN agencies until Israel accepts the Palestinian right of return. Some of the groups at the conference, including one of the Palestinian human rights organizations, were against this position, arguing that it is unrealizable, and therefore not necessarily useful. When we asked why this Palestinian human rights organization felt this position is unrealizable, the head of the group referred to the international human rights organizations' agenda. But surely one can ask, in order for an agenda to be 'realizable,' must it fall in line with the international agenda as defined by INGOs or Western governments, and is this what is meant by a 'universal' human rights agenda ?
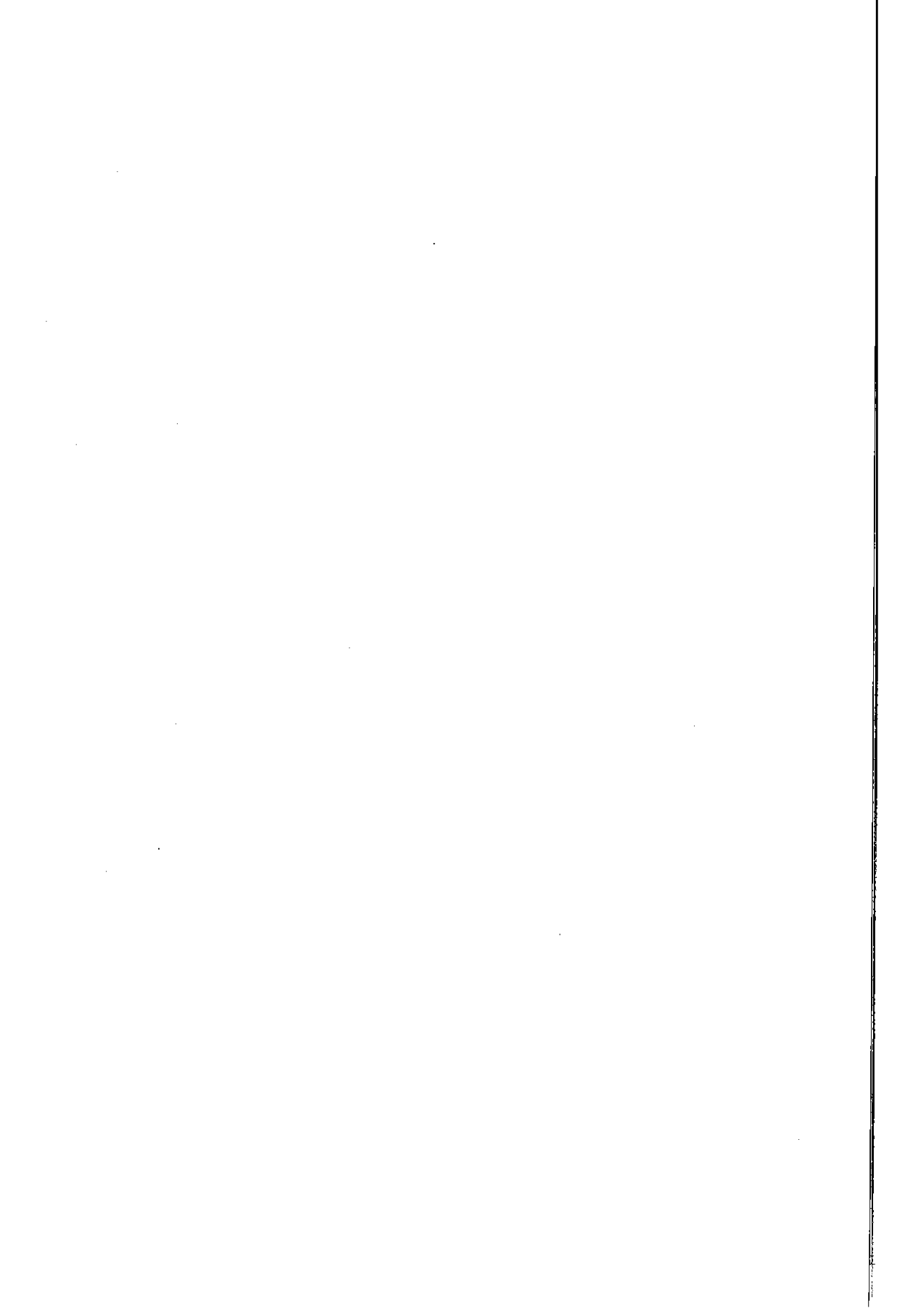
Chapter 4   **Agenda Setting and Negotiations**

4.1. Introduction

When examining relations between donors, INGOs and NGOs, one cannot ignore the fact that donors have a significant influence over the constitution of the local NGO agendas. This is due to a number of factors: first, the pressure brought to bear by the donor on recipients to introduce new elements into the elaboration of sustainable development, such as environment, gender, human rights. Second, the almost total dependence of the local NGOs for funding on foreign aid, which may push them to adopt fads or trends thought to be favored by the donors. Matters become even more complex when one considers the different factors motivating INGOs. For instance, while some INGOs arrived in Palestine with solidarity motivations, others espouse a Third World ideology, while still others belong to Christian messianic groups. This notwithstanding, there are INGOs motivated by a humanitarian ideology, often with a neo-liberal tone, working in the name of the universality of human rights and professionalism. In this regard, the question here not only concerns the motivation of the donors, and therefore their declared and non-declared political and economic interests, but also the articulation of these interests with the demands coming from the recipient society. Third, the local NGOs perceive and internalize the donor agenda as a global agenda – a naturally given and self-evident agenda – which is seen as appropriate to the international context and the national changes brought about by the peace process and the Palestinian state-building process. Thus, the recipient NGOs receive this agenda in good faith, and even defend it.

Although one speaks of a 'global agenda,' this does not mean that such an agenda is monolithic. In fact, if one differentiates between all the different types of international organizations – development agencies, solidarity groups, and organizations that operate according to a humanitarian ideology and emphasize universal principles– then it becomes clear that any international agenda is certain to take a variety of forms, as it is interpreted by the diverse international development actors.

Some observers recognize that the influence of donor funding goes well beyond financial assistance. The acceptance of an increasing volume of foreign aid involves entering into agreements about what is to be done, and how it is reported and accounted for. This can foster an emphasis on certain forms of activity at the expense of others, on upward accountability (rather than downward accountability to members or beneficiaries), as well as on particular techniques and donor definitions of 'achievement.' In the case of *developmental* NGOs, donor approaches to beneficiary participation are often instrumentalist. This is often incompatible with the stated vision of the vast majority of NGOs that conceptualize participation as a means to empower the poor and disadvantaged, not simply as a means to achieve short-term project goals. Moreover, as some scholars have noted, the whole debate on NGO performance, accountability, legitimacy and cost-effectiveness is framed exclusively in Western (liberal) terms (Hulme and Edwards 1993).

The objective of this chapter is to shed light on the process of agenda setting. The chapter reviews different patterns of interaction, as well as exchanges, among the actors and identifies key conditions such as donor criteria of funding. In addition, we examine the mechanisms of negotiations, identifying three aspects that are relevant for understanding the negotiation process: setting the rules of the game, structural parity, and investing in the space for negotiations. Finally, we argue that the changes in global and local agendas have had an impact on the constitution of local and international NGOs. Moreover, the limited way local NGOs have invested in the negotiation space has had tremendous effect on the character of the local organizations.

The local interaction between NGOs and donors cannot be understood if it is not situated within a broader terrain of historically constituted sets of relations wherein the role of INGOs and NGOs are defined and developmental ideas and priorities circulate. In previous decades, when solidarity groups in the West, relying on funds collected from their own public, were active in developing societies, the relation between the Northern and Southern NGOs was based on a straightforward mechanism of interaction. The local partner played a main role in defining the sector of intervention. Moreover, the local partner was often chosen on the basis of its political or ideological affiliation and therefore its affinity with the Northern organization: professionalism, as a criteria for funding, was largely absent.

With the restructuring of aid channels reviewed above, and with Northern NGOs receiving a greater share of institutional (government) funds, the relationship became complicated by the introduction of another layer: government agencies as funding partners. Over the last several decades, Western governments have imparted upon Northern NGOs (NNGOs) greater responsibility for distributing aid. According to the survey conducted in 1995 by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), NGOs in Scandinavian countries receive the largest amount of government funds: 0.96 % of GDP for Denmark, 0.87 % for Norway, 0.81 % for Netherlands, 0.77 % for Sweden, 0.55 % for France and 0.1 % for USA (OECD, 1997, cited by Gérard Perroulaz, 1998: 343-348).

Moreover, as some observers point out, historically the relationship between NNGOs and Western governments has changed from grants to grant programs and now to contracting. According to the American Near East Refugee Agency (ANERA), there has been a change in orientation all the way down the line: "Twenty years ago a villager would come along and say there was a need for a road. ANERA would look into it and probably fund it. Now if the same request were made, the project's acceptance will depend on whether the donor is funding it [that sector]. If local NGOs propose a project, if we have funds for that category/sector, they are lucky. If not, it may become part of the long term dialogue with donors in the future."

Thus the structure of the terrain has direct bearing on the tripartite relationship between Northern governments, NNGOs, and Southern NGOs (SNGOs). There have been changes in the structure underpinning the relationship over time, in particular, pertaining to the relationship between NNGOs and Northern governments. Overall, the implication of these changes is that today the donor (government) plays a greater role in defining the priorities of funding and how funds are to be distributed.

Finally, it should be stated that the tripartite relationship between governments, INGOs and SNGOs cannot be reduced to a single pattern of interaction; in fact it is characterized by a certain degree of fluidity, such that it is not always easy to decipher the leanings of an INGO, as they try to maneuver in the terrain, especially in terms of how they situate themselves vis-à-vis government agendas. Feeling the burden of institutional funding, Médecins sans Frontières (MSF-France) now accepts no more than 20% of its funds from government. If the government has an interest in a particular region, then MSF-France does not take funds for that region from the state agencies. In this regard, MSF distinguishes between European Commission funds and French government funds and considers the funds from the latter to be attached to a larger number of conditions. In contrast to this is the case of the French Platform in France. This coalition of NGOs which works with Palestinian NGOs has diversified its sources of funding; but rather than

minimize contact with the government, members meet with the ministry and negotiate with them. Here the INGO, relying on its own leverage, possesses a degree of power, and reminds us of the possibility of negotiations between the actors, or meaningful exchange between the INGO and the Western government.

However, the problem is related not only to government policies and the influence that Western governments exert over INGOs. In some cases it has been shown that INGOs may negotiate with government and obtain program funding but they do not always pass this funding on to SNGOs, but keep the latter in an unequal relationship by providing only project funding.

4.2. Agenda Setting: Donor Criteria for Funding a Project

Certainly donors have their own agendas which reflect their economic and political interests.[42] In the case of donor contributions to the Palestinian National Authority, the interest factor is rather clear, for example, donors provide technical assistance by using foreign expertise, and this invariably returns the money to the donor country in one form or another (See Brynen and al., 1998). The same issue, however, becomes more complicated when considering NGO agendas.

Among the donors working in Palestine, three main criteria for funding are discernable: political eligibility - in terms of supporting the peace process, sectoral priority eligibility, and professional eligibility.

Political Eligibility

Concerning the first criterion of eligibility, some donor agencies made clear statements during the interviews[43] about their motives for being in Palestine, such as Norway: "We are here to support the peace process and are concerned with projects that could be visible and which show that tangible improvements are occurring." (i.e., peace dividends). The idea behind this statement, which will be our starting point here, is that the major issue for donor agendas in Palestine is the Olso peace process. The components of this agenda are not restricted in the project type, but do restrict the sort of actors eligible to receive funding. Some agencies have identified actors who "did not

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[42] As USAID defined itself in its web site: "USAID is an independent federal government agency that conducts foreign assistance and humanitarian aid to advance the political and economic interests of the United States." (see www.usaid.gov)

[43] All of the following quotations stem from the interviews we did during the fieldwork between 1998 and 2002.

support the peace process" and are to be excluded from funding: for example, CIDA restricts funding to Hamas and the Islamic Jihad, and other donors disqualify the Union of Health Care Committees, because "they don't have a clear position on the peace process."

In regard to the selection of Palestinian partner organizations, it is apparent that the donors operate according to the principle that recipients should be diversified in the political/ideological sense, as in their view this will support the creation of a "vibrant civil society." A Scandinavian donor agency outlines that its officers "are able to recognize most of the affiliations of PNGOs and are aware of the political/ideological association of PNGOs. The NGOs represent power centers in society. Thus in funding, they try to balance the centers, as one donor representative explains: "We do not want to support one sector of the society only. We want to support the civil society, if they promote political reform and democracy it is of course fine with us. Human rights organizations have a political agenda and we see this as important. Undoubtedly though, the donor's conception of a vibrant civil society excludes Islamic actors."

While donors exercise influence over local actors to advance their own political agenda, this does not mean that the donors intervene in all program or project levels to advance such an agenda. In the research domain, when funding agencies support a specific research topic, they do so at the *expense of others*. Thus, research topics are indirectly "manipulated," but donors rarely wield any control over the actual research process. Moreover, although there may be a tendency for research projects to reflect the official political position of either the donor or its government, one should not exaggerate the occurrence of such episodes. For example, a German foundation supported a conference organized by the Economic and Social Commission for West Asia (ESCWA) entitled, "The impact of the peace process on industrial sectors in the Middle East." Although it was evident that the foundation sought to emphasize the positive impact of the peace process on the industrial economies of the concerned countries, most of the studies presented at the conference concluded the opposite, at least in the transitional period imposed due to the intermittent progress of the peace process.

Sectoral Eligibility

Donor sectoral criteria for funding are less clear cut than political criteria, since often the sector of intervention is not well defined. Donors tend to have either a broad framework for sector priorities, which allows for flexibility and wide interpretation or, if there is a defined sector, the donor will not have defined programs or projects within the sector. For instance, the Heinrich Böll Stiftung (affiliated with the German Green

Party) identifies its two sectoral priorities as violence against women and informal education. These represent thematic areas of concern, more so than strict sectors. In the case of the Ford Foundation, three sectors are singled out, but with very broad meaning: institution building for educational, cultural and research centers; reproductive health and public health; and human rights. Some donors do not stipulate sectoral conditions, and instead specify a particular target group. For Oxfam-Quebec, the main target groups are women (micro-credit programs and empowerment by advocacy) and refugees. Generally, donors have a very broad and open-ended conception of sector. For example, while the general directive of the British foreign ministry from 1998-1999 prioritized funding poverty alleviation, a British cooperation officer in Jerusalem criticized this directive as one dimensional, and explained how he succeeded in convincing his superiors that poverty in Palestine is not concentrated in specific areas, as in comparable countries, but is, in fact, dispersed over the entire area. Rather than relief for the poor, funds could be channeled into a development strategy for Palestinian society, which could in return benefit individuals living below the poverty line.

Overall, our findings support the premise that, rather than strictly delineated sector conditions, there is actually an absence of donor sector conditions. Moreover, when they do exist, a rigorously defined sector agenda does not necessarily reflect rational choices. The decision is in large part driven by institutional and idiosyncratic factors, as well as a substantial degree of serendipity. Some donors we encountered explained the difficulties they face identifying priorities in the Palestinian territories and creating an effective program. In this case, the donors often leave the allocation of funds open and solicit proposals from PNGOs.

However within a specific juncture, donors re-adapt or change sectors according to the creation of emergency plans. The second Intifada impelled many NGOs to change their sector of intervention or to remodel their programs. As for the INGOs and the donors, Canada Fund, for example, continues to targets the refugees, but it funds more services provision than advocacy. In general, it is evident that donors have been slow to adapt to the second Intifada. One noteworthy observation stands out; the USAID responded much more quickly to the Intifada than the European Commission. Smaller organizations also exemplified greater flexibility. For example, Heinrich Böll Stiftung began funding activities to treat child trauma beginning in the second month of the Intifada.

Professional Eligibility

The last macro criterion is professional eligibility. It is usually the larger donor agencies that prefer to work with big local NGOs that stipulate this condition. For example, in the case of USAID, NGOs must

undergo an internal audit to ensure the organization meets international standards. This facilitates recognition by the donors, and assures them that they are entering into a working relationship with a strong partner that is qualified, competent and transparent. The consequences of this condition will be studied in the section below, on the creation of the mega-PNGO.

At the same time, the process through which donors decide to distribute funds is usually based on submission of a proposal, which presupposes a higher level of organizational practice and professionalism. Some criteria by which donors assess proposals emphasize defining a certain type of partner organization. For instance, Heinrich Böll Stiftung uses the following criteria: there should be some grassroots orientation, the proposal should be sound, the budget should be under 70% for salaries, and the activity must not duplicate existing activities. In general, this NNGO also privileges smaller organizations, since the organization should neither be over-funded nor have access to the big donor agencies. Jerusalem is included, however, Arabs in Israel are outside of the eligible geographical area. Concerning the question of whether they maintain a balance between geographical areas, this Stiftung recognizes that the main partners are in the Ramallah and Jerusalem, but that it tries to reach out to Jenin and other rural localities.

In contrast to this, one of the bigger development agencies in the Palestinian Territories has identified the following criteria: "We do not fund Hamas or Jihad organizations, we refuse big projects, we do not fund poorly designed projects, or projects which advocate gender segregation (example: sports club for men). We also give consideration to the sustainability of the project, and take into account its environmental effects (not to cut trees, having a waste water system)." For another European agency, the criteria are as follows: "We [will] support something that has a measurable impact. The project should not be mainstream, or linked to another activity in the human rights/democracy field. There is no core funding or funds for seminars. For us, it is more important if an organization goes out to the village and tells villagers about their rights, versus an elite academic activity." In both of these examples, the donor criteria of funding are buttressed by consideration for the role of the NGO in its society, and professionalism is implicitly considered. Other related issues such as organizational or project sustainability are more directly highlighted.

Patterns of Interaction

Donor funding criteria represent an important starting point for locating and beginning to delineate the structured interaction between donors and NGOs. Yet the patterns of interaction between the actors are also determined by practices, perceptions and forms of exchange that cut across or through institutional formation.

Palestinian NGOs' perception of what they regard as an 'imposed criteria' varies from one donor to another. Some PNGOs look upon certain donor countries as friendly and others as not. This is not wholly a matter of interpersonal dynamics; it also reflects the policies of the country in question. For example, the human rights organization Al Haq states: "Governments want reports to show to their taxpayers. Some governments, however, such as the Scandinavians, do not have strong conditions attached to aid. They aim to help more than meet political objectives, in particular, Denmark and Sweden. These governments are clearly different from the USA, which looks to maximize politics via aid." Norway is generally viewed as a "good partner" by PNGOs and is often referred to as an example of a friendly donor. This may be so, but there are also many ways in which it is similar to other donors, for instance, in its concern for political objectives. A Norwegian official explained that their primary reason for being in Palestine is the peace process rather than poverty, since Palestine's GNP is well above the level used to determine aid disbursement.

A central aspect of the negotiation process for agenda setting is the question *who initiates the idea for the project?* The prevalence of donor reliance on NGO proposal submissions as a mechanism to distribute funds implies that the donors do not put forward project ideas. This is not always the case. Of the donors we interviewed, some had proposed project ideas to the local partners. An official at CIDA explained that two projects have been proposed to PNGOs: first, a project for increasing the participation of women in Palestinian elections for which Oxfam-Quebec selected WATC as the partner organization for Canadian $ 0.5 million in funding; second, CIDA approached Bisan, Birzeit University and Shu'un al-Mara (Gaza) for a project creating an NGO management program.

This type of interaction, in which a donor proposes a project to an NGO, is linked to many factors, but it is particularly related to the size of the donor agency or international NGO. The larger and more bureaucratic the organization, the more probable that the decision-making process concerning the type of sector or project will be directed from above, limiting the involvement of the local partner. This is especially clear in the assistance provided to the Palestinian National Authority, and aid in general that is directed at the state level. For example, a report evaluating the European Commission's institution-building assistance to the PNA revealed that the projects in this sector "have often not been the subject of a precise requirement expressed by the PNA, but in some cases it was the donor who more or less made the first move." The authors ended the report by criticizing the ineffectual impact the European Commission is having in this area (European Commission, 1999: 13).

The case of the World Bank elucidates SNGOs' limited participation in the conception of projects. According to Michelle Miller-Adams, from 1973-88 NGOs participated in 6% of the World Bank's projects. By 1994-97, this

had risen to almost 50%. However, she notes that the type of participation varies, and NGOs actually share in the *design of projects* only about 40% of the time. Moreover, while there are funds for NGO participation, they come from temporary trust funds, giving the impression that this is not a central feature of Bank operations (Miller-Adams, 1999: 72-92). The author goes on to argue that the Bank's rationale is largely pragmatic in that it seeks to improve the sustainability of projects by increasing the ownership and commitment of stakeholders (i.e., sharing the burden and the blame). She also outlines that this increased collaboration with NGOs has followed NGO critiques of the World Bank, especially the impact of structural adjustment programs (SAPs) on the poor and marginalized, and a growing awareness of problems with effectiveness of the implementation of the Bank's projects (Miller-Adams, 1999: 71-77).

Reviewing over 300 World Bank projects in which NGOs participated during the early 1990's, Nelson found that in the majority, NGOs were implementing organizations. Only in one-quarter of the cases did NGOs contribute to project design (Nelson, 1995: 8). moreover, he notes that often the substance of this contribution is limited: often NGO input is restricted to their own sub-project financed under the project. Or contributions to design are for relief projects under the rubric of SAPs in which NGOs participate not in shaping adjustment conditions, but in facilitating communication with marginalized groups and in planning safety net programs (Nelson, 1995:177).

Finally, two examples add to our understanding of the interaction between donors and NGOs. First, in the case of the World Bank, there is a bidding process for projects in the science and technology field that have no geographical area or priority. At the international level, no Palestinian organization is known to have ever won a bid in this sector. There are also projects that are regionally oriented. In contrast to this, the European Union has funding available to Palestine from various programs, for instance, the MENA Democracy Fund. PNGOs have benefited from such funds, which are available for the region and on a worldwide scale. Often, European NGOs submit proposals in partnership with PNGOs and the latter are able to tap into this line of funding. In some programs, PNGOs have the greater share of the budget because they are more active than other NGOs in the region and also because Palestinian law allows for more flexibility than other governments in the region.

4.3. Defining the Negotiation Space

There are three dimensions to be considered when understanding the process of negotiations and examining the negotiation space: *setting the rules of the game, structural parity, and investing in the negotiation space.*

Setting the Rules of Game

It is true that donors have power, knowledge and money. But the most important issue concerning the negotiation process is the rules of the game and, further to this, which *types* of rules of the game are being followed. Some donors (such as USAID) deem that their own experts should define everything related to a project after consultations have been conducted with the local actors. USAID's experts, for instance, determine the details of the project, geographic location, target group, project approach, and search for an implementing agency, or what they call a "partner." (See Chapter 3.) With this type of rules of the game, there is little that can be negotiated. Here, we highlight that indeed there are rules of the game and, more often than not, the donor sets them.

Increasingly, NGOs are witnessing the effects of a new type of rules of the game, one that reduces the space for negotiations by imposing a process of competition among the recipients, as in a market place. The US NGO, ANERA describes the environment in which International NGOs operate today as one in which donors determine the sector of intervention, and INGOs compete: "It is not about negotiations, it is a competition process."

Interestingly, even donors have used the analogy of the market place to describe the realm of donor-NGO relations and the agenda setting process. Richard Sexton from the World Bank office in Jerusalem noted in a conference in 2000 about the relationship between PNA and the NGOs: "We are not talking about an agenda but rather a market place....The weakness of that is the difficulty for Palestinian institutions to coordinate and organize according to donor diversity....There is no organized structure that brings Palestinian priorities together in front of the donors." Both ANERA and the Welfare Association made a similar point in discussions.

These observations are not confined to processes underway in the Palestinian Territories but reflect a global trend. In many countries NNGOs are now required to bid against one another for government contracts. According to Smillie, with this development market values enter the relationship and competition leads to a *supply-driven* situation in which the uniqueness of each NGO is irrelevant: "The NGO's own ideas, style, capacities and innovation are becoming less important then the priorities and pace of governments" (Smillie, 1999: 9). Within this context advocacy NGOs are "losing their voice," their activism blunted by the contract relationship as they drift farther away from their own goals and accept the policies of the funder. Overall, he sees that competition for contracts will leave NNGOs with the risks of aid delivery, turning them into contractors of service providers and inexpensive government executing agencies.

One manifestation of the 'market analogy' raised by Sexton and others as it relates to Palestine is supply-driven projects. This issue is well discussed by many authors; for example, the phenomenon of the micro-credit banks is

considered a manifestation of local society responding and re-shaping itself in relation to excess supply.

There are three scenarios of such supply-driven shifts in local NGOs programs: responsiveness by the local society; unresponsiveness of the society; and finally a distortion of the local equilibrium.

Responsiveness of the Society

The Grameen Bank of Bangladesh for small credit is looked upon as a positive example, a successful local initiative that was initially prompted by donors. But even in this case one can raise the criticism that with the Grameen Bank the result is simply a compensatory measure for SAPs. With this initiative the poor remain poor, but they avoid starvation.

In Palestine, there are clear examples of supply-driven projects, some of which cater to the preferences of the emerging elite. For example, the French Consulate strongly emphasizes cultural projects (music, cinema). Yet in Palestine, the society has few sporting facilities. While the first serve the elite, the second could serve all social classes, especially children in summer.

In other cases, the manner in which funds are disbursed by donors in Palestine reveals the push from the supply-side directing these initiatives. The Union of Palestinian Medical Relief Committees (UPMRC) described how, after a long focus on health education, SIDA suddenly stopped supporting this project and switched to a new program for youth training without maintaining any continuity at the program level. The Palestinian Family Planning Association related that it was approached by CARE to implement a project worth over $1 million, and were given the explanation that a large amount of money was coming into the health sector after the Wye Agreement in 1996.

Unresponsiveness

A lack of response on the part of the local society to a supply-driven project should be understood as the result of the failure of a dialectic interchange between donor and NGO. In some cases, this may be attributed to the absence of bridgehead formations, which translate the global trend into a local benefit. In other cases, especially issues relating to culture, the local society may simply reject the project by not responding. For instance, this has been the case with some family planning projects,[44] and AIDs awareness and prevention projects, which have been pushed by some

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[44] See the health section in Chapter 3.

donors in the Palestinian Territories yet are not very needed by local society, according to one of the Palestinian health organization, as there is a low incidence rate of HIV/AIDs.

Distortion of Equilibrium

Finally, in a third scenario, it is possible that supply-driven projects may distort the local equilibrium. For example, women's micro-credit projects are admitted by many as being a failure in Palestine. Some, for example, Sama Aweida from The Women's Studies Center, criticize the indicators used to measure the success of this type of initiative, arguing that they disguise more than they reveal: many women become indebted or sell their own property to repay these loans. A woman's organization we interviewed in Gaza reiterates this point, explaining that often many women use these loans for their husband and then bear the consequences of indebtedness. Furthermore, in its newsletter, the Women's Affairs Technical Committees (WATC) has bemoaned the absence of substantive indicators to measure whether women truly benefit from these projects.

Dis equilibrium in the local society as a result of supply directives manifests itself in different forms. Some of the large donor agencies (like USAID) set the salaries for local Palestinian project leaders which can be three to four times higher than that of a government minister. Such practices not only inflate local salaries but also distort the meaning of NGOs as voluntary organizations.

In addition, in the Palestinian case, donors have demonstrated a proclivity towards investing in infrastructure and large-scale projects which produce fast results and demonstrate to the people the benefits of peace. Yet in some cases this has been done in a manner that ignores the local society's demands. For example, Palestinian NGOs and PNA officials working in the health sector lobbied against certain locations of hospitals in the Palestinian Territories but the donors refused the advice. Now some of the hospitals are underutilized and the local society must maintain them at high cost without benefit.

Sometimes the donors propose an idea without taking into consideration conflicts or the internal divisions within the society, or the actors' own predilection. For example, the Network of Policy Research Centers (Rabita), a network proposed by a donor for Palestinian research centers, ignored the fact that some of the organizations do not want to engage in networking. As a result, the networking initiative ended up as a small club. Here it should be stated that, although ideas and knowledge circulate within aid channels and are embraced by donors and NGOs alike, it remains that concepts are interpreted and re-articulated by local actors. Therefore, although the Ford Foundation arrived with the idea for the

network as an open space, this idea was de-coded, and re-encoded by local actors, as a clique.

Finally, it should be clear that the problem with donors proposing ideas is not that it should not occur, since it can be beneficial and produce synergy between the developmental actors. The problem, however, is in how it is approached and executed, for if there is an absence of genuine exchange, then the process is not based on a meaningful partnership.

Structural Parity

Although it is evident that donors do propose ideas to PNGOs and exert influence over them, the more important aspect of agenda setting is the structure of the field underlying donor-NGO relations as well as the practices that precede the meeting of donor and NGOs. Also significant is the extent to which NGOs draw on available mechanisms to strengthen their position in the agenda setting process.

In one sense, one cannot neglect that power relations and structural factors hinder SNGOs from broadening the space for negotiations. Individually, NGOs are often not strong enough to redress the unequal relationship with the donor. Indeed, SNGOs could increase their leverage, if they coordinated their efforts, but this is seldom successfully carried out. NGO "communities" differ in their capability and desire to create structures to represent their interests and meet with the donors on their behalf. At the same time, there are factors that inhibit this, such as the fragmentation of NGOs and the competition between them. One of the UPMRC officers explained why his organization was unable to redirect USAID's health policies: "We sent a message to them. We had a meeting with USAID, NGOs and the PNA. Unfortunately there is lack of vision on the Palestinian side and things are unclear, so we cannot force our concerns on them."

There are additional structural factors that need to be considered here. It is clear that in Palestinian society there has been a proliferation of NGOs following a shift in the type of funding available in the past decade. In 1989, there were only very few human rights organizations, Al-Haq being the most prominent, and now there are a dozen. This shapes the local field of action in which NGOs operate. It becomes easier for donors to propose ideas for a project since if one NGO rejects the donor there are many others that may accept. We observed donors visiting different NGOs and proposing project ideas to them. This is revealing of the changing structure underpinning the distribution of aid. Donors are aware of competition at the local level, and are guided by changes at the international level that affect the structure of the terrain, namely the greater intervention of donors in defining funding priorities. A new dynamic arises in local society:

donors test which NGO will accept their project. For example, Al Haq reported that: "No donor has ever told Al-Haq how to act concerning the political reality. As I said before, there are donors with whom you share common professionalism and they will fund you. Other donors try to market ideas: if the NGO respects itself, it will remain true to itself."

Besides the problem of an excessive proliferation of NGOs, there is also the dilemma of fragmentation. According to many interviewees, there is very little effort to enhance coordination among PNGOs and this keeps them weak in the face of donors and therefore limited in the agenda setting process. One of the interviewees noted that: "For one of the USAID community development projects, one PNGO asked a mayor not to cooperate with any other NGO and to give only them information on what the village needs."

However, structural parity does not only concern harnessing the strength of NGOs, but includes forms of leverage derived from factors such as institutional capacity, which includes proposal writing. In this respect, we noticed that many donors and international NGOs have a genuine interest in developing the capabilities of the local NGOs in proposal writing. One of the PNGOs noted: "At the beginning we were writing poor proposals but with good ideas, it was clear we did not have the capacity. The organizations we were working with provided us with technical help to improve our proposal reporting. Some donors require specific reporting, and they have shown us how to do this."

It is common to hear NGOs complain of the need to develop a proficiency in English and have staff members fluent in this language, especially in writing. Some organizations have professional people to write proposals for them. Others hire professional people (native English speakers) for fundraising. This raises a broader issue: how do we understand the development of administrative capacity and the process of professionalization? What is its impact on NGOs and their capacity to challenge the rules of the game? Does it improve this capacity? Is it not a good thing, which increases parity between donors and NGOs?

Developing the administrative capacity of NGOs is a positive activity. The question however is, if the PNGOs' capacities as organizations improve, why don't the PNGOs' efforts to engage the donors increase? The organizations involved with the PNGOs Network, for example, are some of the most developed in terms of organizational skills and resources.

It is probable that NGOs would respond to this issue by pointing out that as their administrative capacity increases so does their bureaucratic workload. Many Palestinian organizations complain of becoming slaves to proposal writing and reporting requirements. Thus many would argue that administrative enhancement comes with bureaucratic overload (Jad, 1995). While we understand this position of PNGOs, we feel it is not fully justified. It is necessary to separate between administrative changes and

the orientation of the actors in the NGOs, many of whom are or started out as activists. In Kenya, for example, organizations have expanded and grown, yet they have maintained their relations to a grassroots community and involved actors and retain a very strong activist position. The Green Belt Movement (GBM) in Kenya is recognized internationally as a very effective environmental and women's NGO. The organization has 50,000 members in more than 2,000 community groups. GBM organizes different campaigns, while fostering political consciousness and grassroots mobilization (Silliman, 1999: 140). The key to the GBM's success seems to be located in the creativity and ingenuity of its leadership. While the organization has grown, its leaders have deliberately plotted their own organizational development, resisting institutionalization and preferring to maintain a fluid organizational structure.

This raises the matter of the subjectivity of NGO activists and their orientation as well as the vision of where to lead the NGO. To say that administrative work determines NGO actors and is to blame for the orientation of the organization is insufficient. There remains the issue of the NGO activists' subjective understanding of their role, what purpose the organization should have and what its relations should be with community, donors, and other NGOs. (For more on this point see Chapter 5) With vision and objectives, PNGO leaders can direct administrative capacity to their advantage. Here there is the possibility of creating new structures or redefining the organization to fit a certain vision. Rema Hammami has pointed out some possibilities as pertaining to Palestinian NGOs (2000).

In addition to this, we add that PNGOs often undervalue the benefit of proposal writing, as an exercise, which can facilitate the exchange of ideas. It may be that some NGO actors are not open for such a reciprocal exchange to occur.

Investing in the Space for Negotiations

The interaction between donors and NGOs and the encounter between their respective structures creates a negotiating space, which can be broad or narrow. The rules of the game also play a major role in determining the dimensions of the space for negotiations. However, the presence of this space does not mean that the local actors utilize this space or direct their energies towards it as a way of enhancing their position in the agenda setting process. Therefore, the main question is, to what extent do local actors invest in the negotiation space? Reasons for not investing may be due to a number of factors: they want money at any price, fear, fragmentation, 'wild-competition' or because the rules of the game are not clear.

Overall, our fieldwork reveals that there is a space for negotiations,

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but PNGOs have not invested in it significantly. We will review some of the testimonies of NGOs before presenting our general analysis.

One Palestinian NGO actor reports: "PNGOs follow donor trends and priorities. They do not set their own priorities. PNGOs do not conduct needs assessments or survey the community's development priorities on their own; rather they apply to a donor with defined projects and change their program documents to fit the donor." Therefore, in the words of this program officer, organizations rarely carry out needs assessments on their own. Moreover, they tailor their proposals to donor funding priorities. The same program officer reveals how PNGOs change their own programs in order to secure funds from donors: he points out that one of the health NGOs has a project for a youth center for computers. This youth center has no ties to the health sector. Moreover, he notes that his own organization does not even conduct evaluations unless the donor wants this. They want to cut down on expenses as much as they can and evaluations are not a priority for his NGO. At the same time, however, the interviewee bemoans that this is obviously why the NGO lacks its own clearly defined priorities.

In contrast to this, some Palestinian NGOs are supervised by a strong board that ensures the NGO's programs cohere with its overall mission. An NGO in Rafah explained the relevance of its own board in providing such oversight, for while the NGO is a health organization, on occasion it has been approached by different donors, one of which presented it with a democracy promotion initiative.

Undoubtedly, the space for negotiation is, in one respect, a derivative of the configuration of power underlying the donor-recipient relationship. While the configuration of power is generally assumed to privilege the donor, this is not always completely accurate. Nor does this image elucidate the complicated forms of relationships that develop between donors and recipients. Some of the large Palestinian NGOs working in human rights describe their negotiations with donors in triumphant terms: "We have clear guidelines outlining our funding policies. Firstly, no single donor can give more than 20% of our budget. Secondly, no one can discuss the proposal with us. There is no room for donor input. Project ideas/proposals are made internally. They cannot negotiate with us, it is either yes or no. They have no say in the content. Third, our preference is people-to-people aid, meaning we prefer to deal with INGOs. 90% of our funding comes from INGOs. Funding is also a partnership. Our partners must be committed to defending our position. We take some money from "friendly governments," states that do not have a direct interest in the conflict, i.e., Ireland, Sweden and Norway."

The reader should take note that this discourse is quite extraordinary, and pretends that there is no donor input in the NGO's projects. What do we make of such a discourse, which paints the NGO as occupying a powerful position vis-à-vis the donors? Firstly, it reflects the NGO *leader's position* within a "privileged" NGO, an organization with a very

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good reputation with both donors and INGOs and is well known by development actors. At the same time, this leadership represents a group of very strong, charismatic NGO figures, known by name and invited on a regular basis internationally to speak at forums. From this, one can raise the question, how strong is the phenomenon of clientelism in the NGOs sector between donors and strong-figureheads like the above interviewee? How does Al Haq compare, which lacks a strong personal figure? Or consider another prominent NGO figure, who personally challenged the head of the Norwegian People's Aid by complaining about her to the Representative Office? How important are personal contacts and personal networks in the NGO sector and in negotiations? Is there a small clique emerging?

Our fieldwork reveals that when a Palestinian NGO is strong, it is able to negotiate and even obtain core funding for more than one year, which is normally very hard to secure. One of the influential human rights actors states: "Last year we had a 'core partners meeting' and signed a memo of understanding with close partners of ours. We concluded with them that we will submit proposals and they will commit support for a period of three years, and that if we have a shortage they will help. This relationship is based on the principle that they believe in what we are doing. We cannot be running after funds each year, we need more solid support. It should be noted, however, that we have entered into these relationships with core partners who have supported us for years, since the (first) Intifada. Through this arrangement we receive core funding as well, they provide the budget and we use it within the context of our proposals." This same NGO apparently has a choice of donors: "Let me give some examples. USAID offered to pay our budget for three years, and I rejected them straight out, because it is governmental money. We do not agree with their policy. They have projects (already pre-defined) and just want someone to implement them. With their project for the independence of the judiciary, $18 million was spent. Foreign consultants did the studies, no local input, and then they looked for puppets to implement the projects. No room for PNGOs to contribute to the project idea."

In addition, we accumulated testimonies illustrating the way some Palestinian NGOs resist donor trends: "There are fashions in funding, first there was institutional building, then women's rights, now human rights. Human rights organizations are funded by governments directly – this is big money. We feel that before the need to advocate for human rights there is a need to secure basic rights, such as for health services. We have been presented with projects to promote human rights/democracy, but how can we accept such projects here in Rafah when our citizens do not even have a hospital and therefore no access/right to basic healthcare? People see that there is no hospital, no basic services. This leads to another issue, the relationship between NGOs and the people. The people hear about the funds coming to NGOs, they are not stupid."

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Sometimes, donor agencies want to engage in discussions and negotiation with the local partner, but make it clear beforehand that they refuse to finance core expenses or conferences and seminars because they want to "have an impact on the situation, on the people, and try to tailor the elements of the application to local needs and donor interests." This example implies that with the transition to project-based funding, partnerships between PNGOs and donors could become the basis for a dialogue between a global and a local agenda. This explains the strong rejection of project funding by organizations that look at their accomplishments and feel their independence should be preserved and do not want to engage in this dialogue with the donors. In this respect the case of Inash al-Usra (an NGO which was very important during the first Intifada) is a revealing example of NGOs who do not want to engage in negotiations. It is a PNGO with a different view. At the same time, it blames the donors and does not want to negotiate with them, as if it has a grudge against the donors. It does not understand why one of the French organizations asks them details about the long term results of sponsoring a marginalized family, even if this French organization is a solidarity one. Especially, if one compares Inash al-Usra with Rawdat al-Zuhur, one can see how the latter is much more active and willing to try to engage donors. Rawdat al-Zuhour does this without adopting the approach of professional organizations. It had a successful open-house which served as a fundraising event, and subsequently they received $10,000 from the UNDP. Rawdat al-Zuhur extends its hand out to donors.

Some Palestinian NGOs approach negotiations with the donors with great confidence (usually the larger organizations). They envision donor-NGO relations as an association which should aspire to a partnership, one which gives the local organization equal say: "A participatory approach needs both partners to participate in designing, implementing and evaluating the project. The structure should reflect a partnership." 'Partnership' understood in this regard by such interviewees, represents an ideal type in which donors and NGOs together design the project, its implementation and evaluation. This NGO actor continues his conception of partnership: "In 1997, an Italian organization contacted us and suggested establishing a program to assist small scale enterprises. UNRWA was interested in helping women entrepreneurs, providing business advisory services to them. We developed the proposal on how to proceed. We conducted 12 consultative workshops in various areas with the local population; we met with 400 women to introduce the idea asking them what the main constraints facing female entrepreneurs were and asking them for their concept of structure to help them. Based on the results of these consultations we produced a report about constraints/needs." This represents an example of a donor-initiated project, where the PNGO was clearly unsure of whether to proceed with it or not. The reader should notice how the local organization increased

their ownership over the project by conducting a significant survey of local opinions, consulting 400 women and including their voice into the project. In this case, the consultative workshop represents and exemplifies a mechanism that the PNGO used to negotiate with the donors and modify a project which they themselves were unsure of; thus making it more accountable to the needs of Palestinian women and acceptable to the organization.

PNGO Approaches to Negotiations

The following is a survey of Palestinian NGOs' views on negotiations, what should be negotiated, and implicit in these understandings of what *can be negotiated*. In the first case, the NGO feels that 'priorities' are not something worth negotiating over, rather what should be negotiated over is the structure of the project. One PNGO interviewee states: "We have always had strong partnerships with donors. But we also have strong mechanisms to clarify our goals and ensure accountability. For example, now we will be holding workshops as the transition period is ending, to clarify our vision and future direction. The issue is not only about priorities and content, but it is about the structure of the program. Priorities are subjective: in a sense they are all useful and important. How can we say that developing water sources/conservation is better than institutional development? There is a diversity of NGOs and the needs of people are very diversified."

Another Palestinian NGO, one specialized in healthcare, considers that the margin for negotiation is small for two reasons: First, as the officer states, "Palestine is not needier than Bangladesh, but there is a political agenda here; the peace process and stability in the region"; second, "Before the PNA the funds were more honest, the money came in solidarity with and support of the Palestinians. The values of the donors were more in line with our own. Now the concerns are less for solidarity and more political."

Why does this organization choose not to negotiate with the donors, opting for the exit model? One of its leaders provides a justification for this position: "What we are trying to do as NGOs is to maximize this opportunity for Palestine before the funding stops. This means taking advantage of the money, by presenting our work to donors and getting their support. But with some we cannot do this, some donors funds are allocated by governments; i.e., SIDA, USAID, and the potential to change them is difficult, but we still try.... This means that this is part of taking advantage of the present situation of donor concern with Palestine."

"Our policy is to try to minimize the damage, if we feel a project is problematic for some reason or does not reflect the population's concerns. If we tell donors that this project goes against Palestinian development

priorities, they will simply find another NGO partner. We try to enter the project and reorient it, change things like the target group, or the geographic location to improve it. For example, in 1996 there was a project between CARE and UNFPA for women's health. We and others opposed the project. Despite our protests the project went ahead. The next year we entered the project with CARE to try and improve it.... On the next project they wanted us to be the implementers; we objected and told them local institutions should be involved. We told them they cannot work alone and succeed. Thus we entered the project with them and reviewed its priorities, objectives, etc. and we came to some compromises, and we were able to minimize the damage and wasted funding. This is our approach. Usually the Americans are the toughest in this regard, they are different from the Europeans, and they are less flexible and less willing to negotiate."

Another local NGO in the health sector summarizes the problem of negotiating with American organizations: "Unfortunately, working with USAID requires lots of negotiations. It can be humiliating. But we forced our way on them. It is true, they have a political agenda, a personal agenda, and they work to promote the peace process. Shall we refuse? But we need this. Sometimes there are projects that are more problematic than they are worth and it is best not to have them. For example, there was a US family planning organization that approached us with $1 million for training. They wanted to work on promoting male sterilization. We rejected it, more than this – we got them out of the country. We informed the minister of their project and succeeded in getting them out. There are cases of projects that can hurt the country and are not culturally sensitive. On the other hand, if we can re-design them, they can be useful."

The same interviewee continues by making a distinction between American donors and other donor agencies: "Most of our projects are funded by the Norwegians. They have a framework for funding projects, which is defined internationally; it is not defined specifically for Palestine. We submit proposals based on our needs: the project, objectives, needs, staff, etc. have all been defined by us. We negotiated with them that we decide on the role of the staff, they do not dictate. We have the ultimate decision making power for the project. They give us feedback and monitor things to ensure the project is being implemented as planned, but we are in control. This is an ideal, healthy approach that is based on a partnership. Now on the other hand there is USAID. The way in which we must deal with them is so problematic. They get too involved in the design of the project and in the funding/budget. For a project to have an impact it needs plans that contribute to the impact. When they get involved in the design, they suggest things like international consultants. This can cost so much and they accept it, but if we go over the budget slightly they object.... We were going to reject a project with USAID, but we compromised, painfully.

Now after working with them for a while, we have pressured them with the support of other NGOs regarding some of their rigid and inflexible tactics. Now, we have succeeded in getting them to agree to listen to our own comments on the feedback they provide us with – not them just dictating to us. Therefore, in this regard, you can influence the donors."

However, all of these testimonies, including the local NGOs' 'success' stories of prevailing in their negotiations with the donors, still does not mean that the Palestinian NGOs are investing in the space for negotiations. Many donors reported that local NGOs are in a hurry to obtain funding even if unrelated to their sector. Many donors receive formal and informal phone calls from PNGOs who raise questions such as: "What kinds of projects are you funding?" and "What is your focus these days?" A small health organization reported to us that one of its donors imposes the location of the projects. When we addressed the donor, it became apparent that the donor agency's officer proposed a location which to him seemed marginalized in terms of access to health service. The Palestinian NGO formulated a request for another location without explaining why. When the officer asked for a justification the PNGO actor simply withdrew its request for the location change. This kind of NGO, which fails to invest in negotiations, is open to what donors offer, and accepts items from their shopping list. Without making the investment in the margin that exists, the NGO will lose sight of its own agenda.

The negotiation process does not only pertain to donors and recipients, but also relates to exchanges between donor organizations in Western capitals and their representatives in Tel Aviv and Ramallah. An officer at one of the Scandinavian cooperation offices in Ramallah relays her struggle to change the donor agency's priorities and her efforts to incorporate women's projects into the bilateral channel: "We were approached by WATC. I argued that this sector is important and should be prioritized. I received a proposal from WATC, and felt what they want to do is very significant and important. I personally went and met with a director at MOPIC and pushed the idea on him, to have the women's sector included as part of bilateral cooperation." This is an important example showing how sector agendas can be defined through the input and the initiative of the individuals inside donor organizations. Now this woman's project has been incorporated into the bilateral program. This case also shows the importance some donors assign to women's empowerment.

Finally, the way in which an NGO invests in the space for negotiations can also be understood in a manner analogous to the Hirschman model (See Chapter 3): following the pattern of voice, exit or loyalty. The *voice* model prevails if the NGO approaches cooperation with the donor with the aim to interject its own input into the project idea, its methodology, target group and location. In contrast to this, the *exit* model refers to an NGO approach of either exiting completely from negotiations or tentatively

accepting the funds and then changing the projects from inside. *Loyalty* implies that the NGO accepts the conceptions (and not necessarily the conditions) of the donor.

Flexibility as a Form of Negotiations

What kind of flexibility can be observed among the donors? Are they willing to extend a deadline, and does this constitute a form of flexibility? We understand flexibility as a willingness to amend fixed features of programs, such as the budget line, when there is a sudden event, or if there is a change in the project. In general, donors have shown some flexibility if a clear and valid reason to change is given by the local organization.

After reviewing the files of some of the donor agencies', it is evident that there are numerous examples of donors modifying certain project arrangements according to requests made by the NGO partner, such as changes to the implementation schedule. One example provided by a local organization in Gaza illustrates that the donors are also sensitive to the societies' own norms: "We have one project, a mixed project for girls and boys. The mixing of the two sexes offended the sensibilities of some of the parents; you know this is a traditional society. We explained this to the donors; they agreed with us that the project should be changed." Another NGO discusses other forms of flexibility shown by donors: "We will begin producing our research in English not just in Arabic. So far most of our research has been written in Arabic. But donors cannot read this and cannot see our work; thus far they have accepted it this way. But we need to show the donors we are capable, therefore we should publish in English. Second, we are planning to produce a video on our organization in which we will introduce some of the issues we tackle, i.e., early marriage. This can introduce the donors to what we do."

Emergency funding can be considered to be a sign of willingness to yield to unforeseen developments, suggesting a certain degree of flexibility and willingness to bend to unanticipated events. A large human rights organization was able to set aside 10% of its budget for unexpected situations that require immediate action. As this PNGO explains: "Last year we did not have any conferences listed in our plans. During the year the opportunity to hold an international conference in Geneva came up. We approached the donors with the idea and they agreed quickly. We have the flexibility to do things quickly with them. These core partners are basically all INGOs."

The eruption of the second Intifada has pushed the issue of emergency funding to the fore. Generally, INGOs and donors working in the Palestinian Territories adjusted aspects of their program objectives, enabling the local NGOs to respond and cope with needs during the uprising. The

first major emergency funds to arrive were distributed by USAID. In fact, the US agency publicized its intention to provide this assistance in the local newspapers, identifying partner organizations to which this aid would be dispensed, including the UPMRC among others. The Medical Relief Committees protested to USAID for not consulting with them before publishing information about them.

Surprisingly, the European Commission waited one month before deciding to provide emergency assistance. Although Palestinian partners made demands, local officers refused. It is apparent, however, that despite the delay in the donor agencies' reactions, they did modify their programs and a certain amount of flexibility was shown. It is not usually easy for international donor agencies to make such decisions, for a variety of reasons, including complicated bureaucratic procedures. According to our interviews with MSF, the EC needs three months to take a decision even for emergency funds, and sometime the causes of the emergency recedes before the funding arrives.

INGOs responded much faster to the Intifada than the donors, both in reacting to the situation, and in modifying their projects accordingly. Amal Khreishe conveys with humor that she agreed with her donors to consider demonstrations as a type of "outdoor workshop."

4.4. Changing Organizational Forms

Palestinian NGOs have undergone many transformations since their historical inception in the 1970's and 1980's. While undoubtedly shaped by internal factors, these changes have also been propelled by external shifts, in particular by the restructuring of Western development assistance and the formation of new relations between donors and international NGOs. This section addresses these transformations, focusing on four issues: the emergence of the techno-bureaucrat and the expert within the field of international development; the rise and the increasing predominance of project funding; and emphasis on the advocacy function of the NGOs. And finally, we will also look at the local NGO formations, arguing that new global agendas and donor practices support the creation of mega-NGOs.

Emergence of Techno-bureaucrat Expert Actors in the International Community

Two types of actors play a central role in international organizations: the administrative officers and the experts. Contrary to the image of a donor

devising its agenda in a distant capital, our fieldwork reveals the importance of the administrative staff within the local office in setting donor funding priorities. Such individuals possess decision-making authority; in selecting local partners and evaluating proposals, they not only propose ideas but also negotiate with the head office. These techno-bureaucrats are more than executors, as we saw in the example discussed above, of the local officer being able to modify the British Foreign Ministry's poverty alleviation approach.

In regard to the expert, this individual is usually contracted out on a temporary basis as a consultant to design and evaluate programs and projects. The triumph of the expert model within the aid industry is linked to a broader process of restructuring, marked off by the increased role of INGOs in dispensing government funds, in turn paralleled by the weakening of the solidarity model.

It is clear to us that both the techno-bureaucrats and the consultants often adopt what we called a "technicistic" approach. Muller (1989:19) has also observed this, locating it within a broader context in which management training and institutional capacity building have become very important for NGOs. Moreover, it has been recently acknowledged that 'capacity building' activities are so common that they constitute a veritable donor fashion, as seen by the Welfare Association survey (Hanafi, 1999), and the Clark and Balaj report (1994:10). Moreover, these training programs are often not tailored to the particular requirements of the NGO, and with poor coordination this effort becomes duplicative and produces limited results.

The practices of the techno-bureaucrat and the expert are underwritten by the technicistic approach. The latter is steeped in Max Weber's *instrumental rationality*. This is a process towards the most efficient means for attaining or realizing goals that are predefined. This is often reinforced by a form of scientificity (or scientific rationality). The *scientific-technocrat* produces reality through what Foucault called a 'ritual of truth.' This gives rise to a growing body of knowledge that presents itself as 'scientific' and which contributes to the power of governmentality. This form of subjectivity places particular importance on the primary orientation of the agents and often marginalizes the feedback from the on-the-ground experience, as will be illustrated in the discussion of community participation and Participatory Rapid Appraisal approach (PRA), below. It is apparent that the NGOs discourse, both local and international, does not take into account the evolving academic-practitioner-consultant relationship in the reconstituting global division of labor. As per the Foucauldian perspective, power is a necessary condition for the construction of knowledge. Yet the consultant's discourse is still based on the global-local disjuncture. In this discourse, local knowledge and analysis are devalued, under varying pretexts, among them the (assumed) inherent bias of the local experts in approaching local issues that directly relate to the conflict in

which they are living. At the same time and in the same discourse, there is an over-emphasis on international technical expertise, its set of tools and its ability to provide predictable solutions.

With regards to the subjectivity of the experts, it is more accurate to speak of *inter-subjectivity*. The production of knowledge is connected to the impact of the institution and the disciplinary processes embedded within it. Building on Foucault's concept of governmentality, these techno-bureaucrats and experts are indeed decision-makers but, at the same time, they internalize the rules made by the institutions that control the individual through surveillance processes.

Part of this surveillance process is to set up rational and quantitative indicators for measuring the success or failure of a project. One of the health organizations working in the field of mental health relays the problem: "Some donors want to know how many meetings it takes to cure the sick in one year. This is not possible. In our society circumstances are unstable. Training may start, a person's health improves but later they may regress and have to return to us." We suggest that the issue is not that the donors do not appreciate local circumstances, but that they are fixated on having quantifiable indicators that can be reported at the end of the year. The techno-bureaucrats of the donor agencies often work with logical frameworks, and they are required to provide quantifiable indicators in addition to qualitative ones.

Smillie argues that the Logical Framework Analysis (LFA) reflects the logic according to which donors approach the development process. The LFA tries to impose certainty and control onto a risky and uncertain process. This may be more appropriate for and reflective of the running of the economy, as opposed to the political economy. Moreover, this contributes to a shift in attention away from the ground and the activities of development, towards the nature of the NGO with emphasis on the search for the most 'efficient and sound management' and the NGO capable of handling the process (1995: 158).

Some might argue that the popularity of such methodology is related to the growing complexity of the work of the donor agencies and international organizations. This is not inevitable. Very few international organizations devote significant consideration to developing the right approach. Some do in an effort to make their programs as amenable as possible to the recipient context such as, for example, ENDA. The 'Environmental Development of the Third World' (ENDA-TM) is an international associative organization with non-profit goals. ENDA was founded in 1972 in Dakar; it is composed of separate organizational entities which are co-coordinated by an Executive Secretary. This organization began in reaction to the European approach to development, invariably imposed from European capitals. In contrast to this, for ENDA, knowledge should be legitimized by power structures at the local level. It considers its program as political and neither reformist

nor humanistic. ENDA's approach is premised on encouraging the participation of the population in all stages of the project from its incept to its completion. Prioritizing *social actors*, it draws on all of the community's resources, including the traditional leaders (sheikhs) in a manner which does not try to instrumentalize their input, but rather directs their participation into the community urban project. Contrary to other international organizations, ENDA has worked with the Islamists and mobilized them for social and economic projects. Moreover, the poverty alleviation project that ENDA promotes becomes a tool for urban and social change, creating a new concept of citizenship.

Furthermore, in contrast to other international development organizations, ENDA does not package and categorize initiatives into separate projects, typically divided according to advocacy, awareness raising or service provision, but espouses a single package, with the overarching objective of transforming the life of the population. To this end, mobilization is very important for them. A committee of local fundraisers is established. With 10 branches in Senegal, ENDA refused to create specialized technical teams. Each branch should depend on primarily local resources. For ENDA, the participation of the target population is important, because it believes that often the articulation of local demands reflects dominant group interests and, therefore, does not necessarily reflect broad-based needs. ENDA refuses to enter a country with a pre-constructed methodological canvas to be applied onto the local population, but chooses to mobilize the population to be fully involved in defining, implementing and evaluating the project.

In a country like Senegal, ENDA has become a very powerful organization. When the Senegalese government devised its master plan to combat urban poverty, ENDA imposed its rules on the donors. In instances where 60% of the funding is provided by institutional (government) resources, it explicitly resists the expert method of evaluation.

Having introduced the notion of techno-bureaucrats and experts and contrasted this with the ENDA model, it remains to inquire, how do the techno-bureaucrats and the experts of the international community influence local NGOs? The process is not simple. By way of illustration, we will start with the example of an international approach to grassroots participation and examine how this approach is dealt with at the local level.

Community Participation, as an Agenda Taken for Granted

During the course of our interviews many NGO leaders discussed the importance of community participation. However, upon close inspection, we found that community participation is often used as a slogan: it is discussed as a method, but when probed as to how it is applied, there is

little substance behind the celebratory proclamation of increasing grassroots participation. One of the Palestinian officials working in an NGO that provides grants to Palestinian organizations praised community appraisal methods, and stressed the need to train partners in them. Her treatment of community appraisal, however, is analogous to a panacea: a medicine for all ailments. But not all NGOs and INGOs fall into this category. The Catholic Relief Services, one of the first organizations to use the Participatory Rapid Appraisal (PRA) in Palestine, adopted this approach as part of a genuine effort to reinforce the participation of target groups.

Nonetheless, one notices that both local NGOs and international organizations working in the Palestinian Territories highlight the importance of community input and mechanisms like the PRA in their discourse, but in practice many do not promote or utilize these techniques. A program coordinator in one of the big PNGOs reported that: "PRA is a 'professional word' used for the donors; it increases NGO credibility. The problem is whether the donor and/or NGO are using the PRA as a tool for information or as an approach to be followed. While one women's organization carried out the PRA in half a day, it took me 15 days to complete it in Gaza for the same size of project. Donors play around with PRA and use it to legitimize their own agenda. UNDP completes the PRA in 1 day. In most of my NGO experience with PRA where there is a divergence between the results of the needs assessment and donor agenda, the latter is followed."[45]

In addition to this, the same program coordinator quoted above also addressed criticisms of the Welfare Association Consortium, which heads the management of the World Bank Fund for PNGOs. According to him, the World Bank does not want to use the PRA. He continues that: "For a big project in Gaza, a conference was organized for the first phase of the project; PNGOs were invited to give their input. But the World Bank had its own objectives and did it this way, i.e., held a conference instead of doing a PRA in advance. With the third cycle of the project it became clear that only 10-15% of the projects would be in Gaza, but the aim of the project is poverty alleviation, so why is Gaza so excluded!!" This refusal to make a serious participatory approach could reflect the fear that the new elite in the NGO sector has of the rural elite and the traditionalistic views they espouse.

We have two hypotheses regarding the manner in which the PRA, as a tool for community participation or communication, has been taken for granted. The first hypothesis is that a community participation agenda does not function in Palestine. The second hypothesis is that the actors in charge have interiorized the global agenda without interpreting the agenda, and adapting it to the local context.

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[45] Abdo substantiates this argument. She quotes the Bisan June 1993 report on a project in Askar Camp. The women in the camps were asked about a project initiative to set up a small business center in the camp: in the survey, the women expressed their opposition to the idea, but both the donor and PNGO went ahead with project anyway (Abdo, 1995).

Concerning the first hypothesis, this view holds that the community participation approach does not fit Palestine. In this perspective, the notion of rural village life, as a community capable of contributing in a positive manner to a needs assessment, is too simplistic. Beyond the local level and the predominance of the PRA in PNGO discourse, it is evident that this mechanism has become popular as part of a broader trend adopted globally and especially by international organizations for whom community participation is considered to be essential. Often, however, the assumptions underlying this prioritization of community involvement are simplistic, stereotypical, and represent romanticized notions of village life as a form of warm communal existence, and the opposite of the individualistic, egoistic life of urban centers. In other words, it seems that the representation of 'community' in this perspective is more in line with a mythic 'Other,' that has been defined in relation to an internalized notion of the 'Self,' more than it has been defined in reference to an actual community.

In this regard, what has been happening in Palestine? Has the global emphasis on needs assessment arrived and been implemented in Palestine in the manner described above? Is it possible that the NGO actors, aware that the rural society is made up of undemocratic, traditional elites that can circumvent NGOs and global agendas inside the sectors, do not apply the PRA? And by doing so keep the local elite outside of influence?

According to Crochet, following the end of the Khmer regime, Cambodian society became very individualistic and interpersonal relations were marked by an absence of trust. In this context, community participation projects to prevent AIDS failed tremendously because of the absence of communitarian life (2000). The point here is that the notions of "community" that frame a project and often arrive to the local society can be superficial and often erroneous representations of the village.

The main idea that emerges is that there is no universal definition of "community participation." The notion that this can be defined universally must be questioned. We need to ask, is there a real "community"? What do we mean by community? Do not communities form around issues and in relation to events, with specific actors leading and representing these "communities"? Further to this, it needs to be asked what kind of participation is meant. What is the relationship between the actors involved, what links them to the project? Do they want to be involved, i.e., volunteer? According to Bernoux, quoted in 1985: "There is no community defined as it is. It is always relative to an action. The community can dissolve when this action does not mobilize it anymore. At the same time, this community can be created in the moment of the action" (Crochet, 2000:76).

The second hypothesis concerns the Palestinian NGOs' internalization of the global agenda without questioning it and the instrumentalization by the INGOs of the local NGOs. As Hulme and Edwards ask, while NGOs can claim benefits from their closeness to donor organizations, such

as increased access to ideas, new approaches and concepts, is the reverse applicable? The authors warn that while donors prioritize 'participatory approaches,' it is not clear how much this actually provides NGOs with the space to shape and alter the outcomes, and by extension it is not clear how open and willing the donors are to such input. Moreover, the authors warn that structural constraints reduce the likelihood that such participation will be meaningful: "Can participation be achieved by limited consultations about strategies that are already well formulated and that must fit into three-year time frames?" (1997: 10).

This second hypothesis could be taken to mean that the internalization of the global agenda results in knowledge being shared between the local and the international community. However, this is often not true. Let us consider the evaluation process as a form of knowledge, and investigate the interaction among the actors, and whether evaluations are shared with the concerned individuals in the local organization.

Evaluation: Unshared Knowledge

Donor appraisals of NGO projects have been criticized by many authors for the way evaluations focus on the outputs of a project, while failing to probe deeper at the community level, in order to observe the impact on beneficiaries. A member of one of the women's organizations stated that: "Sometimes donors expect a revolution for the $60,000 they contributed. I will not work with such donors again. If they think they can see such results right away there is a problem." However, this NGO leader does not seem to have a conception of an alternative method of evaluation to present to the donor, nor does she recognize the need to challenge the donor in this regard.

Smillie rightfully critiques the methods currently being used by donors: he points out that evaluations tend to focus on outputs of a project itself, ignoring the larger development process. Therefore the donors neglect critical questions such as, did the program make the best use out of the available inputs? What would it cost for local society to continue this project without donor support? These questions are not asked in donor evaluations (Smillie, 1999: 26). Here, Smillie is pointing out a fundamental flaw in evaluations that reflect the power relations between NGOs and donors. By only evaluating the project output, rather than how a project fits into development processes, the donor organization removes itself of responsibility to the society in which the project is being implemented. Accountability remains upwardly oriented: objectives of the project are examined inside of the narrow "project-box" with a record of how donor money is spent. "Partnership" and the power of the NGO to represent societal interests and prevent projects from diverting from a particular

developmental course are sidestepped. Smillie also views evaluations as being wrongly linked to funding decisions. For example, if a project fails and financial punishment follows the evaluation, then objectivity and willingness to learn from experience are inhibited by this minus zero equation. The consequence of this, according to Smillie, is that the entire relationship between NGOs and donors needs to be redefined along principles of "trust" and "autonomy." His prescription is that practical mechanisms need to be set up to overcome power inequalities between donors and NGOs. Moreover, his suggestion is that NGO peer evaluations be adopted, instead of donor evaluations. This will give NGOs more autonomy and encourage them to admit failure and learn from the past (Smillie, 1999: 33).

Although many donors and INGOs working in the Palestinian territories subscribe to the PRA, these actors very rarely use it in a substantive manner. The PRA if applied properly in Palestine could be used to evaluate the initial needs of the population. However, this still leaves the matter open, along with the unresolved need for a mechanism which can evaluate target groups and the impact of the project on these individuals after the initiative ends.

Usually, it is the donor who conducts the evaluation. If the project is large, the donor may bring an external actor from headquarters to function as a third party; but it remains that these decisions are taken by the donor. For Oxfam Quebec, when projects are over a certain budget level, the INGO brings in an expert from Canada to evaluate the project and verify everything: whether the goals were realized, if problems appeared during implementation of the project, and if the manager of the project was able to resolve them. In this type of situation, the third party brought in by the donor is constrained by a limited time frame, the language barrier, and possibly unfamiliarity with the local context. In such cases, more often than not, the evaluation is closely linked to a continuation of funding. This stifles critical discussions of the project, and therefore the opportunity to use the evaluation as a mechanism for reflection and for generation of new ideas. According to some, in such a context evaluations are more comparable to a 'test' that must be passed for further funds to be disbursed, rather than a learning process for both parties (Malena, 1995: 20). The consequence of this is that there is seldom any accountability by the funder to the local beneficiaries. Whether the local society is better off because of the project/program is not considered. Moreover the best NGOs, from the donor perspective, are those that account for funds quickly and effectively. The donor evaluation rarely connects the project to the NGO's broader programs.

One of the human rights organizations clearly illustrates the type of distortion caused by this understanding of evaluation: "We must divide each project up into different aspects – each is funded separately. Some, for example Danida, want to know what other donors are funding. Therefore,

we must make an action plan and evaluate a portion of each of our programs for each donor: Swedes, Dutch, etc, all within one year. This is detrimental and causes splitting in the mentality of the professionals. They must evaluate each aspect of the project and determine objectives separately. The result is too much evaluation and reporting, when this time should be spent on projects."

Another type of distortion arises when the expert carries out the mission hastily and formulates criteria that do not fit the context. One of the intermediary women organizations, states: "Sometimes if in the rural areas where we work with women's committees, the donors want an evaluation, we bring a local to do it. Our projects are sub-contracted out to committees. Sometimes donors complain because people in the rural areas do not know us. For us this is not important. They know the committee, and the committee is important because it has the direct ties to these people. Donors think if we are not known in the rural areas, it is not a success, but this is wrong."

There is also a problem in terms of evaluation 'invisibility.' What we mean by this is that evaluations can be understood as a form of knowledge produced and thereafter shared between donor, or INGO, and (very few) NGOs. For example, when one of the Palestinian research centers asked for a copy of an evaluation by a German Stiftung, it was only given excerpts of it, while another local PNGO receives all of the evaluations carried out by their Scandinavian donor agency. However, donor evaluations are usually not available to NGOs. It is rare to find evaluations on PNGOs' web sites or to find that the staff have access to or openly discuss evaluations. Almost none of the PNGOs' annual reports disclose even a summary of donor evaluations. Moreover, it is rare to find a critical discussion of their programs. For example, one of the prominent human rights organizations has a very static annual report, which only describes its projects. This is an important issue for it indicates there are forms of knowledge which are kept undisclosed. One is inevitably led to the conclusion that overall there is a lack of communication between donors and NGOs, and among NGOs.

Unfortunately it appears that the majority of the Palestinian NGOs do not have an alternative conception of evaluations to offer to the donors. It seems that they are not yet convinced of the importance of the evaluation as a mechanism of knowledge from which they can benefit. Rather, they accept it as a procedural tool. In this respect, we reiterate what a Palestinian program coordinator said above, that the Palestinian NGOs do not conduct evaluations unless they are asked to do so by the donors. The problem is not necessarily that the evaluation should be done by the local actor, per se, but rather we suggest it is important to reduce evaluations reflecting the 'box mentality', to focus on outputs over results, and to set up new innovative techniques, including, for instance, the creation of a team composed of both foreign and local experts.

Project versus Core Funding

Given their own predilection and leanings, the donor agencies in the Palestinian territories have oriented PNGOs, and indirectly exerted pressure on them, to submit project-oriented proposals,[46] rather than program proposals. Core funding is certainly better suited for organizations working to promote social change, as this type of work takes time. It not always produces tangible results, and therefore needs greater flexibility and stability than what can be provided with project-based funding. According to Silsby (1996: 28), 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.

The human rights organizations in the Palestinian territories are, by and large, the only type of organization to receive core funding. Reviewing the human rights file of one of the Scandinavian cooperation agencies, it is evident that there are almost no project proposals submitted. Most PNGOs receive grants to use towards their programs – each submits its annual programs or plan of action. However, some human rights organizations receive funding on a project basis. For example, half of Al Haq funding is core funding while the other half is project based. When we asked this organization about its relationship with the donors and about its ability to negotiate for core funding, it reported that: "All of our projects are our own ideas. The donors only have input in translating the Strategic Plan into administrative plans for each project, which means dividing up the work among staff in the most efficient manner. Al Haq has a full-time staff and all contribute. The projects are not divided up into teams; a staff member will work on more than one project. The donor helps clarify the administrative arrangement."

Generally, the bigger the NGO, the greater the possibility of core funding. A women's organization, such as the Women's Center for Legal Aid and Counseling, receives two-thirds of its budget as core funding, and the rest on a project basis. Otherwise, it is very difficult and rare for Palestinian NGOs to have core funding. Our fieldwork confirms that most of the funding for PNGOs is project based.

Despite the strong critique against project funding, donors continue to privilege this type of arrangement. In her research, Malena found that Northern organizations were usually unwilling to provide long-term funding and imposed project-based funding. She points out that many observers have made the case that the project approach is out-dated as well, and is not in line with SNGOs' needs and development approaches (Malena,

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[46] A project can be defined as a concentration of means in a limited time and space in order to achieve a defined objective.

1995). Indicative of such assessments, a woman activist that we interviewed described the failure of an attempt to advance women's legal rights through the project approach: "The problem of the informal parliament that WCLAC accepted to implement was a (donor-imposed) limited time frame project and not a long term program. If we had gone slowly we could have achieved our aims." (For more on this project, see Chapter 5)

Project-oriented funding seems to reply to three logics. The first logic is that neo-liberalism is no longer a concern of all the population at the national level. Projects are limited by target group and geographic area. Secondly, aid channels and donor agencies emphasize tangible effects, or quantitatively visible results, which invariably orient the focus towards the short term, as opposed to the long run. The third logic concerns the new type of INGO working in the Palestinian society. This INGO is not the solidarity group of late. Some have little knowledge of and experience in the local society, which is why they prefer to go slowly and focus on short-term cooperation.

Smillie argues that project-based funding should be rethought: it removes donors from the reality on the ground. He outlines that the project approach is problematic for NGOs, as it does not adequately reflect how they approach development. It requires things to be divided into boxes when organizations take a holistic approach. Finally, he points out that many NNGOs have convinced governments to give them multi-year bloc grants instead of project grants. However he notes that NNGOs have not used this important breakthrough with SNGOs and still subject them to a project approach (1999: 29).

Project-based funding can be very problematic for the sustainability of the NGOs, as exemplified by one of the Palestinian rehabilitation centers which provides services: "Many come and go, and no one has made a long-term commitment to us (i.e., providing core funding), all funds are project based or for equipment. To establish this organization we raised $40,000 from the city, and received support from ANERA, as well as from a Catholic and an Islamic organization and from some of the embassies here. We are committed to continue searching for funds, but as I said till now no one has made a real commitment to our services."[47]

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[47] Another interviewee indicates that project-based funding affects the type of services or activities the NGO is able to provide and this can pose a problem for the integrity of the NGO's service provision: "Sometimes the services we can provide to our community in Gaza are limited because of the donor's conditions. For example, female schizophrenia, no donor is willing to support. This therefore limits our ability to provide services to this group. In each of our projects the target group is stipulated, and thus must be approved by the donors. Our circumstances do not really allow for such specific stipulations, this doesn't work in a reality were there are deep needs. Some donors outline that any changes must be approved by them, i.e. regarding emergency funds, they cannot be used unless we report to them and they approve. Our circumstances sometimes do not allow for such rigid stipulations."

Building on this, one could argue that project funding can endanger the program approach, which NGOs follow on the ground. However, it is evident that due to certain mechanisms, including the oversight of the board and the administrative committee, and because the donors pay close attention to NGO activities, there is a form of continuity in the NGO's orientation and the way it intervenes in the local development process. Although a high turnover of staff was noticed, one does not find the radical discontinuity that one would expect given the predominance of project funding.[48]

Finally, some PNGOs are conscious of the danger of fragmented projects and inconsistency in their programs, especially in this transition period. One of these organizations developed its program document after the establishment of the Palestinian National Authority. It produced the document through workshops held within the organization to establish a new plan of action based on the new reality in Palestine. The NGO reached the conclusion that its primary objective should be to move away from its current status as a relief organization towards a development organization. To this end, the NGO adopted a program approach that is almost equivalent to core funding. Its programs run for a minimum of three years each: this strategy distances the organization from the regular project-based funding approach.

Advocacy versus Services

There are three logics behind the ascendancy of advocacy over services as a type of project approach encouraged by the donors. Firstly, there is *neo-liberalism*, which focuses on the need to empower the individual to look after themselves, in the face of reduced government services and increased economicability (costs) within social life. This point was discussed extensively in the three case studies presented in Chapter 3.

Secondly, the institutional constraints of the donors, for example, budget restrictions, lead donors to favor advocacy over services as a way to have an impact in the short-term and with less financial resources. For instance, Danida encourages organizations to go out into the 'village' and inform people about their rights. We asked the donor why it chooses an advocacy approach, as opposed to projects that empower people with skills or something tangible, enabling them to demand their rights on their own. Danida responded by highlighting the problem of limited finances,

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[48] There are, however, exceptions and cases in which NGOs maneuver around the mechanisms which support and sustain this continuity. For example, in one of the NGOs a dispute between the director and the board resulted in the board leaving, rather than the director being fired. Another organization in the health sector has a project for a computer lab for youth that has no relation to health. However, such examples are an exception.

explaining that it is difficult with a small budget to have a real impact or to try, for instance, to empower people by giving them certain skills. So, in one respect, advocacy is a strategy for small budgets.

Thirdly, there is also the logic of the cultural and historical bias of the donor in their developmental framework in regard to gender. According to Puar (1996), donors view gender from the cultural and historical perspective of the development of Western feminism. In this regard, gender projects that promote female equality with men and tackle gender in this manner are prioritized. Other initiatives that empower women in a different manner are looked at as being less relevant. The extent to which the elite of the Palestinian women's movement internalize these frames and adopt them for their own reasons is also an important issue which has implications for the internal development of the women's movement.

Most of the NGOs that suffer from such a conception are the charity organizations which used to empower women through the services provided to them. According to one leader of these organizations, Farida Amad, of Inash al-Usra, this NGO did not succeed in forming ties with the donors. She argues that donors have their own agenda, which includes a conscious or unconscious preoccupation with a particular type of empowerment for women which prioritizes advocacy/lobbying over the types of services the societies are providing, i.e., literacy programs and vocational training. The study of the women's agenda in the previous Chapter provides more analysis on this point.

WATC, an important coalition of women's organizations and activists, also recognizes the problem associated with the prioritization of the advocacy approach, even though it is compelled for funding reasons to focus on advocacy. The director describes the organization's experience initiating a project for women that is not advocacy oriented: "We found out that one of the biggest problems for girls is the need to pay transportation costs to schools, and that there is a high drop out rate, which is not only due to social norms but also to financial reasons. We decided to help them get to school. We started a sponsorship program and asked many locals (for donations). Few responded. We presented it to the donors, but no response. But they respect us and many donated money to the program. Oxfam would never fund something like this, but they respect us and found a way to raise $3000, the South African Office gave us $900 and Qattan Foundation also gave some money. We have ended up helping 45 girls."

The main issue concerning this scholarship program is that it does not fit into donor priorities, as one women's activist declared, "Donors do not see this as empowerment, but as welfare and unsustainable." WATC attempted to present this project as empowerment and not as welfare, and indeed it is a form of empowerment from the local actor's point of view. More importantly, though, this example outlines what is set down

as "red lines" by the donors and the margin within which NGOs have to maneuver. In this regard, the future of WATC's sponsorship program is still unclear. Commenting on all of the wrangling and effort the NGO exerted in order to advance a project that was not prioritized by the donors, the director stated: "All of this took so much effort in comparison to writing a proposal and receiving $100,000 from a donor." One idea that was developed is that the women assisted by the program should repay the organization after graduating from university, six months after finding a job. This would assist WATC to continue the program and possibly even start an endowment fund, which could support women's education expenses.

In addition to this, it should be made clear that the problem is not simply advocacy versus services, but also what type of advocacy approach is adopted. Our fieldwork reveals the prevalence of an advocacy approach, which is characterized by the following features: it targets educated individuals who read the newspapers; that is to say, the focus is on the print media. Further to this, the preferred mechanism is generally the workshop, as opposed to the mass media, including the radio. There are, of course, exceptions to this. For example, the Palestinian Working Women's Society operates a radio program and advertises it in the local papers. Similarly, as will be indicated below, WATC runs a successful television program covering women's issues.

Reviewing the activities advertised in the *Al Ayyam* newspaper during a three month period (May-June-July 2000), it is very clear that a large proportion of the NGO-organized activities fall into the category of advocacy and awareness raising initiatives. This can be seen in the newspaper reports, articles and announcements about workshops, symposia and training courses organized by NGOs. (See Table 10.) Based upon this examination we deduced the following. Firstly, it is apparent that NGOs' awareness raising and advocacy activities receive more media attention than their other work. Moreover, this focus on advocacy and awareness raises two issues: first, the titles of some of the conferences are really very vague: Human Rights; Women and Their Rights, Democracy and Human Rights: a Necessity. Secondly, while the NGOs know how important the TV and radio channels are, they continue to orient themselves towards the newspapers when they disseminate information. This can be interpreted as indicating that the NGO leaders are inclined towards enhancing their visibility through written culture, in spite of the fact of the centrality of oral culture in a country like Palestine. Therefore, the PNGOs adopt the 'high culture' (*Al-Thaqafa al'Alima*), as opposed to the 'popular culture.' This is a general trait of the elite in the Arab world.

In contrast, among women's NGOs one finds effective usage of the mass media: the programs 'Be with Women' and 'Seen with the Eyes of Women' are run by women's NGOs and are aired on TV and radio.

During the course of our fieldwork, a debate was held on a television program about the harassment of women in the streets of Ramallah. (The program is co-produced by WATC and the Palestinian Broadcasting Company.) Interestingly, we took note of comments made about the program by people in the public taxis closely following the time it was aired. This illustrates the importance of this medium of communication in terms of reaching the average person on the street. However, we also recognize that television is generally considered the 'voice of the state,' and therefore this may explain the limited cooperation between the NGOs and the TV stations. Also, the Sky Company's monopoly over all Palestinian TV advertisements may contribute to this problem. However, this does not explain why the NGOs do not cooperate with private TV stations like Watan, or the private radio stations. Finally, the need to preserve its autonomy from the authority may explain why the Palestinian Independent Commission for Citizens' Rights no longer advertises on Palestinian TV and chooses Watan TV.

Surprisingly, we found many information announcements made about domestic violence – sometimes three announcements in the same newspaper. Surveying *Al-Ayyam* newspaper for a one month period (from 15 June to 15 July 2000), we recorded 46 announcements informing the public of a hotline for female victims of violence, by five different organizations.[49] At issue here is not only the duplication and overlap in the mission of these NGOs but, while all of this activity abounds, the willingness and ability to set up a shelter for women is very limited. There are two points here. Firstly, we observed a lack of cooperation between the five NGOs mentioned above: in fact three of these PNGOs separately approached one of the Stiftung organizations with a proposal for a project to publish an information guide for female victims of violence. There is a broader issue at stake here. Commenting on women's work in Palestine, a representative of the Heinrich Böll Stiftung stated that the Arab feminists rarely influence or have an impact on the population in the marginalized rural areas. According to this observer, Arab feminists prefer advocacy work or the detachment of the hotline as a way to deal with women's issues, rather than the incremental but also arduous process of working with women on a daily basis, which is involved in the setting up of a shelter.

There are exceptions to this, as is discussed in Chapter 5 on the position of PNGOs in their society. The WCLAC, for example, has set up a women's tent in a village near Hebron to provide counseling for women, including victims of domestic abuse. At the same time, it cannot be ignored that the preference for advocacy over a services approach that is

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[49] These organizations are the Working Women's Association, Center for Conflict Resolution, Palestinian Association of Family Planning and Protection, Association of Defending the Family, and Sawa: Center for Supporting the Victims of Sexual and Physical Violence.

espoused by the PNGOs that have established hotlines for female victims of violence, is also a reflection and byproduct of the global agenda pushed by the donors. For instance, one of the heads of the Stiftung organizations in Palestine that receive funding from the German foreign ministry conceded that this funding comes with certain conditions, such as that the funds are to be used only for civic education. Civic education can be interpreted as advocacy and awareness raising. The effects of donor-driven trends can be observed in Jenin governorate, which is widely recognized as being over funded by many PNGO actors. In this district, one finds an extensive array of workshops, conferences, and training courses being held, especially in the area of health, human rights and gender.

Table 10: NGOs activities reported in the Al Ayyam daily newspaper during a 3-month period (May to July 2000)

Sector	Training courses, workshops, conferences	Other activities	Total
General	17	22	39
Human rights and democracy	16	2	18
Women's issues	12	13	25
Health	15	12	27

Workshops and conferences represent an important mechanism for exchanging ideas and opening a forum for discussion, debate and even self-reflection among community actors. However, there is a problem associated with an excess reliance on workshops and conferences as a means of action and technique to tackle social problems. There are many examples of PNGOs using workshops or conferences as a means to address very critical issues that have wide-reaching implications for society, and that directly address questions of social justice. For example, the conference organized in Gaza by one of the human rights organizations on Women in Palestine covered wide-ranging topics from gender and development, to women and the law and women in Islam. Yet one can ask, what is the end purpose of the conference? And how does it relate to a program of action and long-term strategy for social change?

There is another side to a reliance on workshops and conferences that may be problematic. There is the possibility that local NGOs depend on workshops and conferences as an unconscious way of avoiding the

responsibility of action. For example, while there are many conferences on a boycott of the Israeli products, there is no real initiative to coordinate such work. Is the technique of holding conferences being used to replace rather than to complement social action and form a long-term strategy for social change? Among PNGOs actors, is there an internalization of the short-term vision of action that is associated with and normalized by the project-based approach, which many NGOs now find themselves adopting?

Donors and the Creation of Mega-NGOs

Mega-NGOs have been created in Palestine. This observation is made independent of a judgment value as in some sectors such as health it could be very important to have large entities. But we should be conscientious about its implications including that it contradicts the fundamental raison-d'être of NGOs theorized by Salamon (1999). He argues that the increasing importance of NGOs responds to the diversity of demand, that is to say, NGOs are a part of and reflect a diversity of providers of different types of social goods. According to his account, society has changed. It does not have a hegemonic demand: society is made of groups that want different types of medical services and they want to be able to choose. Moreover, government macro planning does not fit modern society. Contrary to this account, however, it has been argued that donor funding increases the prominence of large SNGOs and crowds out smaller SNGOs, thus distorting the mandate of SNGOs. They increasingly reflect donor concerns rather than the NGO's initial mission, as opposed to a 'diversified demand'. In Palestine, donor aid policies (among other reasons) have pushed and supported the creation of mega-NGOs in some sectors, for example, Medical Relief, PARC and LAW. Research in Kenya has found that there are NGO favorites among the donors. Donors admit that the reputation of the head of the NGO is a factor in the funding decision. Some donors recognize that they assist the rise of pro-state or elitist NGOs, but they argue that they do not have the capacity to run nationwide grants program. In one example Wachira Maina notes that one Kenyan NGO received one quarter of a single donor's civil society program for a two year period.

The intrusion of market logic into development processes fuels the rise of a global elite and conversely the marginalization of other organizations. One example illustrates this: ANERA is now working largely on a contracting basis since much of its funding comes from USAID. In the past, ANERA had more freedom in determining its projects, including deciding to which beneficiaries to disperse funds. According to the Women's Charitable Society of Hebron, ANERA had

provided it with 70,000 Jordanian Dinars (about $100,000) to purchase land and build a daycare center. Today, the same organization is unable to receive funding from ANERA, because the organization is not sufficiently professionalized. Thus the rise of logical frameworks and contract relations, driven by market logic and an attempt to impose control over an uncertain process, has led to the prioritization of administrative capacity, which supports some elites and marginalizes other organizations. A USAID officer who was questioned about marginalized grassroots organizations recognized that many simply cannot keep up because of weak administrative capacity. Therefore, this issue should be addressed as a problem of administrative capacity. If a focus on organizational skills stems from, as Smillie argues, the market logic of control, administrative capacity is not necessarily a good indicator of an NGO's work on the ground or its contributions to development processes. Furthermore, one can argue that this prioritization supports the rise of a global elite.

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 organizations. In an extreme case, as mentioned above, USAID contracts consultants to audit and evaluate the structure of grant candidates, to ensure the organization 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 organization, not necessarily on its work on the ground. By implication, the donor's decision whether or not to support the project proposal does not give much consideration to the broader context. Moreover, donors tend to neglect the smaller organizations that may be doing very good work on the ground. Is there the possibility of smaller NGOs receiving funding compared to mega-NGOs, considering current donor criteria for funding projects and their fund disbursement approach?

Some donor agencies prefer to work with a select number of NGOs. One of the human rights organizations reported: "Firstly, with the Ford Foundation, I object to their policy of concentrating on a few organizations and not diversifying funds. I had contact with them in Cairo, and we were interested in working with them. One of the big human rights organizations put us in touch with them. But they rejected cooperation, saying their position is to focus on organizations they already have working experience with. What is the purpose of working with 2 or 3 organizations, giving them $1 million each, when they could help support many organizations that help Palestinian society. Are they just interested in working to help the heads of a few organizations?" This quote illustrates the problem of donor institutional constraints. Donors work with two or three NGOs, whom they are familiar with and trust. However donor

criteria for funding and their approach to dispersing funds can also be a factor in fueling the rise of mega-NGOs.

Some mega-PNGOs are conscious of the problem of the temporary nature of the significant amount of funds disbursed recently in the Palestinian Territories. An officer with the UPMRC explains the relevance of learning from the experience of SNGOs in other countries: "Gaps in funding for one year can cause the collapse of an organization. USAID created huge organizations in Latin America and Africa and made them collapse with its changes. Since 1994 we have decided not to open any more clinics in order to improve our sustainability."

In addition to this, a form of clientelism exists between donors and some NGOs in urban centers. Generally, donors look for organizations 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. Civic Forum, one of the Palestinian human rights organizations, confirms the importance of physical proximity to the donors: "There is a problem with informal linkages which you need sometimes to find out why you have been rejected. Personal relations play a big role. We have seen a lot of this with the EU. Often we contact the regional officer and are ignored or do not receive a reply back: this is unprofessional. With personal ties, one does not face this problem."

The creation of mega-NGOs is not necessarily a conscious process on the part of donors; there are often institutional factors at work. For instance, 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.

This problem of mega-NGOs is also fueled by the NGOs themselves. For instance, a large NGO in Gaza pressured the donors to try to deter them from changing funding arrangements. The Norwegian People's Aid 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 or find it useful for NGOs, and sent a letter to the Norwegian Representative Office, complaining about the NPA representative.

Finally, we should add that some donors, albeit few, have introduced changes in their funding guidelines to address the problem of mega-NGOs. For instance, the German Fund managed by Friedrich Nauman Foundation has established new guidelines that distinguish three types of PNGOs: large development centers; medium-sized organizations that require institutional support; and grassroots organizations that generally do not have access to donor funding. Under the Nauman Foundation's new guidelines,

mega-NGOs can apply for funding either through projects, which further *cooperation* with other NGOs in or across sectors, or they can apply for a *joint project*, which supports activities or the institutional development of the marginalized community organizations that lack donor financial support. This example is interesting because the changes to the donor's funding guidelines were proposed and advanced by the local project manager who, through his own initiative, adjusted the organization's approach to the local society in an attempt to stem the creation of very large monopolistic organizations. Again, this shows that there is room for individual organizations to maneuver within and modify the operations of the agencies, despite their internalization of the rules of the institution.

4.5. Conclusion: Is There an Epistemic Community?

Regarding the view that donors impose ideas on NGOs, it should be made clear that donors do not directly impose their ideas. Donors have a direct impact on methodology, project approaches, administration, etc. But in terms of transferring ideas, it is not clear cut. Inside the development industry, ideas circulate and technical knowledge is accepted and understood by the actors. There are mechanisms whereby ideas and priorities of development are disseminated. Some lessons can be drawn from international and UN conferences: here SNGOs are either actors involved in the event or witness the event from afar. In either case, there is proliferation of knowledge and shared understanding of priorities and emerging "global agenda." Peter Haas has raised the idea of an "epistemic community"[50] which exerts political influence by "diffusing ideas and influencing positions adopted by a wide range of actors" (Haas 1992). By this he means a community bound by technical knowledge (for example, a scientific community), in the sense that the actors involved share a vocabulary of terms with common meanings. The actors involved in the development industry share such a similar body of knowledge and are bound by technical terms. If we acknowledge that actors within NGOs, INGOs and donor agencies share a similar vocabulary and form an epistemic community, does this mean that by virtue of this they also all share in the formulation, promulgation and perpetuation of a global agenda?

We are very careful in adopting the label of an epistemic NNGOs and SNGOs community. There is more common ground observed in terms of institutional form than of knowledge. According to Tvedt, organizations in developing and in donor countries are becoming more and more alike: linked by an integrative system they share the same language and are

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[50] Epistemic community means a community whose members share a minimal philosophical and conceptual basis.

all accountable to donor institutions (1998: 213). He then relates this phenomenon to Di Maggio and Powell's (1993) theory of "institutional isomorphism" to explain the rise of institutional similarities. According to this theory, isomorphism is a constraining process that forces one unit in a population to resemble other units that face the same set of environmental conditions.

One way of looking at this issue is through a Foucauldian approach, as done by Arturo Escobar. He views the development industry as a discourse, a form of representation, as well as a set of relations that have been constituted in a particular historic period, that is, the post-WWII order. Through this way of acting and this form of representation, the third world is acted upon and brought into the new international order. For him, development should be understood as a discourse, with discourse formations that are shared and understood by all actors involved. His interpretation of this, however, is one-sided; he emphasizes the way in which this shared "knowledge" forms a way of acting upon the third world, which perpetuates its underdevelopment (Escobar, 1997).

Many examples in this chapter show how global ideas are rearticulated in the discourse of PNGOs who decode these ideas and re-encode according to their context. However, this does not happen always. If not consciously rearticulated, then the question arises, what do they mean in practice by this concept? What do their actions reveal? For example, the shifts in some PNGOs define democracy as also advancing an alternative development vision. This fits in with the global vision of an associational revolution (Salamon, 1993). It also, however, corresponds to the elitist nature of these organizations.

Our research reveals that this is not the whole story. Just as philosophers call for reading history against the grain and looking for the unheard stories of the past, it is also essential to look to the ways in which actors within the development industry absorb the shared terms of the 'epistemic community,' but use them in a manner which challenges their shared meaning and the typical implications of the concept understood by the practitioners involved. In doing this, such actors subvert aspects of a global agenda which they find as harmful or unbeneficial to actors involved. For example, consider the work of a Canadian NGO coalition, Alternatives, or the work of Fredrich Naumann Foundation. One of the program officers of this organization understands the intention of people-to-people projects as a form of peace-building projects between Israelis and Palestinians. Yet he believes that the Palestinians are not ready for such projects, so he funds people-to-people projects between Palestinian citizens of Israel and Palestinians in WBGS.
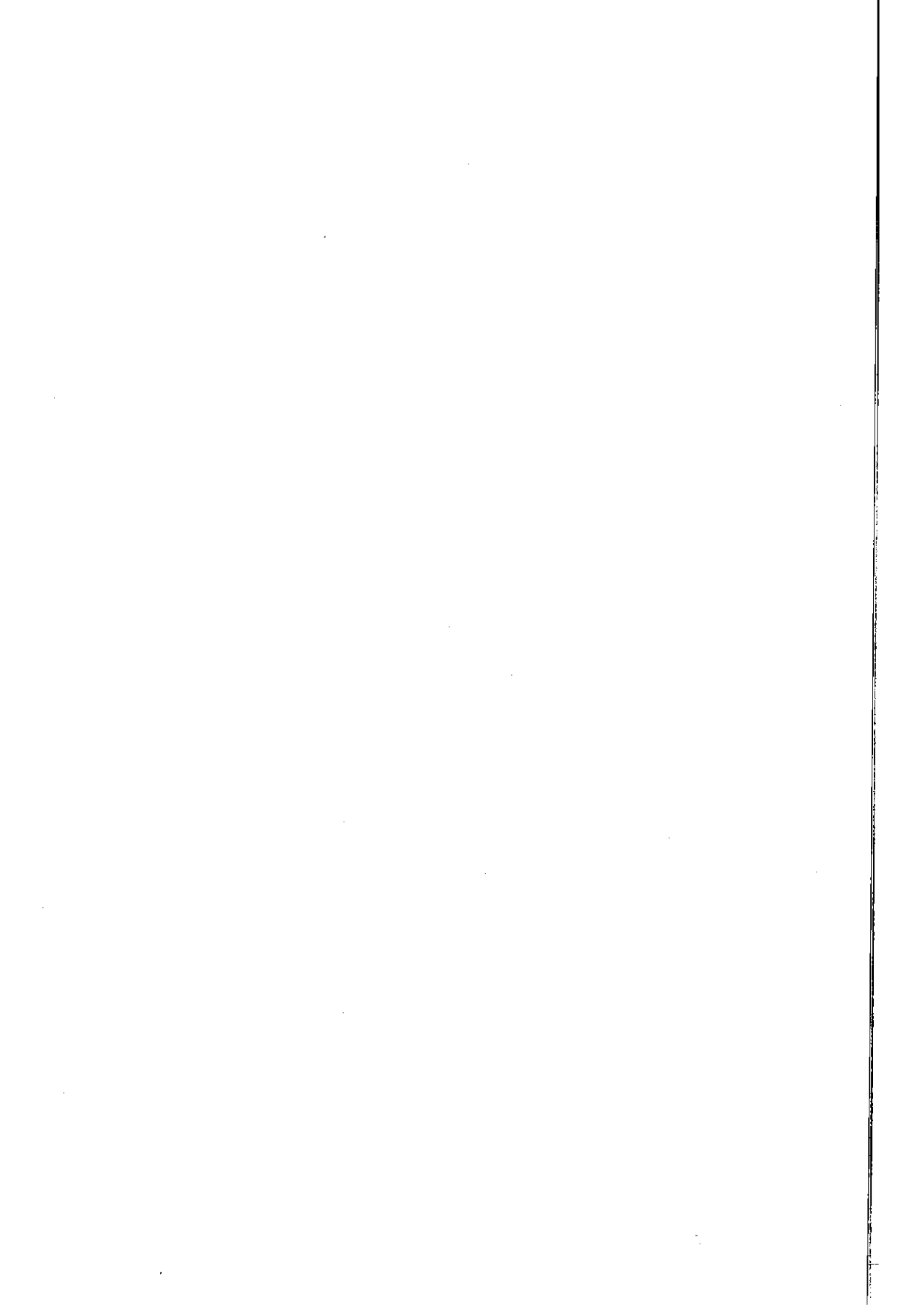
Chapter 5

From the Global to the Local: the Position of PNGOs in their Society

"This (civil society) is not to consist of ethnic or other affective community groups, but contractual, non-community, non-affective groups, such as professional associations, chambers of commerce and industry, trade unions and NGOs. It is a society made of such groupings that will support the 'technical' reforms; indeed it is this type of society, which will *demand* these technical reforms. The neutral state will be supported by a liberal public sphere."

(Young and Williams, 1994:96)

"Civil society in developmental paradigms and donor discourse is no longer a political space of contestation, but rather a space of 'redemption'."

(Rajasingham-Senanayake 2001:20)

5.1 Introduction

The position of Palestinian NGOs in their society and the manner
in which they contribute to social and political development is influenced
by a complex array of factors. On the one hand, the historical evolution
of NGOs, and the broader social and political context in which they are
situated, defines the immediate conditions in which action is conducted. At
the same time, however, one cannot neglect the multiple positions NGOs
occupy — in particular, the way they straddle both local and global arenas.
As outlined above, given their exposure to global agendas and international
standards, there is inevitably a process of structuring knowledge and practice
among NGOs, with a range of factors beyond local influences entering into
play. Furthermore, as revealed by the case studies presented in Chapter 3,
agenda setting is itself a complex process that occurs over time, a process
which is more about the way global agendas intertwine with local national
narratives, then a dichotomous notion of NGO-donor wrangling. NGOs
position and *re-position* themselves within their society, not only in relation
to changing local political and social circumstances, but also as they contest
or ascribe to changing global agendas and international standards. In the case
of the women's sector, double alterations at the local and at the international
levels formed the backdrop against which women's NGOs fundamentally
revamped their agenda, redefining the Palestinian women's movement.

This chapter will examine the role of Palestinian NGOs in their
society through the lens of the 'new policy agenda,' which has dominated
development and aid policies since the end of the cold war. The new
policy agenda is particularly relevant insofar as its economic and political
dimensions each ascribe a particular role for NGOs. The influence of the
new agenda, and the manner in which its principles meet up with local actors
and produce effects in the local society, vary in each context. In general,
these policy precepts should be understood as opening up new possibilities
for NGOs, while also guiding these organizations in a particular direction.

On the economic side, NGOs are viewed as effective and cost-
efficient vehicles for delivering social services, and the preferred channel
for services as a deliberate substitute for the state (Hulme and Edwards,
1996: 2). Politically, NGOs are regarded as essential components of civil
society capable of promoting democratic relations, in addition to enhancing
accountable forms of government and new debates on citizenship.
Therefore, on the one side, NGOs are expected to cooperate with the state
in dispensing public goods; this is especially evident in the policies of the
World Bank. On the other hand, donors and INGOs also emphasize the
advocacy role of NGOs and their potential role as agents of social change.
In Palestine, both of these aspects of the new policy agenda are observable
in donor discourses as well as in their actual practice and funding priorities.
However, in the Palestinian context, donor political support for the peace

process results in conditions for the disbursement of funds, with select actors qualifying, while those that oppose the peace process are excluded from donor support. It is also true that with the importance of the peace process, donors may emphasize the necessity of cooperation with the PNA because they also fear an opposition movement.

With the new policy agenda as our starting point, we will analyze the position of PNGOs in their society with two central points in mind: firstly, it is important to maintain a *relational view* when examining the role of NGOs in their society. The NGO role should be looked at in relation to changes in the economic field as well as in the state sector, in particular expanding market logic over the distribution of goods and the reduced role of the state. Secondly, it is essential to remain cognizant of the multiple relations NGOs are involved in; most important, in this regard, one should observe the effects that the incorporation of NGOs into aid channels have on their internal operations and how they relate to their external environment. Donor and INGO programs support SNGOs not only with intersect actors, shaped by broader social and political structures, but they also meet up with NGOs that have been influenced by their entry into formal development cooperation.

5.2. The Provision of Social Services

As already indicated, the new development paradigm promotes cooperation between the state and NGOs in providing social services. Some see the priority placed on the role of NGOs in providing social goods as an attempt to promote a privatization of state welfare functions. In contrast to this, the World Bank argues that the role of NGOs in providing services contributes to 'good governance,' and postulates that there is a link between decentralized control over development processes and more accountable decision making and public policy formulation. In any case, the implications of this way of thinking about development are far reaching. The literature warns of the dangers that an increased role in dispensing social services poses for NGOs. The argument has been presented that a weak state, with limited financial resources and poor administrative capacity, will seek to derive benefits from the role of NGOs as service providers, while trying to exclude them from gaining influence in other spheres, especially the political (Bratton, 1989: 572-573).

Other pertinent questions, however, have also been raised with regard to the assumptions this paradigm makes concerning the state. In particular, it has been argued that the new paradigm is premised on the image of a 'strong' state in developing countries. In this regard, scholars have addressed the problem of promoting a decentralization of service provision in developing societies, pointing out that a strong state may be lacking in

one of two characteristics. Robinson argues that cooperation between NGO and state actors in distributing public goods requires a strong governing authority, with sufficient administrative capacity to *coordinate and regulate* the various decentralized actors (1994). Tvedt suggests that more than this, allowing non-state actors to assume responsibility for service provision requires a strong state with a significant degree of *social control* (Tvedt, 1998: 70).

In the Palestinian case, there is neither a strong (independent and sovereign) state nor a strong governing authority. For the past seven years, the Palestinian National Authority has been set up in the midst of a highly competent NGO sector. Historically, Palestinian NGOs took on the role of service providers in the absence of a central authority. Therefore, at the time of the establishment of the PNA, NGOs were responsible for providing 60% of primary healthcare, 49% of secondary and tertiary care, and 100% of daycare services (Barghouthi, 1994:6). Today, many of the NGOs working in fields such as health, education and agriculture represent some of the largest and most efficient organizations; many surpass the PNA ministries in terms of budget, staffing and experience. In this respect, the international agenda emphasizing a reduced role for the state, and a decentralized system of service provision, arrived in Palestine at a time when the question of the division of labor between state and non-state actors was quite salient, given local historical developments. Moreover, entering the local society at such a juncture, the new development paradigm has overlapped with two central questions that local actors have been confronted with since the establishment of the PNA: what type of state and what system of public goods are most appropriate for Palestinian society?

What Type of State?

The question of what type of state will emerge in Palestine touches on a number of issues related to the roles and responsibilities of the state. Will the state be reduced to a regulative role, with its main responsibility enhancing and supporting the private sector? What role will the state take on in distributing, regulating and overseeing social services? As already indicated, in Palestine these types of questions have been heavily influenced by the significant role played by NGOs in providing services. The donors working in Palestine have generally acknowledged the importance of the accumulated experience of Palestinian NGOs and thus the contributions they can make in the transition to a period of state-formation. International NGOs such as Christian Aid and ICCO, emphasize the need for cooperation and coordination between the PNA and PNGOs, on the basis that the latter can use their experience to assist in the initial phase of setting up the state apparatus. These INGOs prioritize *dialogue* between the

various development actors over what their respective roles should be, with the end result envisioned as: "Increasingly the state would then take over activities that are regarded as the domain of the state while NGOs would gradually phase out and concentrate on their own role in civil society" (CA Policy Document Period 1996-2000:41).

In general, the perspective adopted by INGOs such as Christian Aid clearly differs from the approach of the mainstream donor agencies. Other INGOs, however, such as ANERA, which increasingly rely on Northern government contracts, explain that projects which touch on questions about the emerging nature of the system of service provision usually arrive predefined from Washington. Indeed, most donors operate with more rigorously defined preconceptions of what the role of the state should be and see the role of PNGOs as that of 'long-term development partners.' Donor agencies, such as USAID and the World Bank, insist upon long-term coordination between the state and NGOs in service provision. In general, World Bank assistance to Palestine is set within the Comprehensive Development Framework, which emphasizes long term partnerships between the state, NGOs and the private sector in development. In particular, the World Bank project for PNGOs was created to stabilize the NGO sector after reports of significant loss of funding due to donor diversion of resources to the Authority. Analysts recommended that such a fund would enable the most effective NGOs to retain their role in providing services (Balaj and Clark, 1994). In this respect the policies of donor agencies directly touch on questions such as what type of state is to be created, with their funding schemes arriving pre-defined and reflecting the donor's own conceptualizations. Shawa's work finds that donors are having a constitutive influence on the role of PNGOs. She identifies service provision as one of the preconditions NGOs are expected to fulfill to comply with donor definitions of 'civil society,' and she highlights coordination with the PNA as one of the donors' central priorities (Shawa, Forthcoming: 12-14).

When discussing the influence of the new aid agenda in Palestine, it is important to distinguish between how donor policies may have a constitutive effect on the nature of the emerging state and how donors may address problems of fragmentation by promoting cooperation within sectors. As some PNGO actors explain, there is a serious problem of fragmentation in the NGO sector, partly impelled by competition and also by factionalism, which keeps NGOs as a whole weak and divided vis-à-vis the Authority or the donors (Interview with Project Officer in PNGO). Illustrating the extent of division among NGOs, this interviewee relates that during the proposal phase for the USAID community development project, one PNGO actor asked the mayor in one village not to cooperate with any other NGOs and to give them only information on the village's needs. Clearly the NGO actor was seeking to exclude others from gaining

information to be able to bid for the USAID project, by cultivating a relationship with the local elite. In this respect, donor agendas emphasize that coordination of development actors, not only between state and NGO, but also among the NGOs themselves, can facilitate cooperation in a context where the actors are fragmented. A project manager at one of the Stiftungs identifies the challenge donors face as follows:

"Look at our program in Palestine. We work with 22 NGOs, some in youth, or education sectors, others are in the Network and they implement projects, which are very similar to one another. We tell them, you are working on the same issues and could coordinate/cooperate and gain from each other. For instance, there is much to be gained on a practical level in the production of a manual, etc. But unfortunately it is very difficult to get them to work together. In Palestine we have tried to encourage cooperation but it is difficult."

Regarding the impact of the new development paradigm on Palestinian NGO and PNA relations, it is clear that PNGOs vary in the degree to which they have directly tackled the question of what type of Palestinian state they want and what role they envision for themselves. Some of the women's organizations, both popular committees and professionalized centers, have taken a position against providing services out of ideological conviction that this should be the role of the state (Jad, 1995; Interview with Women's Affairs Technical Committee). At the same time, as some point out, the ongoing occupation compels NGOs to fill in gaps in services or provide relief assistance, such as during the current Intifada. The effect is that this postpones questions about the responsibilities of the emerging state (Interview with Union of Palestinian Medical Relief Committees).

At the practical level, PNGOs providing medical and agricultural services have established very good working relationships with the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Agriculture, and have begun cooperating with one another in order to coordinate service provision .[51] Such relationships, entered into by non-governmental service providers and the Authority, are premised on a formal concession of the expertise and the importance of PNGOs within their respective sectors, such as health.[52] However, despite such working relations, members of the PNGO Network have acknowledged that within the current transition period, many central questions about the future state remain unresolved, including what the division of roles and responsibilities between the government and NGO sectors will be (Abdul Hadi, 2000:70; Giacaman, 2000:99).

The unresolved debate on what type of state is appropriate for the Palestinian society is symptomatic of the difficulties and entanglements

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[51] Interview, Renad Qubaj, PNGO Network, Ramallah, July 7, 1999.

[52] See for example, *Sharing Responsibility, Second Coordination Workshop Between the Health NGO Sector and the Palestinian Ministry of Health,* December 1996 (Ramallah, HDIP, Policy Dialogue Series No. 2, 1997)

that the question raises. In this respect, one cannot ignore that this issue is mediated by historical developments, including broader political structures and power relations. While the significant role played by NGOs in providing social services has been heralded as a positive contribution to development in Palestine by both international organizations and local actors alike, one should also recognize the controversy that surrounded this issue during the initial years of the formation of the PNA.

More specifically, when the PNA was first being established, the PNGOs had the capacity and expected to provide the institutional foundation for the nascent state, given that they had functioned as the main service providers for decades, and possessed accumulated knowledge, experience and resources (Tamari, 1999). However, in setting up the PNA, the Fatah political elite bypassed the NGO sector, choosing to establish their own ministries and institutions, thus excluding the NGOs from serving as the foundation for the emerging state. This created initial tensions between the two sectors, sowing the seeds for a potential rivalry. Moreover, in the context of a truncated state-building project, entered into under the continued occupation, Palestinian institution building was highly rushed and extremely politicized, reflecting the Fatah elite and leader Yasser Arafat's efforts to consolidate power and stabilize the PNA (Shain and Sussman, 1998). When the Fatah NGOs were closed down or merged with the Authority, the NGO sector quickly became the remaining institutional sphere for the former leftist activists. Thus, clear political and ideological cleavages came to separate the Fatah-dominated PNA and the primarily leftist NGO sector. More importantly though, when the state elite revealed its desire to clamp down on the NGO sector by proposing a very repressive NGO law in 1995, antagonism between the two sectors increased, as did the NGOs' suspicions and fears about the PNA (Dajani, 1999).

The Neo-liberal Model: Internal Push Factors

If one observes the PNGOs closely, a sort of schizophrenia is apparent. The NGO actors are primarily leftists and therefore ideologically they support a strong public sector. Yet their reluctance to initiate a debate on the emerging nature of the state and its political economy, including how to promote strong public sector intervention in social services where needed, or how they seem to protectively cling to their role as service providers, paradoxically brings them very close to the neo-liberal model. When one recognizes the broader context and the complex set of factors involved, as indicated above, it becomes evident that internal factors and historical developments may be pushing the NGOs in this direction.

In one sense, one could view the PNGOs' neo-liberal position as a politicized stance given the nature of their encounters with the Authority

outlined above. However, two prominent NGO actors explain the issue as being much broader. While the PNGO actors ideologically support a strong state, they regard the practical realization of this as complicated by the distortions arising out of the highly restrained Palestinian state building process, including, in particular, both the undemocratic practices of the Authority and the weak administrative structures of its ministries. As one PNGO actor argues, "The present system being set up in Palestine is inherently unstable….The rules of the game are not clear, and most ministries will virtually have to be overhauled from top to bottom if they were to serve developmental aims." At the same time, he acknowledges the need for intervention of the state, "In poor countries, empowerment of women is not possible without compulsory education on a mass level. It is clear that this is not a job for the market, or a mission for NGOs. In several other sectors, similar questions will have to be asked about the roles of different actors" (Giacaman, 2000: 100). George Giacaman highlights the contradictions NGOs face; on the one hand, they realize the importance of a strong state for a developing society, yet they are confounded by the haphazard institution building process of the PNA and unsure of how to proceed to promote the former.

Another director of an NGO explains that PNGOs face a dilemma between pursuing what they regard as a developmentally efficacious agenda and taking a democratic course of action. As he explains, while PNGOs want to support the PNA out of a conviction that the state should play a preeminent role as caretaker of public goods, they recognize however that it is not in their interest to support an undemocratic government. In this manner, it would appear that in the absence of democratic rules of the game, NGOs may view it as being in their own interest to retain their own separate institutional sphere and maintain a strong role in service provision, even at the expense of their own ideological views. Donors add to this problem by failing to use conditionality to promote internal democratization within the PNA. The debate about what type of state is appropriate for Palestine is set within a broader context in which donor agencies push for cooperation between the PNA and the PNGOs even when the rules of the game are disadvantageous to NGO actors. Donor political and strategic interests and their central objective of supporting the peace process have had a mitigating impact on donor willingness to use conditionalities to promote internal democratic practices among the Palestinian Authority. At the same time, bilateral and multilateral donor agencies continue to push for cooperation and coordination between the PNA and the PNGOs in service provision. In this sense donor efforts to promote coordination between the two sectors without pushing democratic reform in the PNA, indirectly support the sub-zero relationship developing between the PNGOs and PNA which the above quote hints at.

These brief observations indicate that in the context of the new development paradigm, there are complex internal factors and contradictory

external impulses that may in fact serve to align PNGOs very closely with the neo-liberal model of the state. Clearly there are some intractable issues affecting this process, which go well beyond the political cleavages that separate the PNA and PNGO spheres and have more to do with the contorted state building process. This raises the question: will a strong role for NGOs in service provision further the neo-liberal model, which is one of reduced state responsibilities and expanded market logic in determining the distribution of goods? Or will the PNGOs be capable of using their influence to transform rights and entitlements, and promote new forms of citizenship?

What System of Public Goods?

The system of public goods slowly developing in Palestine reflects the internal and external factors discussed above, the convergence of a strong NGO sector and a global agenda emphasizing a reduced role for the state in providing social goods. Some point out that the role of Palestinian NGOs in the health sector and funding to these organizations has dropped by 65% since 1994.[53] While this appears to indicate a steady decline in the role of NGOs in providing health care, it in fact illustrates a new trend that has become increasingly apparent in Palestine since the arrival of the Authority. After the decline of funding to the NGO sector, following the Gulf War, and the increased arrival of development aid grounded in new paradigms, some of the smaller NGOs have closed down, while the larger more efficient organizations have been consolidated. From this one can deduce a future trend; the delivery of social services in Palestine will be characterized by an overall reduced role by NGOs, but there will continue to be strategic involvement by key NGOs. Moreover, while the largest and most effective NGOs will receive the bulk of donor support and find ways to increase their financial self-sufficiency, the smaller organizations will be expected to compete for less funding and for local government contracts. This latter point is important. Connected with a concentrated intervention by NGOs in service delivery, there will be a proliferation of subcontracting arrangements.

Consider the recommendations of the Ministry of Health and HDIP workshop, held in 1996, on coordination between health NGOs and the Authority. Two of the five recommendations identify the importance of subcontract arrangements for the future. One states, "The Ministry and NGOs will develop partnerships including subcontracting of NGO services and joint committees for development, implementation and monitoring of health programs." The second more explicitly recommends

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[53] Interview with Union of Palestinian Medical Relief Committees.

that, "NGOs should improve their quality of service in order to attract contract opportunities and the Ministry should be willing to enroll in such a relationship."[54] This workshop reveals that the coordination between health NGOs and the Ministry is working towards avoiding duplication between service providers, putting the responsibility on all health care providers to build the health care system, and developing committees to facilitate joint PNA-PNGO planning and monitoring of health programs. What is revealing from our perspective is the adoption of subcontracting as a mechanism to incorporate NGOs into a long-term system of service provision with the Authority. The implications of subcontracting arrangements have been raised in the literature and we will turn to some of these below. For now it is important to point out that, in addition to being highlighted as a relevant mechanism for the future by the PNA and main health NGOs, sub-contracting may become prevalent as smaller organizations, faced with fatigue in searching for funding, also look to it as a way to alleviate pressure of sustaining themselves. For example, in Gaza one of the main NGOs working in rehabilitation expressed the following: "The problem is that we are trying to find sufficient funds to cover our expenses for the services we provide. Some NGOs in Europe provide services and are paid by GOs. We have been thinking of this idea. We presented it to the Japanese and asked them to pass it on to the Ministry on our behalf. In this case, we will sell the service, the PNA will endorse it, and international aid can be channeled to pay for this service. Frankly, otherwise it will be really difficult to secure our sustainability for the next 10 years."

The NGOs engaged in service delivery face the pressure of financial sustainability more than other development NGOs or advocacy NGOs because of the recurrent costs of providing services. In the Palestinian case, this pressure has been intensified by the trend we have highlighted, namely, the consolidation of large NGOs and the increased competition among the smaller organizations. The introduction of contracting arrangements, whether endorsed by the larger NGOs or looked to by the smaller organizations as a way to stabilize themselves, will introduce *market logic* into the NGO sector. Smillie argues that the biggest risk for NGOs today is that they will lose their ideology or their advocacy role and become 'entrepreneurs' in a quasi-market environment in which they contract themselves out to governments (Smillie, 1995: 172). Korten (1990) notes also that public service contractors are driven more by market considerations than by values, given the need to compete for bids, and are therefore *more like businesses* than voluntary organizations. The problem is that the requirements of institutional survival and the pressure to compete conflict with the NGO role of advocates. The NGO faces the danger of becoming a surrogate for the state and losing the advocacy function.

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[54] UPMRC Annual Report, 1996: http://www.upmrc.org/index.htm

It may be true that increased competition and the market-induced logic of sub-contracting arrangements inhibit NGOs' advocacy role. However, some argue that the strategic involvement of NGOs, in complementing the state distribution of public goods, gives them an opportunity to influence public policy in a way unmatched by other civil society actors. As Wood explains, "Fragmentation of the delivery function entails a corresponding fragmentation of voice, with political parties and unions sidelined in the process, their respective voices denied primacy and legitimacy in the specific sectoral context of service provision" (1997:84). His point is that given the role and expertise of NGOs in sectors like health or education, they are able to articulate and advance policy positions with a legitimacy unmatched by parties – and are in a better position to affect public policy.

In considering both of these influences – the inhibiting effect of sub-contracting on the advocacy role of NGOs and, conversely, the opportunity that service provision affords to NGOs to influence public policy – the essential issue in Palestine is what will be the consequences of the continued involvement of PNGOs in service provision? Most PNGOs providing services have looked at coordination with the Authority as essential and have begun contributing to policy issues. In the health sector, coordination between PNGOs and the Authority covers substantive matters and central policy issues, including what the needs of the health care system are, where investment is required and how to develop the primary health care system.[55] Clearly, these are not trivial matters, and they touch on the scope and nature of the emerging health care system. Moreover, as PNGO actors in the health sector concede, coordination is often a very *politicized* issue, which at times has been opposed from the Cabinet and Executive of the PNA. At times, in the midst of discord between the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Finance, the former has moved closer to the PNGOs in the health sector as a way to strengthen itself. Also other factors complicate coordination, including, for example, organizations and actors that derive influence from the political elite often seek to maximize their involvement in the health sector as opposed to focusing on their own comparative advantage. In this respect, donor agendas that emphasize coordination between different development actors has had a positive impact in Palestine, by having a mitigating influence on internal conflicts and rivalries, and have supported the ability of PNGOs to shape the emerging health system.

Yet what does this coordination mean for the role of Palestinian NGOs in safeguarding overarching public interests in terms of the distribution of public goods? Tvedt argues that in contrast to the notion of NGOs representing society, or 'the people', these organizations inevitably always speak on behalf of some particular interest group. Therefore, he

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[55] Interview with the Union of Palestinian Medical Relief Committees.

argues that the role of guaranteeing the 'public interest' rests solely with the state (Tvedt, 1998: 67). Our case study on the health sector in Chapter 3 illustrated that questions which are important to the overall public, such as an insurance system, are being tackled by PNGOs. But in the case of insurance, this issue has received surprisingly less attention by the NGO actors than one would expect, given its overall importance in ensuring equity and securing the access for all people to health care. While this example may support Tvedt's argument that the state is ultimately the best guarantor of social rights, it would be inaccurate to infer that PNGOs are co-opted by broader agendas and are incapable of supporting social justice. What is at issue is that PNGOs should enhance their relations with the population, using a downward accountability mechanism that will ground them in diverse constituencies and increase their responsiveness to issues of broad public interest. Some of the ways NGOs can do this will be reviewed below. Overall it is clear that the structure of the emerging Palestinian system of public goods closely resembles the neo-liberal model, with NGOs playing a strategic role in service delivery. This can present an opportunity to PNGOs to advance issues of social justice in public life, if they develop the right mechanisms and structures that can firmly establish their linkages with the local population.

5.3. Social Change: General framework

The political dimension of the new development paradigm regards NGOs as agents of social change. NGOs are considered to be social organizations that are capable of supporting democracy and contributing to a vibrant civil society. Western governments' concern for promoting liberal democracy throughout the developing world in the aftermath of the cold war, and private Northern foundations' long time support for social justice in the third world, have in effect included new areas of social and political life into development. External support to SNGOs encompasses a wide range of issues. International backing for SNGOs advocacy efforts and their local campaigns, especially when supplemented with external pressure on the local government, represent new, at times powerful, sources of leverage that local actors can draw on in advancing change. At the same time, support for local NGOs can be looked upon warily by government actors, which may view strength of such social organizations as a challenge to the political stability (Bratton, 1989). Our concern here is with the implication that the stated objectives and, more importantly, the unstated assumptions of donor and INGOs' assistance to NGOs have on NGO contributions in their own society toward promoting change.

There are different actors, including donors, private foundations and INGOs that promote democracy in developing societies, with varying

objectives. Biekart identifies three factors that motivate donors and INGO efforts to bolster civil society in developing countries: First, there is the *'neo-liberal'* approach which enhances civil society because it is instrumental for privatizing the state. The *'pluralist'* approach supports civil society "to strengthen the efficiency and accountability of the state and the participation of societal actors in order to strengthen political society" (Biekart, 1999: 96). Finally there is the *'inclusive'* approach which builds on the pluralist approach; it recognizes that for democracy to be supported, unequal power relations must be addressed and the most marginalized incorporated into civil society. As the author points out, donors and INGOs usually work within the pluralist approach, operating under the assumption that increased participation of social groups in decision making will promote better government practices and a more liberal democratic system.

In examining Western organizations' support to Southern NGOs, it is important to make a distinction between donor and INGO efforts to support democracy. INGOs usually adopt a more flexible and open approach to promoting social change in developing societies. Historically, government democracy programs were linked to security interests and only recently have become attached to development issues. Brouwer argues that in the case of donor democracy programs in the Middle East, geo-political and strategic interests overlap with efforts to support political liberalization. He emphasizes that donor democracy programs focus on predictable results, and shy away from overtly political forms of action; for the donor "there is (only) a 'non-political,' technical and incremental way to democracy" (Brouwer, 2000: 16).

In the Palestinian context, democracy and civil society initiatives take various forms, but in general donors and INGOs work within the pluralist approach, with some additional strategies taken from the inclusive approach. Four different types of support to NGOs can be identified in the Palestinian case. The first type is exemplified by USAID. The USAID's civil society program is entirely based on the goal of supporting a constructive relationship between the society and the Authority.[56] To this end, it focuses on Palestinian organizations that can build *citizen participation* and *promote dialogue* with the Authority. In analyzing such donor programs, is essential to remain cognizant of the donor's own conceptions, including their political conceptions of reality. For in the case of USAID, it excludes political parties from its definition of organizations that can support a dialogue with the Authority because of the parties' opposition to the Oslo process. For the year 2000, USAID proposed to spend $17 million on its good governance program. Besides supporting networking between health NGOs and the Ministry of Health, the

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[56] Interview with USAID.

program looks to NGOs as the vehicle through which to increase society participation by such initiatives as fostering debates between the local population and government representatives.

The second type of support available for PNGOs is exemplified by organizations, such as the political foundations (Stiftungs), which support marginalized groups to raise awareness about their cause and advocate for their rights. For instance, one Stiftung funds a Palestinian women organization's newsletter that is inserted in the Palestinian daily newspaper. Thirdly, donors also endorse activities that promote either passive or active forms of citizenship. Passive forms of citizenship include voting in elections, while active citizenship entails taking on a leadership role in the community. The Palestinian organization, Civic Forum, that was initially set up by the National Democratic Institute (NDI) to provide civic education and leadership training in democracy, and is supported today by USAID, reflects this type of assistance. Other Palestinian NGOs, including the Palestinian Center for Peace and Democracy and some women's groups, receive support from a variety of donors to inculcate active participation of individuals in society through leadership and gender training programs. Finally, donors and INGOs in Palestine generally support NGO activities that strengthen political society. This is similar to the first category represented by USAID, above, but it is distinct since here the priority is activities that reinforce the function and structures of government, for instance, the rule of law. Examples include support to Palestinian human rights organizations and support for lobbying activities which bolster the importance of the Legislative Council and the overall rule of law.

Underlying Assumptions of Donor Support to NGOs

Observers have raised two types of questions about the implications of such donor democracy promotion programs for the role of NGOs in their society and broader state-society relations. Firstly, at one level, some have asked, "Do aid interventions contribute to the inclusion of vulnerable (and excluded) sectors of civil society or do they maintain the customary exclusion?" (Biekart, 1999: 97) Secondly, Tvedt, concurring with our thesis that aid affects local elite formations and gives rise to a new type of elite, raises the more general question: what role will the new elite play in the work for national unity, consolidation and development? As he states, "Will the NGO channel create *laissez-faire* entrepreneurs, citizens with community responsibility or strongmen with a particularistic outlook -- in the long run?" (Tvedt, 1998: 68). As outlined in the introduction of this chapter, the new policy agenda, which forms the basis for the support that donors and INGOs provide NGOs, should be viewed as both creating

new possibilities for NGOs and at the same time impelling local actors in certain directions. The actual effect of aid on the local society is to be found in the way that donor and INGO programs supporting NGOs intersect with local historically constituted actors, and broader social and political relations and power structures. The questions raised above are valid: Do aid interventions enable new forms of inclusion beyond dominant groups and what role does the new elite play in the national landscape? Yet to determine actual effects of aid on the role and position of NGOs in local society, it is first necessary to review underlying assumptions of donor support to NGOs and then analyze how this intersects with local historically constituted actors.

Organized Interests

Let us briefly conceptualize and draw out some of the implications of donor policies towards promoting democracy in non-Western society. There are two underlying assumptions that complicate the application of donor and democracy programs in developing societies. The first issue is that support to NGOs is usually based on interest group theory or the pluralist model of liberal democracy, and therefore assumes that 'interests' are already organized, as in the case of functioning liberal democracies. In this sense, it is taken for granted that there actually are 'organized interests' and mobilizing structures in place, in addition to the intermediary institutional sphere of NGOs. Also in some cases certain social actors, for example, poor rural women, are expected to identify with a particular category that it is assumed represents them – such as urban feminists (Tvedt, 1998: 179). In this manner, assumptions underlying aid to NGOs contradict what some call one of the *raisons d'être of SNGOs*, which is to *organize the unorganized social groups and actors* (Clarke, 1998: 42).

These observations can be applied to the various types of donor and INGO programs supporting Palestinian NGOs. In the case study of the women's NGOs presented above, we discussed Brouwer's criticism of civil education programs sponsored by USAID in Egypt and in Palestine. The author critiqued these initiatives for failing to address a central question of importance from the perspective of the participants, namely, how to organize for democracy (2000). This raises an important point. If we unpack the variegated influences in aid channels, it is evident that more than one factor impels NGOs to implement activities that disregard questions about structures and how to organize and sustain long-term action. The assumption that interests are already organized, which underlies democracy programs, meets up with other influences, like the neo-liberal thrust to inculcate citizens with self-help practices, or the

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short-term vision of the project approach: all of these factors encourage types of practices such as workshops, advocacy over services and civic education. With this type of activity, the NGO treats the population like a 'client' to whom it has provided a 'beneficial' service. From the perspective of the assumptions underlying democracy programs, NGOs do provide a benefit to society precisely because it is assumed groups are organized and thus will gain from workshops or similar types of events. Here the NGO leaves aside the question, how to organize society, which may in fact be what is needed.

Pearce reaches a similar conclusion. She argues that NGOs in Latin America have three models available to them with which to advance change: pluralism, grassrootism and empowerment. According to her, *pluralism* is associated with donor discourse on civil society and governance: it envisions NGOs playing an intermediary role between the state and social groups. *Grassrootism* refers to grassroots activism. Finally, *empowerment* refers to social transformation via popular organization and mobilization. While she finds the last two are more effective ways to advance social change, she points out that there has been a tendency to lean towards the first model: "The 'pluralist' approach had such huge financial backing that it could not fail to emerge as the dominant paradigm, taking with it many NGOs who felt unable to resist the opportunities offered for influence and resourses" (Pearce, 1997: 268-270).

Structures of Power

The *second* issue is that donor and INGO support to NGOs is usually based on a simplified notion of how power is organized in the local society. It often goes unrecognized that while Northern civic organizations engage with an institutional arrangement which is firmly entrenched, SNGOs face institutional structures which are varied and extremely fluid. Donor and INGO democracy programs often consist of initiatives to reinforce structures and practices seen as the foundation of established democracies. Yet within the project, the broader context of the developing society is blurred, especially the nature of power, which usually operates through informal structures, such as clientele relations. By way of illustration, consider the case of Palestinian NGOs. They can be observed undertaking various projects with the support of donors, such as lobbying for laws or supporting the work of the legislature. While such activities may strengthen formal political institutions, the informal neo-patrimonial structures, which organize power informally, remain intact. This raises questions about the efficacy of such approaches for the local actors that are seeking to transform these institutional arrangements.

Having reviewed some of the assumptions underlying donor support

to NGOs, it remains to examine how these influences intersect with Palestinian social organizations, and the changes these organizations have undergone over time. As outlined in the section on the historical evolution of PNGOs presented above, Palestinian NGOs emerged at a particular moment in the national movement. During the first intifada these organizations were intrinsically tied to the party with fluid relations between the individuals in the party and the NGO. The Union of Health Care Committees, a grassroots health organization affiliated with the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP), has been marginalized since the shifts in funding patterns after the 1991 gulf war. A member sheds light on the NGO organizational model that existed during the first Intifada: "Doctors who were members of the DFLP formed this union and during the intifada the party funded the union. This was and continues to be important, because the political party is the basis for action.....Life is about politics. The separation of politics from other forms of action is not right. Donors try to encourage the separation of the political from the organization. But it is known that any movement is built by parties. They are the way forward; our concern is how the party helps develop the society. If it were not for the parties and their ideology, we would not have had these organizations. (....) Without the party we would not have had the national work. It was the party that gave the broader link (cohesion) to the national work. And for us now, it is our commitment to the party that keeps us going even though we have no funding and often very little for salaries."

This interviewee raises a very interesting point. In contrast to the claim made that historically the political party distorted the work of the NGO, this individual presents the view that it is the NGO which gained from the affiliation with the party. More specifically, his point is that the national work gained because the party facilitated the cohesion of the voluntary work initiative in the first intifada. Despite its own biases, this perspective is invaluable because it provides a reference against which one can identify the changes PNGOs have undergone over time. Indeed, PNGOs have changed tremendously since the first intifada. While today most NGOs operate independently from the political parties, often the link between the NGO and the party persist through the upper cadre. As recently as three years ago, executives of a certain political party assigned one of their members to fill the vacant position of director in an NGO. This was not a case of dispensing patronage per say; rather the objective was to ensure that the position of director continued to be filled by a party member. In this regard, it is interesting to contrast the discourse of PNGOs today with the discourse of actors such as those quoted above. Today, Palestinian NGOs quite adamantly stress that they are non-political entities. Salwa Shawa explains the context within which PNGOs have embraced such a de-politicized discourse of civil society: "Some of the Palestinian NGOs took on this discourse because of their previous politicized nature and their interest in

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social change. Others felt that the discourse could help them to legitimate themselves in their new environment" (forthcoming: 14).

Today Palestinian NGOs occupy a strategic position in society: the NGO sector is quite strong in comparison with both trade unions and political parties. Moreover, it is relatively autonomous from the Authority and outside of its informal power structures. In the following section, we will start by examining the women's organizations model parliament project as an example of how Palestinian NGOs contribute to social change today, set between opposing factors: the influence of donor policies on one side and their own historical evolution on the other.

Social Change in the Project Framework:
the Case of the Model Parliament

The Palestinian Model Parliament is a project that was launched in 1997-1998. A series of activities were organized around the theme of women's rights, culminating in national debates in March and April of 1998 on the status of Palestinian women in laws. The project was implemented by the Women's Center for Legal Aid and Counseling (WCLAC), supported by women's centers, women's groups and human rights centers, and funded by the British Council and Dutch organization NOVIB. The Model Parliament reflects two important developments that have occurred since the establishment of the PNA. The first development is the formation of a national-political arena within which to raise internal social and political questions. The second development is a convergence of social organizations seeking to raise issues related to democracy and social rights, and donors willing to fund democracy building efforts—as set within the short-term framework of the project approach. Initiated by women's organizations, the Model Parliament is situated within the changes women's groups have undergone since the first intifada, discussed in the case study above. More generally, it is also set within the transformations PNGOs have gone through over time, also discussed above. In both cases, the rise of professionalized organizations, and their leadership role in the women's and NGO movements respectively, is evident.

While the Model Parliament was praised internationally, with WCLAC bestowed with a human rights award for its efforts, the event caused a stir locally and led to a strong backlash by the majority of Islamist-nationalist forces.[57] Taking into account the event and the effects thereafter, it raises two important points about the PNGOs' role in contributing to social change. Firstly, the Parliament illustrates the difference between the short-

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[57] This is a more appropriate term than 'Islamists.' In Palestine, one cannot grasp the Islamist actors by solely referring to religious ideology, but must also consider the nationalistic one as well.

term focus of the project approach, with its emphasis on identifiable 'outputs,' and the long-term time frame needed for social change. Secondly, the event also exhibits the inadequacy in the project framework of tackling social and political issues, embedded within the power structures of the society. The project approach does not take into account the politicized nature of such an endeavor, nor is it equipped to deal with the deeply-rooted power relations, unless supported by broader structures or mobilized constituencies. A brief discussion of the experience will illustrate these issues.

As already indicated, the Model Parliament project culminated in nation-wide parliamentary debates on the status of women in Palestinian law.[58] To facilitate these debates, parliamentarians were elected: 88 chosen for the West Bank and 120 for the Gaza Strip for sessions to be held in each geographic region respectively. The participants included members of the Legislative Council, women's activists, members of human rights associations, Islamic clergy and Islamist activists. Additional activities were held concurrently with the preparations for the parliamentary sessions. In particular, training sessions were conducted to prepare lobbyists to support the campaign, and workshops were held on both the current state of Palestinian law and on international law. With regard to the parliaments themselves, the session held in the West Bank dealt with women's legal status from a number of different angles, giving consideration to women's political and civil rights, the right to work and the right to healthcare and education. In contrast, the parliament in Gaza focused exclusively on the Palestinian Family Status Law, examining how to promote women's equality and human rights within this legal code. In general, the Model Parliament project received considerable media coverage; the Palestinian TV, radio and newspapers covered the regular activities of the project, including the proceedings of the parliaments themselves.

On one level, the Model Parliament project was an extremely important initiative, successful by virtue of its groundbreaking nature. The project not only raised the issue of women's rights in public, but women's equality was openly debated in an unprecedented manner. Furthermore, a direct link was established between women's human rights and the Palestinian Personal Status and Family Status laws, both of which are derived from the Islamic Sharia. Also, the debates offered the opportunity for strategizing and consensus building between concerned actors on how to advance women's rights in these highly sensitive areas. One observer describes a debate between the members of the Model Parliament that

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[58] Palestinian law is based on Jordanian and Egyptian laws, with the former applied in the West Bank and the latter used in the Gaza Strip. The Personal Status Law, which is particularly important for women and deals with matters of marriage, divorce and child custody relies on the Islamic Sharia, as do the Family Status Laws.

reflects this process. As she explains, while some of the members of the parliament advocated that modernist interpretations of Islam be used as a strategy to promote and locate women's rights within the local traditions, other members argued that such a strategy would prove counterproductive in the end. Moreover, the secularists made a convincing case that the real issue is not just a change in the laws, but changes in the power structures of society, in which case Islamist positions' should not be conceded (Sh'hada, 1999: 41). In addition to such opportunities for open strategizing and consensus building, some have described the achievements of the Model Parliament as follows: "The members of the parliament were able to convey their objectives to the people despite the Islamists' counter-campaign; the Model Parliament succeeded in ensuring the right of women to discuss their status under the current laws; the members of the parliament broke the taboo set by some Islamists that had stopped people from discussing the Sharia; and by implementing the slogan, 'The national and social struggle have to be carried out side by side,' the Model Parliament filled the vacuum left by the democratic movement" (Sh'hada, 1999: 44).

Clearly, the Model Parliament was an extremely important event in and of itself. Unfortunately though, when one considers the broader context of the project, specifically an assault by some Islamic groups on the women's movement, and the Authority's silence and complacency, then the inadequacy of pursuing social change in this manner comes into view. A reliance on the project approach as a way to change the legal status of women in the Palestinian context faces inherent limitations because of the way women's issues are deeply intertwined with the politics between the national and Islamists factions; therefore such an initiative inevitably becomes embroiled within these power structures. Other mechanisms are needed to advance women's rights, including mobilized support of constituencies-that can anchor the women's movement as a veritable social actor, and prevent it from becoming a ping-pong ball in the power games between the political forces. Consider Sh'hada's analysis: she explains the complexity of advancing women's rights, pointing out that the latter are caught up in the power struggles of the main political forces. As she outlines, the nationalists and Islamist factions are competing over issues of everyday life; both seek to construct their own hegemony by drawing on strands of Palestinian identity, each of which define women in an equally subordinate manner (1999: 50-62). Sandwiched between the Authority and the Islamists, the Model Parliament lacked the means to either protect itself from the attack of some Islamist groups or to pressure the Authority to intervene. This was the case because neither did the Parliament project display strong popular backing, nor was it effectively supported by a mobilized coalition of social organizations. For their part, some Islamic forces mobilized a powerful counter-campaign, using print articles, speeches in the mosques and leaflets to denounce the women's movement

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and forestall their efforts to redefine social regulations in the public arena. In the midst of this, the Authority stood by silently, indirectly allowing these Islamist groups to attempt to assert control over social norms in exchange for their exclusion from the negotiating process. The Islamists' campaign had the strategic objective of forcing the women's movement onto the defensive and making it difficult for women's groups to reassert their calls for change. Moreover, the backlash of some Islamists put the women's movement in a vulnerable position.

Two lessons emerge out of the Model Parliament experience. The first is that there is a difference between the short-term focus of the project approach, which looks for identifiable 'results,' and the long-term time frame required for social change. The project was a worthwhile initiative, and if repeated with a revised strategy it would surely be beneficial for the women's movement. Yet the donors supporting the project did not share this perspective. Once problems surfaced, the donors quickly withdrew their support. Expecting quick results, they also wanted to avoid getting involved in internal entanglements, and so they exited. Importantly, it exposed a problem between the short vision of the project framework and the time frame needed for social change, and also revealed a gap between the donors' stated intentions and their willingness to get involved due to political constraints. However, one acknowledges that both of these factors could have easily been reversed if NGOs were given more autonomy and granted program support as opposed to project funding.

The second issue is that if NGOs approach the question of long-term social change as a project, unmediated by supporting structures, they leave themselves open to the possibility of grave disappointment. One only has to look at the nature of the opposition mounted by some Islamists to see the importance of strong social backing. The Islamists counter-campaign included mobilizing their own Islamic women's groups, some of whom went and disrupted the Model Parliament proceedings in the West Bank to protest their exclusion and the efforts of the 'liberal feminists' to monopolize the voice of Palestinian women.[59] Indeed, since the Model Parliament, some of the Islamic women's organizations have revised their strategies and work plans in order to play a more active role in shaping the Palestinian women's agenda. This is significant, since it is well known that some Islamist groups have a well developed grassroots support and their own network of social services. For their part, women's activists have recognized some the failings of strict adherence to a project approach. It has been acknowledged that problems with the Model Parliament included that it required additional work at the popular level.[60] Also as one activist stated, "The Model Parliament is much bigger than a project idea."

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[59] Interview with Al-Khansa.
[60] Interview with the Palestinian Working Women's Society.

Professionalization of NGOs and the Effect of the Aid Channels

The problems associated with pursuing social change in the project framework are not restricted to women's organizations, but apply more generally to all PNGOs. There is a broader issue at stake here, namely the changes that PNGOs have undergone over time. For it is the NGO, as affected by development cooperation, and *reconstituted within aid channels*, that meets with donor policies and imposed frameworks such as the project approach. One can ask, why do PNGOs not use the project and donor support as a beginning to be complemented with additional support mechanisms and support from society? This question, however, is tied up with the changes that NGOs have undergone, which play a determining role in how NGOs interact with donor influence. This raises the question, what do we understand as the effects of PNGOs' entry into aid channels? What does one mean by professionalization? What is constraining, and what is enabling about the changes PNGOs have undergone? In the section on the PNGOs and historical changes above, we outlined that the entry of NGOs into development cooperation should be viewed as accompanied by changes in both the *internal organization* of the NGOs and the NGOs' *external way of relating to society*. Internally, due to conditions for funding which stresses organizational capacity, and due to the effects of the regulative relationship between the NGO and the donor, the NGO adopts organizational practices amenable to the donor way of reporting, monitoring and evaluating development work. Such changing organizational forms orients the NGO in the direction of the 'mainstream approach to development,' with its emphasis on 'inputs,' 'outputs' and predictable results, and this affects how the NGO relates to the external environment.

Different academics offer similar analysis. According to Hulme and Edwards, funding establishes a relationship between NGOs and donors *based on regulations*, and this fosters certain patterns of behavior and norms. Sometimes this can result in the NGO increasingly beginning to resemble the donor. "The acceptance of increasing volumes of foreign aid involves entering into agreements about what is done, and how it is to be reported and accounted for. This fosters an emphasis on certain forms of activity at the expense of others" (1997: 8). At issue here is the normalization of established forms of behavior such as using logical frameworks, which become organizational norms. These are not only bureaucratically rigid but also inconsistent with an organization working to promote social change-this can lead to NGOs becoming more like donors.

Escobar expands on this, arguing that within the development industry, social life becomes a technical problem to be *managed* by the 'development professional.' He states, "Instead of seeing problems of society in its historical/cultural tradition, the 'development professional' devises mechanisms and procedures to make societies fit a pre-existing model

that embodies the structures and functions of modernity" (1997: 91). As Escobar reveals, increased entry into development cooperation reorients the position of the NGO actor in society. It is not so much that an NGO becomes detached from the grassroots, as that the development professional adopts a particular way of *relating to society.* The development professional approaches society as the problem field, which he can 'fix' through interventions based on equations prescribing definable inputs and producing tangible outputs.

To summarize, the entry of NGOs into aid channels is understood as being accompanied by changes in the internal organization of the NGOs, including patterns of behavior that are less flexible and which resemble donor organizational forms. Secondly, there can be a shift in the way the NGO relates to society, with the hegemony of the mainstream approach to development affecting how the NGO relates to the external environment. Other observers and social theorists suggest possible explanations of why this is the case. Some suggest a 'colonization of the life world,' with the logic of the rationalized political and economic systems penetrating the life world, through the entry of money and power into the action area of civil society (Arato and Cohen, 1992: 204).

Indeed, one can observe the logic of verification and control entering the NGO sector through funding. Donor reporting requirements and tools such as the Logical Framework Analysis not only seek to impose certainty on the unstable process of development, but they reflect a logic of verification and control that donors impose to track the usage of funds. Donor pressure on NGOs to report and account for their actions, and similar pressure to use the most efficient means to attain their objectives, inculcate self-contained institutional practices. One can conceptualize this as the spread of *instrumental rationality* in the social sphere. Regular reporting and planning within the project framework take over and become the driving imperative of the organization, and with this a narrow focus on 'means-to-ends' becomes a continuous cycle, repeated by the actors.[61] In this context, society becomes the problem field for NGOs to act upon, and social groups and the grassroots, insofar as they are mentioned, maybe factored in as inputs or outputs of whatever 'gap' or 'problem' the NGO is fixing.

All of this suggests that the effect of the entry of NGOs into aid channels ironically challenges their ability to act as real agents of social change. This implies that unless PNGOs are able to redefine their vision and reorganize their institutions they face the danger of becoming more

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[61] Many of the organizations we interviewed conceded they are hiring English speakers to manage reporting and correspondence with the donors. Other smaller organizations complained of the complexity of proposal writing and donor reporting requirements. Indeed, larger PNGOs like Bisan and others have begun providing training for smaller organizations on proposal writing and reporting techniques.

like donors and detached development professionals. Both leave PNGOs unequipped to go beyond donor policies or frameworks. As the above analysis shows, underlying assumptions of donor and INGO support for NGOs, as well as the limitations of the project approach, necessitate that NGOs approach ties with donors with a critical perspective. If donor support for NGOs is to truly become an opportunity for the latter to advance social change in their society, they must be able to supplement projects with their own structured vertical and horizontal relations with the grassroots and other social organizations.

What is needed, therefore, is for PNGOs to develop a new vision and to restructure themselves. As Chambers argues, caught in 'the system' of organizational cultures, procedures, and punitive measures, 'the self' feels powerless, and changes seem impossible. Yet he reminds us that personal choice of *what to do* and *how to do it* mediates every action and every change. In this regard, policy, practice and performance are all the outcomes of personal decisions (1996: 246-247). At the same time, it is essential to recognize that professionalization should not be understood in a negative sense, nor should it be viewed as signifying all the changes PNGOs have undergone. Professionalism can refer to knowledge, skills, networks and experience, which NGO actors' gain and that can be used by a cadre of activists to promote change. Moreover, as will be illustrated in the third part of this book on networking (Chapters 6 and 7), effective transnational advocacy work requires highly professional organizations possessing resources, knowledge and linkages to effectively lobby for change at global conferences or at the regional level. In the remainder of this chapter we will explore the different possibilities open for NGOs to restructure themselves. First, however, a few issues should be reviewed.

5.4. Some Constraining Factors of Social Change

Internalization of Professional-Activist Dichotomy

In considering the possibility of an alternative vision for NGOs, it is necessary to start with a discussion of some of the factors that complicate the capacity of NGOs to readily transform themselves. In the case of Palestinian NGOs, one factor that deserves consideration is the *actors' own conceptions of organizational models*. As already outlined, PNGOs emerged within the national movement, and with their increased entry into development cooperation they faced the pressure to depoliticize themselves. Consider the following example, which suggests that some PNGOs may have internalized a dichotomous notion of professional organization/ activist organization as two separate and distinct modes of organizational operation. The shift from one organizational model to another is neither

a given, nor a deterministic process brought on by donor influences. Yet, in PNGO discourse, bureaucratization and professionalization are represented as linear processes that transformed the organizations from one mode of functioning to another. In this view, *the role of the actors is abstracted* and the possibility of fusing the grassroots component of the activist model with the professional model is rarely considered. The construction of a dichotomy between professional organizations and activist organizations, may also be related to the way PNGOs rationalize their own evolution and understand the movement from one particular model of organization to another.

Consider the following example: Several years ago, in a very large development NGO, a problem occurred between the director of the NGO and the political party. More specifically, the party tried to prevail on the director that the NGO should be more accountable to communities in the rural areas. Rather than consider ways to reorganize the NGO and bring the communities into the organization, the director, however, chose to split with the party. Two NGOs were formed: one became a union type structure, linked to the party and representing the rural communities, and the second became a professional development NGO led by the director. In choosing this course of action, the director reproduced the dichotomy of professionalization verses representation-activism. However, the problem is clearly not one of professionalization being diametrically opposed to activism, but a reflection of personal actors inside the organization. Who decides on the structure of an organization and why? On the one hand, we can interpret this case as indicating a problem of centralization of power and undemocratic action, for it was the director that made the decision, not the people inside the organization or the rural communities. On the other hand, there is also a question of representation, and how the actors inside the NGOs form their own notions of themselves and of professionalization. In one respect, NGO actors internalize notions of hierarchical organizational models from the donors. At the same time, reproducing the dichotomy between a professionalized and activist organization rationalizes their historical evolution.

NGOs Reflect the Power Relations in Society

In contrast to the high expectations new development paradigms have for NGOs, it is evident that the broader power relations which exist in society are reflected inside of these organizations. As the above example illustrates, there are problems of personal power and undemocratic behavior inside NGOs. There are also problems of political rivalries and other issues such as gender discrimination and lack of individual rights. For instance, many examples were given by our interviewees illustrating the continued saliency of individuals political affiliation as a factor that can create

tension and inhibit cooperation, or that can facilitate access to rewards and advancement, depending on the context.

How far then are PNGOs removed from the inequalities and power relations of society at large, and how does this apply to the PNA and other organizations? According to the sociologist Lisa Taraki: "Palestinian political institutions have operated within a political culture that has witnessed tensions between the realities of patronage and personal influence and control, on the one hand, and discourses of public responsibility, participation, rights, entitlements, and merit on the other" (1997:15). She continues by highlighting the duality between the formal institutional framework and the informal mechanisms through which power is organized. As she explains, during the period in which the political formations maintained hegemony over political life from the post-1967 period to the 1990's: "It is true that most deployed kinship and regional affiliations and ties as vehicles for such mobilization, but the party and faction framework was the major arena within which political life was conducted" (Taraki, 1997: 16). In terms of an understanding of NGOs, this suggests the need to look beyond the formal institutional framework of the organization, considering the fluidity of the power structures of society.

Signs of Distinction

The structuring of a new elite is one of the consequences of increased entry of NGOs into development cooperation. In this process, elite formation depends heavily also in the power structure inside of the society and the capacity of the actors to use their symbolic capital and to create different signs of 'distinction,' as the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu argues. Are the high wages of NGO actors a sign of distinction of this group? In fact, it can be seen not only in Palestine but worldwide. But as a sign of distinction of NGOs, high salaried positions in NGOs is something chosen; it is a marker that reflects the process from which this new elite emerges and donors play a role in this process. Donors, especially USAID, establish very high standards for employee wages, and this can be problematic, especially considering the manner in which it is done. For example, the salary of a director of a PNGO nearly doubled from $1800 to $3500, when the NGO accepted funds from USAID and the donor set the director's salary. As for the Community Development project USAID is currently launching, the local director's salary is set at $6,500 and the foreign NGO director's is set at $10,000.

In contrast to this, some point out that rather than represent distinguishing features of a differentiated group, such signs signify a problem of rent-seeking and dependency on donor funding among this new elite. As Carapico points out: "Indeed, some activists decline subsidies from

Western or Arab sources entirely, pointing to a new kind of dependency: *NGO rent-seeking*. These critics call attention to the class dimension of criteria for qualifying for international loans, grants or programs – such as preferences for those who speak English, understand spreadsheets, or dress in appropriate business attire" (Carapico, 2000: 14).

NGOs and Charismatic Leadership

Let us consider one of the main internal issues facing PNGO organizations. As suggested above, the broader power relations and inequalities that exist in society are reproduced inside of the NGO. This can take many forms. In the Palestinian case, despite considerable discussion of institution building and the priority placed on organizational capacities, it is evident that there is a problem of centralization of power within NGOs. This is a complex issue related to many factors. On the one hand, PNGOs are relatively young and often the original founder of the organization leads the NGO. On the other hand, there are also systemic factors related to formal development cooperation that reinforce strong charismatic leadership and centralized control. Although in this type of development cooperation, the aid recipients are non-governmental actors, often the pomp and formality associated with formal diplomatic relations among state actors remains intact; delegations of foreign visitors, international experts and donor missions are a routine part of the NGO's external relations. This reinforces the tendency towards strong powerful figures leading the NGO.

Typically such an individual is regarded as the official 'representative' of the NGO, and develops his own external, quasi-diplomatic, relations with donor aid agencies and other international organizations. Such patterns of behavior do not support a decentralized and informal organizational culture. Concentration of power in strong personalities is not only of consequence for what type of institutions are being established, but it also affects the role of the NGO, and its relationship with society. Internal democratic procedures and accountability structures linking the organization to society are important factors influencing the role the NGO plays in contributing to social change. Undoubtedly this issue also raises questions related to the role and responsibility of the donor. Is it a matter of interference, or is it the donor's duty, to investigate the leadership within the NGO and the relation of the organization to the constituency? Without systematically delving into this issue, below we highlight some of the important points in the Palestinian case.

In some of the PNGOs observed during our fieldwork, it is clear that there is resistance to set up a decentralized system of authority and to delegate decision-making responsibilities inside the NGO. While in some cases there is a partial devolution of authority, power is usually shared

with an individual that is often very closely situated in relation to the central personality of the organization. It is not clear if the centralization of power is due to a sudden dumping of funds locally, which leads to rapid organizational growth without proper structural foundation. In any case, it is definitely supported by ambivalence inside the organization towards internal restructuring, which is due to an absence of incentives or pressure to redefine internal structures. In some extreme cases, it is apparent that there is a conscious centralization of power by one individual that reflects deeply entrenched personalized power structures inside of the NGO, with the director treating the NGO as his own private patrimony. For instance, several years ago there was problem over a director's mismanagement of funds in a PNGO. Instead of dismissing the director, the entire board resigned. Clearly things should work the other way around, especially insofar as an NGO's legitimacy stems from its claim to represent and work in the public interest, rather than for the interest of one individual.

This raises questions about donor responsibility and what types of mechanisms donors and INGOs use to monitor internal governance. According to Smillie, donor priorities like the Logical Framework Analysis and their focus on the management capabilities of NGOs often means that: "Real internal good government, i.e., accountability to a board or membership, remains unchecked. This is particularly clear in the South where the NGO movement is young and many NGOs are still headed by the original founder: and are thus controlled by a charismatic leader and/or run like a family enterprise" (1995: 150-151).

Yet what mechanisms are available to donors to promote better forms of internal governance inside NGOs? One suggestion is for donors to link the emphasis on organization capacity to a focus on *decentralized management systems,* linking capacity to organizational structure with a clear delegation of responsibilities and input mechanisms for staff members. In some cases, donors already define organizational building in terms of decentralized management systems.

A director of a women's PNGO describes the transformation of the organization over time, and the transition to more participatory structures, with input and involvement of the donor: "We have evolved a lot. Initially all projects were my ideas. I wrote all the proposals, this is how we started. As we grew, management structure changed....When they (donor) realized we were growing they suggested technical assistance, and offered funding to develop a proper management system. A new system was established. Now we have units and unit heads. It is more decentralized. Now there are ideas that are mine, and there is, at the same time, room to insert ideas. The heads of the units are expected to contribute and have input and ideas."

This example illustrates the positive synergy that can be generated between donors and NGOs and the positive contributions donors can make to facilitate proper growth of the NGO. At the same time, however, it is

also clear that donors often directly or indirectly reinforce a concentration of power inside NGOs. Firstly, the formality and pretense that accompanies development cooperation support the 'cult of personality' among NGO leaders. Not only is the donor's only point of reference for the organization the director, but it is with this person that all formal correspondence and visits are made. Again, this adherence to diplomatic-like procedures reinforces the centralization of personal power. Also, invitations for conferences are mostly to the director; this is another type of mechanism that perpetuates the power of one person. In extreme cases, donors may be aware of the extra perks and incentives afforded the director of an NGO, and continue to support the organization even when it is clear that such practices are rampant and constitute a form of excess. For instance, in one of the local donor's archives, it was observed that a regular partner in Gaza had submitted budgets showing the NGO director's annual salary as close to $50,000. In this case, donors not only reinforce a concentration of power within one person but they openly endorse excessive practices, which conflict with the legitimacy of NGOs as non-profit agencies established to serve the broader public interest.

Board Meetings and Constituency

Two issues closely related to the concentration of power inside the organization include whether there is some form of oversight over the NGO by a board and whether there are accountability structures linking the organization to the population. Concerning the role of boards in Palestine, it is evident that the existence of actual boards may not be a problem, but questions surface concerning the democratic functioning of boards. For instance, few boards, aside from those of women's organizations, give consideration to gender representation. Also, questions can be raised about the substance of actual oversight provided by the board. In the Palestinian context, most board members are made up of prestigious individuals, many of whom are important personalities from within the NGO sector. Moreover, many individuals serve on the board of two or more NGOs, and some even serve on as many as 25 boards. In this regard, it is not clear how deeply the board actually enters into the inner workings of the NGO. Does the board provide a democratic check, or is it used as a status symbol in which prominent figures shore up the credentials of the PNGO?

Donors working in Palestine have adopted different approaches on the issue of the role of NGO boards. Some, such as USAID, hire local organizations to check into the functioning of the board. "We hire an audit firm. An NGO must have a board that meets once or twice each year and supervises the staff. This is checked out by a local organization" (Interview with USAID). Interestingly, USAID places the strongest emphasis on

monitoring the internal organizational structures of NGOs and other issues related to their internal governance, including the proper functioning of the board. While this reflects USAID's general approach to development cooperation, it may also be reinforced by the local Palestinian staff members who recognize internal governance as a central problem of the PNGO sector (Interview with USAID). Other organizations such as the Ford Foundation only began thoroughly investigating the function of the board in 2002. Other agencies, such as Danish Aid Agency (Danida), adopt a *laisser faire* attitude: "For a new partner we will check if they have a functioning board, but we do not have specific requirements for elections or for administrative management. We are less conditional than USAID" (Interview with Danida). Some private foundations are conscious of the sensitivity of interfering and ultimately place the responsibility for internal leadership and democratic functioning on the local actors. As one program manager states, regarding the leadership issue: "This is not a problem we can solve. I cannot tell the board to be more active.... We tried with NGOs to increase transparency, to see if the board was active, [if it] meets and how often, and to prioritize gender sensitivity in the board, but there are limitations to this. We cannot know everything. What we know is limited to what we see on paper.... The responsibility for democratic leadership must come from the NGOs themselves."

Another central issue related to the centralization of power within NGOs is whether there are structures linking the organization to society.[62] This is also a very complex question, which involves many issues including the evolution of the NGO in Palestine over time. Without entering deeply into this issue, our research suggests that the relationship of the PNGO to society is an issue that has yet to be effectively addressed, and will become increasingly important in the future. Since the transformation of PNGOs from their original model during the first intifada, the question of their relationship to society has not been given much consideration, and the issue of establishing accountability structures linking the community with the NGO has been met with indifference.

Reflecting on the transformation PNGOs have undergone, including signs of their incorporation into the aid channel as discussed above, one PNGO project officer spoke frankly about the emergence of an *instrumentalized attitude* towards the local population. As he explained, mechanisms such as the Participatory Rapid Appraisal (PRA), which are designed to survey the opinion of the grassroots, are often used by the PNGOs as a tool to reinforce pre-existing assumptions, rather than as a tool for knowledge or as a way to increase participation. Interestingly, one Northern NGO commented on the relationship between PNGOs and the

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[62] Of course, this does not concern all the NGOs but those of development and advocacy which by their work directly serve constituencies.

local society in the following manner, "NGOs in Palestine *are isolated from society*. But they have a constituency for a project, if they want that project. This is a structural problem we cannot do anything about." In contrast to this, issues such as the centralization of personal power in NGOs, the effectiveness of the board and the relationship of the NGO to the local society, should be of concern to both local actors and their international partners. Many assumptions, including that NGOs have close ties to the grassroots, have buttressed the new development paradigm. Yet, as we have suggested, many contradictory factors, including the effects that the entry into aid channels has on NGOs, can affect relations with the grassroots. In this respect, the onus is on both NGOs and donors to critically examine such issues.

Today the most prominent and well known Palestinian NGOs, whether research centers, human rights organizations or service providers, are led by charismatic individuals, known locally, connected to donor and Western aid circles, and possessing international contacts and networks in their sector. As some remark, some of the PNGO leadership, such as those that are active in the PNGO Network, are skilled politicians actively advancing the interests of the NGO movement locally (Hammami, 2000). Those remain directly active in political parties and move between the structure of the NGO and the party, acting on two fronts of civil society, and entering the public arena through both of these structures.

The success of the PNGO Network in forestalling the Palestinian Executive's efforts to enact a repressive NGO Law, and their continuing lobbying efforts, show how sophisticated these NGO actors are and how fruitful their joint action can be. Yet how does this type of professionalized action, encouraged by the NGO leaders, fit in with the national landscape in relation to other political questions that face society and the public as a whole? Are the PNGOs in fact becoming isolated and somehow irrelevant in terms of broader social and political questions?

The decision-making process inside NGOs and the type of linkages formed between these organizations and the grassroots are essential factors influencing the role of the NGO in its society. The broader arena in which PNGOs operate is not simply one of opportunities, but it is also one of constraints and contradictory influences. The increased entry into aid channels is accompanied by pressure to alter organizational forms and is associated with influences that may alter the way the NGO relates to the local society. In this context, internal democratic practices and structures linking the society with the NGO fulfill the important function of grounding the NGO in downward accountability mechanisms; these in turn inhibit the NGO from being led astray by complex and multiple factors beyond its control.

Consider the different decisions taken by PNGOs over time. In 1985, the Arab Thought Forum held a conference in which 126 PNGOs took

the decision to boycott USAID (Barghouthi, 1999: 76). Recently, a similar debate was held on whether the PNGOs should boycott USAID in response to American calls to make development assistance conditional on progress in the political relations between Palestinians and Israeli negotiators. Some project officers complained that within their own organizations, the issue was not debated either with the board or with staff but left to the opinion of the director, and even when confronted about the debate the director refused to allow broader views to be considered.

5.5. Towards an Alternative Vision: New Possibilities

What would be an alternative vision for NGOs? There are many different possibilities, but most agree that SNGOs need to be strengthened as a first step towards redefining their position within aid channels and reforming their relationship with the Western aid agencies and INGOs, to increase their organizational capacity and ties to the grassroots, to diversify their funds, and to improve their negotiating skills with Northern institutions, while also building trust with personnel within Northern institutions. Alternatively, others propose that NGOs and donors move away from notions of *partnership*, and embrace *solidarity* as a basis for their relations. Solidarity is a more transparent form of relationship; it recognizes power inequalities domestically and globally, and it positions shared values at the center of the relationship. It makes no pretense about shared interests at all levels (Abugre, 1999). While the specific way in which an NGO may seek to redefine itself may vary, the basic issues remain the same: finding ways to increase autonomy from the overlapping pressures with the forces with which they work, developing horizontal and vertical linkages in their own society, and cultivating transnational solidarity linkages.

Developing Autonomy

An essential part of the challenge of increasing the autonomy of an NGO is developing forms of financial independence. This is not an easy task. In fact, opportunities to increase an organization's financial resources, such as income generating activities, are not only risky but may prove to be self-defeating. The organization may exchange bureaucratically rigid donor models for business-like behavior and responsibilities. The different ways in which an NGO can reduce its dependence on the donors include the following: fundraising, income generating initiatives and setting up an endowment. Alternatively, some organizations also choose to diversify their sources of funding in order to offset reliance on donor support. Let us briefly review some of the experiences of PNGOs with each option to

get a better understanding of the different models and possibilities that are available.

Both the literature and actors within the PNGO sector often look upon local fundraising with hesitation. Some of the literature argues that in the Middle East, practices like fundraising and recruiting volunteers are closely tied to deeper social affiliations and, when conducted successfully, are motivated by intervening factors like religion. Kandil suggests that religion plays a central role in motivating voluntarism in the region. According to her, in some Arab countries it is difficult to mobilize volunteers for activities that are not religiously oriented. Moreover, as she argues, religious social organizations, such as those in Egypt and the Gulf countries, are highly self-sufficient and autonomous, partly because of their ability to raise funds to cover their needs and recruit volunteers (Kandil, 1994: 119). In Egypt alone, the *zakat* funds of 3000 mosques totaled *$5 million* in 1989 (Kandil, 1994: 112- 117).

The Islamic social organizations we 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 organizations have successfully formed linkages with Palestinian diaspora communities, and receive substantial financial support from them. Having said this, it is important to recognize that while the influence of religion in society may explain the success of *zakat* donation drives and Islamic organization fundraising techniques, it does not *ipso facto* explain why fundraising is problematic for NGOs. Such an explanation requires a close inspection of the relationship between the organization and the context in which it is situated; often factors need to be considered such as the legitimacy of the organization, and the extent to which it has cultivated a relationship with the community. In Gaza, for instance, an organization providing rehabilitation services originally mobilized support and received donations from the community to set up the organization. Today, however, the same organization finds it difficult to continually fundraise locally because of the broader socio-economic situation in Gaza, with almost 60% of the population impoverished refugees whose own economic circumstances have worsened rather than improved overtime.

One development PNGO in the West Bank argues that it is easier to fundraise for relief than it is for long-term development work. While plausible, this argument is disproved in practice. Again, the evidence suggests that factors such as the extent to which the organization is known locally, and possesses legitimacy, are more important. Before the second intifada began, the Palestiniane Red Crescent Society in Nablus conducted a local fundraiser. They put on a telethon on television that was supported by members of the community and the local municipality. The fundraising initiative was quite successful; many people responded positively and phoned in with pledges. It is true, however, that the Red Crescent Society

is somewhat of a unique case and does not face the challenge that other PNGO actors face in fundraising. Due to its role in providing social goods, and through its hospitals and emergency services, it is both very well known and regarded as an essential component of the system of public goods.

When an organization is not as well known locally, it may confront difficulties in fundraising locally. For instance, a women organization's efforts to raise funds locally for a scholarship fund to support women's post-secondary education received meager response from the community. The inability of the women's group to raise a substantial amount of money left the activists tired and frustrated. As the director explained, with less than half of the effort and work put into the fundraising drive, they could have written a proposal and received a large grant from donors. Given such a scenario, why would they engage in fundraising in the future? However, as the director also explained, the purpose of the fundraising initiative was to enable the organization to offer grants for women, an idea generally not supported by donors, since it conflicts with donors' increased emphasis on promoting women's empowerment through self-reliance. In this regard, fundraising can be a useful and essential tool to increase the autonomy of the NGO. Yet in order to be effective, fundraising requires a strategy which takes into account the broader context, including ways to bolster the legitimacy of the NGO and its fundraising scheme locally.

A second option available for NGOs for increasing their self-sufficiency is to develop income generating activities. Palestinian NGOs have had different experiences with income raising projects. Some of the older women's organizations have suffered losses with production projects that utilize primitive modes of production, and are unable to compete in real market conditions. Local women's organizations found their production of textile goods rendered unprofitable by economic changes brought about after the arrival of the PNA, in particular the opening of local markets to cheap goods from Asia. Other women's organizations have established cafes or cafeterias. Yet results have also proven unpredictable and in some cases unsustainable.

Thus far, the experience of PNGOs suggests that income generating activities are not only risky, but there may be limitations on the ability of non-profit organizations to utilize market strategies effectively, without losing their original focus and orientation. One of the Stiftungs working in Palestine recognized some of the difficulties of income generating activities and is promoting ways to mitigate the adverse effects of market-oriented solutions. This organization helps Arab NGOs to find ways to effectively market their products or projects in the region. It also encourages Palestinian NGOs to build on their accumulated experience, and sell their services to the private sector or to other Arab NGOs, for example, by providing consulting or training programs. Some Palestinian organizations

have turned to other forms of creative market solutions; many of the Islamic organizations collect a fund which they use to invest in land or in a building that will generate regular income for the organization. It is the more creative types of solutions that will prove effective in the end, for as one PNGO in Gaza states, NGOs are caught between two dilemmas if they enter into income activities: firstly, PNGOs are non-profit social organizations, and secondly, there are limits on the profitability of most local income generating schemes.

The third possibility available for NGOs is to set up an endowment. This has been increasingly recognized as an important strategic option that can enable an NGO to increase its independence and self-sufficiency without the burden associated with business ventures. One small PNGO, Rawdat al-Zuhour, which was established to provide services for destitute girls, established a trust fund in 1986 on the occasion of the death of the founder of the organization. Rawdat established this endowment through its own initiative, using a local fundraising drive. Currently, the fund generates interest of $2000 monthly. While this is clearly not enough to support the organization, the director hopes to obtain a grant to raise the principle and increase the return of the fund. What is interesting about this example are the consequences of developing forms of self-sufficiency for the organization. In contrast to most PNGOs, this organization is conscious of possibilities outside of donor funding and approaches donors from a position of strength, knowledge and aggressiveness, unmatched by other organizations.

In contrast to the case of Rawdat, negotiating with donors to obtain a grant for an endowment can be a complicated and difficult task. As Dr. Mustafa Barghouthi explains, endowments have been proposed by NGOs, but the donors often refuse since there is no guarantee that the character of the organization will not change over time (1995). In one exception, the Ford Foundation provided $1 million for an endowment to the Community Health Institute at Birzeit University. In June 2000 at an IDRC (International Development and Research Center) meeting for Palestinian partner organizations, many PNGOs suggested that INGOs should help NGOs set up endowment funds. Yet as the discussion revealed, this form of support is very difficult for donors to justify financially. The Birzeit Health Institute was an exception because it is affiliated to the university and therefore perceived as being apart of a public institution. It is apparent that donor support for PNGOs remains confined to a short-term emphasis on obtaining 'results' in donor-defined thematic areas of concern, as opposed to a focus on long-term institution building. While it can be said that the question of NGO sustainability is ultimately the responsibility of the local organization, it is also true that donors have not really helped the PNGOs in this matter, prioritizing short-term gains over long-term mechanisms to support these institutions.

Finally, in the absence of independent forms of funding, many NGOs are diversifying their sources of funding to insulate the organization from dependence on the same donors. This also applies to INGOs. For example, Médecins sans Frontières has reduced its reliance on government funding and at present only 20% from its budget comes from donors agencies. Locally, PNGOs that have diversified their funding sources have done so with the strategic objective to reduce their dependence on any one donor. For example, after its partner institution, the International Planning Parenthood Federation (IPPF), began phasing out its support to partner NGOs in 1997, the Palestinian Family Planning and Protection Association (PFPPA) began diversifying its funding. By 1999 this PNGO had gone from a sole reliance on its parent INGO to expanding its sources of funding to include the following supporters: 12% Donors/INGOs, 16% Ministry of Health, 27% their own clinics, and 45% IPPF. The director of a prominent Palestinian women's organization argues that diversification of funding provides PNGOs with a form of leverage, by showing the donor that the organization has many avenues of support.

Alternative Organizational Structures

Developing forms of financial independence is an essential technique that can enable an NGO to strengthen its autonomy. But if the NGO wants to move beyond the mainstream development approach and overturn the construct of social life as a technical problem, it will have to consider ways of restructuring itself. Given the historical evolution of PNGOs, they will have to devise ways to reconstitute their relationship with the local population, and locate the proper strategies and mechanisms through which to effectively contribute to social change. The literature highlights different directions for this, most of which fall under the category of developing *accountability mechanisms*. It is widely recognized that NGOs that work with constituencies need proper structures that can enable them to *manage* multiple forms of accountability and *negotiate* their way through contrary pressures and demands. Our perspective broadens this by also pointing out that actors inside the NGOs need to review the way they relate to their own external environment. Most of the literature proposes structural modifications as a way for NGOs to improve their performance, without considering the subjective dimension involved. It neglects the need for the individuals inside the NGOs to reevaluate how they understand themselves as actors in their own local context. Are they detached development professionals, or are they organizations situated in a field of action, where groups are organized, and institutions form coalitions and act together? These points will be developed further in relation to the literature and the NGOs in Palestine.

Two worthy recommendations have been raised in the literature. Firstly, Hulme and Edwards propose that a distinction be made between *functional* and *strategic accountability.* The former refers to accountability concerning the way resources are used and in regard to the immediate impact of the NGO. Strategic accountability refers to accounting for the impact NGOs have on other organizations and on the wider environment (1996: 8-10). While NGOs have already developed forms of functional accountability, yet it is strategic accountability that remains underdeveloped. Moreover, as they indicate, finding ways to firm up an NGO's strategic accountability presents an opportunity for the NGO to cultivate and enter into a new relationship with the local population. This is an extremely important concept. What is being suggested is that the NGO open up the debate on its overall modus operandi and its role in society to a group of stakeholders. This is also relevant in that it is a flexible proposition, and the NGO can decide the sort of structures that suit it best, for instance, for the NGO to hold an annual public workshop on its work. Alternatively, it is also possible for the NGO to establish other mechanisms that incorporate society into the organization on a long-term basis. Historically, NGOs have relied on membership as a way to give the population access to the organization and to enable the NGO to form direct links with groups in society. Returning to the subjective dimension that underscores any organizational change, it is crucial to recognize that the notion of strategic accountability presupposes that the NGO possesses the will to go beyond a static instrumentalized attitude toward the people, and is willing to give the broader public a channel to the NGO.

The second recommendation that Hulme and Edwards propose is based on Fowler's (1993) notion of the *'onion-skin approach'* to organizational development. The onion-skin approach recognizes the strategic significance of the way an NGO is internally organized, and acknowledges the importance of insulating certain strategic tasks and objectives from broader organizational functions and mundane activities. For example, while the outer layers of the organization engage in service delivery, or activities such as workshops and training programs, the inner core of the NGO is insulated, and acts as a nucleus for strategies dedicated to change and transformation (Fowler, 1993; quoted in Edward and Hulme, 1996a: 258). The purpose of this onion-layering approach to organizational development is that it allows the NGO to combine different functions which, if not carefully balanced, can conflict with one another.

In the case of PNGOs, such an approach would mean that projects which overlap with questions relating to social change, such as the Model Parliament project discussed above, would be kept separate from the NGO's own strategies and objectives on how to contribute to change. In this respect, women's activists in the NGO would combine their

strategies with the project, and supplement the latter, instead of allowing the project's activities to outstrip and overtake broader strategizing. Therefore, what is called for is not necessarily less cooperation with donors and INGOs but that PNGOs approach this type of cooperation equipped with the right structural foundation in place.

Thus far, this discussion has focused on what an NGO can do to restructure itself. Indeed, any strategy for renewal or revision should be the initiative of the NGO itself. Nevertheless, donors and INGOs have a supportive role to play in this regard. It is important for NGO actors and individuals inside of donor agencies and INGOs to develop relations based on trust and support. More importantly, flexibility is required on the part of donors and international organizations. The forms of solidarity extended to Palestinian and other social organizations in the South in the 1970's and 1980's have been increasingly critiqued and cast as a hindrance to development work. Yet, an alternative that can provide a lucid basis on which Southern social organizations and Western institutions can cooperate and support social change has yet to emerge. The influence of the Western donor is complex and often associated with unexpected results. As we have suggested, there are often contradictions between the stated intentions and the actual means as well as the underlying assumptions of donor programs supporting civil society in developing societies. Moreover, as Ottaway shows, donors need to fine tune their understanding of the societies they support, and inquire into *how* the groups in societies organize for democracy, instead of starting from their own 'NGO template.' Furthermore, as she argues, donor civil society programs have proven to be most effective when the donor loses the pretense and contradictions associated with development assistance, and utilizes civil society aid as a strategic means to support democratization (Ottaway, 2001). With these suggestions in mind, let us turn to consider the direction PNGOs are headed in as agents of social change, and review some of the conceptual issues associated with this process.

Social Capital and Voluntarism

A consideration of the ways in which an NGO can restructure itself leads one towards more generalized issues, related to the increasingly prominent notion of 'social capital.' The literature on civil society and democratization has been significantly influenced by Robert Putnam's concept of social capital (Putnam, 1993). According to Putnam, social capital "refers to the social norms and networks that enhance people's ability to collaborate on common endeavours" (2001: 135). He argues that associational life builds trust, social networks, and forms of cooperation. In turn this creates 'social capital,' which is valuable in that it enhances the

ability of groups to work together and undertake collective action. In this way social capital is essential for democracy.

It is true that this notion of social capital has been criticized. For instance, some claim that Putnam's concept of social capital abstracts associational networks from their broader context, and does not consider the effects of larger social and political structures. Some ask how is trust and reciprocity to be built, when the state can deploy political repression or utilize forms of cultural hegemony (Chandhoke, 2001: 15-17)? The notion of social capital is somewhat slippery, in that it can be deployed in a neo-liberal sense as part of a notion of mobilizing a 'community's resources' and enhancing self-help strategies in the face of privatization of state welfare functions and structural adjustment programs. As economics increasingly acquires the power to explain the social via 'capital' (the triumph of the notion of social capital to measure civil society), the social and political are instrumentally deployed in terms of utility maximization, and measurable in terms of individual optimization in the development discourse.

However, in contrast to these criticisms, in the Palestinian context the concept of social capital raises an important theoretical discussion, and provides the opportunity to rethink the role of voluntary work in Palestinian society. Although historically voluntarism was a prominent feature of Palestinian society in the 1970's and 1980's as part of the national movement, and the voluntary work initiatives that were encouraged by the leftists, today these types of social networks have largely collapsed. Some may point to the changing context, and the onset of a process of state-formation to explain this change. But it is clear that in other state-building projects in underdeveloped societies, such as Eritrea, voluntary work initiatives are viewed as a strategic asset in the reconstruction process and encouraged in tackling community development. In the Palestinian case, however, voluntarism has come to be viewed as that which is diametrically opposed to paid employment. Moreover, in the PNGO sector, the idea of a local volunteer has become almost foreign and the notion of voluntarism as something valuable in and of itself has become lost. Even board members are often being paid for the work they do, including attendance at the board meetings.

Clearly, this issue has taken on its own unique dynamic given the historical evolution of Palestinian NGOs and the restructuring of the national movement over time. In the first intifada, there was a clear understanding that national work included both building an institutional alternative to the occupying power, and mobilizing people against it, and therefore the idea of volunteers was the backbone of this vision. As the historical record shows, when PNGOs become separated from the national movement and entered into increased forms of development cooperation, paid staff increasingly took over the work and responsibilities

of volunteers (Jad, 1995). In the absence of a financial need for volunteers and with the increasingly professionalized approach of PNGOs, the idea of voluntary support receded from view. This leaves us with the broader question, is voluntarism relevant in the Palestinian national landscape today? Should it be?

Putnam's concept of social capital provides an interesting contribution to this debate. According to his conception, one can talk about voluntarism not in terms of money, as the traditional debate is framed, but in terms of general resources. Here, it is crucial to remember that a 'community' is something which is formed relative to an action. In this sense, the relevance of building social capital through voluntary work should be understood in relation to specific projects, campaigns, and activism. Here, voluntarism has the benefit of adding an extra dimension to NGO work, something intangible but at the same time something that clearly manifests itself in a form of energy and commitment of actors outside of the NGO's staff. As Putman argues, it is this intangible commitment of many diverse individuals that is a valuable resource in launching a campaign or plan of action, or even for a local project. In addition to supporting localized forms of action, these types of social networks support democracy by combating the tendency of the mass population to retreat into private life. As some argue, with the changes that are underway in developing societies today, and the move towards a free market economy and democratic political system, the elite and the middle social layers have an interest in the emerging system, but the general population is retreating into the inert role of *spectators* (Hippler, 1995: 26).

Interestingly, in Palestinian society today the main social organizations that continue to cultivate social networks through voluntary work are the Islamist NGOs and some committees in refugee camps. These organizations constitute a new elite which is different from the professional PNGOs; they rely on different funding sources, have their own organizational mode of operation and continue to rely heavily on voluntary work. As indicated above, many Islamic NGOs have created relatively autonomous organizations by establishing forms of financial independence through techniques like fundraising. Some of the Islamist organizations we interviewed have sufficient financial resources to purchase their own building and sustain their running costs. In this context, however, they continue to rely on voluntary work on a regular basis and as part of the organization's daily operation. Volunteers' contributions include constructing websites and assisting with food production projects. Moreover, it has been observed that in countries such as Egypt and increasingly in Palestine, Islamic organizations are embedded in dense social networks (Roy, 2000). This suggests that there is a link between building social capital through voluntarism and via informal social

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networks, and forging a mode of organizations which could become a social movement organization.

Some have argued that PNGOs like the Union of Palestinian Medical Relief Committees constitute a type of social movement actor, one which expands democratic practices and egalitarian relations in the social sphere, and therefore promotes practices that build 'social citizenship' (Craissati, 1996). Although Islamist NGOs do not fit into Craissati's definition, they do however constitute a type of new social movement actor, as we see below. Moreover, their success and their influence in societies like Palestine, as illustrated in the discussion of the Model Parliament project above, suggests that building social capital through voluntary work and through informal social networks is a determining factor in the success of this type of movement. Furthermore, PNGOs can benefit from this resource of social capital in devising their own vision of how to contribute to social change.

Islamic Organizations: Do They Constitute a New Model?

Islamist NGOs in Palestine constitute an alternative model to that which has dominated our discussion until now. The Islamist NGOs operate according to their own paradigm; they rely on their own sources of funds, *zakat* contributions and support from the diaspora. Moreover, these actors have developed dense social networks largely through an array of social services, and they continue to employ volunteers. Some have claimed that the political Islamist actors in Palestine have turned to a social and developmental role, indicating the importance of the Islamist NGO phenomenon (Roy, 2000). In the following we will briefly review two examples of Islamist NGOs to illuminate the characteristics of this new elite.

Let us start with the Holy Land Foundation (HLF) as an example of an Islamic organization that functions as a new form of NGO. In fact, the Holy Land Foundation is an international NGO; its head office is in Texas and it provides relief, development and emergency assistance in the Palestinian Territories, Pakistan, Bosnia, Lebanon, and Chechnya. The organization is highly institutionalized and it disperses a major portion of its funds for developmental purposes. In comparison to other organizations, this foundation's expenses are minimal. Interestingly, the HLF exceeds the basic standards for non-profit conduct, set by the Philanthropic Advisory Service for the Council of Better Business Bureaus (PASCBBB), a US national watchdog group. To this group, a reasonable use of funds means that: "At least 50% of the total income is spent on programs directly related to the organization's purpose. The HLF spends over 80% of its income on related programs. At least 50% of donations are spent on the programs described in the solicitations. The HLF spends 90% of its income on

programs. Fundraising costs do not exceed 35% of the related contributions. The HLF spends less than 10% on these costs. Total fundraising and administrative costs do not exceed 50% of total income. The HLF's costs do not exceed 20%."[63]

The particular feature of the Holy Land Foundation is that it maintains a significant portion of its funds for emergency activities and relief. Its relief program has enabled the organization to develop a good relationship with needy people at the level of the local community and grassroots. At the same time, however, the approach that HLF uses does not differ from other professionalized organizations. The foundation uses an assortment of community development projects, similar in kind to those of other INGOs. It is interesting to note that in 1999 HLF called for a series of workshops to enable the organization to determine the needs of women in the communities and countries where it operates.

Another somewhat more illuminating example is that of Al-Khansa, a local Palestinian Islamist NGO for women. It seeks to offer women a form of empowerment centered on service provision. A relatively new organization, after only three years of its formation it has already purchased land and is in the process of building a center for women. The funds for the center were raised from donations and other sources, but without the assistance of any government donors or INGOs. The center will serve as a school, a recreational center and offer many other services to women.

Overall, Al-Khansa's aim is to improve women's personal situation, providing them with the means to "think for themselves" and challenge social norms – from an Islamist perspective. In this sense, they espouse an "Islamist" vision of empowering women. They aim to challenge some of the social restrictions placed on women, for instance, the difficulties women face going out alone together at night, from an Islamic point of view. They situate themselves within the Islamic movement, advocating the establishment of an Islamic state and consider the Shari'a as the point of reference for changing social regulations that constrain women.

Many of the professionalized women's centers view organizations like Al-Khansa as being controlled by sheikh's and Islamic clerks. Indeed, during the women's Model Parliament project examined above, Al-Khansa was one of the organizations that mobilized against what they saw as the attempt of the 'liberal' feminist women to monopolize the voice of Palestinian women and define the agenda for women's rights. Yet in contrast to many of the professional women's NGOs, Al-Khansa maintains a strong social network and relies on volunteers as a part of its regular function, even though it is a professional organization.

Azmi Bishara (1995) has argued that when considering the prospects for democratization in the Arab world, one cannot only consider the power

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[63] Source: brochure of the organization, without date.

struggles taking place at the state level, but most also consider the struggles taking place at the level of "individual liberties." He advances the extremely important argument that, "modernization in the Arab world has undermined old collective subjects of traditional society, relegating them to the private sphere but not replacing them with the individual citizen in the public sphere" (1995: 182). His point is that because the Arab citizen does not have a legal public identity rooted in the symbolic system of the people, struggles persist at the level of the individual: 'traditional' forms of subjectivities (family, clan, religion) try to reassert control over the individual. Here the advancement of democracy must confront the folk religion and the subjectivities of the people.

Much of what he is advocating applies to the phenomenon of Islamist NGOs. If we look at the level of the 'individual liberties' and consider the role played by NGOs, we note the fact that the Islamic NGOs, such as Al-Khansa, are trying to develop a close relationship to the community. This is part of a larger trend pointed out by Sara Roy (2000) in which she argues Islamists more and more are turning to developmental and social roles including NGOs. Within Bishara's reading, this translates into Islamist efforts to reassert religious identities and a particular normative vision at the individual level. Some of the secular leftist NGOs are trying to create their own social space within which to promote other democratic conceptions of the individual, of women or normative and political worldviews (Craissati, 1996). In this context, the Islamist NGOs' leaders not only constitute a new elite, but also a new type which in certain contexts could become a kind of social movement competing with the secular organization at the individual level over notions of citizenship and individual subjectivities.

5.6. Conclusion:
Elite Formation and Emerging Trends in Palestine

Social Capital or Social Movement?

There are two trends discernable in the Palestinian NGO sector today that reveal the future trajectory of these organizations. As an examination of these trends below will illustrate, Palestinian NGOs have reached the point in their historical transformation where they are in a position to reconstitute their relationship with the local population. Some organizations have even moved towards forming a new type of relationship with the grassroots. Overall, however, PNGOs remain distant from the notion of strategic accountability outlined above. Secondly, in regard to the role of PNGOs in contributing to change, the current intifada reveals that many PNGOs are focusing on a short-term role, such as relief action. A long-term vision on

how to promote change in society remains undeveloped. An investigation of each of these trends is in order.

Starting with the first trend, it is apparent that PNGOs have arrived at a stage in which their detachment from the local society is being timidly acknowledged, and ways to reestablish relations with the population are being considered. Some interesting examples can be observed among the women's organizations. For example, the Palestinian Working Women's Society (PWWS) has initiated what it calls the 'Chain of Solidarity and Compassion.' This is an interesting project that the PWWS set up without the help of donors or international organizations. Moreover, the purpose of the project is to move away from reliance on aid, while also encouraging voluntary initiatives and broader social solidarity. As the organization explains, "The idea is to revive the notion of cooperation and societal participation based on solidarity among all society sectors. This is done by rebuilding the bridges in the Palestinian society between classes and stressing the dependence on local resources instead of foreign aid" (PWWS document). Clearly, this project touches upon many of the themes discussed above in regard to the concept of social capital. Moreover, the PWWS seems be trying to build a form of social capital. The Chain project rests on two premises: individuals should donate money to the less fortunate or to social development projects, and the people that receive support should compensate by providing voluntary assistance contributing to community development projects. In this respect, the project endeavors to link voluntarism to giving to broader forms of social solidarity. Since the current uprising began, the Chain of Solidarity and Compassion has been revived after falling dormant, and those that can afford it, have used the Chain as a means to provide assistance to others during this intifada.

Other examples from women's NGOs provide a clearer picture of the possible changes underway in the NGO sector. As outlined in the case study on women's organizations, the Palestinian Working Women's Society has shown signs of cultivating a new type of relationship with women at the grassroots level. A project officer at the PWWS confided in us about her efforts to extend beyond the framework set down by the training programs funded by the donors and offered by her organization. For the past five years, she has been going into remote rural areas to provide gender training classes. Yet as she described, her relationship with the rural women is not confined to the isolated duration of the training session. Rather, she uses the sessions to cultivate networks and form lasting relations with the women. Moreover, she insists that she has gained 78 volunteers over the years and maintains informal contact with the women. A network has been formed in which she refers them to organizations that can help with issues they may face in the village and they volunteer and extend their support for PWWS initiatives. This is an interesting and important example of how PNGO actors possess room to

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maneuver and can find new ways to relate to the population that extend beyond the project framework.

The Women's Center for Legal Aid and Counseling (WCLAC) provides another interesting example of the choices PNGOs are making today. This organization exemplifies the professionalized centers established at the end of the first intifada, as the national movement declined and the women's movement entered into a new phase, establishing a separate space for itself in society. The WCLAC provides legal aid for women as well as emergency support for abused women, and conducts awareness raising and advocacy work. The WCLAC was the implementing organization for the Model Parliament project discussed above. Moreover, when asked about its relationship with women, a representative stated: "The service part brings us into contact with women on an irregular basis. Some women stay with us for three years. But mainly we see them when they are in trouble as we operate on emergency basis."[64] This suggests that the organization's relationship with the population has fallen into the *development professional - client* dichotomy discussed above.

Yet an NGO is not static and its relationship to the grassroots is subject to change. A recent initiative indicates the center may be espousing a greater outreach approach. In October 1998, the organization set up a 'women's dialogue tent' in Samou', a village near Hebron. There are no formal support mechanisms such as a community center for women in the village. In this setting, the tent is meant to facilitate a space for women to discuss issues and access counseling on a range of topics including incest and abuse. As some point out, the initiative is itself contrary to donor funding priorities, "Some aid agencies look with scorn on women's counseling because it provides no measurable 'outputs.' Here in Samou' the tent seems to be serving the role of a social safety valve to relieve the pressure that was spilling in from the streets."[65] Similar to the challenge that the project officer at the PWWS faces, the tent's services operate according to a rigid structure, with formal counseling sessions set up that last for a limited period of time. As well, in a manner similar to that of the individual at the PWWS, the social worker that runs the Samou tent, defines the success of the initiative as best measured by whether the members continue to work together after the sessions are over. Moreover, she describes something similar to a social network that develops out of the formal sessions. Informal contacts between the women are established, and the women's own independent activities, such as one woman's effort to set up a kindergarten, feed into one another, with the women drawing on each

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[64] Interview with WCLAC.

[65] "The Limits of Empowerment," Palestinian Civil Society Under Siege (5) From Small Families to Small Business: Empowering Women, *On the Record, Electronic Link to Civil Society in Palestine,* Vol. 15, No. 5, June 21, 2001. Email listserver provided by Grassroots International.

other's resources, contacts and skills. When possible, the organizers of the tent refer women to organizations that can help with their activities, such as the Palestinian Agricultural Relief Committees (PARC), which provides women with jam-making classes in Samou'.

Both of these examples are indicative of the position of Palestinian NGOs today; these organizations are presented with the option of reconstructing and consolidating a new type of relationship with the population. Both examples are encouraging and suggest that the importance of voluntary work and the benefits of social capital are possibly reemerging as themes under consideration in the NGO sector. Yet the most important issue remains: what type of relationship will be built with the grassroots? Will the population be given a stake in the NGO? Many options remain open including membership and accountability structures. However, these examples also indicate that a broader debate about forging new accountability mechanisms has yet to surface among the Palestinian NGOs.

Emerging Globalized Elite

From the outset of this book we have argued that there is an emerging Palestinian globalized elite, composed of an important part of the leaders of NGOs and the local leaders of international NGOs, and loosely defined as a local social formation which is informed by and/or closely aligned with global debates and agendas. We explained this as set within a broader process of a structuring of knowledge, practices and elite formation among Palestinian NGOs in relation to their increased entry into development cooperation. We will elaborate on this further with a brief characterization of this globalized elite and a classification of NGO social formations.

With the increased availability of development assistance to Palestinian NGOs and the decreased availability of Arab and other forms of funding, not only has there been a new hierarchy established among organizations, according to donor funding criteria, but there is also a new heightened state of competition. Amidst this competition, the new NGO elite has overturned the old elite (including the voluntary charitable societies or, in some cases, the elite in the rural areas) through a process of competition in vying for organizational continuance. In the Palestinian context, the new NGO globalized elite reflects the broader process out of which it has emerged, including the overarching national context of the peace process and the foreign assistance provided to support the transition to a post-conflict order. Before characterizing this elite a few observations are in order.

A comparison of some PNGOs' discourse and practices is quite revealing. In analyzing their discourse, a kind of dogma or profession of faith can be observed. This 'profession of faith' is usually framed in

dichotomous terms, black versus white, more importantly 'global' versus 'local.' As will be briefly indicated here, these dichotomies do not reflect beliefs of the NGO actors per se, rather the actors move within these categorizations and manipulate then according to the context. For instance, many PNGO actors often speak of a 'national agenda' which guides their developmental approach, yet they rarely address who can speak in the name of national interests nor do they look at this agenda in a pluralistic manner.

More revealing, in local discourses many NGOs demonize one donor, USAID, in particular. This suggests that they select donors according to the interests of the national agenda. Our interlocutors often portrayed USAID as the enemy of the Palestinian people. Why did they choose USAID? Most probably they view USAID as the US government, which often takes a position supporting Israel. However, we were surprised to find that contrary to their own declarations, five of these actors had actually applied for funds from USAID. Some of them received grants and others did not. Finally, at times Palestinian NGOs talk about the local agenda, when in fact they are much closer to the global agenda, especially concerning the importance of some issues such as using awareness in gender policies, training in capacity building, using the participatory approach, integrated projects, and community-based projects.

All of this is meant to indicate that the globalized elite is not simply an easily identified group: sometimes concepts such as 'global' and 'local' become markers used by the actors interchangeably depending on the context.

Turning to the features of this emerging globalized elite, four major characteristics can be drawn out. Firstly, as we have already identified, globalized elite refers to actors that are *informed by global agendas* and may be closely aligned with internationally endorsed development paradigms. They move within the space occupied by donors and INGOs, attending global conferences and forming their own relations with international organizations. Thus in no way does a globalized elite mean a global elite but its characteristics refer to ties to global actors, mainly the actors of international NGOs and donors. Participating in global events does not necessarily mean contributing to decision making. However, the global elite provides a new legitimacy to the local elite. For instance, the new discourse of the women's movement concerning the 'Beijing Declaration' is used as argumentation against some Islamist interpretations, and the conservatism in the society.

The second feature is particular to the Palestinian context: this elite is distinguished by its position on the peace process. The *elite supports the peace process* or at least believes in the importance of giving this process and the PNA sufficient time before considering violent resistance against the Israeli occupation. In this regard, this elite is different from the Islamist elite.

Also as seen in Chapter 2, the focus of donor funding has been on

Jerusalem and the large Palestinian cities. This has led to the creation of an *urban elite*.

Finally, it is a *professionalized elite*: Palestinian NGO actors are no longer the pure activists of the first Intifada. They are either former activists with a technical bend or they are technocrats who do not have a connection with the national movement. The absorption of donor ideas and norms has had implications not only for methods but also for personnel. In this respect, it is clear that there is a predominance of English-speaking graduates, and finance skills are become increasingly important. Some PNGOs ask for English as a native tongue when soliciting applications for positions such as fundraiser or proposal writer. This not only privileges the non-Palestinian or foreign born, but it also sheds light on the fundraising process. This process is no longer about local individuals in local organizations interacting with partner INGOs, but a relationship between professional bodies. Here professional skills refer to the capacity of the NGO applicants to meet the reporting needs of the international partner.

Without making a judgment about this elite, it is clear that the emergence of a new elite within the context of national liberation and a certain cultural milieu presents some paradoxes that these actors should be aware of.

To begin, one can ask is this elite necessarily democratic? This question has two aspects, the first concerns donors, civil society and democracy building programs. A cursory look at the literature of development agencies and international NGOs shows that it is very clear that often these two objectives have been confused. Theoretically, civil society is analogous to Habermas' public sphere: it is a context in which a plurality of trends and different social and political actors debate their ideas. In this sense, while civil society is an indispensable tool for democracy, it is not democracy itself. But this cannot be simply reduced to a problem of the projection of a 'Western' concept in the Third World. For even in many Western contexts, civil society does not always produce democratic behavior of the dominant elite; instead forms of intolerance, racism and xenophobia arise. More than this, the issue at hand is one of confusing, or equating, civil society building with democracy building, when in fact these two objectives are not exactly co-terminous. Democracy building extends beyond civil society and requires broader structures and a redistribution of power among social actors. The confusion between these two goals has an impact on NGO projects and activities and also on the character of the new elite.

More importantly, the second aspect of forging a democratic elite concerns the internal practices of the NGO actors. As we argued in Chapter 5, the broader power structures in Palestinian society are reflected in the NGO sector. Further to this, we suggested that the donors do not pay sufficient attention to local NGOs' internal governance. Often they were satisfied with a certified audit. There is not enough attention paid

to the function of the board, or the general functioning of the NGO. Moreover, little consideration is given to the personalization of NGOs, many of whom are referred to and known by the name of their directors more than by the organization's own name. If there is a change in the director of an NGO, one can speak of a sort of coup d'etat. Therefore, in this respect, the donors do not promote a democratic elite.

Finally, one can ask, if an NGO is too close to the donors does this mean that it will be removed from its constituency? The idea of a globalized elite does not necessarily logically entail that the local organization will undergo a process of separation from the grassroots. As we outlined in Chapter 5, if the donors require local NGOs to be accountable to them through different reporting mechanisms, this does not lead in a cause-effect manner to these NGOs becoming less accountable to their constituency and to the grassroots. There are many complex factors that impact on the relationship between the NGO and the community, which we reviewed in Chapter 5. Beyond any external influences, in the Palestinian case it is evident that there is a trend among many Palestinian NGOs towards elitism; this seems to be related to factors within the local context more than to the donors. For instance, many local NGOs often pay insufficient attention to what types of linkages bind them with the public, and many disseminate information that is sometimes in English. Two donors declared to us that they asked local NGOs to translate some material into Arabic and they received the answer that: "It is not necessary"!

These paradoxes lead into another important issue, the role of *interests* in explaining the formation of the globalized elite. In the introduction of the book, we introduced the emerging globalized elite by emphasizing the role of external knowledge, international debates and development paradigms in structuring this elite. But ideas alone do not explain the globalized elite; interests also form a central component of elite formation.

In a sociological sense, interests often underpin group identity. For example, class analysis differentiates between groups according to their position in the modes of production, and theoretically it is assumed that each group will have its own particular set of interests. Yet, just as class analysis has been proved to operate with rigid assumptions which do not capture the fluidity and flux of identity and interests, we recognize that the interests that underlie the actions of the globalized elite can take various forms. Through the course of the chapters above, we provided various examples of the interests that impel actions taken by this new elite. For instance, there is the motivation of the leaders of the women's movement to pursue women's social agenda, which fell in line with internationally endorsed agendas for women's empowerment. Or there are personal interests involved: some prominent NGO political activists marginalize the political party and use the NGO as a platform to enter the social and political arena. Finally, the market-like competition that has taken over the

NGO sector also induces other interests among NGO actors, especially the interest to secure organizational sustainability. All of this suggests that the concept of globalized elite is not a constant category. Subsumed within are localized, fluid interests.

Classification of NGO Formations

If one were to plot the main types of Palestinian NGO formations along a line, ranging from the elite to the more marginalized organizations, 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.

	Elite	Peripheral Actor
Int. funding	Globalized elite	Voluntary
Local/diaspora funding	Islamist	Marginalized Charitable NGO

There are a few salient points to be raised here that will shed light on the position of the globalized elite in relation to other formations as well as highlighting the polarization that exists between organizations.

Firstly, as indicated in this diagram, there is a gap between the two ends of the spectrum. This is meant to signify the polarization that exists between the two main PNGO classifications.[66] The globalized elite and the Islamists are juxtaposed against one another because they reflect two relatively strong models of social organizations. Each one possesses its own development paradigms, sources of funding, and political/activist networks. There is also the possibility that they have different relations to the grassroots, raising the question of whether they represent competing 'social movements,' in Dina Craissati's (1996) understanding of the term.

Secondly, if one takes the other pole, the peripheral actors, one notes a circular movement whereby the organizations at this end rotate within their pole without necessarily making the transition to the other end of the spectrum of global elite vs Islamists. Consider the case of Rawdat al-Zuhour, which transformed from a voluntary charity initiative into

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[66] There are indeed organizations between these two categorizations, but our concern is simply to identify the main type of NGO actors in order to place the globalized elite in the national context.

a successful voluntary organization. It did this by diversifying its funds and setting up an endowment fund on its own. (See Chapter 5 for more details.) Now it meets the donors on its own terms. For instance, it held an open house organized with the parents of the children who are helped by the NGO: the consular representatives and the UNDP were invited and the latter provided the NGO with a $10,000 donation. This successful voluntary organization uses creative methods - open house, sponsorship schemes and endowment - to retain its independence and it meets the donors on different terms than those of the global elite.

Further to this, if one looks at the case of Inash al-Usra as a marginalized voluntary society, then a different picture emerges. As outlined above, in Chapter 4 and the women's case study in Chapter 3, Inash went from a successful voluntary organization during the first intifada to the status of a marginalized organization in the present. This is due to various factors, including increasing ineffectiveness of income generating projects, increased exposure to donor funding, the inability to compete but also at times the organization's own resistance to reach out to donors.

Overall, then, there is a polarization between NGO formations, especially between the elite and the peripheral NGO actors, and as suggested there is a self-perpetuating logic at work, which maintains the differentiation between the two groups. Across the range of NGO formations one finds class differences (in terms of actors running the organization), different administrative capacities, varying levels of involvement in global conferences and differing reliance on diaspora and local donations.

In terms of locating the globalized elite within the national landscape, as Hassan Asfour, the former Minister of the NGOs, declared in 1999, the Palestinian NGOs that rely exclusively on Western donors for funding account for about 20% of all organizations. In a similar respect, the globalized elite does not apply to all of the leaders of PNGOs. The PNGOs belonging to the Islamist trend rely significantly on local and diaspora funds, while popular organizations as well as some of the pro-Fatah organizations receive support from the PNA and some also a small portion of Western funding. However, the 20% of PNGOs that can be said to constitute a globalized elite include some of the most important organizations. One cannot, for instance, discount the significance of the Union of Palestinian Medical Relief Committees, which provides about 30% of health services in the West Bank. Further still, this globalized elite primarily concerns the leftist activists, especially the People's Party (ex-Communist Party). Moreover, as we have already argued, the donors have supported the creation of mega PNGOs, some of which have acquired a monopoly in certain fields (PARC in agriculture, UPMRC in health, Bisan in training). In fact, the process of creating the globalized elite corresponds

to the momentum associated with the arrival of a huge amount of funds, which followed the establishment of the PNA and the peace process.

Finally, it is more accurate to view the globalized elite as a classification made up of actors with different positions rather than as a single category. As suggested above, interests play a central role in the actions of such an elite. These interests are indeed context dependent. Nonetheless, at least two different positions can be identified: some of the local NGOs perceive and interiorize the donor agenda as a global agenda, a naturally given and self-evident agenda, which is seen as appropriate to the international and national changes brought about by the peace process and the formation of the Palestinian national state. Thus, the recipient NGOs receive this agenda in good faith, and even defend it. Or, as we pointed out in the case study on women, some NGO actors accept projects without rigorously questioning the politics of donor policies or critically assessing the ideological implications of the project.

The second position is one of a resistant posture. In Chapter 4 we reviewed examples of organizations that are bound by the global discourse with their sector. For such actors, the key concern is an equal say in designing the project and control over its implementation. Or, as in the case of the PNGOs in the health sector, if the attempt to contest the donor's policy fails, the actors will try to reorient the project from within.
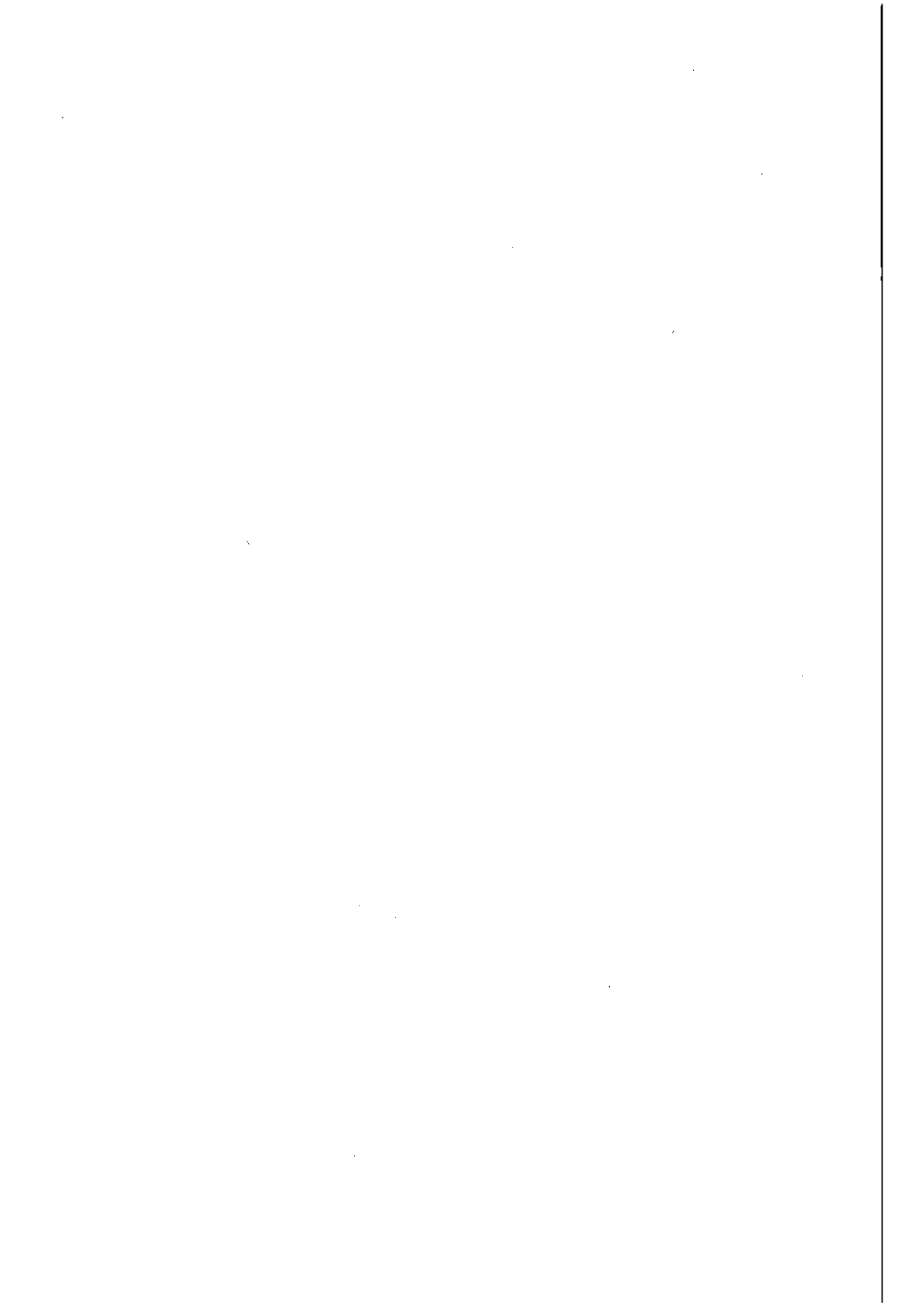
PART III

TRANSNATIONAL NETWORKING

Chapter 6   Networking:
A Multi-Leveled View

6.1. Introduction

Within the last two decades, non-governmental organizations have not only become important actors within their own national space but they have become influential actors within the international arena. The 'associational revolution,' to borrow Salamon's terminology (1993:1), has been accompanied and supported by the growth of transnational networks between INGOs, local NGOs and popular organizations. Networking has both *enabled* and become the *means* for a new mode of action in which territorially-based actors and organizations engage in activity that transcends the boundaries of a specific/single locality. Closely associated with this, external influences are increasingly brought to bear on local, primarily Southern, governments, through the activation of the transnational ties of local NGOs, especially during advocacy on sensitive questions such as human rights, creating a boomerang effect (Sikkink and Keck, 1998).

The rise of NGO networks within the real-politick world of international relations challenges the hegemony of state actors. On the one hand, networks communicate alternative forms of knowledge and information, challenging state actors' monopoly over the definition and interpretation of events. At the same time, networking is also directed at lobbying for policy changes within international organizations or national governments. In contrast to this, networking can also facilitate transnational

grassroots protest, such as the Seattle protests against the World Trade Organization (WTO). Underscoring the strategic focus of INGO-NGO alliances, Nelson defines NGO networks as, "evolving alliances with specific purposes, indeterminate structures, and sporadic and *ad hoc* coordination" (Nelson, 1996: 617).

Within the context of globalization (economic and political restructuring, increasing global integration, converging and diffusing values), NGO networks have been received in a celebratory manner. One view regards NGO advocacy across borders as analogous in its form and effects to a social movement. Therefore some have heralded the rise of Transnational Social Movement Organizations (TSMO). TSMOs are seen as significant actors in global politics, albeit mostly behind the scenes, which contribute to the development of *global civic society* through contentious as well as co-operative relations (Kriesberg, 1997:3). Undoubtedly the rise of transnational networks reveals the inadequacies of *the state-centric analytic approach,* which considers official state actors as the central agent in international relations, thus neglecting the impact of the INGO sector and civil society actors. However, to what extent does the emergence of transnational networks signify a paradigmatic shift? Is the label of 'social movement' always warranted? Is the analytical construct of 'global civil society' a useful, heuristic tool, or does it conceal more than reveal?

In the following chapters we examine networking among NGOs and INGOs from the view of local actors in the South, illustrating the differentiated forms this activity takes. Our conceptualization of transnational networking locates this activity in its multifarious dimensions: its *various forms*, self-initiated by NGO actors or officially sponsored by governments; its *various effects*, expounding alternative knowledge, lobbying for policy change or protest movement; and its *multiple locations* in international, regional and local sites, which should be understood as fragmented and overlapping. A review of the literature on networking and a discussion of our conceptualization of networking will elucidate the framework that guides the following chapters.

Locating Transnational Networks: Perspectives in the Literature

The expanding influence of INGOs is a noted feature of the post-World War II international order. The increased role of INGOs within international development was one of the catalysts behind the formation of intergovernmental organizations (IGOs). The growth and maturation of both INGOs and IGOs occurred in a mutually reinforcing manner, and was the outcome of a dynamic process of interaction between the two kinds of organizations. For instance, the establishment of an IGO institutionalized the related sector at the global level, and this in turn legitimized INGO

work, and eventually transnational networking, within the sector.

Through data drawn from the Yearbook of International Organizations, Smith shows rapid growth of INGOs, from 183 organizations in 1973 to 631 in 1993 (1997:47), mostly working in the realm of human rights, environment, women's rights, peace and development. Concerning the geographical distribution, Smith points out that there is a relative balance in the geographical distribution between industrialized and developing regions. However, such statistical surveys do not take into account the decision making center of an INGO; for instance the ENDA-TM is based in Dakar, but the center of decision making is in Paris. There has not only been growth in numbers, but also in the density of the external networks of INGOs.

The linkages formed between INGOs and NGOs are understood as having given rise to a new form of agency within international spaces dominated by state actors. This has multiple consequences. On the one hand, it opens up new forums for debate and exposure to new perspectives on issues within the local context. NGOs are assumed to play a vital role in the *upward* as well as *downward* circulation of knowledge, occupying intermediary positions between the local society and the transnational network. Local NGOs can generate intra-society debate and consensus around the definition of an issue and its appropriate solution. This shifts the role of a network from serving as political lobbies to providing a mechanism for generating debate in the public spheres. However, thus far little attention has been paid to the process of exchange between a network and the local society in the case of Southern actors. The failure to consider the way SNGOs insert themselves within networks blurs the interaction and decision-making roles of NNGOs and SNGOs inside transnational networks and ignores many questions concerning the participation of Southern actors.

The significance of networks extends beyond facilitating connections between INGOs and local NGOs. Networks support as well as protect local NGO activists faced with threats from their own governments, for example, the Peace Brigades International which makes use of strategic information in order to increase the safety of local activists in Sri Lanka, (Hovey 1997:214). This is especially true in the case of human rights work.

Much attention has been devoted to INGO and NGO activities within and around international UN conferences. Examining the intercession of non-state actors within world conferences, many scholars have announced the birth of transnational social movement organizations (Kriesberg, 1997; McCarthy and Zald, 1997; Cortright and Pagnucco, 1997). Through advocacy and mediation, NGO actors influence international institutions like the UN, generally using six stages of intercession: raising the issue, seeking sympathetic partners, educating about the issue, working the system, facilitating agreement between disputants, and seeking consensus.

Of the studies which forecast the rise of transnational social movement organizations, Cortright and Pagnucco show that NGO advocacy is effective for issues such as the environment, and human rights. Yet, their role until now has been very limited in dealing with security issues even after the end of the Cold War period, as demonstrated by the failure of the Nuclear Weapons Freeze Campaign to influence intergovernmental organizations (1997: 173). Another area that until now has remained out of the reach of NGO activism includes immigration policy. These limits demonstrate the way NGO network agendas are inevitably posed and defined in a relational manner with the Western states.

Transnational Movement or Transnational Networks?

As already indicated, some scholars associate the rise of NGO networks with the emergence of transnational social movement organizations (TSMOs). It is postulated that TSMOs play a central role, connecting the SNGOs, INGOs and intergovernmental organizations around global issues. TSMOs are regarded as having their own distinctive goals, distinguishable from INGOs. Their strategies aim at generating constituencies for multinational pressures on national policy, and attempting to influence international negotiations and IGOs (Chatfield 1997:19). In the view of such authors, TSMOs are not organizations created to defend a paradigm adopted necessarily by states or international governmental agencies. For McCarthy and Zald, they result when networks of actors, relatively excluded from routine decision-making processes, engage in collective attempts to change some elements of social structure and/or reward distributions in society (1997:12-17).

In contrast to such perspectives, however, our own findings, based on a multi-leveled analysis of NGO advocacy as presented below, reveal that the allusion to a social movement is in many cases premature. A social movement implies a level of cohesion, transformation over a long duration, and the expanse of alternative social vision. These factors are often not met by transnational activities of non-state actors. For Sikkink and Keck, the term transnational 'network' is a useful analytical category as it accentuates the *structured* and *structuring* dimension in the actions of these agents (Keck and Sikkink, 1998: 3-4). In our view, the concept of network is relevant as it does not restrict the object of study, but allows for an examination of networking in its international, regional and subregional manifestation and a consideration of the interrelation between activities at these levels.

For example, unable to insert themselves successfully at the global level, Southern NGOs may take up networking initiatives at the regional level, as was the experience of Arab women's organizations (see discussion of the

women's network Aisha below). Secondly, the claim that transnational social movement organizations are emerging has invariably been made in reference to UN world conferences, supported by the premise that NGO actors advance an alternative paradigm to that of state actors. A case has been made that refutes this: that in fact it is debatable whether NGO actors succeed in promoting their own paradigm. Often their participation serves to legitimize the discourse and agendas of states within UN forums (Silliman, 1999). This suggests the need to consider the power relations between states and NGOs that are *reproduced* within global forums, where relations may be blurred by the assumptions of the social movement approach. Thirdly, the notion of a network conjures up images of a coalition of actors, implying a process of alliance building. This raises in a more pointed fashion the question of Southern participants, where and how they insert themselves into such networks. The idea of a transnational social movement implies an unproblematic process of shared identity formation among members that can obfuscate the position and perspective of Southern actors.

The View from the South

The way in which SNGOs insert themselves in transnational action, and the associate process of agenda setting between NNGOs and SNGOs, as well as the different types of networking activities SNGOs engage in, are all central concerns of this study which analyzes the Palestinian NGOs and the Arab region in its case study. Within the literature, the influence of the transnational networks on the local NGOs' national policies is examined, yet there is little consideration of the role of SNGOs in shaping transnational networks. Furthermore, even when studies focus on the "high politics" of transnational networking activity in explicitly political arenas, they pay little attention to the "deep politics" of shaping individual thinking and actions on environment, peace, development and other issues, or the way new perspectives are disseminated by local NGOs and received by societies in the South.

Some offer a very critical perspective on transnational networks, arguing that these networks usually consist of Western groups projecting themselves into developing societies, and while working in partnership with SNGOs, the agendas and values pursued are usually those of the more dominant Western partner (Carothers, 2000). This position has been contradicted by those who have argued, with reference to the international women's conferences, that although there exist clear differences between the concerns of Northern and Southern women's organizations, international gatherings facilitate consensus building between these organizations. This view recognizes the possibility of mutual goals between North-South organizations beyond some undifferentiated Western

hegemonic agenda. As noted by the author, by the close of the Decade for Women a dialogue had been initiated which was premised on differences in priorities, and still sought to build North-South alliances around common goals (Jahan, 1995).

Finally, an important study on NGO participation in UN conferences was undertaken by Clark, Friedman and Hochsteler providing important empirical research into the actions of NGOs inside transnational networks (1998). By looking particularly at how SNGOs participate in these alliances, their findings reveal significant differences in the goals, experiences, and agendas of North and South NGOs, often to the detriment of the participation of the latter. Overall the authors argue that while North and South organizations share many common frames, they prioritize different aspects of issues; for instance, at the Copenhagen world conference, the debate over Zionism as a form of apartheid clearly divided NGOs along North-South lines (Clarke et al.: 28). Moreover, considering the gap in resources between North and South organizations, the study concludes that SNGOs are at a disadvantage in trying to promote issues which are not recognized as a priority by Northern counterparts. This suggests the need to problematize agenda setting within networks.

A Multi-leveled View of Networking

Our approach emphasizes both the different types of networks and the different levels at which this activity takes place, thus situating this action in its global, regional and sub-regional manifestation as well as differentiating between varying types of networks. This conceptualization is based on our reading of globalization, which reveals the necessity of examining events and action at the global level, through an informed understanding of both *developments* at regional and local levels and the *interrelationship* between them. Some elucidation is required.

Globalization is a process of global economic and political restructuring, centered around the expansion, transformation and reconstitution of the capitalist system. To focus exclusively on activities at the global level or, for example, on the unfolding of a global civil society, is to follow the narrative of globalization; it is a *reflection* on the development of capitalism that the new, complex interrelationship between the local, regional and global levels is ignored. On the one hand, local and regional contexts are being reconfigured through new sets of economic and political relations, as a result of changes at the global (center). At the same time, issues and power structures within the local and regional levels are not detached from, but rather are reproduced in and are part of global events, which become new sites where Southern actors at once encounter both the *global* and the *local*.

This conceptualization is supported by those who locate the notion of global civil society in a particular historical moment. According to Drainville, the idea of *global civil society* has both emerged from and makes sense in the context of a global governance project, which in turn is specific to the history of organized capitalism on a world scale (1998). New rules are being established at the global level and something analogous to a transnational social contract is being negotiated, which facilitate the expansion of a new economic modality. Events and activities at the global level, such as UN world conferences, are a part of this process, and the notion of global civil society should be understood in this context. The importance of Drainville's premise comes into view when one considers the nature of globalization and in particular how it is represented and how it is perceived. Coronil advances our understanding of globalization when he argues that this process of global reorganization evolves with and through a discourse which absorbs differences between East-West and North-South into an image of a unified globe (Coronil, 2000). This creates new hierarchies and uneven distribution of power, resulting from a process of global economic and political restructuring.

Together, these two perspectives illustrate the importance of a multi-leveled view of networking. The international conferences and the activities directed at the global level increasingly represent a venue for rule making, which directs the process of globalization now underway. At the same time, this has implications for local and regional contexts, which are affected by the direction of the process of globalization and which become situated within new relations and hierarchies. In this regard, the global (events and international conferences) becomes a site where Southern actors confront *globalization* as rule making and reordering relations that affect local and regional conditions.

At the same time, it should not be forgotten that within global forums, Southern actors also confront the *local*, as the power relations and dynamics of the local context are reproduced within this site, especially when SNGO actors encounter their own state counterparts. In this last respect it is clear that the discourse of globalization should not be used to conceal the fact that while the era of globalization seems to be leading to a convergence in NGO philosophy, structure and practice, a wide diversity, which still remains the hallmark of NGOs, is witnessed, and that the national context shapes events as much as more generalized, and indeed globalized factors do.

Different Types of Networks

The typology of the networks can be made according to geographical level or form and effect of NGOs actions. At the geographical level, there are three main types of networks: international, regional and

sub-regional. Examples of each of these types of networks will be discussed in the following chapter. This structure will allow us also to pay attention to the three types of form and effect of NGOs actions: transnational networks within UN world conferences; state sponsored networks; and alternative NGO networks. Differentiating between the types of networks illuminates the terrain in which this action takes place. It can also indicate the possibilities as well as limitations of this new form of agency available to NGOs.

Transnational Networks at UN World Conferences

Since the 1990's the UN has sponsored international conferences around social and economic issues, profiling themes such as women, human rights and the environment. Within these conferences international norms and standards are established in the respective field. The advocacy efforts of transnational NGO networks are a central part of the wrangling that takes place inside these global forums. Networks pressure for the inclusion of items in the final document of the conference in order to raise the issue onto the global agenda. The women's network, for example, lobbied for the acknowledgment of violence against women as a form of human rights abuse in international women and human rights conferences (Sikkink and Keck, 1998). This type of network raises many questions: Where do SNGOs fit within or in relation to this type of network? What is the agenda-setting process inside such networks? How do local issues become internationalized?

There are two essential issues regarding transnational networks at the UN: the first relates to the nature of action that occurs within UN forums, and the second concerns the position of NGOs inside such events. In regard to the first matter, it is evident that NGO participation in UN conferences is best understood as a problem-solving endeavor, which takes a highly technical and depoliticized form. At UN Summits or for instance within NGO-World Bank Committees, NGO actors are invited to find solutions to global human problems. These are *problem-solving ventures*. For some, this represents part of the cosmopolitan grand project of global order. The international consensus produced by UN conferences and in particular the finalized documents represent a new global map, a blueprint that facilitates the conditions for global capital accumulation (Drainville, 1998: 53). Drainville describes UN Summits as follows: "They are idealized representations of a projected order and...."phantasmagorical" destinations of transnational pilgrims who come to fetishise order on display" (idem.: 24). A fundamental feature of this type of activity is its *depoliticized* nature. "In it (activity around UN) structured relations of power are compartmentalized, politics takes on the appearance of a collection of managerial problems to be solved and the broad political attempt to settle a new order goes

unexamined." (idem.: 54) Transnational NGO networks active within UN forums must be analyzed within this context.

With regard to the second issue, the extent of the room available for NGOs to maneuver within UN conferences should be investigated before being assumed. On the one hand, the emphasis on problem-solving and thus the de-emphasis on allowing the UN forum to become a tool for advocacy and critique is a characteristic that has become more pronounced over time, as exemplified by our review of UN conferences on women (see Section "Nairobi to Beijing," below). On the other hand, it is also clear that in addition to the challenge of raising their voice within the global forum, SNGOs also encounter their own states at these events. Therefore, multiple factors and questions of power relations enter into and impact on SNGO positions within the event as well as their capacity to participate effectively in and draw gains from the global event.

State-sponsored Networks

In addition to transnational networks active in UN conferences, other types of networks operate transnationally, regionally and sub-regionally, and some emerge out of state-sponsored initiatives. In the Arab region, the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership Agreement signed between European and Arab countries has spawned social, cultural and economic forms of cooperation and has been the impetus for NGO networking, through the Euro-Med Civil Forum. As the discussion in the chapter reveals, the fact that networking between NGOs emerges out of a state driven momentum should not dissuade one from observing the opportunity that this may present to NGOs. In fact, excluded from effective forms of participating in global forums, Arab NGOs have benefited from Euro-Med initiatives. SNGOs' voices may emerge stronger out of such networks than through networks active at the UN forums. However, it is clear that the agency of SNGO actors, especially in terms of shifting the agenda of a state-sponsored network to further their own ambitions, was a central part of the Arab NGOs' experience with the Euro-Med initiatives.

NGO Networks

The third type of network is neither located in the halls of the global governance project nor does it emerge out of a state enterprise. This kind of network is initiated by NGOs. It can take one of two forms; the first is a transnational protest, as in Seattle, and the second is to engage in advocacy campaigns, disseminate information and challenge perceptions of events and issues outside of world conferences, at regional or sub-regional levels.

The first activity should be understood as a form of *grassroots transnationalism* in which strategically bound actors (each territorially-based) form strategic organizing alliances that bring together local and national forces into transnational coalitions (Drainville, 1998: 51). This type of network gives expression to protests that take place outside the global governance project, and that can contest the effects of capitalist penetration and the direction of globalization or can address issues in a regional context. This type of networking activity is marked by both a protest dimension and coupled with some form of mass action, as illustrated by transnational protests organized against the WTO.

The second activity represents a means for NGOs to influence issues and perceptions without the element of direct action but through advocacy campaigns and by disseminating information at the regional level. In the Arab world, there are two Arab NGO networks that have been created by actors in the region. Both illustrate the dynamic contribution that NGO activism can potentially make, especially in terms of generating new debates in a region where there are few channels for social participation and a high degree of disillusionment with the state project. The Arab Shabaka (Arab Network for NGOs), for instance, has taken a strong political stand in the region by opposing normalization of relations with Israel. Also, the Arab Women's Network (Aisha) is an important coalition of activists which, as our analysis suggests, could serve as a platform from women's groups in the region to debate and formulate their own views in regard to the global agenda on women's advancement.

Yet, despite the pressing social, political and developmental questions facing the Arab region, there are few examples of successful networking activities. This is due to many factors, particularly the polarization (including along political lines) and fragmentation of NGOs in the region with NGOs from certain countries – Egyptian and Lebanese – both vying for and monopolizing leadership of NGO activities. At the same time, it is apparent that many NGOs in the Arab region do not have a support base at the grassroots level.

The question of NGOs' local ties with the grassroots brings this discussion full circle. It is clear, as outlined from the outset, that networking among NGOs is a particular type of transnational activity. Yet without firm grounding in the local society, questions can be raised concerning the effect and the implications of networking. Transnational networking and advocacy at the global level cannot substitute for or replace local activism.

In conclusion, by proposing a differentiated view of networking that recognizes different levels as well as types of networks, we are not suggesting a simplistic compartmentalization of NGO actions within each category. Rather the agency of actors necessitates close empirical investigation and attention to the ways subjective orientations can challenge objective conditions and constraints.

6.2. Grassroots Transnationalism: Seattle as Example

The Seattle demonstration is one of the events that highlights the importance of NGO mobilization at the global level in order to protest against the neo-liberal economic agenda. Since then many articles were written in many languages announcing a new era in which the NGOs have become new actors for world change. Far from being the dominant action of the international NGOs, we dissociate ourselves from the euphoric analyses and examine what some authors call grassroots transnationalism as a type of global protest. In comparison to activity around the UN, this type of grassroots activism is defined as follows: "It is closer to a mob in revolt against the injustices of the new order," which strategically bound actors (i.e., different territorially-based) from strategic organizing alliances. These have brought local and national forces into transnational coalitions. (Drainville, 1998: 51)

The WTO Ministerial Meeting in Seattle, November 29-December 2, 1999, designed as a new round of trade liberalization - the so-called "Millennium Round -" was the occasion for a spectacular display of transnational activism. Approximately 50,000 people demonstrated in Seattle against the WTO. Groups ranged from environmental to women's, as well as labor and human rights organizations. As an unprecedented display of mobilization on a global scale, the protest at Seattle warrants inspection both for what it reveals about the process of globalization and for what it elucidates about transnational networking.

Surrounded by controversy since its inception, the WTO had long elicited criticism and opposition; protests against its policies had been well underway prior to the meeting in Seattle. In particular, an International Day of Action against a Comprehensive New WTO Round was launched by Northern groups as well as NGOs in Asia and Africa on September 16, 1999 (Khor, 1999b). The WTO Ministerial Meeting in Seattle provided the opportunity for the coalescence of a diverse array of protest groups. Two factors contributed to this: The proposed agenda, focusing on an expansion of trade liberalization, united the opposition. As well, the location of the meeting in the US was significant for strategic reasons, insofar as protest organizations could raise the issue of capitalist-led globalization to the North American public while also raising awareness about the effects of the WTO.[67]

For NGOs and other social organizations such as unions, it was an absolute imperative to stop further liberalization. On the international day of action, 1200 NGOs from 77 countries released a statement declaring opposition to the Seattle meeting expressed in the slogan, "No New Round, Turnaround!" For organizations in the South it was clear that since its

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[67] On the latter point see, (Nichols, 1999).

inception, the WTO had not enhanced the well being and prosperity of all people in its member states. Rather, in their view it had contributed to an increased concentration of wealth in the hands of a few, while having a deleterious impact on indigenous people, the environment, health, human rights, labor rights and the rights of women and children (Khor, 1999b). Moreover, Southern groups had two specific objectives: they wanted a comprehensive review of existing WTO agreements and an assessment of their impact on developing societies in the aforementioned areas. As well, their aim was to stop further liberalization negotiations, especially those aimed at bringing areas such as investment, competition policy and government procurement under the WTO.[68]

The governments of developing countries had also expressed their disillusionment with the WTO in Geneva in the weeks prior to the Seattle meeting. Many had stated that they have yet to see the benefits of the creation of the WTO. Worse, poor countries faced potentially enormous dislocation when they implemented obligations stemming from WTO agreements (Khor, 1999a). The dissenting perspectives of developing countries, however, remained unaddressed in the days prior to the Seattle meeting. These voices of dissent would have their own impact in Seattle, inside the Ministerial Meeting.

Among the developed countries, the so-called Quad powers (US, countries of EU, Japan and Canada) had contrary views on the Millennium Round. The EU and Japan were in favor of launching a new comprehensive trade round and wanted it to take effect in early 2000. Canada strongly warned against such an approach. The US took the position that it was too early to decide on the matter. (See PGA Bulletin, June 1998: www.agp.org)

Capitalism, Local and Global Relations and Transnational Networks

Globalization, Seattle and the Impact on People's Lives

From an analytical standpoint, the transnational protest against the WTO is important in two respects. Firstly, it exemplifies a new relationship between the global and the local, developing out of a process of globalization, particularly in the way changes at the global level impact upon and reorganize conditions at the local level of society. Secondly, insofar as transnational networks between NGOs and groups throughout the globe enabled the protest at Seattle to occur, questions arise about this type of activity and its implications, as well as the new possibilities it creates and where SNGOs fit into these networks. Let us consider these issues further, starting with the first point.

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[68] Khor, 1999b; Press Release, African Trade Network, September 3, 1999.

It is the expansion of capitalism on a global scale that directs the process of globalization and the establishment of international regulative organizations such as the WTO. In this respect, the establishment of the WTO must be understood within historical developments in the global economy. One structural change stands out as important. The current process of global restructuring is the extension of an earlier shift in economic relations. Specifically, in the 1970's the capitalist system entered a period of deep crisis, precipitated for the first time by an "explosion of social conflicts" (Arrighi and Silver, 2000). The crisis was not resolved until a radical change in US policy between 1979 and 1982. This policy change consisted of a shift from the *labor-friendly and third-world-development-friendly international regime* of the past 30 years in favor of *a capital-friendly international regime*. The new international regime is most clearly identified by the emergence of the Washington Consensus and the shift to neo-liberalism.

The current restructuring of the capitalist system is marked off by a redefinition of the relationship between the global level and the new conditions produced in local societies, as illustrated by the impact the WTO is having on countries worldwide and as reflected in the protests it has generated. The WTO's policies are not simply marked by a comprehensiveness in scope, affecting issues ranging from the environment, to human rights and women rights, but are also characterized by an immediate impact on people in the North and South equally. This is far from a simplistic one to one, cause-effect relationship. Rather, restructuring at the global level leads to new relations and policies at the regional and national level that produce new sets of conditions, and that affect societies in diverse ways. The implication of this is that a consideration of transnational networking must take the diverse agendas of different actors into account.

Building on this, it is clear that the changing nature of capitalism and the formation of the WTO have had a direct impact on the lives of people in both the North and the South. However, the issues facing them have been somewhat different. In the North, the protesters included environmental groups, women, labor, church groups, human rights activists and farmers, many of which represent social movements that have grown over the last three decades (Sommer, 1999). Their discontent reflected, among other things, their frustration with the encroachment of an economic logic on social life. For example, in past years labor has been subjected to programs such us 'progressive competitiveness,' in which workers have been 'trained' to become more productive in order to compete with low paid labor abroad (Panitch, 1999). Or in areas like Ontario, Canada, legislation has recently been passed allowing raising the regular five-day workweek from 40 hours to 60 hours. This has the effect of allowing the managers to force workers to work more hours for less money, since they lose the benefit of 'over-time' wages.

In contrast to this, the issues that have aggravated people in the South slightly differ in nature. Rather than being a matter of lifestyle, the issues affecting people in the South can be directly linked to the issue of survival and often it is the very marginalized or disenfranchised groups that are affected. It is true that in some of the economically advanced societies, such as Mexico and India, labor groups have joined the protests against the WTO. But in other places, the issues people have spoken out against have touched open issues of survival. For example, in Africa where 80% of the world's new AIDS cases are found, governments such as South Africa have grown medicinal herbs and manufactured generic medicine to treat patients at low cost. These attempts to establish low cost treatments for AIDS have been blocked by the WTO, on the grounds that this constitutes unfair competition for pharmaceutical countries that want to sell medications at regular market value. This not only cripples the government's efforts to stop a deadly disease but it sanctions the death of thousands of people by the disease (Martinez, 2000).

Also, the plans to liberalize agriculture under the WTO constitute a threat to countries that import more food than they export, as it blocks agricultural subsidies. This plan jeopardizes the food security of many African countries, where a large percentage of people suffer from hunger and malnutrition. In countries like India, peasants have suffered tremendously because of WTO policies. Between 1992 and 1998, 600 peasant activists were killed by the Indian army, and 400 committed suicide in 1998, in mounting their opposition to the dislocation caused by the WTO and its agricultural policies that have resulted in the invasion of agriculture by multinationals, which has imperiled the survival of small peasant farmers (PGA Bulletin, June 2, 1998, www.agp.org).

What do we make of the differences in the issues facing people in North and South? What does this mean for the transnational networks in which North and South peoples come together? What does it mean for alliance building and agenda setting inside types of protest movements? What does it suggest about the mechanisms needed for effective collaboration between them?

Globalization and Transnational Networks

According to Leo Panitch, labor studies specialist, *globalization* is "another word for the spread of capitalist social relations, the power of financial markets, the intensification of exploitation and a vast growth in social inequality." He goes on to explain that globalization cannot be simply understood as an economic process. Rather, "It is a political process advanced by identifiable interests for clear purposes. The failure to see the strategic political nature of globalization reflects an economism which

needs to be overcome....States are not by-passed by capital, they represent capital, above all financial capital, in the era of globalization. Increasingly foreign capital has itself become a powerful social force within the host state" (1999). Others describe globalization in more relational terms as the interdependence and intermingling of global, distant and local logics, resulting in the greater hybridization and perforation of social, economic and political life (Amin, 1997:133).

The perspectives offered by Leo Panitch and Ash Amin do indeed reflect different ideological orientations and the preoccupations of different disciplines, but they do not negate one another. Actually, their views support one another in a complimentary manner. Panitich's discussion of globalization identifies the causal agent underlying this phenomenon (the expansion of capitalism on a global scale) and locates the effects that one can expect will follow based on the changing material base of societies brought into a new system of economic and political relations known as globalization. On the other hand, Amin's definition highlights the dynamic underlying this process. More exactly, he pinpoints the political-sociology that follows from the expansion of capitalism. In doing so Amin provides a more nuanced understanding of globalization. For instance, clearly he problematizes rudimentary notions of class and applications of class-based interpretations of action by introducing the idea of the intermingling and hybridization of 'global and local logics' within social and political life. One of the implications of what he is saying is that identity and interests become more fluid and reflect global and local structures. This changes the nature of social action producing not only new forms of transnational action but also affecting the elite formation in the Southern society by the emergence of globalized elite as we described it previously.

These changes are happening simultaneously. In other words, the new power struggles that Panitch anticipates will follow from the restructuring of the capitalist system are also affected by the process of hybridization of the global and the local, identified by Amin. What impact do they have on the means available to address issues arising in an era of globalization? Does the intermingling of global and local logics within social and political life indeed point to hybrid, open, fluid and multi-polar solutions to the old/ new social issues arising in the era of globalizations? And are transnational movements an example that substantiates this view? There is of course the other possibility, namely, that globalization creates as many possibilities for democratization and empowerment as it shuts down (Munck, 2000). In this latter case, the question becomes who gains and who benefits? What are the possibilities created by transnational networking, and what are the limitations of this form of action and how does this relate to Southern actors?

Inside the Network, NNGOs, SNGOs and the Tensions Within

Behind the perception that the Seattle protest was a spontaneous outpouring of discontent is the reality that considerable work went into the organization of the event. This work included organizing rallies and teach-ins, coordinating efforts among organizations, and transporting individuals from the South to Seattle. Also, some groups trained protesters in demonstration tactics prior to the event and others organized educational workshops. It is true that Northern NGOs took the lead in planning and organizing the Seattle protest, and in many ways they surpass SNGOs in terms of resources, but this does not mean Southern groups were passive or inactive. It does, however, suggest, as will be indicated below, that Southern groups were less visible in the Seattle protests. In fact, in terms of numeric representation, their presence was marginal. Moreover, if one probes beyond the common slogans of the protesters, there are tensions that are evident in particular along North-South lines.

Northern NGO Organization Efforts

As some have noted, months of education in Seattle, prior to the WTO meeting, went into the demonstrations that took place November 30 to December 3. While the event has been interpreted as a form of 'global activism from below,' it cannot be ignored that the Seattle protest was buttressed by the organizational, logistic and resource backing of NNGOs and other Northern groups, including in particular organized labor. As an illustration of the level of organization and planning that went into the protests at Seattle, one can survey the teach-ins held, which features prominent figures such as US environmental party leader Ralph Nader, and Body Shop Executive Anita Roddick. At the same time, the discussion panels brought together speakers from Pakistan, Malaysia, Philippines and Ghana. (Nichols, 1999). Clearly, such preparations require sound organizational capacity and financial resources. In truth, the Seattle protest was backed by organizations well endowed with resources and experience. Some of the large organizations include Sierra Club and Rainforest Action Network. The Ruckus Society, an environmental group with strong financial support, trained many of the demonstrators and planned well-organized street action (De Weese, 2000). However, the protest was also supported by years of education and activism on the issues raised by the WTO worldwide (Bruno, 1999).

Parallels between the preparations for Seattle and other action directed against capitalist-led globalization reveal a pattern of sophisticated activists with organizational skills and financial backing, leading the organization of protest movements. For example, preparations have already begun across Ontario and Quebec for the largest international gathering to take place

ever in Canada; on April 2001, 34 countries have met to discuss the Free Trade Agreement of the Americas (FTAA). The FTAA initiative created the world's largest trading bloc, encompassing North, South and Central America. Canadian activists have already begun preparing for protests to be organized as the delegates meet to discuss the FTAA: "Preparations have already begun: teach-ins, civil disobedience, training and planning for a pre-summit shutdown in Ottawa on April 1. In fact, the calendar between now and the April 20-23 summit is already pretty full" (Wheeler, 2001: 15).

Similar to Seattle, the groups leading the protest initiative are well endowed with financial resources. Interestingly, Canadian groups have received money from both provincial and federal governments for their protest activities. For instance, the Quebec government gave $200,000 to groups organizing the people's summit and related events, while the Federal government gave a similar amount for delegates to travel to the people's summit and for simultaneous translations during the teach-ins (Wheeler, 2001).

In addition to working on preparations for the protest in Seattle, many Northern organizations (American) played a key role in mobilizing people for the event. For instance, a coalition of many organizations, the Direct Action Network (DAN), brought thousands of people to Seattle. The Global Exchange was one of the organizations that worked on bringing people from the South to Seattle.

Most of the coverage of Seattle indicates that the most instrumental actors in terms of mobilizing individuals for the event and training activists were the environmental groups and the labor unions. American *labor groups* flexed their organizational muscles, used their own resources and mobilized many of their members for the event. In turn, this coincided with one of the ironies of choosing Seattle as the site for the WTO meeting, in that it is one of the most heavily unionized cities in the United States. (Nichols, 1999) Labor's efforts produced tangible results. The AFL-CIO (one of largest unions in the US) rented out the 12,000-seat Memorial Stadium for a November 30 rally and dispatched 20 organizers to recruit people for the march. The result of all of this was a demonstration that drew 20,000 people (Bruno, 1999). Besides this, teamsters and unionists arrived to Seattle from all over the US and Canada, mobilized through the structures of the labor movement.

Position of Southern NGOs

As stated above, it is clear that Northern NGOs and organizations played a leading role in planning and preparing the Seattle demonstrations. This does not mean, however, that Southern groups were passive or idle witnesses to this global activism. In fact, third world activists were present

and even prepared a panel discussion on WTO effects on health care and the environment. Many of the Southern organizations that did not attend pledged their support for the event from afar. As illustrated by the examples of the ways SNGOs inserted themselves into this transnational network, it is clear that many adopted a *dual*, global and local strategy. This may place them into contests with their own governments in addition to the challenge of contesting the policies of the WTO (See the box below). Nevertheless, it is evident that in terms of their positioning in the Seattle protests, SNGOs were definitely less visible on the day of the event and their representation in the actual protests and the organization of the movement was 'marginal' in comparison to the role played by Northern groups. Overall, this indicates that while Seattle was an important breakthrough in terms of global activism, the power relations and disparities between the North and the South appear to have been replicated within the protest movement.

The under-representation of Southern organizations within the Seattle protest was recorded by a few commentators. One observer explained that it related to larger North-South incongruities: "The new methods of mobilization do not, as yet, reach out to the poorest people. Those who have access to electronic communications or can travel are inevitably part of the elite" (Kaldor, 2000: 111).

Others warn of the dangers of romanticizing the notion of '(global) civil society' by disregarding the patterns of inclusion/exclusion within it. As Scholte points out, in terms of class, those in the 'global civil society' are largely propertied, professional, computer-literate and English speaking from Northern countries. Women and all colored people are under-represented. He also warns against overestimating the policy impact of the protest event in Seattle and argues that at best it will produce, instead of unadulterated neo-liberalism, neoliberalism plus fringe social policies. Thus he concludes: "In short, there is a significant danger that global civic activism can reproduce the exclusions of neoliberal globalism, even in campaigns that mean to oppose these inequalities" (Scholte, 2000).

Some observers in the United States view the gap between the participation of North and South as a broader problem that has parallels in the under-representation of non-white Americans in the protest movement. Martinez, an American woman of color, has pointed out that both third world activists and American non-white communities were not visibly represented in the protests. It is surprising that colored Americans, many of whom have the most to lose from increasing social inequalities and cuts in welfare services brought on by WTO agreements, were not present. She estimates that 5% of the 50,000 protesters were non-white. Moreover, she points out that in the Direct Action Network, which as stated above brought thousands to the event, only one person of color was involved in the planning and coordination of the event within the organization (Martinez, 2000).

Interestingly, Martinez herself, a member of a minority group in the United States, was one of the few commentators to record some of the tensions and inconsistencies that surfaced inside the movement, in particular between North and South. As she reports, on the November 30 march, the AFL-CIO leadership took a separate route to the Convention Center downtown. Upon reaching the downtown area, the AFL-CIO leaders had a conflict with the Third World People's Assembly, when they told the third world representatives to 'move aside so they could lead' (Martinez, 2000).

Tensions Within

Martinez's observations point to one of the ways in which power inequalities between North and South are re-manifested inside the protest movement. Her example, while highlighting what in all probability was a very minor incident in the scheme of the protests, nonetheless touches upon important issues such as the differences in concerns of groups from the North and the South, and the question of who leads, and whose issues are advanced? Are issues advanced that concern both and, if so, how and what mechanisms are needed? It is true that one of the great advantages of global activism such as Seattle is the convergence of diverse groups, all with a common focus on one entity, the WTO. But at the same time, with this comes the challenge of addressing the divergence in interests and goals of the disparate groups.

One way of illustrating the tensions that underlie this network, especially between North and South, is through a brief discussion of US labor unions, which as we have seen above, played an important role in the Seattle protests. The role of labor in the United States in the Seattle movement must be understood in light of the historical evolution of unions in the USA. This historical perspective raises some of the contradictions between a strong role on the part of labor groups like the AFL-CIO and the interests of third world organizations. A brief historical overview is in order.

As discussed above, after the crisis of the capitalist system in the 1970's and the restructuring of the international economy along capital-friendly lines, organized labor in North America adopted an *accommodating* attitude to capital, seeking to advance their interests through '*social partnerships*' between labor and capital (Panitch, 1999). This was framed by the context of the Cold War, in which unions were polarized by the East-West debate, as opposed to forging a strategy vis-à-vis capitalism. Also, organizations like the American AFL-CIO were known to be funded by the CIA during the cold war, supported to fight communism abroad by spreading their 'business unionism' (Moody, 1999).

The importance of these historical references is to outline the past trajectory of the American unions' position in regard to capital, a legacy

that impacts on their position in the present. In regard to the Seattle protests and the role of unions within the action against the WTO, it should be recognized that remnants of the unions' history remain evident today, in particular the potential inclination of the unions to adopt a compromise with Northern capital. Moreover, this indicates that while the network, which supported the Seattle protest, was indeed transnational, some of the Northern groups may be operating within a nationalist framework. This raises questions about their interests and the potential tensions between union concerns and those of other groups, including Southern organizations.

These observations are supported by the analysis of labor studies specialists that identify American unions as recognizing the merits of a global strategy yet remaining embedded within nationalist terms (Moody, 1999: 273). While many calls have been made for unions to enter coalitions with other social movements, known as 'social movement-unionism,' there are signs that within the Seattle protest phenomenon, there are limitations centered in the tense relationship between the goals of the different groups. For instance, it was reported that a month before the Seattle demonstrations, John Sweeney, President of the AFL-CIO, joined a group of business leaders in signing a letter endorsing the Clinton Administration's trade agenda for the WTO negotiations (Arrighi and Silver, 1999). This action makes sense when looked at in terms of the history of the US labor movement, and their past policy of 'business-unionism.' It suggests that some in the labor movement will be satisfied if measures are taken to protect American industries from the new competition raised by WTO policies. Clearly such a position puts them at odds with other members of the Seattle demonstrations and the global activism generated against the WTO. To be fair, it should be stated that observers report that there seems to be a rift within the labor camp, between those that want to pull the US out of the WTO altogether and those that will be happy if American industries are protected (Nichols, 1999).

With labor a key player in the protests at Seattle, and keeping in mind that in contrast to NGOs, labor unions generate their own financial resources from union dues, the importance of the rifts mentioned above, and the capacity for particularistic labor interests to surface and create tensions within the transnational network, should not be underestimated. On the other hand, this discussion of the position of US labor groups also supports one of our key premises, namely, that the global event at which transnational action takes place is inseparable from local structures and relations. In many ways, the global event becomes a site at which the local is encountered in a new form. This suggests the need to problematize rudimentary notions of transnational activism and to analyze it in more complexity.

Success of Seattle Protests: 'The Post-Modern Prince'

Not only were they a spectacular event in terms of unprecedented activism on a global scale, but more importantly the Seattle street protests were paralleled by a collapse of the free trade talks inside and subsequent failure of the WTO new Millennium Round. In retrospect, Seattle has been hailed as a victory for global activism against capitalist-led globalization. For activists, Seattle is now understood and situated within a sequence of triumphs against capital-friendly globalization. Seattle is seen as the next major success story for global activists, after the victory they gained when 600 NGOs around the world, via the internet, stopped the closed-door-negotiations of the 29 richest countries on the Multilateral Agreement on Investment (MAI) (Sommer, 1999). Beyond the discourse of the activists and how they frame their own narrative, the question arises, how does one interpret Seattle? What does it mean in terms of global politics and resistance to the restructuring of the international order, and where do concepts such as 'global civil society' fit in? How useful and explanatory are they? Finally what is the role for SNGOs, and where do they fit into this?

One interpretation of Seattle holds that this event was the manifestation of a global social movement. Some have attempted to describe this new form of political agency as a 'post-modern prince.' While illuminating, this interpretation is lacking in certain respects. As will be outlined below, the notion of global civil society, used in the interpretation, blurs the multi-layered nature of globalization as an economic process with a clear political logic, and it hides the end-points of power that are both linked to and facilitate this international restructuring at regional, national or sub-national levels. While concepts such as the 'post-modern prince' are relevant, they point to one narrative, the macro picture at the global level. However, the nature of capital-led globalization as an economic and political project is that it is multi-leveled, with more power struggles going on than simply the one at the global level. It is crucial to recognize this in order to begin to understand where SNGOs fit into this global activism and how/if it benefits them in struggles at sub-global levels.

Global Social Movement?

Many observers concurred that the Seattle protest exemplified a type of global social movement. Also many believe that this global social movement espouses an alternative vision of globalization, one in marked contrast to the world-view of transnational corporationas (TNCs), the World Trade Organization and the World Bank. Thus, the battle in Seattle was truly that, a battle. It represents a new politics advanced by a 'global

civil society' seeking to alter the nature of capital-led globalization with a vision of globalization from below (Cohen and Rai, 2000; Kaldor, 2000).

For some that ascribe to this view, an important aspect of this new type of politics is the system of relations that connects the global activists, which is best described as *networks*: "The networks' component parts—connected by modes and hubs—are both autonomous from, and dependent upon, their complex systems of relationships. Dense and highly active networks spanning vast spaces are transforming many kinds of social, cultural, economic and political relationships" (Cohen and Rai, 2000).

If one narrows this interpretation down to its basic thesis, getting at what is implied by the idea of 'global social movement,' it becomes clear that the idea here is that the main fault-line underlying this new politics is between the people, grassroots activists and social groups in the North and the South *and* the architects of the international order, the international trade meetings where new global political economy are being designed. Note that there is no discussion of tensions inside the movement. The power relations within this ideal notion of 'global civil society' are avoided.

Another way of putting this interpretation is that the economic restructuring of the capitalist system has resulted in class politics becoming emancipated from previous geopolitical constraints and determination (Harris, 1987). Thus the new antagonists battling out the nature and direction of globalization are divided roughly into two groups: first, social groups like women, church groups, environmentalists are lumped together and, second, labor. These two groups form the 'grassroots' worldwide, pitted against the pillars of new order, WTO and TNCs. Is this an adequate interpretation? What about the inequalities inside the movement, and tensions between North and South, raised above? Does this interpretation reflect the complexity and multiplicity of relations underlying WTO and capital restructuring? What about the position of SNGOs internationally – the multiple relations they are involved in, that are subsumed under this grand narrative at the global level?

International relations theorist Stephen Gill has described the action in Seattle as a new potential and form of global political agency, which he calls the *post-modern prince*. He views this 'bundle' of agency as something plural and differentiated, yet linked to universalism and construction. It is a set of social and political forces *in movement*, constructing a new globalism. According to him, the post-modern prince challenges modernist practices and resists the consolidation of globalization under capital rule. Moreover, it is a new pattern of agency, which goes beyond politics of identity and difference—it has gender, race and class aspects, connected to democracy and environment. Important to Gill is the apparent way which this form of agency acts together yet in a non-institutionalized way:

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"Indeed the diverse organizations that are connected to the protests seek to go further to organize something akin to a post-modern transnational political party, that is, one with no clear leadership structure as such (...) however, it does not act in the old sense of an institutionalized and centralized structure of representation." In Gill's view, the post-modern prince is not institutionalized as such. It has multiple and capillary forms. Many who are involved, while 'local' in focus and nature, recognize the importance of global solutions to local problems (Gill: 2000: 138,140).

The main problem with Gill's 'post-modern prince' is that it abstracts the action that is taking place from the context, namely the historical evolution of economic and political relations. More importantly, it blurs the actors involved (i.e., tensions inside the movement and their diverging interests), and it ignores the end points of power – who they are acting against and the sites at which this action takes place. Globalization is an economic process with political end-points that make it work. Therefore, it is only logical that one seek to recognize the multiple power sites that exist and to determine what this means for NGOs, especially SNGOs, instead of blurring these power relations with elegant concepts such as global civil society or post-modern prince.

Considering Another View:
Transnational Networking Within New Global-Local Relations

A few dissenting voices expressed a contrasting reading of Seattle, one that recognized the fact that converging and diverging interests and power relations formed a central part of the events in Seattle. This second interpretation extends beyond a reading of Seattle that sees the protest as a clash between "the people/NGOs" and "the center of global capital/WTO."

More than one observer of Seattle commented on the fact that the collapse of the Millennium Round was not only linked to the protests organized outside, but was also brought on by the contradictions inside in the Ministerial Meeting. Here, observers are referring mainly to the divisions between developed and developing countries over future trade modalities (Arrighi and Silver, 2000). Inside there was a lack of transparency and the process was undemocratic. For instance, exclusionary tactics were used whereby most delegates, except those from the main industrialized countries and their friends, were kept out of the 'green room' during negotiations to push through a basic agreement (Khor, 1999a). Inside, besides speaking out against the lack of transparency of the talks, the developing countries expressed their disdain with the WTO trade regime and the manner of its delivering more benefits to the developed nations. In contrast to the US push for labor and environmental issues

in the WTO, the developing representatives rejected further additions to WTO and their protests effectively stopped the talks (Statement of Philippine Social Movements, 1999).

For those that recognize the role of developing countries in stopping the talks, a more complex picture emerges than just a movement of organizations struggling against the WTO. As the statement of the Philippine social movements (1999) expresses: "More than anything else, the WTO fiasco surfaced the internal contradictions within the multilateral trading system and current crisis of the global capitalist system. A contradiction of global corporate rule versus the workers and the masses of oppressed people; of global capital represented by governments of developed nations versus developing and least developed nations; and contradictions among competing global economic powers."

Some have gone farther in considering what these diverging interests mean for our understanding of the Seattle protests. For Arrighi and Silver, the Seattle demonstration was more than a diverse protest movement expressing dissent with the WTO. It was an event which can be understood in relation to specific interests and positions. In their view, historically Northern labor and third world elites had gone along with, rather than contested the Reagan/Thatcher counter revolution, which unleashed the current pro-capital international regime. Moreover, the significance and the success of Seattle lies in that: "Northern workers and Southern elites seemed to have simultaneously realized that dismantling the welfare (system) and developmental state (model) benefited primarily Northern capital and did little or nothing in delivering the unkept promises of the global New Deal"(2000: 11). In their analysis, Arrighi and Silver move away from an undifferentiated protest movement lumped under ambiguous and idealized terminology, to identify key actors and interests. Instead of an undifferentiated global civil society acting against the WTO, (which happened in terms of the actual event on the ground), their interpretation brings out the struggles/interests underlying this event, which in practice are much more fluid, differentiated and complex. In their understanding of the event, the fault-lines were developing countries and labor verses a northern capital-defined international system (in addition to civil society versus WTO).

What should be clear by now is that Seattle was about multiple relations, power relations and fluid interests that are not sufficiently elucidated by the romantic and undifferentiated 'global civil society' challenging a tyrannical trade regime. In fact, as Arrighi and Silver suggest, the global activists did not play the only part in this tale; the interests and positions of developing countries were also key factors behind what happened in Seattle. What does this mean and how can we reconcile the popular concept of global civil society and the power relations that underlie WTO?

Kaldor's analysis offers the clearest way forward. Her interpretation of Seattle reconciles the seeming incompatibility between the view that wants to endorse a global civil society and the view that brings out the different interests and sets of relations that extend within and outside the WTO. Kaldor's understanding of Seattle is multi-leveled, and for this reason it is very important. At one level, she views the protests at Seattle as part of a political contest over the nature of the global system. Moreover, she views this as a possible global 'civilizing process' at work, in which citizens' groups (global civil society) are struggling to tame capital globalization. This global civilizing process is situated in a period of increasing global integration of regulation mechanisms and extension of international law (Kaldor, 2000).

At another level, Kaldor outlines that actors and pact building underlie this global civilizing process. What direction the civilizing process takes and what impact it has on international order, depends on what pact is formed between which actors. That is to say, it is not all up to 'global civil society.' For instance, an alliance between the new right (national protectionist regimes) and globalizers (WTO, TNCs) would mean an increase in inequality and nation-state enforced globalization. An alliance between globalizers and civic networks would mean the democratization of globalization (Kaldor, 2000). Also of importance is that in her understanding of global political cleavages, Kaldor separates civic networks from the left (labor). In her view the left can fit into either scenario, in other words into a capital-friendly alliance or an alliance which civilizes the globalization process. This reinforces what was outlined about the tensions inside the movement against the WTO, particularly regarding the tense relationship between Northern labor's interests and Southern groups' interests. Labor seem to be able to revert to the old social pact with capital.

Furthermore, the main contribution of Kaldor's analysis is that it shows that, more important than the idea of global civil society, is the idea of a global plan of action, or what others have termed a 'global public sphere,' where different groups, civic networks, labor, and globalizers are battling out a new international system (Cohen and Rai, 2000). By highlighting this terrain, she reintroduces agency (and interests) of specific groups, getting away from the undifferentiated and unsubstantiated notion that it is only global civic groups acting against the WTO.

We can summarize Kaldor's views as two points: first, the global civilizing process, and second, what is shaped by pact building among global political cleavages.

The only problem with this conceptualization is that it ignores the position of SNGOs within global networks. As should be clear from the above discussion, SNGOs were marginal in terms of their role leading the Seattle protests. Unfortunately this in turn reflects the North-South divide as much as it reflects the positioning of Southern civic networks within the international order. Moreover, in light of this it is necessary to add another

level to Kaldor's schema in order to see the implications for SNGOs. In one respect, it is important to consider the contests SNGOs are involved in regionally and locally, and whether the transnational network supports them in these struggles. At the same time, networks such as those which facilitated the Seattle protest need to be broken down and reviewed not simply in terms of the agenda setting process but also in terms of agenda silencing due to power inequalities within the network.

Therefore, we can add that there is a third level at which divergent interests meet and where contests over the globalization process take place: this site extends to the regional and national, even sub-national level. This third level also impacts on the above two levels identified. Also it can be said that this level also reflects the plane of global action, insofar as civic groups may draw on networks, alliances or tactics which extend beyond their own borders. At this third level NGOs and civic groups enter into contests with their own governments. For example, in terms of the WTO, a quick glance at the protest groups reveals their involvement in multiple relations and a two-pronged strategy of local and global activism. How does transnational networking support SNGO activism locally or regionally? Consider the recent victory in South Africa over the TNCs, where the transnational pharmaceutical companies launched a lawsuit against the generic AIDs medication. The campaign of local social organizations and governmental organizations was supported internationally by INGOs such as Oxfam and Médecines sans Frontières. In this case, Southern actors received the support and backing of transnational networks concerning a contest occurring locally.

The importance of identifying this third level highlights the position of Southern NGOs within global activist networks and allows us to raise the question: what benefit do SNGOs derive from networks, beyond participating in the narrative at the global level? Are they able to derive benefit from the networks in their own micro contests, at lower levels? What mechanisms do they need to develop in order to become better equipped to do so? What is the role for SNGOs? Can they escape being left behind by contests over the global order: can they translate the potential for a 'global civilizing process' into tangible gains in their own struggles in their local contexts?

6.3. UN Conferences

In the 1990's, the UN organized high-level world conferences covering a range of social and developmental issues under the auspices of its initiative to tackle poverty and other issues. Starting with the World Summit for Children in 1990, the conferences focused on issues from the environment to women's rights. They included: the UN Conference on Environment

and Development in June 1992, the World Conference on Human Rights in June 1993, the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States in April-May 1994, the International Conference on Population and Development in September 1994, the Fourth World Conference on Women in September 1995, the World Summit for Social Development 1995, and the Second UN Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) in June 1996.

These world conferences are distinguished by a new inclusiveness and an emphasis on the participation of state and non-state actors in formulating international standards and regulative mechanisms pertaining to social development. For instance, the World Summit for Social Development (WSSD) which was held in March 1995 in Copenhagen was attended by over 180 UN member states, including 117 heads of state and government, and representatives of over 800 NGOs. At this conference, former UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali described the UN initiative as facilitating a framework in which all social as well as state actors can share in actions and decisions.

The significance of UN conferences, in which social organizations are accorded space within a global forum alongside state actors, should not be underestimated. However, the view which equates NGO advocacy work within UN conferences with a transnational social movement must take into account the constraints within these events as well as the functional dimension and rule-making priority of these forums. NGOs are still far from imposing their own alternative vision within such conferences; likewise, they have not been able to address the underlying and structural causes of new forms of uncertainty and insecurity affecting the lives of people. The presence of so many world leaders at the World Summit for Social Development gave immense political weight to the agreements adopted there, namely the *Copenhagen Declaration and Program of Action.* Yet this formula also minimizes the possibilities of alternative vision.

Finally, it is also apparent that the involvement of NGOs within UN conferences is not without constraints. Take for instance the USA challenge to the participation of NGOs in the UN. The United States representative in the Fifth (Finance) Committee of the UN General Assembly submitted language to the resolution on "Pattern of Conferences" (February 5, 2001) which would require UN Conference Services to be reimbursed for services used by NGOs. If this resolution passes it apparently would result in NGOs being charged for all documents, use of rooms, translations of NGO documents, and any other "costs" of NGOs at the UN. This presumably would apply to Geneva and Vienna and other UN offices as well. This report was confirmed by US UN Mission officials who themselves do not support the US 5th Committee proposal. This resolution would be disastrous for NGOs and represent a monumental example of the hypocrisy of governments who constantly talk about how important the enhanced

involvement of NGOs is to the UN. The resolution also contradicts the UN Charter and ECOSOC resolutions, especially 1996/31, which mandates consultative arrangements and rights of NGOs to participate, speak, receive documentation, circulate and submit documents.

In the following section, we will examine the fifth UN world conference on women, the Beijing +5 summit, held in New York in 2000. Our analysis looks at this event from the perspective of SNGOs, in particular Palestinian women's groups. In addition to raising the challenges Southern groups confront in inserting themselves into such global forums, the analysis also identifies the way local power structures, especially between NGOs and their own states, are reproduced inside such forums. Finally, we problematize basic notions of transnational action, locating the impact that SNGO action at the global level has on regional networks.

Women's Summit in Beijing

The Beijing +5 UN Conference, held during June 2000 in New York, was the latest in a series of world conferences organized around the theme of promoting women's advancement. Four world conferences on women preceded Beijing+5: Beijing (1995); Nairobi (1985); Copenhagen (1980) and Mexico (1975). This hub of global activity around women's issues began with the International Women's Year (1975) that launched a new 'women's era' at the UN and served as an important factor in propelling the rise of the global women's movement.

Palestinian women's organizations participated in Beijing+5, as well as in the preceding world conferences on women. The experience of Palestinian women's organizations in Beijing+5 reveals much about the way in which Southern organizations insert themselves into this type of event, as well as how they participate in associated processes; for example, raising an issue to the international agenda or initiating activism at the regional level. From this vantage point it is possible to deconstruct basic assumptions about NGO advocacy within UN conferences. The evidence that will be presented below suggests that a central feature of UN world conferences is their rule-making function *within* state-defined macro policies. At the same time, NGOs, especially SNGOs, confront local power structures and their own state counterparts in advocating issues within UN forums.

In this regard, the following analysis differentiates between two factors: those which *influence* the way Palestinian women's groups insert themselves into the world conference and the *mechanism and ways* in which women's groups participate in the global forum. The factors that influence how Palestinian women organizations participate in the UN conference include: the shift over time within UN women's summits from an advocacy approach to a focus on problem-solving within state-defined rules of the

game; and the power relations between NGO and state actors reproduced within the forum. In addition to this, there are also *the specific ways* and the mechanisms through which such non-Western actors participate in the global events, for instance, investing in preparations and strategies prior to the event, and coalition-building. A striking finding in the Palestinian case is that the regional level represents a potential site from which Arab women may begin to launch their own perspectives on, as well as engage in, a critical dialogue with global trends on women's issues. Associated with the rise of regional networking is the issue of where Arab women are located within the transnational networking phenomenon. Many questions remain unresolved in the case of Arab women's groups, such as what are the factors which facilitate or inhibit their participation in transnational networking, and similarly what determines or obstructs the internationalization of a regional or local issue in the Arab world?

In examining the participation of Palestinian women in Beijing+5, it is essential to begin with a brief outline of the broader setting within which this world conference is situated by reviewing the significance of the UN Decade for Women.

UN Decade for Women

The UN Decade for Women (1975-1986) emerged out of the International Year for Women. Reflective of the role of NGOs in defining the global framework overseeing women's issues, the idea of an international year for women was proposed by a women's NGO with consultative status at the UN. The Decade was organized along the theme 'Equality, Development and Peace.' Three conferences were held inaugurating, evaluating and closing the Decade. In the first of these conferences, held in Mexico City, women voiced their frustration over having been excluded from development programs (Berkovitch, 1999). At the midway conference in Copenhagen, a wider range of development issues were covered and a critique of past approaches to women in development emerged. Finally at Nairobi, the closing conference, a document was produced which 'provided an analytical framework and prescriptive measures for addressing obstacles to women's advancement' (Chen, 1996:141). The document produced at Nairobi, *Forward-Looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women*, remained operational until the year 2000. As a framework to guide the international community in advancing women's rights, it was superseded by the documents produced at the Beijing conferences.

At one level, the agreements reached at UN world conferences have created international standards on women's rights, adopted by all state actors and national signatories. This has provided women with new tools to use in their society to advocate for improvements in the conditions of

their lives. At another level, these international forums have facilitated the meeting of women from throughout the globe. This has altered the nature of the international women's movement and stimulated new forms of transnational activism on women's issues.

In this regard, three observations are noteworthy; together they will frame our understanding of the context within which actors such as Palestinian women's groups approach and find space to position themselves within these global forums. Firstly, the meeting of women's groups from throughout the world to advocate for and shape the emerging framework of the international agenda on women's rights should not be assumed to be a wholly unproblematic process. For instance, some argue that divisions such as North-South, rich-poor, developed-underdeveloped are still very contentious terrain inside the field of NGO activism around international conferences. As Clark, Friedman, Hochsteler point out, in Mexico City SNGOs were concerned with development and imperialism and NNGOs were concerned with sexism. Similarly at Copenhagen the debate to denounce Apartheid and Zionism also divided Northern and Southern organizations (1998: 28-33). For the Northern NGOs such declarations amounted to 'politicization' of women's issues whereas for women in developing societies these regimes form a central part of systems which perpetuate 'oppressive sexism' (Berkovitch, 1999:123).

Secondly, notwithstanding such tensions, some describe the Decade for Women as a period in which feminism became defined in relation to other structures in the world (Stienstra, 1999). However, recognizing the diversity of 'feminism(s),' it has been argued that the Decade ended with the acknowledgement of the plurality of perspectives on women's issues of the various women's groups throughout the world. Thus, this acknowledgement led towards a focus on coalition building within the international women's movement as the means for campaigning and raising issues to the international agenda.

Thirdly, building on these two points out of and around the international conferences, many women's advocacy initiatives developed including both regional networks and transnational networks. Regional networks were formed in Latin America, Asia and Africa after Nairobi. In 1984 DAWN, a network of Southern women researchers was established. Since then DAWN has become an important reference for women's organizations in developing societies. For instance, DAWN is looked to by some Palestinian women's organizations as a reference for an alternative vision for southern women's groups.[69] Moreover, DAWN is well known for its alternative research program; it played a leading role in exposing the negative effects of Structural Adjustment Programs on women in developing societies, thereby successfully raising the question of the effects of global

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[69] Interview with Suheir Azzouni, WATC.

economic restructuring on women (Steinstra, 1999). Organizations such as DAWN represent important means through which non-Western women's groups can insert themselves into global processes – challenging prevailing paradigms, offering alternative vision or advocating for southern women's perspectives.

The existence of regional networks also suggests another layer of activity in which women's groups from developing countries may engage with global frameworks or utilize such mechanisms in their own region. While such forms of action *may* receive attention internationally, it is also a possibility that such activism will somehow remain unacknowledged at the global level. This will be developed further below through a discussion of the Arab women's network, AISHA.

Sikkink and Keck have examined the impact of such networks by charting the rise of violence against women on the global agenda. They illustrate how this agenda became set through the efforts of transnational groups, coalition building within the women's movement and as well as alliances formed between the women's movement and the human rights movement. As well they highlight the dialectic role of the donors in stimulating the rise of this agenda (Keck and Sikkink, 1998: 170-182). Within such transnational advocacy networks, the mechanism of coalition building allows for 'inclusivity' of actors in participating in the formation of such an agenda. At the same time, however, questions can be raised about whether Southern groups take the initiative and participate in such networks. Similarly, one can ask what sort of obstacles, such as resource constraints, may bar groups such as Arab women's organizations from effectively entering such networks. The issue of whether non-Western groups such as Arab women's organizations find a space and means to participate in transnational forms of activism and agenda setting should not be taken for granted.

Shifting Paradigms, Nairobi to Beijing

A few dissenting voices in the literature have raised the claim that UN conferences represent a site for depoliticized, technical problem-solving endeavors. Shiva wrote: "The global economic apartheid that is an inevitable consequence of structural adjustment and free trade policies will create apartheid among women of the world. This equality in a divided world will create an elite minority of 'successful' women as UN bureaucrats, CEOs of large corporations and heads of states – and large numbers of women who will have equal rights with their men to be poor, hungry, homeless and unemployed. Women of the world do not want such empty equality within the brutal inequality of global apartheid." (1995:8) These voices support the project of global restructuring. This perspective is supported by our

empirical findings. A review of the UN women's conferences, from Nairobi to Beijing, reveals a shift from an advocacy agenda to an agenda framed by state-defined rules of the game. The observations and experiences of Palestinian women's groups at the women's conferences also reinforce this view. For instance, some of the Palestinian women activists that were interviewed for this research expressed their reservations about the latest UN women's summit, the Beijing conference, because of the minimal attention devoted to the Palestinian national question. As they explained, in contrast to Beijing, in the Nairobi conference the Palestinian national agenda was accorded equal importance with the social agenda of advancing women's rights.[70] As will be argued below, these observations reflect the shift in the role of UN women's summits from an advocacy mechanism which challenges state paradigms and state interpretations of economic and political relations, to a problem-solving forum which is set within state macro policies. A brief review of the Nairobi and Beijing conferences will illuminate this shift.

Nairobi: an Alternative Social Vision

To begin, in the 1985 world conference to assess the UN Decade for Women in Nairobi, a concept of women's advancement emerged which was clearly activist in nature. There are two distinctive features of the final document that reflect this. Firstly, statements were made criticizing the direction of capitalist-led globalization and its dislocating impact on people's lives. As well, a clear position was taken supporting a people's right to self-determination. Both of these pronouncements were set within a document intended to support an alternative vision of social justice, not simply at the social level between men and women, but also between nations.

Looking at the final document, Nairobi's alternative vision is evident in the way the relationship between three objectives of the Decade – equality, development and peace – was conceived. These three tenets were accepted as *interrelated* and *reinforcing* (*Nairobi Forward-Looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women*, paragraph 9-11). Note how this is formulated; for instance, it is stated that, "equality is important for development and peace because national and global inequalities perpetuate themselves and increase tensions of all types" (ibid, paragraph 11). This quote is very revealing. Firstly, it is quite clear that a very broad notion of *equality* is being used here, one which extends beyond the level of gender relations to the relations between nations. This is significant in a document establishing an international agenda for women's rights. This document's

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[70] Interview with researchers from Women's Studies Institute, Birzeit.

frame of reference goes to the level of the social, linking national and global forms of inequality to social-well being. Again this reflects the ambitions of this conference, which was meant to provide an alternative vision on social relations as well as on economic and political relations between states.

Leaving aside the nature of the unfolding economic global order, which was critiqued at length in the document, let us focus on implications of the Nairobi document regarding the right to self-determination. Within the Nairobi Forward-Looking Strategies, women's rights and national rights were conceived as dependent and interrelated. Specifically the attainment of national rights was recognized as a condition for the effective protection of women's rights. For instance it was stated, "the full and effective promotion of women's rights can best occur in conditions of international peace and security where relations among States are based on the respect of the legitimate rights of all nations, great and small, and peoples to self-determination, independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity and the right to live in peace within their national borders" (ibid, paragraph 14).

Finally, reflective of the period of the 1970's and 1980's in which the legacies of decolonization and poignancy of liberation struggles were relatively fresh, the Nairobi document also included specific positions on South Africa and Palestine. Two paragraphs were devoted to these issues; paragraphs 259 and 260, titled, *Women and children under apartheid* and *Palestinian women and children*. This represents an even more lucid testament of the advocacy orientation of the recommendations produced by the Nairobi conference. For example, concerning South Africa a sharply politicized position was taken; calls were made to support the liberation movement and for international sanctions against the apartheid regime. Similarly, it was stated regarding Namibia, "The total and unconditional liberation of Namibia should be a major objective of the Forward-Looking Strategies" (ibid, paragraph 259). It is true that the paragraph on Africa was far more politicized and advocacy oriented than the one on Palestine, however, the latter was an important step in recording and recognizing the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination internationally. In each of these paragraphs the link between the advancement of women and the rights of the collective, the people as a whole, was clearly established.

Beijing: Reasserted State Paradigm

In contrast to the conceptualization of women's advancement that developed out of Nairobi, a new vision of women's rights emerged in the Beijing world conference for women in 1995. Set within the post-Cold War era, in the period of democratization in Eastern Europe and the South and the rise of new forms of ethnic conflict and global economic restructuring, a fundamentally different paradigm of women's advancement arose. An

examination of the *Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action* reveals
that the advocacy orientation of Nairobi and its critical perspectives on
the international order were replaced with a framework supporting rather
than critiquing a state paradigm of the international system. This requires
some clarification. Firstly, in general this shift is evident in two changes:
Within the Beijing document, the critique of global economic relations
was muted and political stability was a reoccurring theme, as opposed to
previous activist calls to support liberation movements. Secondly, two
features marked the agreement reached at Beijing. On the one hand, there
was deepening of the social agenda for women's rights and enlargement
of its scope, with specific recommendations developed in different fields
including health, education and women and poverty. On the other hand,
on the political level Nairobi's alternative vision of relations between
nations was replaced with an endorsement of both state-sponsored conflict
resolution methods and an endorsement of international human rights law
as the appropriate means to address aggression between nations. Focusing
specifically on one section of the final document, *Women and Armed
Conflict*, a few observations will illustrate these claims.

To begin, it should be stated that within this section of the document
there is a recognition that conflict and aggression, including foreign
occupation, affect the well being of both women and men (*Beijing
Declaration and Platform for Action*, paragraph 131). Also, there is a
statement reaffirming the right of all peoples to self-determination (ibid,
paragraph 145). As opposed to Nairobi, however, here the relationship
between women's and national rights is neither explicitly specified nor
comprehensively discussed. Furthermore, specific cases of military
occupation, such as the Palestinians, are not discussed. While in Nairobi
there was emphasis on the rights of the collective, in Beijing the *individual*
is established as the window through which to approach women's rights
and the rights of people in times of conflict. There are two ways in which
this can be received and interpreted. Firstly, it is evident that women's
social agenda is advanced on every level in the Beijing agreement, including
for instance the protection of a women's human rights within conflict
situations. Such recommendations can be accepted as important in and of
themselves. However, our analysis is concerned with another issue, that is,
the position of the final document in relation to state agendas, on the one
hand, and the social vision of non-state actors, on the other hand. Nairobi
maintained a critical distance from state paradigms; however, within Beijing
this distance is reduced. It is this level of analysis that the Beijing document
must be read against. Two final examples will illustrate the theme of Beijing.

Let us take the emphasis on peaceful conflict resolution methods. In
Nairobi the ideal environment for protecting women's rights is a world
order made up of independent and sovereign states. In the Beijing document
the optimal setting is envisioned as follows; "An environment that maintains

world peace and promotes and protects human rights, democracy and *the peaceful settlement of disputes,* in accordance with the principles of non-threat or use of force against territorial integrity or political independence and of respect for sovereignty as set forth in the Charter of the United Nations, is an important factor for the advancement of women" (italics added) (ibid, paragraph 131). Indeed the references to world peace and protection of human rights are welcome and important. However, a critical reading of this passage against the backdrop of the language of the Nairobi document reveals that this represents a shift away from activist calls supporting people's struggles for liberation to a prioritization of state-sponsored conflict resolution methods. This stems from state-centered reading of international systems, which emphasizes political stability. In contrast to recognition of the right to self-determination, conflict resolution methods emphasize containment of a conflict and attenuate the moral and ethical claims to a people's rights embodied in the notion of self-determination.

The second example concerns the endorsement of international human rights instruments. Within the Beijing Platform, a link was established between conflict and human rights violations. With this shift, a turn was taken towards the mechanisms of international law, human rights law and humanitarian law. For example, it is stated that, "violations of human rights in situations of armed conflict and military occupation are violations of the fundamental principles of human rights and humanitarian law as embodied in international human rights instruments and in the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and the Additional Protocols thereto" (ibid, paragraph 133). In principle the application of humanitarian international law is indeed a progressive and important achievement. However, the implication of such an endorsement within the broader text of the Beijing document needs to be considered.

Firstly, in line with the less activist-oriented tone of Beijing, the endorsement of human rights law effectuates a separation between national-collective rights and individual human rights. The result is that the violation of the national right to self-determination, which is an inherent dimension of a form of aggression such as occupation, is eluded; instead this form of domination is reframed in the language of individual human rights, and also in terms of women's human rights. For example, consider the way instruments of international humanitarian law, which function to delineate the responsibilities of a foreign occupying power to the people over which it is ruling, are reread in terms of their ability to protect the individual. In actions to be taken by Governments it states, "Consider the ratification of or accession to international instruments containing provisions relative to the protection of women and children in armed conflicts, including the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 1949, the Protocols Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 1949 relating to the Protections of Victims of International Armed Conflicts (Protocol I)" (ibid, paragraph 144a).

This reflects the vision that emerges of Beijing. While the social agenda of women's rights is clearly advanced, this is set within a state paradigm of the international system. Problem-solving around issues such as women and poverty or the role of women in development is conducted, but an alternative social vision, such as the vision of a just international order that emerged out of Nairobi, is stifled. Both the endorsement of human rights instruments and peaceful conflict resolution methods represent state affirmed rules of the game, which channel discontent and highly contentious questions related, for instance, to a people's right to self-determination, into state-supervised mechanisms and international structures.

Without going into details it should be stated that the new paradigm which surfaced in Beijing intensified and became more pronounced with the Beijing+5 conference held in June 2000. Two examples are noteworthy. Firstly, indicative of the separation between individual and collective rights is the focus on gendered approaches to conflict without clear attention to rights of people as collective. For instance, the document states, "There is wider recognition that armed conflict has different destructive impacts on women and men and that a gender sensitive approach to the application of international human rights law and international humanitarian law is important" (*Further Actions and Initiatives to Implement the Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action*, paragraph 12). This is clearly an important statement, but it is made without any qualifying statement reaffirming the importance of sovereignty, and national independence. In this regard, the implication is somehow that the human rights of the individual transcend conflict. Paradoxically this neglects the way in which the rights of the collective are an inextricable aspect of equality and social well being. At the same time, this paradoxical pronouncement makes perfect sense within the above discussion, namely, the dominance of a state paradigm within the UN world conference. Secondly, interestingly, further to the shift towards peaceful methods of conflict resolution made in Beijing, in the Beijing+5 conference humanitarian intervention is mentioned as a central form of assistance in post-conflict situations. Humanitarian assistance and the work of NGOs are identified as important mechanisms in addressing the needs of women in times of conflict (ibid, paragraph 12). This dovetails with some of the questions raised in our discussion of humanitarian aid in the foregoing chapter.

Nairobi to Beijing: Some Concluding Observations

The shift from an advocacy-oriented agenda in Nairobi to a more state centered agenda in Beijing raises pertinent questions about UN global forums and more specifically about the relationship between the UN and state interests. This question is given close consideration in the section on

'NGOs, GOs and the role of the Mediator' below. Here, we will briefly introduce the issue at hand.

Some describe the changes that have taken place in the international system, from Nairobi to Beijing, as follows, "The post-Cold War world involves new priorities organized around peace, governability, the struggle for survival, and recent formulations relating to 'global human security.'" Indeed new forms of conflict are discernable, notably the rise of ethnic conflicts as in the former Yugoslavia or cases of genocide in Rwanda. At the same time, new approaches to conflict resolution, which prioritizes non-violent methods and peace building efforts, have also arisen. The Palestinian delegation which tried to push for raising the issue of occupation as one that concerns women were confronted by the paradigm which labels them as people in conflict. One member of this delegation noted: "We fought for the inclusion of occupation in the Beijing document. But part of the problem that we as Palestinians faced was that we were suddenly being looked at not as an occupied people, or people struggling for liberation, but as a people in a 'conflict-situation.' This of course was largely due to the peace process." A simple reading of the shift in women summits described above could attribute this shift to new challenges within the international system and as a response to new forms of conflict. Such a view, however, is itself set within a state-centric perspective, ignores the participation and contributions of non-state actors within UN forums and neglects the alternative social vision that NGOs possess.

Very little attention has been paid to this issue. However, one observer has equated the shift from Nairobi to Beijing to a struggle between state and non-state actors over the degree to which the logic of advocacy and critique of the changing global order is allowed into UN global forums and agreements produced there. Based on her experiences at the Beijing conference in 1995, Shiva has argued that there was an explicit attempt to undermine the contributions of Nairobi in both the NGO forum and the official meeting at Beijing. Specifically, at issue was the alternative social vision presented in Nairobi, including the strong criticisms against the international order and the linkage of women's empowerment to the emerging global economic order and its impact on the South. One of the actors to whom she attributes such actions is the NGO facilitating committee. As she states, "The FC (facilitating committee) [organized] plenaries focused on making women adjust to the New World Order. Women's movements, on the other hand, are demanding that the global order adjust to the needs of women, which best reflect the needs of society as a whole" (Shiva, 1995:4-5).

In addition, she also links the efforts to disassemble the framework established in Nairobi to the influence of the US, both within the conference and in shaping the agenda of the plenaries. Moreover, she also locates the actions of the NGO facilitating committee as state-aligned mediators. Shiva's

personal account of the Beijing conference offers a rare view into the contests between NGO and state actors within UN global forums. Her observations reinforce our claim that UN women summits have evolved from advocacy-oriented to state-centered forums. Shiva's account also supports our additional claim that there is a need to problematize the relationship between the UN and state interests. Some of the mechanisms and relationships which support state interests within the UN world conferences and the follow-up activities related to these conferences will be considered in the section on NGOs, GOs and Mediators below.

In any case the shifts outlined above raise many questions and challenges. Striking findings at the regional level suggest Arab women are finding their own response to these shifts.

Palestinian Women in the Global Arena:
the Beijing+5 World Conference

Notwithstanding the paradigm shift in the way women's advancement is defined within world conferences, it remains true that these global forums represent an important site where ideas are exchanged, issues are defined and where groups can insert themselves into the process and lobby for the inclusion of a particular item on the international agenda. Palestinian women's organizations as well as organizations from throughout the Arab world, including Iraq, Tunis and Kuwait, traveled to New York in June 2000 for the Beijing+5 conference. Palestinian women in particular had participated in the preceding conferences, including Nairobi and Beijing. A review of their experience at Beijing+5 is illuminating in terms of revealing the different levels of participation open to women's groups as well as identifying the challenges and the obstacles women from the South face in inserting themselves into the global arena.

The Palestinian delegation to Beijing+5 was composed of both an official and an NGO delegation. Together they numbered approximately 20 women, 15 NGO representatives and 5 official representatives. The UN Committee on the Status of Women issued the invitations for the NGOs, inviting accredited NGOs (either observers at ECOSOC or those who attended the first Beijing conference). Also a number of international organizations and foreign governments funded Palestinian women and youth to attend the conference as individuals or part of the NGO representation, such as UNIFEM, Heinrich Boell Foundation and the Egyptian Representative Office in Palestine. The role of such organizations and governments in funding women to attend the conference should not be overlooked. It represents an important mechanism in increasing access of women's organizations with limited resources to attend the event. For example, it should be noted that in contrast to the small

showing of Palestinian women in Beijing+5, in the first Beijing conference approximately 60 Palestinian women attended. One of the factors behind the sharply diminished presence of Palestinian women may be the costly nature of attending such an event. As one Palestinian woman who attended Beijing+5 noted, "The hardest part of going was the financing. It was so expensive. The hotel was $200 per night. We received some money from the PNA and the UNDP also added to it. But in general it was very costly, especially given that the conference was located in New York City."[71] The prevalence of cosmopolitan centers such as New York, Geneva and London, which are notoriously expensive, as sites for international conferences does not bode well for women's or popular movements, as resource constraints may serve to exclude them from the event.

All Dressed Up to Go...With No Strategy

Examining the involvement of Palestinian women in this world conference, one quickly observes that there are different levels of participation open to non-governmental organizations, both inside the conference and within the preparatory and follow-up activities. For instance, one can differentiate between levels that include attending the conference, raising awareness of issues, and suggesting alternative visions by organizing a workshop – and actively working to include issues within the final document by lobbying around concrete suggestions. One determining factor influencing the level of participation NGO actors reach is their own preparedness and the extent to which they invest to formulate a strategy to direct and coordinate their actions within the sea of workshops and panels which comprises a world conference such as Beijing+5.

Based on the accounts of the Palestinian participants at the conference, it appears that certain women's groups participated substantially, acting in a concerted fashion to exert their own agenda. For example, Western lesbian women were extremely active and effective lobbyists. As one Palestinian activist explains, a reason for this may be that rather than allow themselves to be bogged down with a 'crowded agenda,' which was the case with Arab women, they focused on influencing one declaration in the final document and having their perspective included in that paragraph.[72] Similarly, Asian women, from China, Korea, etc., were very united and acted collectively, organizing a workshop that drew a full audience. In the workshop they suggested their own innovative strategies and recommendations which attracted attention and allowed them make an impact in the conference (Interview with PWWS and GUPW).

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[71] Interview Siham Succare, GUPW.

[72] Interview with Inash Masri, PWWS.

In contrast to the ability of such women's groups to successfully insert themselves into the process, many of the Palestinian NGO participants expressed disappointment with their own overall performance and involvement in the conference. Moreover, these individuals viewed their own lack of preparedness, as a group with reference to the Palestinian delegation as a whole, as one of the main factors behind their muted participation.

Reviewing the Palestinian delegation's preparations before the conference and their activities within it, one can state that at best they adopted an ad-hoc approach to the conference and engaged in limited preparations for the event. Furthermore, once there, NGO actors devised an informal and individuated approach to lobbying, targeting the workshops where they would lobby around the broad notion of the 'occupation's impact on women's development.'

There were clear signs indicating the absence of a coherent strategy on the part of the Palestinian women's groups. No meeting was held prior to New York to define an agenda in preparation for the conference. In some cases, Palestinian NGO delegates were unaware of who their fellow delegates were; some reported discovering the presence of fellow Palestinian women at the meeting quite by chance. Furthermore, the first meeting of the Palestinian delegation as a whole in New York was organized by a *state actor*, Huda Badran of the Egyptian embassy, who organized a meeting to brief the delegates on the workshops (Interview GUPW). In contrast to women's movements in other regions that organized themselves well in advance of such a conference, Palestinian and Arab women's groups face the danger of stifling their own voice and allowing themselves to be led by state actors if they are not well prepared.

Once in New York, however, representatives of Palestinian women's NGOs developed an informal strategy as a way to proceed and tackle the global forum. In general each individual attended a workshop on their own with the objective of lobbying on the effects of the occupation on women's advancement. Clearly many questions can be raised about this approach. Suffice it to point out that there is obviously a significant difference between lobbying around a broad notion such as the impact of occupation on women, which covers innumerable aspects of women lives, and identifying a link between military occupation and women's rights which translates into one or two specific sets of actions or recommendations that can be lobbied for inclusion in the final document. This is a strategy which AISHA, the Arab women's network, has used in the past, and it will be discussed in the next section below.

Overall, it is evident that there is a link between the levels of participation open to women's groups within world conferences like Beijing+5 and the degree of preparedness of the actors involved. As one Palestinian women noted, "Had the Palestinian women's NGOs met and devised a strategy early on, they could have organized a workshop on the

key issue they wanted to address" (Interview Inash Masri, PWWS).

In contrast with the first Beijing conference where the Palestinian delegation formed one single group of 60 activists led by veteran women's leader Um Khalil, in the Beijing+5 conference the Palestinian delegation was divided for the first time into official and NGO representatives. Thus Palestinian women's groups faced a situation similar to that of other Arab women organizations of not only needing to raise women's issues onto the agenda but in the process needing to confront state narratives and interests.

In addition to identifying different levels of participation available to NGO actors at world conferences, we also submit that such actors are liable to become embroiled in direct contests or implicit struggles with their own state counterparts within the conference, or in the activities organized around it, especially around conflicting narratives. Two examples, one from the Palestinian delegation and another from the Arab delegation, will illustrate this point.

First, with regard to the Arab actors, more than one observer raised the point that the participation of the NGO actors in the conference was stifled by the presence of state actors. In one clear case, it was noted the involvement of the Egyptian NGOs as well as other Egyptian representatives were overshadowed by the presence of Suzanne Mubarak, the Egyptian President's wife, who dominated the entire delegation. This is a case in which the contributions of women's groups are filtered through the mediating presence of the state actor. Further to this, criticisms were raised against some of the Arab NGO participants who were viewed as too pro-government, avoiding controversy and in many cases not adequately reflecting the reality of Arab women (Interview with Hanan Arouri, PWWS). In some cases this type of behavior may be linked to the overpowering influence and presence of state actors, such as Susan Mubarrak, that set the tone for the narrative on Arab women. At the same time there is another issue here, namely that some of the women's organizations in the Arab world are run by an old elite, bourgeoisie or old notables, a situation that may lead to such pro-state alignment. This question of narrative and conflicting NGO-state interpretations of women's reality is an important issue that not only surfaced inside the conference, but became a very salient issue in the follow up activities, for instance, the UNIFEM workshop in Amman, to be discussed below.

Second, in the case of the Palestinians a clear example of conflicting state-NGO agendas emerges. Within the Palestinian delegation, as was the case with the other participants, an NGO representative was allowed to participate in the official delegation. The purpose of this was to facilitate cooperation between the two sides and lobbying on the part of the NGOs among the official country representatives. In the Palestinian case, however, allowing one NGO to act as go-between, in this case the General Union of Palestinian Women (GUPW), did not facilitate coordination

between the two sides. One reason for this may have been what some of the NGO participants suggest was self-censorship on the part of the female official representatives. Implied was that directions came from above, within the PNA executive, that the official delegation should abstain from taking a strong position or provoking discussions in order to remain friendly with all of the delegations (Interview with Hanan Arouri, PWWS). Presumably such a command, if it existed, had its roots in state interests. It is possible that the basis of the PNA executive's reasoning was that, in line with the strategy of achieving independence, it is best for Palestinians to remain cordial with other states. Clearly here such a state directive comes at the expense of women's issues. As the Palestinian case suggests, besides actual conflicting narratives over the conditions of women in the Arab world, other agendas of NGO and official actors may clash in such conferences. Moreover, NGO actors face the added task of maneuvering around these factors as well as overcoming state tactics in order to advance their interests.

Concluding Remarks on Women's Conferences

What were the overall results of Palestinian involvement in Beijing+5? Besides bringing to the conference their own experiences as women struggling for their advancement in the context of occupation, what contributions did they make? Moreover, in addition to exposure to new ideas and international standards, what gains did they obtain by participating? The GUPW reports that the Palestinian participants succeeded in getting the occupation mentioned as an obstacle to development in four different paragraphs of the final document. While this may be so, bearing in mind the shift in paradigm from Nairobi to Beijing reviewed above, a much more pointed statement/recommendation for the final document could have been expected from the Palestinian actors, one that links women's rights to collective rights, for example. In contrast to the GUPW, other Palestinian delegates expressed disappointment with Beijing+5 and raised questions about the relevance of future participation in absence of a clear agenda and strategy.

In light of Palestinian experiences at Beijing+5, it is possible to identify a few aspects of world conferences that should be given consideration in looking at how certain actors insert themselves into this process. There are two main factors that stand out; firstly, there are clearly different levels of participation open to NGO actors. An important determinant of the substance of participation is the extent to which these actors invest in the conference preparations and arrive at a pointed agenda, with key recommendations for the document, and place this within a context of strategy on how to advance these issues. Secondly, what is often overlooked

in reports on world conferences is the relatively fluidity between an 'NGO' sphere and the 'official' state representatives. The tensions that exist between them can manifest in multiple ways and impact on the nature of participation and input of NGOs into the conference. As the examples discussed above indicate, often there can be conflicting narratives or interests at work.

Effective Forms of Participation

Having looked at the participation of Palestinian women in the Beijing+5 conference, it is central to place this experience within the broader sphere of activity within and around world conferences. Two questions emerge. What do effective forms of participation in world conferences or in the formation of an international agenda consist of? Where do Arab and Palestinian women in particular fit into these forms of activity? Through a brief discussion of two examples of transnational advocacy by women's groups within world conferences, we will identify some of the factors that contribute to successful forms of activism around world conferences and where and how Arab women position themselves within this phenomenon.

In their study on transnational advocacy networks, Keck and Sikkink identify five possible 'conditions of influence' to measure the efficacy of NGO activism. These include: issue creation and agenda setting; influence on the discursive position of state or international organization; influence on the institutional procedure of state or international organization; influence on the policy within an international organization; and influence on a policy change within a state (1998:25). Reviewing two examples of transnational networks that succeeded in meeting one or more of these conditions of influence, clear commonalities are discernible. The network was facilitated by significant financial resources and organizational skills; a broad-based coalition supported the initiative; strategies were developed in relation to particular opportunities in the form of world conferences; and finally the networks were led by Northern groups.

The first example to be reviewed is that raised by Keck and Sikkink on the women's transnational network which raised the issue of violence against women to the agenda of the international women's movement, redefining women's rights as human rights. The dynamic surrounding the rise of this network illustrates some of the factors that contribute to successful advocacy. The Nairobi conference provided a forum in which this issue first received attention and became prioritized by different women's groups. In particular, the International Network Against Violence Against Women (INAVAW) was formed after Nairobi, at the same time that networks in Asia and Latin America started to give more attention to this

issue. These diverse actors could advocate for the inclusion of this issue within the international agenda on women's advancement through the rise of a network, created during the opportunities of the world conference on human rights in Vienna in 1993 and preparations for that conference. More importantly, however, this ability to establish a network around this issue was facilitated by the role of donors, particularly the Ford Foundation, which following the Mexico conference of 1975 increasingly prioritized the issue of violence against women in its funding schemes (Keck and Sikkink, 1998: 179-182). At the same time, the role of Northern women, particularly the Global Campaign for Women Human Rights, led by women activists in the US from Rutgers University, provided a leadership role which directed the network.

The second example to be considered here is the International Women's Health Coalition (IWHC) formed to advocate for women's reproductive rights in the 1994 Cairo world conference on population and development. This example more clearly brings out the importance of financial resources as well as the organizational skills that underlie successful advocacy efforts. For instance, the IWHC organized a five day international conference in Rio for over 200 delegates from 79 countries in 1994, entitled the *Reproductive Health and Justice International Women's Health Conference for Cairo '94* (www.iwhc.org). The purpose of this conference was to define the coalition's agenda, encapsulated in a declaration on population policies, in preparation for the Cairo conference. The elaborate nature of a five-day international conference with over 200 participants is itself a clear indication of the level of professionalism and organization behind such transnational advocacy networks. Moreover, it reveals the level of preparation put into lobbying at world conferences. However, it should not be assumed that tensions inside the coalition, especially around the formation of a single position, were absent (see for example the report written on the conference in Rio (www.iwhc.org), or the discussion on Seattle for the type of divisions inside such networks). In this regard, it is also noteworthy that the participation of Arab women in this network was marginal at best.

Finally, it is apparent that against the backdrop of intensive preparations and the development of strategies to advance its agenda, the IWHC was able to achieve its objectives. At the Cairo conference itself, the coalition lobbied for the inclusion of their position on reproductive rights with a successful outcome. Commenting on the Cairo conference, the IWHC expressed satisfaction with their lobbying efforts noting that for the first time, sexual health and reproductive rights of women were central to the international agreement on population (www.iwhc.org/cairoindex.html).

Having reviewed some examples of successful activism around and within world conferences, it remains to probe the positioning of Arab women's organizations within these forms of activity. The presence of Arab

women's groups in the transnational networks discussed above was minimal if any at all. This raises questions about whether actors are being excluded from this process and if so why. What obstacles may bar groups from the South from entering such networks?

Women's International Level vs. Regional Level Networking

Surveying Palestinian women's groups' networking activities, it seems that the networking in the global level is not as popular as that on the regional level. Two observations can be made. Firstly, networking with women's organizations outside of Palestine does not appear to be a main priority of Palestinian women's groups. At the same time there may be constraints at work which inhibit this transnational activity. For instance, there is the matter of financial constraints. In general, many of the PNGOs interviewed for this research project outside of the 'mega-NGOs' expressed that they do not have the funds to partake in networking and activism with organizations outside of Palestine. Some women's NGOs participate in donor-funded networks, but once funding stops the network ends. At issue here may also be underdeveloped organizational skills. This is the view expressed by a UNIFEM representative in Palestine, who states, with reference to women's organizations: "PNGOs' networking is not as good as it should be. There is a need for it and they recognize this, but they do not have the skills for it. We try to encourage this and help build their capacity. For example we try to help Palestinian partners by improving or building their information systems."

At the same time it should be noted that in some cases women's organizations themselves do not prioritize transnational forms of activism or, more pointedly, they question its relevance. For instance, one prominent women's organization expressed the view that networking is part of 'public relations work (PR).' The director stated that when she can allocate resources to PR, networking outside of Palestine will be developed. Other women's activists have questioned the efficacy of participating in international forums, especially in the context of the persistence of the Palestinian national question and in the face of changing paradigms within women's conferences discussed above.[73]

This last statement raises an important question. How can Palestinian women's groups insert themselves into the global UN forums, when the forms through which women's advancement is now viewed and the mechanisms through which it is addressed have been redefined, away from

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[73] One female activist states: "The main issue for me is that at these forums agendas are depoliticized. To go there without there being a panel on the nature of our conflict, occupation, or refugees, is catastrophic. I think that we should boycott in such cases, as a way of making our own statement internationally on the nature of these events."

the advocacy focus of Nairobi? Undeniably, as a people still struggling for independence and sovereignty, there are limitations as well as contradictions concerning the extent to which the paradigm of women's advancement and development at Beijing applies to Palestinian women.[74] This is something all women's organizations in Palestine are confronted with when considering where and how to insert themselves into the global forum, even if they themselves are not conscious of it.

The second observation is that within the context of this ambivalence towards transnational activism, (sub)regional networking has been much more widely accepted and prioritized. This is exemplified by the popularity of AISHA, the Arab women's network. AISHA is a common reference point among Palestinian women's organizations, both those that are members in the network as well as those that are not. AISHA is an important example of *how* as well as *where* Arab and Palestinian women's groups position themselves in the global forums and vis-à-vis the development of an international agenda on women's rights.

After this discussion of the different women UN conferences, we will shift to the World Conference Against Racism which constitutes a turning point in the relationship between Northern and Southern human rights organizations.

Durban World Conference against Racism: a Moral Victory

The NGO Forum at the World Conference Against Racism in Durban (South Africa) in August 2001 can be considered a turning point in the history of the global human rights movement – not because of the victory of one of the longest-suffering victims of colonialism, nor because reparations for slavery were introduced on the international agenda, but because the role of the Southern states at this world event eclipsed the usual center stage role of the Northern and international NGOs.

Still, the Southern NGOs should not be euphoric, as their victory was more moral than strategic. Its practical dividends are very limited and rely upon the ability of the Southern NGOs to follow up and widen their discourse.

Inserting new language

The importance of the final declaration adopted by the 3,750 organizations that met in Durban is that it established new language for the

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[74] See above section on 'Nairobi to Beijing' and see the conclusion of Chapter 7 concerning the problem of different types of old and new social movements.

victims beyond the legal-bureaucratic standard behind which international NGOs have always hidden. Three developments were prominent, the first of which addresses the apartheid model of Israeli colonial politics. It is not surprising that the South African organizations strongly supported Palestinian claims, considering that representatives of the Network of South African NGOs (SANGOCO) visited Palestine during the second Intifada and had a first-hand view of developments following the Oslo negotiations process.

The Durban conference declared that: "Israel is a racist, apartheid state in which Israel's brand of apartheid as a crime against humanity has been characterized by separation and segregation, dispossession, restricted land access, denationalization, 'bantustanization' and inhumane acts." Thus, the conference program of action called for the launching of an international anti-Israel apartheid movement similar to that implemented against South African apartheid, which established a global solidarity campaign network of international civil society, United Nations bodies and agencies and business communities and of the ending of the conspiracy of silence among states, particularly the European Union and the United States.

It also called upon "the international community to impose a policy of complete and total isolation of Israel as an apartheid state, as in the case of South Africa, which means the imposition of mandatory and comprehensive sanctions and embargoes, the full cessation of all links (diplomatic, economic, social, aid, military cooperation and training) between all states and Israel." It asked that South Africa "take the lead in this policy of isolation, bearing in mind its own historical success in countering the undermining policy of 'constructive engagement' with its own past Apartheid regime." It also condemned those states supporting "the Israeli Apartheid state and its perpetration of racist crimes against humanity including ethnic cleansing, acts of genocide."

The second development that emerged could be criticized as a kind of irrational revenge taken by the Palestinians against the Western media and international NGOs' half-hearted criticism of Israeli policies. The declaration generalized the use of "acts of genocide" to refer to what Palestinians, as well as the Kurds, have experienced in their colonial conflicts. It is disputable whether Israeli policies can be described as such in general, while in particular cases, as the 1982 massacre of Palestinians in Sabra and Shatilla refugee camps, the United Nations General Assembly and the High Commissioner of Human Rights spoke of "acts of genocide."

But what is important here is that the victims set out to alarm international organizations that traditionally use strong language such as "war crime," "crime against humanity" and "genocide" only when Western countries or their interests are parties to the conflict, as in Bosnia for one. What happens in developing countries, on the other hand, has usually been described by these same organizations in banal terminology. Even so, the

declaration was quite rational and even revolutionary in that it used the words "ethnic cleansing" and "crimes against humanity" to describe the Palestinian case in such an important document.

The third development of the conference established a separation between anti-Semitism, on the one hand, and anti-Zionism and anti-Israeli policies, on the other. The Palestinians and the Arab delegates insisted on their sympathy for victims of anti-Semitism and anti-Jewish sentiment. They pointed out that the session should separate Judaism as a confession from the political program of Zionism and Israeli policies, so that it can be evident that being anti-Israeli is not conflated into anti-Jewish racism (just as being anti-apartheid is not conflated into anti-white racism).

The rapporteur of the session on anti-Semitism did not take this into account and forced an article onto the draft declaration that considered all critics of Israel as de-legitimizing the State of Israel and perpetrating a form of anti-Semitism. But when the article was proposed by the ecumenical caucus and voted on, 37 of the 39 caucuses – all except the Jewish caucus and the (abstaining) international NGOs caucus – voted to delete this item.

In this debate, the critics of Zionism as a national ideology were largely absent. In fact, many of the discussions held previously in Cairo, Geneva and Durban among the Arab caucus members, and supported by most of the Palestinian human rights organizations, opposed the mentioning of Zionism. Other organizations, such as the Arab Lawyers Union, were in favor. The compromise was that the declaration mentioned the political practices of Zionism and not Zionism as a national ideology and cultural and social thought.

An Arab participant did try to contest the declaration's usage of "Holocaust" with capital "H" on the basis that the lower case "h" includes all communities subjected to the genocidal policies of the Nazi occupation of Europe, notably the Roma and Sinti communities, and to underscore that the term ought not be used to refer to the genocide of only one ethnic group, excluding all others. However, the steering committee did not accept this proposition. It did accept the addition of a paragraph that attempted to highlight anti-Arab sentiment and Islamophobia. The final declaration noted that: "The Arabs as a Semitic people have also suffered from alternative forms of anti-Semitism, manifesting itself as anti-Arab discrimination and for those Arabs who are Muslim, also as Islamophobia."

Voices of the Victim and of the South Are Heard

Although many believe that the Intifada had a major impact on world NGOs and elicited sympathy, there are those who consider its role to be quite secondary. Three other major factors played a hand: the role of the Southern organizations in setting the agenda of the conference,

the marginalization of international human rights organizations and the importance of the voice of victims at Durban.

The Durban conference was unlike other world and international conferences such as the Social Development Summit in Copenhagen or the World Development Network in Bonn. There, Northern organizations monopolized the preparations and setting of the agenda, thus deciding who should talk, for how much time and when. Subsequently, the Southern voice was marginalized. (Even when conferences have been held in a Southern country, this hegemony has not differed substantially. When the World Conference on Women was held in Beijing in 1995, China was in isolation from the international scene and took a low profile in the preparations, satisfied with its role as a host country.)

It was highly symbolic that this conference against racism was held in a country that had suffered tremendously under apartheid. SANGOCO played a major role in preparing the conference and in the choice of the speakers and the steering committee for the NGO Forum. Furthermore, SANGOCO also organized with Islamic organizations for a joint demonstration on the third day of the conference of 40,000 people, as reported by the South African newspaper *Mercure*.

The second important factor in this conference's success was the marginalization of international organizations such as Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch. While they attempted to influence the process behind the scenes, they were grouped into the International NGOs Caucus, which had a single voice, just like any of the other caucuses. Inside this caucus there were different positions. In this respect, the International Federation of Human Rights was more sensitive to the claims of Palestinians than others. Amnesty International, on the other hand, had a very curious position. Irene Khan, its General Secretary, intervened in the last session to propose adding to the first paragraph of the declaration the following sentences: "As NGOs, we are a diverse group, representing different constituencies, with varied interests, experiences and perspectives. But we are united in our goal to denounce and combat racism and human rights violations, in whatever form and wherever they occur. The contentious and complex nature of some of the problems should not obscure the broad agreement within the NGO community on a range of issues. A global anti-racist and human rights network is slowly emerging, and no one can afford to ignore its voice." Her point was that there are different narratives from the victims and that these narratives do not express a consensus. Finally, the chair of the meeting asked the participants if they agreed with her proposal. Only very few hands were raised.

In addition, the international organizations tried to convince some Palestinian members of the NGO delegation to compromise on the language of the declaration in the name of real politik and the necessity of achieving a compromise with the Jewish caucus, despite its small minority. The position

of Human Rights Watch (HRW) was clearer. Reed Brody, Advocacy Director of the organization, declared that the use of the words "acts of genocide" to describe the Israeli policies were not precise. Finally the international organizations caucus pushed by HRW and Amnesty decided to abstain in the vote.

The third factor of the moral victory concerns the voice of the victim. Unlike other world conferences, participants were not only those accredited by the United Nations, which are large NGOs but also grassroots voluntary organizations. At Durban, about 3,750 organizations participated, most of them from Southern countries. These were represented in the 40,000 demonstrators in the streets of Durban who included South African landless people, anti-privatization activists and, above all, those against apartheid in Israel. The demonstration closed by delivering to the South African President and General Secretary of the United Nations a memorandum of claims. From discussion with the participants, it was clear that this action came largely from grassroots organizations and not from elitist ones. It is not anecdotal to remark that only the Palestinian and Jewish caucuses had members who wore ties. Most participants bore T-shirts inscribed with their cause.

The Durban conference marks a turning point in the history of the global human rights movement. The shift is not between the classic diplomatic actors and NGO actors, but towards actors who are victims themselves. The victory is hence a moral victory, which was not reflected in the conference resolution, as international organizations had already set out to marginalize the NGO declaration. United Nations Human Rights Commissioner Mary Robinson even initially refused to receive the declaration from the NGOs, describing it as "rude."

The Palestinian organizations can learn from this event that they should have more solidarity with other victims. For example, very few Palestinians participated in the demonstrations and workshops for the Dalits, Kurds and Romas. The cultural minorities and groups in the Arab world such as the Amazigh people (referred to by others as Berbers) have yet to gain the attention of Arab human rights organizations. It may be the problem here that the causes are in juxtaposition to one another rather than reinforced through thematic meetings. Why is there no anti-colonial theme instead of a Palestinian theme, a Kurdish one and another for the Sahrawi people? In any case, the Palestinian delegation did not participate in the thematic caucuses, resulting in very little influence. It may help them in the future to be global and humanistic and not local and parochial in their discourse.

Despite that criticism, one must say that this experience was a rich one for all the Southern organizations, one that emphasized their solidarity and the importance of mobilizing the grassroots.

6.4. Regional Networks

The literature indicates reasons to be wary of donor-NGO cooperation. It is not just that donors have their own agenda and operate within a state paradigm that conflicts with NGO goals, but in cases of multilateral agencies, such as the World Bank, there are well established organizational practices which are difficult to change. Examining the World Bank's participation agenda for NGOs, Miller-Adams identifies some of the problems of donor-NGO collaboration. Concerning the objectives behind the Bank's drive to increase its cooperation with NGOs, she argues that NGOs were given greater inclusion in the Bank's work following sharp criticisms by NGOs against Structural Adjustment Program's social impact on developing countries and problems with the effectiveness of implementation of Bank projects. Moreover, she suggests a strategic policy of co-optation via inclusion behind the World Bank's policy of providing increased room for NGO participation. At the practical level, Miller-Adams identifies that NGO participation remains 'toothless,' in that it has not been followed by high level policy changes to back it up (such as the establishment of a department to monitor NGO participation) (1999: 92). Nelson (1995) also identifies the problems of World Bank-NGO cooperation, factors such as the Bank's organizational culture, the limited incorporation of NGOs in project design, and the emphasis on the service delivery role of NGOs over their advocacy functions. Nelson points out that after two decades of NGO participation in the World Bank's work, the resilience of the Bank's organizational features and development paradigm are clearly evident, despite NGO input.

From Nelson and Adam's investigation of the World Bank, it is clear that donor-NGO collaboration can be quite problematic. However, donor-encouraged networks provide the opportunity to look at this issue in a new light. In what follows, we will review three cases of regional networks, with examples taken from the World Bank and the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership between Arab and European countries. Three different outcomes are evident. Firstly, the accesses to financial, technical assistance and new information may create an opportunity for NGOs to undertake new types of activities and advocacy work. Secondly, the agency of SNGO actors is always a factor in the encounter with externally promoted networks. The way NGOs may shift the stakes of the network, reworking the explicit or implicit objectives inherent within the definition of the network, is evident; for instance, this is observable within the Euro-Mediterranean initiatives which facilitate Arab cooperation that is premised on the inclusion of Israel. Finally, the reverse scenario is also possible, namely that SNGOs succumb to the agenda of the network. For example, the Mediterranean Development Forum initiated by the World

Bank illustrates how concepts and knowledge which legitimize the Bank's liberal economic agenda and the neoliberal paradigm are disseminated and legitimized within the Arab region and among its intellectuals.

The Mediterranean Development Forum – MDF 3

The Mediterranean Development Forum (MDF) is a partnership of Middle Eastern and North African think tanks, organized mainly by the World Bank, to support development research and policy initiatives. Its aim is to operate "by increasing research capacity, creating and maintaining regional networks, encouraging debate, exploring new ideas, influencing policy and setting agendas." From the beginning, MDF has sought to co-operate with the "private sector, governments, development agencies and civil society, including the media, to improve economic and social progress in the MENA region."

As will be seen in the discussion of the Arab Network for NGOs (Shabaka)), inter-Arab forums facilitating dialogue and debate, which include non-state actors, are important mechanisms that have been slow to develop in the region. Initiated by the World Bank, the MDF is interesting in two respects: Firstly, reflective of the Bank's emphasis on cooperation between state and non-state actors, the MDF network brings together a think-tank composed of NGOs, private sector, media and state actors. On the other hand, this network is important in that it illustrates the process of dissemination of new ideas and concepts in the Arab region, tropes that support the reasserted market orthodoxy and the new envisioned model of state-market-society relations.

While the first MDF conference in 1997 had an emblematic slogan "Knowledge and Skills for Development in the Information Age," the second MDF in 1998 discussed "Participation and Development: Empowerment and Effective Policymaking in the MENA Region." The theme of the third three-day conference, held in Cairo during March 2000, which brought together 700 development practitioners and experts from across the MENA region, was "Voices for Change, Partners for Prosperity." At the MDF3 there were seven main workshop themes, each of which had six sessions over the three days. The themes were: global trade and regionalism; institutional reforms and sustainable development; "what makes your firm internationally competitive?"; civil society; knowledge and development; financing development; partners for employment creation; and social protection.

The MDF3 workshop on civil society, which we observed, was organized by Saad Eddin Ibrahim of the Ibn Khaldoun Center in Cairo. In the workshop, Ibrahim presented a definition of civil society which reflected the terms of reference and the functional role attributed to

this concept within the global agenda. He noted that the agenda's announcement of the revival of civil society has coincided with the resurgence of classical liberal economics and new development paradigms. As he stated, civil society is, "the self-initiating and self-regulating associations that operate between the household and the state" and which traditionally "promote democracy, accountability, transparency, sound governance, development and the provision of services." Civil society, he believes, is a catalyst for development and a watchdog for the people, "a kind of cushion between the despotic, powerful state and ruthless, greedy business."

For civil society to thrive requires the removal of restrictions on association and freedom of expression. It means a change of attitude by governments, which have "no trust in the popular genius for finding solutions." This workshop concentrated on practical concerns such as how to empower civil society and overcome obstacles to it playing a leading role in development. However, the concept of civil society adopted by the session in the MDF3 did not take into account the fact that this civil society is a terrain mined by "unequal relations of power wherein some actors can gain greater access to power, as well as differential access to material, cultural, and political resources than others" (Alvarez et al., 1998: 18).

Among the subjects that were dealt with in detail during this workshop were: the creation of an action plan for improving the legal framework of NGOs; how women's organizations can be more successful, using case studies on micro-credit in Tunisia and citizenship in Egypt; increasing the impact of civil society on policy-making; and the contentious issue of foreign funding of civil society organizations. There was also a debate about the role of the media in covering civil society and whether the media is part of civil society. It was clear from the discussion and the papers presented that the workshop approached the question of civil society in the region in terms of success stories like "the growth of Arab human rights organizations and the involvement of civil society organizations in Cairo in converting Islamic extremists into successful small entrepreneurs."

In the other workshops, the neo-liberal economic agenda was very clear, such as the workshop on global trade and regionalism. The aim of this workshop, organized by the Cairo-based Economic Research Forum for the Arab countries, Iran and Turkey, was to "ensure that the MENA countries are able to negotiate tough deals in the various trade negotiations that are underway, (WTO, the European Union Association Agreements and the Arab Free Trade Agreement)." A series of six sessions on trade liberalization issues was held with an up-to-the-minute briefing on the current status of all of these trade agreements – including advice on how to gain the most out of the negotiations, in light of new research into past failures and successes. There was discussion of the timely issue of global

standards, in such fields as working hours and environmental protection. The impact of freer trade on manufacturing, agriculture, textiles and petrochemicals was examined in detail. What are the main obstacles to increasing MENA countries' exports? What are the implications for jobs and output if domestic markets are opened? Can international trade agreements be used to improve policies towards the rural economy?

In the opening session of the MDF3, one of the speakers underlined that this meeting will bring out many of the latest ideas on balanced approaches to development that incorporate the social dimension and its concern with health, education and freedom of expression, with an emphasis on economic progress. In a similar manner, during one session a paper was presented by a World Bank consultant arguing that economic growth cannot reduce the number of poor and that the gap between the disadvantaged and the wealthy could increase. This paper is in harmony with the new catchphrase of the World Bank about 'qualified growth' or growth with equity instead of pure growth. This paper is reminiscent of similar publications of two decades ago, often by Indian economists. Along with the argument of the academic production of such publications one should ask: why should actors attend such a conference, to hear a theory proven over a decade ago?

In fact it is quite clear that what is important here is not knowledge as such, but a legitimization of knowledge by the experts from international organizations. For example, qualified growth becomes at the same time *signifiant* and *signifié*. In this sense, the MDF seems to function as a think tank for harmonizing vocabulary about development, progress, liberalization, and so on among the actors. This 'new' knowledge empowers itself through a process of *objectification* in elegant golden brochures, books, five-star hotel conferences, etc., and by *institutionalization* in prominent organizations like the World Bank and UNDP.

World Bank experts cannot use 'political' vocabulary such as democracy and instead draw on the more nuanced term of good governance which exhorts the state to cooperate with non-state actors (NGOs and private sector), creating synergy and equilibrium between these actors. Implicit in the good governance discourse is the emphasis on the equilibrium of stakeholders that excludes the possibility of strong street demonstrations by some actors (such as unions), which make this concept problematic. However, what is more problematic is when the language of good governance also becomes the vocabulary of the scholarly community and is accepted without critical inspection.

Overall, the practical implication of the MDF is that it marginalizes critical thinking. This is a subtle process, advanced not by direct pressure such as exclusion or stifling countervailing opinions; rather it is the end result of the hegemonic consensus, which develops around new legitimized concepts and knowledge. It is true that some voices emerged during the

conference that challenged neoliberal premises, but such perspectives were marginal. Moreover, in the end, a few dissident voices reinforce the legitimacy of the dominant paradigms by showing that a sort of pluralism exists. Many of the papers presented illustrate that little attention is devoted to re-thinking the categories and concepts used.

The Euro-Mediterranean Partnership: Barcelona Process

The Euro-Mediterranean Agreement that was signed between Arab and European countries has given rise to many cooperation initiatives, including at the level of non-state actors. In particular, the Barcelona process was instated in 1995. This scheme represents the first attempt to put in place mechanisms on a regional scale on the basis of a common agreed upon international instrument, in order to "ensure the democratic development in the Euro-Mediterranean region and effective protection of human rights." The fact that the impetus for the Barcelona process and the idea came from Europe, played a role in the success of the initiative, as it resolved both the problem of the polarization of the Arab world and the question of leadership. Successful in its own right, in turn the Barcelona process gave rise to different types of networks.

Of the many projects that developed out of the initial Barcelona process, the process for civil society is a network that was established for NGOs; state actors are not represented in this network, participation is voluntary and it is approved in accordance with the platform designed by the network. Despite the apparent inclusiveness of the network, the selection process is not always unproblematic. Often rivalries enter into the selection process, creating forms of exclusion.

Consider the example of the network developed in the human rights field. In 1997 the Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network (EMHRN) was founded in response to the Barcelona Declaration. The network is located in Copenhagen and delivers regular reports, disseminating current information on human rights conditions in the area. The network will be reviewed below through a focus on its Euro-Med Civil Forum. For now it is important to note the case of the Palestinian human rights organization, Mandela Institute for political prisoners. Mandela was excluded from the Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network. The official reason given was that Mandela is not considered an NGO in accordance with the platform designed by the network. However, it is known that in reality there is a rivalry between some Palestinian leaders of the network and this NGO, and the former played a role in the latter's exclusion. Therefore this shows how the idea of the network must be problematized and analyzed and not understood in simplistic or idealized terms. As with NGOs, the network is also a site which reflects and reproduces within it the inequalities and power struggles at large.

Through the Barcelona process other networks were created like the Med-Media Jemstone Network (Jemstone). Jemstone is the biggest of Europe's Med-Media projects. Founded in 1997, it was established to increase contacts and understanding between Europe and the Mediterranean Partner Countries (MPC's).[75]

Barcelona Process and reviving the Arab Human Rights Network: the Rabat Conference on the Rights of Palestinian Refugees

The Arab Human Rights Network is a network that was formed by the NGOs in the Arab region prior to the Barcelona process. Interestingly, the Arab Human Rights Network had been inactive for a long time, and the meetings organized through the Barcelona process played an important part in reactivating this network. Thus ironically what had been designed to promote an Arab-Israeli encounter became the opportunity for the advancement of an Arab agenda. Here, the agency of SNGOs was important and enabled pre-conceived agendas to be overturned and reworked in practice. In this case, the activation of the Arab Human Rights Network, within the context of the Euro-Med initiatives, enabled the Arab side to become a cohesive force within the network and able to redirect its focus. The Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network also played a part in the activation of the Arab network by supporting the network with funding. Let us take the Rabat Conference on the Rights of Palestinian Refugees as an example.

The Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies (CIHRS), in cooperation with the Moroccan Organization for Human Rights and the Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network, and with the participation of experts and representatives of Arab and international human rights organizations, organized the Conference on the Future of the Palestinian Refugees under the Current Political Settlement/the Third International Conference of the Human Rights Movement in the Arab World from February 10-12, 2001, in Rabat, Morocco. The content of this very successful conference was discussed above in the section on the human rights agenda (See Chapter 3). Here, it is simply relevant to highlight the significance of the actors from the South and their capacity to divert and even change the stakes that have been pre-designed by the Northern partner. While the networking initiatives that developed out of the Euro-Mediterranean want to foster a relationship between the Arab and

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[75] Since the suspension of Med-Media in late 1995, Jemstone has been Europe's only media project operating in the Eastern Mediterranean, most recently under a special contract running from November 1997 to January 1999. During this contract Jemstone organized 18 separate events ranging from workshops on TV set-design to courses for senior managers running training departments. Jemstone works with experienced journalists, media professionals and managers to improve skills and create supportive networks. Jemstone's main activities come under several headings: general journalism skills; specialist journalism, including business and economics; master classes in specific craft-skills; Euro-Med Round Tables; media management, including audience and readership research; the development of in-house training capacities; and network maintenance and development.

Israeli NGOs, the Arab actors who had strong weight in this network used it to reinforce the inter-Arab relationship. The conference in Rabat is a clear example of this. Without delving into the specifics of the conference which were discussed in the above chapter, it is simply relevant to note the agenda of the conference which was organized to consider the future of Palestinian refugees. Out of this conference a strong statement emerged supporting the right of the Palestinian refugees, reflecting the cohesiveness of the Arab actors within the network.

The Euro-Med Civil Forum: the Human Rights Forum at Stuttgart

As part of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership Agreement, summits are regularly held providing the occasion for the partner governments to "monitor the application of the Declaration and define actions enabling the objectives of the partnership to be achieved" (c.f. Barcelona Declaration). Previous summits have been held in Barcelona, November 1995; in Malta, April 1997; in Stuttgart, April 1999; and in Marseille, November 2000. In addition, an ad hoc meeting took place in Palermo, June 1998; and a 'think-tank meeting' took place in Lisbon, May 2000. Since Barcelona 1995, civil society gatherings have been organized in relation to the summits. They represent an opportunity for civil society representatives to meet and present their recommendations to the governments of the region.

Let us take the example of the Conference held in Stuttgart, in particular the human rights civil forum, which we monitored closely. The official Conference of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership in Stuttgart in April 1999 was held with parallel civil forums organized alongside it in order to discuss various problems concerning the Mediterranean region. The civil forums covered the following areas: human rights and citizenship in the Mediterranean, unions, and journalism. The parallel conference on Human Rights and Citizenship in the Mediterranean was organized by the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung in cooperation with the Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network and the Forum des Citoyens de la Méditerranée. This conference was the first in which there was a major presence of independent human rights organizations during a Civil Forum. In addition, it was the first time an official encounter was organized between government representatives of the partner countries and the representatives of organizations present in Stuttgart. Theoretically the multilateral approach of the Barcelona process places human rights at the center of the Euro-Mediterranean partnership. Article 2 of the Association Agreements, which govern the bilateral relations between the European Union and its Mediterranean partners, reiterates this priority.[76]

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[76] Article 2, read jointly with clauses of suspension or cessation of the Association Agreements. In theory, one party suspends or ends the execution following a serious violation of human rights.

Reviewing the network around the human rights civil forum, it is clear that it created an opportunity for NGO action and advocacy work, especially since an encounter with the state actors of the area was organized. At the same time one notes the structural issues associated with this sort of networking, in particular, the role of the organizer of the conference in mediating the outcome of the networks activities, both in terms of selecting the participants of the network and in monitoring the final statement produced by the network. In general, however, this type of networking, which brings together actors from the North and the South, is conceived differently from other forms of North-South exchanges. For some of the participants, this network is not marked by the hegemony of the North as in other encounters. Ilan Halevi, who participated in the Palestinian delegation (as vice-President of the Forum des Citoyens de la Méditerranée), found the network to be an improvement over the Human Rights Committee of the International Socialists. This committee, which is controlled by the Northern countries, tends to behave as if giving lessons to the Southern countries. While the representatives of Southern countries in turn consider that there are systematic violations of social and economic human rights in the North, and in the South by the North, in contrast, the Euro-Med forum was designed in a manner to temper this position.

The participants of the Stuttgart civil forum on human rights[77] discussed the issue of Israeli violations of the Geneva Conventions in the Palestinian Territories and the preparatory measures that had been taken to convene the Conference of the High Contracting Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention. A position paper launching the International Campaign for the Implementation of the Convention was signed by fifty-one NGOs (including B'tselem, an Israeli human rights organization). These regional and international organizations agreed to participate in the campaign by raising awareness of the issue in the countries where they operate and by lobbying their governments to ensure that the conference would convene on the specified date and under the agenda defined by the UNGA. In this regard, it is evident that the forum opened up a new advocacy initiative and facilitated cooperation and a transnational campaign. The advantage of this type of network for SNGOs and NGO actors in general is clear. Yet more consideration needs to be paid to the structural aspects of this type of networking and the type of obstacles which are inevitably associated with advocacy initiated by NGOs inside the network.

It is clear that the conference on Human Rights was an interesting and successful one due to the well established network (Euro-

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[77] 55 Arab and European human rights organizations attended the meeting.

Mediterranean Human Rights Network) that prepared the conference. How does this network function?

Working as a network, one has to admit that the participants were selected thanks to the personal contacts of network members. This means that those invited belonged to the circles of these members; thus, a French organizer led to the over-presentation of Franco-North African associations at the expense of Italy and Spain (which were marginalized). England was, in any event, absent because of its marginal interest to the Mediterranean area. In line with the aim of integrating Israel in this region, its civil society was represented by four human rights associations and an intellectual. Yet, it is also evident that these associations are known for their opposition to the violation of human rights in the Occupied Territories. Therefore the selection of these Israeli organizations does not reflect a national representation designed by the Israeli government but the choice of the Euro-Mediterranean Network. Clearly this is a significant point which again illustrates the permeability of the explicit/implicit aims of networking that is initiated parallel to state-sponsored agreements such as the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership.

In contrast to this, however, in the Tunisian case there was pressure exerted against the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung to include three GNGOs' (Governmental Non-Governmental Organizations) representatives. These official organizations were extremely disturbing during the meeting, as they tried to hinder the other Tunisian associations based in Europe from discussing human rights violations in Tunisia. Some of the organizations included solidarity groups such as Collectif Palestine which is a federation representing all of the French organizations working in Palestine. Isabel Avron, the president of Collectif Palestine, played a chief role pushing the recommendations to denounce Israel. Other organizations such as Amnesty International were more of an international organization than solidarity group. It was clear that Amnesty did not want to take a 'radical' position.

Overall it is clear that the selection process undertaken by the Network enabled fertile discussion during the meeting, since common ground was found before the conference. This reinforces and supports effective discussion of the final statement and recommendations directed toward the official meeting.

Discussion of the Final Statement

Concerning the Palestinian issue, the final statement developed by the forum included a strong section concerning the Arab-Israeli conflict:

It must be realized today that neither the peace process nor the respect of human rights have progressed in the region. In fact, quite

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the opposite is true. The peace process in the Middle East, the region at the center of this discussion, has been ruined by the policies of the current Israeli government which has placed the region under dangerous pressure and violates the agreements signed since Oslo for the interim period, which will end in a few days.

We see that the dead end in the Israeli-Arab and Israeli-Palestinian peace process is slowing down the entire process of the Barcelona partnership. In this respect, the conference participants call upon the European Union:

- to apply pressure on Israel to implement the agreements made since Oslo with the Palestinians.
- to intervene through all means to ensure that Israel retreats from the occupied Palestinian territories, Golan and South Lebanon, the immediate cessation of colonization, particularly in Jerusalem. The status of this city must be the subject of negotiation.
- to commit itself to the recognition of the Palestinian state once it has been proclaimed and to help this state establish its independence as soon as possible and to help it exercise its full sovereignty."

Also the meeting adopted a position paper prepared by the Palestinian Human Rights Center (PHRC) on the Fourth Geneva Convention, which addresses the High Contracting Parties to the convention, and participants committed themselves to work for the implementation of the paper in spirit and letter.

Moreover, the meeting adopted a decision asking the European Commission to call on the European countries, in accordance with the second paragraph of the partnership agreement, to freeze the European-Israeli partnership due to Israel's ongoing violations of Palestinian human rights. Also, a working group was formed to follow up on Palestinian human rights conditions.

Overall, the final statement that was produced was quite good, and advocacy oriented, yet the first draft had been stronger since it requested the European Union to stop the Association agreement between the European Union and Israel until Israel complies with the Wye River Accord and halts all settlements. However this proposition was rejected by the representative from Amnesty International and by the Israeli associations. It was surprising to find that four of the five Israelis had lunch together before the statement discussion in order to take a joint position against the proposed position, although the large divergence between them was very clear during the conference.

While the role of the Israeli organizations in preventing an endorsement

of the more aggressive statement is clear, it should also be made known that the organizers of the conference also intervened to prevent the first draft from being finalized. The Friedrich Ebert Stiftung representative, who until the preparation of the first draft had acted as an observer, interjected for the first time that as a founder he could not accept such a statement. Although the majority of participants were in fact in favor of the first draft, the final pronouncement was reduced to a statement requesting pressure against Israel. This shows that the Southern NGOs have a glass-ceiling in their capacity to change policies in an international conference. More than this, however, it also illustrates the need to problematize the role of the organizer and consider their role as a mediator that can affect the final outcome of the action produced through the network.

Despite this, the importance of the Civil Forum remains apparent, especially since the position adopted by the NGOs was much clearer than that of the official meeting of the foreign ministers. To compare, look at the following statement regarding the peace process: "Many Ministers welcomed the recent declaration of the Berlin European Council. Ministers encouraged the European Union to continue increasing its role in support of the Middle East Peace Process." As the term 'many' indicates, this statement did not reflect a consensus among the ministers.

Déjà-vu?

As part of the Civil Forum events, annual conferences are organized. While they are certainly interesting events, the mechanism used for choosing participants invariably results in almost the same people attending these civil society festivals with the same discussions repeated without progress. This feeling of déjà-vu, that one encounters the same actors in Stuttgart as in Marseille, has been expressed by different observers (Jünemann, 2000).

While a speaker in the first conference in Barcelona called on civil society to seize the opportunity and activate itself, five years later it seems social actors are still marginalized in consequential areas of decision-making such as migration and the peace process. Moreover, the national French media did not even cover the Marseille civil forum event, and it received the attention of only a few of the local newspapers. In contrast to this, the Ministerial meeting of the Euro-Mediterranean states was extensively reported and covered by French TV and radio. This demonstrates that the media continues to have strong expectations from the classical diplomatic actors: the state. The same can be said about Europe in general: a Finish journalist who attended the same conference the next year at Marseille was not able to convince Finish newspapers to publish an article that she wrote about this event. To marginalize the Euro-Mediterranean Forum in Brussels in the following year (March 2001), the European Union and the European

government did not send any official to the event.

Two important questions surround the efficacy of these civil forums as a type of network that is linked to state-sponsored agreements. Firstly, it is important to remember that the NGOs that participate in the Euro-Med civil forums represent a small portion of the 'civil society' organizations (150 organizations represent all of the Euro-Mediterranean countries), and many of these organizations do not necessarily have a relationship with the grassroots. One could raise the objection that the advantage of NGO networking lies in its ability to mobilize people in the street, for example, as in Seattle rather than meetings to organize strategies for advocacy initiatives in the prestigious halls of 5-star hotels. In Marseille, a meeting and demonstration was held at the same time of the civil forum meeting. For these alternative organizers, the other organizations of the Barcelona process are instrumentalized by the government and are even not able to play their role as watchdogs.

Finally, the Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network seems to be a lively and active network promoting cooperation between the organizations of both South and North. However, from the South some voices emerged during the Stuttgart and Marseille meeting, such as Sa'eda Kilani from Jordan, who wondered if the Barcelona Declaration is anything more than ink on the paper (European Commission, 2000). She argued that during the period of 1995-1999, violations of basic principles of freedom of expression increased and restrictions on the press, media and freedom of thought more than doubled in many countries in the Euro-Mediterranean area during these years, while the European partners failed to take action or move to condemn these violations.

After presenting these three cases of regional level of networking, we can say that the dynamic inside of this level is more relevant than that of the international level, and the capacity of the Southern actors to negotiate agenda-setting and alliance building with Northern NGOs (and states eventually)in order to participate in decision making is more important. However, the impact is still limited, even very limited. The Euro-Mediterranean forum was more and more institutionalized and manipulated by the states. With the fading of the Barcelona process and its incapacity to link the anti-war movement and the anti-globalization movement, in 2003 we witnessed the emergence of the Social Forum, in Porte Allegro, and its thematic forums in Florence, in Cairo, etc. Finally, unions, NGOs, grassroots organizations and, importantly, the political parties were represented. In Florence, it was very important to see numerous Palestinian flags not in a specific demonstration (as was the case in the Euro-Mediterranean Forum in Marseille in November 2001) but dispersed in all sections of the demonstration, especially with the European and Italian workers' unions.

Below we will see that the Arab regional networks (such as the Arab

Network of NGOs, Aisha and Bunian) reveals the importance of the (sub)regional level as a site at which Arab actors are working to define their own perspective on issues raised at the global level, as well as being a site from which they may engage with global agendas and forums. The issue is not only related to the level of networking but to the agenda pushed by this networking. A discussion of AISHA below will illustrate these points in greater depth. It will be illustrated that AISHA addresses the problems arising out of the shift from Nairobi to Beijing for Palestinian and Arab women. As will be shown, AISHA pointedly raises the inconsistency and the contradictions that emerge out of the shift to a state-centered paradigm at UN conferences, from the perspective of marginalized cases such as the Palestinians.

6.5. Sub-Regional Networks: the Arab level

Examining the Arab region, it is clear that NGOs have been slow to form networks. At the same time, the efforts of state actors to prohibit networking should be acknowledged. In the fall of 1996 a committee of the Arab League, the Ministry of Interior Committee, met in Tunis to discuss the national security concerns that NGOs, especially human rights organizations, pose to Arab states. Later, it was revealed that Arab governments had bilaterally contacted Western countries funding NGOs, requesting them to halt their support to these organizations (Pitner, 2000: 34). In Tunis the government created NGO fronts which it sends to conferences, including international conferences, to report on the activities of Tunisian NGOs (Pitner, 2000: 35).

Although the Arab NGO leaders acknowledge the importance of networking in its vital role in the region, generating new debates, challenging perceptions and creating a forum for inter-Arab issues, the constraining influence of state actors and the limited resources of Arab NGOs inhibit the emergence of strong Arab advocacy networks. Of the existing Arab NGO networks, some have been created by Arab NGOs and others initiated by foreign donors.

In this section we will present three Arab networks: two formed by NGOs, AISHA, the Arab Women's Network, and Shabaka (the Arab Network for NGOs), and the third network, Bunian, a regional project for NGOs initiated by a foreign donor. An inspection of these networks is relevant in three respects. Firstly, these networks, especially AISHA, show the fruitful role NGO networks can play in the region, especially in terms of promoting new perspectives on issues. Secondly, the material to be presented questions basic conceptualizations of transnational networking, which assume this activity follows a single direction, from the local(s) to the global. In fact, networking can unfold out of a dialectical process.

International agendas may generate responses in the form of regional networking initiatives, which in turn may spawn different forms of activism, including a re-engagement with the global agenda. Finally, by considering the opportunity donor-supporting networking initiatives create for NGOs, assumptions of a dichotomous relationship between donor and NGO agendas are challenged.

AISHA, an Arab Women's Network

AISHA, formally titled the *Arab Women's Forum,* was established in 1991 by Arab women activists. Its objectives include: to establish a means of communication between Arab women's groups; to increase the awareness of the conditions affecting Arab women's lives; to develop an Arab women's rights discourse; and to form pressure groups to promote women's rights and the implementation of international conventions on women's rights. As an example of Arab women's activism in an era of transnational networking, AISHA raises two central points. Firstly, it illustrates the role of subjective factors in strengthening the cohesion of a network. In this regard, two things stand out as important here. Firstly, AISHA operates largely on an informal basis. By this one means that there is no actual space or office set up to run the network nor is there funding for the regular running of the network. AISHA is maintained through the voluntary contributions and input of its members. However, donor funding is occasionally relied upon for events and conferences. A second interesting aspect of AISHA is the relative absence of new forms of information technology linking the members. Many of the members do not have internet websites, many also seem not to have email addresses. This is a striking point, since it suggests that the availability of information technologies is not a determining factor in the formation of a network. Moreover, in the case of AISHA, the members seem to be bound by a sense of solidarity developed in relation to common obstacles they face as Arab women. The network is often able to carry out effective action because of their shared ideology and experience working together, according to one member.

Secondly, the more relevant aspect of AISHA is the manner in which it appears to be moving towards a platform from which Arab women can develop their own perspective on women's issues and can initiate their own response to the framing of women's issues at the global level. This observation is based on the unique nature of issues addressed at a recent conference organized under the auspices of AISHA. At this conference, a critique of the global paradigm on women's rights was launched from the perspective of Arab women. It should be stated, however, that it is clearly too soon to tell whether AISHA will succeed in this mission and whether other forms of regional activism are also possible. This notwithstanding, a brief

review of the themes of the conference and its implications are in order.

In November 1999, a conference titled *The Exclusion of Women in the Arab World from the Effective Protection and Benefit of International Human Rights Law* was held in Lebanon under the auspices of AISHA. The conference focused on two matters: why the international human rights system does not effectively protect Arab women and the strategies that can be developed to address this. From the outset it is essential to outline the dynamic, that this conference represents a regional response to the international agenda on women's rights. In the words of the organizer, it was at the Beijing world conference in 1995, and the exposure to a new global agenda on women's empowerment, that evoked the need to raise the issue of the exclusion of women from the protection of international human rights law (www.nisaa.org/conference/index.htm). In this regard the event is significant in two respects. On the one hand, by raising this issue within the regional context, AISHA creates a forum for Arab women to develop a position on the international women's rights agenda. This in turn opens up the possibility of tackling it at the global level or in its regional manifestations. On the other hand, regardless of whether the organizers were conscious of it or not, by raising this issue AISHA has voiced an Arab response to the shift in the paradigm in women's UN conferences from Nairobi to Beijing.

A paper was made available prior to the conference that articulates the problem at hand. The paper, entitled *The International System of Women's Human Rights Protection: Situations of Exclusion,* was coordinated by the Palestinian Women's Centre for Legal Aid and Counseling and presented at the Beijing world conference in 1995. (The paper can be viewed at www.nisaa.org/conference/beijing.htm). As indicated in our analysis of Nairobi and Beijing above, the movement from the advocacy agenda of Nairobi to the paradigm that emerged at Beijing was accompanied by an endorsement of state-sponsored conflict resolution methods and international human rights law. One aspect of this is that forms of aggression such as belligerent occupation are reframed in the language of individual human rights. The other dimension of this is that women's rights are equated with human rights.

The paper referred to above, which defined the theme of the conference, tackles this shift by identifying the gaps that surface as well as the forms of exclusion created when the international women's rights agenda is defined in this manner. The paper exposes cases of women, such as Palestinian women who are excluded from the protection of international human rights law. As the paper explains, there are three forms of exclusion that prevent women from benefiting from the protection of the international human rights system. First, the governing authority is not bound by nor subject to scrutiny under the international instruments created to protect women's rights (i.e., states that have either not ratified

the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) or have ratified it with debilitating reservations; non-state entities which cannot accede to the CEDAW; occupying powers). Second, the system of international law does not oblige their governing authority to respect the civil and political rights of a population under its control (i.e., situations of belligerent occupation; states of national emergency). Finally, the international community tolerates the extensive denial of fundamental civil and political rights by governments bound under international law to respect them. (www.nisaa.org/conference/beijing.htm, 1995:3)

On the basis of these forms of exclusion, the authors warn that the approach to women's empowerment through the mechanisms of human rights law, while useful and important: "...risk remaining vexingly academic to an important part of the world's women that are excluded from the operation of the relevant international treaty instruments, from participation in national political life pursuant to the exercise of self-determination, or from the exercise of fundamental civil and political rights within their respective nation-states" (ibid.: 6).

In this regard, this paper raises the contradictions and the limitations of the reformulation of women's advancement through the prism of human rights following Beijing, as pertaining to marginalized women such as the Palestinians and others. At issue here are the inconsistencies and gaps that arise when an advocacy agenda is replaced by a paradigm which supports state rules of the game, and elides the power relations, forms of aggression and structural inequalities that affect women's lives. This paper raises some interesting points, which reinforce our observations about the shift from Nairobi to Beijing, about the problems that exist in terms of the effectiveness of the international human rights system in obliging states to enforce women's human rights. Moreover, the centrality of the state within the international human rights system is acknowledged. "The state remains the primary actor, playing a decisive role in the making, interpreting, and enforcing of international law, even when the function of the law is to determine individual human rights" (ibid., p. 23). Thus, in line with our observation, the role of international human rights instruments in supporting state-defined rules of the game should not be disregarded.

Overall, this paper and the broader initiative behind it is illustrative of the way in which AISHA and Arab women are critically engaging with the global agenda on women's empowerment and identifying its deficiencies insofar as it neglects circumstances of women such as the Palestinians. However, as our own review of the shift over time in UN women's summits has revealed, the shortcomings raised by Arab women are in fact quite deep and illuminate the contradiction underlying the movement from the advocacy orientation of Nairobi to the paradigm that emerges out of Beijing.

In conclusion, this conference and in particular this paper shows how

AISHA and how Arab and Palestinian women in general are positioning themselves in relation to global forums. It shows the importance of the regional level as a site where agendas are defined and effective forms of action taken, although one can raise questions regarding the challenge Arab women might face in raising this type of agenda to the international level. For example, this issue was presented at Beijing; what response did it generate? Finally one notes both the creativity and ingenuity displayed by AISHA and Arab women's groups in locating the implications of the shift from Nairobi to Beijing from the perspective of Arab women and addressing this issue in a cogent manner. If AISHA continues this way, it may emerge as a new gateway for Arab women into the global level of activities and agenda setting.

Arab Network for NGOs (Shabaka)

Shabaka is a Cairo-based Arab Network for NGOs and a legal entity operating in the field of development, which undertakes its own projects in the region. There is also another Arab network for developmental NGOs based in Lebanon, but on a smaller level. There is a quasi-total absence of working in the level of specific sectors (health, education, etc.). Founded in 1997, the Shabaka aim is to "promote and activate the role of the work of civil society by collaborating with its NGOs and with similar Arab, regional and international institutions contributing in the achievement of sustainable development in the Arab nation." The fact that the President of the Board of Trustees of this network is Prince Talal Ben Abdul Aziz of Saudi Arabia can be considered both a strong and weak point. On the one hand, this represents a weakness because many leftist NGOs fear instrumentalisation of the Arab NGO Network by a Saudi prince, and for this reason many of them have refused to become members of this network. On the other hand, the strengths are also apparent, as Talal Ben Abdul Aziz is known to be a very enlightened prince who has funded interesting projects in the past, for example, the Arab Council for Childhood and Development; the Center of Arab Women for Training and Research; Bank of the Poor; El-Amal Project; and the Arab Open University.

The Shabaka conducts a wide range of activities including awareness raising, and it also provides different types of training programs. Similar to AISHA, Shabaka illustrates the role that NGOs can play in creating a forum for inter-Arab debate and in raising provocative issues and challenging state discourses and interpretation of events. Shabaka was one of the first regional organizations to adopt a political stance, opposing normalization of relations with Israel until a just resolution of the Palestine question is realized. The normalization of relations with Israel is a

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highly contentious issue, which affects the Arab region as a whole, and one that is marked by divisions between the official policy of the state and the position of social actors. Recently with the outbreak of the latest Intifada, some Palestinian NGO actors have acknowledged the need for an inter-Arab forum for social actors, to discuss the question of normalization as a prelude to defining a single stand on this matter. In this respect, Shabaka represents both the potential but also the failings of NGOs in the region. Although one of the first to recognize the importance of an Arab NGO position vis-à-vis Israel, its own position does not extend beyond its own members. In this regard, Shabaka has yet to provide a forum for Arab social organizations.

This last point, namely, the significance but at the same time the shortcomings of the Shabaka reveals much about the role of NGOs, the networking phenomenon in the region and the challenges confronting the activation of social actors in the Arab world. On the one hand, there are about 400 Arab NGOs that are members in the Shabaka, of which 107 NGOs are Palestinian. This constitutes a huge number compared to Egypt, which has only 86 members. On the other hand, the obstacle that restrains the Shabaka from facilitating a genuine inter-Arab dialogue at the level of non-state actors is the fragmentation and polarization of NGOs in the Arab world. As alluded to above, there are significant political and ideological divisions between Arab NGOs. At the same time, questions of power and leadership inevitably surface within networks and further obstruct the development of broad-based Arab NGO coalitions.

Paradoxically, one of the most important examples of NGO sectoral and cross-sectoral collaboration in the Arab world has been stimulated by a international NGO and development agency, Bunian. After observing this network, it is apparent to us that the presence of the 'foreigner' and their role in initiating and implementing this network has 'facilitated' possibilities for joint projects, but definitely not by dictating or defining who cooperates together and over what project. The success of Arab NGO cooperation in the Bunian project is neither in spite of nor coincides with the leadership role of the foreigner, rather the successful cooperation is related to the presence of the external actor. Moreover, we can suggest three reasons why it is far easier to set up a network when the impulse comes from outside rather than inside the Arab world: the problem of polarization of the Arab world; the question of leadership, especially Egypt vis-à-vis Lebanon; and with externally proposed networks, funds are easier to access, and often large funds are available.

Nevertheless, it is also evident that sometimes donors refuse to fund Arab networks and prefer that networking takes place at the Mediterranean level, which automatically includes Israel. For instance, one of the NGOs in Palestine approached one of the Stiftung with a proposal to fund an Arab democracy network. This Stiftung refused to

support the initiative, according to a Palestinian interlocutor. In contrast to this, we observe the repeated manner in which year after year another Stiftung (Friedrich Naumann Stiftung) has proposed the Mediterranean Democracy Network. This network aims to "establish a new regional platform for the democratic reform debate and to make this debate as concrete and practical as possible," and certainly encouraging meetings with Israeli counterparts.

Bunian: a Regional Project for NGOs

The Bunian project focuses on capacity building and networking among Arab NGOs in Palestine, Egypt, Lebanon, Syria and Jordan. It started in 1997 for a two-year period, and now it is in its second phase. It is funded by the European Commission and the Friedrich Naumann Stiftung and implemented by the latter (Jordan office) and a Lebanese organization (the International Management and Training Institute).

The project has three components: training courses at the leadership level, facilitating joint projects among NGOs, and regional workshops. For the first two years training courses were conducted, joint projects undertaken, and three regional workshops held. As a result of the project there was further networking in unexpected areas, for instance, the Jordanians and Syrians cooperated together on a computer-training program. According to the Bunian website, the "focus groups in each country, composed of NGO representatives, both members and non-members in Bunian, are now giving their suggestions for the next phase. It is agreed it will have two focuses: advocacy, each national group undertakes its own campaign; and democratic leadership for NGOs, training and workshops on alternative capacity building techniques and ways to promote flexibility and democratic practices."

What is striking about this project is its practical orientation. Rather than simply funding an Arab NGO network, this program supports cooperation around practical and mutually beneficial activities, for example, the exchange of expertise or selling of services to one another. This introduces the NGOs to the gains of networking and thus may more effectively plant the seeds for further cooperation after the project ends. Yet as was suggested above, one of the important factors behind the success of the NGO cooperation generated by Bunian is the role of the external actor in leading the project. This has somehow mitigated tensions and power contests that might otherwise arise. Whether this leads to sustainable forms of cooperation between Arab NGOs, however, remains to be seen.

One further note about this program, evident in the literature describing it, is that it promotes both cooperation between NGOs and

the private sector and market-oriented solutions to NGO problems of dependence on donor funding. For instance, it encourages NGOs to sell their services or to more aggressively market their products/income generating projects. According to the Project Manager at the Nauman Foundation, "PNGOs could offer services to the private sector or to NGOs in the region which other NGOs could pay for. Also donors would definitely fund PNGOs to take advantage of their own experiences and pass them on to Arab NGOs, i.e., PNGOs could provide strategic planning courses for Jordanian NGOs.[78]

As the Bunian example illustrates, the distinction between an NGO and a donor-initiated network does not provide a full picture of the synergy between the actors and the dynamic underlying the network. For instance, the donor-initiated network in no way illuminates how the presence of an external actor can be beneficial in facilitating cooperation when NGO actors are fragmented. This suggested the need to closely inspect donor-initiated networks. These were examined, not simply in terms of the objectives of the donors in supporting the network (both explicit and implicit), but more importantly in terms of the opportunity the network may create for SNGOs, and conversely the way NGO actors may in practice rework the objectives of the network established by donors.

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[78] After the successful conclusion of the first phase of Bunian (1997-1999) the external evaluators assigned by the European Commission had recommended in summer 1999 the continuation of the Bunian process. The program proposed by Friedrich Naumann Foundation aims at "strengthening civil society actors in the Arab MPC to participate effectively in social development and democratic transformation of their societies thus contributing to the Euro-Med process." On the regional level the new project will tackle "good governance and participation with the participation of the nine countries (Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine, Tunisia, Syria, Yemen)" involved in the consultation process of the Bunian Design Phase. The outcome of this endeavor will be the production of an elaborated model on "Best Practices" to be promoted in the 9 countries and beyond. On the national level, three country programs will be implemented in: Jordan (poverty alleviation and access to labor market), Lebanon (youth participation in public life), and Syria (promoting peoples' participation through enhancing voluntarism).

Chapter 7   Networking:
the Structural Aspects

In the previous chapter we reviewed the main types of transnational networks: protest networks, networks formed around UN world conferences, NGO networks and networks prompted by state actors and international organizations. This chapter investigates the structural dimension of networking. It is divided into two areas of inquiry; the first concerns the structured nature of networks formed around UN conferences as well as donor initiated networks. Of importance here is the objective conditions, factors like the selection process determining which NGOs participate in the network and mediating factors such as the intervening role of the organizer of the network. Largely neglected until now, these factors represent intermediate variables that affect the activity of the network and the final output of the network produced by NGO actors.

The second area of concern is the relationship between the transnational networking activity and the local context. The space *in between* networking in its regional or international manifestation and the developments in the local society can be labeled the *meso level*. This meso level should be investigated for the existence of mechanisms that facilitate linkages between transnational advocacy and activism in the local setting. While there has been a rise in networking between NGOs across borders and new transnational forms of activism, does this activity link up with and reinforce activities of local actors?

Overall, it is clear that transnational networking is increasing. Palestinian NGO actors are participating in this new type of activity. Yet as the above chapter illustrates, PNGO networking is predominately located

in state-sponsored networks such as those developing out of the Euro-Mediterranean agreement. There are limits to the impact of this type of networking. In this section, we locate the mechanisms within networks as well as those between transnational networking and the local society that are important for understanding the potential as well as the limitations of NGO networking.

7.1. The Network as a Structured Experience

In the literature on international conferences and NGO activism, the 'structured' nature of the networking experience is often overlooked. We will review this issue with reference to two specific types of networks: networks formed around UN conferences and networks established parallel to state initiatives such as Euro-Med. There are two issues to consider; the procedures and mechanisms which define critical issues like who participates in the network, and the intermediary role of the organizer of the network in affecting the form and substance of the NGO actors' participation, including how the relationship between the official and non-official delegates is arbitrated. While these mediating factors are acknowledged by observers, they are not commented upon. This may be so because the literature often focuses on the functional purpose of the global or regional forum where the network is engaged, as, for example, describing the process of developing a consensus around a particular agenda, while neglecting the practical matters that impact on the final outcome of the forum.

Participation in the Network: Who Selects?

A structural feature of donor-initiated networks is that the Northern side invariably directs the selection process concerning which NGOs participate in the network. This structural feature has a two-way impact, firstly it affects the network itself, since which NGOs are selected will influence debates as well as coalition building around issues and advocacy initiatives. At the same time the selection process also has an impact on the local context; in particular, if it is a donor that selects which NGOs will participate in a network, there is often a reliance on informal personal networks, which indicates a clientele form of relationship, between the funder of the network and the NGOs.

In highlighting the mechanism of selection, we consider it useful as a heuristic tool; the question of which NGOs participate in a network can be quite banal or extremely contentious, depending on the context, the actors involved and the issue being addressed. In some cases, the mechanism of selection can facilitate forms of exclusion. For instance, some have argued

that NGOs with radical social agendas were excluded from some of the sessions in the Beijing conference on women by the NGO Facilitating Committee as part of an effort to stifle the advocacy efforts of women's movements (Shiva, 1995). In this regard, the selection process becomes a part of the contested nature of the event, representing a tactic which illuminates a new side of the encounter between NGOs and states at UN conferences.

However, the role of the Northern actor in selecting which NGOs will enter the network is not necessarily something negative. As pointed out with regard to the Bunian networking project of some Arab NGOs, the presence of the external actor is often advantageous in a climate of fragmented NGOs. A selection process determined abroad can also be quite useful in terms of bringing together people (from different political and ideological trends) to an event, as compared to a mechanism of selection which reinforces local divisions and narrow clique gatherings. In fact, the selection process can be based on a cooperative and consultative process that counterbalances the structural inequality between the Northern and Southern actors. For instance, the Heinrich-Böll Stiftung set up a democratic mechanism to guide the selection of PNGOs to participate in the Marseille civil forum in the environmental sector. After organizing the network, Heinrich-Böll left the selection of which NGOs would attend the civil forum up to the members of the network. It imposed only two conditions, that there be parity between Gaza and the West Bank and that there be at least one woman. For the Marseille meeting, the environmental Palestinian network was unable to achieve a consensus about who would represent the network, in which case the Stiftung intervened and designated a participant for the meeting.

Other modalities of selection mechanisms are also possible. Concerning the World Bank events such as the Mediterranean Development Forum, the selection process included both sides, the local actors and decision makers abroad. Firstly, the World Bank chose an institution to be in charge of the selection. For the MDF-3 in Cairo, the Palestinian Center for Research and Studies in Nablus was responsible for designating 12 people to attend the conference. Then Hisham Awartani, the director of this center, selected individuals from private, public, NGO, and academic sectors. At the same time, the World Bank chose other names. The head of workshops in MDF-3, for example, Saad Eddin Ibrahim, the head of the civil society workshop, could also issue invitations. In this regard, the selection appeared to be decentralized, with local, regional and international actors participating in the decision-making process.

There is, of course, another side to the selection process, namely, its impact on structural relations between donors and NGOs in local society, as well as on the organizational practices and relations inside of NGOs. Let us take the selection mechanism used in the civil forum of the Euro-

Mediterranean partnership summits to illustrate what we mean by this. In the Stuttgart and Marseille meetings, the selection process proceeded as follows: The Forum of Mediterranean citizens came to Palestine and met with the PNGO Network, which is the most important network of Palestinian NGOs, composed mainly of leftist organizations. At the end of the meeting the Forum decided upon a few participants, taking into account different 'objective' criteria (sector, presentation, geographical location, gender equality, etc.). However, such a selection process is certainly guided by the extent of knowledge the Northern NGO has about the Southern context. In this regard, it is usually the larger NGOs, led by prominent and charismatic personalities, that are most known by INGOs and NNGOs. In the Palestinian context, contact is made primarily with the directors of these NGOs. The consequence of this is a type of selection process that reinforces unequal relations between NGOs as well as within them. For instance, one leader of a very prominent PNGO attended 12 conferences abroad in an 8-month period while no one else from the NGO represented the organization abroad and few of the smaller NGOs attend networking forums.

Regarding the structural relationship between donors and NGOs, this example reflects a form of clientele relationship observable between PNGOs and the network organizer. The NGOs that attend the cocktail parties at the embassies or have strong relationships with donors agencies are the best known and have more of a chance to be selected. That is to say, the larger and more influential NGOs develop working contacts as well as personal relations with the INGOs and donors initiating the network, which implies access to sources of patronage. In this case, the patronage represents entry into the network, and the knowledge, resources and contacts it can provide.

Concerning the impact of selection processes on relations inside NGOs, we asked an organizer of a network about the implications for democratic and accountable relations inside NGOs when the same charismatic NGO leader represents the organization inside of networks. The organizer responded that they select the NGO more than the individual representing the organization. However the organizer acknowledged that there is a leadership problem, but felt that it could be considered interference in the NGO if a name was selected for them to participate in the network.

On the one hand, donors should be able to impose transparency conditions, which imply that individuals other than the director participate in the network. On the other hand, this may be a difficult and sensitive issue. As one of the Friedrich-Naumann Stiftung officers declared: "We tried with NGOs to increase transparency to see if the board is active, meets and how often and to prioritize gender sensitivity in the board, but there are limitations to this. We cannot know everything. We are working with what we see on paper. Sure we can see how many times the board met but how

can we know the substance of the meetings? Also there is a lot of sensitivity about donor intervention in internal operations."

Finally, while we have highlighted the selection process controlled by the Northern actors as a central structural aspect of networks, there are also other factors which affect whether NGOs participate in networks outside of their local context. Sometimes, the INGOs and the organizers of the international event promote the forum without providing grants to cover the costs of attending the event. In this case, it is only the wealthy and the larger NGOs that can afford to attend a conference in venues such as New York or Geneva. For example, the General Union of Palestinian Women complained about the high cost of attending the Beijing+5 conference in New York. Other NGOs also mentioned that they could not afford to partake in this sort of activity. This supports the claims of those arguing that transnational networking should not be over-estimated for it often reproduces certain class and social divisions. Also its accessibility should be inquired into and not assumed. One PNGO leader discussed the barriers associated with networking outside of Palestine: "We participate in a network of Arab organizations for the disabled and have tried to make a twin-ship with a Norwegian organization. There is not a lot going on at this level. We do not have funds to allocate to such activities. It would require a PR person, which we do not have. We are badly in need of this, but we have a problem with the funding. We do not have the projects to sustain us into the future and it is difficult to start income-generating projects, therefore these sorts of activities are kept on the side."

Sometimes, however, donors help overcome this barrier by providing funds for NGOs to attend international forums, such as with the Beijing+5. Still one can ask which NGOs do donors fund to attend these conferences?

There are other factors which impact on which NGOs participate in transnational activities. One PNGO leader pointed out that in order to join international networks: "We need to be strong and strengthen our own house. We are not ready yet. The first stage is to prepare and organize PNGOs. In years to come, funding will decrease, some PNGOs will close down. To strengthen Palestinian civil society we need to revive Palestinian voluntarism, historically so prominent in Palestine. If we could increase citizen participation, that would be good. More initiatives need to be taken to increase the people's involvement. Furthermore, if international networking is to occur it must be on a national level, in which ALL NGOs participate. The ideas should be our own. We should NOT have international networking before we have internal cooperation, so we can benefit from the process and the ideas /initiatives will be our own."

This quote pointedly raises the question about the relationship between transnational networking and local activism, which will be returned to below.

The Rules of the Game

In addition to the structured nature of the networking experience, there are also 'rules of the game' that structure the encounter between state and non-state actors within UN conferences and events such as Euro-Med (Euro-Mediterranean) summits. Basic procedures regulating the conduct of participants and controlling the production of the final document, but more importantly the intermediary structures such as the role of the organizer overseeing the forum, structure the interaction between NGO participants and state actors. The significance of this comes into view when one recognizes some of the tensions and contests that emerge at these sites, especially between NGO and state actors. This issue becomes especially important with regards to participants from non-democratic countries, such as the Arab world. For instance, world conferences like Beijing+5 not only pose a challenge for Arab women's groups in terms of getting their voices heard in the agenda setting process, but there is the added dimension of having to confront and maneuver around state actors which seek to impose their hegemonic interpretation of the status of women in the Arab world on the NGO participants. Examples of such tensions between NGO and state actors were given above in the discussion of Palestinian experiences at Beijing+5. In general the encounter between NGOs and state actors forms a central part of the wrangling that takes place at UN conferences. The procedures regulating participation and the intermediary role of organizers have a constitutive impact on the playing field upon which state and non-state actors meet, and therefore have important implications for the final document and more generally the paradigm that emerges out of the event.

There are two levels at which one observes a structuring of the encounter between state and NGO actors. At one basic level, NGO involvement in international or regional forums is regulated by mechanisms which are largely prescriptive in terms of delineating admissible and inadmissible conduct. These basic rules are important in terms of outlining what is permissible and what is not, therefore creating opportunities or forming obstacles to effective voicing of their perspective. For example, international conferences like Beijing+5 are divided into the NGO forum and meeting of official delegates. Prior to the convening of the NGO and official meetings, preparatory sessions are held to define the agenda for the conference. The formal division of the UN conference in such sequential stages creates the framework against which NGO agenda setting strategies are devised. Thus the preparatory meetings for the conference have become widely acknowledged as essential sites of intervention for NGO actors seeking to get a particular item on the agenda (Chen, 1996).

At another level there are mediating structures, in the form of UN agencies such as UNIFEM, or the organizer of NGO civil forums in the Euro-Med summit, that have an impact on the way in which state and

non-state actors meet up and the engagements that occur between them. In some cases the mediator can create new opportunities for NGOs to raise their perspective and lobby for an issue, thus *redefining* the rules of the game in favor of NGOs. On the other hand, the mediator can reassert rules of the game, which privilege the state actor and the state perspective. In this regard, the role of the mediator should be understood as part of the encounter between state and non-state actors, in which shifting rules of the game affect the final outcome and the agendas emerge out of these forums. Two examples will illustrate what we mean by this.

The focus of activity at the world conference is of course on the official document. The relationship between the NGO input into the conference and the deliberations of the official actors is mediated by both INGO and UN agencies. For instance, the Women's Environment Development Organization (WEDO) proposed a 'Women's Caucus' during the preparations for the Rio world conference on the environment as a way to link NGO and official deliberations. Since then a Women's Caucus has been used at every preparatory meeting and conference since Vienna. At the Vienna world conference on human rights, UNIFEM organized a daily 'Governmental Women's Caucus' to facilitate networking, hence encouraging alliance building between women representatives of NGOs and states to advance women's human rights at the conference (Chen, 1996:145). These two examples highlight the role played by UN agencies or NNGOs in facilitating space for NGO participation. In each of these cases the intermediary role of the third party redefines the rules of the game creating new input mechanisms for NGOs, and restructuring NGO-state interaction.

However, there are also cases in which the role of the mediator serves to assert rules that stifle NGO advocacy efforts. Note how simple procedural regulations can be used to limit NGO action that is perceived as inappropriate by the mediator. For example, at the first Beijing Conference in 1995, an NGO Facilitating Committee was responsible for NGO activities at the conference. Some have argued that this Committee did much more than 'facilitate' NGO participation; in some cases it excluded some NGOs from participating in sessions, in an attempt to stifle criticisms directed towards the global (economic) order and its impact on women (Shiva, 1995:5). Shiva links the actions of the Committee to the influence of the US in the conference and its setting the agenda of the plenaries the Facilitating Committee organized. There is also the example of the Stiftung, which organized the Civil Forum on human rights at Stuttgart. This organizer interceded in the NGO negotiations over their final statement, making it known that they would not allow a statement to be released that calls for a suspension of EU-Israeli agreements until Israel halts its settlement expansion. In each of these cases it is clear that the mediator put down rules which limited NGO attempts to challenge state actors. On the

one hand, this illustrates the role of the mediator, and how they affect the conduct of NGOs, their actions and clearly the final outcome of the forum. On the other hand, a consideration of the role of the mediator and the manner in which they may apply rules which support the state actor, points out the need to consider whether structural mechanisms privilege state actors in UN forums of NGO meetings at the regional level.

Building on this last point, in what follows we will review the Palestinian experience in the preparatory meetings for the Beijing+5 conference organized in the Arab region by UNIFEM. In particular, a conference was organized in Jordan in 2000, *the Arab Regional NGO Conference in Preparation for Beijing + Five,* which became a site in which NGO and state actors' visions clashed. Here the role of UNIFEM illuminates how the third actor structures the state-NGO interactions. More centrally, this example reveals the way in which the rules laid down by UNIFEM, rules set by the UN headquarters, supports the discourse of the state actors and stifles the NGO voice.

NGOs, GOs and the Role of the Mediator

As mentioned above, UNIFEM and ESCWA organized two important meetings in the Arab region, which deserve consideration here. In 1998 a meeting was organized by ESCWA and UNIFEM to prepare a follow-up on the implementation of the Beijing Platform of Action in the Arab region. In 2000, UNIFEM organized a meeting in preparation for the Beijing+5 conference. Within these two events, state and NGO actors clashed over various issues ranging from the role and input allowed NGOs in the Beijing review process, to the content of the report on the implementation of the Beijing Platform in the region. Underlying these clashes was the meeting of NGO and state agendas and narratives. At issue was the clash between the state discourse and the critical discourse of the women's activists. Within these meetings, the role of the mediator illustrates our central premise, namely that they have a tangible impact on the encounter between state and non-state actors. The third party can redefine the rules in favor of the NGO actors or they can apply rules that support the state position.

Two additional points emerge from this discussion. Firstly, as already raised above, Arab women's NGOs face the double challenge of raising their own issues to the international agenda of the UN conference while also confronting state actors in the process. The second point is that when one recognizes that such forums, be they an international UN conference or regional preparatory meetings, actually facilitate power struggles between state and NGO actors, then it becomes clear that while the organizers may intend to facilitate the participation of NGOs, they may not necessarily be furthering this aim in a substantive/comprehensive manner.

In 1998 a meeting was held in Lebanon entitled the *Second Arab Meeting for Follow up on the Beijing Conference.* At this meeting, designed for state and non-state actors, Arab governments relegated the Arab women's organizations to the status of 'observers' at the forum discussing the implementation of the Beijing Platform in the region. However the NGOs protested since they had been granted the status of partners in the review process by a UN agency. This indicates the sorts of tensions that exist between state and non-state actors in non-democratic countries, in which differences in state and NGO discourse and interests presumably are more pronounced than in a democratic setting. As one of the organizers, UNIFEM intervened to redress the marginalized role accorded the NGOs by the state officials and provided them with the task of writing a shadow report (Interview with GUPW). Here the role of the mediator alters the rules of the game, and re-establishes the involvement of the NGO actors.

At the preparatory meeting in Amman, the *Arab Regional NGO Conference in Preparation for Beijing + Five,* clashes arose between state and non-state actors over the Alternative NGO Report prepared for the world conference. Here the contest was between a pro-state report versus an NGO narrative on the conditions and status of Arab women. However, UNIFEM was also brought into the clash, through its role as organizer of the meeting. The meeting in Amman had been intended as a forum for Arab women to formulate their position in advance to the Beijing+5. However rather than facilitate this goal, the meeting became the site at which the contentious issue of the Alternative NGO Report was raised. According to the AISHA representatives and PNGO actors, this Arab NGO Report was in fact written by a state-aligned group of NGOs. Therefore it sacrificed analysis of women's conditions and a critical analysis of the mechanisms put in place to advance women because of its clear state bias.

In this context, a crossing of NGO-UNIFEM discourses is illuminating in terms of raising critical questions surrounding the role of the mediator. For the Palestinian NGOs, UNIFEM failed in its role as the organizer of the forum by allowing a flawed document, which adopted a pro-state bias and therefore *misrepresented* NGOs, to proceed as submission to the world conference. Local Palestinian women's groups expressed the view that this revealed UNIFEM's partiality and its close alignment with the state.[79]

In regard to UNIFEM, when the Palestinian representative of the UN agency was questioned about this meeting in Amman and the criticisms raised against it by NGOs, she explained that the purpose of this meeting was to provide a forum to prepare Arab women's position for the Beijing+5.

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[79] Interview with PWWS.

It was not their intention to allow the forum to become a platform for state actors. However, a very high number of state actors arrived at the meeting, more than had been anticipated. When asked why state actors had been invited to a meeting meant to define the position of Arab women in preparation for the conference, UNIFEM responded that this is part of the rules of participation in these forums, coming from New York.[80] Yet one wonders why state actors would be included in a forum designed to develop the NGO position. This last point is very important since it exposes what we mean by the structured nature of world conferences and the role of the 'rules of the game' in defining interaction between NGO and state actors. The criticisms directed at UNIFEM by NGO actors for allowing a pro-state document to be presented at Beijing+5 on behalf of NGOs speaks not simply to the role of UNIFEM as a mediator but to the logic of the rules of participation as set down by the UN. By including the state actors in this conference, on the one hand, and by not challenging the report which was written by pro-state actors, on the other, UNIFEM created a space for state actors enabling them to assert their hegemonic discourse onto the NGO actors. Is this the flaw of UNIFEM as a mediator, or the rules of participation laid down by the UN headquarters? In any case it is clear from this example that there is not necessarily a level playing field upon which state and non-state actors pursue their agendas. As the rules of the game shift, one should inquire what this means for the playing field, and as indicated in this example how the impact of the third party is implicated in and affects this issue.

At the Beijing+ 5 conference in New York, Arab women's NGOs spoke out against the Alternative NGO Report and its misrepresentative nature. Arab women's groups released a statement denouncing the report's content and the 'undemocratic manner' in which organizations were chosen to write the report. It states: "The undersigned organizations underline that the structure and content thereof (of the Alternative Report) is but an unexpected outcome of the nondemocratic process that produced it: foremost the appointment of the national and regional Arab coordinator through a process that lacked all criteria and transparency, which resulted in the production of that alternative Arab report without the real participation of the majority of Arab women NGOs. Some of those NGOs have attempted to introduce some modifications to that report in the preparatory meeting held in Amman in February 2000. Their efforts and inputs were not taken into consideration" (Statement of the Alternative NGO Report, June 2000).

With this statement, Arab women NGOs raised their objections against the report presented on their behalf at the world conference. They also implicitly voiced their critique of the rules of the game, as facilitated by

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[80] Interview Alia El-Yassir, UNIFEM.

UNIFEM, which allowed such misrepresentation to proceed uncontested, thus catering to state interests and narratives.

Two important points emerge here. Firstly, in contrast to the view presented in some of the literature which suggests that global forums somehow represent a level playing field between state and non-state actors, this example suggests that this is not always the case. Cohen and Rai allude to this when describing a 'global public space' in which state and non-state actors have a voice. They assert, "States, in effect, have to compete to stay in the game. The nation state is increasing one 'power-container' among many, claiming primacy and fealty" (2000: 13). This statement may apply to the relationship between state and transnational corporations, but does it apply to state and NGO encounters around such UN forums? Does the encounter between Arab women's NGOs and their state counterparts indicate a level playing field, or do we need to problematize the structural relationship between state interests and the UN as some propose?

Furthermore, the last issue one can raise relates to the questions about how local issues arrive onto the agenda of transnational networks and what factors inhibit this. Far from addressing this issue, we will simply raise a question. For instance, one can ask the question, to what extent did the voices of Arab NGOs at Beijing+5, in waging their critique of the Alternative NGO Report, gain the attention and support of other NGO activists? One indication that this did occur in a substantial manner is the way in which the Alternative Arab NGO Report was included in the Women Action 2000 Network's website, without any qualifying statement or even acknowledgment of the contested nature of the document.[81] This is indeed ironic, given that Women Action 2000 is a coalition of women's groups from different parts of the world, whose goal is to enable NGOs to engage in the Beijing+5 review process. However this raises other issues about the inclusivity of the transnational activism (what is in the agenda and what is out) and what factors propel or in this case inhibit a local issue from being placed on the agenda or receiving the support of other actors.

7.2. From the Global to the Local?

In our analysis of the protests against the WTO at Seattle, we proposed that transnational activism should be examined at three levels: the global event, which reflects the narrative of globalization; the pact building between global political cleavages that underlies and determines the direction globalization takes; and the relationship between transnational networks and the local or regional entanglements in which SNGOs are involved. Closely related to this last level, it is essential to inquire into the synergy between

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[81] See www.womenaction.org/global/reports_2.html.

transnational networks and local activism. Do SNGO networking activities link up with the local level, transferring knowledge and ideas to the local society or reinforcing and supporting local action? This is an important area of inquiry, which elucidates the structural relationship between transnational activities and the local level. The key concern is whether transnational networks enter into a dialectical relationship with the local context, opening up new possibilities for activism and new forms of exchange, or whether the transnational networking activity is suspended above and takes on an exterior relationship to local society. Far from reviewing networking in its entirety, we delineate key issues in the Palestinian context.

By way of introduction, there are two key points to consider in the Palestinian context which allow us to begin understanding this issue. Firstly, the number of Palestinian NGOs involved in international and regional networking is very few. Secondly, PNGO interviewees raised doubts about the usefulness of participating in international conferences or transnational networking when there is a weakness of networking among PNGOs. For instance, some indicated that there has been a failure in attempts to establish broad based local networks, illustrated by the very narrow and restricted membership of the PNGO Network. Therefore how and why should PNGOs go out and network beyond the national arena? Some felt more networking is needed among PNGOs before effective networking outside Palestine can take place. Others felt there is a problem internally within the PNGO sector, for example, corruption, lack of vision, and loss of ties to grassroots, and this must be addressed before networking outside is begun. Further to this, others raised the point that networking or attending international conferences is very costly. Critiques concern also the type of networks. One NGO noted, "We need to join with other forces. But the question is with which forces? I do not know. Health? Developmental? Academics? Practitioners? We participated in many international conferences, but only 20-30% of [the total]. We need to consider what type of networks we should join."

While the preceding chapter looked at numerous cases of PNGO networking activities outside of Palestine, this brief introduction indicates that despite its prevalence, when examined from the vantage point of the local, the networking phenomenon is somewhat problematic in the Palestinian context. In one respect this is mainly related to the *meso level* and the weak linkages connecting the transnational and the local levels. On the other hand, it is also clearly related to structural problems raised by some of the Palestinian interviewees, for example, the fragmentation among PNGO actors and the absence of strong networks in the local context. Also of importance is the way in which local inequalities and divisions between PNGOs are reproduced and reflected in the limited number of local actors that are actually engaging in networking outside of Palestine.

Absence of Local Networking

Of the structural factors just mentioned, let us briefly consider the problem of local networking. In the Palestinian context it is evident that while local actors have entered international and regional networks in the last decade, this has not translated into an endorsement of networking in the local level. In fact, local networking is still very underdeveloped. It is not anecdotal to say that many of our Palestinian interlocutors mention meeting their Palestinian colleagues only abroad. It is true that this is specific to the Palestinian context given the absence of freedom of movement due to the restrictions and the closures imposed by Israel. But this is not the determining factor.

Some explain the absence of networking by referring to the political culture in the Arab World, arguing that networking does not fit into the political culture of social actors in the region. Such arguments point to the state initiated networks of the Arab League or the role of the Saudi Prince, Talal Ben Abdel Aziz, in funding the Arab Network for NGOs (Shabaka) to justify their claim that the Arab patrimonial rulers do not leave any space for the emergence of independent NGOs. Such arguments are insubstantial; firstly, the existence of independent NGOs and a space outside the reaches of the Arab state is an empirical reality. On the other hand, the cultural argument does not explain, for instance, why one finds network structures in the refugee camps of Gaza but not in the West Bank. Our own observations and interviews reveal that it is the political and personal rivalries between the actors inside the NGOs that play the most significant role in fueling fragmentation of NGOs and thus inhibiting the emergence of strong local networks. If we take the Palestinian human rights organizations as an example, it is apparent that the idea of networking among them is indeed absent: browsing their websites, we discover that very few common communiqués have been released by these local organizations.

It is useful to point out that donor-initiated networks are not always driven by a political agenda, for instance, to introduce Israel into the region. The local donor can be aware of the problem of fragmentation that exists in the Palestinian NGO sector. One of the project managers of a Stiftung recognizes that there is a need for networking in Palestine among PNGOs. According to him, Palestinian-Palestinian networking is called for, more so than Israeli-Palestinian people-to-people initiatives. As he states, "There is a need for networking between Hebron and Bethlehem, for example, or between Khan Younis and Gaza City. This is an important form of networking. We work with the Arab Educational Institute in Bethlehem, and we have suggested that they meet with the NGOs we work with in Gaza. We try to facilitate this at least informally." This rare example reflects the concern of the individual inside the donor organization to turn the 'networking agenda' around, and to address a local problem, namely the

fragmentation of Palestinian society, as opposed to pursuing a political agenda through people-to-people projects.

Local NGOs recognize the problem of networking and dissemination inside of Palestine. One of the human rights organizations notes that: "On the Palestinians level we have a problem just networking between PNGOs in the West Bank and those in Gaza and Jerusalem. It is as though we have internalized these Israeli-created divisions. First, we need to increase these ties, this is a serious issue. However, today is better than two years ago. There is a stronger awareness of the need for networking. Occasionally networking is done on a very high level, for example, during the 'July Crisis,' or regarding special issues concerning a group of PNGOs such as the implementation of the Fourth Geneva Convention for human rights organizations. Now you cannot speak of regional or international cooperation if you do not have coordination and cooperation on the ground in Palestine. This type of networking should be a strategic priority. During the Intifada we used to meet, NGOs, popular organizations, and the people. This form of linkages and this type of human relations is being lost."

Dissemination at the Local Level

Overall, our observations of the relationship between the involvement of PNGO actors in transnational networks and the local context reveals underdeveloped linkages at the *meso* level linking these two spheres and the forms of activities taking place at each level. There are two closely related observations. Firstly, clearly the most striking finding is that while PNGO actors play a major role in networking outside of Palestine, they remain incapable of mobilization on the local level. (In other words, while the presence of PNGOs in external networks is clear, the absence of joint action or broad-based coalition of social actors acting together in the local setting is equally apparent.) In another respect, it is evident that the same organizations and the same individuals participate in networks or activities outside of Palestine. More than this though, there is a relative absence of information transferred back to the local society after the event, either to the public or organizations in the sector or even to the people inside these organizations. For instance, after reviewing the Palestinian newspapers, we found nothing mentioned about the Civil Forum of the Euro-Med summit. The only place where the declaration was found is the PNA official website!

In the context of structural problems such as the fragmentation of PNGO actors and the absence of linkages connecting transnational activities to the local level, what are the overall implications of transnational networking for local society? While there are clearly many answers to this, we choose to highlight one, which is quite important for PNGO actors. Paradoxically, the transnational contacts of a restricted number of NGO

actors can support a form of structural dependency on external pressures and influence as a way to effect local change. The challenge for local organizations is to find the space and mechanisms to address the problems they confront, such as fragmentation and absence of linkages between local and transnational activity. This will enable a new form of agency opened up by the networking phenomenon to impel and support, rather than replace, local activism. Further discussion will highlight this idea.

Structural Dependency?

International and regional level networking is certainly an important mechanism that non-state actors can use to influence decisions, agendas and policies of state actors. Yet in the Arab world, NGOs have up to now benefited from external pressure, which has intervened and exerted pressure on the state on their behalf. This has been labeled the 'boomerang effect' by Sikkink and Keck (1998). As illustrative of this, Jordanian NGOs have long attempted to lobby their government against honor crimes. However, the Jordanian government only began to take measures against this practice when it was strongly critiqued about it by Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch in 1999.

Abdullahi An-Na'im coins this phenomenon as a form of 'human rights dependency.' By this, he refers to the way the governments of developing countries are more responsive to international pressure than to the activities of local NGOs and other actors calling for the protection of human rights within their own societies. In line with this, international human rights NGOs tend to monitor human rights violations in developing countries, with the indispensable help of local NGOs. But they publicize their findings mainly in Europe and North America in order to influence Western governments to pressure the governments of developing countries. At the same time these INGOs also tend to depend on funding, and seek publicity for their activities from developing countries, instead of from and within their own countries or regions (An-Na'im, 2000).

The problem of this type of dependency is that it is structural and the local NGOs cannot break it as much as the developing countries cannot suddenly break their economic dependency on foreign aid. The question becomes, how can local actors resist being reduced to this form of dependency? This can be achieved in two ways: first, by creating space inside the local society to lobby issues vis-à-vis the decision making. Note the success of the social movement of Palestinian teachers, which was able to impose itself on the ground without intervention from abroad, because of its strong linkages with teachers, including at the lowest level. Secondly, by activating the transnational actors from the local: the experience of the Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network shows the importance of

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transnational actors originally from North Africa living in Europe who play a tremendous role since they know both sides of the Mediterranean, and can go between both or even put pressure on state actors. This network makes statements criticizing the violations of human rights by some Arab regimes.

What is curious about the perception of the NGOs concerning networking, is that it is invariably seen as a mode for increasing international lobbying for the Palestinian cause and few pay attention to it as providing access to new forms of knowledge. Only one health NGO points out the importance of the knowledge: "We need to be a part of the process of exchanging ideas on international issues and we should contribute to the dialogue on globalization and consider how it will affect health and health in Palestine. If we miss the knowledge revolution, we will be on the margins of global issues."

7.3. Conclusion:
The Emerging Space of Struggles and Contest

Transnational networking should be understood in its multifarious forums; there are different types of networks with different purposes, ranging from protest networks to networks that lobby UN world conferences to raise an issue to the international agenda. Also there are multiple levels – international, regional, and sub-regional – at which networks operate, are organized around and take action. As our analysis illustrates, an activity at one level can impel action at another level. For example, confronted with an international agenda for women's rights which disregards the conditions of Arab women, AISHA raised the issue at the sub-regional level among Arab women's organizations. Similarly, the establishment of the Barcelona process at the regional level prompted the activation and reorganization of the Arab Network for Human Rights at the sub-regional level of Arab countries. At the same time, while networking represents an important mechanism facilitating new ways to influence state actors, the relationship between networking at the international or regional level and local activism should be kept in mind. Transnational networking can support but it cannot replace local activism.

The entrance of NGOs and INGOs in realms previously the domain of state actors raises new questions about the sites and the processes through which politics is being conducted in the international system. Can one speak of an emerging space created by transnational networking within which non-state actors engage with states and challenge state and donor actors in new ways? How can we conceptualize it? In contrast to the literature which celebrates an 'emerging civil society' as an outgrowth of transnational networks, we present an alternative vision of a space being created that

is marked by new power struggles between different development actors which has an impact on micro NGO-donor relations. This is a space in which new tactics and *mechanisms of influence* are becoming available to NGOs and donors; while NGOs and donors are increasingly speaking the same language in terms of development agendas, power struggles are still occurring and new tactics are becoming available in relations between NGOs, INGOs and donors.

Mechanisms of Influence

Consider the example of USAID. The concept paper for its health and population program, which is presented on its website, provides the basis for its program and projects in this sector. Within the concept paper, USAID's approach to population is presented as stemming from and supporting the recommendations of the Cairo world conference on population and development. Note how this conference is used as a legitimizing force to reinforce the merit of USAID's policies. When we compare this concept paper and its legitimating premise of the Cairo conference with the USAID program within this sector in Palestine we see that here the thrust of their work centers on reproductive health, mainly providing the medical infrastructure for reproductive health services. Underlying this is the sensitive matter of population control.

As discussed in the case study on the health sector, USAID's policy in regard to health and population has been critiqued by PNGOs. At the same time, it can be argued that the USAID's approach represents a very narrow interpretation of the global agenda on population and development that emerged out of conferences like Cairo. Women's groups note that an effective reproductive health approach should be an all encompassing strategy which tackles the issue of early marriage and promoting female education. In this regard, this example illustrates the way donors may *selectively* draw from the recommendations of international conferences, while using them to legitimize their policies and their own agenda. In this case, there is an emphasis on population control without the added recommendations of NGOs, for instance, the need to address early marriage and female education. This example points to the tactics that open up and become available to donors to advance priorities which may not be shared by NGOs; this reinforces our claims of a space opening up with new struggles and strategies and forms of engagement between NGOs, INGOs, states and donors.

In a similar respect, this idea is also illustrated by Nelson. Looking at engagements between NGO networks and the World Bank over issues of environment, structural adjustment and poverty, he describes the new forms of struggles between NGOs and development agencies and the

strategies available to them. For example, he points out that the Bank has taken the language of 'popular participation' and amended it to its own structures and mandate. Also he argues that if one steps back and considers the implications of NGO inclusion in the Bank's work, it is that the latter's range of influence has expanded, its capacity to prescribe policy and institutional changes has increased in several fields, and its capacity to regulate economic policies have been strengthened (Nelson, 1996: 606). This example again describes a new space in which new engagements and new forms of power struggles between NGOs, donors and states are emerging.

Terrain of Unequal Relations and Differentiated Access to Resources

Without contesting the opportunities and new mechanisms of influences available for NGOs through networking, it is nonetheless essential to remain cognizant of a two-fold inequality. There are power imbalances between the actors inside of networks and there remains an unequal access to decision making between state and non-state actors. Alvarez et al. argue that "civil society is a terrain mined by unequal relations of power wherein some actors can gain greater access to power, as well as differential access to material, cultural and political resources" (1998: 18).

On the one hand, networks can reproduce and reflect class and social inequalities. Observers of the protests at Seattle noted that the activists were of the propertied, educated classes. At the same time, our analysis of PNGOs reveals that it is a minority of NGOs that engage in networking activity outside of Palestine, primarily the larger organizations with financial resources. On the other hand, transnational networks are marked by imbalances between the actors in the network. Our discussion of Seattle and the UN women conferences indicated the relevance of inquiring into how SNGOs insert themselves into transnational networks and the corollary process of agenda setting with Northern partners.

Concerning access to decision making, the experiences of Palestinian NGOs reveals that in some instances a 'glass ceiling' effect is observable: PNGO's participation in these events is characterized by limitations, an invisible 'glass ceiling, beyond which there are restrictions. The Stuttgart civil forum illustrates this: PNGOs tried to use this forum to exert real pressure on Israel but were stopped by the organizer. In this regard, Palestinians were invited to participate in this forum but when they wanted to use it as a real tool for their political concerns they were prevented from doing so. This sends a clear message to Palestinians – we want you to participate, but you must do so on terms that we set, even if this means forgoing your own causes. Clearly this raises the question: what type of participation are we talking about here – substantive or superficial and

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lacking in decision-making authority? What are the results of PNGO participation in these events; if their priorities are rebuffed, as in Stuttgart what is the result of NGO inclusion? One is evidently forced to consider that there are greater stakes involved, including legitimating a bigger process (i.e., a Euro-Mediterranean (re)conception of the region).

The issue has already been raised in the literature that NGOs face the threat of co-optation by collaborating with organizations such as the World Bank. The proximity of the NGO to the international organization does not automatically mean that SNGOs gain influence in the decision making process. We noted varying degrees of cognizance of this issue among our interlocutors. For some PNGO leaders, it is enough to be 'close' to the process, that is, to the decision-making process of global agendas at international conferences. For another, who is participating in an NGO working group for the World Bank, and coordinating Arab developmental NGOs, the idea of this forum is that it provides space for NGOs to lobby and advocate for change from inside the Bank. According to him, "before this we were sensitive about the Bank...." However when questioned about the danger of neutralization he concedes that there are indeed constraints on NGO participation, but ultimately he feels that over the long term NGOs may be able to obtain increased access to decision making.

Finally, in the above two chapters we have outlined what is at stake with the transnational networks and that the capacity of this mechanism to provide increased incorporation of NGOs into processes of decision making remains out of reach. Some have already raised the point that by entering into collaboration with state actors and organizations such as the World Bank, the incorporation of NGOs may change them in ways which are detrimental for their role as advocators of alternative development agendas (Nelson, 1995; Miller-Adams, 1999). Without entering this debate, we suggest that attention should be paid to the *type of incorporation* of the NGO into collaboration with the state actor or development agency. Consider the ESCWA-organized Arab meeting for follow up on the Beijing conference. The meeting was dominated by Arab states and NGOs were expected to accept a token role of silent inclusion in this conference and the subsequent reports to be written on implementation of Beijing recommendations. In the case of Palestine, UNIFEM intervened in this process and gave the NGOs the role of writing shadow reports recognizing that the PNA was dominating the report on the implementation progress.[82] Furthermore as discussed above, at the Beijing+5 conference a group of Arab NGOs released a statement critiquing this process and their misrepresentation in the Alternative NGO Report. These examples suggest the impact of the international organizations and state actors in determining the type of incorporation of the Palestinian NGOs.

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[82] See interview with GUPW on Beijing +5.

Finally, it is necessary to briefly outline the theoretical implications of our rereading of some conference endeavors by transnational networks in terms of what these global forums mean from the perspective of the actors, such as the Palestinians. As mentioned in the introduction, according to Coronil a particular discourse, which he labels *globalcentrism*, accompanies globalization. This discourse propagates an image of a unified globe and dispenses with the notion of an outside (Coronil, 2000: 368). Difference is absorbed into the 'global.' As a discourse *globalcentrism* often characterizes our reading of global forums such as the women's conferences in question, representing the conference as a global event. This however conceals the actual relations and positioning of different actors, peoples and states to such an event. Moreover, as Coronil argues, it is essential to deconstruct this system of representation, which absorbs difference into itself, *by differentiating the notion of the global and showing the highly uneven distribution of power and the immense cultural complexity* (Coronil, 2000: 370). In this sense, our description of the changing paradigm from Nairobi to Beijing is not complete without a brief delineation of the implications for the Palestinians and of the positioning of such actors in relation to global forums.

New and Old Social Movements: a Hypothesis of Problematic Relationship between NNGOs and SNGOs

The weak impact of the participation of SNGOs on decision making was explained by our research in advancing problems and issues from the South but also from the North. Although we emphasized structural issues, one might ask if there is an inherent problem related to the repertoire of action. Recognizing that in Palestine the NGOs cannot be conceived of as the bearers of a social movement, we would like to introduce a reflection made at the global level by some authors concerning the problems of different modes of social movements and their implications for the agenda setting and alliance building between Northern and Southern NGOs.

In their introduction to *Global Social Movements*, Rai and Cohen introduce the distinction between old and new social movements and how they see it as relating to global social movements. The distinction between 'old' and 'new' movements was first made in Europe after the May 1968 student movement. After May 1968 the left and labor were radically discredited in Europe and became labeled as the 'old movement.' Following this break, as the authors explain, old social movements become defined as being pre-occupied with emancipatory rights. They are directed at the nation-state and wedded 'irremediably' within the dominant political order. In contrast, the new social movements differ in that they demand changes in social values and life-styles (2000: 5). However, according to those

authors, in a time of global social movements, the distinction between 'old' and 'new' movements becomes blurred. This is the case even within a movement found in one region, i.e., the South, or within a transnational movement, which traverses North and South. For example, human rights movements cannot be labeled as clear-cut 'new social movements.' They aspire to both political change and social transformation, therefore they are concerned with human and emancipatory politics. Or, in the case of the international women's movement, they outline that here Western feminists adopt a strategy of disengagement with the state and focus on lifestyle issues and social change. This however is not the case in the South, where the denial of civil and political rights, social expression and economic equality has meant that the 'old emancipatory' agenda define women's agendas. (2000: 6-7)

The importance of identifying this differentiation between old and new movements lies in considering its implications for alliance building and transnational networks. For the authors, they outline that in the case of the international women's movement, the differences in agendas arising from the type of movement complicate alliance building. Forming linkages and solidarity becomes a 'tortuous process' because of differences at the ideational level, practical level in terms of focus, strategy, issues of priority, etc.: "Cockburn maintains, women's groups will act together with a shared purpose only by means of conscious and careful processes of boundary-crossing, agenda-setting and alliance-building." (idem: 6)

However, the most important problem arises in the process of alliance-building and the means that the actors possess for their actions. Havemann has a pessimistic view between 'old' and 'new' movements during this process. In terms of what the 'network society' means for indigenous people and their capacity to advance their rights, Havemann argues that indigenous people exist in a state of 'nautonomy' (structural disempowerment) and they are hurt by a lack of access to ICT (information and communication technology). He argues access to ICT is necessary but not sufficient to get involved in the political process. In "Risk Society," building on Beck's work, Havemann argues that power conflicts today are not only over relations of production, but they are also over the 'relations of definition,' i.e., the rules, institutions and capacities that structure the identification of risk; they are the legal, episteme, and cultural matrix in which politics is conducted. From that there are two potential positive sides for indigenous people in the network society: Firstly, "ICT's have certainly added to the potential of the politics of rights because they enable indigenous people and other social movements to go beyond state-controlled law-making bodies and political arenas to disseminate damning information to shame and confront the powerful." Secondly, "support for indigenous people's can be garnered by ensuring increased understanding of and sympathy with their values and beliefs

from segments of dominant cultures, notably post-material social movements such as the Greens." (2000: 21). Havemann, however, is also pessimistic about the potential for positive results for natives. Why?

Firstly, he considers the unequal access to ICTs and the fact that alliances are not so easy to build. New Social movements want to focus on life issues; many see native people's issues as 'old movement.' "Thus project identities (of NSMs) are concerned with the politicization of everyday life and demand an acute social reflexivity that often makes the automatic compatibility of their agendas with traditional-based indigenous peoples' movements improbable. Resistance identities frequently require what to cosmopolitans appears as the practice of an essentializing, exclusionary, often patriarchal, ethno-politics for constructing primary identities out of the myriad hybrid, self and diasporic identities found among their potential eligible membership." (idem., 25)

In his view, there is a difference between Northern movements and Indigenous movements: Northern movements represent "Communities of Assent" while Indigenous represent "Communities of Descent"; the latter focus on primordial identities. He concludes that while the network society is imperfect, the web and ICT should be used as a transmitter of politics of rights and human rights talk. Although imperfect, it still represents important resources through which to deploy and advance claims (idem., 30).
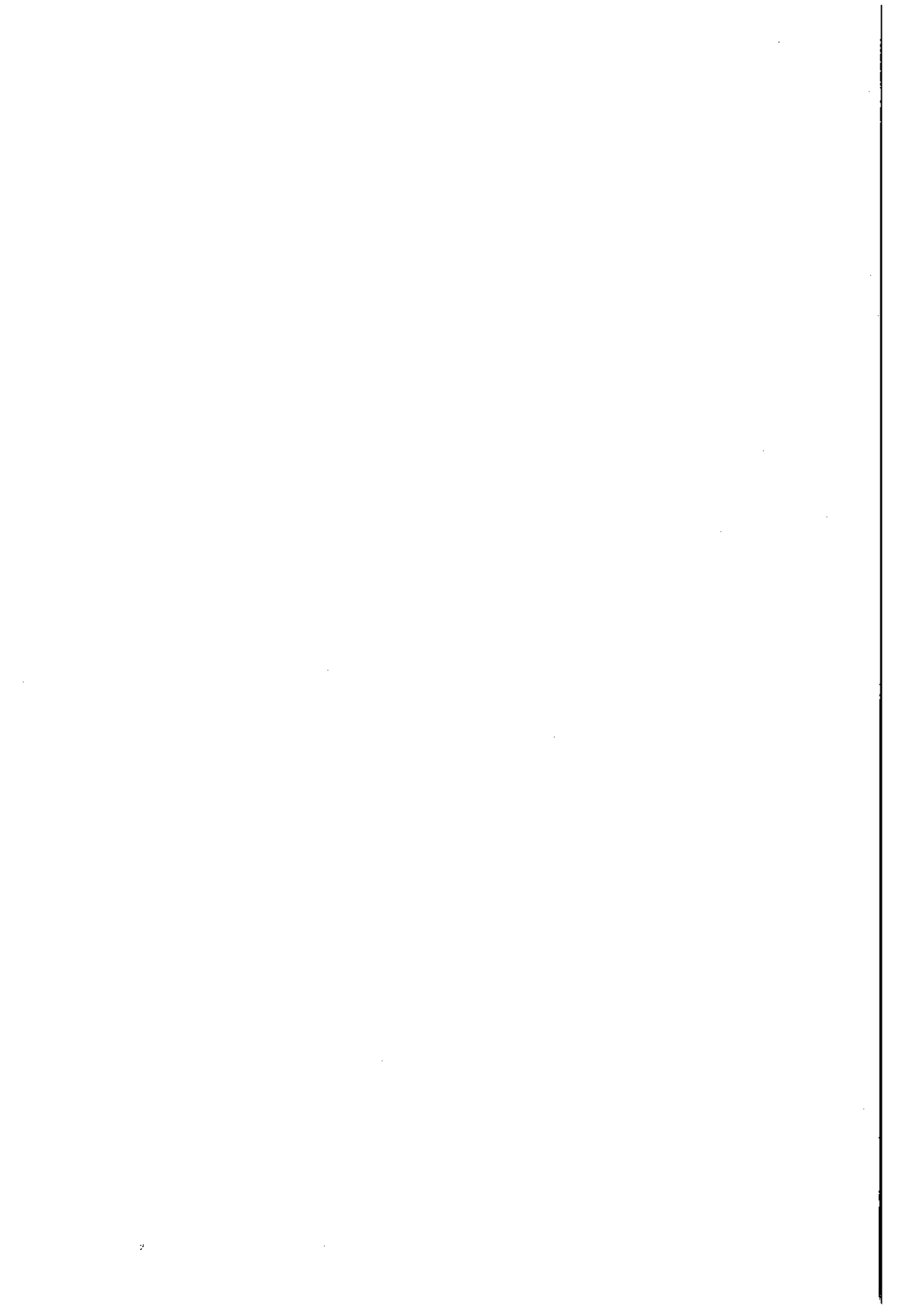
CONCLUSIONS

Chapter 8   Conclusions

Both the increased role of NGOs in local development and the activation of transnational NGO networks have opened up new research areas, including around the issues of agenda setting and networking, between NGOs, INGOs and donors. In addressing some of these new research questions, the objective of this book has been to challenge basic assumptions about donor-NGO relations and to extend beyond the celebratory reading of transnational social movement organizations to reach a differentiated conceptualization of agenda setting between donor and NGOs, on the one hand, and the role of networks in the regional and international arena, on the other.

In the literature, assessments of the role of NGOs in local development processes and their advocacy efforts in the international arena range from highly pessimistic to overly optimistic. In one respect, the relationship between donors, INGOs and local NGOs is viewed in dichotomous terms, and the structural inequality and the power relationship between them is seen as determining the dynamic of interaction. With regard to networking, the literature has focused on the transnational social movement organizations, which are regarded as possessing an alternative conception of social change and supporting the development of an integrative global civil society.

Drawing on fieldwork and surveys conducted in the Palestinian context and with a focus on three sectors - health, gender and development, and human rights and democracy - our research has made timely theoretical and empirical contributions by unmasking the process of decision-making that underlies the structured interaction between donors and Palestinian NGOs. The findings also provide a view of changing global sets of relations

from the perspective of peripheral global actors, the Palestinian NGOs. This conclusion is divided into two sections: a summary of our main findings and a concluding assessment of PNGOs, which reviews their role during the current Intifada.

8.1. Agenda setting

The interaction between donors, NGOs and international NGOs is situated within aid channels and is therefore structured by historically constituted sets of relations, which define the responsibilities of INGOs and NGOs. The salient features associated with the restructuring of Western development assistance over the past two decades that have impacted on local NGO-donor relations were reviewed in Chapter 1. Some of the noteworthy changes have included new sets of relations between INGOs and donors, in which the former play a greater role in distributing government assistance. Also many INGOs have moved beyond the solidarity model and become highly professionalized institutions, some with their own marketing consultants and complex management systems. Yet some, such as ANERA, combine a bit of both models, maintaining a solidarity outlook and approach. In addition to this, with the end of the cold war, aid has become a mechanism of conflict resolution and peace building. With this, the semblance of improvement in socio-economic standards becomes important for political reasons, as in the Palestinian case. At the macro level of politics of international assistance, the new humanitarian movement and the medicalization of politics, examined in Chapters 1 and 3 respectively, represent major changes in the politics of aid; in each case actors blur the lines between the developmental and the political. Finally, the New Policy Agenda provides the policy framework within which a new emphasis has been placed on the NGO role in service provision and on their capacity to represent the interests of marginalized groups in their society. It remains clear, however, that the manner in which such an agenda reaches the local society is differentiated and varies in each context.

Agenda setting has different dimensions. In one sense, the agenda setting process between donors and NGOs covers approaches and policies, which define local developmental trajectories. In this regard, it is a multi-leveled process that extends from negotiations over project methodology, which covers issues related to the implementation of a project, up to sectoral agendas, which frame the donor or INGO area of intervention. Various factors intervene upon the negotiations between donors and NGOs. In addition to donor funding criteria, factors such as the extent to which NGOs invest in the space for negotiations affect this process. As we explained in Chapter 4, while there is a 'space for negotiations' and NGOs do indeed have mechanisms available to them to advance their

priorities, at the level of sectoral agendas and more generally at the level of the conceptualization of aid, these organizations did not invest sufficiently in this space. The NGOs own fragmentation, but also donor pre-defined project conceptions, restricts the ability of NGOs to negotiate with donors over what approach should be applied locally. This was the case with USAID's reproductive health approach used in Palestine, examined in the case study on the health sector in Chapter 3. In this example, local PNGOs contested USAID's approach but were unable to effect a policy change. More than an example of donor obstinacy, this case reflects the transformations that have occurred over the past two decades in the way development assistance is dispersed and the greater involvement of governments in defining how funds are to be spent, illustrating that agenda setting should be looked at as a long term process.

In addition to this, agenda setting also has a sociological side. More than wrangling over development approaches, agenda setting is also about how globally approved agendas are articulated locally. The arrival of a global agenda can intersect or overlap with complex social processes. As the case studies in Chapter 3 revealed, in the Middle East, the global human rights agenda overlaps with a newly emerging Arab human rights movement, which is still developing its own discourse. Yet, Palestinian human rights groups have voiced their objections and contested the way the global human rights paradigm has been applied to the Palestinian territories and to Israeli violations of Palestinian rights. In the case of Palestinian women's organizations, we showed how the women's movement entered into a new independent phase, which dovetailed with international agenda endorsing advocacy and gender awareness efforts. Most strikingly, here we observed new hierarchies among women's groups, and new patterns for incorporating grassroots women's actors into state-society narrative.

Finally, directly undercutting the restructuring of aid channels and the different dimensions of agenda setting are changes in the organizational models of local NGOs. One of the most important alterations associated with the new development paradigm ushered in by the New Policy Agenda is the reorientation of NGO internal operations according to donor funding criteria and in line with their own organizational models. What some have called the 'mainstream development approach' envisions development as a predictable outcome; projects becoming the work of 'inputs' and 'outputs' abstracted from the context (Biggs and Neame, 1996). This has implications for NGO actors' own external activities and how they view themselves as actors within their own context. If NGOs are the agents that 'fix' development problems, this implies that they objectify themselves as outside of the context of their society.

Hulme and Edwards (1996: 14) note that the New Policy Agenda raises NGOs to a new level of prominence making NGOs new influential actors, yet they ask what prevents the NGO from being co-opted to the

aims of the New Policy Agenda: what happens to NGO values, missions and their links to the population? (1996: 14) They argue that what is needed is mechanisms of accountability and strategic vision and planning. While they are correct in ascribing these measures, our analysis shows that in fact the structural changes in the development field have deep rooted implications which affect NGO internal organizational practices, and therefore their external mode of action, in a manner which is not easily addressed. In Chapter 5, we reviewed some of the ways in which PNGOs can develop their own alternative vision. At the end of this chapter, we conclude with observations on the approach of PNGOs during the current Palestinian uprising.

8.2. Networking

As Chapters 6 and 7 illustrated, an investigation of how NGOs participate in the elaboration of global agendas through transnational networks is a new area of inquiry that can shed important light on the networking phenomenon. While the literature heralds the beginning of a new politics and notes tremendous changes introduced by new types of international networking, our findings have shown that a more nuanced understanding of networking is needed. In order to understand the networking revolution, it is essential to differentiate between the forms networks take and the functions they perform, as well as the different levels around which networking occurs. For instance, the international networks organized around UN world conferences are quite different from the protest movement that emerged in Seattle and at the Social Forum later on. It is clear that in a few cases evidence of a new form of 'grassroots transnationalism' has surfaced, constituting itself as a transnational social movement, such as the case of the protests against the WTO in Seattle, and this has supported the euphoric calls announcing a global civil society. In contrast to this, the networks active at UN forums participate in de-politicized, technical problem-solving around issues of global concern, in which macro policies are set by state actors.

In terms of the actors that organize and operate in and through networks, a few central points emerge. Firstly, the participation of Southern actors in transnational networks should not be assumed but inquired into. Power relations and perceived hierarchies such as North-South are not erased but take on a new form inside of transnational networks, and this affects negotiations and agenda setting inside of a network. Inquiry into the participation of Southern actors in transnational advocacy initiatives remains an underdeveloped area of research. Yet, as we illustrated with the analysis of the Seattle protests in Chapter 6, an inspection of transnational advocacy networks from the vantage point of the input and participation

of Southern actors, represents an illuminating way to objectively assess the network as well as to observe its operation from a subterranean angle.

Moreover, examining various examples from the Arab world, we also showed that networking among Arab activists remains marginal at both the international and the local level. However, our research also indicated that some Arab NGOs, such as the women's groups involved in the AISHA network, are in a position to define their own regional agenda, in response to agendas for women's empowerment set at the global agenda. More interestingly, local actors can be observed actively modifying and shifting the stakes of networks designed by Northern actors, such as NGO networks that emerge out of a state-sponsored initiative (like the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership Agreements that have given rise to many NGO networks). Ironically, while such initiatives seek to integrate Israel into the Mediterranean region, the Arab NGOs have used such partnerships to reinforce the inter-Arab relationship.

8.3. Donors and Palestinian NGOs during the National Transition: The Case of the Second Intifada

The current intifada represents a unique moment in which to observe the role of PNGOs, especially given that during the peace process these organizations withdrew from the national-political question, including the reality of the occupation. Today, both the national movement and the broader goal of national liberation have been re-animated. Within this context, three observations can be made about the role of PNGOs: firstly, the NGOs have not moved beyond professionalized action. On the one hand, this is not necessarily bad, especially since the forms of transnational networking and advocacy work needed to convey Palestinian rights effectively in the international arena require highly capable organizations, endowed with the resources and skills to communicate, network and lobby cross-borders. Yet, as we concluded in Chapter 7 on networking, Palestinian NGOs face the problem of dependency if professionalized activities are not supplemented with local networking and strategies for action. Moreover, in the context of the renewed national struggle, the Palestinian NGOs have not developed a synergy with the population or other social organizations.

Secondly, many PNGOs have reverted into the familiar pattern of short-term relief work. This in turn reflects the absence of a long-term vision or strategy on how the NGOs and social organizations can contribute to change in the context of national transition. The third observation concerns the incapability of the NGOs to articulate the civic with politics or to separate the 'politics' from the 'national.' Their actions betray a lack of awareness of the fact that they are in an occupied land. The

NGOs leaders are from the urban middle class; and this intifada is taking place in the refugee camps, the remote cities in the North and South of the West Bank, and in the South of Gaza, more than in the urban centers such as Ramallah. At the same time, this intifada is not simply political, but social, and is propelled by people who did not gain from the peace process. Moreover, the ongoing intifada expresses cumulative popular anger at both the violence of the Israeli occupation and the compromises that the PNA seems willing to make on basic Palestinian national rights.

The NGOs have been absent from the demonstrations taking place in the Palestinian streets, and at the same time they continue to insist on their independence from the political party and other political bodies. The only big demonstration where the NGOs played a major role in mobilizing the population was when the Israeli authority closed the road leading to Birzeit University. The Ramallah elites suddenly found themselves very concerned with the consequences of the intifada. Many organizations used their email lists and took out advertisements in the local newspapers to mobilize people for a demonstration from Ramallah to the new checkpoint imposed on the road to Birzeit. In light of their successful mobilization effort, one NGO leader declared to the French Newspaper, *La Croix*, that they should henceforth impose their position on the National and Islamic High Committee of the intifada: "Our activities our *independent* from that of Marwan Barghouthi [the leader of this committee]. It is our pressure which made him take into account civil society (...) However he does not consider us as an integral part of his committee. We signed the press communiqués. However, *we did not take a position on political issues like the call for Sharon to resign*. Inside of the committee our voice is well heard" (emphasis by authors) (Larzilliere, 2001). It is very curious to observe such a-political discourse inside of a war-like context; one is surprised by the superior position in which the globalized elite looks at itself as being above the committee, which manages the intifada on a daily basis.

Furthermore, it is evident that the NGOs leaders confuse between the 'political' and the 'national' and refuse to commit to the national under the pretense of refusing to conduct political activities, although many NGOs show more and more of an internal politicization in terms of alliance building. For instance, the communiqué released on October 7, 2000, entitled 'Unifying the Efforts for Ending the Occupation and Realizing Independence: All the Efforts for Supporting the Popular Intifada for the Independence,' was circulated among NGOs and political party leaders for signature but they asked for personal signatures and not those of the organizations. This shows that these leaders do not see the NGOs as taking on a leadership role in national issues.

Consider the following example: at the beginning of the intifada, during a PNGO Network meeting held after the head of USAID in

Tel Aviv announced the intention to make further aid conditional on political developments,[83] some prominent figures in this network refused to call for a boycott of USAID funding under the pretext that: "200 families now live off of USAID salaries." This is not just a case of short-term funding supplanting long-term vision, but there seems to be a tension between vested group interests and the overriding national political imperative.

At the same time, while the NGOs are searching for a role and place in the society, they lack the willingness and the legitimacy to take on such a role. George Giacaman of Muwatin reported that in the second month of the intifada, a meeting was held in Ramallah for representatives of municipalities, unions, federations, the PLC and NGOs in order to fill the leadership vacuum within civilian affairs. During this meeting, most of the time was taken up with conflicts over the leadership role and structure. Giacaman points out that part of the reason why this initiative did not succeed was because of the "instability in the legitimacy (of the NGOs' role) and the absence of the legal and administrative structure for insuring this legitimacy" (2001).

For Hammami and Tamari, the fact that the NGOs lack a mass base and focus on development and governance issues makes them structurally incapable of organizing at the popular level (2001). However the UPMRC was able to mobilize 10,000 supporters from its beneficiaries and the numerous dispensaries operated by this organization in the few months before the Intifada. But why were these same people not able to be organized thereafter?

Concerning the professional work of the PNGOs during the Intifada, there are numerous examples which illustrate the contributions they have made, ranging from timely release of information on human rights violations, to efforts to confront the image of the intifada in the Western media. For instance, the Red Crescent Society provides accurate and up to date statistics on the number and type of injuries as well as on the number of deaths during the uprising. As well, the HDIP produced a report on the effects of the intifada on the delivery of health care. Also, the Union of Palestinian Medical Relief Committees as well as the Community and Public Health Institute of Birzeit University produced two videos for Western audiences to address the misperceptions and stereotypes distorting the image of the uprising.[84]

Further to this, the human rights organizations responded very quickly to the intifada and many developed an effective system for disseminating information on human rights violations. In addition,

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[83] In a formal statement, the head of USAID, Larry Garber, announced that aid would stop if a declaration of independence was made by the PNA.

[84] The UPMRC produced the 'Price of Dignity' and the Community and Public Health Institute produced the 'Memories of a Child'.

they actively asserted themselves when Mary Robinson, the head of the UNHCHR visited the West Bank and Gaza, monitoring developments and overseeing preparations in anticipation of her visit. Besides this, it is evident that the training of health care workers and ambulance staff in emergency procedures over the past decade was very useful. The ambulance and first aid teams that have attended to the injured are more professionalized than during the first intifada. As well, people at demonstrations have been able to provide first aid for the wounded while waiting for the ambulances. This reveals the importance of the work carried out by health organizations before the intifada in terms of providing training courses to the population.

Overall, PNGOs have fulfilled an important function, acting as highly professional and competent intermediaries between their society and the international public, by disseminating information, making alternative forms of knowledge available and receiving foreign delegations in Palestine. This role in turn enables the population to carry on in the intifada. On a similar note, many reports produced by the international NGOs shows that contrary to other conflict areas in the world, the Palestinians have been able to maintain good quality services in health, education, nutrition, despite the closure and bantustanization of the Palestinian territories.[85]

This notwithstanding, it is also clear that despite the useful and effective professional actions taken by PNGOs, little synergy has developed with the mass population. The human rights organizations showed from their first meeting an inability to coordinate their work in order to conduct joint activities. At the same time, little was done by other organizations in terms of mobilizing people, encouraging voluntarism, or directing the public by providing a leadership role. Muwatin was a pioneer in initiating debates on the intifada. It sponsored a large conference attended by about 600 people, with representatives from the PNA present. However, this and similar public forums have yet to channel social energies in any particular direction. In terms of the next step and how to go beyond the conference mode of action, to raise issues in a tangible manner in the society, little follow up has been taken.

Short-term Relief

During this uprising many PNGOs have reverted to short-term relief work, yet their contribution to emergency assistance for the population has been very little. According to a polled survey, conducted by Bocco,

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[85] Some 93 cantons in West Bank and Gaza Strip were created by the Israeli military authority through the permanent closures and encirclement.

Brunner and Rabah (March 2001), the international and Palestinian NGOs provide only 7% of emergency assistance. UNRWA was identified as the main single source of assistance (45%) followed by religious organizations (18%), then the PNA (17%) and finally the charitable organizations (6%). By June 2001, the figures had changed slightly: 51% of emergency aid recipients had received aid from UNRWA, 22% from the PNA, 13% from zakat committees and other religious organizations. Of all the other sources, none received more than 3% of the responses. In terms of the type of emergency assistance, UNRWA was identified as the main single food aid provider, followed by the Palestinian Authority and the zakat committees. While UNRWA is the main food donor in refugee camps and in cities, the zakat committees and the PA provide more food in villages (the Bocco, Brunner and Rabah, July 2001). Overall, the Palestinian Authority is the source of 75% of financial aid, UNRWA accounts for 8%, and all others for 17%. Only a few of those polled mentioned the efforts and assistance of non-governmental organizations, or international organizations, suggesting that the latter have continued to focus on developmental projects or short-term relief efforts.

Problems have arisen with the emergency assistance that has been provided, especially the trend of providing people with food aid, when what they really are lacking are jobs as opposed to welfare services.[86] In contrast to this, however, by April 2001, the UNDP had set up a $22 million fund for employment generating projects throughout the West Bank, in which skilled laborers that had worked in Israel receive a third of their regular daily wage.[87]

In regard to role of the Palestinian NGOs in short-term relief, while the assistance they have provided in this regard has been essential, the failure to supplement it with broader activism within the uprising indicates that they have yet to develop a long-term vision on how to contribute to change in the context of national liberation. Let us take the example of the Palestinian Agricultural Relief Committees (PARC) to illustrate this.

PARC exemplifies the transformation PNGOs have undergone over time. During the first intifada, the organization had a network of volunteers in villages throughout the West Bank and Gaza. Yet this has diminished over time, and today few volunteers remain. The current intifada and the Israel closure and encirclement policies have strangled the Palestinian economy and taken an immense toll on Palestinian farmers. In this context, PARC has stepped in to provide effective forms of short-

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[86] According to an assessment made by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in cooperation with other humanitarian organizations in the region, there is no shortage in food supplies at present in markets and commercial shops. But the crisis is manifested in that some families have no income because they are unable to reach the places of their jobs because of the Israeli blockade, according to the statement.

[87] *UNDP Focus*, April 2001, Vol. 7.1, Jerusalem.

term relief. For example, it supports cooperative schemes, such as one in Ramallah where farmers bring their olive oil to be packaged and shipped abroad. PARC not only covers 70% of the costs of the cooperatives, but it utilizes contacts, such as Oxfam, to find a market for the goods, many of which are being sold in Oxfam fair-trade stores in Europe.[88] Indeed, this is an important form of relief assistance yet this short-term role should be contextualized and situated within the broader challenges facing the Palestinian society.

Since the beginning of this uprising, the political reality in Palestine has once again been transformed, and today both the challenge of the anti-colonial struggle and the agenda calling for democratization of political structures frame the social horizon. Intermediary Palestinian organizations are in the midst of this fluid and fluctuating political and social terrain. They are directly linked to the mass population, which is suffering not only at the hands of Israel's siege on Palestinian villages, but is also affected by the changes in the national movement. In the context of an uprising in which the main confrontations are occurring outside populated areas, an armed resistance has become a central dimension of the intifada; and at the same time, with the absence of large-scale delivery of emergency assistance or collective support mechanisms, the population is retreating to the private sphere and individual survival mechanisms.[89] Moreover, some describe the signs of increased self-sufficiency apparent in the villages as follows; "This is a self-reliance that is based on a need to survive and a product of desperation. It is not the product of a grassroots movement – of communities that are working together to achieve a common goal."[90] In this respect, it is clear that while some PNGOs such as PARC are providing effective forms of short-term relief and others have engaged in professionalized forms of action, there seems to be a lack of vision on how to bridge the complex challenges facing the society at present.

[88] "Self-sufficiency and Survival," Palestinian Civil Society Under Siege (7) The Challenge of Agricultural Development, *On the Record, Electronic Link to Civil Society in Palestine*, Vol. 15, No. 7, July 1, 2001.

[89] On the intifada see, "A Double Responsibility" Palestinian Citizens of Israel and the Intifada, an Interview with Azmi Bishara. *Middle East Report*, 217, Winter 2000; Rema Hammami and Jamil Hilal, "An Uprising at the Crossroads." *Middle East Report*, 219, Summer 2001.

[90] "Self-sufficiency and Survival." Palestinian Civil Society Under Siege (7) The Challenge of Agricultural Development. *On the Record, Electronic Link to Civil Society in Palestine*, Vol. 15, No. 7, July 1, 2001.

ANNEX
Methodology, Theoretical
Framework and Field Work

I. Methodology, Theoretical Framework

Three approaches are used in this study: the organizational approach, the Institution as a stabilization of power relations and the sociological intervention approach.

1- The organizational approach

As Crozier and Friedberg (1977) theorize, this approach understands an organization as a social construct aiming to solve problems of collective action. The existence of the organization supposes a minimum of integration of the behavior of the concerned social actors who pursue divergent objectives. Thus the organization sets up a structuring game, whose nature and rules indicate a series of possible "winning strategies" (stratégies gagnantes). It follows from this that nothing is written or decided arbitrarily by the organization. There remains room for incertitude and maneuver. The concept of organization preserves the autonomy of the actors. However, the rules influence collective decisions by limiting differences with regards to the fundamental objectives of the organization. These rules are the product of human activity, and constitute an exterior constraint on individual decisions. They refer to a system of legitimacy. The rules also have to be in

harmony with the "philosophy" of the organization and its members. It is a matter of a process of regulation, more than constraints determined once and for all. Thus through collective action, this process of regulation allows for the creation, and the transformation, of the rules (Carré & Zaoual 1998: 328). This approach is very helpful to grasp the diversity of actors within the organizations. The donors or PNGOs actors do not mirror in their decisions immobilized rules decided once and for all, but reflect negotiation and contradictions even within the organization.

2- The Institution as a stabilization of power relations

To be able to analyze the relationship between donors, local and international NGOs, discourse analysis is not sufficient; there are also practices: institutions, architectural arrangements, regulations, laws, administrative measures, scientific statements, morality, etc. that form an intensified surveillance and control mechanism creating policy. One should study the local and international NGOs and the donor agencies as institutions. However, as mentioned in the previous approach the institution is not only an apparatus, which follows the rules, but these rules are generated by the apparatus. In this Foucauldian perspective, one should understand the institutions by studying power relations. As Al Amoudi suggests, this means that the following points must be analyzed:

- The system of differentiation, which permits one to act upon the actions of the others.

- The type of objectives pursued: maintenance of privileges, the accumulation of profits, the exercise of a function, etc.

- The means of bringing power relations into being: system of surveillance, complex means of control, etc.

- Form of institutionalization: these may mix traditional predisposition, legal structures.

- The degree of rationalization: the bringing into play of power relations in a field of possibility may be elaborated in relation to the effectiveness of the instruments and the certainty of the result (Foucault, 1982 ; cited by Al Amoudi, 2000).

However, the institution cannot be defined as "an independence with the pattern of events they generate, but as a stabilization of power relationships according to the five points exposed above" (idem.: 20-21)

3- The sociological intervention approach

For such research, which is a matter of scholarly reflection on the development process and actors, it is very important to involve the actors themselves in the analyses of their actions. This can have a tremendous impact on helping the actors analyze the meanings of their action with the help of scholarly collaboration. It is no longer a matter of subjectivity and objectivity, where in such debate the researcher has to keep his "neutrality" but, on the contrary, the researcher can have a role in determining the sense of the actions. Furthermore, it is time to make a break in the mutual ignorance of the parallel tracks in the mode of an organization, between the academic sphere and the world of action and development. This project proposes an intensive exchange between these two parts. The methodology, developed by the French sociologist, Alain Touraine, has been applied in much research on the social movements in France and in Central Europe (1987).

II. Field Work

This book examines two hypotheses. The first hypothesis postulates that the negotiations between donors and recipient NGOs, over the definition of the agenda for development projects in Palestine, are weak. The system and process of decision-making reflects donor priorities more than needs drawn by the local NGOs and their constituencies. The second hypothesis concerns networking: because donors and INGOs provide more than mere financial resources, they do have an impact on the empowerment of local NGOs in Palestine and on the enforcement of their role as new actors within national social movements and in the political field, therefore bearing new forms of legitimacy coming from abroad.

To examine the first hypothesis, we studied the mechanisms for decision-making from the ideas stage, in order to identify the source of the project and the extent of the involvement of the donors. This mechanism is very complex as many actors intervene in the decision making process at different levels and in various stages. The focus is on:

1. The model(s) promoted by prominent international institutions;

2. The mechanisms of donor and INGO interventions: working directly with the PNGOs, geographical and institutional decentralization, donor consortium, PNGOs and INGOs consortium;

3. Sectoral agendas: the decision of sectors concerned, processes of decision making between the headquarters of donors or the local

offices in the recipient countries;

4. Project first draft agendas: the negotiation between local offices of donors and recipient NGOs about the idea of the first draft;

5. Project last proposal agendas: the compromise between them regarding the objectives, methodology, partners (state or other NGOs), reporting, specific groups focus;

6. Project evaluation: the extent of intervention of the donors in the project implementation, the extent of cooperation in case of modification of the terms of references during the implementation of projects;

7. The impact of the dialectic relationship between donor agendas and recipient agendas on sectoral policies and strategies;

8. Comparing the agenda process, according to variations in the source of funding between international agencies, Western NGOs, Arab NGOs, religious foundations and Palestinian diaspora foundations.

Regarding the second hypothesis related to networking, the following issues will be examined:

1. The scope and the nature of what has been called transnational social movement organizations and the mechanisms for the constitution of global networks and issue networks, and the ways and magnitudes of the insertion of the PNGOs in them;

2. The impact of these networks on the enhancing of the capacities of the local NGOs as sustainable developmental actors in terms of management skills, technical expertise, local community (participatory) development;

3. The impact of the transnational networks on the interaction of the PNGOs with the PNA: autonomy of the NGOs vis-à-vis the PNA, co-operation with the PNA, involvement of the PNGOs in the decision-making process regarding the design and operation of the development;

4. The impact of the insertion of the PNGOs on the transnational networks with regards to the conflict within the different groups of civil society and if these networks are capable of providing new grounds of legitimacy (in other words, do the universal values they

promote create a new basis of legitimacy in the face of traditional forms, based in religion or tradition or culture?);

5. The process of mutual interaction between transnational networks and local ones (what do international NGOs learn from the local NGOs?);

6. The impact of the insertion of the PNGOs into transnational networks with regards to the conflict within the different groups of civil society (for breakdown of the questions posed to the interlocutors, see Annex 1);

Issues such as funding and agendas are always very sensitive. For this reason, the methodology is complex, quantitative as well as qualitative. This research attempts to determine and confront potential discrepancies and gaps between intentions and actual programs. To this end, it has dealt with that which remains unspoken, assumed or silenced. Fieldwork was undertaken at both the horizontal and vertical levels. The horizontal level is meaningful for examining the different elements that come into play in the interaction of agenda setting and networking processes and their frequency. At the same time, vertical in-depth investigations have as their objective the aim to go beyond the formal and the apparent for a richer understanding of these complex issues. The details, from an anthropological perspective, reveal the contradictions between speech and deed.

The interviews with the leaders of NGOs, INGOs and donor agencies dispensed with the formal questionnaire which contains fixed and standard questions, in favor of using open and semi-open questions which leave the interlocutors with the freedom to expand on certain issues. However, this does not mean the absence of defined criteria for measuring the extent of interaction between donors and recipients and the process of negotiation (see the framework for analysis in Annex 1). The indicators and criteria were established with the help of the preliminary surveys, and the previously mentioned study by the Welfare Association (Hanafi, 1999).

Methodology and Sampling

Donors and NGOs are not homogenous, neither are their strategies and modes of action. The usual way of differentiating NGOs is through their fields of activity, thus differentiating social service-NGOs, development-NGOs, ecological-NGOs and so on.

In the context of the relationship between NGOs and donors, another

typology will be suggested, which is oriented on many other axes:

- For the donors: size of the donation; date of initial funding in Palestine; nature of the organizations (governmental, inter-governmental, non-governmental, and INGOs); having local contacts or not; solidarity organizations or not; religious organization or secular; mode of cooperation with PNGOs.

- For the Palestinian NGOs: size of the NGOs; sectors of intervention; informal political affiliation; years of experiences; locations (Gaza or West Bank); member organizations or not; modes of action; modes of contact with the PNA.

Data collection was difficult, although almost all of the selected interviewees accepted to answer some, if not all, of the questions. The sensitivity of the issue slowed donors' responses to requests for information. The degree of enthusiasm in answering the questions varied from person to person. There were sometimes discrepancies and inconsistencies between sources for various donors, due in part to some organizations releasing confused or disorganized data or using different INGO accounting systems. When the interlocutors did not give sufficient information about the negotiation process between donors and recipients, and in which there are probably unspoken aspects, we utilized our experience and knowledge of these actors (from previous contacts and research).

The empirical methodology consisted of the following steps:

1. The archives of some NGOs related to the projects submitted to the donors (whether rejected or not) were requested in order to retrace the history with donors and thus understand the current interaction between donors and recipients. At the same time, the annual reports of these NGOs were consulted. Here, some projects were taken as units of analysis to be examined in detail, as potential case studies.

2. To be able to analyze the role of the international and local organizations in many global and regional events, the literature produced by them in the form of books, reports, proceeding papers, and meeting minutes were consulted.

3. A 'sample' of 33 donors and 45 PNGOs was chosen for interviews. Donor organizations are constituted of governments, inter-governmental organizations (IGOs) and INGOs. Concerning PNGOs, different categorizations were established. The choice took into account the NGOs that are accessible and willing to give information

to the research project. Here, the relations and connections that the researchers have in this milieu are very important. The PNGO 'sample' was distributed between the three sectors chosen by this project (health, women and development, and human rights and democratization) and between the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

4. The research was conducted within this sample through formal (and eventually informal) interviews. The interviews were constituted of two parts. A general part, and a more specific one where some projects were studied intensively, utilizing an approach similar to that of the anthropologist, looking for the finest details, in order to find, what A. Polaney has called the grammar of the actors' speeches. Every donor (or INGO) and every PNGO was asked to provide details about 6 approved projects/programs, which were be selected according to the main political events in Palestine which are supposed to have influenced donor policies: the first project/program undertaken, one project in the beginning of the Intifada, one project after the Madrid Conference, and the last three projects/programs. The same selection was made on six projects/programs that donors refused to fund. Donors, INGOs, and PNGOs were also asked to provide other examples they consider as "typical."

5. A sociological intervention group was constituted and composed of specialists in social sciences, as well as actors in the PNGOs, INGOs and donor agencies. These actors were chosen from the interview 'sample' and are active and experienced in the field. The group met for debating the complex issues involved.

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2005: (With Eyal Benvinisti and Chaim Gans) (ed.) *Israel and the Palestinian Refugees*. Heidelberg: Max Planck Institute for Comparative Public and International Law.

(ed., with Sarah Ben néfissa and Carlos Milani) *NGOs and Governance in the Arabic World*. Cairo: Center of Political and Strategic Studies of Al Ahram. (In Arabic).

This book aims to inquire into the ways in which external actors influence Palestinian NGOs in terms of their development policies and their relative promotion of democratization, and secondly, to investigate the capacity of Palestinian NGOs to contribute to the elaboration of global agendas through transnational activism and global conferences.

In order to circumscribe this broad problematic, the empirical data was drawn from organizations working within three sectors: in health, in gender and development, and in human rights and democracy. As the empirical investigation for this study proceeded, this study became aware that an examination of the sites where the 'global' and the 'local' intersect and intertwine is inseparable from an analysis of the effects of new transnational relations, specifically the aid system, and their impact on local social formations. This is to say that local actors and social structures do not remain static, but are transformed as they are drawn into new transnational relations and then seek to negotiate their place within the aid industry and their relations with donors and international NGOs.

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