ISLAM, CIVIL SOCIETY AND SOCIAL WORK

MUSLIM VOLUNTARY WELFARE ASSOCIATIONS IN JORDAN BETWEEN PATRONAGE AND EMPOWERMENT

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Islam, civil society and social work

Muslim Voluntary Welfare Associations in Jordan between Patronage and Empowerment

Islam, maatschappelijk middenveld en sociale zorg
Gezaghebbende teksten, rituele praktijken en sociale identiteiten
Particuliere Islamitische welzijnsorganisaties in Jordanië
tussen bevoogding en ontvoogding

(met een samenvatting in het Nederlands)

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INTRODUCTION

Introduction

The Historical Background of the Civil Society Concept from a Theoretical Perspective

The concept of civil "society" as the realm of voluntary self-organization and association by citizens has largely been defined in contrast to the state. This understanding of civil society originates from late 18th century and early 19th century Europe, during which time the rising bourgeois classes were in the process of emancipating themselves from the strictures of absolute monarchy, church and feudal estates as well as traditional bonds of kinship. This process was championed by philosophers such as Ferguson, Hegel and DeTocqueville who, each in his own way, envisioned a society of autonomous individuals who on a voluntary basis would group together in order to defend and promote their common interests, vis-à-vis the state's authorities. This civil society was expected to hold the state's authorities accountable to the public will.

For much of the 20th century, however, the concept of civil society disappeared from usage. It resurfaced again in the 1980s. Once again, the theme of defending or promoting citizens' interests and rights vis-à-vis (potential or actual) tyrannical or oppressive state institutions was central to its definition. The concept was brought to the fore by dissident movements in the former Communist bloc countries of Eastern and Central Europe, and powerfully embodied by the regime-defiant heroism of figures like Lech Walesa from Poland and Vaclav Havel from Czecho-Slovakia.

The revival of the concept also resulted from criticism of the idea of state-led modernization of the so-called "Third World" countries that had dominated development thinking since the 1950s. During the 1980s and early 1990s, development experts and policy makers in the Western world came to see the role of the state in economic and social development in developing countries in an increasingly negative light. Accordingly, the state was criticized for its lack of accountability and representativeness, authoritarianism, corruption, wasteful expenditures and distortion of market forces.

During the 1990's, however, it became apparent that neo-liberal policies imposed by international financial institutions in the so-called "developing" countries resulted in the dismantling of state-run programs in the realms of education, health and social welfare. This, in turn, had negative consequences for the socio-economic position of the poor and the vulnerable in those societies which often led, ultimately, to general social and political instability. This prompted several development organizations, Western governments and eventually the World Bank to embrace the idea of strengthening non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in developing countries as the most realistic vehicles for social development. Voluntary associations as expressions of authentic desires of citizens in favor of social and economic justice, democratization and human rights were at least potentially regarded as the proper antidote to unaccountable state bureaucracies as well as to the threats of social disintegration and the instability that resulted from profit-oriented market economies. The new ideal among established Western development institutions became that of partnership between market, state and civil society for the sake of development for the common good. Civil society came to be seen as the natural haven for positive human values in the realm of democracy, equality, freedom and human rights.[1]

Such normative expectations of civil society have been criticized by scholars from as diverse backgrounds as Britain's John Keane, Jude Howell and Jenny Pearce, Neera Chandoke from India and Maha Abdulrahman from Egypt. Such scholars emphasise that actually existing civil societies are marred by tendencies that, in many ways, represent the opposite of these values. First, organizations established by citizens on a voluntary basis are not, by definition, democracy-friendly in their structure, values and goals. Adolf Hitler's Nazi party started as a voluntary organization, for instance, and the same applies at present to mafia organizations, Al-Qa'ida, and the Ku Klux Klan. Second, civil society institutions are not always as autonomous from the dynamics of state and market as some idealistic voices like to hold. Third, civil societies invariably reflect existing socio-economic inequalities. Civil society organizations representing wealthier and more powerful groups in society usually have a greater economic, social and political clout then those representing relatively underprivileged sections of society.[2] In this regard, Howell and Pearce distinguish between two different approaches toward civil society ideals: the dominant one underlines harmonious partnership between state, civil society and market economy, while the alternative approach underlines conflicting interests between grassroots associations that, on the one hand, represent underprivileged groups of society and, on the other, represent the state, profit-oriented companies and more privileged civil society forces.[3]

Dominant approaches to civil society have also been criticized for the euro-centric nature of their underlying assumption that the existence of any civil society requires "equal, autonomous and self-determining individuals free from the bonds of kinship, ethnicity and faith." As a critical response to such approaches, Robert Fatton responded that in the case of Sub-Saharan Africa, civil society "has to be conceptualized as the realm of collective solidarities generated by processes of class-formation, ethnic "inventions" and religious "revelation," and not so much by individual autonomy and self-determination.[4]

This dissertation focuses primarily on the dimension of religious "revelation", faith and discourse as this is reflected in the discourse of Jordanian Muslim voluntary welfare associations as well as translated into practice. The aim is to analyze the degree to which discourses and practices reflect and uphold patterns of patronage and/or empowerment. When the former is true, relationships of dependency are reinforced through practices of aid, cultural activity and education; when the latter describes the nature of these discourses and practices, the beneficiaries may hope to become relatively autonomous and self-reliant citizens. Related to this issue is the question of the impact of traditional socio-cultural patterns on the one hand and modernization processes on the other. The same goes for the issue of individual autonomy versus collective identity.

Determining the "Muslim" nature of NGOs

In a country like Jordan, it is no easy matter to identify the degree to which a voluntary organization may be described as "Islamic" or "Muslim." After all, legally speaking, an official category of "Islamic" voluntary welfare associations does not exist. And Jordanian government officials as well as the leadership of Jordan's General Union of Voluntary Societies (GUVS) emphasise that, according to Jordanian legislation, NGOs are prohibited from making any distinction between people on the basis of religion or origin, whether it concerns applicants to their services or candidates for membership. The same officials and GUVS leaders do acknowledge, however, that religious beliefs and a common religious discourse can be an important factor when people associate together and carry out social work within their community.[5] It is obvious, then, that Islamic NGOs in Jordan are a sociological and anthropological phenomenon; but not a formal and legal category. However, given the wide diffusion of Islamic beliefs, discourse and practice in Jordanian society, especially with regard to social well-being and family issues, it is also difficult to delineate Islamic NGOs from non-Islamic ones on a purely sociological or anthropological basis.

In terms of overlapping membership and religious ideology, some NGOs are affiliated with The Muslim Brotherhood Islamist movement. Indeed, these were often initiated by one, or more, of The Muslim Brotherhood's leaders and, in terms of their motivation as well as their efforts of Islamization toward their clients and/or the wider public, are clearly derived from Islamic beliefs and discourse. There are also, however, NGOs who spring from similarly formulated Islamic beliefs and promote similar Islamic socio-cultural messages to their clients without having any (obvious) connections with Islamist movements. In this regard, it should be noted that there is not always a clear-cut boundary between Islamists and non-Islamist observant Muslims in Jordan. The Islamist movement spreads its influence in Jordanian society by creating, expanding and fostering social networks through *da'wa*, or missionary, activities in as many arenas of Jordanian social life as possible. Personal relationships, familial and tribal structures, mosques as well as institutionalized NGO work are used as vehicles by members of The Muslim Brotherhood as part of this process.[6] As is typical of social formations based on social networks that, to a considerable degree, transcend the formal memberships of organizations, it is impossible to determine with precision the limits of The Muslim Brotherhood's influence in Jordanian society. Moreover, in determining the extent to which someone is socially included or excluded from membership in and/or activities of Islamist voluntary welfare associations, formal affiliation to a particular religious organization, such as The Muslim Brotherhood, is not usually considered relevant by those involved within these associations. Instead, the correct ideological outlook, normative orientation and lifestyle are typically deemed more important.[7]

There are also local NGOs who combine secular with religious discourses in their work for social development. Toward the international donor community, they present themselves as secular development organizations; while, internally, they may disseminate a religious discourse to get their developmental messages across to the local public. Associations headed or established by members of the Jordanian royal family often provide us with examples of this type of NGOs. For, it is certainly true that the Jordanian monarchy propagates the reform and modernization of Jordanian society in accordance with the developmental values espoused by the global community and enshrined in the UN Millennium Development Goals and various other UN treaties on human, women's, children's and disabled person's rights. Yet, at the same time, this push for modernization is publicly anchored in the (Arab and Islamic) values and habits that are part and parcel of local society. Thus, towards the end of the 1970s, The Hashemite Fund for Human Development (JOHUD) headed by Princess Basma issued a *fatwah* (religious edict) from the chief *Mufti* of the Kingdom that permitted Muslim citizens to pay their *zakah* (Islamic wealth or poll tax) to this development institution.[8] Moreover, JOHUD also runs a Goodwill Campaign in the name of the Islamic concept of *'ihsan* (goodwill and charity) that is expressly based on Islamic values of solidarity and support for the underprivileged. The campaigns' activities are concentrated during the holy month of Ramadan.[9] The Fund also accommodates religious objections to charging interest prevalent in local communities when it introduces micro-credit schemes there with the aim of setting up micro-businesses among poor families.[10] Islamic scholars are involved in giving religious lectures to convey the Fund's message on developmental issues like family planning and women's rights across. Ghusoon Diab al-Kareh, director of the educational program of the Young Women's Muslim Association (YWMA), another "royal NGO" patronized by Princess Sarvath, is not entirely happy with the label "Muslim" in her association's name. In her experience, it does not help if one wishes to garner support in the Western world. In Jordan itself, it raises the expectation of a "correct" religious association that meticulously observes the *shari'ah*. In reality, the association functions largely as a secular association. Muslims as well as Christians work there and many of the women employees are dressed in Western style clothes without headscarves.[11]

Even foreign development organizations operating in Jordan that have no Muslim background whatsoever have to take local religious sensitivities into account. For, instance, the British development association Questscope – which specializes in working with children at risk (usually school drop-outs from poor families with severe social problems, and at risk of ending up involved with crime and/or addiction problems – has chosen a local Islamic women's association to implement its program of empowering "girls at risk." Indeed, from the point of view of a traditional Arab community, nothing provides a safer place for girls than a charitable women's association with a strong reputation of piety and chastity.[12]

In other words, precise distinctions between "Islamic" and "non-Islamic" NGOs cannot be made in a Muslim society, such as Jordan's. *Al-'Afaf* Welfare Society is an NGO that promotes the "right Islamic approach" to marital life. Abdullatif Arabiyyat, also one of the leading personalities of The Muslim Brotherhood-based Islamic Action Front Party (IAF), is Al-'Afaf's founder and president. The Society's general manager (not Arabiyyat) insists, however, that it cannot be labeled as "Islamic," since "there is no such a thing as an Islamic association in Jordan." Rather, he argues that, as the overwhelming majority of Jordanian society is Muslim, it is only "natural" for an association like his to give expression to Islamic values. By this argument, the general manager emphasizes his group's appeal to all people in Jordanian society while avowedly dissociating it from political Islamic movements.[13] While perhaps a certain interest in marketing flavours his approach, this should not distract us from Arabiyyat's main point: attaching labels to NGOS on the basis of their Islamicness should only be done with extreme caution.

Categorizing Jordanian Muslim NGOs

1. *Islamist associations.*
   These are voluntary welfare associations established by representatives of political Islam, most often The Muslim Brotherhood Movement. Their discourse, in combination with their social activities, is clearly aimed at the Islamization of society and at countering those "alien" social phenomena deemed so harmful to an Islamic way of life.

2. *Politically unaffiliated conservative associations.*
   These associations engage in activities and espouse a socio-cultural discourse similar to that of the Islamist associations, though they differ from the Islamists on the grounds that their founders and present members have no, or only marginal links to political Islam.

3. *Progressive Muslim associations.*
   Rather than defending and bolstering an Islamic identity in the face of political, social and cultural threats posed by external forces deemed "hostile" to Islam (as holds true for the previous categories), these associations prefer to advocate modern reinterpretations of the Islamic message and, in so doing, may counter those of the traditional voices, in order to enable Muslims to engage fully in the modern and developed world.

4. *Secular organizations engaging in Islamic discourse.*
   These are not expressly based on a certain Islamic model, but still engage in modernist forms of Islamic discourse in order to reach certain target groups.

5. *Associations not engaging in any kind of Islamic discourse (in a Jordanian context, this applies solely to Western or Christian ones).*

Here there follows a brief explanation of background and the types of social activities in which each association is engaged. For reasons of space, it will be given in note form. Concerning social background, it will be indicated whether, ant to what extent, an association may be characterized as tribal, urban, rural, Palestinian and so on.[14] If the data concerns a women' s NGO, this will be indicated as well. All other NGOs than those established or run are either exclusively or overwhemingly male in membership. In terms of the association' s activities, another kind of categorization will be used: whether they are of a multi-purpose, or of a specialized nature.

1. *Islamic Center Charity Society*

- Relationship to Islamic Discourse: Islamist. Established by leading figures of the Islamist trend, first and foremost the leadership of The Muslim Brotherhood, this is widely regarded as The Brotherhood's social wing. Working out of an Islamist motivation to promote the "Islamic way of life" as understood by The Muslim Brotherhood, toward their own clients as well as toward the wider public
- Social background: mixed. Palestinians as well as East Bank Jordanians are represented. Generally, these are significantly more urban than rural
- Type of activities: multi-purpose
- Engaging in financial and in-kind aid to orphans and poor, and mediation and reconciliation in the case of social conflicts in families or the local community
- Educational activities on: a) religion; b) childhood development; c) marital relationships; d) social behavior in public space; e) health issues; f) vocational training
- Mediation in employment seeking and income-generating projects for needy clients
- Health institutions (clinics, hospitals)
- Educational institutions (kindergartens, schools, community college and university)

2. *Al-'Afaf Welfare Association*

- Relationship to Islamic discourse: Islamist. Established by prominent Islamist politician, former IAF secretary general and Muslim Brotherhood member Abdul Latif Arabiyyat. Tries to Islamize society by disseminating Islamist discourse on marriage and family issues
- Social background: mixed in terms of ethnic background. More urban than rural
- Types of activity: specialized in marriage issues
- Yearly mass weddings
- Educational activities on a) religion in conjunction with; b) childhood development; c) marital life; d) social behavior in public space (to a limited extend); e) health issues

3. *Islamic Anwar Al-Huda Welfare Association*

- Relationship to Islamic discourse: Conservative. Established by Mrs. Madiha Kokh, former head of secondary girls' school. Active in social and charitable work, strongly religiously motivated in a traditional sense associated with and promoted through notions of *da'wa*, but with no explicit involvement in political Islam
- Social background: women, ethnically mixed, urban
- Type of Activity: multi-purpose
- Financial aid and aid in kind to the poor
- Reconciliation and mediation of conflicts within families
- Educational activities on a) religion; b) childhood development; c) marital relationships; d) health issues; e) vocational training
- Limited mediation in seeking employment for clients

4. *Islamic Samma Welfare Association*

- Relationship to Islamic discourse: Conservative. Links with political Islam seemingly absent
- Social background: tribal and rural
- Type of activities: multi-purpose
- Financial and in kind aid to the needy
- Educational activities on a) religion; b) health issues; c) vocational training
- Income-generating projects for needy families
- Health institutions (dental clinic)
- Educational institutions (kindergarten)

5. *Al-Faruq Welfare Association for Orphans*

- Relationship to Islamic discourse: Progressive Muslim. No binding relationship with a particular Islamic doctrine, but generally in favor of a humanistic and liberal approach toward Islam that does not distinguish between Muslims and non-Muslims, religious or secular in social relationships or public life. It disseminates religious discourse to clients and local public in order to promote such liberal and modernist understandings of religion. Not in favor of the Islamist movement.
- Social background: mostly Palestinian (refugee-camp based), to a limited extent East Bank Jordanian (village based)
- Activities: multi-purpose
- Financial and in-kind aid to orphan families (i.e. families lacking a regular income-provider)
- Mediation of conflicts in families and local community
- Educational activities on a) religion; b) childhood development; c) marital relationship; d) social behavior in public space; e) health issues; f) vocational training
- Health institutions (poly-clinic)
- Educational institutions (kindergarten and primary school)
- Income-generating projects for needy families

6. *Welfare Association for the Care of Orphans*

- Relationship with Islamic discourse: Conservative
- Social background: Ethnic composition unknown. East Bank Jordanian presence seemingly dominant. Urban
- Type of activities: specialized (orphanage institution)
- Educational activities for orphan children on: a) religion; b) childhood development; c) (future) marital life; d) social behavior in public life; e) health issues
- Plans for vocational training and for income generating projects for orphans

7. *Young Women's Muslim Association*

- Relationship with Islamic discourse: Secular (very little Islamic discourse at the level of the organization, aside from fund-raising during Ramadan)
- Social background: mixed in all respects, including the religious
- Type of activities: specialized

- School and vocational training institute for mentally handicapped children, adolescents and young adults, institute for training young women to teach the mentally handicapped and home training for families with mentally handicapped children

8. *Islamic Bani Hassan Welfare Association*

- Relationship with Islamic discourse: Islamist. Established by ex-IAF parliamentarian and ex-ambassador to Iran, Bassam Umoush. Personal links with the Islamic Center Charity Society as well
- Social background: tribal (of the Bani Hassan tribe), and mostly urban
- Type of activities: multi-purpose
- Financial and in-kind aid
- Mediation in tribal and familial conflicts and feuds
- Educational activities on: a) religious education; b) childhood development; c) marital relationships; d) social behavior in public space; e) health issues; f) vocational training; g) literacy course
- Income generating projects for the needy through micro-credits (planned)

9. *Islamic Educational Association*

- Relationship with Islamic Discourse: Islamist. Established and headed by Abdul Baky Gammo, one of the Jordanian Muslim Brotherhood founders. More Islamist figures, including an IAF politician, involved
- Social background: mixed, but with a significant proportion of Chechens, including Gammo himself
- Activities: specialized. Kindergarten and primary school
- Financial aid: school enrollment against fees according to income of parents. The poorest enroll on a free of charge basis
- Special educational activities on: a) religious education; b) social behavior in public space; c) literacy course for adults, as well as all the regular school subjects

10. *Umar Ibn al-Khattab Welfare Association*

- Relationship with Islamic Discourse: Conservative.
- Social background: mainly Palestinian, and urban-based.
- Activities: specialized. Orphanage
- Educational Activities on: a) religious education; b) childhood development; c) social behavior in public space; d) health issues

11. *Jordan Hashemite Fund for Human Development*

- Relationship with Islamic discourse: predominantly secular. It is also engaged, however, in the dissemination of a modernist Islamic discourse on issues like social development, women's rights and family planning
- Social background: mixed. Headed by Princess Basma
- Type of activities: multi-purpose
- Financial and in-kind aid
- Educational activities on: a) religious education in conjunction with; b) women's issues and rights; c) childhood development; d) health issues, including reproductive health and care for the handicapped; e) vocational training
- Income-generating projects (micro-credits)
- Educational institutions (kindergartens)

12. *Questscope*

- Relationship with Islamic discourse: Secular (Islamic discourse absent at organizational level). However, it does cooperate with local Islamic NGOs and religious individuals, including Islamists
- Social background: UK-based international NGO with local staff in Jordan
- Type of activities: specialized. Target group: "Children at Risk" (children from broken and/or socially weak families dropping out from school and in danger of getting involved with crime)
- Educational activities (for children) on: a) childhood development, including counseling; b) vocational training; c) income-generating projects

13. *Islamic Al-Urwa Al-Wuthqa Welfare Association*

- Relationship with Islamic discourse: Islamist. Established and dominated by Muslim Brotherhood members and others involved in the mainstream Islamist current
- Social background: mixed. Several East Bank Jordanian founders. However, urban-based Palestinians dominate active membership
- Type of activities: multi-purpose
- Financial and in-kind aid
- Mediation and reconciliation in conflicts in family and neighborhood

- Educational activities on: a) religion (including political topics such as Palestine and Jerusalem); b) social behavior in public space; c) health issues; d) vocational training

14. *Islamic Welfare Association of Salt*

- Relationship with Islamic discourse: Conservative. Main founders state-employed *'ulama'* (Islamic religious scholars)
- Social background: East Bank Tribes (from the city of Salt and surroundings)
- Type of Activities: multi-purpose, though educational ones dominate
- Financial and in-kind aid (in particular during Ramadan)
- Mediation and reconciliation in conflicts within family and neighborhood
- Educational activities on: a) religion; b) childhood- and youth development; c) marital relationship and gender; d) social behavior in public space; e) health issues; f) vocational training
- Income-generating projects
- Educational institutions (kindergartens)

15. *Al-'Ihsan Welfare Association*

- Relationship with Islamic discourse: Islamist. Founder and head ex-employee of the Islamic Center Charity Society
- Social background: women, mainly urban and Palestinian
- Type of Activities: multi-purpose
- Mediation and reconciliation within family and neighborhood
- Educational activities on: a) religion; b) childhood development; c) marital relationships – both b) and c) on the basis of informal counseling; d) vocational training
- Limited income-generating project

16. *Khawla' Bint Al-Azwar Association*

- Relationship with Islamic discourse: Conservative as well as progressive elements. Founded by *wa'izah*, or female mosque teacher, with the support of Questscope (see no. 12)
- Social background: women, urban and overwhelmingly Palestinian
- Type of Activities: Specialized. Focused on "Children at Risk" (cf. no. 12)
- Mediation and reconciliation in familial conflicts, through working with girls and their mothers

- Educational activities on: a) religion, mostly in conjunction with; b) childhood development; c) marital relationships; d) social behavior in public space; e) (mental) health issues; f) vocational training
- Income-generating handicraft project

17. *Southern Society for Special Education*
- Relationship with Islamic discourse: uncertain. Founded by prominent figure of tribal society in Ma'an.
- Social background: members of southern Jordanian tribes.
- Type of activities: specialized (care for the physically and mentally handicapped).
- Financial aid and in kind aid for the needy on occasional basis
- Educational activities on: a) childhood development (of handicapped children), religious discourse used in order to break the shame among families for having such children; b) marital relationships of the handicapped; c) health issues pertaining to handicaps; d) limited vocational training and income-generating project for deaf girls.
- Health institutions: polyclinic for the handicapped, including labs, diagnosis, medical treatment, physio- and speech therapy and outreach to families with handicapped members, including home training. Financial rates are according to income, and the poorest are diagnosed and treated free of charge
- Educational institutions: primary school for the deaf

18. *Al-'Aqsa Welfare Association*
- Relation to Islamic discourse: Islamist, with outspoken progressive tendencies. Founded and headed by Nawal al-Fa'uri, ex-IAF and ex-Muslim Brotherhood member who used to be the first woman representative in the IAF *Shurah* Council and who is at present member of the Islamic Center Party (*Hizb al-Wasat al-Islami*). Promotes interpretation of Islam in favor of women's and children's rights
- Social background: women, and mainly East Bank Jordanians from the provincial town of Madaba and surroundings
- Type of Activities: multi-purpose
- Financial and in kind aid
- Educational activities on: a) religion, especially in conjunction with; b) childhood development; c) marital relationships and gender; d) health issues; e) vocational training; f) literacy course
- Income generating projects (through micro-credits for needy families)

- Educational institutions (primary school for the deaf, plans for secondary school and vocational training for the deaf)

19. *Orthodox Association in Fuheis*

- Relationship to Islamic discourse: no such discourse, since it is Christian. Represents the Orthodox Christian community in a social/communal, and not so much in a religious sense
- Social background: East Bank Orthodox Christians from Fuheis
- Type of activities: multipurpose.
- Financial and in-kind aid to the needy
- Cultural activities (theatre, music, singing)
- Educational institutions (nursery)

20. *Society of the Blessed*

- Relationship to Islamic Discourse: uncertain
- Social background: urban, ethnic composition unknown
- Type of activities: specialized, focused on kindergarten
- Financial aid and in-kind (mainly during the two major Islamic feasts *'Id al-Adha* and *'Id al-Fitr*)
- Educational activities on: religion (Qur'anic course for adults)
- Educational institution (kindergarten)

21. *Society for the Memorization of the Qur'an*

- Relationship to Islamic discourse: Islamist (established and run by Muslim Brotherhood figures)
- Social background: ethnically mixed, more urban then rural, centres segregated according to gender.
- Type of activities: specialized (in religious learning)
- Financial and in-kind aid (during *'Id al-Adha* and *'Id al-Fitr*)
- Educational activities on: a) religion (Qur'an, Hadith, Islamic ethics), also in conjunction with; b) family relations; c) social behavior in public space

22. *Red Crescent Society in Salt*

- Relationship to Islamic discourse: conservative
- Social background: East Bank tribes from Salt
- Type of activities: specialized (orphanage for girls from families that rejected them)

The Structure of the Dissertation

This dissertation takes the concept of civil society as its main theoretical focus. In Part One, we deal with the relationship between Islam and civil society. In Chapter One, a closer analytical look is taken at the civil society concept as such. It will be discussed primarily as a realm that consciously organizes the socio-cultural lifeworld of citizens. In Chapter Two, we discuss how this concept can be applied to Muslim societies and to mainstream Islamist currents within the modern Middle East. In Chapter Three, we move on to the role of Islamist NGOs in the Arab world. Here we probe the degree to which these organizations exist as modern institutions reflecting horizontal civic (middle class-based) networks; concomitantly, we also explore the degree to which the same organizations promote traditional hierarchies and patronage.

Part Two situates empowerment and patronage within the general context of power relations between state and (civil) society in Jordan. Chapter One describes these relations from the perspective of state hegemony and patronage. In Chapter Two, the perspective of four prominent types of non-state sociopolitical actors in Jordan – political parties, professional associations, organizations representing employers and laborers, and the Islamist movement – is highlighted. Chapter Three describes and analyzes the Jordanian NGO sector.

Part Three focuses more closely on the religious discourses of Jordanian Muslim voluntary welfare associations. We explore how these discourses reflect patterns of empowerment and/or patronage. Chapter One puts Islamic socio-economic ethics in a historical perspective. Chapter Two describes and analyzes religious motivations and social ideals in the discourse of associations affiliated to The Muslim Brotherhood. It also describes the views of non-Islamist outsiders regarding these associations, given the controversial nature of the Islamist movement and its social and political clout in Jordanian society among liberals, secularists and non-Muslims. Chapters Three, Four, and Five describe and analyze the role of Islam in the discourse of associations not affiliated to The Muslim Brotherhood.

Part Four deals with the socio-economic aspects of the Muslim associations' social activities and the ways in which they relate to patterns of empowerment and patronage. Chapter One deals with the provision of financial and in kind aid; while Chapter Two discusses those activities oriented toward employment.

Part Five endeavours to establish the extent to which the associations' cultural and educational activities reinforce notions of empowerment or dependency. Chapter One describes several cultural activities. The following chapter presents the educational discourse of one Jordanian Muslim association that specializes in religious education as an example. Chapter Three provides a theoretical background regarding two rather different educational approaches within specific Arab and Islamic contexts. It illustrates these approaches with Muslim associations' discourses and activities related to child development. Chapter Four deals with a variety of discourses and activities within the realm of gender relations.

In the Conclusion, we address the significance of Muslim NGOs' various discourses and practices as these relate to their role as institutions of Jordanian civil society. In particular, the relationships between these NGOs and the more general political and social realities of patronage and empowerment in Jordan will be discussed.

Part One

ISLAM AND CIVIL SOCIETY

1. The Concept of Civil Society

This chapter analyzes the concept of civil society from the perspectives of various theoretical approaches. From the outset, we adopt a flexible and dynamic understanding of civil society as a realm of voluntary activity involving the commitment of citizens in an associational framework. From this basis, the present chapter begins by describing civil society as a distinct domain between state and economy. Then it discusses the issue of the normative basis of civil society. The chapter ends with an exploration of how individualistic and community-based approaches relate to the concept of civil society.

Civil Society as a Distinct Domain

Various interests, ideas and beliefs present in, and emanating from, a society are served and promoted by a selection of ways through the civil society framework. Human solidarity on a voluntary basis is a basic principle of any civil society. Primordial relations, by contrast, such as those of family, tribe, region, nation or religion do not necessarily form a part of civil society. This is because, to a significant extent, membership in such groupings is simply of an ascribed nature (i.e. acquired by birth and/or blood-ties) and not based on voluntary choice. That does not mean, however, that tribal or religious life is by definition excluded from the realm of civil society. Within such spheres, people may very well engage in common voluntary activities to serve their aims, interests and convictions. Such voluntary engagement presupposes a kind of reflexive consciousness regarding values, ideals and preferences on the part of individual participants. However, the idea of individual consciousness may not be lauded above all factors, as some liberals are inclined to do. No individual develops his or her values, ideals or preferences entirely detached from relations with other individuals and from the general social, cultural, political and economic environment in which he or she lives. Reflexivity always has a strongly social and contextual dimension.

In order to be defined clearly, civil society must also stand in contradistinction to other spheres of political being. Since the end of the 18th century, it has been defined mainly in contradistinction to the state. In this reading, civil society is the institutional and associational expression of society vis-à-vis the state.[1] By organizing themselves voluntarily, citizens create a realm in which their interests, ideas, beliefs and preferences are served and promoted in accordance with their own desires and choices. In other words, a kind of counterbalance against the domination of bureaucratic state institutions, who are inclined to impose their own points of view, laws and regulations on the social domain, is provided for. Such voluntary organizations may directly oppose state institutions and/or their policies, but do not necessarily have to do so. What all of them do achieve, however, is to contribute to an institutionalized societal and cultural domain that is, to a greater or lesser extent, autonomous from the state.

According to certain political and social scientists, civil society should be distinguished from the realm of the economy as well. Cohen and Arato, for instance, regard civil society as the whole set of conscious, institutionalized and organized expressions of the "lifeworld."[2] By this term, they mean the socio-cultural realm of everyday human relationships, cooperation and solidarity guided by norms, values and cultural traditions in which individual identities are formed. Interpersonal communication is the rule in this sphere. This definition of lifeworld is borrowed from the German philosopher Jürgen Habermas, who distinguishes it from what he considers as the two subsystems of state and economy. Both of these subsystems, Cohen and Arato argue (after Habermas), function in ways that are fundamentally different from the lifeworld. Neither is oriented toward social life with its cultural norms, but rather is oriented toward empirical interests to be served as effectively and systematically as possible. In the case of the state, this interest is power, which is served through a hierarchical system of sub and superordination linked ultimately to negative sanctions exercised by the higher ranks in this system. In the case of the economy, the interest is financial gain – an interest that is served through systems of exchange and economic efficiency. In the sub-systems of state and economy, we find communicative patterns that are characterized by a "certain automatism," and that share a more impersonal and formal nature than occurs in communication within the lifeworld.[3]

Modern civil societies, according to Cohen and Arato, emerge when processes of differentiation within the lifeworld take place. Such processes of mutual distinction occur between factions that used to exist within one and the same institutional sphere. This applies to the realm of socialization, in which differentiation has taken place between family, on the one hand, and school education on the other. It applies equally to the realm of social integration, which is divided into various groups, collectives and associations. In the sphere of cultural reproduction, differentiation has taken place between the religious, the artistic and the scientific. Even the basic constituents of the spheres of personality, society and culture stand as differentiated from one another. In this process, personal identities and interpersonal relations are freed from the unquestionable acceptance of traditional values and institutions. The production of culture is freed from the dominance of external social institutions. Not surprisingly, such a process results in the emergence of a more critical and reflexive relationship to tradition. Reflexive forms of association, publicity, solidarity and identity come into being. On the level of communication, norms, established patterns and definitions of situations are questioned and reinterpreted by the members of the society. Such a process results also in a new type of voluntary association, with equal rights of membership, freed from kinship, patriarchal and other ascriptive restrictions on belonging and holding office. This type of association renews its forms of solidarity primarily in the free interaction of its present members.[4]

Such a modern civil society needs to be secured by rights that are legally codified.[5] It also implies that, unlike in traditional settings, the tasks of administration of the society is separated from the lifeworld and left to specialized state institutions, and that the economic tasks are left to the enterprises and companies of the market. In this way, the lifeworld will be freed from the burden of the patterns of communication essential to the two subsystems. The latter, in turn, need also to be institutionally anchored within the lifeworld if they are to be responsive to its needs and demands.[6]

Another renowned civil society theoretician, John Keane, disagrees with the exclusion of the realm of the economy from that of civil society. He argues that the aspect of satisfaction of the material conditions of life cannot be separated from the realm of civil society. Furthermore, he criticizes the proponents of a conceptual differentiation between economy and civil society for wrongly presuming that, in economic life, interpersonal solidarity, cultural norms and social values play no role. To refute this, he points to phenomena of human solidarity within economic life, such as workers' trade unions, the involvement of businessmen in charities or other social endeavors and the importance of social norms like trust, reliability, punctuality, honesty, friendship, group commitment and non-violent mutual recognition for any well-functioning market economy. On the other hand, Keane also acknowledges that market forces are, of themselves, blind to the social consequences of their own economic logic. Such consequences may be adverse for many individuals, social groups or even entire regions, leading to their marginalization and exclusion, he affirms. Furthermore, Keane continues: "market forces tend to spread into every nook and cranny of social life, thereby violating its plurality of voices and identities." He concludes by saying that, in the final event, markets and civil societies depend on one another for the existence of each.[7]

While his conclusion may be valid, Keane's argument overlooks the fact that a similar interdependence also exists between civil society and state, or at least a state that displays at least a minimum of accountability and responsiveness toward the needs, interests and opinions within the society of which it forms a part. It is generally presumed that civil society cannot be anarchic, but rather needs the administrative and legal framework of the state in order to exist. In turn, state institutions that are supposed to be accountable and effective in administering and serving the needs of the society are, like the market itself, in need of socio-cultural norms of trust, reliability, group commitment and non-violent mutual recognition. This applies to their internal functioning as well as to their relationships with (different sectors of) the (civil) society and the economy. Basing his observations on the workings of regional governments in Italy, the American political scientist Robert Putnam observes that, in settings where people are more prepared to act collectively to achieve their shared goals (i.e. where there is a great measure of social capital and dense civic networks), state institutions as well as markets operate more effectively.[8] For sure, modernity also knows the phenomenon of unaccountable states. The totalitarian state, in its pure, ideal-typical form, does not know anything like an autonomous civil society or public sphere. Unresponsive states without any connection to a civil society and devoid of civic norms may assume a monstrous and tyrannical character in relation to their citizens, but so do unrestrained and socially dis-embedded markets in relation to, in particular, the more vulnerable sections of society.

In my view, the system/lifeworld dichotomy is most useful for the sake of analytical distinction. That is to say it allows us to distinguish between different kinds of communication and practice, which spring from the basic mechanisms of the (respective) realms of lifeworld, state, and economy. Such an analytical distinction, however, should not lead us mistakenly to posit that there exists an actual separation between these three realms. Socio-cultural norms derived from the lifeworld are necessary for the effective, accountable and socially responsible way of functioning of the institutions of state and market alike. And indeed, the persons working in both subsystems are rooted in the lifeworld and have lifeworld-related orientations, norms and interests. Not surprisingly, therefore, we have the intermediary institutions of political parties, on the one hand, and trade unions, chambers of industry and commerce and employers' organizations on the other. These institutions can be regarded, in my view, as civil society institutions, since they are bodies of voluntary activity in which human solidarity for common interests and purposes is organized. Their activities and purposes, at the same time, reside within the subsystems of the state and economy respectively. However, these considerations do not alter the fact that such subsystems have their own operational logic, distinct from the lifeworld. This logic represents mechanisms – bureaucracy, hierarchic domination and economic efficiency for the sake of profit-making- that threaten the independence and integrity of the civil society and lifeworld, if such mechanisms are not rendered responsive to the latter. As a matter of fact, the mechanisms of bureaucratic administration and profit-oriented efficiency do penetrate the institutions of modern civil society to varying degrees.

The Normative Dimension of Civil Society

Besides the institutional aspects of civil society, there is the normative dimension of civility – by which I mean a spirit of non-violence, mutual tolerance and respect. Civil society institutions are supposed to deal with one another and with citizens in general in such a spirit, regardless of differences in belief, political conviction, lifestyle and organizational affiliation.[9] There are scholars who prefer not to include this criterion of civility in the definition of a civil society institution. Political scientist Berthold Kuhn, for instance, is of the opinion that confining the concept of civil society to those actors proven to be democracy-friendly and non-violent is problematic, because such criteria cannot be accurately measured. To illustrate this point, he points to an organization like Greenpeace, often considered an example of a transnationally operating civil society force, yet capable of considerable violence in some of their more spectacular acts.[10] Dropping the criterion of civility implies that organizations such as Neo-Nazi-groups, the Italian Red Brigades, the Ku Klux Klan, Mafia organizations and Al-Qa'ida are all to be counted among the forces of civil society, as long as their membership and their activities, including violent ones, have a voluntary basis and emanate from the grassroots of society.

The inclusion of civility among the criteria for membership in civil society certainly carries complications. Yet, at the very least, we might state that the prevalence of a spirit of civility is essential for the maintenance of a stable, inclusive and pluralist civil society and is, thus, a necessary ingredient of it. It is important to realize, however, that (collective) actors may emerge in the realm of civil society that are not so civil in terms of their final objectives and even some of their current activities. Keane has elaborated on this issue. As far as final objectives are concerned, he points to 19th and 20th century European history during which the "energies of groups, such as missionary movements and religious and trade union associations… fought for their right to survive and thrive as *civil* associations by using universalist language that threatened the principle of plurality upon which civil societies thrive."[11] He emphasizes that any civil society is beset by tension, conflicts and contradictions between interests. In this vein, he asserts, civil society tends to paralyze and undermine its own pluralism.[12] These tensions and conflicts constitute also civil society's endogenous sources of incivility. Violence, according to Keane, is not simply "the anti-thesis of civil society;" rather, he claims that every known form of civil society tends to produce this same violent antithesis, thereby preventing it from becoming a haven of non-violent harmony."[13]

The case of Islamist currents in the Middle East shows us as well that the same ideology or even the same movement can give rise to peaceful and civil as well as to violent and uncivil trends. My own judgment is that, since the concept of civility does provide an important normative framework for a modern, democratic and pluralist civil society, the activities of civil society actors must conform to a minimum of civility in order to be classified within the realm of civil society. A certain tolerance and respect for the rights of others is basic in this regard. Groups whose main objectives and types of action contradict this distance themselves from the realm of civil society. However, as is the case with the system/lifeworld divide, while a distinction between civility and incivility can be drawn, there is no clear dividing line between the two phenomena. Civility may disintegrate or degenerate into incivility, and incivility may evolve into civility under certain circumstances. Yet, consensus on where the boundaries between civility and incivility lie is non-existent. Whether Greenpeace crosses the line of civility by taking physical action against objects and devices that pollute the maritime environment is a question that will always give rise to disagreement. To put it in more general terms: criteria for inclusion in the realm of civil society will never be precise and universally accepted, and there will always be a measure of doubt in this regard.

Civil Society: Individualistic or Communitarian?

The concept of civility relates primarily to peaceful relations among the individual members as well as the organizations of (civil) society themselves, rather than to the institutional relationship with the state as well as with the economy.[14] This dimension touches upon another kind of contradistinction: that which exists between civil society and the individual. Civil society is supposed to transcend the naked self-interest and egoism of individuals by providing for solidarity within associational frameworks. Virtually all classical political and social theoreticians – Saint-Simon, Comte, Tocqueville and Durkheim, etc. – tried to discern an associational realm for citizens situated between, on the one hand, "unbridled individualism" and the "atomization of the competitive market society," and, on the other, a "state-dominated existence."[15] Hegel elaborated on this theme in particular. He adopted Immanuel Kant's notion of the individual as a bearer of rights as well as the singular agent of moral conscience, an ethos that transcends individuality.[16] The latter ethos should, according to Hegel, be cultivated through social integration of individuals in what he called "corporations:" voluntary associations where egoistic motivations of individuals would give way to collective concerns and identifications, and where individuals would be educated to internalize the common good and develop civic virtue.[17]

This approach to good and peaceful relations between the members of (civil) society implies a much more active understanding of the idea of a civilized society than a mere cool indifference to people who are "different" in political conviction, religion, lifestyle, ethnic origin, and so forth. Such an understanding seems also to fit better with the societal visions of Islamist movements, Islamic intellectuals and Muslim NGOs, who start from the principle of *al-amr bil-ma'ruf wal-nahy 'an al-munkar* (to order the good and to forbid the evil). As an illustration, the following statement by Ali Kettani, Secretary General of the Islamic Academy of Sciences in Rabat, Morocco, may serve:

> I would like to differentiate between the Western concept of civil society, based on liberty and freedom, and that of the East, based on social justice, equality,

> between people of different religious and ethnic backgrounds, and responsibility for righting wrongs. Responsibility is an Islamic obligation. According to the *Hadith*, a person should change whatever is wrong with his hand (i.e. by his deeds), with his tongue (i.e. by words), or, if these prove to be impossible, at least with his heart.[18]

Apart from the question of how such religious ideals relate to social practice, which is invariably problematic, Kettani touches upon two different normative approaches toward the civil society concept. A civil society defined by individual freedom and liberties (often negatively formulated in terms of a rejection of interference by state and community) is contrasted with a communitaristic one based upon religious injunctions regarding social responsibilities and justice. This raises the question of how a liberal civil society, based primarily on “individual liberty” relates to a religiously inspired civil society, based on “moral and social responsibility:” a “rights”-based approach versus a “duty”-based approach. A political scientist like Christopher Bryant perceives a clear difference between the two types of (civil) society in terms of civility. According to him, civility “demands that in all of life outside the home, we afford each other certain decencies and comforts as fellow citizens, regardless of other differences between us.”

Bryant continues to observe, however, that “it [civility] is…a cool concept. It does not require us to like those we deal with civilly, and as such it contrasts strongly with the warmth of communal, religious or national enthusiasms.”[19] It may seem that, with their emphasis on social and moral duties for all individual members of society, such enthusiasm is at odds with a liberal pluralist approach in which the freedom, independence and privacy of the individual are central values. However, the search for a balance between individual liberties and collective duties has long been conducted by Muslims, Christians, Jews and secular people in Western and Muslim societies alike. There is no reason to think that the two approaches – one focusing on individual liberties and the other on collective duties – are mutually incompatible.

2. Islam/Islamism and Civil Society

The relationship between Islam, including Islamist movements, and civil society has been the subject of extensive academic debate, with some scholars under the impression that Islam and civil society remain fundamentally incompatible. At the opposite end of the spectrum are those who claim that, if properly implemented, Islam inherently leads to strong, effective and flourishing civil societies. In between the two poles, there are those who acknowledge the possibility as well as actual existence of "Islamic civil societies," but posit no single and unequivocal relationship between Islam and civil society. Instead, they see positive as well as negative Islamic phenomena and tendencies in terms of civil society principles. Roughly speaking, since I am not in favor of essentialist observations regarding the relationship between Islam and civil society (wholly positive or definitively negative approaches simplify the matter equally), this thesis identifies with the middle path. In this chapter, an overview of (some of) these different approaches is given. This will be followed by my own analytical observations on the subject.

Islam as an Obstacle to Civil Society

Certain Western orientalists and Arab secularist thinkers join forces to argue that the Islamic religious establishment has always constituted a serious hindrance to the development of a truly civil society in the Middle East. Established orientalist scholars like Bernard Lewis and Eli Kedouri suggest, for instance, that Islamic law is inherently totalitarian and, thus, prevents the emergence of strong societal institutions able to check the tyranny of rulers.

Differently, though also pessimistic, scholars like Ernest Gellner and John Hall argue that Islamic law reflects the view of a tribal society that is, by definition, hostile towards established state authority. This hostility prevents the emergence of stable states in the region and thereby also precludes the development of stable democracies and civil societies.[1] According to Gellner, the traditional secular Muslim rulers were often weak since they lacked legitimacy in terms of the shari'ah, the sacred law that was the domain of the *'ulama'* (Muslim religious scholars), who constituted the religious leadership of the Muslim community. Due to this lack of legitimacy, he maintains, Muslim societies were always strong vis-à-vis the state, but that did not make them civil societies. The urban associations in those societies were of a "segmentary" nature, implying that their membership was ascribed by birth and therefore involuntary. Moreover, economic security and autonomy of citizens is, according to Gellner, a basic condition for the existence of any civil society. This has been lacking in non-Western, specifically Muslim societies, however, where rulers extort or confiscate the wealth of their subjects at whim.[2] In the views of scholars like Gellner, the notion and reality of civil society originate in certain politico-social developments embedded in Western history and, therefore, cannot be applied to the Muslim World.

Scholars in the Arab world are also skeptical of a Muslim civil society ever being realised. Indeed, in blaming Islam and its religious institutions for the prevalence of the despotic states in Middle Eastern history, the views of a selection of prominent Arab scholars, like al-Tahir Labib and Aziz al-Azmeh, resemble those of Lewis and Kedouri. Both sets of scholars draw attention to the historical legitimization of authoritarian rule in the name of Islam by religiously sanctioned paradigms like the duty of obedience. Such paradigms were employed by religious establishments in order to promote reactionary religious ideologies that have generally served the interests of the rulers.[3]

These scholars usually exclude modern Islamist movements from their definitions of civil society, since they regard them as present manifestations of an authoritarian Islamic tradition. Al-Azmeh is vocal in criticizing Islamist movements for having a populist totalitarian discourse that contradicts, according to him, true liberal democracy. He maintains that this discourse is based upon essentialist premises, defined solely in Islamic religious terms, regarding the "true character and identity" of "the people." Their unitary conception of society and the popular will, according to al-Azmeh, dismisses all contradictory interests as running counter to their understanding of society's essential character.[4]

Moreover, al-Azmeh argues, the approach of Islamists toward women demonstrates that their vision of an essentially Islamic society is bound up with notions of a traditional and patriarchal order. This order is characterized by personal ties and loyalties based upon principles of allegiance and obedience.[5]

Islam as the Benefactor of Civil Society

Vehemently opposing the theories of the Western orientalists and aforementioned Arab secularists, we find other Arab figures who point to a long history of civil society in the more urbanized parts of the Arab and Muslim worlds. Basing their arguments on the cultural importance of *turath* (heritage), these scholars postulate that, despite – or perhaps because of – many occasions in which medieval and early modern Muslim authorities abused their religion for selfish purposes, such authorities were, in places like Egypt, the fertile crescent and North Africa, also opposed traditionally by a strong Islamic civil society under the guardianship of religious institutions and figures. This civil society, termed by them as *mujtama' ahli* ("popular" or "peoples" society), was composed of institutions like guilds that organized craftsmen, *awqaf* (endowments) aimed to serve the public good, cultural associations and religious groupings. These institutions used to integrate individuals, families and social groups in their networks. The latter protected the members of the community and constituted a sphere that was relatively autonomous vis-à-vis state-power. Through this medieval/early modern mujtama' ahli, Islam preserved its emancipatory essence. Real suppression of the Islamic *umma* (community of believers) with its civil institutions came only with the establishment of non-religious political authorities in the Arab-Islamic world, in particular the 20th century modern nation-state. Democracy and civil society in the Arab world can, according to this school of thought, only be (re-) established through a revival of this Islamic citizens' society.[6] Arab academic thinkers who follow this line of thought are often sympathetic to the moderate Islamist movement with its voluntary associations and institutions, which they see as a revival of the old mujtama' ahli.

Differences can be noted, though, in such thinkers' views on the role of contemporary Islamic civil society and Islamist movements. Saif al-Din Abd al-Fattah Ismail, a political scientist at Cairo University, regards a revival of the mujtama' ahli in modern form as the only possible means to overcome "the crisis of politics in the Arab world."[7] In regard to traditional forms of association, like tribal and familial groups, Ismail would like to preserve their positive elements (mutual support and security for the individual), while rejecting the negative elements of factionalism and nepotism.[8] Here, the preservation of Arab and Islamic authenticity requires the "democratic" implementation of the shari'ah and the reduction of foreign influence among the "interests of the 'ummah" (community of believers), in addition to the struggle against the authoritarian state.[9] For Ismail, the role of contemporary Islamist movements, as prominent participants in voluntary associations and institutions, is vital if the mujtama' ahli is to be revived.[10] On the other hand, his desire for an 'ummah that remains unified against threats from state power as well as from the forces of foreign domination ensures he seeks cooperation with non-Islamist political and civil forces. As a result, he advocates a "new social contract" to overcome the divisive intellectual and political dichotomy of secular versus religious.[11] Only such an alliance, from Ismail's perspective, will generate a civil society strong enough to resist the intervention and corruption of state authority both from within and without.[12]

Unlike Ismail, Hebba Rauf Izzat, a political science researcher at Cairo University and outspoken Islamist dismisses secular forces, like the leftists or the liberals, as politically and socially insignificant representatives of Arab and Muslim society. For Izzat, the Islamists represent the authentic communal spirit by virtue of their ideas. Accordingly, she points to the Islamists' success at developing economic, political and cultural services for Arab-Islamic populations as proof of their cultural authenticity. The prevailing division between secular nation-state and religious societies, by contrast, Izzat views as a deviation from the historical Arab-Islamic world. The role of a contemporary mujtama' ahli or Islamic civil society she describes as a temporary and transitional one: to preserve the continuity of the 'ummah and put political pressure on the secular state. In the end, however, when state and society are completely Islamized, the mujtama' ahli will lose its relevance and an organic unity between state and society will prevail.[13]

Historian Khalid Ziyada from Beirut University, however, envisions a permanent role for a modern version of an indigenous mujtama' ahli in a more democratic and just Arab world. According to him, there needs to be a conscious revival of the historically rooted division between, on the one hand, the state (as protector of order) and, on the other, the intermediary civil sphere (as the liberal arena in Arab and Muslim societies).[14]

Not only academics, but prominent Islamist political figures, like the exiled leader of the Tunisian Islamic *Al-Nahda* (Renaissance) party, Rashid al-Ghanuchi, passionately uphold the affinity between Islam and civil society. To summarize, al-Ghanuchi argues that it was Islam alone that elevated people from a state of involuntary and instinctive belonging to tribes to a state of voluntary allegiance to an Islamic society. For al-Ghanuchi, this society is solely based on a faith that individuals embrace freely. It is administered by a state whose relationship with its citizens is based on bay'ah, or a contract by which citizens entrust a ruler with the task to order and to forbid.[15] This authority is, in turn, bound by Islamic law.

The Islamic faith has, according to al-Ghanuchi, a profound civilizing influence on believers. Therefore, it consolidates civil society. Islam declares all humans to be equal creations of the one and only Lord. It judges them according to their deeds and encourages them all to make the best use of God's creation. This creation is God's bounty from which no human is excluded. The authority of religion in the Islamic society is founded on the free exercise of *ijtihad* (individual interpretation) of the Islamic sources by the religious scholars. It is, however, the people who, on an individual basis as well as collectively through a freely elected parliament, decide which religious interpretation is to be adopted. Furthermore, Islam endows the believers with a conscience and a sense of responsibility to enjoin good and forbid evil. According to al-Ghanuchi, religious values – and, in particular, those relating to the concept of *taqwah* (fear and deference of God) – form the best guarantor of a civil and compassionate spirit in society. In contrast, secularized Western societies have, to a great extent, lost this spirit. This has led to the prevalence of undesirable phenomena like materialism, selfishness, racism and senseless violence that invariably threaten the functioning of civil society. Only religion and piety, according to al-Ghanuchi, may bring the necessary balance, justice and peace to society. Interestingly, however, al-Ghanuchi avowedly prefers a secular democratic system to any kind of despotism, even if the latter claims to be Islamic. But his ideal remains the Islamic democratic system of shurah (consultation).[16] In that system, the free and flexible exercise of ijtihad regarding the interpretation of *Qur'an* and Hadith provides the religious basis of political pluralism, freedom of expression and a representative multi-party state. A powerful belief in religiously sanctioned freedom even prompts al-Ghanuchi to accept parties upholding atheist doctrines, notably the Communists.[17] His socio-political thought is extremely influential among moderate Islamist circles in the Arab world, as well as in Arab migrant communities in the West.

The Middle of the Roaders

As we have seen, when pondering the relationship between civil society and Islam, scholars often adopt diametrically opposing positions: Islam either is, or is not, fundamentally compatible with the notion of civil society.

As in any debate, however, there exists a middle party consisting of those who prefer not to identify with either extreme. Yet, here too, among these "middle of the roaders," there is to be found a wide diversity of views.

Civil Society as a Means rather than an End

Some scholars view Islamist movements as actual phenomena of civil societies in the Arab and Muslim world that play a powerful role there, but find it hard to see a correspondence between these movements' ultimate aims and the principles that underlie pluralist civil societies.

Emmanuel Sivan mentions several methods and strategies applied by Islamist movements in civil society. Among these he includes the establishment of voluntary associations that provide services to the needy, the creation of autonomous spaces in the realms of education, economy and banking where the shari'ah is to be applied, and the ubiquity of public institutions like mosques and the legal system. However, Sivan also points to methods applied by Islamists that are questionable, to say the least, from a liberal point of view of civility. He mentions, for instance, vigilante-style actions to enforce "proper" Islamic behavior in terms of ritual life, dress and abstinence from "sinful" forms of entertainment, such as drinking alcohol. According to Sivans, Islamists use a mixture of persuasion and intimidation in this endeavor; at times, they indulge in acts of outright violence. As regards the final political aims of the Islamists, Sivan observes that they wish to seize state power in order to use all means and modalities at the disposal of the modern state (i.e. media, education and all other kinds of public institutions) to Islamize society completely. In Sivan's view, the Islamists will liquidate democratic liberties in the name of the shari'ah. Clearly, this entails a restriction of the sphere of civil society, even as compared with the present situation, and especially with regard to formal institutions.[18]

Distinguishing Moderates from Radicals

Other scholars tend to distinguish between different categories of Islamists as regards the civil society concept. Usually, "moderate" Islamists are distinguished from "radical" ones. Roughly speaking, the moderates correspond in discourse and practice to civil society norms and principles, while the radicals contradict these. The scholar who best represents this line of thought is perhaps Ahmed S. Mousalli, a political scientist at the American University of Beirut.

Mousalli reproaches the West at large for its one-sided approach towards the so-called Islamic fundamentalist danger. He points out that

Islamic fundamentalism is an “umbrella term for a wide range of activist discourses that tends to move from a high level of moderate pluralism, and thus inclusive democracy, to extreme radicalism, intolerant unitarianism, and thus exclusive majority rule.” Indeed, according to Mousalli, most mainstream Islamist groups in the Arab world are pluralistic, democratic and inclusive. While only a minority of the fundamentalists are “truly exclusivist and adhere to the notion of change through radical programs and uncompromising revolutions.”[19]

Moderate fundamentalist trends demand to participte in the existing political system and societal institutions. According to Mousalli, the moderate trend genuinely sees its involvement in civil society and its calls for pluralism as the road to salvation of the community and of individuals. In his view, the moderates are also generally willing to engage in a dialogue with the Western world.[20] This implies that moderate Islamist involvement in civil society is not merely a matter of tactics, but a strategic and normative choice that also determines their ultimate political aims.

Another example of a scholar who distinguishes radical, intolerant and violent versions of Islamic fundamentalism (or Islamism as he prefers to call it) from more moderate and civil ones is Mustafa Kamil al-Sayyid, a political scientist based at the University of Cairo. However, his approach toward traditional Islamic institutions as well as modern Islamist movements in Egypt, including the moderate among them, seems to be more critical than that of Mousalli. Pointing to authoritarian and intolerant tendencies among certain Islamist movements, al-Sayyid lists instances and incidents of censorship, intimidation and assassination by Islamist groups (including the more moderate voices), against all opponents – in particular, he singles out writers, intellectuals and artists. Egyptian society, according to him, is presently ruled over by an arbitrary and oppressive government, while her civil society is increasingly dominated by Islamists with tenuous claims to pluralist democracy.[21]

This does not lead al-Sayyid to exclude a priori religious institutions and actors from the arena of civil society, however. For him, associations of religious scholars, mosque communities and parishes belong to civil society in much the same was as political parties, trade unions and women’s movements do. In this vein, he argues for a more pragmatic and rational response to Islamist movements. The integration of moderate forces among the latter in civil and political society should not be prohibited, since al-Sayyid regards the disunity between secular and religious civil society forces as one of the major obstacles to political liberalization. This disunity allows the existing authoritarian regimes to retain their hegemonic position.[22]

Norms of Civil Behavior

Scholars like the Egyptian political scientist Hassanain Taufiq, American political scientist Mahmood Monshipouri and Egyptian sociologist Saad Eddin Ibrahim see possibilities for including Islamist movements in the realm of civil society, provided that they conduct themselves according to civil norms. Thus, Islamists must tolerate multiple understandings of Islam and society, abstain from the use of violence and respect human rights. According to Taufiq, the realms of civil society and the public sphere must be broad enough to entertain free debate on questions of state structure, religion in politics and the Islamist response to the crisis of democracy.[23] Monshipouri notes progress in the Islamist camp and optimistically observes that: "Islamists' views on the relationship among state, economy and society have been seriously rethought. Islamists treat democracy as a standard and universal good. They advocate a free market economy and, in Augustus Richard Norton's words, "certainly have at least a foothold in civil society."[24]

Saad Eddin Ibrahim believes that, under the right democratic conditions, the Islamists may evolve into something akin to the Christian Democrats in Europe or the religious parties in Israel. In his analysis, the 1980s and 1990s witnessed a revitalization and growth of the realm of civil society in the Arab world. This was due to certain factors: the growth of a better-educated middle class; the Arab states' inability to manage conflicts in the region successfully; the latter's failure to meet the socio-economic needs of their populations; and the global wave of democratization. Ibrahim notes that while such conditions of crisis spurred civil society organizations in the Arab world to pressure states for greater liberalization, they also led to the rise of Islamic militancy. He speaks of a "three way race" between autocratic regimes, Islamic activists and civil society organizations. "One variant of the race," according to Ibrahim, "has been the squeezing of civil society out of the public arena by autocratic regimes on the one hand and by Islamic activists on the other. In another variant," he continues, "[b]oth the autocratic regimes and Islamic activists have attempted to win over or appropriate civil society organizations."[25] At the same time, he acknowledges that Islamist movements like the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood have opted for peaceful means in pursuing their objectives. They created in fact new organizations of civil society through their activities of teaching, preaching and grass-roots work in service provision.[26]

Islamic Activism and the Modernization of Society

Having surveyed a range of views on the relationship between Islam, Islamist movements, and the notion of civil society, we now turn to the impact of modernization on the role of Islamist movements in civil societies. American scholar John L. Esposito and his French colleague Gilles Kepel hold widely cited views on the matter. While holding certain reservations concerning their optimistic assessments of these movements' prospects, the present thesis is to a significant extent inspired by their approaches.

According to Esposito, the political, military and socio-economic failures of modern secular states in the Muslim world have generated the resurgence of Islam as a significant socio-political alternative. Islamic movements thus offer an Islamic solution as a third alternative to capitalism and communism. Such movements are convinced "that a modern Western bias or orientation, secularism and dependence on Western models of development have proven politically inadequate and socially corrosive, undermining the identity and moral fabric of Muslim societies."

Islamic movements, Esposito suggests, have their main membership base among the modern educated younger generation of professionals and students and among the lower middle class. These groups feel deprived of their social, economic and political rights by the state. They are Islamically-oriented members of a modernizing society and committed to social and political activism to create a more Islamic society or governmental system. A small, but significant minority among them have become militant, turning to violence to overthrow existing governments, seize power and impose their vision of an Islamic order upon society. The majority of them, however, are committed to peaceful activity within civil society.

This peace-keeping majority has pursued its strategy of Islamization of society from the bottom up through participating in, and eventually dominating existing civil society institutions such as the professional associations, as well as establishing their own civil institutions and associations, such as charitable associations as well as whole networks of hospitals, clinics, mosques, day-care centers, youth clubs, legal aid societies, foreign language schools, banks, drug rehabilitation programs and publishing houses. These initiatives have become part and parcel of the mainstream of civil society in Muslim countries. The Islamic private voluntary associations that carry them have filled a void left by the state. They are an implicit critique on the inability of the state to provide adequate services, in particular to the non-elite sectors of society, and an alternative to expensive private institutions as well as to low-quality, overcrowded public facilities. They also provide a sense of community identity as well as spiritual and religious renewal. Islamic social activism has won many political supporters and votes in election time for the Islamist political parties in many Muslim countries, among the poor and unemployed as well as among the middle classes.[27]

Esposito points to the fact that in the relatively closed political systems of the Muslim world, Islamist forces have often constituted the only viable voice and vehicle for opposition. This being the case, they attract votes not only from ideologically motivated sympathizers but also from those who simply want to protest against the existing corrupt and authoritarian establishment. In a truly open political system, where strong civil society institutions can foster the growth of competing opposition parties, the Islamists will lose their monopoly on opposition. As he states, "promotion of the values and institutions of civil society is the hedge against the perpetuation of a culture of authoritarianism, secular or religious." In this regard, he mentions actual phenomena of Islamist parties who have adapted their ideology and programs to prevalent and basically secular notions of democracy, human rights and citizenship. They do so in order to compete for votes in relatively free elections in countries like Jordan, Kuwait, Egypt, Turkey, Malaysia and Indonesia. The underlying reason is that these parties have to take diverse interests and constituencies into account in a relatively open political climate.

Not only at the level of party politics, but also in intellectual life, debates are taking place in the Muslim world in which the Islamic tradition is rethought in respect to the issue of pluralism. They are conducted against the backdrop of modern global discourses on human rights, democracy and citizenship in the Muslim world itself, as well as the permanent presence of Muslim migrant communities in the Western world. Esposito mentions names like Rashid al-Ghanuchi, Muhammad Selim al-'Awa, Yusuf Qaradawi, Anwar Ibrahim, Abdulrahman Wahid and Nurcholish Madjid. They have produced a growing body of literature in which they reinterpret Islamic principles to reconcile Islam with democracy and political multi-party systems.[28] As Esposito shows, these thinkers also come up with more liberal and egalitarian interpretations of the Islamic sources regarding the status of non-Muslims in Muslim society.

Regarding gender relations, Esposito points to some reactionary Islamic thinkers and activists, who propagate a return to past practices regarding the status and social activities of women. Many others, including those belonging to mainstream Islamist movements like The Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt and Jordan and the Tunisian Renaissance Party, emphasize greater gender equality, not only in piety and worship but also in education and employment. In these countries, women are becoming more visible in the councils of Islamic parties and other organizations. Islamist women are also increasingly found in the professions, and as administrators and staff in schools, clinics and voluntary welfare associations.[29]

Esposito acknowledges the existence in the Muslim world of forces that oppose democracy in the name of Islam, like the conservative Saudi monarchy or certain militant Islamist groups. He stresses, however, the belief of many others that traditional Islamic concepts, such as shurah (consultation), *ijma'* (consensus), *maslahah* (general welfare) and *ijtihad* (individual interpretation), provide the bases for modern Muslim notions of an indigenously rooted version of democracy. [30]

According to Gilles Kepel, self criticism and an orientation toward pluralism and cooperation with other political currents have increasingly become the trend among, in particular, the younger intellectuals and middle class Islamists. The violence of militant Islamism, which has led to acts of large-scale terrorism like the attacks on Washington and New York on 11 September 2001, is increasingly perceived by him as having reached a stalemate.[31] Such acts, as well as the bloody cycle of Islamist terror and state repression in places like Algeria and Egypt during the 1990s, have made the more clear-sighted Islamist intellectuals, in the Muslim countries themselves as well as in communities of migrants and exiles in cities like London, realize that a rigid application of the politico-religious dogmas of their movement will lead to disastrous results.[32] The same goes for the political, economic and moral debacles of Islamist regimes in countries like Afghanistan, Sudan and Iran.[33]

The disillusionment of many Islamists has caused the latter to seek cooperation with the secular forces of civil society, in the name of the values of democracy and human rights. In Kepel's words: "they have put aside the radical ideology of Qutb, Mawdudi and Khomeini; they consider the jihadist-Salafist doctrines developed in the camps of Afghanistan a source of horror, and they celebrate the 'democratic essence' of Islam." Islamists defending the rights of the individual stand "shoulder to shoulder with secular democrats in confronting repressive and authoritarian governments."[34]

As a sociological explanation for this trend, Kepel points out that several decades ago, the Islamist movements recruited much of their following in the Muslim world among people born in the countryside who had migrated to the cities and lived through the trauma of rural exodus. This generation was taught en masse to read and write. They had thus been separated from their own rural, illiterate progenitors by a cultural gulf that radical Islamist ideology could exploit. Their children, however, knew nothing other then city life and modern educated culture. They were more likely to call into question the utopian dreams of their parents. The present generation of young Muslims growing up in the Muslim world's cities is, by contrast, less enthusiastic about the traditional Islamists' ideological advocacy of a high birthrate among Muslims. They want to improve their life circumstances by limiting the number of their children.[35] Furthermore, these young Muslims are making use of media unknown to their parents, such as telephone, Internet and satellite TV-programs. Moreover, they often have relatives living abroad. Their horizons are usually much broader then those of their parents.[36]

Kepel states that Islamists who have been more successful in educational and economic life are often most interested in finding a common ground with secular groups and democratic ideologues. Because they view "opening up to the world" as the only way to survive and advance both politically and economically, they may gain a lot from forging links with their secular and Western-oriented – or even Western – counterparts in the middle class. However, Islamists who are economically marginalized and/or radicalized tell a different story. They have nothing to gain from such an Islamist-secular middle class alliance, face many frustrations and often harbor volatile feelings. Many of them are to be found in jihadist-Salafist circles that organize themselves in secret organizations and terrorist cells, in the Muslim world itself as well as in Western countries.[37]

Islam and Civil Society: an Evaluation

As I began this chapter by stating, I believe that unequivocal answers regarding the relationship between religion/Islam and civil society (whether positive or negative) are mistaken either because they attribute a basically unalterable character to Arab and Muslim societies or because they are too particularistic and Euro-centric in their definitions of the concept of civil society. This assessment applies to Western orientalists as well as to certain Arab secularists. Both of whom postulate that Islam and its public institutions inherently have always precluded the emergence of a "true" civil society, democracy and pluralism, and that they will continue to do so in the future. By contrast, I agree with the proponents of the mujtama' ahli school that the idea of a "secular" civil society that excludes any form of religious expression from its realm is, historically speaking, too narrow an approach to this concept. After all, the connection between civil society and laicité (the idea of a public realm free from religious interference, wherein all expressions of religious life are confined to the private sphere) is not even the product of Western history in general. Rather, it is the product of countries in which a revolutionary movement inspired enlightenment ideals has attempted to break the dominance of the Roman Catholic Church – the best known example of which is France. Other examples include countries like Spain, Italy, Portugal, Mexico and Brazil.[38]

By contrast, in countries with more diverse populations in terms of religion – e.g. Britain, the United States, the Netherlands and Germany – the relationship between church, state and society has emerged significantly differently. In these countries, religious communities have played a powerful role in the development of civil societies, which have translated themselves on occasion into confessional involvement in political life.[39] There is no reason, therefore, to exclude a priori Islamic institutions and movements from the realm of civil society. Rather, I favor a more flexible approach toward the civil society concept, as a realm of voluntary association and activity that is not coerced from above. According to this vision of civil society, human solidarity is organized or in the process of being organized for the sake of various interests, norms, values and ideals all emanating from the socio-cultural lifeworld, with its cultural (including religious), socio-economic as well as political dimensions.

What is troubling about some of the mujtama‘ ahli advocates is that they tend also to fall into the trap of essentializing the character of their own Muslim societies. The concept of mujtama‘ ahli is formulated so as to be distinct from, or even so as to oppose the Western concept of civil society, which carries the Arabic translation of mujtama‘ madani. Its advocates often attribute to religion, and more in particular to Islam and its institutions, a central and dominant role in this indigenous civil society, since it is presumed to be in accordance with the "essential nature" of Arab and Muslim peoples. Such an approach may marginalize or even exclude those members of Arab or Muslim society who have little affinity with religious life, engage in religious interpretations that are different from the dominant view or are even outright atheists. It might be that the latter are inspired by Western philosophies or discourses. However, in a globalized world, the West cannot be excluded anymore from a Muslim civil society, as much as Islam cannot be excluded from contemporary Western civil society. Even the various currents within Islamism itself are strongly affected by various exogenous ideologies, ranging from Leninism (as expressed in the notion of a "vanguard" of the Islamic revolution and state) to Fascism (as expressed in the idea of the Islamic 'ummah as a "body" with its authentic "soul") to democracy, human rights and pluralism (which are supposed to correspond to "authentic" Islamic notions and practices). The point to be made here is that, by definition, civil societies are in a state of flux and are invariably affected by exogenous forces. Any attempt to essentialize "authenticity" always brings with it the danger of marginalizing and excluding those who do not conform to more or less fixed notions of this concept.

In this regard, it is not surprising that many secular and liberal-minded citizens of Arab states feel uncomfortable with the rise of Islamist movements, even if the latter currently behave in a relatively civil manner in social and political life. The following expressions of secular political activists in Jordan about their Islamist counterparts provide an example. In response to a question about the Islamists' attitude regarding civil rights and democratic freedoms, a human rights' activist in Amman with leftist leanings replied as follows: "in the current situation, where the Islamists are an opposition force, we can work very well with them. But I don't know how things would be if they ever reached power."[40] An activist for press freedom in Amman who politically defines himself as a liberal has a similar judgment: "The Islamic movement promotes itself now as defender of democratic rights and freedoms, because these enhance their own political chances. But a doctrine that advocates a religious state and society, you cannot really call that democratic. What will their attitude be if they ever come to power? We would be quite worried about how they themselves would deal with these democratic rights and freedoms."[41]

According to several Jordanian political observers, there is little debate on the religious or secular nature of Jordanian state and society going on in the Kingdom at present, because it is the regime, and not a free and pluralist public sphere, which ensures the necessary "balance" between religion and secularity. In the past, the government allowed the Islamists to be politically, socially and culturally active in public life and organize themselves. This had a pacifying impact on them. At present, the state is much more restrictive toward new Islamist initiatives in civil society and limits their opportunities for expression in the public sphere. In turn, this gives a reassuring sense of protection to liberal, secular and Christian citizens.[42]

The exclusionary tendencies and mutual suspicions between Arab secularists and Islamists notwithstanding, in the previous two sections, we also found people – on the one hand, intellectuals and activists of a secular orientation, Islamist advocates, on the other – who are willing to mend fences: among the liberals, there are figures such as Mustafa Kamil al-Sayyid and Saad Eddin Ibrahim; among the Islamists, we counted Saif al-Din Abdul Fattah Isma'il and Rashid al-Ghanuchi.

The Islamist Movement as a Manifestation of the Lifeworld

In terms of the system/lifeworld divide, I regard Islamic ideologies and activisms basically as phenomena focused on changing the societal order, including the political and the economic system, on the basis of values that are formed in the socio-cultural realm of the lifeworld. Enlightenment-originated secular ideologies like liberalism, Marxism and social democracy are system-focused. Generally speaking, their views on human nature are optimistic. They often presume that once the right political and economic system is put in place by humans, the best will come out of any human being. Religious or spiritual movements, on the other hand, are usually inclined to believe that improvement of the society as a whole starts with, and results from, changing the beliefs, mentality and attitudes of each and every individual and of the wider community. In particular among religious fundamentalists, this idea is based on the premise that the human beings' own rational capability to create a better societal order is limited, and that divine moral injunctions are needed for the believers to create such an order.

In the case of Islam, political scientist Nazih Ayubi emphasizes that the original Islamic sources (of Qur'an and Hadith) have very little to say on matters of governance and state.[43] Consequently, a specifically Islamic political order in the sense of an institutionalized state system does not really exist. Islam is first and foremost a message that calls upon all humans to surrender to the belief in the one God, which also implies following a code of moral behavior. However, Ayubi points out that Islamic morality is not simply a private morality but a public one that is collectively enforced.[44] The manner in which this collective enforcement is to occur is a much debated topic within Islamist circles. While mainstream Muslim Brothers take the lifeworld as their starting point by stating that an Islamic state can only emerge in a context of personal piety and a moral community that should be developed from below, Islamist radicals seem to suggest that such an Islamic lifeworld can only be brought into being from the top down by an Islamic state.[45] As Ayubi notes, however, Islamist contributions to the debate on the State in the Arab world have been very limited.[46]

The French scholar Oliver Roy concurs with Ayubi. Roy stresses that Islamist discourse on the state rarely ventures beyond emphasizing the moral principles, virtues and values like honesty, selflessness and fidelity (all derived from shari'ah), which all members of Islamic society, and first and foremost the leaders and functionaries of its state institutions, ought to possess. No matter how Islamists believe that the Islamic state should be realized, its only specifically Islamic function is pedagogic: to teach its citizens virtue. It is not institutional form that most counts, but the moral quality of each and every individual within the given institutional framework of an Islamic society. In Roy's words: "[t]he goal is not the state, but [rather] devotion, which is both an individual and a social practice."[47]

The same goes for Islamists' attitudes toward economic life. Shari'ah has its moral prescriptions and injunctions relating to economic life, such as Zakah as a tax that redistributes wealth from the wealthier to the needy, the prohibition of *gharar*, meaning any element of uncertainty in a contract and of *riba'* (usury) and inheritance rules. But these are isolated prescriptions. Something like a coherent, all-encompassing and institutional Islamic economic order does not exist. Some Islamists are inclined to embrace socialist or social democratic economic models, while others espouse a more capitalist reading of "Islamic economics" that emphasizes the right to private property and a market economy. As is the case with political life, Islamists consider respect for Islamic morals and values as the true basis for a successful economic life. Virtuous behavior of every individual in conformity with the norms of the shari'ah comes first. This implies self-limitation in the pursuit of material gain and redistribution of goods so that everyone's needs are met.[48] Ayubi describes Islamists' contribution to thought on socio-economic issues as even more limited than that regarding the state.[49] According to Abu Ruman, political analyst at the Al-Urdun Al-Jadid Research Center in Amman, the Islamist parliamentarians in Jordan have nothing to offer in terms of structural solutions to Jordanian society's socio-economic woes. Their contribution in parliamentary debates is largely limited to stressing (their interpretation of) Islamic socio-cultural values.[50]

The conclusion seems to be that in spite of the Islamists' claims of Islam as a comprehensive system of life offering solutions and answers to all kind of problems (including those related to the state and the economy) all solutions they offer are supposed to emanate from an Islamic ideology that focuses on the socio-cultural lifeworld. Such solutions invariably aim to subject the logics of state and economy to the Islamists' own divinely ordained moral logic.

Tradition and Modernity in the Muslim Arab Lifeworld

As explained in the previous chapter, Cohen and Arato make a distinction between a traditional and a modern lifeworld and civil society. The former unquestionably accepts existing patterns of authority, social organization and practice and cultural discourse, and is undifferentiated in terms of various social and cultural domains. The latter differentiates between social, cultural, economic and political institutions, each of them with its own mode of operation, and allows for critical and reflexive attitudes toward the above-mentioned existing patterns in all domains of life. In this connection, the issue of the consequences of modernization processes in the Middle East on the traditional Muslim lifeworld and its mujtama' ahli may be raised. Subsequently, we should enquire as to how the discourses of present day actors of political and social Islam in the Arab world in general, and in Jordan in particular, relate to "civil modernity" in Cohen and Arato's sense. Likewise, we shall ask to what degree the moral discourses accompanying the social activities of Muslim welfare NGOs in Jordan may be considered traditional or modern. While it is outside the scope of this chapter to provide a fully comprehensive analysis, some indicative answers may nevertheless be reached.

First of all, it is important to note that societal modernization processes in the Muslim world have not taken place in an entirely homegrown and indigenous fashion, as was the case in the Western world. They were to a large extent externally imposed, first by European imperial powers, then by the two superpowers of the cold war and finally by a Western – in particular US – dominated global economy. If we look at the impact of the imposition of artificially constructed nation-states on the Middle East, as well as at the penetration of a Western-dominated world economy on Muslim lifeworlds, the term "disintegration" might be more apt than "differentiation." Even before the advent of direct colonial rule, modern administrative reforms in Middle Eastern states diminished the independence of the traditional scholarly religious institutions and Sufi orders, took away their economic base by measures like nationalizing their awqaf (endowed socio-economic projects)[51] and other properties and turned them into state-dependent and government-legitimizing vehicles. Expanding state power as well as a penetrating capitalist world market destroyed the relatively autonomous socio-economic base of the traditional Muslim lifeworld. It did so by rendering the associations for craftsmen, professionals and merchants, in which religious scholars often played a prominent role, obsolete and superfluous. For sure, processes of differentiation took place in Muslim societies under the impact of colonial and post-colonial modernity. This differentiation, however, seemed roughly to have taken the character of a cleavage between a Western-oriented, secularized and state-centered elite on the one hand and the traditional middle and lower classes of the society on the other. The latter were still largely rooted in their traditional lifeworld. For them, religion often constituted an essential basis for giving meaning to a life which suffered traumatic shocks resulting from modernization processes over which they had no control and from which they insufficiently gained.

Such a mode of modernization, characterized by dependency and disempowerment, did give rise to a kind of critical reflexivity. This reflexivity, however, developed in a way that is somewhat different from what Cohen and Arato describe. The latter speak about a reflexive and critical relationship of members of modern civil society toward all kinds of traditional patterns. They do concede that, in the process of the emergence and development of a modern civil society, tradition itself is not abolished altogether. Rather, they state that a new, reflexive, non-traditional relation to tradition comes into being.[52] Cohen and Arato apparently base their analyses mainly on 19th and 20th century Western history. Middle Eastern history, however, must be viewed in its own right, as I endeavour to demonstrate below.

Patterns of modernization taking place during the 19th century in Muslim societies like those of the Ottoman Empire and the Egyptian state of Muhammad Ali (1805–1849) and his successors involved areas like state administration, law, economy and infrastructure. However, the top-down pattern of this modernization was mainly based on practical and utilitarian considerations pertaining to the effectiveness of state power and its economic base. On the socio-cultural level of the lifeworld, it mainly led to the marginalization of the traditional ideational and normative dimensions of life, rather than to a reflexive and critical transformation of the latter. Modernization and traditional religious orthodoxy increasingly appeared to be incompatible with one another.

This incompatibility led to a crisis to which the intellectual trend of Islamic modernism tried to provide answers. It did so by searching for a synthesis between modern reason and traditional faith. Muhammad Abdu (1849–1905), a trained religious scholar, was the most prominent exponent of this emerging trend of critical reflexivity toward religious tradition and of the systemic modernization processes. Abdu looked to find in the message of the Islamic revelation a moral framework for the modern developments and scientific and technical progress taking place in his society. To this end, he reinterpreted the Islamic message and Islamic concepts to make them compatible with modern and Western ideas; thus he appropriated John Stuart Mill's notion of utility; democratic ideas relating to public opinion and parliamentary life; and scientific laws of causality determining nature as well as human society.[53]

Abdu's thought gave rise to two, intellectually opposing trends. Some of his followers, like Mustafa al-Kamil and Lutfi al-Sayyid, pursued a greater reflexive distance from Islamic tradition by demanding a complete liberation of creative rationality from its weight. The other trend, represented forcefully by Rashid Rida (1865–1935), was alarmed by this approach. Rida put greater emphasis on Abdu's idea of the Islamic revelation as the all-encompassing moral framework for any human progress by emphasizing the need to return to a pristine, untainted form of Islam. This newly perfected social reality was to be based solely on the principles of Qur'an and *sunnah*.[54] His approach represented a return to dogmatism and away from critical reflexivity. It was based on the premise that that the Islamic literary sources contain nothing but the absolute truth and, therefore, must be followed by believers in all walks of life Concomitantly, the same sources also function as bases from which to critique the existing political as well as religious authorities. It is this kind of "dogmatic reflexivity" that became the ideological basis for modern Islamist political and social movements.

Reflexivity and The Muslim Brotherhood Movement

The original Islamist movement in the Arab world was The Muslim Brotherhood, established by Hassan al-Banna in Egypt in 1929. It emerged as a religion-based populist mass movement in an Egyptian society that was suffering the full impact of a top-down modernization process that had been largely dependent on the West, and, in particular, on colonial Britain.

At the political level, Egypt was nominally already independent at that time but remained under British tutelage, especially in the field of foreign and defense policy and external economic relations. Egyptian politics was hostage to the paralyzing power games between the British colonial authorities, the monarchy and the nationalist Wafd Party, and therefore unable to resolve the main political and socio-economic issues facing wider society. Political measures adopted by the royal palace, like the dismissing of any government or elected parliament pursuing policies deemed undesirable so as to rule by decree – measures supported by many aristocratic landowners – reduced Egyptian parliamentary democracy to a mockery. Not surprisingly, ordinary Egyptians had little faith in democratic politics.

At the socio-economic level, a massive migration from the countryside to the cities started to develop in Egypt, due mainly to the decreasing availability of cultivable land and the decline of the price of cotton, Egypt's main export-oriented crop, during the economic recession at the end of the 1920s. This development, increasing in strength in the second half of the 20th century, brought to the rural migrants psychological uprooting, social alienation and the dissolution of traditional patterns of social cohesion and control. The migrants were cut-off from their traditional settings and exposed to modern city life without adequate social and cultural capital; likewise, they were left vulnerable to the vagaries of the market in terms of jobs and wages. Economic recession led to a massive rise of unemployment and increasingly exposed the gap between the wealthy and the poor.

Thus, Egyptian society grew increasingly polarized. On the one hand, there was a Western-oriented and secular urban elite. On the other hand, a wide swathe of the population was constituted by economically impoverished and socially frustrated middle and lower classes, virtually all of whom upheld a more traditional cultural outlook. Many from the latter group had grown to despise the adoption of Western cultural symbols, materialist-consumerist attitudes and the apparent moral laxity of the elite. In response to this, the traditionalists emphasized notions of cultural authenticity and "true" religious morality.

It was against this backdrop that The Muslim Brotherhood easily won a following. For The Brotherhood promised a better, more moral and fairer political, social and economic order; this was to be based on the comprehensive implementation of the moral values and laws derived from Qur'an and Hadith and enshrined in Islamic Law. Such fundamental changes were to be accompanied by a collective program for social welfare. The Muslim Brotherhood held instant appeal; it gained a mass following among the lower and lower middle classes as well as members of the professionally educated strata, intellectuals and students.[55] The distinctive aspect of this movement's ideology was that it did not diagnose Egyptian society's problems merely in terms of foreign political and economic domination, as the leftists and nationalists had done. Rather in the policies of Western imperialism and its "agents" among Egypt's political, intellectual and religious establishments, The Brotherhood perceived a wholesale onslaught against the religious, moral and cultural identity of all Egyptians, and of the worldwide Islamic 'ummah (community of believers).[56] In other words, the message of the Islamist revolt represented by The Muslim Brotherhood was based upon the kind of "dogmatic reflexivity" developed by thinkers like Rashid Rida, and phrased in socio-cultural terms.

The Brotherhood's reflexivity was critical toward many of the existing political, economic and cultural patterns in Egyptian society. In this regard, it did not spare Egypt's long standing religious authorities based at Al-Azhar University. According to the leaders and thinkers of The Muslim Brotherhood, Azharite scholars were engaged in theoretical theological exercises that were irrelevant in terms of solving the problems and ills of Muslim society. In the words of Muslim Brotherhood ideologue Muhammad al-Ghazali, these scholars "had gone to sleep, and the Muslim society has followed them."[57] As an alternative to the perceived dangers of "alien" secular discourses and influences as well as to the passivity of the prevailing religious establishment, The Muslim Brotherhood offered a return to a blemish free form of Islam as it was/is reflected in the "eternal truth" of Muslim scripture and law. In other words, it looked to these original Islamic sources to provide for a solid, absolute and unquestionable "fundament" that could offer religiously viable answers to the problems of contemporary Muslim life. In this sense, The Muslim Brotherhood and similar movements in other Arab and Muslim countries can be described as "fundamentalist." They share this basic attitude with their counterparts in the Christian world and elsewhere.

Such fundamentalist attitudes, which reify supposedly "authentic" traditions in the face of real or perceived threats emanating from "alien powers," do not fully accord with Cohen and Arato's vision of modern civil society trends that are ready to question all traditional patterns and authority in society. In the vision of Cohen and Arato, and that of their teacher Habermas, civil society is of a particularistic nature and highly determined by the Western context in which it was born – a context in which youth and student movements during the 1960s and 1970s rebelled against all existing traditional patterns, including the institutions of family, marriage and religion. The kind of fundamentalism espoused by movements such as The Muslim Brotherhood is perhaps more in line with what theoreticians, such as John Keane (among others) have said about civil society movements with universalist pretenses. Such movements have dogmatic views on what would be best for all members of society, or even for humankind. Such views invariably clash with those of people of different interests and ideologies. They seem to thrive especially in political, economic, social and cultural conditions of crisis, fear and uncertainty. Of course, there is nothing specifically Middle Eastern or Muslim about these movements. Certain leftist and fundamentalist Christian currents in the West have displayed similar tendencies, and still do so. Even liberalism, with its emphasis on individual freedom, and secularism, with its insistence of relegating religion to private life, may become dogmatic by presenting their worldviews as fixed, essential, absolute and as universally valid "truths." Currently, we see in several Western countries the emergence of a kind of "enlightenment fundamentalism" as a reflection of anxieties and fears about the multicultural society, the presence of Muslims and the phenomena of Islamically inspired "fundamentalism" and "terrorism."

Like the above-mentioned Western ideologies, Islamism's dogmas may become more rigid under certain circumstances, and more flexible in others. The views of Sayyid Qutb (d. 1966) provide an example of extreme rigidity. For Qutb, humankind is divided, in Manichean fashion, between the forces of good and evil. Qutb's views are clearly represented in his most famous work, Ma'lim Fil-Tariq (Milestone along the Way), written while in prison. In this, the reader finds no room for compromise or rapprochement between those upholding the truth of "pure" Islam and those who would deviate from that vision. Indeed, Qutb indiscriminately brandishes those who disagree with him as *kuffar* (non-believers) and *jahilin* (ignorant) – among which he included the vast majority of Muslim society itself. Similar ideological and discursive patterns are to be found among the current jihadist-Salafist trends.

Flexibility and willingness to compromise and find a common ground with secular trends and non-Muslims are displayed by those Islamists who, as Muslim democrats, develop more open and inclusivist approaches. They stress the commonness of their values, ideals and aspirations with those of others. In the words of the leader of Jordan's Islamic Action Front Party, which is affiliated to The Muslim Brotherhood: "at issue now is not whether people are religious or secular, whether they promote the shari'ah or not. The real issue is whether they are willing to promote democracy, pluralism and human rights."[58] It must be noted, however, that even such inclusivist versions of Islamist discourse may be presented in a dogmatic fashion, in the framework of a scripturalist vision of Islam that has "an answer to all questions of life."[59] As Kepel remarks, these Islamists celebrate the "democratic essence of Islam."[60]

3. **Islamist Voluntary Welfare Associations:** Patronage or Middle Class-Based Civic Networks?

Islamist movements translate their vision of the Islamic message as the solid fundament offering answers to all problems of life into various activities: religious preaching, ethically correcting one's own as well as another's behavior, political activity and, last but not least, organized social work. This social work has given rise to the establishment of numerous voluntary welfare associations. In this chapter, a closer look is taken at the way in which these Islamist NGOs function at present in the Muslim Arab world. First, cultural and political trends of Islamic revival during the last three decennia with the concomitant social networks will be highlighted as basic to the existence of such associations. Subsequently, the assessments of some scholars regarding the nature of these associations – as either patronage-based institutions or the embodiments of relatively horizontal middle class networks – will be presented. Thereafter, the actual political functioning of these associations will be analyzed by looking at their relationship with the state. To finish, some observations on the political significance of these associations as civil society institutions will be made.

Religious Revival as a New Source of Social Capital

Muslim – including Islamist – voluntary welfare associations are the product of a society that traditionally cherishes and cultivates religious values.[1] Their role has been reinforced, however, by relatively recent trends of religious revival in the Arab world. These trends took place against the backdrop of modernizing developments over the last fifty years. They include the development of state structures that, while modern in a bureaucratic sense, are authoritarian and oppressive in a political sense, urbanization, the spread of mass education and mass media, globalization, and, lastly, the near ubiquity of the world market. The combination of these factors in many Muslim territories has led to serious socio-economic dislocations, a decline in traditional forms of social cohesion, cultural alienation and concomitant feelings of deprivation.[2]

As the French scholar of Islam Francois Burgat claims, these alienation processes were aggravated by the introduction of a secular culture from the top down: first by the European colonial powers; and later by the culturally secularist and/or politically Western-oriented elites of the newly "independent" Arab states. This culture strongly marginalized the societal role of the traditional religious values. Such values continued to prevail, however, in the culture of the Arab societies' middle and lower classes. Once demographic pressure and economic recession exposed the failure of these elites' modernization programs to bring the bulk of the population meaningful prospects and prosperity, the road was paved for the ascendancy of cultural and political trends that drew upon traditional Islamic values, albeit in a form that had been profoundly adapted to modern society.[3] Burgat's countrymen Roy and Kepel have pointed out that frustrated and modernly educated young (Arab) Muslims, on the one hand products of their modernizing and globalizing societies while, on the other, excluded from opportunities of social mobility and advancement felt most attracted to these trends.[4]

Such forms of dislocations, exclusions and (relative) deprivations largely emanating from the dominant systems of state and (global) market must have heightened the attraction of a religious discourse that emphasizes the lifeworld values of community relations and the cultivation of morality in the context of daily life in a modern and urban environment. Through such a discourse, religious movements such as The Muslim Brotherhood manage to restore a sense of self-worth and social, moral and even political orientation to various groups of people living in an often uncertain and frustrating (secular) modern society.

Such religious discourse also fosters, in turn, the creation, reinforcement and expansion of (new forms of) social cohesion and networks. As a matter of fact, Islamic discourse can be very explicit about values of social cohesion, such as care, compassion, honesty, trust and mutual solidarity. Canadian political scientist Janine Clark and others have noted such processes of creation of social cohesion and networks among the middle classes in countries like Egypt, Jordan and Yemen. Religious discourse is fostering such processes because of its appealing frame resonance in Middle Eastern societies. Wiktorowicz gives the following description of the concept of frame-resonance, which is derived from social movement theory:

> Frames represent interpretive schemata that offer a language and cognitive tools for making sense of experiences and events in the 'world out there.' For social movements, these schemata are important in the production and dissemination of interpretations and are designed to mobilize participants and support. As signifying agents engaged in the social construction of meaning, movements must articulate and disseminate frameworks of understanding that resonate with potential participants and broader publics to elicit collective action.[5]

One of the forms this collective action takes is represented by the social work of Islamic voluntary welfare associations.

The Nature of Islamist Voluntary Welfare Associations

Do the voluntary welfare associations established by Islamists represent modern civil society institutions, or are they rather continuations of traditional forms of association derived from the pre-modern mujtama' ahli? Sami Zubaida counts religious associations as well as associations with a tribal or regional basis among the so-called "Neo-Traditional" social formations. The latter are forms of association rooted in the pre-modern societal formations, but are at the same time adjusted to modern conditions in their way of functioning. Zubaida states that the suppression of the modern types of political and civil associations in Middle Eastern states continues to motivate individuals to seek security and prosperity through cultivating their primary affiliations of kin, tribe, region and, possibly transcending them, religion.[6]

Zubaida sees in the Islamic associational tradition much that is at odds with liberal notions of civil society as these exist in the West. Indeed, the traditional societal formations in the Muslim world that, for other scholars, prove the existence of a relatively autonomous civil space throughout Muslim history were, according to Zubaida "almost uniformly patriarchal and authoritarian, often coercive." Positions of authority within, as well as general membership of these formations were usually based upon family-ties and inheritance from father to son. All of them stressed values of authority, loyalty and obedience. He also emphasizes that patriarchal associations and attitudes have persisted, even if they have been reconstituted under modern conditions. As examples, he mentions tribal and village associations in cities, formal and informal religious associations around neighborhoods, mosques and charities and the more invisible web of familial bonds and authorities. "New Islamic and Islamist social and political forces have a special affinity with these social formations," Zubaida writes, "and have sought in many places to control and colonize them."[7]

Zubaida also points out that many businessmen and enterprises in Arab countries are related to movements like The Muslim Brotherhood. They contribute to social projects and charities of Islamist organizations and feed into Islamic social networks of patronage, conversion and mobilization. Their role as major employers is instrumental in this regard. Through the provision of social services, the Islamists engage in a moral and social colonization of the community at large, since the objective is to Islamize the population in terms of religious observance and ethical conduct. In the framework of these social services, the Islamists place a strong emphasis on family morality and the decency of women and young people. The government is content with these activities since they ameliorate social discontent, and the associations that carry them function as agents of social control. The sole governmental condition is that they do not venture into opposition and militancy.[8]

Zubaida asserts that most Islamic social projects and institutions are dominated by a Salafi orientation. This orientation is, in his own words, "much more conservative and "fundamentalist" (when compared with other, more democratic Islamist tendencies), more insistent on the literal reading of scriptures and the teaching of the historical authorities of shari'ah. To this current, the ideas of democracy and civil society are either totally rejected, or superficially adapted to their traditionalist and organicist conceptions."[9]

At least two other scholars emphasise the nature of Islamist NGOs as the embodiment of relatively horizontal middle class-networks, rather than as patronage-based institutions. The first of these is the sociologist Asef Bayat,[10] who stresses that Islamic NGOs do not aim to mobilize their clients in order to wage collective struggles to improve their lot. The way in which they approach the urban poor is basically as deserving, but passive recipients of their services. Islamist initiatives in the domain of welfare for the poor are basically part of a broader endeavor aimed at the establishment of an all-encompassing Islamic legal, political, social and moral order. Accordingly, he emphasizes that Islamism in the Middle East is primarily a movement representing the relatively marginalized middle classes, rather then the lower classes. Islamist middle class agitators tend to activate marginalized but more educated strata in the society, such as students, professionals, the educated unemployed as well as groups that are socio-economically relatively strong, but politically excluded. Many of the Islamist NGOs' services, like those in the realms of education and health care, are financially affordable to those middle class groups but not to the poor. Political activation of the poor rarely transcends the gathering of their votes at election time.[11]

Bayat clearly regards the relationship of Islamist NGOs toward their needy clients as vertical and paternalistic. Islamists' attitudes toward their fellow members of the educated but socio-politically marginalized sections of the middle class, however, are more egalitarian. This observation is lent added support by the second scholar in question, Janine Clark, a Canadian political scientist. Her findings show that Islamic NGOs "are embedded in a complex web of social networks through which they find participants – volunteers, donors and employees – and secure important contacts and donations." These social networks, she argues, are to be found in the modern educated middle class. The Islamic NGOs "cater to the middle class", she asserts. "It is within these horizontal networks of clients, doctors, teachers and directors that ties of solidarity, trust, teamwork and a sense of mission are developed", she continues. "And it is within these middle-class ties that the potential lies for the introduction and expansion of Islamist networks."[12]

Clark explains the importance of these middle class-based social ties for the Islamic NGOs as follows:

> The day-to-day needs of ISIs (Islamic Social Institutions, i.e. Islamic voluntary welfare associations) dictate that they are composed of people with the time, skills and/or means to devote – whether on a regular or ad hoc basis – to ISI activities. Their operational demands thus require a predominance of networks able or willing to fulfill these needs. In the case of ISIs, this social category is the middle classes, primarily the new middle class – doctors, teachers and other professionals whose needs are not being met, or are being met poorly elsewhere.[13]

These relatively marginalized educated middle class members participate in the activities of Islamic NGOs – whether as formal members, employees, volunteers or donors – because it involves them in networks of gratifying social relations and mutual solidarity. These NGOs also offer many of these middle class participants – and especially those employed by the former (e.g. medical doctors, teachers or social workers) – material incentives: e.g. salaries that are often higher then those paid by the public sector, or the usage of modern equipment. In particular, hospitals, clinics and educational institutions at various levels that are run by Islamic NGOs are important sources of employment.[14]

The poor recipients of Islamic NGOs, however, are excluded from these social networks that lie at the heart of the Islamist movement. In this regard, Clark points to the phenomenon that these recipients also seek the aid of numerous other NGOs as well as of other sources. They are not exclusively bound to their Islamist "patronizers and colonizers," to put matters in Zubaida's terms. Some Islamist social projects, in particular those in the realm of education and health care, are commercial in nature and important in generating income for these NGOs. They are designed for the middle classes. Islamists have, out of a strong sense of religious obligation, also established projects for the poor. They do not view the poor as objects of political mobilization, however.[15]

A final observation by Clark is that Islamist NGOs do not confront the state. They rather function as pillars of the state system vitally important for the implementation of policies of social welfare. These NGOs reflect the desires and outlooks of those sections of the middle class who are relatively excluded in socio-economic as well as political life. The latter do not really dream of revolution and of replacing the upper classes, but of having a larger "piece of the state pie" and share power with those upper classes. Consequently, Clark notes that, while Islamist social activism "has brought about significant changes in the civil society," it has also failed "to alter the political structure."[16] Clark sees in the strengthening of social networks among the middle classes the real significance of the Islamic NGOs.[17]

NGOs and the State

As far as the functioning of Islamist NGOs as civil society institutions is concerned, the aspect of state policies and legislation vis-à-vis the NGO sector should be taken into account. Arab states are usually repressive in their dealings with cultural and social welfare NGOs. Strict rules and regulations prevent the latter from becoming pressure groups capable of opposing government policy. In Jordan, for instance, such associations are prohibited from organizing any lecture or discussion with a political content. Moreover, they are obliged to submit yearly reports on their activities and finances to the Ministry of Social Development. NGOs may not engage in any new type of activity without the Ministry's consent. Officials of this Ministry pay surprise visits to the premises of NGOs that are under its jurisdiction. The Ministry of Social Development also exercises, in coordination with the *mukhabarat* (Intelligence Agency), control over the elections to the administrative boards of NGOs as well as over the admittance of new members. Transgressions of these regulations and laws by NGOs may result in the arrest and imprisonment of NGO members as well as in the dissolution of the NGO in question. Cultural and welfare associations are thus prevented from playing a lively role of opposition and protest in the public sphere.[18]

It is obvious that such a regime of state monitoring and supervision does not create a climate conducive for openly mobilizing the poor to engage in political action. Whether, if this legislative and regulative regime did not exist, Islamic NGOs would engage in such activities is hard to tell. Clarks' observation that, due to a lack of resources, the poor is unable to contribute to the social networks that form the basis of Islamic NGOs and of the Islamist movement as a whole suggests that this is unlikely. On the other hand, if organizing struggles or lobbying for the sake of the rights of the poor in the name of the Islamic message would contribute to the Islamists' influence in society and their leverage vis-à-vis the state, one might easily ask why they wouldn't do so. Belonging to the middle class is, of itself, not an obstacle to mobilizing and organizing the lower classes. Historically speaking, many social movements mobilizing the lower classes have been led by figures from a middle class background. There are even some instances of Islamist movements in other Middle Eastern countries that have engaged in such struggles. One of them is the Hezbullah movement in Lebanon, which, during the 1990s, mobilized residents of the Dahiyah slum neighborhoods in Southern Beirut in strikes and protests. The same movement organized professional as well as residential groups in that area to press the government to improve social services.[19] However, repressive force by the Lebanese government against these Hezbullah-organized protests, resulting in death for some protestors, ensured this movement soon quit its activities.[20] Another example of a social movement relying on lower and middle class support is al-Ghanuchi's Tunisian Mouvement de la Tendence Islamique (MTI). Toward the end of the 1970s, the movement aligned itself with the General Union of Tunisian Workers (UGT), winning much support within the latter's ranks, until once again state repression made this impossible in 1984.[21]

Likewise, NGOs in Jordan, including the Islamic ones, cannot engage in overt political mobilization of the poor due to state repression. If Islamist NGOs want to mobilize and politically influence the poor, for instance during election time, they must do this in ways concealed from public view, in order to escape the repressive measures by security and intelligence services. Since many members and workers of an NGO like the Islamic Center Charity Society are also active in the Islamic Action Front Party, in particular during election time, it may not prove too difficult for them to circumvent the prohibition stipulating that welfare NGOs may not engage in any kind of political activity.[22]

Nevertheless, the fact that these NGOs are barred from expressing a political discourse in the public sphere clearly dis-empowers them. Here we see that Cohen and Arato's observation of a "modernization of civil society" through a spontaneous process of differentiation between various institutions of a political, social, cultural and economic nature simply does not apply. In the case of Middle Eastern countries like Jordan, it is the state which imposes differentiation on the institutions of civil society, not for the sake of the latter's "authentic modernity" but for that of state dominance and control itself. In response, the educated members of this civil society may try to express their criticism of, and grievances toward, state policies and the political and socio-economic establishment of their country through all kinds of civil society institutions, including welfare NGOs. At least, that is what the state is wary of and what it wishes to prevent.

Ultimately, it seems clear that different historical trajectories of political, social and economic development have given rise to different kinds of modernity; this also explains the abovementioned institutional differentiation. The political environment of Middle Eastern countries, including Jordan, is often characterized by authoritarian rule preventing political parties and other grassroots movements from playing a meaningful oppositional role, and imposing serious limitations on press freedom and freedom of expression. It is also characterized by many forms of economic, political and cultural dependency and/or marginality of those countries vis-à-vis Western powers. This environment generates many socio-economic and political frustrations. These frustrations, which at present are often expressed through the language of political Islam, seek an outlet through any possible means, including institutions like NGOs. In this sense, they have the tendency to lead to a spontaneous bottom-up process of de-differentiation, in the form of a strong politicization of all realms of (civil) society, including mosques, professional associations and welfare NGOs, which have the potential of turning into vehicles of political opposition. The state, in turn, anticipates and checks such trends by its policies of a repressive differentiation and the de-politicization of civil institutions imposed from above. So far, Middle Eastern states seem to have been successful in this policy. This is certainly the case with the repression of political expressions by welfare NGOs, who are remain fearful of invoking the wrath of the state authorities.

State control and repression is but one aspect of the NGOs' relationship with the state, however. Another important aspect is the reliance of the state on welfare NGOs – not least among these the Islamic ones – to provide services to subaltern as well as middle class communities. These services guarantee a measure of social peace and take away part of the burden of social care and development from the government. Both Clark and Zubaida have rightly pointed to this aspect. Closing down welfare NGOs would also involve costs for the government: it leaves a vacuum in social services with clearly adverse implications for the wellbeing of society. Not only is there the risk of sociopolitical unrest, but also of social disintegration. Orphans and other needy children, for instance, would receive no aid from the state, may drop out from school, and turn to drugs, alcohol or crime. Thus it seems that a kind of modus vivendi has been developed in a country like Jordan between the relevant governmental apparatuses and (Islamic) NGOs on the basis of a shared interest in social cohesion, stability and peace. The state gives space to the (Islamic) NGOs to institutionalize part of the (Islamic) socio-cultural lifeworld values of their members and workers, like piety, caring, solidarity and charity, through their social welfare activities. The NGOs commit themselves to obeying the law and observing the official regulations imposed by the state, which implies abstaining from (publicly visible forms of) political activity.

The Political Significance of Islamist NGOs as Civil Society Institutions

The need to abstain from visible and direct forms of political activity that confront or oppose state authorities does not mean that Islamic NGOs have no political significance. The very establishment of such welfare associations is already an expression of dissatisfaction with what the state has to offer in terms of social services. As political scientist Dennis J. Sullivan writes on Islamic NGOs in Egypt:

> These groups recognize the problems society faces and do something to fix them. The groups also see that many of society's problems stem from government officials and their policies, for even when government is not responsible for the problems, the popular view remains that government leaders either do not care to fix things or just cannot do anything to solve them.[23]

Especially in the case of NGOs set up by Islamists, the aim is also to show that an alternative approach, based upon Islamist interpretations of Islamic values, offers real solutions to socio-economic problems. This can be a way to recruit new followers for the Islamist movement. As Zaid Abu Ghanimeh, Jordanian Muslim Brotherhood leader and administrator at the Islamic hospital in Amman puts it:

> Our success is in building a practical model for how Islam can serve. It has raised the confidence of the community that Islam can solve people's problems. That is why people now support the Islamic movement. Poor people, especially those served by the hospital, they pay us back in elections and meetings … They [the recipients of social services offered by Islamists] voluntarily find themselves morally indebted to the movement… When the movement is in elections or needs support, they repay the debt.[24]

Showing that "Islam can solve problems" implies victory in a socio-cultural battle against models and systems considered alien to Islam and, thus, incapable of solving present problems. This battle includes, according to Quintan Wiktorowicz and Suha Taji Farouki, "struggles over the proper role of Islam in society and its relative significance vis-à-vis other cultural codes and values. Islamic voluntary organizations engage in this conflict." Wiktorowicz and Taji Farouki regard this as typical of trends that characterize new social movements. Such movements conduct struggles over: "meaning and values, reflecting a qualitative shift from direct political contention to the cultural arena. Struggles over power, ethnicity, values and religion are often waged through society and cultural discourse rather then state institutions or government decision-making bodies." These new social movements, Wiktorowicz and Taji Farouki state, "demonstrate that an alternative reality and way of life are possible." Islamic NGOs, as an example of such social movements aim

> to address socio-economic issues within an Islamic framework and challenge Western cultural codes … By providing goods and services, Islamists hope to expand networks of shared meaning so that individuals will organize their lives in accordance with Islamic precepts, rather then Western values and norms. [25]

Such attempts to persuade individuals to reorganize their lives often result in what Carrie Rosefsky Wickham calls a "transvaluation of values," meaning a reordering of the priorities in someone's individual life.

For instance, the Islamist subculture in popular neighborhoods in Cairo often belittles the value of secular knowledge and official diplomas gained through formal education. It gives priority to religious knowledge that is acquired in more informal ways. Likewise, Islamists may downplay the value of university careers, prestigious jobs and material possessions, things that generate social status in a society that is dominated by values of economic success, as less relevant. What really matters, according to the latter, is a religiously and morally clean and honest way of life.[26] In the words of a young Jordanian couple who got married in one of the collective mass weddings organized by the Jordanian Islamist Al-'Afaf Welfare Association, "We do not care about the (material) affairs of this world. We just want to live for God."[27] According to Wickham, such a transvaluation of values constitutes an Islamist response to socio-economic frustrations like unemployment, denial of economic opportunities due to practices of nepotism and corruption and the inability to meet the expectations raised by a consumerist culture. It provides its adherents with a sense of moral superiority and may even lead to a decrease in fear of and deference toward the existing authoritarian state, since a good Muslim "is only afraid of God."[28]

Scholars like Sullivan, Wiktorowicz, Taji Farouki and Wickham touch upon the political importance of religiously inspired NGOs. Put simply, they offer an alternative to governmental social services, which particularly in Arab countries are often characterized by bureaucratic inefficiency, a severe lack of quality and widespread corruption.[29] In contrast to the formal authorities, these NGOs act out of a concern for social solidarity, and a moral sense of mission to improve the society and the lives of its individual members. Such religious lifeworld values play a role at the level of motivation, but may also be expressed and promoted to the beneficiaries of the NGOs' services. This may take place informally, in daily interactions of NGO workers with the latter, or through formally organized educational and counseling programs. These values may also be expressed toward the general public.

As organized representatives and reflections of the lifeworld, such NGOs function as civil society institutions. At issue is not whether or to what extent they contribute to the strength and influence of oppositional movements, like those of the Islamists, in order to assess their significance as civil society institutions. What is at issue is the very fact that the participants of such voluntary associations translate lifeworld values into tangible activities within an organized framework. As such, they contribute to an institutionalized realm that, in principle, functions autonomously from the state apparatus. This realm provides a framework for the expression of a discourse of social cultural values emanating from the bottom up. Such a discourse can be considered as basic to the raison d'être of such NGOs. Monitoring and supervision of NGOs by the state may neutralize potentially dangerous political implications that such discourses might entail. However, they do not really eliminate the latter at their very core.

The findings of this study suggest that Islamist as well as other Muslim NGOs are indeed based upon relatively horizontal middle class networks in their way of functioning. That does not take away the fact, however, that certainly Islamist associations are, at the same time, engaged in activities of religious, moral and political "colonization" – in Zubaida's terms – or even indoctrination, if you will, of their needy recipients. The bulk of my findings on these matters will be presented in the last four chapters of this study.

Part Two

CIVIL SOCIETY IN JORDAN

4. State and Society in Jordan

The aim of this chapter is to describe and analyze the relationship between state and society in Jordan. Here we look primarily at the ways in which the discourses and policies of the Jordanian state toward society have shaped this relationship. The chapter starts by describing the consequences of the formation of Jordan for the tribal population of the territory in question (the Transjordanian Emirate in the early 1920s) – at the time headed by the Hashemite prince Abdullah. Thereafter, the implications of the incorporation of so many Palestinians into the Jordanian state are dealt with. In the subsequent two sections, state practices of patronage towards the various segments of Jordanian society are depicted: first in terms of state discourse and then in terms of institutional practices of cooptation. The fifth section deals with the limits to democracy and pluralism in the kingdom. The sixth section analyzes this relationship between Jordanian state and society from a historical perspective. The seventh and final section deals more specifically with state hegemony over formal civil society institutions, as well as over public opinion in Jordan.

The Establishment of the State

"In the beginning was the state" is the apposite title of an essay by Laurie Brand on Jordanian civil society.1 When Abdullah, son of *sharif* Hussein of Mecca (who belonged to the same Hashemite clan as the prophet Muhammad more then thirteen centuries earlier), was appointed by the British government as *Emir* (prince) of the newly established Emirate of Transjordan in the area to the east of the River Jordan, the Death Sea and the Wadi Araba, a sense of a common national identity was still markedly absent among the area's 400,000 population. Instead, this population consisted of multiple communities organized according to tribal affiliations. Such affiliations permeated many aspects of life: economy, marriage, maintenance of order and discipline, military defence and protection, marriage and sense of collective identity.2 Roughly half of the population consisted of semi-nomadic Bedouins; while the other half were made up of rural villagers, and urban merchant and artisan families.[3] The rationale for establishing the new state of Transjordan was informed by various British imperial interests: accomodating Arab nationalist aspirations, establishing a military strategic bridge between Egypt and the Arab Gulf region,[4] and checking French ambitions in the Middle East.[5] Similarly, the Emirate's foreign and fiscal policy and its defense were kept under British Control.[6]

In fact, a dynasty was imposed by a foreign power on an area where there existed no modern society, in the framework of a nation state, but rather an amalgam of traditional tribal communities. In the early 1920s, several tribes rebelled against the rule of the newly imposed Emir. These insurrections were suppressed with brutal force. Transjordan's tribal population's loyalty towards the new state had to be cultivated by means of patronage and cooptation. The most important method in this regard was the mass enlistment of tribesmen in the Arab Legion, the Transjordanian Army under British command. Furthermore, tribal leaders were given posts in the administrative apparatus of the new regime, received subsidies or were turned into landowners.[7] Integration of the population into the political and military institutions of the state made them receptive to a new discourse that provided legitimacy to the new polity and its leadership: that of allegiance to the Hashemite family in general and to the Emir (later King) as sharif (descendent of the Prophet Muhammad) in particular. Through such a discourse, a common loyalty to Islam proved helpful in creating a formative and burgeoning sense of national identity among the tribal population. It did so by stressing notions of a shared religious identity as a basis of unity and harmony between the tribes.[8] Moreover, the direct personal style of rule of Emir Abdullah enabled him to function as a kind of sheikh of the tribal sheikhs, which once again furthered the legitimacy of the new dynasty.[9] At the same time, the construction of a modern centralized state providing security and stability and enacting laws that protected the private property of merchants and landowners enhanced the latter's social, economic and political status.[10] The emerging pattern of patronage between the state and the largely tribal population in the country was characterized by the offering of benefits and protection by the former to the latter, and loyalty and allegiance of the latter toward the former. This pattern has remained highly influential in terms of state-society relationships to the present day.

Implications of the Palestinian Presence

Jordanian society underwent a profound transformation due to the arrival of hundreds of thousands of Palestian refugees during the Israeli-Arab wars of 1948 and 1967, and the annexation of the West Bank to the Hashemite Kingdom in 1950. With the latter event, a Palestinian population of some 800,000 was incorporated as citizens into the Kingdom, a number significantly higher then that of Transjordan's native population. Many well-educated and skilled members of the Palestinian middle class were added to the still modest Transjordanian professional middle class. The average level of education and professionalization among the Palestinian population was significantly higher than that of Transjordan's population, due to the much greater previous educational opportunities and bureaucratic diversification in Palestine as compared to Transjordan. Many of those well-educated newcomers found jobs in the Jordanian public sector or established themselves in the free professions or the private sector.

At the same time, the regime imposed a Jordanian identity upon the new citizens of Palestinian descent.[11] All public references to Palestine and Palestinian identity were suppressed or erased by the authorities. Palestinian civil society institutions, including labor, women's and professional associations, were required to label themselves Jordanian and to move their headquarters to the East Bank of the river Jordan. Palestinian symbols, such as the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem and traditional expressions of art, such as embroidery, were claimed to belong to Jordan's heritage. Meanwhile, Palestinians were largely excluded from the army and the upper levels of the state's apparatus. This situation caused a great deal of resentment among the majority of citizens of Palestinian descent, profoundly affecting their sense of loyalty to, and inclusion within, the Jordanian state.[12] Equally, it ensured that the relationship between state and society never fully stabilized; and, in turn, that the Kingdom's security forces were regularly called upon to suppress potentially dangerous outbursts of anti-state feeling.

The rise of Palestinian nationalism and the PLO would aggravate the tense relationship between the state and the Palestinian section of Jordanian society even further. In particular, Palestinian national identity was able to assert itself in the Kingdom following Jordan's devastating defeat of 1967 in the June war against Israel. Indeed, the Palestinian guerrilla movements started to use Jordan as their main basis in the struggle against Israel. At the end of the 1960s, a nascent Palestinian civil society, in the form of health care, women's, students', teachers' and labor organizations started to flourish in the country. This trend was aborted brutally by bloody confrontations between the Jordanian army and the Palestinian guerrillas in (1970-1971), during which the latter were forcibly evicted from the Kingdom.

After these events, not only was the policy of suppressing public expressions of Palestinian identity resumed, but Jordanians of Palestinian descent were also increasingly barred from entering the civil service. This was caused by an (albeit unwritten) policy of preferential recruitment of Transjordanians[13] in the public sector.[14] According to Adnan Abu Odeh, himself a Jordanian citizen of Palestinian descent who has occupied the positions of Minister and Political Advisor of the King, it was pressure from Jordan's native tribal population, many of whose members had fought for the survival of the Hashemite Kingdom against the Palestinian guerillas, that made the state adopt this discriminatory policy. By allowing the state institutions, which were dominated by native tribe members, to conduct this policy, the King reinforced the presence of a loyal and strong power base among Jordan's native tribes.[15] Obviously, much of Jordan's native tribal community came to suspect Palestinians as potential traitors to the Kingdom and supported repressive and discriminatory policies against them.[16] The general pattern of exclusion from the public sector must have reinforced the inclinations among Jordanians of Palestinian descent to focus their economic activities on the private sector. Consequently, Jordan's business and banking sector became increasingly Palestinian-dominated. Due to this, many members of the Transjordanian community in turn came to feel deprived and discriminated against economically. Such mutual feelings of disparity and discrimination between both ethnic communities has complicated the development of a strong and unified civil society vis-à-vis the state even further.[17]

Up to the present day, there exists a general pattern of socio-economic division between, on the one hand, the native Jordanian tribal population and, on the other hand, the Jordanians of Palestinian origin. The former controls the state apparatus; while the latter dominates the business sector. This does not imply that regime policy towards both communities is absolutely straightforward. Official Jordanian state discourse speaks of the Jordanian nation in terms of a single Hashemite family – a model of Arab unity that includes all citizens, regardless of ethnic origin or place of birth. From the beginning of the annexation of the West Bank in 1950, both banks and their inhabitants were proclaimed by the regime to be two branches of the same family.[18] While it is a fact that the state has always been the largest employer in the Kingdom and that the Palestinian-dominated private sector has largely been subordinate,[19] the political and societal clout of the

Palestinian economic elite has been increasing from the 1990s onwards. This is mainly due to government policies of economic liberalization and privatization.[20] Developments in the late 1980s and the early 1990s, including the cutting by King Hussein of Jordan's legal and administrative ties with the West Bank in 1988, the political liberalization process from 1989 onwards, King Hussein's firm anti-war position during the (1990-1991) Kuwait crisis and war and a significantly improved relationship between Jordan and the PLO in the framework of peace negotiations with Israel have, among citizens of Palestinian origin, and particularly among those of the younger generation encouraged a greater sense of loyalty to the Hashemite Kingdom and its supreme ruler.[21]

At the same time, anxiety and scepticism among Jordan's native tribal population regarding the Palestinians' loyalty and sense of belonging to the Jordanian homeland persisted. It has manifested itself at times in an aggressive form, described by Abu Odeh as "Transjordanian nationalism." This current is motivated by fears among Transjordanians of the Palestinian demographic "overweight" in the country. In part, such fears are fueled by claims of right-wing Israeli politicians (including ministers) that Jordan should serve as the "substitute Palestinian homeland."[22] They are also fueled by the dominant Palestinian position in the private sector, especially given the fact that the IMF-dictated economic privatization process and the concomitant downgrading of the public sector may lead to the economic marginalization of large numbers of Transjordanians currently employed by the state.[23] Demands by this ethno-nationalist and anti-Palestinian trend include the withdrawal of citizenship from the whole or a part of the Palestinian Jordanian community and the official adoption of discriminatory measures that would exclude Palestinians from the public sector and from political life.[24]

Tension and rivalry between Transjordanians and citizens of Palestinian descent, although a real and serious phenomenon, should not be generalized and overstated. According to an opinion poll conducted by the Center for Strategic studies of Jordan University in 1994, 64.9% of Transjordanians and 72.3% of Palestinian Jordanians believe that the interaction between the two communities is solid enough for them to be considered as one people.[25] Several Palestinian Jordanian informants in my own field research described the nature of daily interaction between members of both communities as peaceful and friendly, and regarded discrimination against Palestinians as a problem relating mainly to state policy.[26] Also the King, in his proclaimed role as upholder of the unity of the nation and the equality of all citizens, has taken outspoken Transjordanian nationalists to task from time to time.

At one point, King Hussein accused Transjordanian nationalists of harming national unity, and of upholding a "very ugly chauvinistic view, which is very different from what is in our hearts and minds."[27] Many citizens of Transjordanian and of Palestinian origin cooperate together in civil society institutions such as politicial parties, professional associations and voluntary associations. Representatives of the Ministry of Social Development and of the voluntary sector alike emphasise the legal requirement of NGOs to serve all citizens without discrimination on the basis of ethnicity, religion or sex, and to accept their members or employees likewise on a non-discriminatory basis.[28]

State Discourse

The King as the Final Arbiter of State and Society

No description of state-society relations in Jordan can neglect the role of the King as the symbol of the nation's unity, and as the actual manager and final arbiter of political life in the Kingdom. Speaking about the nature of the Jordanian state or regime, a distinction should be made between the role of the various bureaucratic state institutions on the one hand and that of the Royal Family and the King on the other. The latter always portrays itself publicly as the ultimate arbiter of the public interest and the common good in Jordan. This proclaimed role elevates King and Royal family above all tribal, ethnic, societal and political groups and factions and even above the state apparatus itself. In spite of its partly illusory nature – the King's rule relies on a state apparatus dominated by Transjordanian tribes – this image has been effective in bolstering his legitimacy among the Jordanian public in general. The American anthropologist Andrew Shryock has described how the immense outpouring of grief that the Jordanian public displayed on the occasion of King Hussein's death demonstrated the degree to which, regardless of any misgiving they may have had about some of his domestic or foreign policies, most Jordanians identified with him and equated him with the country's stability.[29]

On many occasions, King Hussein has played the role of arbiter, protecting the interests of citizens against abuses or neglect from state institutions. Possibly the most famous and politically significant occasion was the riots in response to price hikes caused by an IMF-imposed economic readjustment program in the towns and villages in the south of Jordan in April 1989. The backdrop to this outbreak of public anger was the considerable grievance at levels of corruption in government circles and the general lack of political freedom and participation. King Hussein responded by dismissing the government of Zaid al-Rifai and holding general parliamentary elections for the first time in more then two decades.[30] Other examples of royal intervention – by Hussein as well by the present monarch, Abdullah II – include the resolution of corruption cases, the pardoning of political prisoners,[31] the provision of better housing to needy families, and intervention when hospitals and orphanages have failed to provide adequate services.[32]

"Authoritarian Pluralism"

The status of the monarchy as the final arbiter in favor of the Jordanian common good is related to the pluralist model of governance practiced by the Hashemite dynasty. Sociologist and anthropologist Mansoor Moaddel contrasts the regime type of the "ideological state" with that of the "ideologically neutral state." The former governs virtually all components of and relationships in the society by a single, uniform and solid ideology; while the latter rests on certain ideological presuppositions as well, but only insofar as they pertain to general political matters, such as the selection process of political leaders and legislature members and the maintenance of order. Unlike the ideological state, the ideologically neutral state allows for a pluralism of discourses and ideologies, in the society and in the state institutions themselves.[33] Moaddel defines the nature of the Jordanian political regime as that of "authoritarian pluralism." The monarchy is unquestionably authoritarian in the sense that it possesses the ultimate political decision making power in all aspects of domestic and foreign policy. However, in exercising this role, it is forced to take a variety of interests and pressures emanating from within the society into account. In this manner, different socio-political tendencies within Jordanian society are reflected in a variety of discourses, including Arab nationalism, Islamic conservatism, tribal patrimonialism and Western modernism. All of those are present as components of Hashemite state discourse itself. According to Andrew Shyrock, by employing such a broad, pluralist and flexible discourse, the state is able to appear as different things to different segments of the population.[34]

Various factors could account for the blend of authoritarian paternalism and open-minded pluralism espoused by the Hashemite regime: the limited natural resource base of the Kingdom; the historical "artificiality" of the Jordanian nation state; the presence of two ethnic communities that coexist in a state of latent tension and rivalry; contradictory pressures and influences from neighbouring states and areas (Israel, the Palestinian territories, Egypt, Syria, Iraq and the Gulf states); and economic and military dependency on the West. Such factors underline the precariousness of the Hashemite Kingdom's existence. Together, they have created an imperative for the Hashemite regime to consider carefully a variety of internal as well as external interests in devising its policies and shaping its discourse.

This chapter focuses especially on the internal interests, since it deals with internal state-society relations. Various societal groups are the bearers of those interests, such as the Transjordanian tribes, the Palestinians, minorities of a religious (mainly Arab Christians) or of an ethnic nature (Circassians and Chechens),[35] or of both (Armenians), the Islamist movement, which is mainly represented by The Muslim Brotherhood, and progressive and conservative trends within each of these groups.[36] In response to all these different interests and subcultures, the Jordanian King is able to assume different identities. To reinforce and strengthen the loyalty of the native tribal population, he presents himself as a supra-tribal leader with a commitment to preserve Jordan's tribal heritage.[37] Vis-á-vis the Palestinians, he assumes the mantle of protector and supporter of their interests and national cause. Likewise, he emphasizes his role as a protector of the Christians and of the ethnic minorities. To Western-oriented liberals, he emphasizes his Western education, advocacy of social, cultural and political tolerance and his support for secularization. To Muslim religious trends, including the Islamists, he emphasizes his descent from the prophet Muhammad and his role as custodian of Jerusalem's holy places.[38]

State Islamic Discourse

The regime's Islamic discourse performs an important function in legitimizing the position of the King as the final and impartial arbiter of society. Thus, for instance, in response to criticism from the Islamists, who protested changes in the election law in 1993, King Hussein declared in a speech to the nation:

> I would like to emphasize that my government and I, as a father and a brother to each citizen, do not support one side over another. I call upon you all to realize that the Arab Hashemite Hussein, who has been honored by Almighty God to be a descendant of the Prophet Muhammad bin Abdullah, peace be upon him, is above all worldly titles and positions.[39]

Comparably, King Hussein appealed to his Hashemite family background to strengthen his legitimacy among the Palestinian section of Jordanian society. He did so by reminding his listeners that his tribal ancestor Hashim was buried in Gaza, that the Prophet Muhammad made his nightly journey to Jerusalem and then to heaven, that his great-grandfather Hussein bin Ali had "sacrificed all in the defense of the Palestinian people on their national soil" (in the Arab revolt against the Ottomans) and that his grandfather Abdullah, the first king of Jordan, had successfully defended Jerusalem against the Israelis in 1948.

Religion was also used by King Hussein in order to de-legitimize radical Islamist opponents of the regime or its policies, such as militant Islamist groups perpetrating violent acts or radical preachers in mosques who criticize, for instance, Jordan's peace treaty with Israel. The regime argued on such occasions that Islam is "exploited for political purposes." King Hussein repeatedly underlined that the pulpits in the mosque should not be exploited "for purposes that have nothing to do with our doctrine and our religion." According to him, "Islam shall remain clean and pure," because "this is what the moderate nation, the Muslim nation, is all about."[40] Especially since the 11th of September 2001, King Hussein's successor, Abdullah and other government representatives have since emphasized the "moderate, tolerant, humane and just" nature of Islam that "rejects all forms of extremism and terror." Conferences organized and speeches made by state representatives have been devoted to this theme. On the one hand, such discourse is targeted at local Islamist militants and their – actual or potential – sympathizers; on the other, it is also intended to mollify those Islamophobic tendencies in the West that equate Islam with terrorism and intolerance.[41]

The status of the royal family as descendants of the Prophet Muhammad obviously facilitates the process of shaping a State Islamic discourse. For the sake of comparison: the Egyptian regime of the ruling National Democratic Party led by president Hosni Mubarak has made use of the prestigious and age-old al-Azhar University to bolster its religious legitimacy. In doing so, it has become dependent on the latter's religious authority. The Jordanian king, however, can simply invoke his own religious authority as sharif. Jordan's religious establishment of 'ulama' (Islamic scholars) and mosques is firmly under the control of the monarchical regime.[42] The phrase "In the beginning was the state" certainly applies to the relationship between state and religious authority in Jordan as well.

State Democratic Discourse

Since the start of the liberalization process in 1989, the Jordanian kings Hussein and Abdullah and the consecutive Jordanian cabinets have used the discourse of democracy, pluralism, rule of law, human rights and civil society to bolster regime legitimacy. From then on, regime patronage of Jordanian society has also involved democratic and civil society discourse. In fact, there exists a link between State Islamic and State Democratic discourse: Jordan's parliamentary life is considered by the monarchy to be an "emulation of the rule of shurah" (i.e. the Qur'anic concept of consultation in decision making). According to King Hussein, it constituted a "revival of the golden ages of Arab Islamic ideals and values which made our nation the best nation brought to mankind."[43]

At numerous occasions, for instance in addresses to the parliament or the general public, King Hussein has emphasized that Jordan has implemented political pluralism and democracy, that Jordan's political life is based on the rule of law and that its policy is founded "on the Constitution, on the National Charter and on respect for human rights, freedom and dignity." As a reflection of the regime concept of Jordanian nationhood as "one Hashemite family consisting of equal members," King Hussein emphasized that the elections for parliament held since 1989 took place "with the participation of all citizens regardless of their roots or origin." In a reaction to criticism from the opposition concerning the 1993 amendments of the Election Law, that were enacted after parliament itself was dissolved, the King stressed that they were made "only after a thorough dialogue by politicians, intellectuals, members of the media and representatives of all shades of party and political opinion in this beloved country." Thereby he tried to legitimize an apparently undemocratic decision by making use of democratic discourse.[44]

Serving the National Interest

Typical of the democratic discourse employed by the regime is an explicit stress on "loyalty to the nation" as a prerequisite for the legitimate operation of political parties and civil society institutions. Loyalty to the nation implies, in the Jordanian case, loyalty to the monarchy as the final arbiter. When the Political Parties Law was enacted in 1992, thereby legalizing the establishment and existence of political parties for the first time in 35 years, King Hussein decreed that political parties should place the country's interest and the unity and cohesion of the Jordanian people above all other considerations.[45]

During the run-up to the US-invasion of Iraq in March 2003, King Abdullah and his government launched the so-called "Jordan First" campaign. Its guiding idea was that Jordanian parties, civil society institutions and citizens in general should put the interests of the Jordanian home country and its political, social and economic development at the top of their list of priorities. They should not be distracted from these by issues of a pan-Arab nature, such as the Palestinian intifada and the upcoming war against Iraq. The Jordanian nation, it was argued, would be in a much better position to extend a helping hand to its fellow-Arabs, including Palestinians and Iraqis, if it first put its own domestic affairs in order and created a strong, modern and unified Jordanian society. The national Jordan First Committee comprised, besides the King, ministers and regime-loyalist members of parliament, Islamic scholars, business people, academics and professionals. The "Jordan First" concept was aggressively promoted through the educational system, the media, public bill-boards and posters to be seen everywhere in the Jordanian streets. It was not well received, however, by the Islamist, leftist and pan-Arabist opposition parties who questioned the legitimacy of such a campaign at a time when, after dissolving parliament in the summer of 2001, more than 100 temporary laws were unilaterally enacted by the government. These laws affected, amongst others, the areas of elections and public freedoms.[46]

Promoting political, social and economic development of the Jordanian homeland and involving civil society organisations in this process remained a high priority for the regime after the US-British led invasion of Iraq in March 2003. On 23 October 2003, King Abdullah issued a "Letter of Designation" to the newly formed government of Prime Minister Faisal Fayez. Therein, principles of development were spelled out that underlined the need for inclusion and participation of political and civic institutions, including the parliament, political parties, professional associations, chambers of commerce and industry, trade unions, media institutions, intellectuals, artists, women's organizations, the youth and religious leaders.[47] Prime Minister Faisal Fayez followed up on those instructions by paying widely publicized visits to the leading figures of civil society institutions in the following months, thereby trying to convey the image of a civil society-friendly government that sought to prioritize democratic development.[48] To the present day, typically during youth forums and meetings with students, the King and other royal family members as well as ministers place considerable emphasis on the importance of women and youth participating in the process of political development.[49]

The same regime representatives, however, also made clear that there are limits to state tolerance and democratic freedoms. Prime Minister Faisal Fayez, for instance, stated that the government's democratic approach does not mean that anyone should have the chance to "harm the country and distort its image;" though he did not define the nature of such transgressions.[50] On another occasion, Fayez lashed out against some of the most prominent civil society institutions for not participating in the regime-led political development process. "The sad fact is that we have no Jordanian public opinion because the silent majority constitutes 90 percent of the population and the only voices heard are those of the professional associations, the Islamic Action Front and the leftist parties," he asserted. "What the government wants from the political parties, other political and professional associations and civil society institutions is to do their part in encouraging political participation in a proactive manner," he added. According to him, the civil society institutions have failed in this regard: "the professional associations have no other concern but pan-Arab issues. They show no interest in what is going on at the domestic level. Theirs are private agendas."[51]

The top-down character of the process of "political development" and the patronizing attitude of its promoters towards civil society and public opinion becomes especially clear when the promoters' statements on the role of the media are carefully reviewed. According to Faisal Fayez, modern media-related laws are going to be drafted "in order to make our media free and responsible, a media that will not resort to character assassination, slandering symbols of our homeland." The Kingdom needs responsible media, according to him, that does not endanger its political and economic interests.[52] According to the King himself, national interests should be a priority for the media's coverage. He stressed that the media has a significant role to play "in educating the public on their civic duties to participate actively in the Kingdom's development, on solid work ethics and the merit of a cohesive society working in harmony towards the country's goals."[53] As a final example of discursive paternalism toward civil society by the regime in the name of the "national interest," the circular issued by Fayez' government that directs political parties, professional associations and other civil society institutions to observe the National Banner's Law by hoisting the flag and posting the King's pictures in their offices should also be mentioned.[54]

Cooptation of Society

Cooptation of Tribes

Of course, regime patronage over society in Jordan is not a matter of discourse alone. It is also a matter of concrete policies of cooptation vis-á-vis the various societal groups, with tangible consequences for their societal and political status in the Kingdom. The predominance of Jordan's native tribal population in the state apparatus has already been mentioned. Up to this day, the Hashemite regime has reserved the more powerful positions in the state bureaucracy, the army and security apparatus for this ethnic community. Moreover, tribal and rural areas in the kingdom are disproportionally represented in parliament through a distribution of electoral districts that is decisively in their favor.[55] The Hashemite monarchy officially recognizes tribal leadership and respects tribal custom. A nephew of the King functions as the Advisor for Tribal Affairs. He consults and represents the tribes. Until 1976, tribal law was officially administered in much of the country. Unofficially, tribal law is still administered by state institutions.[56] According to anthropologist Richard Antoun, the "weak" nature of the Jordanian monarchy has led to the cooptation and protection of tribal life by the regime, since the latter needs to have all the allies it can find. Consequently, socio-cultural tribal patterns of cooperation and conflict resolution in Jordan do not have to resist the assault of centralized state power, as happened in Iraq under the regime of Saddam Hussein and continues to happen in Syria. Therefore, tribal mechanisms in the field of patron-client relations, *wastah*[57] and peaceful resolution of conflicts continue to be relevant. They have even penetrated the state apparatus to a high degree.[58]

Cooptation by the state of the tribal population actually results in a high degree of discriminatory practice. Having a native tribal family name, or having a relative in a prominent position in the state apparatus may improve opportunities for things like university admission, employment in the state sector, forgiveness of a traffic violation or the issuance of a passport. Being deprived of such fortunes – true for most citizens of Palestinian descent, in particular those of a modest socio-economic background – one may spend hours in line to renew a driving license, have greater trouble in finding employment and is more likely to be punished or arrested during police-checks on the roads or in the streets.[59] Even business people of Palestinian origin often feel obstructed in their economic activities by civil servants of a Transjordanian tribal background.[60]

Obviously, state-coopted tribalism is of a strongly hierarchical nature and is, therefore, likely to result in patron-client-relationships. However, the kingdom's political phase of liberalization since 1989 seems also to have resulted in more democratic and horizontal practices within the political and social life of the Transjordanian tribes. Lauri Brand has noted, for instance, primaries taking place within tribes to democratically elect their candidates for Parliamentary elections.[61] This is part of a wider process of social change taking place in Jordan's tribal communities, under the impact of factors like urbanization, education and increased physical mobility. This process undermines the authority of the traditional tribal elders and empowers younger tribesmen on the basis of the modern education they have acquired as well as their knowledge of and (work) experience with the workings of modern state institutions.[62] As a result, traditional tribal sheikhs have found levels of obedience among the younger generation increasingly to be waning.[63] Antoun has described the emergence of a more lively tribal public sphere, wherein issues such as traditional tribal cultural practices and bureaucratic incompetence of state institutions are more freely debated and criticized, and voluntary associations are established.[64]

Cooptation of Palestinians

Regime patronage of the Palestinian section of society seems to be much more limited as compared to that of Jordan's native tribes. Nevertheless, until Jordan's disengagement from the West Bank in 1988, usually about half of the ministers in any Jordanian cabinet were of Palestinian origin. This was meant to symbolize the unity of both banks of the Jordan River under the Hashemite leadership.[65] Also, since 1988, there have been several examples of Palestinians serving as ministers, the most prominent of which remains Tahir al-Masri. He became Prime Minister in 1991, when Jordan embarked on the process of peace negotiations with Israel. As a general rule, however, Palestinians have been excluded from the restricted decision-making group at the very top of the state apparatus and the military.[66]

In spite of this state of affairs, since it allows the great majority of them to become Jordanian citizens, Jordan can claim to have been more hospitable than most Arab countries towards its Palestinian community. It has, after all, provided them with a legal basis to participate and advance in the Kingdom's socio-economic life. The result of such participation is that Palestinians predominate not only in Jordan's business life, but also in its professional, media, and educational sectors.[67] In general, economically successful Palestinians have a greater loyalty toward Jordan and its dynasty than the

Palestinians who suffer economically. Trends of structural adjustment and privatization that assign a greater economic role to the market also seem to strengthen the political clout of the Palestinian business elite vis-á-vis the regime.[68] As far as inhabitants of the Palestinian refugee camps are concerned, the United Nations Relief and Work Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) is responsible for their education, health care and other social services. The Jordanian state does, however, play a role in socio-economic development in the camps. It provides infrastructure like water and sewerage services, waste-water treatment, roads and electricity networks, housing for poor camp inhabitants and loans to poor students from the camps. The government has a department for Palestinian Affairs that is responsible for such services and coordinates with UNRWA.[69] The role of the state in the refugee camps may ensure at least a minimum of state legitimacy among this politically most disaffected part of Jordan's Palestinian community.

Cooptation of Minorities

As far as the minorities of Circassians, Chechens and Christians are concerned, special seats in parliament are assigned to them, through which they are, in fact, over-represented in relation to the size of their communities in Jordan's general population.[70] Also, in the fields of employment in the state and security apparatuses, and, in the case of the Christians, policies of internal security and protection, these minorities enjoy a special relationship with the regime.[71]

Cooptation of Political and Cultural Islam

While the Jordanian monarchy is in favor of secular and liberal trends advocated by Jordan's modernist economic elite, it also offers The Muslim Brotherhood legal protection.[72] In the past, the Islamist movements' religiously motivated opposition against secular pan-Arab, Marxist and Communist trends made it a useful ally of the Hashemite regime. At times, the regime has felt itself threatened by these currents; in particular this was the case during the 1950s and 1960s.[73] At the same time, The Brotherhood functions as a counterweight against the more militant versions of Islamism, calling for the overthrow of the monarchy, such as Hizb Al-Tahrir (Liberation Party) and violent, often Al-Qa'ida-affiliated splinter groups initially established by Jordanian veterans of the Afghani *jihad* (holy war) against the Soviet army during the 1980s.[74]

To cultivate this alliance with Jordan's mainstream Islamist movement, Muslim Brotherhood members were frequently co-opted into prestigious positions by the regime. A former Minister of Awqaf (Holy Places) and Islamic Affairs was Kamil Ismail al-Sharif, one of the early Brotherhood leaders in Egypt. Especially during the 1970s and early 1980s, the Brothers enjoyed a strong influence in the Ministry of Education, where many of them, including a large number of The Brotherhood's executive bureau, were employed. One of the most prominent Brotherhood leaders, Ishaq Farhan, served as Minister of Education from 1970 until 1974 and as president of the University of Jordan from 1976 until 1978.[75] Given the demise of secular pan-Arabist and leftist ideologies during the past decades, we may state that, from the regime's point of view, the present function of The Muslim Brotherhood, including its extensive network of political, social and cultural institutions, is that of providing a non-violent and regime-loyalist Islamic option to disaffected sections of Jordan's population, in particular the youth and urban Palestinians. By its cooperation with The Brotherhood, the state tries to prevent militant and jihadi versions of Islamism from taking root in the society.

Similar to the regime's attitude vis-á-vis tribal culture, its position towards religious culture in the Kingdom has always been characterized by accommodation and cooptation. It never started explicitly from a secularist ideal, in the vein of the secular pan-Arab regimes in Syria, Iraq and Egypt, the Kemalist regime in Turkey or the Pahlavi regime in Iran. Part of its authority is palpably based upon Islam, as has been mentioned above. Existing secularization processes in the Kingdom were not forcefully imposed from above, but rather encouraged by the regime gradually. According to the Kingdom's constitution of 1952, shari'ah courts enjoy jurisdiction over personal status matters such as marriage, divorce, inheritance and child custody, and over awqaf (Islamic endowments).[76] After the Islamic revolution in Iran had taken place in 1979, Jordanian society experienced a wave of Islamic cultural revival. This was expressed by phenomena such as the increased wearing of Islamic dress and of beards, increased mosque attendance and a mosque construction boom.[77] The regime participated in this upheaval by policy measures such as increasing the amount of religious programming on state-run television and radio, encouraging the payment of zakah through the Zakah Fund, which is affiliated to the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs, enforcing bans on smoking and alcohol during Ramadan and facilitating the creation of the Jordanian Islamic Bank for Finance and Investment.[78]

It seems, however, that the Kingdom has not known a trend of religious censorship on public expressions of a degree similar to that in Egypt in the 1990s. The regime may even intervene at times to protect citizens from aggressive manifestations of Islamic cultural revival. In 1989, for instance, television talk show host and women's rights activist Toujan Feisal faced charges in court for apostasy and ridiculing Qur'an, Hadith and shari'ah. The legal proceedings against her were initiated by certain Islamists provoked by a press article in which Feisal mocked the institution of polygamy. King Hussein intervened on her behalf and, in January 1990, the court of appeal exonerated her from all charges.[79]

Again, the status of the King as the final arbiter above all parties and sections may at times work to the benefit of citizen's rights. It could even be stated that different sections of Jordanian society feel themselves protected by the monarchy against real or perceived threats emanating from one another. On the one hand, mainstream Islamists often observe that, due to the existence of the monarchy, they have been spared the kind of persecution suffered by Muslim Brothers in Egypt and Syria.[80] And they are all-too aware of the relatively open political climate in the Kingdom as compared to other Arab countries. They enjoy official recognition by the state and are permitted publicly to perform religious, social and political activities without fear of legal reprisal (as long as they do not transgress the state imposed limits discussed in the next section).[81] On the other hand, Jordanian Muslims of a more secular or liberal orientation, as well as Christians, feel protected by the state against the perceived threat posed by the Islamist movement to their individual rights and freedoms in social, cultural and perhaps even political spheres.[82] This also means, of course, that the monarchical regime has succeeded in playing these different forces off against one another in its policy of managing as well as accommodating them. Moreover, various profound tensions between these forces and the state do exist. These will be dealt with in the next chapter.

Limitations to Democracy and Pluralism

Institutions of Parliamentary Democracy

That the sort of pluralism advocated and practiced by the Hashemite regime is still an authoritarian one, as observed by Mansoor Moaddel, is supported by the limitations imposed on the exercise of democracy and civil rights in the Kingdom. To start with the formal institutions of parliamentary democracy: while it is true that, since 1989, Jordanian citizens have enjoyed the right to elect their own parliament, the power of this parliament is still circumscribed by monarchical privileges. The Senate, the Prime Minster and the council of Ministers are still appointed by the king, who chooses individuals in accordance with his own preferences and interests. In addition, the Constitution grants the King the power to dissolve parliament and declare martial law.[83] The royally-appointed government may also enact temporary laws for as long as parliament is absent.

The last time that the King made use of his power to dissolve parliament was in June 2001.[84] Parliamentary elections were initially scheduled for November that year, but they were postponed several times until finally being held on 17 June 2003.[85] In the meantime, many temporary laws, some of them affecting civil rights, were enacted by the government. One such law made the holding of public events, marches and rallies conditional upon official prior approval of the provincial governor.[86] Another stipulated the "permanent or temporary closure" of publications that carry "false or libelous information that can undermine national unity or the country's reputation." Publications carrying articles that incite "crimes, strikes, illegal public assemblies or the undermining of public order" would be subjected to fines up to 5000 JD and/or prison-sentences of up to three years, to be imposed by the State Security court. This court does not know a right to appeal.[87]

The election law favors pro-regime constituencies, to be found mainly in tribal and rural areas and in the smaller towns, over the more opposition-oriented and Palestinian dominated bigger cities in various ways. More on this will be discussed in the next chapter. Finally, the functioning of political parties is severely hampered because of state policies that confine the former's activities to the sphere of "political society" in the narrowest sense, while, at the same time, severely circumscribing their activities in the "civil society" – i.e. in terms of voluntary associations and public, grassroots activity.[88]

Public Protest

Holding demonstrations and public meetings by citizens in general is subjected to severe restrictions as well. In each case, the provincial governor should give prior written permission. If the authorities feel that the meeting or demonstration implies protest against the government's own policies or against that of Jordan's allies, permission is on the whole denied. Occasionally, however, permission is granted, for instance in the case of demonstrations out of solidarity with the Palestinian intifada or against US intervention in Afghanistan or Iraq. In such cases, the authorities feel that it is wise to allow people to let off some steam. Sometimes, protest meetings are only allowed to take place within the premises of the organizing institutions, such as political parties or professional associations, which greatly lessens their public impact. Citizens who defy the ban on a demonstration or a public meeting risk arrest, interrogation and sometimes physical abuse or torture by police or mukhabarat.[89]

The Press

Similar restrictions are suffered by the Jordanian press. While journalists in Jordan are considerably freer than they were before the start of the liberalization process in 1989,[90] laws relating to the press stipulate limits to press freedoms that ensure journalists generally to practice self-censorship. First of all, there is the prohibition on "disparaging the King and royal family members." Second, the Jordanian armed forces and security forces (including her police and mukhabarat) may not be harmed by publication of "news items, cartoons and comments." Third, information deemed damaging to Jordan's national unity is also considered off-limits. Finally, any article or source of information that might be read as slandering heads of state of Arab, Muslim or friendly nations, and anything that instigates "illegal" political activities – such as sit-ins, strikes or gatherings held without permission – is also banned.[91]

Needless to say, such vaguely formulated red lines make Jordanian journalists think twice before pursuing potentially controversial topics. When a paper receives a "sensitive" news story through a foreign news agency, a reporter often contacts a senior official requesting a comment on the matter. The paper might put the official's comment as a lead to the original story. In other instances, "sensitive stories" are published on inside pages or added to other stories.[92] Since the government owns a major interest in the country's main daily newspapers,[93] the latter usually refrain from publishing material that is critical of government policy. The privately owned weekly newspapers may be more daring in this regard, depending on their chief-editors. But they must also take the views of government officials regarding the publication of certain topics into account. If not, the journalist or (chief) editor in question risks being arrested, imprisoned and interrogated.[94] Defying the wishes of the authorities in these matters can lead to the closure of the newspaper in question.[95]

Religious Institutions

In our discussion of the limits to freedom of expression in Jordan, the religious sphere must not be omitted. The religious establishment in Jordan is also subject to censorship by the state. In Jordan, the phenomenon of the "private mosque," found in several other Muslim countries, does not exist. All mosques are controlled by the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic affairs. This provides the state with the means to control the flow of discourse in this institution that plays such an important role in Muslim social and public life.[96]

To prevent the airing of views by mosque preachers that are critical of government policies and to foster a docile state Islam, the Ministry of Awqaf has increasingly tried to control the content of the Friday sermon *(khutbah)*. Since the mid-1980s, when The Muslim Brotherhood underwent a wave of repressive government measures, preaching has been under the supervision of the Department of Preaching and Guidance. This department resorts under the Ministry of Awqaf. Since then, the state has employed "balanced thinkers," uncritical of the regime and its policies, as qualified preachers and imams to give the mosque sermons. While the hiring of preachers with a more oppositional and/or Islamist outlook cannot be entirely avoided, due to a general shortage of mosque personnel, the latter are closely monitored and rotated from mosque to mosque to prevent them from building a large following. A preacher who persists in criticizing government policies will be banned from the mosque for a couple of months. The Department of Preaching and Guidance has the authority to grant or withhold permission to speak in the mosque, without specifying a reason. Any preacher who violates a ban to preach might be referred to the secret police. Some imams and preachers have found ways to circumvent governmental restrictions by masking their critical messages towards state policies in quotes from Qur'an and Hadith that serve as allusions to current political or social events. However, such analogies are usually so subtle that they are also lost on much of the audience and therefore have limited effect within the public sphere.[97]

Voluntary Associations

As a final example of limitations to democratic rights and freedoms in the Hashemite Kingdom, we turn to the voluntary associations. Many of these associations organize courses, lectures and workshops on various social and cultural issues. State discourse on the "separation" of the realm of social and cultural life from that of political life places such associations in a difficult position. This is because many social and cultural topics – concerning, for instance, gender relations or religious/ethnic (particularly Palestinian) identity – have political implications. The law on Voluntary Societies and Social Organizations (Law no. 33 of 1966) states that voluntary associations can only be formed "to provide social services without any intention of financial gains or other personal gains, including political gains" (emphasis added). This limitation prevents such associations from engaging in any political mobilization and/or public advocacy work that may put pressure on the state. There are several cases of voluntary associations whose members faced harassment, arrest and/or interrogation by the mukhabarat for conducting cultural activities with political import. Some associations were actually dissolved by the authorities for such reasons.[98]

A Historical Pattern of Patronage

In an attempt to describe historically the evolution of the regime's attitude to Jordanian society, we must note that a combination of factors has produced, on the one hand, a pattern marked by authoritarian control, and, on the other, sensitivity toward various interests and ideological viewpoints emanating from within society. Internal stability could not be achieved by exercising repression and coercion alone, though this has often formed a significant part of the regime's repertoire. Needs and interests in wider society have to be satisfied (or at least placated), and the various segments of Jordanian society co-opted whenever possible.

During the years in which the Kingdom enjoyed an abundance of economic support from abroad, in particular the 1970s and early 80s, when it received subsidies and development aid from the West (particularly the USA) and Arab oil states (as well as remittances from hundreds of thousands of Jordanian citizens working in the Gulf region), the state could co-opt the population by simply distributing goods and services. Thus, it granted subsidies on basic commodities and the provision of public sector jobs. Accordingly, popular participation in politics and democratic freedoms could be "bought off" by satisfying popular desires in the realm of consumption and economic prosperity.

This pattern could no longer be sustained when, due to the decline in the oil revenues of the Gulf States during the 1980s, debt and inflation in Jordan soared to unprecedented heights, expatriate Jordanian workers returned from the Arab Gulf region and unemployment started to rise. The Kingdom finally capitulated to an IMF-imposed structural adjustment package that was highly unpopular among the people. When, due to fuel price increases that were part of the structural adjustment package, members of the tribal population of the south of Jordan started to riot in April 1989, the King decided that it was time to give the wider society a voice in Jordanian politics. This was prudent because the protestors and rioters belonged to a segment of society that formed an essential pillar of the regime.[99] From then on, maintaining the pattern of regime patronage and cooptation of the population has taken a different form: providing political space to vent the frustrations of disaffected groups and thereby to placate them.

Patronage of Civil Society

The new form of cooptation leaves the basic patron-client relationship between state and society intact or perhaps even reinforces it. For the regime allows autonomous spaces in the society, such as tribal structures, professional associations, voluntary associations, political parties and Islamic movements, to continue to exist. As part of the same process, it regularly listens to opinions and complaints emanating from this civil society and occasionally consults civil forces (such as professional associations,[100] or The Muslim Brotherhood[101]) in order to defuse socio-political tensions and unrest. However, the reins of public and political life remain firmly in the hands of the state. Thus, the regime defines the nature of acceptable and responsible attitudes and expressions in the public sphere, and it alone determines their limits. Yet, the laws and regulations defining those limits are so vague in content that they provide state authorities with considerable leeway to step in when they deem it necessary. Hence, if members of a voluntary association engage "unlawfully" in political activity, if a newspaper editorial criticizes the regime of a neighbouring Arab country, or if a peaceful demonstration is considered politically dangerous, the state can exercise its right to act punitively. All dealings of the state with the forces of civil society have the safeguarding of the monarchical regime and its hegemony over Jordanian society as the ultimate objective. Regime survival requires a certain measure of communication with forces from (civil) society, so that the state will not be alienated from what is going on at the grassroots and thereby lose its ability to control and manage them. This implies that the regime is open to suggestions or criticism from civic institutions such as women's organizations, professional associations or human rights groups only when this accords with its own power interests and its own top-down agenda of political, social and economic modernization.[102]

At times, state authorities display contradictory attitudes toward local civil society institutions. This is due to the fact that, in many cases, the state itself is caught up between conflicting internal as well as external interests. Take the example of wastah or favoritism, a widespread practice within the state apparatus. By allowing this practice to continue, the regime co-opts

Jordan's native tribal population, thereby cultivating an important pillar of regime support. However, the emergence of a globalizing and knowledge-based economy in Jordan requires an efficient and professionally working state apparatus that transparently hires persons solely on a meritocratic basis. Therefore, it is not surprising that the King himself as well as the Prime Minister and other cabinet members are strong verbal opponents of the practice of wastah.[103] At the same time, the regime relies on a state apparatus that largely functions on the basis of this phenomenon. Needless to say, this prevents it from taking effective steps to eradicate wastah. The human and civil rights NGO Arab Archives Institute, led by journalist Sa'eda al-Kilani, gained first hand experience of this paradoxical state of affairs when it made recommendations to the government, on the basis of its own research and documentation, to combat the wastah phenomenon: government officials received these recommendations with open arms and agreed fully with the NGO's criticisms. Little was done to translate them into practice, however.[104]

Another example of inconsistent state attitudes toward voices from the civil society is the case of the Campaign to Eliminate So-called Crimes of Honor. This was an NGO that gathered signatures in 1999 and 2000 to repeal an article in the penal code that grants reduced sentences to men convicted of committing honor crimes. The regime's attitude on this issue was a sensitive one, since it had repeatedly brought the country under the international spotlight for the wrong reasons. The NGO in question faced strong opposition from conservative tribal as well as Islamist forces that saw in it a ploy to undermine the traditional social and moral fabric of Jordanian society. A Jordanian parliament dominated by conservatives blocked a proposal to repeal the article in question. The monarchy, meanwhile, tried to show its good faith toward the Campaign as well as to the international community by organizing a public rally against the article. At the same time, however, it declared its "respect" for the decision of parliament. Regime patronage of the issue had, meanwhile, led to the marginalization of the public impact of the NGO's campaign.[105]

Self-Representation of the Regime

The self-representation of the regime as the embodiment of the common good and of the supreme values of the nation is another element that characterizes its patronage over civil society in Jordan. This embodiment is expressed by the monarchy in various ways, such as through references in speeches to its own sharif-based status, to the national interest, to the modern values of democracy, civil society, and socio-economic development, and to the empowerment of marginal social groups (women, youth and the poor). Likewise, members of the royal family make frequent visits to needy communities and Palestinian refugee camps,[106] involving themselves there in the opening and sponsorship of charitable centers, social initiatives and welfare NGOs.[107] Next to royal family members, governmental institutions, such as the Ministry of Social Development, have also initiated the establishment of welfare and development associations.[108] It can be safely assumed that the regime is motivated by a genuine desire for development of the nation. After all, its own interests, survival and international relationships are linked to the promotion of modernization processes that entail, among others, the development of a knowledge-based economy, the emancipation of women and youth and a transparent and participatory political and administrative environment.[109] However, the way in which the regime implements these processes (i.e. from above) fosters a top-down model of state-civil society relationships, in which it is the monarchy that promotes itself as the benevolent caretaker of the society and as its educator in modern and "enlightened" values.

To characterize this pattern in terms of existing civil society theories (albeit to do so briefly), we assume that, to some degree, the Jordanian model resembles the statist conception of civil society as developed by the early 19th century German political philosopher Hegel. According to Hegel, the state embodies the universal interest of society, preserves its inner balance and harmony from above and maintains a corporatist relationship with the civic institutions.[110] The function that the Hashemite State assigns to civil society institutions is also reminiscent of Gramsci's understanding of the nature of such institutions: the inner trenches of the established system that contribute to the stability of hegemony exercised by the society's rulers.[111]

The Response of Civil Society to Regime Hegemony

Jordan's licensed civil society institutions seem to be willing to play according to the rules of the game described above. Gone are the days that pan-Arab forces in the 1950s or Palestinian leftist-nationalist forces in the late 1960s and early 1970s openly questioned the legitimacy of the Hashemite monarchy, and threatened to replace it with a genuinely "popular" regime. The liberalization process that began in 1989 took place on the condition that the status of the monarchy (as final legal arbiter) would not be questioned by political and civil society forces. By and large, Jordanian representatives of those forces seem to acquiesce to this. Like the Jordanian public in general, they often appreciate the stability, security and relative freedom that the Hashemite dynasty brings to Jordanian society. Many of them contrast the political situation in the Kingdom in a positive vein to that in other Arab countries. In the words of one political specialist, Schirin Fathi [h]ad the main thrust of the oppositional strength in the past been geared toward questioning Hashemite legitimacy, this has been resolved in the monarchy's favor. Recent events have underlined the King's authority as the guarantor of survival and stability … The sentiment is so strong that many Jordanians are not able to conceive of Jordan without the King.[112]

At the same time, there is still widespread dissatisfaction with the prevailing situation regarding civil rights and freedoms, and with the lack of a popular participation in parliament and in other political bodies. Demands for a fairer political climate, in which critical and oppositional voices may be expressed and discussed, are voiced in the media. There is also criticism pertaining to socio-economic policy and/or foreign policy, in particular as regards Jordan's role in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. However, all the mainstream currents, including Islamists and leftists, abide by the rule that criticism may be leveled at specific and concrete government policies, never at the monarchy itself.[113] The basic pattern of a parliamentary democracy, a civil society and public opinion acquiescing (in public discourse and practice at least) in the patronage of a monarchical regime seems to be firmly in place.

5. Political Society, Economic Society and the Role of the Islamist Movement

This chapter aims to illustrate further the patronizing and semi-authoritarian/semi-liberal relationship between state and society in Jordan (highlighted in the previous chapter) by focusing on those civil society institutions and popular forces most often dealt with and written on within the media and academia. It begins with the historical development of political party life in the Kingdom. Subsequently, the role of professional associations as economic but especially as political interest groups will be explored. Then the role of organizations representing employers and laborers as representatives of Jordanian economic society will be described. Finally, a closer look will be taken to the historical development of Jordan's Islamist movement, especially its main current, The Muslim Brotherhood. The chapter will conclude with a comparison between these four categories of civic institutions and their role vis-à-vis society and state.

The Role of Political Parties

As in any parliamentary democracy, political parties in Jordan are meant to represent competing social interests and views in parliament. Their influence on policy-making may be exerted from within parliament or, if with luck, from within the governmental cabinet itself. One can argue that since political parties are engaged in the realm of policy – and decision – making in the sphere of the state, they do not belong to civil society proper.[1] It could equally be maintained, however, that since parties have, ideally speaking, the character of citizens' initiatives and represent the interests and opinions among (certain sections of) the citizenry, they perform the civil society function of protecting citizens' rights and interests vis-à-vis the state.

Political Party Life up to the Declaration of Martial Law in 1957

The first political party in the Emirate of Transjordan was established in 1920 by Syrian nationalists who had fled their country when the French occupied it. It was called Hizb al-Istiqlal (Independence Party). Once they started to criticise Emir Abdullah for his subservience to the British Empire, however, they were expelled from the Emirate. That was in 1924.[2]

On 20 February 1928, the British government officially recognized Transjordan as a polity separate from the British mandate administration in Palestine. The Emirate remained under British tutelage, however, especially in the fields of foreign, defense and fiscal policy. Accompanying this agreement was the promulgation of an organic law creating, for the first time, a legislative council made up of 21 members. This council was not empowered to counter government policy and the Emir could dissolve it at whim. It did offer a platform, however, for the expression of frustrations and political protest emanating from Transjordan's predominantly tribal society. These frustrations and protests were related to the continuing economic marginality of Transjordan's rural and tribal population vis-à-vis the main urban centers, as well as to the British imposition of an external administrative elite in Transjordan that largely consisted of officials from Palestine. The Transjordan National Congress (TNC) gave a voice to these resentments. Under the slogan 'Transjordan for the Transjordanians,' the TNC tried to use the Legislative Council to block the appointment of more Palestinian officials. The successive governments neutralized this opposition, however, by co-opting its members into positions within the Executive Council.[3] Moreover, Emir Abdullah himself established his own People's Party as a counterweight to this opposition. Other newly established parties represented the interests of one particular tribe. Most elected representatives in the council were notables and sheikhs who owned large landholdings. They dominated Transjordanian political life by their personal interests[4] and effectively played the role of intermediaries between Emir Abdullah's autocratic regime and their own tribal constituencies.

Nevertheless, developments of urbanization and mass education, leading to the emergence of a new middle class, gave rise to new ideological groupings in the 1930s and 1940s. Examples included The Muslim Brotherhood, associations of intellectuals and political activists inspired by secular pan-Arabism,[5] and the Communist Party.[6] With its diverse ideological inclinations, this new middle class would be greatly expanded by the arrival of hundreds of thousands of Palestinian refugees during the 1948 war and the annexation of the West Bank of the Jordan River in 1950. The inclusion of a Palestinian population in the Hashemite Kingdom's citizenry,[7] twice as large as the Transjordanian one and generally more advanced in terms of education, urbanization and political consciousness, injected a new lease of political life into the Kingdom. This development was reflected in the Jordanian constitution of 1952 that explicitly recognized, for the first time, the right of citizens to establish political parties.[8]

The subsequent five years were characterized by political turmoil. The monarchy was weakened by the assassination of King (the previous Emir) Abdullah in 1951 and political currents from abroad, like Nasserism and Islamism from Egypt, Ba'thism from Syria and Communism from the Soviet Union were increasingly promoted within the Kingdom's civil society, especially by Palestinians. The young King Hussein, who ascended to the throne in 1953, started to make concessions to these newly emerging opposition forces in a bid to appease them. First of all, an unpopular parliament engineered in 1954 by the authoritarian Prime Minister Tawfiq Abu al-Huda was dissolved. At the beginning of 1956, the King decided to rescind a plan for Jordan's entry to the Baghdad pact (an anti-Communist military alliance led by the United States and Britain), after violent clashes took place in the Kingdom's cities between protestors against the plan and the security forces. Moreover, he dismissed Glubb Pasha, the British head of Jordan's Arab Legion and despised symbol of continued British colonial presence for Arab nationalists, communists and Islamists alike. Last but not least, the King decided to hold general elections that same year in which the opposition was allowed to participate.

Winning 12 seats in the 40 member parliament, the greatest oppositional success during these elections was enjoyed by the National Socialist Party (NSP) led by Sulaiman al-Nabulsi. This party of businessmen and professionals espoused a relatively moderate pan-Arab nationalism and anti-colonialism, as well as liberal democratic demands pertaining to governance. Two parties that were more radical, the Ba'th Party and the Communist Party, won two and three seats respectively. Their following was to a large extent made up of disaffected Palestinians, especially refugees. Characterised by a fierce anti-imperialism, they overtly opposed the monarchy and advocated a socialist redistribution of wealth. These three opposition parties obtained most of their votes from the Palestinian population of the West Bank. On the conservative side of Jordan's political map, there was the pro-

Hashemite Arab Constitutional Party, winning 5 seats, The Muslim Brotherhood, winning 4 seats and independent candidates mostly belonging to the category of tribal notables also won most of their seats on the East Bank.

The King entrusted NSP leader al-Nabulsi with the post of prime minister to form and lead a new government. Much to the monarch's dislike, however, al-Nabulsi opted to select Ba'thists and Communists as coalition partners. The Communist and Ba'thist ministers and deputies started to organize popular demonstrations in favor of their agendas and dismissed pro-Hashemite officials.[9] Moreover, Communists were released from prison and the new government started to make diplomatic overtures toward the Soviet Union.[10] When radical-influenced army units started to clash with Hashemite loyalists in April 1957, the King reacted forcefully. He dismissed the al-Nabulsi government, dissolved parliament and banned all political parties.[11] With the support of the tribal notables, the rural propertied elites and even The Muslim Brotherhood, he declared martial law in May 1957,[12] thereby ending the phenomenon of official political party life in the country for an indefinite period of time.

Official Political Life without Parties (1957–1989)

During this period, opposition parties continued their activities underground, but could not operate in public anymore. Before the June war of 1967, elections were held twice in the Hashemite Kingdom, but candidates were not allowed to run on a party ticket. When the regime deemed the parliament elected in 1962 to be too critical, the King dissolved it. The occupation of the West Bank by Israel during the 1967 war made the regime decide to freeze parliamentary elections for an indefinite period of time, due to the impossibility of holding elections in an occupied part of the Kingdom. When the Arab summit of 1974 in Rabat declared the PLO to be the sole and legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, the King suspended parliament altogether, pending the resolution of the Palestinian problem.[13]

The period between 1967 and 1970 was an exception to the overall trend. The Hashemite regime's weakness after the devastating defeat in the June War of 1967 against Israel allowed Palestinian guerilla movements of different political colors to manifest themselves openly in Jordanian civil society. This enabled the banned pan-Arabist and leftist parties to declare themselves publicly as a Jordanian coalition that backed the guerillas. All of this came to an end, however, when the regime managed to forcibly remove the PLO from the Kingdom during the violent confrontations of 1970–1971.[14]Leaving Jordan without a popular representative body caused considerable problems in a society with a growing, politically ambitious professional middle class and tribal leaders accustomed to enjoying an officially recognized political voice. Thus, in 1978, on the advice of some of his closest confidants, the King appointed a National Consultative Council (NCC) consisting of 60 leading figures from mainly East Bank-Jordanian society. An attempt was made to give this body a representative quality by appointing members from different parts of the Kingdom and from different ideological currents, including some veteran oppositionists.[15] It had no binding decision-making authority, however.

Due to economic problems like inflation and the diminishing purchasing power of the population, societal discontent increased in the Kingdom over the following years.[16] Indeed, since the collapse of the oil-market in 1982, the Kingdoms' economic situation as a whole started to worsen.[17] To placate the population, in January 1984, the King decided to dispense with the NCC and to recall the Lower House of parliament. Since eight seats of the Lower House had become vacant due to the deaths of their occupants, popular elections were organized to fill them. It was a lively contest: women voted for the first time and over 100 candidates of different political colors, from leftists and secular pan-Arabists to tribalists and Islamists, all participated.[18] The Islamists' success was remarkable: two of the six Muslim seats were won by Muslim Brothers;[19] while another one was gained by independent Islamist and outspoken regime-critic Leith Shubeilat. The newly elected representatives turned out to be vocal in opposing corruption and human rights violations committed by state institutions and officials. The government responded, however, by manipulating divisions in the Lower House and clamping down on freedom of expression in general.[20]

Meanwhile, economic problems were becoming increasingly aggravated. Due to a growing budget deficit, the state started to borrow from domestic as well as external sources. The skyrocketing debt led, in 1988, to a 45% devaluation of the dinar. Unemployment soared when expatriates of Jordanian nationality working in the Gulf region lost their jobs and had to return to the Kingdom. In March 1989, therefore, the government concluded an agreement for an economic stabilization program with the International Monetary Fund (IMF). In return for stand-by credits, the government had to cut subsidies on several basic commodities, like cooking gas, gasoline, diesel fuel and beverages.[21]

After the announcement of these subsidy cuts, riots broke out in the southern city of Ma'an, and quickly spread to other towns and villages. The rioters expressed themselves against the government of Prime Minister Zaid al-Rifai, which they accused of flagrant corruption.[22] Civil society institutions in the bigger cities, especially the professional associations, used this volatile situation to articulate popular political demands, including democratic elections for a new Lower House, press freedom and broader political participation.[23] The King, feeling that he should speed up political reform to preserve the regime's legitimacy, appeared on television and promised to hold parliamentary elections.[24]

The Impact of Political Liberalization since 1989

Political parties were still banned when elections for a new Lower House were held on the 8th of November 1989. As in 1984, however, candidates from all the main political currents were allowed to participate on an individual basis.[25] Again, Islamists turned out to be the great winners. 20 candidates from The Muslim Brotherhood won seats in the 80-member Lower House, while 14 independent Islamists (not belonging to a formally organized Islamist movement) made it to parliament, effectively creating an Islamist bloc of 34 deputies.[26] 10 candidates from the banned secular pan-Arabist and leftist opposition parties were elected. Of the remaining deputies, 22 were regarded as tribal representatives, while many others belonged to the liberal trend among the urban professional middle class.[27]

In the months after these elections, the newly appointed government of Prime Minister Mudar Badran succeeded in creating a freer political atmosphere. Many political prisoners were released, restrictions on traveling abroad for political opponents were ended, members of the press were given significantly more freedom, civil servants previously sacked for political reasons were reinstated and new civil servants no longer needed to be vetted by the secret police anymore, as was previously the case.[28] Martial law was officially revoked in July 1991.[29]

The King was determined, however, to prevent the experience of the liberalization process of the 1950s, which had jeopardized regime hegemony at the time. To that end, he appointed a 60-member strong commission charged with drafting a National Charter that would regulate, once and for all, relations between state and society in Jordan. The commission's members were politicians from all the main political currents. The National Charter was adopted on 9 June 1991 by an equally appointed 2000-delegate national conference with participants from various sections of Jordanian society. It confirmed explicitly the restoration of pluralism, democracy and popular participation. In return, however, it required from citizens, civil society institutions and political parties alike to acknowledge Jordan as a legitimate independent state (thereby excluding radical versions of pan-Arabism from legitimacy) and to recognize the Hashemite monarchy with the King as the legitimate head of state.[30] Thus, the Charter effectively confined opposition forces within a framework of loyalty to the Hashemite monarchy, since their representatives had signed up to it. At the same time, the legally non-binding character of the document implied that the regime did not need to feel too constrained by the charter's democratic principles when it wished to exercise political repression.[31]

The regime's desire to control and contain opposition forces was also reflected in the new Political Parties Law, enacted in September 1992. While officially reinstating the principle of the multi-party system, it imposed several restrictions on political parties. The most important were the following: a) voluntary associations were prohibited from promoting the interests of any political party; b) political parties may not be financed from abroad; c) they may not have organizational links with external political forces; d) their leaderships should be truly Jordanian.[32] This legislation required a measure of organizational and ideological adjustment from secular pan-Arabist parties. More importantly, it had serious implications for The Muslim Brotherhood, by that time the most powerful organized political force after the state itself. The Brotherhood possessed a large network of voluntary associations, entertained links with sister organizations in other Arab countries and received external funds, from the Gulf region in particular, on a large scale.[33] This implied that it could not register as a political party in its own name. The Muslim Brothers decided, therefore, to establish a new Islamist party, called the Islamic Action Front Party (IAF). The IAF was officially registered at the Ministry of Interior as a political party in December 1992.[34] In the following months, several other political parties registered. Among them were the Jordanian Peoples' Democratic Party and the Jordanian Democratic Popular Unity Party (politically oriented toward the Marxist PLO factions Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP) and Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) respectively), the Jordanian Communist Party, the Jordan Arab Socialist Ba'th Party, the Arab Progressive Ba'th Party (the latter two were oriented toward the Ba'th regimes of respectively Iraq and Syria), as well as several Jordanian nationalist and tribalist parties.[35] Some of the latter fused in 1997 into the Jordanian nationalist and pro-Hashemite National Constitutional Party.[36]

In all, more than twenty political parties were established throughout the 1990s. With the exception of the IAF, however, all failed to secure significant support from the Jordanian public.[37] Again with the exception of the

Islamist trend, the political party map in Jordan has remained very unstable, with much personal bickering within parties and many splits from as well as coalitions between, them taking place.[38]

All these parties had their first chance to participate officially in elections for the Lower House in 1993. Monarchy and government were determined, however, to have a more docile parliament in place after these elections. The 1989-elected Lower House was outspokenly critical, and dared to discuss topics as sensitive as corruption in the highest offices of state.[39] Moreover, the regime was engaged in controversial policies like the Arab-Israeli peace talks and the implementation of the IMF-prescribed austerity package agreed upon in March 1989.

On 4 August 1993, the King dissolved parliament and thirteen days later, the government announced its decision to adopt the one-person one-vote system for the coming elections, instead of the old system of bloc voting. In the old system, a voter could cast his or her votes for as many candidates as the number of parliament seats allotted to his or her district. In the new system, however, voters would have to select one candidate. The government rightly foresaw that most voters would prefer their only vote to go to a representative of their own tribe, clan or family rather than to an ideological party candidate. This amendment came on top of an electoral district system, in place since 1986, which allotted significantly more seats to regime-loyal tribal and rural districts as compared to the opposition-oriented urban areas, in relation to the size of population. Protests against the new system by opposition parties, first and foremost the IAF, were to no avail.[40] Moreover, state authorities employed measures to hamper the election campaigns of opposition parties. They transferred IAF members and sympathizers, for instance, from their voting districts to prevent them from campaigning, and speeches at election rallies of opposition parties were often prohibited.[41]

The November 1993 elections produced the results desired by the government. The IAF obtained sixteen seats, along with six independent Islamists. This created an Islamist bloc of 22 parliamentarians, meaning 12 deputies less then the Islamist bloc in the previous parliament. Leftist deputies won only two seats and no party other than the IAF won more than five seats. Only 34 of the total number of 80 deputies represented political parties. A majority of 56 deputies were to be considered outspokenly pro-Hashemite.[42]

Deliberalization after Peace with Israel

In the following years, antagonism between regime and opposition parties was largely determined by the conclusion of a peace treaty with Israel, which took place in October 1994. Five months before, eight political parties, including the IAF, the Communists and the Ba'thists, had formed the "Popular Arab Committee for Resisting Submission and Normalization" to voice their protest against this development. Such close cooperation between Islamist and secularist forces was a novelty at the time. Protest demonstrations against the peace treaty took place in Amman, but the government responded by banning public meetings. Nonetheless, Jordanian opposition forces continued to voice their protest against peace with Israel whenever possible.[43] Popular dissatisfaction with the peace agreement increased when the expected economic "peace dividend" failed to materialize and socio-economic prospects continued to deteriorate for much of the population. State repression against oppositional voices also intensified; a 1996 report of the Arab Organization for Human Rights accused Jordan of carrying out "arbitrary arrests, physical and psychological torture of detainees, violations of freedom of expression and abuse of legislation."[44] In May 1997, the regime amended the Press and Publications law to the effect that heavy fines for a range of "violations" by journalists were introduced and capital requirements for registering newspapers were substantially raised. The actual goal was to rein in the mostly opposition-oriented weekly magazines. As a result, 13 weeklies were compelled to close down four months later.[45]

In addition to the general deterioration in the quality of democratic freedoms – freedoms of expression in the press, assembly and associations generally suffering as a result – corruption, the retention of the one-person one-vote system and alleged dangers to the nation emanating from the peace treaty with Israel, this amendment was cited by The Muslim Brotherhood as a reason to boycott the November 1997 elections for the Lower House. The IAF, the political party wing of The Brotherhood, also called for a boycott.[46] 7 leftist and Arab nationalist parties joined in, as did the professional associations and some independent public figures. They motivated their decision to endorse the boycott in a joint "Program for National Reform," which included demands for the restoration of democracy and civil rights, a socially fairer economic reform program, and the annulment of the peace treaty with Israel.

Not all oppositionists joined the boycott. 8 independent Islamists managed to gain parliament seats in the 1997 elections, as well as 2 former

IAF deputies in the previous parliament who decided not to join the boycott. Moreover, 5 leftists were elected. Candidates with a regime-loyal and/or tribalist outlook, whether belonging to political parties or not, gained the rest of parliament seats.[47] While largely excluded from parliamentary representation, Islamist as well as secular opposition parties continued to play a role in extra-parliamentary activities of public opposition during the following years. They repeatedly issued public declarations of protest on a variety of issues. Such issues included military cooperation of Jordan with countries like the USA, Britain and Israel,[48] normalization with Israel in general[49] and state repression targeting for example protest demonstrations[50] or press freedom.[51] Occasionally, opposition parties were involved in organizing marches, for instance in solidarity with Iraq when there was a threat of US-British military action against that country[52] or with the Palestinian struggle against Israeli occupation.[53] During the fall of 1999, the opposition parties tried in vain to convince King and government to rescind the measures of closing down the Hamas office in Amman, arresting the representatives of this Palestinian Islamist movement and eventually deporting them.[54]

When municipal elections were held on 14 and 15 July 1999, the Islamists decided not to boycott them. The IAF won 72 council seats and got 7 mayors elected in 5 cities. Leftist and secular pan-Arabist candidates won only 6 seats. Tribal candidates were prevailing in the rural and Bedouin areas.[55]

Elections and their Aftermath in a Time of Regional Turmoil

On 16 June 2001, King Abdullah II dissolved parliament and assigned the government of Prime Minister Ali Abu al-Ragheb to draw up a new election law to hold the next elections for the Lower House.[56] This new law increased the number of parliament seats from 80 to 104, but maintained the one-person one-vote system and the under-representation of urban areas in favor of tribal and rural areas.[57] Furthermore, the government announced a postponement of the elections from November 2001, as originally scheduled, to the following year. The reason stated for the delay was the amount of time needed to prepare the elections in accordance with the new law.[58] It was a public secret in Jordan, however, that denying the opposition the chance to come out victoriously in elections was the true reason behind it.[59]

This public secret failed to remain secret for any length of time. In the following months, government officials stated frankly that the second Palestinian intifada against Israeli occupation in addition to US threats to invade Iraq were the cause for the delay. They asserted that "emotionally charged sentiments that allow the spread of extremist agendas" by opposition candidates had to be avoided.[60] It finally took until 24 February of 2003 for the King to issue a degree ordering the elections to be held, on the 17th of June that year. The only further amendment introduced to the election law was a quota of 6 additional parliament seats reserved for women, raising the total number of seats from 104 to 110.[61] Meanwhile, opposition parties continued with their usual protest activities on the issues of Palestine, civil rights, democracy and US intervention against Afghanistan and Iraq in the wake of the terrorist attacks in New York and Washington on the 11th of September 2001. Protest demonstrations organized by opposition parties, especially those by the IAF, were regularly banned by the authorities and sometimes led to detentions, without trial or indictment, of some of the participants. For the sake of coordinating their activities, the parties had a Higher Coordination Committee for Opposition Parties at their disposal; this was borne out of the Popular Arab Committee against Normalization with Israel (mentioned above). In spite of this cooperation, mutual tension between these parties flared up occasionally; the secular oppositionists' resentment of the dominance of the Islamist IAF within the Committee was generally the cause.[62] A significant gulf divides Islamists and secular oppositionists when it comes to socio-cultural issues like gender relations and the place of religion in politics, legislation and the public realm.

No such a gulf exists, however, when it comes to political issues of pan-Arab solidarity or of democracy and civil rights. When violent protests erupted in Ma'an in 2002, after police units stormed the town to arrest the Salafist-jihadist leader Abu Sayyaf and his followers, the opposition parties formed a special committee to try to mediate a peaceful end to the crisis. The government rebuffed the mediation offer, put the insurrection down by force and threatened with legal action anyone trying "to politicize the issue of the outlaws for personal gain."[63]

Tension between regime and opposition also centred on the "Jordan First" document. Initiated by King Abdullah, this was a blueprint for national political and societal development that prioritized loyalty to Jordan as a Hashemite Kingdom and its development over all pan-Arab concerns. Not surprisingly, the same document was regarded by the opposition coalition as a ploy to abandon support for the Palestinian struggle and to accept US plans for Iraq. The opposition also objected to its proposal to press political parties to merge into larger groups that would have to focus on domestic issues only.[64]

Soon after the US-British invasion of Iraq in late March and April 2003, the Jordanian opposition parties finally agreed to take part in the elections for parliament slated for June that year. None of the reasons for boycotting the elections in 1997 had disappeared, but Islamist and secular opposition forces alike apparently felt that boycotting elections once again would lead to their continued marginalization and loss of influence with the regime.[65] The IAF choose 30 candidates to run, carefully distributed over the Kingdoms' 13 governates to guarantee the highest number of seats in parliament. Leftist and secular pan Arabists participated on a "national democratic list."[66]

The IAF won 17 seats, a disappointing result for the party. Interestingly, 8 independent Islamists made it to parliament, several of them former IAF members who did not agree with the relatively moderate and conciliatory line the party's leadership had adopted during the last few years vis-à-vis the regime. Only 3 candidates from leftist and pan-Arabist opposition parties were elected. The opposition's lack of success, to a large extent, may be attributed to electoral apathy among Palestinian Jordanians largely due to continued administrative and economic discrimination against them. Tribal leaders, former government and security officials and former pro-government legislators took 62 of the 110 seats. Again, tribal considerations turned out to be dominant in parliamentary elections.[67]

Nevertheless, the elections did result in the presence of a newly elected Lower House in which criticism of government policy could once again be voiced publicly. Especially opposition parliamentarians, led by the IAF, vehemently criticized many of the so-called "temporary laws" issued by the government of Ali Abu al-Ragheb during the absence of parliament, especially those banning public assemblies and curtailing press freedoms.[68] Other complaints voiced against subsequent governments by these parliamentarians singled out their corruption, nepotism, the mixing of governmental and business interests, unjust socio-economic policies and collaboration with the US occupation of Iraq and with Israel.[69] Battle lines in parliamentary debates were of a different nature when they concerned religiously sensitive socio-cultural issues. When the *khul'* law – granting any woman the right to divorce her husband unilaterally on the provision she foregoes the right to financial support from him – was dealt with in parliament, Islamists sided with tribal conservatives in rejecting the law. Both agreed that it would encourage women to "break up families" and "ruin the fabric of our Arab and Muslim society." On the other hand, secular oppositionists and pro-regime modernists found themselves on the same side in defending the same law.[70]

Opposition parties also continued to issue statements of protest outside the realm of parliament. Occasionally, they organized protest demonstrations, especially in the case of Israeli military actions against the Palestinians or against Lebanon. The Israeli assassinations of Hamas leaders Ahmed Yassin and Abdul Aziz Rantissi in the Gaza Strip in March and April 2004 gave rise to massive protest demonstrations in Amman that boosted the role of the opposition in the street.[71]

Relations between the (especially Islamist) opposition and the regime fluctuated between mutual understanding and mutual dislike. The IAF lost two of its 17 deputies, Abu al-Sukkar and Mohammad Abu Fares, after the State Security Court convicted them in August 2006 on charges of "fuelling national discord and inciting sectarianism." These charges were based upon remarks they made during a condolence visit, in June 2006, to the city of Zarqa where they met the family of the slain leader of Al-Qa'ida in Iraq, Abu Mus'ab Zarqawi, during which they eulogized him as a martyr. Zarqawi claimed responsibility for several (foiled and successful) terrorist attacks in the Kingdom, including the bombing of three hotels in Amman on 9 November 2005 resulting in 60 deaths. While both deputies were released from prison at the beginning of October 2006 by a special pardon from the King, they were not allowed to return to their parliamentary seats.[72]

The Role of Professional Associations

Professional associations may be regarded as the most powerful civil society institutions in Jordan. Their role has, however, a few problematic aspects regarding the civil society concept. First of all, they were not founded by the professionals themselves but by the government. The latter regarded professional associations as a way to regulate and raise the standards of the various professions exercised in the Kingdom.[73] They are, therefore, not citizens' initiatives in the proper sense. Moreover, Jordanian law stipulates that any professional is required to join the association of his/her profession in order to exercise it legally. This contravenes the basic principle of voluntary membership of, and participation in, civil society institutions. A final aspect is that many professionals in Jordan are employed in the public sector, something that works to the detriment of their economic and political independence vis-à-vis the state.[74] There is, however, so much to say about the professional associations' function in protecting their members' interests and lending a voice to their political opinions and grievances that they have to be included in any description of Jordan's civil society.

The Professional Associations' Legal and Internal Structures

The Professional association's prominent status within civil society is derived from the heavy political, social and economic weight of the professional middle class in Jordan. This class is utterly central to the state's overall objective of modernizing and developing the country on the basis of education, knowledge and personal skills. There are, at the moment, 14 registered professional associations in the Kingdom.[75] Their total membership reportedly exceeds 120,000.[76]

According to the relevant legislation, the associations' aims are to provide for an associational framework for members of the same profession, to preserve that profession's principles and standards, to elevate the scientific level of professionals through the provision of training courses and to provide services, such as health insurance and pensions, to their members and their families.[77] Some of them also provide housing to their members and their families and offer them cultural programs.[78] Professional associations are also legally bound to cooperate with state institutions in order to improve the professional practice of their members. The premiums paid by their members for health insurance and old age enable the associations to engage in investment and enterprise as well.

Apart from their legally stipulated functions, professional associations play an important role in giving expression to the political opinions of their membership on issues not directly related to professional life, such as the Palestine problem, Iraq, democracy and human rights. Their views on such issues are often of an oppositional nature.[79]

All paying members of a professional association constitute its General Assembly. The latter body meets on a yearly basis and elects the association's council as well as its president every two years. The council organizes the activities of education and training, and also expresses itself regularly in the public sphere on the kind of issues mentioned above. The presidents of all professional associations constitute a coordinating committee functioning as their umbrella. Both a single professional association and the coordinating committee can establish committees specialized in aspects of professional life or in a political issue,[80]such as support for the Palestinian struggle, civil liberties or opposing US intervention in Iraq.[81]

The participation of the professional associations' membership in their activities is limited in practice. Lack of interest as well as unemployment among members is responsible for the phenomena of widespread failure to pay the yearly contributions or to attend the yearly general assembly. According to some figures, only around 20% of the members bother to show up at the latter event. Elections for Council and president within professional associations are generally speaking of a free and democratic nature; the government does not interfere in them. However, these associations also have disciplinary committees at their disposal for members who violate the professional code or commit other kinds of transgressions against the association's interest. These committees have the power to impose fines and even to expel violators from the association. Since membership in a professional association is a legal requirement for exercising a profession, the latter punishment is particularly severe.[82]

Oasis of Opposition in a Desert of Authoritarianism

The first professional associations in Jordan were established during the first half of the 1950s. These associations pertained to lawyers, dentists, medical doctors and engineers.[83] This occurred against the backdrop of the annexation of the West Bank to the Hashemite Kingdom in 1950, which led to the enormous expansion of a previously very limited class of Transjordanian professionals with a much larger number of Palestinian counterparts. The government felt that it should foster and organize this vastly expanded pool of human capital for the sake of the country's economic and technical modernization. Not surprisingly, therefore, the newly founded associations were Palestinian-dominated. Expansion of educational facilities – including higher education – in Jordan in the subsequent decades would lead to a further expansion of membership in professional associations.[84]

The vast economic resources of the association's membership, in combination with their professional skills, guaranteed already in the 1950s a measure of political autonomy vis-à-vis the regime. The Medical and Bar associations, for instance, called in 1955 for a general strike against the plan for Jordan's entry to the Baghdad Pact. After political parties were outlawed in 1957, the professional associations gauged the attention of the public as the only platforms whereupon members of the illegal party organizations could still compete in elections.[85] Representatives of secular pan-Arab currents dominated the professional associations' political life at the time.[86] However, until 1967, they were still mainly focused on safeguarding their members' social rights and professional standards.[87] The devastating defeat for the Arabs in the June war of 1967, however, pushed the professional associations toward greater political involvement. They grouped together to support the Palestinian struggle against Israel in a series of meetings, lectures and displays.[88] At the beginning of the 1970s, however, the state reestablished its authoritarian control. It enacted legal amendments empowering the government to dissolve the council of any professional association, or even a professional association as a whole, in the case of a "threat to public security and peace" posed by the latter's activities. So far, the government has not made use of this possibility, although it has repeatedly used it as a threat to discourage the professional associations from engaging in political activity.[89] By and large, however, the government abstained from directly interfering in the internal political life of the associations.[90]

In the course of the 1970s, the professional associations, growing in number with the establishment of associations for agricultural engineers, the veterinary medics, the geologists, the construction contractors and the nurses and midwives, came increasingly under the grip of currents inspired and supported by the various PLO factions, often of a leftist nature.[91] In 1977, their leadership established the Council of Professional Unions, which resumed limited political work in the public sphere.[92] Their activism focused mainly on issues related to Palestinian rights, such as protest against the Camp David Agreement between Israel and Egypt and against Israeli occupation and invasion policies, in the occupied territories or in Lebanon.[93]

The 1980s witnessed economic recession, which put greater pressure on the professional associations' leadership to solve their members' economic problems, and, specifically, the rising levels of unemployment. Many members perceived the incumbent leadership of leftist or Arab nationalist political colors as paying too much attention to "grand political issues" at the expense of the former's own socio-economic interests.[94] This seems to have enhanced the chances of Islamist candidates in the elections for the associations' councils and presidencies. Muslim Brothers started to compete in those elections in 1982.[95] The pattern of a list of Islamist candidates competing with a list of leftist and Arab nationalist candidates became prevalent within the associations.[96]

Another development during this decade was the associations' involvement in protest against state repression. This occurred regardless of political color. Together with political parties and human rights activists, professional associations or their members issued public statements or declarations on numerous occasions. These included demands to the government for the return of civil liberties, the lifting of martial law, holding free and democratic elections, the release of political prisoners and freedom of association and of the press.[97] After student demonstrations at Yarmuk University in Irbid were violently dispersed by the security forces in May 1986, representatives of the Council of Professional Unions paid two visits to the Prime Minister's office on the students' behalf.[98]

Meanwhile, the professional associations continued to speak out on issues pertaining to the struggle for Palestinian rights and against Western intervention in the Arab world. In general, they regarded Western dominance as the main culprit for the region's developmental problems and failures.[99] The increased politicization of the professional associations' role led to a counter-reaction from the state, which clamped down on the expression of political dissatisfaction in general. Articles in the state-controlled press attacked the associations' political role, and argued that their true function was to advance the interests of their members and to raise professional standards.[100]

The Impact of Political Liberalization since 1989

The liberalization process beginning in 1989 provided King Hussein and the government with an extra argument to urge professional associations to focus on professional affairs only and to leave the political matters to parliament and political parties. While the associations were not against the idea of "reprofessionalization," they continued to function as a forum for the expression of democratic demands. They called, for instance, for the reinstatement of regime opponents who were dismissed from their jobs during the martial law period. They also established a Public Freedom Committee that exerted its efforts for the release of political prisoners, provided legal aid to citizens who complained of violations of their rights and organized conferences on issues related to democracy and civil rights.[101] The appearance of numerous new newspapers and magazines since the start of the liberalization process expanded their possibilities to publish their opinions and make themselves heard.[102]

From the end of the 1980s onward, Islamists increasingly gained the upper hand in elections for council and presidency in most professional associations. The presidencies as well as the councils of the two major associations, the Jordan Medical Association and the Jordan Engineers' Association, fell into Islamist hands.[103] Islamists also came to dominate the smaller professional associations.[104]

Whether the decisive factor in the enhanced popularity of Islamist candidates was their ideological orientation, or whether it was their personal credibility and charisma in the eyes of the professional associations' membership remains open to debate.[105] The case of independent Islamist and outspoken regime critic Leith Shubailat, who won the presidency of Jordan Engineers' Association in 1994 and 1996, suggests the latter possibility. His candidacy was supported by the leftist-nationalist list of candidates for the association's council. Shubailat is a charismatic personality whose popularity has been enhanced through his daring and active opposition to the peace treaty with Israel and his well-known criticisms of the IMF-prescribed program of economic reform.[106]

Sparked off by the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait on 2 august 1990, the Gulf Crisis galvanized the professional associations once more into "anti-imperialist" action. They saluted what they called the "liberation of the Kuwaitis" from US hegemony by Iraq. In the following months, they were involved in the organization of conferences and demonstrations in solidarity with Iraq and demanded a boycott of American goods. After the Gulf War against Iraq in January and February 1991, they organized humanitarian aid activities for the Iraqi population suffering under the international sanctions regime. Also in later instances of US-British military threats or actions against Iraq, professional associations would voice their disapproval through issuing public statements or, on occasion, organizing protest marches. Another example of the associations' opposition against Western hegemony was the protest against the IMF-prescribed economic reform policy in Jordan during the 1990s.[107]

The Struggle against Normalization with Israel

Topping the list of priorities for political action among the professional associations during the 1990s became resistance against the negotiation process and peace with Israel. They opposed a peace that, from their point of view, safeguarded Israel's interests while ensuring Arabs were denied their substantial rights in return. With the conclusion of the peace treaty with Israel in October 1994, an intensive campaign was launched by the associations against "normalization with the enemy." The intention was to preclude the further development of political, economic, social, cultural and military relations with Israel. Unsurprisingly, they boycotted any kind of organized meeting between Jordanians and Israelis.

Perhaps the most controversial policy adopted by the professional associations was their tendency to ostracise, formally as well as socially, any member who happened to have had contacts with Israel or Israelis. Thus, many professional associations threatened to expel members who refused to adhere to their anti-normalization policy. King and government were not amused by this campaign and stressed once again the associations' duty to focus on professional issues and not to interfere in "politics." Not only the regime, but also press commentators and political observers criticized the professional associations for being undemocratic, since they denied individual members the right to decide whether or not to engage in contacts with Israelis. In riposte, however, the associations themselves argued that since all of their presidents and councils were democratically elected, their decision to resist normalization with Israel could not be regarded as undemocratic.[108]

By the mid 1990s, the conflict between government and professional associations over the anti-normalization issue had escalated to the point where the government threatened to reconsider the obligatory membership for professionals. An annulment of this requirement for professionals would have resulted in heavy losses of membership for the associations. In regard to this issue, a majority of the government-appointed Senate suggested in May 1996 to address a question to the Higher Council for Interpretation of the Constitution, to decide how constitutional the professional associations' laws were. In the end, however, the government backed down from this.[109]

Meanwhile, the associations' anti-normalization campaign continued. The Council of Professional Associations established an Anti-Normalization Committee.[110] Along with other opposition forces, they produced blacklists of individuals and companies with connections to Israelis. They also continued to expel or to boycott socially members with connections to Israeli colleagues or known to have had any form of dealings with Israel. The government responded by continuing to employ expelled professionals and by taking legal measures against, and arresting anti-normalization activists.[111] On 7 October 2002, for instance, 3 active members of the Anti-Normalization Committee were arrested, including its chairman and secretary-general of the Jordan Engineers Association, Ali Abu al-Sukkar. The State Security Court charged them with "belonging to an illegal organization" and distributing anti-normalization material deemed "harmful to the national economy." One week later, the Minister of State for Political Affairs and Information described the Anti-Normalization Committee as "intolerable" and "illegal and posing a threat to Jordan and its economy."[112] On 28 November 2002, the government obtained a judicial verdict from the Higher Court of Justice stating that "there was no legal foundation (for professional associations) for establishing political committees", thereby outlawing the Anti-Normalization Committee.[113] Prime Minister Ali Abu Ragheb, in office between the summer of 2000 and the fall of 2003, threatened repeatedly to dissolve the professional associations if they carried on with political activities, particularly in the field of resisting normalization.[114]

Apart from the anti-normalization issue, professional associations continued to be politically engaged with other issues of regional significance. They have played an important role in the organization of demonstrations in solidarity with the second Palestinian intifada,[115] for instance, or against events like the conferences held in Jordan by the World Economic Forum, an annual meeting of international politicians and business leaders. They accused the WEF of having "blood on its hands" and trying to impose "imperialism" on the region.[116] Dealings of the Jordanian governments with US-appointed Iraqi representatives after the US-British invasion of Iraq have likewise invited the professional associations' protest.[117]

The same associations continued also to engage in issues of domestic policy. When the government lifted subsidies on bread in the summer of 1996, for instance, the associations put forward alternative proposals for a policy of economic recovery that would avoid price hikes affecting the lower income groups.[118] Similarly, they raised their voice against the election law[119] and against repressive measures that negatively affected, for instance, press freedom.[120]

The early months of 2005 witnessed renewed tensions between professional associations and the government. This was sparked by criticism, expressed by some of their representatives, of Jordan's complicity in US policy in Iraq. Subsequently, the riot police broke up a rally organized by the associations against the Iraqi elections on 18 January 2005. Once again, state representatives warned the associations not to interfere in politics. On 26 January 2005, security forces raided the professional association's headquarters in Amman to prevent a meeting from taking place there.[121] Moreover, Minister of the Interior Samir Habashneh prepared a draft bill implying disciplinary oversight by the state of the professional associations and making any non-professional meetings organized by them, subject to written permission by the relevant state authority. This was heavily protested by the associations as well as by other opposition forces.[122] At the beginning of May 2005, government and associations reached a compromise on the issue.[123]

The professional associations' oppositional attitudes notwithstanding, the government makes sure to consult them when difficult decisions have to be made. Prime Minister Abdul Salam al-Majali, for instance, received the professional associations' leaders in 1993 in order to seek support for peace negotiations with Israel. Three years later, Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti had talks with them on the proposed hikes in bread prices.[124] In

1998, King Hussein himself paid a surprise visit to the professional associations' headquarters to discuss with them their concerns regarding their own freedom of (political) action as well as the deterioration of public freedoms in general.[125] Such dialogue between the representatives of the regime and those of the professional associations rarely exceeds the occasional consultation, however. Ultimately, it is always the government that takes its own policy decisions, on which the professional associations have no decisive influence.[126]

Economic Society

Employers' Organizations

Employers' organizations in Jordan represent their members' interests and try to organize and support the business sector by various means. Moreover, they try to influence economic government policy and legislation in a way that serves their interests.[127]

The category of the Chambers of Commerce and Chambers of Industry deserves first mention. Similar to the professional associations, membership of these institutions is a prerequisite for anyone wishing to practice commercial or industrial activity. The oldest civil society institution in the territory east of the River Jordan once used to be a chamber of commerce. To be specific it was the al-Salt Chamber of Commerce, founded in 1883 when Salt was the only significant commercial center of the area to lie under Ottoman rule. This was followed by the establishment of the Amman Chamber of Commerce in 1923, and by the al-Karak Chamber of Commerce in 1933. By the turn of the millennium, there were 15 chambers of commerce in nearly all governorates of the Kingdom. The number of members amounted to nearly 63,000. The first Chamber of Industry was established in Amman in 1962. Only at the end of the 1990s did Chambers of Industry in Zarqa and in Irbid, the second and third cities of Jordan, emerge. Chambers of Industry had 11,000 members by 1999.

Employers in Jordan also have voluntary associations. There are for instance professional associations for employers, such as the Truck Owners Professional Association, established in 1963, and the Bakeries Owners Association, established in 1970. Employers' voluntary associations try to mediate between their members and the relevant government institutions and they prepare studies about the impact of the prevailing conditions in certain areas on business opportunities. The Jordanian Businessmen Association endeavors to pool the expertise of its members to foster the private sector and its activities for the sake of economic development. It also tries to promote an integrative environment for the private sector and to motivate businessmen and their companies to perform economic and social tasks that serve the interests of private sector institutions, companies and individuals. There is also an Association of Banks in Jordan.[128]

Trade Unions

With 200,000 members, according to figures from 1995, trade unions involve more people than any other sector of Jordanian civil society. In comparison to political parties and professional associations, however, their political influence is limited.[129] Membership in trade unions is voluntary. Without exception, their by-laws stipulate as goals the defence of the legitimate rights and interests of their members, the improvement of labor conditions, the provision of assistance in economic and social development and the spreading of labor union awareness. Many of their by-laws also provide for the establishment of co-operations, associations, clinics and extending financial aid to their members. Since 1978, the Unions have a Social Security Fund at their disposal that pays pensions and treatment of work injuries to their members, as well as compensation when such injuries lead to death or disability.[130]

As was the case with the professional associations, the annexation of the West Bank in 1950 was the prime mover behind the emergence of the trade union movement in Jordan. While the Jordanian authorities reined in the activities of the West Bank-based Palestine Arab Workers Society, its activists continued its work underground. They contacted the International Labor Organization (ILO) to complain about the government's refusal to permit free trade union activity in the Kingdom. Pressure from the ILO, in combination with a relatively liberal policy of the newly appointed government of Prime Minister Fawzi al-Mulqi, led to the legalization of labor unions in 1953, under Jordanian labor Law 35. This law forbade them, however, to engage in any non-labor-related political activity. Labor activists then managed to register the Federation of Trade Unions in Jordan (FTUJ) in July 1954.[131] This organization engaged in struggles for better labor conditions, such as an eight-hour workday,[132] but also through political action, like planning demonstrations against the Baghdad Pact.[133] The state responded by arresting trade unionists and dissolving 16 of the existing 39 unions. Due to a minor change in the Labor Law in 1961, however, trade unions increased in number once again, up to 40 in 1965. High levels of unemployment after the 1967 war contributed to greater levels of labor unrest. Strikes in refineries and in cement industries in 1969 even led to intervention by the army.[134]

The FTUJ's call for reconciliation between the government and the Palestinian guerilla organizations in 1970 in the wake of the massive military crack down against the Palestinian fighters in the same year was used by the government as a pretext to dissolve the federation's executive committee. The government appointed a new committee instead and introduced changes in the federation's constitution to give the state greater access and influence. The state even made sure that regime loyalists controlled the executive committee. In 1974, a special bureau was opened by the intelligence agency to monitor labor activism. When the number of strikes for higher wages and improved working conditions increased in the 1970s, the government resorted to revising the labor law again. This empowered the Ministry of Labor to reorganize unions without having to consult the FTUJ. During the 1980s as well, the state continued to interfere heavily in the unions' affairs. Candidates for the federation's executive committee whom the authorities considered to be too critical were "persuaded" not to run for elections, and labor activists were imprisoned or dismissed from their jobs.[135]

The IMF-imposed economic readjustment measures of the 1990s pushed trade unions into a defensive position in terms of socio-economic demands.[136] Moreover, the decline of the influence of leftist parties in Jordan since the collapse of the Soviet Union and their increased factionalization reflected negatively as well on the efficacy of the trade union movement. These parties have traditionally controlled the trade unions' leadership. Unlike in the professional associations, Islamists have never played a significant role in Jordan's labor unions.[137]

In 1994, the federation was subjected to a new restructuring process that centralized trade union decisions in the hands of the federation's executive committee – a committee often inclined to curry favor with the government.[138] Good relations with powerful figures in the state apparatus seem to be of use, at times, in labor disputes with employers. The Jordan Times regularly reports disputes regarding wages, housing or work conditions. A trade union may call for a strike to realize its workers' demands in these fields. Often, government figures step in to ensure an (reasonably) acceptable solution to both parties.[139]

Indeed, the possibilities for trade unions in labor disputes seem to have been increased once again since the start of the liberalization process in 1989.[140] However, the business sector and employers' organizations also have their connections in the state apparatus. This can be seen from the impressive numbers of foreign workers in the country. Employing foreigners is often beneficial to employers, since it makes it easier for them to dismiss Jordanian employees. When Labor Minister Abdul Karim al-Dughmi sided with the trade unions in 1991 and pressed for a broad dismissal of foreign workers in an effort to reduce unemployment, he met stiff resistance from the private sector and was ultimately forced to resign.[141] The trade unions' legal possibilities of activism are, to this day, narrowly restricted to the realm of labor and thus tend to exclude other, more "political," issues. Unlike professional associations, trade unions have since the years of liberalization dutifully adhered to this state-imposed rule of the game.

The Islamist Movement

This section focuses on The Muslim Brotherhood, since it is by far the largest and most significant Islamist movement in Jordanian political and public life and also the most relevant in terms of the voluntary associations dealt with in this study. Other Islamic currents will be mentioned, but only in passing. The section begins, therefore, with a description of the goals, the organizational structure as well as the activities of The Muslim Brotherhood.

Goals, Structure and Activities

Stated simply, The Muslim Brotherhood's overriding goal is the reform of all aspects of individual, social, cultural, economic and political life in accordance with the shari'ah. In this spirit, Jordanian society is urged to align itself with Islamic laws, morals and values. As such, the movement's ethos may be summarized as follows: 1) the creation of the new Muslim individual in terms of "thinking and faith, ethics and feelings, mind and spirit;" 2) the creation of the new Muslim family, to "provide care and service to men, women, youth and children on equal footing;" 3) the creation of the new Muslim nation carried on the shoulders of the new Muslim family; 4) the establishment of the Islamic government leading "the people to the mosque, and educating them on the ways of Islam;" 5) the unification of the Islamic world politically and an end to the current artificial disunity; 6) the liberation of Muslim lands currently occupied and colonized by kuffar ("non-believers"); 7) to take the universal Islamic message to every corner of the earth.[142] The structure of the Jordanian Muslim Brotherhood is modeled on that of its Egyptian mother organization, which was established in 1928. This means, first of all, that the basic unit of the organization is the '*usrah* (family) cell. The 'usrah, which is segregated according to gender, consists of 5 to 10 members who are supposed to develop close mutual relations resembling kinship bonds. They recruit new members through their own personal social networks. These new members have to be carefully selected on their moral and religious qualities and approved of by authoritative Brotherhood figures. 4 or 5 'usrah cells together form a division headed by a raqib (supervisor). The raqib, in turn, is responsible to the executive committee of The Brotherhood's regional branch. Regional branches exist in the main Jordanian cities, in Palestinian refugee camps, in universities and colleges as well as in rural areas. A branch's executive committee is elected by all of its members. The regional executive committees, in turn, elect the members of the national *majlis al-shurah*, a consultative body of 30 members. This body is, in theory, the movements' main decision-making institution and elects the national executive committee. In practice, however, the national executive committee controls the policy-making process. Also, in theory, the Jordanian Muslim Brotherhood, like The Muslim Brotherhood organizations in other Arab countries, are responsible to the international movement's General Guide in Egypt. Yet, once again in practice, each national organization is virtually independent in terms of administration and policy.[143]

In terms of activities, a distinction has to be made between those of an internal and those of a public nature. Internal activities largely consist of the spiritual, social and moral training of its members. Hassan al-Banna, the Egyptian founder of The Muslim Brotherhood movement, had this to say of this endeavor: "the meaning of training is an activity of interaction in the Ikhwan (Brotherhood) in terms of actual interaction and conduct, with love and affection between the members. [It is] a complete interaction in all matters of life."[144] This training implies that the members spend much time in study sessions during which they read the Qur'an and the Hadith, as well as works from famous Muslim Brotherhood figures like Hassan al-Banna and Sayyid Qutb and other like-minded Islamist thinkers.[145] Memorizing, reciting and understanding Qur'an and Hadith is considered important for the strengthening of faith in God and his revelation. The same applies to *dhikr*, understood here as praising God every day on several occasions. Frequent prayer and fast must lead to enhanced self-discipline and resistance against worldly temptations. Once a month, Muslim Brothers stay up a whole night to study and pray collectively. The social aspect of ritual activity is much emphasized: all participants are expected to unite in a collective spirit and to concentrate on each other. Muslim Brothers are also called upon to control their emotions, repent all wrongdoings and to spend every night one hour to ask themselves critical questions about their worship and their behavior toward others.[146]

Central to the social morality preached in The Muslim Brotherhood are concepts of honesty, trustworthiness and modesty. One should overcome selfish ambitions and negative dispositions and surrender him/herself to God. Fraternity and love between the believers, not for the sake of riches or status but solely for the sake of God, is regarded as part of the struggle for social change. Prayer, fasting and practicing aid to and solidarity with the poor are perceived as a valid means to that end. The Prophet Muhammad is regarded as the ultimate example of a moral way of life.[147]

Other internal activities are recreational and cultural outings to the countryside to promote group solidarity and to engage in physical exercise. Physical health is considered important for sound participation in The Brotherhood's intellectual and *da'wah* (missionary) activities and for preparation for military jihad, which is interpreted as defense against attacks from kuffar and "the Zionist enemy."[148]Muslim Brotherhood activity is not restricted to its own inner circle, however. Its aspiration is not merely to be an inward-looking sect. Rather, the internal educational program emphasizes the applicability of the Islamic message to all aspects of society, including education, government and economy. Therefore, it has to be disseminated everywhere and Muslim Brothers are expected to spread the message to the public by delivering sermons in mosques, organizing public lectures and seminars, publishing books and articles, and by cultivating personal relationships with like-minded people. In the final instance, there is also the possibility of recruitment. Spreading the message implies political activity aimed at "informing" authorities and legislators of the "right" Islamic approach. By definition, this implies the establishment of all kinds of institutions, such as welfare associations, companies, scientific and cultural centers, schools, clubs and health care centers, to organize Zakah (religious tax for the needy) and *sadaqah* (the giving of general social aid) and to fight social evils like materialism, hedonism and (sexual) immorality. These institutions are established on a voluntary basis and in cooperation with like-minded Muslims outside The Muslim Brotherhood.[149]

The Initial Development of The Muslim Brotherhood in Jordan (1945–1957)

In 1945, Emir Abdullah received a delegation of Muslim Brothers who asked for a license to open a branch of the international Muslim Brotherhood Movement in Transjordan. His response was favorable, and The Muslim Brotherhood was licensed under the Ottoman Law of Associations as a charitable association.[150] The wealthy merchant Abu Qura, a native of Salt, became the branch's first General Guide.[151]

Abu Qura, who owned a trading business in Amman, was known for his charitable works, his great religious zeal and his interest in the Palestinian cause. In 1936, he raised funds from the Amman merchant community to support the Palestinians in their general strike against British rule and Zionist colonization. During visits to Palestine, he came into contact with members of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood, and, in particular, was impressed by the ideas of Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood leader al-Banna.[152] When he approached the Egyptian Brotherhood in 1943, he was warmly welcomed by the latter's leadership and even appointed to its guidance bureau. Once he made known his desire to establish a branch of the movement in Transjordan, the two prominent Egyptian Muslim Brothers Said Ramadan and Abdel Hakim Abdeen became his assistants in the endeavor. The three of them started to tour the Transjordanian Emirate, promoting The Muslim Brotherhood's ideology and activities to the Transjordanian public through speeches, lectures and sermons.[153]

Save for the promotion of military jihad against the Zionists in Palestine, the founding principles of the new organization in Jordan, published in 1946, were of a relatively apolitical nature. They emphasized Islamic education and "contributing to the development of a new Arab culture" based on Islamic principles. The social base of the new Jordanian movement consisted greatly of property owners and merchants, social strata that benefited from the sociopolitical stability prevailing under Hashemite rule as well as from economic government policy that protected private property.[154] They were not interested, therefore, in political rebellion and felt more attracted toward the socio-cultural dimension of Islamist ideology. Students were an important target group for Brotherhood propaganda and activities. These activities were largely of an educational, social and athletic nature.[155] The style of leadership and organization within the young Islamist movement in Jordan was at this stage largely of a personalized, informal and spontaneous character.[156]

King Abdullah, for his part, recognized that The Muslim Brotherhood appealed to the religious sentiments of the population, accepted the monarchy and, most importantly, recognized the status of the Hashemite family as sharifs (descendants of the prophet Muhammad).[157] Its opposition against the rising secular pan-Arabist trend was particularly useful to the King. Nevertheless, familiar with the rebellious attitude of the Muslim Brothers in Egypt and the Jordanian Brotherhood's advocacy of anti-Zionist jihad, so incompatible with his own policy of political compromise with the Zionists, he also regarded the movement with some suspicion.

Therefore, the authorities kept a close eye on the organization and, in the early 1950s, Abu Qura was arrested several times. Nevertheless, in general, the relationship was cooperative in nature and the movement was allowed to open several branches in various cities.[158] Indeed, about 100 Jordanian Muslim Brothers chose to fight as volunteers in the 1948 war against the Israelis, until the High Command of the Arab Legion withdrew them from the front.[159]

The annexation of the West Bank in 1950 had a profound impact also on the subsequent development of the Jordanian Muslim Brotherhood. On the formal level, there was the merger of the Palestinian Muslim Brotherhood in the West Bank with the Jordanian organization. Especially important was the expansion of the professional middle class in the Kingdom, which also boosted the influence of professionals within the Islamic movement. Most prominent among them was the lawyer Muhammad Abdul Rahman Khalifa. He and his followers felt the need to make The Muslim Brotherhood more effective in its efforts to mobilize against Western imperialism as well as against the rising tide of secular pan-Arabism, and to do away with the traditional leadership style of Abu Qura and his fellows.[160]

The new group took control of The Brotherhood in December 1953 by electing Khalifa as its General Guide.[161] Under the guidance of Najib Jweifil, an Egyptian Muslim Brother who had fled the repression of Gamal Abdul-Nasser's regime,[162] the Jordanian movement was reorganized in a more centralized and formal fashion,[163] with a greater stress on educational qualifications and professional ways of working. It started to construct its own network of schools and expanded its recruitment activities in existing educational institutions and among Palestinian refugees.[164] Moreover, its program became more politicized; heavier emphasis was put on the duty of the government to implement the shari'ah as well as on the refusal to accept any system that was judged not to support Islamic principles. Unlike the Hizb Al-Tahrir (Liberation Party), however, a party founded in 1952 by Palestinian ex-Muslim Brotherhood member al-Nabahani, which openly challenged the legitimacy of the Jordanian monarchy as well as all other existing regimes in the Muslim world in order to replace them with an Islamic caliphate, The Brotherhood remained loyal to the regime. It continued to insist on dialogue with the King of behalf of the 'ummah in Jordan to convince him to implement the shari'ah.[165]

In the turbulent years of the 1950s, the role of The Muslim Brotherhood in the Kingdom's political life could be described as a combination of populist opposition to government policy with a loyal attitude toward the monarchy. In its public statements and its publications, The Brotherhood attacked various manifestations of Western imperialism, sided with the under-privileged and poor in Jordan and criticized state repression as well as the corrupt and abusive practices of government ministers.[166] The government responded, at times, with repressive measures: its weekly newspaper Al-Kifah al-Islami, along with other opposition media[167]were closed down, and its leaders arrested.[168] However, The Brotherhood never criticized the monarchy itself. On the contrary, at critical junctures, it supported the regime against its most threatening enemies, namely the representatives of secular pan-Arabism and Communism. Not surprisingly, The Brotherhood considered both forces dangerous to its own existence.

On the one hand, The Muslim Brotherhood had (since 1954) four elected deputies in parliament. These had sided with the secular pan-Arabists and leftists in criticizing the British political and military presence in Jordan[169] and had denounced the Baghad Pact.[170] On the other hand, its leadership supported King Hussein against Nasserist tendencies.[171] When al-Nabulsi of the National Socialist Party, a group with Nasserist inclinations, formed his government in 1956, The Brotherhood was quite happy to join in with the general expression of anti-Western fervor. Once King Hussein started to accuse this government of opening the door to Communist infiltration, however, the Muslim Brothers adopted a different line in support of the King. They held mass rallies in which they praised King Hussein's decisions on behalf of Islam and attacked the policies of the al-Nabulsi government. When martial law was imposed in May 1957 and political parties were dissolved, The Muslim Brotherhood was able to continue its legal existence in the Kingdom as a religious and charitable organization.[172]

The Islamist Socio-Political Role under Hashemite Authoritarianism (1957-1989)

The Muslim Brotherhood continued to play its role as a "loyal opposition" in the subsequent three decades. Khalifa emphasized in 1960 that The Brotherhood was not a political party and that its members were only motivated by religion.[173] This religious motivation gave rise to a certain political discourse, however, that was expressed by Muslim Brothers in parliament as well as through public protests: one of opposition against increased Westernization of Jordanian society and calling upon the government to implement the shari'ah.[174] The movement responded to the rise of (secular) Palestinian nationalism during the 1960s by emphasizing Islamic unity between Jordanians and Palestinians and rejecting separatism.[175] The devastating defeat of the 1967 war was used by The Muslim Brotherhood to vehemently criticize the Arab socialist and nationalist regimes of Egypt, Syria and Iraq. It attributed the defeat to the latter's lack of religiosity and presented the return of Arab Society to Islam and Islamic values as the solution.[176]

In the years (1967-1970), Muslim Brothers made a modest contribution to the Palestinian armed struggle against Israel. When armed conflict broke out between the PLO factions and the Jordanian regime in 1970, The Brotherhood called first on both sides not to open fire on their "brothers in faith." After the eviction of the PLO factions from the Kingdom, however, it expressed satisfaction with the expulsion of the "unbelievers" (leftist Palestinian fighters).[177] Once again, King Hussein recognized The Brotherhood's loyalty. While he embarked on a policy of suppressing any sign of political opposition, he allowed The Muslim Brotherhood to continue to expand its activities over the following decade.[178]

In that period, which largely lacked the presence of a parliament, The Muslim Brotherhood's formal political activity mainly took the form of participation in government administration. In 1970, the King appointed Ishaq al-Farhan, a Palestinian member of the movement, as Minister of Education in 1970. He remained in this function until 1974.[179] The presence of Muslim Brothers as civil servants in governmental institutions significantly increased, especially in the Ministry of Education and in the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs.[180] Al-Farhan himself was Minister of Awqaf from 1983-1985. He, alongside Abdul Latif 'Arabiyyat, another leading Muslim Brother, occupied several leading positions in Jordan's system of public education during the 1970s and 1980s.[181] Influence and control over these state institutions gave the professional elite of The Muslim Brotherhood more possibilities to promote their views on Islam and Islamic society to the Jordanian public. In this endeavor, they could also link up with anti-leftist and especially anti-Communist discourse that was endorsed by the regime and its main supporter, the US administration.[182]

This expansion of influence extended to the public school system. From the 1950s onward, the Muslim Brothers criticized the state educational system for being poisoned by Western influences and as insufficiently religious. They advocated an Islamic educational system in which moral and spiritual training was integrated with intellectual training. Brotherhood members in the Ministry of Education were gradually able to introduce a stronger religious component into the state curriculum. Moreover, elementary and secondary schoolteachers who belonged to the movement attracted support for it through religious education classes and by encouraging pupils to join Brotherhood-affiliated social clubs and scouting groups.[183]

University campuses were another important arena for recruitment. Volunteers of The Brotherhood helped new students in practical and educational matters and organized parties,[184] bus trips and picnics for them. Book fairs and arts exhibits were held and discussion groups on Islamist themes were formed for students. New members were directly recruited into the ’usrah cells in the University. These cells also distributed pamphlets and organized demonstrations. The Islamic bloc, which represented The Brotherhood in the Universities, became increasingly successful in the student council elections, until it held a majority in the student councils of nearly all faculties of the University of Jordan in Amman by the late 1980s. Not only males, but also Islamist females gained ground over the years and were elected sometimes to the student councils. Muslim Brotherhood activities in university campuses provided the movement also with access to the professional associations.[185]

A final example of state institutions as areas of Brotherhood recruitment was the mosque. Muslim Brothers used the mosque for delivering sermons, charity work and education as a means to build constituencies. Brotherhood presence in the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs, which supervises all mosques in the Kingdom, was particularly helpful in this regard.[186]

Another field of expanding Muslim Brotherhood influence in Jordanian society was the establishment of numerous voluntary social welfare and cultural associations from the 1960s onward. Through such associations, Muslim Brothers reached the poor and underprivileged strata in society as well as the middle class. More about them will be mentioned in the next chapter.

Reasons for the increasing appeal of The Muslim Brotherhood among Jordan's citizenry are numerous and varied; here only a few of the most important ones can be mentioned. The drastic socio-economic transformations that took place in the Kingdom since its inception, such as urbanization, mass education and the expanding role of the state brought a decline in tribal and clan cohesiveness with them. This led to a pronounced sense of cultural alienation among recently modernized and educated young Muslims.[187] The relative disintegration of traditional social ties and cultural patterns had also important ramifications for the realm of gender and sexuality. Sexual temptations were greater in a relatively anonymous modern urban society, and women became vulnerable to harassment from males in public space. At the same time, traditional notions of the woman as the embodiment of family honor, which makes her totally responsible for any (perceived) sexual misconduct, remained prevalent. Such cultural alienations were compounded by the failure of the socio-economic modernization process to fulfill the expectations of a large part of the population. The economic recession, beginning in the early 1980s, ensured that increasing numbers of educated young people could no longer be absorbed into the job market and unemployment increased markedly. Economic frustrations were inevitably an important factor in the attraction exerted on this youth by The Muslim Brotherhood.[188]

The Islamist message is one of protest against the Westernized political, economic and social elite that has adopted and implemented Western-inspired development plans, yet at the same time failed to bring the bulk of the population prosperity and meaningful economic prospects. The strength of such a movement is that it is able to provide culturally alienated and economically frustrated (young) people a sense of identity based on community relations and moral values, which also includes norms of gender segregation and chastity, in a modern and urban environment. The fact that the "community" it propagates is not bound to blood ties and to locality but has the character of a universal 'ummah can only strengthen its appeal in an urbanizing and modernizing society such as Jordan.

A second reason for the initial appeal of the Islamist movement was a profound disillusionment with leftist and secular nationalist ideology. Secular pan-Arabist and socialist regimes failed during the war with Israel in 1967 and provided no answers to the socio-economic problems in their own countries. The Jordanian Muslim Brotherhood could also take advantage of the frustrations of Palestinian refugees with the PLO, whose reputation was tarnished by accusations of corruption, by their failure to achieve any meaningful solution to the Palestinian problem and by their habit of granting concessions to Israel.[189]

A third reason was the impact of the Islamic revolution in Iran in 1979. Most Jordanians admired the Islamic revolutionaries in that country for asserting themselves as an Islamic force that successfully defied Western imperialist hegemony. The Muslim Brotherhood leadership hailed this development as a vindication of its own ideological stand that Islam was the only road to true dignity and independence for Muslims. Demonstrations took place in Salt in support of Ayatollah Khomeini.[190]

The Jordanian Islamists' sympathy with the new Islamic Republic of Iran was a cause of tension with Jordan's Hashemite regime, which sided with Iraq in the Iran-Iraq war during the (1980-1989) period. So was King Hussein's half-hearted opposition to the peace treaty between Israel and Egypt in 1979, so fiercely opposed by The Muslim Brotherhood on religious grounds.[191] It was Jordan's relationship with Syria, however, that would serve as a pretext for the regime, from the mid-1980s onward, to clamp down more severely on the Islamist movement.

When Jordanian-Syrian relations were of a hostile nature in the beginning of the 1980s, the Jordanian Brotherhood was allowed by King Hussein to establish paramilitary bases near the Syrian border. Syrian Muslim Brothers, who were engaged in a rebellion against the Syrian regime of Hafez al-Asad, were trained there.[192] By the middle of the 1980s, however, Jordanian-Syrian relations improved, since King Hussein became interested in better economic ties with Jordan's northern neighbor in these years of economic recession. Al-Asad agreed to mend fences with Jordan on condition that the Jordanian government clamped down on Islamist activities, especially along the border with Syria. King Hussein consented to this condition.[193]

It seems that the regime concluded that increasing Islamist influence in the state apparatus as well as in civil society and public sphere had emboldened the movement too much, even apart from the issue of relations with Syria. The staunchly secularist Jordanian Prime Minister Zaid al-Rifai pushed a law through parliament that gave the government the right to select and dismiss mosque preachers, and to review sermons. This enabled the government to prevent Muslim Brothers from preaching. Moreover, many government employees who were members of The Brotherhood were dismissed, and some had their passports taken away.[194] Islamists even reported that Brotherhood members were arrested if they wanted to give a sermon in the mosque, and put into isolation.[195]

The Islamist Movement in the Years of Liberalization

Relations between regime and Brotherhood relaxed again during the riots of April 1989, which took place in response to the IMF-imposed price hikes. Muslim Brotherhood leaders were reportedly making efforts to calm the volatile mood in the country, and the King thanked them in private for this.[196]

The movement was in an advantageous position during the subsequent campaign for the parliamentary elections of November 1989, since it was a legal organization that could run an efficient election campaign. Other political currents lacked this benefit, because they had been outlawed for so many years. The Brotherhood mobilized its branches and regional committees to organize electoral meetings and rallies, which often took place after Friday prayers in front of mosques. Men, women and children distributed its leaflets.[197]

The Muslim Brotherhood election program stated that domestic policy was based on God's shari'ah, and that all existing laws and regulations in Jordan had to be revised in order to conform fully to sacred law. It also called for safeguarding the dignity of citizens and the freedom of expression, thinking, religion, press and forming trade union organizations. It put the blame for the economic crisis and the great disparity between rich and poor on the corrupt behavior of the "slothful, unproductive groups" in the state apparatus and on the greed of the "monopolists and the exploiters." Self-reliant economic development, a progressive tax system and the imposition of the zakah (Islamic wealth tax) were proposed as solutions to socio-economic ills. Education, media and cultural expressions had to promote Islamic morals, and un-Islamic phenomena – alcohol, drugs, dance halls, night clubs and so on – were to be banned. A woman was declared to have the right to own property, work and participate in the society's development "on condition that this does not overwhelm (her) duty toward her home, husband and children." Moreover, the program advocated jihad as the only way to liberate Palestine from the "Zionist enemy" and called for unity between Arab and Islamic countries in the realms of foreign and economic policy.[198] The Islamist movements' great success in translating popular dissatisfaction and demands, such as a socially just solution to the economic crisis, greater political freedom, an end to martial law and support for the Palestinian intifada, into electoral gain is mentioned above in the section on the role of political parties.

Right after the elections, prime minister-designate Mudar Badran approached The Muslim Brotherhood as part of his consultations aimed at forming a new government. The Brotherhood's insistence at getting the portfolio of the education ministry made him first decide not to include them. He did include some independent Islamists as ministers with politically non-sensitive portfolios. Muslim Brothers were subsequently included, however, in the Royal Commission drafting the Kingdom's new National Charter.[199]

Developments following the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait on 2 August 1990 brought The Muslim Brotherhood at the height of its political power. While The Brotherhood had never been in favor of the secular Iraqi Ba'th regime, the stationing of US-led Western forces in Saudi Arabia, the site of Islam's two most holy shrines, in order to prepare an offensive against Iraq made the movement decide to join an anti-American coalition with secular pan-Arabist and leftist forces. After Friday prayers, anti-American demonstrations and rallies were held by The Muslim Brotherhood from the mosques and the movement called on the King to support Iraq.[200]

The King, recognizing The Brotherhood's popular strength, decided that it was necessary to co-opt it and include its voice within the government. On 1 January 1991, the Badran government was reshuffled: Muslim Brothers were appointed as ministers of education, religious affairs, health, social development and justice.[201] During the Gulf war itself, statements by Muslim Brothers on the conflict became increasingly fiery. The movement officially called on 6 February 1991 upon the Muslims all over the world to "support their brothers in Iraq and to purge the holy land of Palestine and Najd and Hijaz (i.e. Saudi Arabia) from the Zionists and imperialists." Portraying the conflict as one between opposing religions and civilizations, Muslim Brotherhood hardliner and deputy Abdul Mun'im Abu Zant declared: "This battle is not between Iraq and America, but between Islam and the Crusaders … It is not between Saddam and Bush, but between the infidel leaders and the Prophet of Islam." Never before had the movement been in such a strong position to disseminate its discourse of Islam versus Western imperialism in the Jordanian civil society and public sphere.[202]

After the war, The Muslim Brotherhood ministers tried to implement a program of Islamization of Jordanian society on the socio-cultural level. In this field, they were much less successful. Their efforts to impose segregation between the sexes in the schools and other public institutions, to prohibit production and distribution of alcohol[203] and to prescribe prayers in state schools with an anti-American content provoked an outcry in secular Jordanian circles and sparked a heated debate in the public sphere.[204] In the end, the movement only succeeded in forbidding the national airline to serve alcohol in flights to other Muslim countries and in obtaining an amendment banning the licensing of recreational centers, sports clubs and swimming pools that do not segregate between men and women. In cooperation with other groups in parliament, it also successfully introduced legislation against government corruption and in favor of ministerial accountability to parliament and citizens.[205] With the convening of a US-sponsored Middle East peace conference in Madrid drawing closer, however, King Hussein decided that he needed a different kind of government. The Badran government was dismissed on 17 June 1991 and a new cabinet, free of Islamists, was appointed with Palestinian liberal Taher al-Masri as Prime Minister.[206] From that time on, Jordan's mainstream Islamist movement was further removed from the corridors of state power. It also became the object of government efforts to contain its political and social clout in Jordanian society. The Jordanian security apparatus continued to monitor the movement closely and its publications were extensively censored or even banned at times.[207]

Intimidating from The Brotherhood's point of view were the trials taking place against more radical Islamists. One hundred suspected members of an armed group of Afghanistan veterans calling itself Muhammad's Army, that had carried out attacks against sellers of alcohol, Christians and a Jordanian intelligence officer, were rounded up by the Jordanian security service without firm evidence or charges. During their trial in September 1991, many of the detainees claimed that they were being tortured. In December 1991, eighteen of the suspects were condemned to death. Later, the King commuted these sentences to life imprisonment. In September 1992, independent Islamist parliamentarians Leith Shubeilat and Ya'qub Qarrash were tried on charges of illegal possession of explosives and weapons, slandering King and parliament and undermining Jordanian-Iraqi relations. The trial elicited widespread protest in Jordanian civil society and parliament. It was commonly accepted that the real cause was Shubeilat's uncompromising stand on financial corruption in the government. The State Security court first sentenced the two deputies to death and then commuted these sentences to twenty years of hard labor. Apparently to defuse political tension, the King pardoned the two men from prison two days after the verdict.[208]

When the Islamic Action Front Party was established in December 1992, its Secretary General, Muslim Brotherhood parliamentarian Ishaq Farhan, stressed its nature as a political party open to all individuals, whether Muslim Brotherhood members or other like-minded citizens. Its political platform too espoused a more liberal political discourse as compared to The Brotherhood' election program of 1989. While it called for the application of the shari'ah in all fields, it spoke of the "promotion", rather then the imposition, of Islamic culture. Moreover, it emphasized the establishment of political pluralism, the protection of human rights and political freedoms, the promotion of unity and dialogue among all citizens, respect for women's rights and broadening the role of women's leadership in political life, besides the more traditional Islamist positions on combating corruption, ensuring social justice, Arab unity and preparing for jihad against Zionism and Imperialism. It was apparent from the beginning, however, that the IAF was controlled by The Muslim Brotherhood. When elections were held to the IAF Shurah Council, independent Islamists won only 18 of the 120 seats. Many of these independents complained that The Brotherhood had violated an agreement aimed at giving them a proper voice and defected from the party in protest.[209]

Developments since the Peace Treaty with Israel

The conclusion of the peace treaty between Jordan and Israel in October 1994 heightened the tension between the regime and the Islamist movement. The Muslim Brotherhood always asserted that Palestine was an Islamic land; that Israel was created as a foreign "infection" in the Arab world; and that to give up any Palestinian or Islamic right over Palestine was prohibited by the shari'ah. Much of Jordan's population was dismayed by the peace treaty and Islamist leaders found receptive audiences in the mosques whenever they preached against it.[210] The King's response implied, however, that he considered public opposition to the peace process as synonymous with attacking the monarchy itself. Some IAF parliamentarians were detained and brought to trial for preaching in the mosque against peace with Israel.[211] Reportedly, Brotherhood hardliner Abu Zant was assaulted by the police for delivering a sermon in the mosque against the peace treaty.[212]

As the sections on political parties and professional associations have already pointed out, relations between regime and Islamist movement have remained tense during subsequent years, even if there has been room for negotiation and even, at times, consultation between the two sides. Islamists, along with other oppositionists, continued to be exposed to different forms of repression – arbitrary arrests, detentions and censorship among these – when the authorities considered their public actions or expressions as having crossed certain red lines. Certainly, current regime policy in Jordan fails to provide them with a public forum for expression such as they used to enjoy in the 1960s and 1970s in the mosque and media. A relatively recent and spectacular case of repression occurred on 8 September 2004, when security forces raided the homes of a number of senior Muslim Brotherhood clerics and arrested nine of them on charges of preaching in the mosques without official licenses. According to The Brotherhood and the IAF, the government acted on American instructions to prevent them from speaking out against the US occupation of Iraq.[213]

Doves and Hawks

The participation of the Muslim Brotherhood dominated Islamist movement, within a relatively open and inclusive political system and public sphere since 1989, has contributed to what Mansoor Moaddel has described as the "secularization of the Muslim Brothers." That is to say, the movement has not been able to stick to a fundamentalist rhetoric aimed solely at educating the believers in the absolute truth of Islam through the provision of unquestionable solutions to all issues of life. Being engaged in relatively open and free debates with non-Islamists in parliament and the public sphere and having to win the sympathy and the votes of a largely well-educated and politically aware electorate required a discourse more focused on practical and appealing solutions to political and socio-economic issues. Narrowly defined religious issues like the prohibition of alcohol, gender segregation and ritual life would no longer suffice in the newly opened up pluralist market of opinions and votes.

The Islamic Action Front, as a political party, was charged with adopting this new approach. The public discourse of The Muslim Brotherhood and the IAF thus became increasingly characterized by rational construct arguments based on key concepts like "national interests," "democracy," "freedom and equality before the law," and less by direct references to the shari'ah.[214] This tendency was most noticeable in the IAF platform, but it also underpinned The Muslim Brotherhood's call to boycott the elections in 1997. Here, rather than theological reasoning, lack of democracy and public freedoms, deteriorating socio-economic conditions and normalization with the "Zionist enemy" were the main causes of complaint.[215] Throughout the 1990s and beyond, Ishaq Farhan, one of the most prominent spokespersons of the IAF, repeatedly admitted that the shari'ah provides only the general principles to guide humankind. "The more specific details of how to go about building the proper social order", he added, "should be worked out within the specific context of the Islamic movement itself."[216] It is worth noting that his shift in approach has allowed greater cooperation with other, secular, opposition forces in order to work towards common aims: political democracy, freedom and the struggle against US hegemony.[217]

This shift in tone did not take place, however, without some degree of internal resistance. Indeed, it gave rise to the differences between those described as the “hawks” and “doves” within the movement. The doves are pragmatists, like al-Farhan and al-Arabiyyat, who emphasize the flexible nature of the Islamic faith and are ready to compromise on details in order to realize at least some of the main goals of Islamization. More pragmatic than many might imagine, both figures are ready to participate in a government that adheres to a peace treaty with Israel, as long as they can exploit their position in order to contain the dangerous consequences of such a treaty. They are, in other words, ready for the give and take of the political arena, and will bargain with the regime itself. They are inspired by the Qatar-based Islamic scholar Yusuf al-Qaradawi’s theory of a realistic practice of *fiqh* (Islamic Jurisprudence), an approach which emphasizes flexibility above other (legal) virtues. If a rigid application of a specific shari‘ah rule in a given context only aggravates human suffering without furthering core Islamic ethical principles, then one should – so the reasoning of the Doves goes – adopt a different, and more flexible, application. They are often professionals who enjoy higher and secular education, in many cases in Western countries. They have a relatively good relationship with the Hashemite regime.

Hawks, by way of contrast, hold more dogmatic beliefs and are less willing to be flexible. They are opposed to the Islamist movement’s full integration in a secular state structure, insisting that the movement should maintain its distance from the secular regime and other secular forces in order to preserve its own religious purity. They even argue that, if the secular regime significantly obstructs Islamization efforts, violent action against it is justified. The only legitimate kind of political rule, the hawks insist, is the rule of God, and this implies that the shari‘ah can only be applied in a full and complete sense. Partial implementation of the sacred law is never an option. Hawks usually hail from modest socio-economic backgrounds and are often graduates from theology faculties.

Debates between the two sides have often focused on whether the Islamist movement can legitimately participate in Jordanian governments. While doves see such participation as an opportunity to translate at least some of their ideals into practice, hawks condemn it as the opportunistic betrayal of the Islamist movement’s mission as formulated by Hassan al-Banna.[218] The Jordanian Islamist movements’ election boycott of 1997 was partially due to the strong influence of hawkish Muslim Brotherhood figures like Hammam Said and Abu Fares, both of whom were afraid of compromising the movements' dogma by participating in elections under adverse political circumstances.[219]

By and large, however, the doves have increasingly gained the upper hand within The Muslim Brotherhood and IAF in recent years. This is also reflected in the political positions the leaderships of these organizations have adopted on issues like democracy, the relationship with the West and gender relations. Unlike the hawkish minority, the dovish leadership emphasizes the compatibility of the system of parliamentary democracy with the Islamic principle of shurah. Unlike the former, it affirms the importance of dialogue and fruitful cooperation with the Western world and upholds women's rights to participate in the development of the society and in political life, as volunteers, paid employees, voters, activists and even as elected representatives in parliament and other formal bodies.[220] In February 2002, for example, women were elected as deputies to the 120 member Shurah Council of the IAF.

In terms of popularity, The Muslim Brotherhood and IAF also have to compete with Islamic currents outside their own organizational framework. By September 2001, some Islamist doves had grown profoundly dissatisfied with the pace of change within The Muslim Brotherhood-dominated movement in terms of its aspirations towards political and social openness and gender equality. These members defected from the IAF and established the Islamic Center Party. At the other end of the spectrum, the strictly literalist Salafi movement refuses to recognize the legitimacy of, or to participate within, the existing state and the societal order in Jordan. This current is not officially recognized and organizes itself in informal study and friendship circles. Most members of these circles behave non-violently; but there is an extreme that does embrace methods of violence and organizes itself in Al-Qa'ida-affiliated cells.[221] Such tendencies are, however, beyond the scope of this study, which deals only with those civic associations that behave non-violently.

Conclusion

The role of the four civil society forces within the Hashemite Kingdom described within this chapter serves to uphold the legitimacy, hegemony and development strategies of the Hashemite regime. The latter needs to communicate with these forces in order to keep abreast of recent trends and developments within wider society. Moreover, it benefits from having a buffer of intermediaries between itself and the society at large via which it may negotiate interests and ideas from either side. Indeed, in so doing, the regime's own stability and hegemony is preserved. Last but not least, there is the requirement of working at an image of democracy and pluralism vis-á-vis the international community. Political parties, professional associations, employers' associations, trade unions and the Islamist movement help to fulfill these functions. At the same time, the regime wants to make sure that it remains fully in charge and that none of these forces will ever reach a position from which its own policies may truly be challenged. To a great extent, these policies are determined by the priorities of international relations and, thus, are aimed at maintaining the support of foreign powers. Accordingly, these forces are dialogued with so that their social and political influence be contained. If necessary, this containment will occur through force.

Political parties are in a particularly weak position, not only vis-á-vis the regime, but also in terms of their standing in public opinion. Telling in this regard are the annual public opinion polls conducted by Jordan University's Center for Strategic Studies. 90% of the respondents of a poll released in October 2004 did not think that the existing political parties were capable of representing their political, social and economic aspirations, and 84.2% believed that none of the existing political parties was capable of forming a cabinet.[222] Their weak standing can be attributed to several factors. There is (the fear of) political repression and restrictions to political expression in public that deter citizens from joining parties. There is also the predominance of personalized tribal, family, local, ethnic and religious bonds in political life, which arrives at the expense of ideological and programmatic orientations on a national level. And, finally, there is the weak position of parliament vis-á-vis the regime.[223]

Professional associations are in an ambivalent position in terms of their role in civil society. On the one hand, they were initiated by the regime, which obliged professionals to be members in order to enlist them in a state-led effort of socio-economic and technological development. On the other hand, these members' economic resources and know-how renders them largely independent of the state and enables the associations to become the prominent forum for popular grievances and oppositional ideas prevalent, in particular, among the Kingdom's professional middle class. Such grievances and ideas are expressed on a voluntary basis, of course, which makes these associations perform a function of civil society. This function can be characterized as a sounding board of public opinion for the government that may be consulted at times. On the other hand, the state is under no obligation to heed the associations' advice, warnings and protests. Especially when it comes to regional, foreign and economic policy decisions, the government's relations with foreign donors will prevail over the associations' oppositional voices. Moreover, the state tries to control and check these voices by various repressive measures and, on occasion, by threatening the professional associations with dissolution. It seems to be reluctant, however, to carry out these threats, due to fear of alienating and provoking the influential professional middle class.

Employers' associations and trade unions provide the state with a means to regulate and control class-based tensions in Jordanian socio-economic life. Unlike the professional associations, their activities do not, generally speaking, spill over into political issues outside the socio-economic domain. It has always been in the employers' interest to keep their relationship with the regime on friendly terms. Since the end of the 1980s, they have also benefited from official policies of privatization and liberalization. Trade unions, on the other hand, do not have the professional associations' economic resources and degree of independence at hand to confront state policy.

The Islamist movement performs the role of a sounding board against which popular frustrations and opposition – similar to that of the political parties and professional associations – may be heard. Moreover, since the 1980s onward, it became the strongest force within these two types of political society institutions. The initial divide-and-rule policy by the regime, via which the Islamists were bolstered as a counterweight against secular pan-Arabist and leftist opposition forces, has greatly helped the Islamist movement in this regard. The subsequent decline of the left and political emboldening of the Islamists, however, ensured the state focus on limiting the extent of the Islamists' influence in political and public life. It continued to recognize The Brotherhood, however, as a non-violent and regime-loyal alternative to more radical and militant versions of Islamism. The movement's ideology and political practices have also been affected by modernizing trends of urbanization, spread of education, growth of a professional middle class, political liberalization and increased participation of women in the labor market and the public sphere. However, its lack of a presence in the institutions of economic society is telling of the Islamists' lack of vision and strategy in terms of socio-economic policy.

6. **Jordan's NGO Sector**

The aim of this chapter is to give an overview of the NGO sector in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. One can most readily distinguish between NGOs, on the one hand, and civil society actors, like political parties, professional associations, trade unions and business associations, on the other, most obviously in terms of what the NGOs do not do. For, unlike the civil society actors, the NGOs' function is, ideally speaking, not to achieve direct political or economic gain, power and influence on behalf of their own constituency within the sphere of state or economy. The primary objective of their activities is to promote the common interests and/or convictions of (groups of) citizens outside of the realm of competition and struggle for direct political or economic power within these two spheres. They can serve this objective in various ways, such as delivering services to certain target groups that need them or advocacy work aimed at influencing legislation and policy (albeit from the outside) on behalf of a constituency. It must be noted, however, that in actual Jordanian practice, links between NGO work and competition (by NGO representatives) in the economic and especially political realm do exist.

NGOs in Jordan are voluntary initiatives of Jordanian citizens. Small associations may have a few dozens of members, while the membership of bigger ones consists of several hundreds. Usually speaking, however, the bulk of an NGO's membership does not participate in its ongoing activities. It merely contributes financially and is invited every year to the association's general assembly. The minority of active members always make up an association's administrative board and may, depending on the size and the resources of the association, also work in the implementation of its activities. Larger and wealthier associations employ staff that implements the programs and tasks decided upon by the administrative board.

This chapter mainly consists of an historical description of Jordanian NGO life. After this description, the present role of the General

Union of Voluntary Associations in the Kingdom will be highlighted. At the end, a rough classification of service providing voluntary welfare associations will be given.

History of the NGO sector in Jordan

The Initial Development of NGO life in Transjordan

During the Ottoman era, the predominantly tribal (nomadic as well as rural) character of the society in the territory east of the River Jordan was characterized by informal ways of mutual assistance, exchange as well as patronage. At that time, the levels of literacy, formal education, division of labor and civic awareness necessary for more or less formal organization of voluntary endeavors did not exist there. Such levels are usually linked to a more sophisticated money-oriented economic system and to a more pervasive form of state power. Modern state power does not limit itself largely to collecting taxes and enforcing military conscription, as the Ottoman authorities used to do in this peripheral part of their empire. Rather, it thoroughly shapes the life of the citizens through legislation, policy and bureaucratic regulation (though we note that in the last half century of Ottoman rule, the exercise of state authority in this territory was already being modernized along these lines).[1]

In 1912, the first voluntary association in the territory was set up in the town of Madaba, called Dur al-'Ihsan (homes of charity). It was a Greek Orthodox grouping exclusively dedicated to serving the Greek Orthodox community, especially its needy children.[2] During the next two decades, establishing voluntary associations would remain a religious or ethnic minority affair: in 1925, the Orthodox Nahda (Renaissance) Association was established, followed by the al-Maqasid al-Hijaziyyah Association in 1931 and the Circassian Ikhwan (Circassian Brotherhood) Association in 1932. The last two were established by members of two different ethnic Muslim minorities: the first was a group of immigrants from the Hijaz, in the west of what is now Saudi Arabia, who accompanied the Emir Abdullah when the emirate of Transjordan was established; the other were the Circassians, who originally arrived in the territory in the nineteenth century as refugees from the Caucasus. All of these associations limited their charitable activities to their own respective religious or ethnic communities.[3]

The pioneering example of the minorities would soon be followed, however, by a form of association by urbanized Transjordanians that was more open toward the general (urban) public. The year 1937 saw the establishment of the Jordanian Youth League and the Association of the Red Freedom. Both of them were politically motivated. They focused their activities on the raising of political awareness, especially in connection with the Palestinian struggle against British rule and Zionist colonization in Palestine. It was not surprising, therefore, that the British-backed administration of Transjordan started to monitor and control associational activity more closely out of concern that it could be used for political subversion.[4] By 1932, the first Tansjordanian legislation aimed at regulating the activity of voluntary associations was already in place, replacing the previous Ottoman legislation.[5] Not only men, but also women joined the voluntary associations. They could do so without undue harassment by state-control, since the state authorities did not regard women as potentially dangerous or subversive as men.[6]

The first society for women only was founded in 1944, and was called the Women's Social Solidarity Society. Princess Misbah, mother of Crown Prince Talal, served as its president. She was also named as the honorary head of another women's society, called the Society of the Jordanian Women's Federation, founded one year later. The women societies specifically focused on improving the social conditions of Jordanian women by raising their educational level, assisting them in the care and upbringing of their children and raising their awareness on health and welfare issues. They organized several meetings and seminars to this end. Besides such endeavours, they also engaged in the more traditional activity of assisting the poor and needy.[7]

The Muslim Brotherhood, licensed in 1945 by Emir Abdullah, must also be mentioned in connection with voluntary welfare activism. As a voluntary religious society, it started to focus on the Islamic education of, in particular, school students. Muslim Brothers gave public lectures and organized Boy Scout clubs where social (including charitable) and athletic activities as well as religious study took place.[8]

The Impact of the Arrival of the Refugees

Voluntary activism for the sake of the poor and needy was boosted significantly by the arrival, during the 1948 war, of hundreds of thousands of Palestinian refugees to Jordan, particularly to the West Bank which was annexed to the Hashemite Kingdom in 1950. Citizens on the West as well as on the East Bank spontaneously established associations to distribute food and clothing and provide shelter to the dispossessed Palestinians, and to take care of the injured and the orphans among them. According to Abdullah

Khatib, present head of the General Union of Voluntary Societies, this popular activism took place even before the international community stepped in and organized UNWRA (United Nations Work and Relief Agency for Palestine Refugees).[9] Members of previously existing associations, ranging from the Palestinian Young Women's Christian Association to the abovementioned Jordanian women's societies to The Muslim Brotherhood were also active in providing the necessary aid, including food, shelter and healthcare.[10]

The Jordanian government did not ignore the developments in large-scale aid provision to the refugees and the proliferation of voluntary welfare activism. In 1949, a special department for voluntary societies was attached to the Ministry of Health, followed by the establishment of the Ministry of Social Affairs in 1951.[11] Among the new Ministry's responsibilities was the supervision of voluntary work.[12] It drafted a new law on voluntary associations in 1956 that defined regulations and registration procedures and classified them in various types for the sake of administrative oversight.[13] Part of the policy of oversight was the development of a comprehensive and controllable institutional structure for these associations. The regime's imperative of control must also be seen in the light of the prohibition of all (oppositional) political activity when martial law was declared in the kingdom in 1957, a development described in the previous chapter. Unions between voluntary associations were erected on the governorate (or province) level in those years. In 1959, the General Union of Voluntary Societies (GUVS), as an official representative body of all voluntary associations in the Kingdom, saw the light.[14] Its representativeness was, however, questionable from the point of view of the civil society principle of free will, since all registered voluntary associations were – and still are – legally compelled to be members of the GUVS.[15]

All these measures and developments reinforced the voluntary associations' role of assisting the Hashemite state in simultaneously serving and controlling Jordanian society. They did so by assuming part of the state's burden in social care and relief and thereby contributing to maintaining public order and social peace in the Kingdom. Among the most prominent of the more recently established associations were the Jordanian Red Crescent Society, established in 1951 and the Jordanian branch of the Young Women's Christian Association, founded in 1950. Apart from relief to Palestinian refugees, voluntary associations continued to assist needy families in general and provided education, orphanages and shelters for the disabled, hospitals for the poor and literacy programs. Between 1954 and 1959, registered local NGOs increased in number from 56 to 107.[16]

One women's association, the Arab Women's Federation, went beyond the role of a mere service providing institution. It was established in 1954 and was headed by the Jordanian lawyer Emily Bisharat. It focused on raising women's political, economic and social awareness and campaigned to repeal discriminatory articles against women in the personal status, labor and electoral laws. Furthermore, it expressed itself on issues like solidarity with the Palestinian people and the struggle against Zionism and European colonialism. However, in 1957, the year when martial law was declared, the Federation was outlawed along with numerous other opposition-oriented bodies as well as all political parties.[17]

Increased Islamization of the NGO Sector and Tightening State Control

The voluntary associational sector continued to grow in the 1960s. That decade also started to witness a higher degree of institutionalization of Islamist social activism. Leading Muslim Brotherhood members established, in cooperation with some independent Islamists, the Islamic Center Charity Society (ICCS) in 1963. Its president was Dr. Muhammad Abdul Rahman Khalifa, who was also The Muslim Brotherhood's General Guide.[18] According to Jordanian political scientist Sami al-Khazendar, the Society's establishment was the result of government policy pushing the Muslim Brothers to distinguish or even separate between their social, religious and political activities.[19] Independent Islamist, ICCS member and engineer Raif Nijm, who closely cooperated with Abdul Rahman Khalifa in the Society's project of building the Islamic Hospital in Amman, puts its foundation in the context of heightened repression of dissident political voices under the martial law regime. For a while, such repression led to the closure of The Muslim Brotherhood's headquarters. It made The Brotherhood's leadership focus more on religious and social, instead of overtly political, activities. The leadership decided, therefore, to systematize and institutionalize the social component of The Brotherhood's work by establishing the ICCS, which is legally separate from the former.[20] Atallah Abu-Latifeh, however, the writer of a dissertation on the political history of The Muslim Brotherhood in Jordan, puts the licensing of the ICCS in a different context. He states, not unreasonably, that it was part of regime policy aimed at enabling the Islamists to keep Jordanian citizens as far as possible from the powerful nationalist and Communist opposition through religious propaganda.[21]

The ICCS would soon grow into the largest voluntary welfare association registered at the Ministry of Social Affairs. Only associations led by members of the royal family, which do not fall under the Ministry's jurisdiction, are larger. The ICCS subsequently evolved into a nationwide NGO that runs schools, some institutions of higher education, medical centers, two hospitals and centers offering financial and in-kind aid, vocational training and (religiously inspired) educational and cultural activities to orphans and poor all over the country. Its greatest source of pride is the modernly equipped and commercially run Islamic hospital in Amman, which opened its doors in 1982.[22]

More religiously inspired Muslim voluntary associations were founded from the 1960s onward, often, though not always, by Muslim Brothers or other politically engaged Islamists. Like the ICCS, their activity is to be found in the realms of health, education and poverty alleviation, in addition to religious awareness raising.[23]

The first half of the 1960s witnessed drought conditions in the Kingdom that severely affected vulnerable groups. It compelled the Ministry of Social Affairs as well as of local NGOs to focus on the implementation of supplementary food programs[24]- an emergency situation perhaps providing the backdrop for the phenomenal increase in the number of voluntary associations at the time. The year 1965 witnessed the foundation of 34 new voluntary associations on the east bank of the River Jordan alone.[25]

This increase, along with the appearance of NGOs linked to the Islamist movement, may explain the drafting by the Ministry of Social Affairs of a new law on associations, one that was more restrictive then ever. The law of Societies and Social Bodies (law no. 33), enacted in 1966 and still in force, strictly forbids voluntary associations from engaging in any activity that can be interpreted as “political”, “sectarian” or “religious.” It requires the opinion of the governor of the governorate in question before the licensing of any association. Moreover, it empowers officials of the Ministry to pay surprise visits to the associations' offices, check their registers and exercise personal control over the meetings of their general assemblies and the elections of their administrative bodies. It also empowers the Minister to dissolve an association whenever he or she perceives a transgression of rules.[26] One of the reasons given by the Ministry to enact this law was to “discourage family, ethnic and religious organizations in order to ensure internal unity.”[27]

Obviously, associations were compelled to conform to a process of nation building devised from above, a process severely hampering their independence as civil society institutions. This seems to indicate also an ambiguous attitude of the state authorities toward Islamist social activism at the time. On the one hand, Islamists were welcomed or even encouraged to counter the influence of secular pan-Arabists and leftists by establishing their own presence in Jordanian civil society. On the other hand, the regime wanted Islamists to understand that their opportunities for expanding Islamist influence in Jordanian society had its limits and that they would always remain subordinated to the authority of the Hashemite regime.

Social Development Discourse and Practice in an Authoritarian Context

The June war of 1967 had a similar impact on the need for increased voluntary assistance to Palestinian refugees as was the case with the 1948 war. The subsequent three years were characterized by the presence of the various PLO factions using Jordan as a base in their armed struggle against Israel. These organizations started to influence much of Jordanian civil society, including the realm of voluntary aid.[28] With the forced removal of the PLO factions from the Kingdom in the years 1970-1971, however, an incipient civil society dominated by Palestinian nationalism disappeared and the Hashemite monarchy reasserted its authoritarian hegemony over all of political and societal life in the country, including the voluntary associations' sector. This return to political authoritarianism did not preclude a modernizing shift in thinking about the role of these associations in society. This shift can be described as one from traditional charity, that may be dependency reinforcing, to social development that is intended to structurally improve living conditions for the better and to enable the needy to help themselves.[29] It took place under the impact of global trends advocating empowerment-oriented social development. These trends affected Jordanian government circles, the NGO sector, media and academics alike. It implied conscious reflection on, and even applied scientific analysis of, the approaches of social development actors, among them voluntary associations. In the words of former head of the sociology department of the University of Jordan, Sari Nassir:

> From the mid-1970s things began to change. The first half of the 1970s was a continuation of the 1960s in terms of handouts, etc. In the second half of the 1970s we started seeing an awareness that social work should not only be about the poor and underprivileged, nor should it only centre in the hands of wealthy women. [Rather] It should be done more publicly in the sense that young people should be involved: social work should be studied, produced in universities, community colleges, institutes. We started with the concept that you must not help people as such, but help them to help themselves.[30]

The new trend did not imply that traditional charitable approaches toward poverty alleviation were disappearing. As a matter of fact, to this day, traditional direct aid forms a prominent part of the work of local voluntary welfare associations in Jordan. The paradigmatic shift toward social development occurred first of all among those circles in closest touch with trends in the global development community.[31] Among these circles were the royal family, the Ministry of Social Affairs, the leadership of the General Union of Voluntary Societies and academics. They gradually started to adopt new methods aimed at sustainable social development, such as income-generating projects for the sake of economic empowerment of the needy (for instance grants or micro-credits to set up small businesses), awareness raising on empowerment and rights of women and children and on family and public health and professional care for the handicapped. Local voluntary welfare associations too would increasingly adopt such methods over the following three decades. On the governmental level, the shift was reflected in a change of name of the relevant Ministry, from the Ministry of Social Affairs to the Ministry of Social Development, in 1979.[32]

Societies founded by members of the royal family like the Queen Alia Fund (that would later to change its name to the Jordanian Hashemite Fund for Human Development), established in 1977, the Noor al-Hussein Foundation, established in 1985 and the Jordan River Foundation, established in 1995, were, and still are, the most prominent and best publicized in terms of activities of sustainable development. The hegemonic status and international connections of the royal family, as well as these societies' privileged legal status, explain their pre-eminence. The latter exempts them from restrictive controls suffered by non-royal NGOs in terms of local activities as well as possibilities for international relations and (financial) support.[33] It illustrates once again how the Hashemite regime maintains its paternalistic dominance over Jordanian civil society even in the realm of sustainable development, social and economic empowerment and women's and children's rights. Alongside the so-called royal NGOs, through the adoption of productive micro-projects, the GUVS takes seriously the role of guiding its member associations in the direction of social and economic empowerment of the needy, and of supporting them in this regard.[34]

In the realm of women's activism and social development, the international women's conference of 1975, which marked the beginning of the UN Decade for Women, opened a new opportunity for autonomous civil organizing in Jordan. A group of women, many of whom had been active in the women's rights-oriented Arab Women's Federation (AWF) in the 1950s, formed a preparatory committee to celebrate the women's year. In 1974, this endeavor led to the establishment and licensing of the Women's Federation in Jordan (WFJ). Former AWF head Emily Bisharat became president of the new organization. Like its predecessor, the WFJ demanded full equality for women in the sphere of economic, social and political rights, stressed Arab solidarity and supported women's effective participation in "building the Arab homeland." Its leadership included women from a broad range of (albeit secularist) political affiliations, with Palestinians as well as Transjordanians in its midst. It ran training and literacy centers for women as well as support services for children. Moreover, it organized weekly seminars, lectures, other cultural and social events as well as bazaars where the products of its training centers were sold. In the political realm, it published, amongst other things, studies on women's rights and demanded the right to participate in debates on issues affecting those rights, such as labor, education and political participation.[35]

The state's fear of independent civil organizing of voices critical of existing state policies, laws and societal structures also limited the duration of the WFJ's existence. At the beginning of the 1980's, state authorities started to harass WFJ delegates at Arab and international conferences, claiming that the federation was being antagonistic towards the Kingdom. In October 1981, the Minister of the Interior ordered the organizations' closure. From then, until the beginning of the 1990s, it could not operate publically.

Meanwhile, the first woman minister in Jordan, In'am al-Mufti of Social Development, was determined to incorporate all women's activities in the Kingdom into an organizational framework directly under the control of her Ministry. Activists of all existing women's voluntary welfare associations in Jordan, with the exception of the WFJ, were invited to a meeting in September 1981. There, the establishment of the General Federation of Jordanian Women (GFJW) was proclaimed. Until today, the organization exists as a federation of voluntary women's associations under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Social Development. It includes associations with a secular as well as those with a religious background, including some Islamist ones.[36] Its platform emphasizes the raising of women's status through education and socio-economic activities. It speaks in vague and indirect terms about public advocacy against gender discrimination and for women's equal rights as citizens.[37]

Also in quantitative terms, the Jordanian sector of voluntary welfare associations significantly increased in the period between the 1967 war and the beginning of the liberalization process in 1989. The Al-Urdun Al-Jadid Research Center's Directory of Civil Society Organizations of the year 2002 notes that while the associations established before 1967 represented only 11.5% of currently existing ones, 55.4% of them were established in the years 1968-1989. Moreover, their proliferation over the different governorates of Jordan significantly improved in these years and partly undid their former heavy concentration in the capital.[38]

Many of these associations served a particular community, such as a rural village or Palestinians originating from the same locality in Palestine. They often focused on enhancing women's educational and vocational opportunities, albeit within the socio-cultural framework of what were regarded as "proper" (i.e. traditional) Arab family values, such as motherhood. According to Jordanian sociologist Musa Shteiwi, the suppression of political party life during this period of martial law had the paradoxical effect of politicizing the social climate within many voluntary welfare associations, since voluntary welfare work served as a substitute for overt political work in the case of many (often leftist or Islamist) politically engaged citizens.[39]

The Impact of Structural Economic Adjustment and Liberalization

From the end of the 1980s onward, two developments were decisive for the further development of NGO life in Jordan: economic recession and the IMF-imposed economic structural adjustment program on the one hand, and political liberalization on the other. The Structural Adjustment Program (SAP) agreed upon with the IMF obliged the Jordanian government to streamline the allocations of public resources. This led to the removal of subsidies on several essential commodities and to the receding of public services, resulting in the spread of unemployment and poverty. The return of several hundreds of thousands of Jordanians and Palestinians from the Gulf States, first of all Kuwait, in the aftermath of the Gulf crisis of 1990-1991, only aggravated this situation.[40]

The regime was forced to realize, especially due to large-scale riots in the south of the country in April 1989, that implementing such unpopular socio-economic policies could not be combined with the continuation of an unrelentingly repressive martial law regime. More or less free general elections for parliament were held in November 1989, political openness and freedom were significantly widened and, in 1991, martial law was finally repealed after 34 years.

This new political atmosphere also unleashed public debates on problems of development and the shortcomings of the state as a provider of services. In keeping with an international trend of criticizing the role of the state in economic and social development,[41] problems stemming from an overgrown bureaucracy and deteriorating public services were stressed in these debates as manifestations of the structural limitations of the Jordanian welfare state. In this contxt, NGOs would seem to have bright prospects for an expanded role in development as a substitute for the state's role in delivering social services.[42] This may also partially explain the 67% growth in the number of local NGOs between 1989 and 1994, as compared to a growth of only 24% between 1985 and 1989. The annual increase in the number of charitable NGOs in the (1989-1994) period was somewhere between 30 and 50. In the four years preceding 1989, this increase had been somewhere between 10 and 30 only.[43]

The process of political liberalization since 1989 also led to a widening of organizational opportunities. Apparently, cultural NGOs, focusing on the dissemination of socio-cultural values, views and messages in the public sphere, through art and/or through activities like public meetings, lectures and workshops, benefited most from these new opportunities. From 1989-1994, between 50 and 80 new cultural associations were established annually.[44] Some of them were (and continue to be) secular in nature, such as the Socialist Thought Forum and the Jordanian Philosophical Society. Others have an Islamist background, such as the Society for the Preservation of the Holy Qur'an. This organization was established in 1991 by prominent Muslim Brotherhood members and opened centers for religious education all over the country. Other organizations have Islamists as well as secularists among their members. One example is the Anti-Zionism and Anti-Racism Society, the latter being headed by the independent Islamist Leith Shuabilat.[45] This strong-willed personality has surpassed The Muslim Brotherhood with his overtly regime-defiant public statements on issues, such as the absence of democracy, human rights, public accountability and struggle against (and the regime's collaboration with) Western imperialism and Zionism. For these reasons, he gained much respect and popularity in and beyond Islamist circles, and, in particular, among secular and left-oriented oppositionists.

The liberalization process also facilitated the development of a new NGO generation. Associations belonging to it specialize in specific public issues, such as democratization, human rights, gender equality, freedom of the press, the environment, consumer protection and family planning.

Their strategy and approach are characterized by public advocacy, awareness campaigns and networking on such issues. Some of them take the form of research and study centers. They often claim a political, ideological and financial distance from the government. Their social basis is, generally speaking, the modern and well-educated urban middle class whose ranks have been significantly expanded during the past several decades of socio-economic development in the kingdom. This societal stratum is most closely connected to global developments and has the best opportunity to get in touch with foreign (often Western) development actors and rights-based institutions.[46] Examples of such associations are numerous and include: the Arab Organization for Human Rights in Jordan (est. 1990); Mizan (Law Group for Human Rights, est. 1998); the Jordanian Society For Citizen's Rights (est. 1998); the Arab Archive Institute for Research and Studies (which focuses on issues related to civil society, democracy and human rights, est. 1999); the Jordan Environment Society (est. 1998); the Jordanian Society for the Control of Desertification and Badia Development (est. 1990); the Friends of the Environment Society (est.1995); the National Society for Consumer Protection (est. 1989); and the Center for Defending the Freedom of Journalists (est. 1998).[47]

Notable in this regard is also the recent reappearance of the women activist WFJ, effectively closed down in 1981, under the name of the Jordanian Women's Union (JWU). Leftist women dissatisfied with the more traditional charitable orientation of the GFJW joined the JWU and captured its leadership in the union's 1993 elections. Like its predecessor, the JWU focuses on campaigning against laws that discriminate against women. During the 1990s, it opened legal aid centers for women, launched an awareness campaign on violence against women that included a violence hotline and offered women counsel on their rights and (social) options in various ways. Unlike the GFJW, the JWU has an individual membership base and is not a federation of local women's voluntary welfare associations.[48]

Controversy over Foreign Funding and Limitations of Liberalization

The connections entertained by many such middle class-based advocacy associations with foreign – often Western – donor institutions have their problematic and controversial aspects. According to Sa'ida Kilani, head of the Arab Archives Institute, such NGOs do not manage to develop strong relations with the lower and lower middle classes of Jordanian society and also lack the local donor support enjoyed by especially Islamist welfare institutions. The overtly political character of these NGOs' work deters potential local donors, due to continued fear in Jordanian society of getting involved in opposition-oriented political activity that is vulnerable to criminalization and persecution by the authorities.[49]

This makes these NGOs highly dependent on the (financial) support of foreign, normally Western, donors. As a result, the latter can exercise a highly decisive influence on the agendas of the local NGOs they support. This may be at the expense of the NGOs' local priorities. Such external influence has caused several Jordanian NGOs shift their attention, for instance, from supporting poor and needy target groups to rights-oriented programs aimed at a well-educated middle class audience.[50]

Moreover, external support from especially Western countries makes local NGOs vulnerable to accusations of betraying national, Arab or Islamic interests. The Kingdom's far-reaching dependence on foreign powers and its resultant international vulnerability, of which politically engaged citizens of various political stripes are only too well aware, can easily give rise to suspicions of selling out Jordanian and Arab society's interests to Western attempts of domination, whenever an NGO receives Western support. Such sensitivities have sometimes led to fierce debates in the media on the issue of foreign funding of NGOs dealing with issues of public policy, human and civil rights or gender equality.[51] If the Western philanthropic donor involved also happens to work in Israel, a "Zionist connection" is easily construed. Accusations of (indirect) Israeli or US imperialist involvement can have serious repercussions for a Jordanian NGOs' local reputation.[52]

Unsurprisingly, certain Islamist as well as secular pan-Arabist and leftist oppositionists are often involved in spreading rumors and suspicions of "Zionist" or "US imperialist" involvement in the work of some advocacy NGOs. This was the case, for instance, when professional associations, themselves dominated by these opposition forces, pulled out of a conference on democracy building on the suspicion that its organizers had "normalized with Israel and been complicit in the Zionist conspiracy."[53]

State authorities and regime supporters also use the "illegitimate foreign support" argument in their efforts to silence certain advocacy NGOs. In 2000, for instance, the Public Freedoms and Citizens' Rights Committee of the outspokenly regime-loyal Jordanian parliament requested the government to "investigate the 'legitimacy' of local Non-Governmental Organizations …and research institutions which receive foreign funding," complaining that the funds were being used to "tarnish the country's reputation."[54] Another example is that of press freedom activist Nidal Mansur, previously the editor-in-chief of the weekly Al-Hadath newspaper. The Jordan Press

Association cancelled his membership on the grounds that he had illegally received "funds from abroad" during his time working for the Center for the Defence of the Freedom of Journalists. Mansur, who could not thereafter continue his work as a journalist, is convinced that it was instigated by the secret police.[55]

Even apart from the question of foreign funding, several NGOs of a cultural or advocacy nature have continued to suffer from state-repression, especially when the liberalization process stagnated from the mid-1990s onward. Repressive measures against NGOs by the authorities, on the basis of the above mentioned Law no. 33 or similar laws and regulations, continued to take place on a regular basis. Some of these were motivated by suspicions of "illegal" political activity. Women from the Center of Women's Studies, for instance, were brought in by the secret police for questioning because they had discussed the role of women in elections in the Center's premises. The secret police considered discussion of electoral strategy as unlicensed political activity for a cultural association. In another incident, that took place in 1997, the Ministry of Culture ordered the dissolution of the Karak Cultural Forum after outspoken Islamist regime critic Leith Shubeilat criticized the government in a lecture at the organization.[56]

Wiktorowicz writes that the most frequent cause of dissolution of local NGOs in Jordan is prompted by the latter's failure to provide relevant information and detailed reports to the authorities.[57] It seems, however, that accusations of such failure can also serve as a pretext to close down an association that is considered politically subversive. In September 2002, the Jordanian Society for Citizen's Rights was dissolved, officially for failure to provide yearly reports on its finances and activities and for refusing to allow officials of the Ministry of Interior to enter the association's office. Fawzi Samhuri, the Society's former president, dismisses this reasoning as either irrelevant or invalid. He is convinced that the true reasons for closure were related to the Society's activities of protest against discriminatory and oppressive state policies targeting citizens of Palestinian origin and against institutionalized authoritarianism in the state structure.[58]

Another tactic of regime-control of a (potentially) critical NGO community is cooptation and patronage of the issues raised by such NGOs. If the government can declare a controversial issue to be of concern, and thus assume control over any activities aimed at tackling it, the issue is likely to lose its subversive potential. Several advocacy NGOs, for instance, have been successfully enlisted by government institutions in widely publicized "reform" efforts in the area of human rights, gender equality and the environment, under the leadership of the relevant government institution for sure. International pressure on such issues makes their adoption by the regime all the more likely.[59]

Monarchy or cabinet may also establish its own institutions working on issues that were originally raised by civil society groupings. A current example is the National Centre for Human Rights which functions as a government-affiliated ombudsman and regularly publishes critical reports on issues such as prison conditions, children's rights and (mis)behavior of authorities.[60] In the area of gender relations, female members of the royal family, first and foremost Princess Basma, the late King Hussein's sister, have taken the initiative of patronizing lobbying activities for women's rights. She did so by establishing and heading the Jordanian National Commission for Women and the Jordanian National Forum for Women in the mid-1990s. Both organizations aim to upgrade the legal status of women, to improve their political participation and to increase their involvement in development. They do so, of course, within the framework of the existing socio-political power structures in the Kingdom and of what is regarded as the traditional unity and values of the "Arab family." Appreciation of such royal efforts differs in Jordanian civil society. While a relatively progressive Islamist women's rights activist like Nawal Al-Fa'uri hails Princess Basma's and other royal figures' engagement with women's issues, many left wing women are inclined to see it as an undue interference of the regime in women's affairs.[61]

Recent Developments in the Sector of Social Welfare NGOs

Since the end of the 1980s, widespread poverty and unemployment have contributed to the continuous growth of the more traditional sector of service-providing voluntary welfare associations. These associations remain active in the realms of charity and social counseling for the underprivileged. A significant number of them also promote the socio-economic empowerment of target groups like the poor and women, and, through activities like lectures and workshops, seek also to raise the wider public's awareness on various social, health and religious issues. Islamists continue to be prominent in this sector. They continue to try to preserve or even to expand their ideological, socio-cultural and political influence in Jordanian society through establishing such NGOs. For four months during 1991, of course, five ministers in the cabinet of Prime Minister Mudar Badran belonged to The Muslim Brotherhood, as part of a regime effort to appease and co-opt the Islamist movement (then at the height of its popular appeal). One of these ministers was Yusuf al-Azm, Minister of Social Development. During his brief term in office, he allowed the registration of more than fifty Islamic voluntary welfare associations, some of which did not meet the legal requirements. Indeed, reportedly he tried to push through seven religious associations on his last day in office alone.[62] The establishment of Al-'Afaf Welfare Society by prominent Muslim Brotherhood member Abdul Latif Arabiyyat two years later was an important addition to the community of Islamist NGOs. This NGO is specialized in marriage and family issues and has organized well-publicized annual mass weddings, intended as a model of a "better Islamic society" of chastity, social solidarity and harmony.[63]

The demise in state welfare services, unemployment and economic recession has also accelerated the growth of a different category of voluntary welfare associations: kinship-based associations. Family ties – whether of a close or more distant nature – turn out to be highly instrumental in forming associations of social solidarity. For wealthier family members contribute to the welfare of the less fortunate ones, and kinship ties can be used in seeking employment. Moreover, such associations provide their founders and heads with a means to acquire social prestige and perhaps even the ability to obtain the electoral support of a constituency along kinship and tribal lines. More than Islamist associations (with an ideological basis that implies the criticism of Jordanian society and politics), the non-ideological kinship-based associations apparently contribute to the de-politicization and fragmentation of Jordanian civil society.[64]

Most prominently present in the realm of voluntary welfare provision, especially in terms of media attention, remain the associations founded and patronized by members of the royal family. Princess Basma's JOHUD runs dozens of community development centers, especially in impoverished rural areas of the Kingdom. Since these areas are inhabited by tribes constituting the traditional bedrock of support for the regime, from the point of view of the monarchy's hegemony, patronizing development efforts there pays off. From 1991 onward, the Fund has organized an ongoing National Philanthropy Campaign. Basing itself on the Islamic values of solidarity and support, the Campaign enlists the participation of a wide range of national institutions such as government ministries, chambers of commerce and industry, universities, the media, the banking sector, scouting clubs, the GUVS and The Muslim Brotherhood. On the one hand, it engages in direct aid to poor families, in urban and rural areas as well as in Palestinian refugee camps, such as food, clothing, free medical services, equipment for the disabled, school supplies for children and scholarships for university students. On the other hand, it tries to foster sustainable development by offering such families financial resources and equipment to assist them in starting their own small businesses or other income generating projects.[65]

Similar activities are carried out by other royally sponsored societies. In addition, the Jordan River Foundation, patronized by Queen Rania, specializes in issues of child protection and development.[66] In the following section, however, a closer look will be taken at the GUVS as a body representing, as well as controlling, "ordinary" voluntary welfare associations.

The Role of the General Union of Voluntary Societies

Aims, Organizational Structure and Function

The stated aims of the GUVS, as an official representative body of all voluntary welfare associations registered at the Ministry of Social Development, include the following: 1) setting the general policy for voluntary associations; 2) cooperating and coordinating with other institutions, of an official as well as a civil society nature, in the voluntary social field; 3) supporting voluntary associations by means of financial subsidy, technical advise and training; 4) providing information related to social work and voluntary associations to anyone interested; 5) contributing to the funding and establishment of productive micro-projects and providing job opportunities to needy citizens by voluntary associations; and 6) offering aid to emergency social cases, in cash or in kind.[67]

The GUVS consists of 12 unions of voluntary associations on the governorate level.[68] Each governorate union has at least three representatives in the general assembly of the GUVS. Once every three years, the 61-member assembly elects, in turn, an 18-member executive committee of the nationwide union.[69] The annual report, in 2002/3, of GUVS' executive committee mentions 777 local voluntary associations all over the Kingdom that are enlisted as members.[70]

According to Arafat Tamimi, Deputy Secretary General and Director of Development and International Relations of the Union, the GUVS has, since the turn of the 21st century, been engaged in a strategy of fully "integrated development." This includes the themes of employment, education, healthcare, agriculture, emancipation of women, care for the handicapped, the establishing of sound income-generating projects and the promotion of democratic decision-making. The GUVS provides counsel, training and financial support in these fields to those voluntary associations regarded as capable to carry out the relevant projects. Besides, it implements its own projects in this regard.

The union's financial resources consist of the membership contributions by its member associations, its own National Charity Lottery, investment in profitable (building) projects and the support of international and transnational aid institutions like UNICEF and OXFAM. All of its member associations receive a subsidy from GUVS in turn. The GUVS itself is financially independent of the Jordanian government.[71]

Assisting State Control and Disciplining

The GUVS plays an important role in the official overseeing of voluntary associations by the Ministry of Social Development. This Ministry consults the GUVS on decisions regarding whether or not to register new associations or to allow an association to expand its activities. However, the Ministry is not bound to follow the advice of the GUVS representatives in this regard and has, at times, rejected GUVS recommendations. The Union assists the Ministry in terms of providing information on its member associations. GUVS researchers gather this information through data collection and statistical analysis. Such data include all kinds of details of a voluntary association's organizational work, finances and performance.[72] The Union's own evaluation of an association's performance can be consequential for the financial subsidy it provides the latter.[73] Besides, the gathered data enable the Ministry to regulate the NGO community according to the conclusions it draws from them.[74]

GUVS as a Body of Representation and Lobbying

The role of the GUVS in assisting the state in terms of disciplinary control and oversight (combined with the fact that every voluntary welfare association registered at the Ministry of Social Development is obliged to be a member), suggests that it is not a genuine civil society organization, since a basis of voluntary membership is lacking, and the function of control is usually attributed to state institutions (rather than civil society associations). There is, however, another side to the coin. As indicated when discussing professional associations in the last chapter, compulsory membership in a state-imposed structure does not necessarily rule out voluntary types of activity. In the case of the GUVS, its leadership tries to lobby the government for the sake of its own activities and for those of member associations, even though the ultimate power of decision-making rests with the government.[75] This position often implies tension and (latent) conflict in the Union's relationship with state institutions. There is complaint within the GUVS about the Ministry of Social Development and the frustrating impact of the latter's rules and regulations on the voluntary associations' sector's freedom and flexibility in carrying out their programs and activities.[76]

Some of these undesired regulations and controls pertain to receiving donations from abroad. Deputy Secretary-General Tamimi emphasizes the Union's desire to deal directly with foreign donors as well as to receive transnational donations directly, while the Ministry insists that it is the sole legitimate channel for such donations. Tamimi, however, views the Ministry as inefficient, customer unfriendly and even corrupt in its functioning; accordingly, he prefers not to deal with it in the field of foreign donations.[77]

The union's head, Abdullah Khatib, speaks about the suffocating hierarchy in the Ministry of Social Development, where officials are more concerned with pleasing their superiors than with efficiently serving civil society and the general public. During one interview with him, he went as far as talking about "the regime" when referring to oppressive state policies, instead of using the more neutral term "government." The Union does not have the possibility, however, to voice its protest freely and overtly in the Jordanian public sphere.[78] Indeed, Khatib handed this author an unpublished English-language document in which angry protest against government policy and legislation aimed at controlling and dominating the voluntary association's sector was expressed, and a list of fifteen principles demanding the rights of these associations as equal and autonomous partners in social development was included.[79] Referring to a draft for a new law on voluntary welfare associations, he was quoted in the Jordan Times as saying: "the people who wrote this draft were only driven by their concern to control the sector, by their security mania. Should this draft be enacted, we would not have an NGO sector – we would have a GONGOs (i.e. Government Organised NGOs) sector."[80]

In this connection, we can agree with anthropologist Richard Antoun that, for the sake of understanding the relationship between civil society and state in a country like Jordan, a pattern of mutual entanglement between state and civil society through a web of, often ambivalent, social relations is more useful than a model of dichotomy. In the former model, patterns of ambivalence, tension and conflict exist side by side with the possibility of accommodation.[81] This is reflected in the functioning of the GUVS. For, on the one hand, it assists the state in its role of controlling and disciplining civil society; yet, on the other hand, it seems to suffer from this very same role and to harbor considerable resentments against the state. Indeed, Khatib's resentment of the regime – a regime in which he personally is entangled – extends even to the so-called royal NGOs. The latter receive, in Khattib's own words:

> a lot of support from Western aid agencies and the World Bank, but they aren't that effective. Of the money they get, 32 percent reaches the poor but the rest is spent on things like salaries, all kinds of benefits for its employees, private purposes, et cetera. We can safely call it corruption. But they know how to present themselves very nicely to foreign donors.[82]

To make matters more complicated, however, representatives of some royal NGOs complain about bureaucratic obstacles and difficulties in their contacts with the Ministry of Social Development.[83] This lends credibility to the idea that, while they are established and patronized by royal figures, they do possess certain traits of civil society institutions in terms of their position vis-à-vis existing bureaucratic government structures.

Classification of Voluntary Welfare Associations

To indicate different types of voluntary associations that are members of GUVS and registered at the Ministry of Social Development, classification could be made on the basis of activities as well as the backgrounds of their membership. Hani al-Hourani of the Al-Urdun Al-Jadid Research Center distinguishes a more traditional category of multi-purpose associations and the more advanced category of specialized associations. Multi-purpose societies, accounting for 82.7% of all registered voluntary welfare associations according to figures in 1999, offer several types of services. This often includes helping poor families, orphans and needy students, offering vocational training for especially young women, establishing kindergartens, solving social problems and differences in family and local community, providing awareness raising, education and health services and sometimes employment and small-scale business opportunities for the needy. Specialized associations, on the other hand, focus on one (main) type of target group and/or activity and usually strive for complete professionalism in this specific endeavor. One can think here of associations serving the disabled or the orphans, and of those running schools or working on family planning. Al-'Afaf Welfare Society, organizing mass weddings and organizing workshops and seminars on marriage and family issues is also an example in this category. According to the figures of 1999, specialized associations accounted for 17.3% for the total number of voluntary welfare associations.

While all voluntary welfare associations are legally obliged not to discriminate against any applicant for membership or for service on grounds, such as religion, origin or sex, citizens of a common background do often associate together and focus on serving people sharing this background. Hence, in Jordan, many associations established on a family, clan, tribal or (actual or original) village basis carry out several of the activities mentioned above, mainly, if not exclusively, in the service of their own social group. Likewise, there are still the associations representing and serving ethnic minorities, such as the Circassians, the Chechens, the Armenians and the Kurds. About 12% of voluntary welfare associations registered in 1999 were women's associations with, unsurprisingly, women as their target group. Many of them focused on the raising of women's awareness on issues relating to their lives (particularly child care) and on providing women with vocational training opportunities. Some of them expressly deal with women's legal rights as well. Last but not least, there are religious associations, of a Christian or Muslim nature. Serving underprivileged groups in various ways, and establishing health and educational services are characteristic of the approach of both groups. According to Hani Hourani of Al-Urdun Al-Jadid Research Centre, there were 18 Christian associations and 27 Muslim associations by the end of 1999.[84] As pointed out in the introduction, however, distinguishing between religious and non-religious associations is neither an easy nor self-evident matter in a country like Jordan. The religious motives and social ideals (as determinants of the religious character) of these associations are central to the theme of the next part of this study.

Part Three

RELIGIOUS MOTIVATIONS AND SOCIAL IDEALS OF MUSLIM NGOS

7. **Islamic Social Welfare Discourse and Practice:** An Historical Perspective

To portray the work of Muslim NGOs in Jordan as only instrumental to the political aims of the Islamist movement would be a severe injustice to the longstanding Islamic tradition of solidarity with and care for the underprivileged: the needy, orphaned, sick and widowed. Social practices pertaining to this tradition have for centuries been underpinned by numerous Qur'anic 'ayat and *hadiths*, according to which believers are to give generously and to help those in need. Indeed, according to religious sources, such practices are necessary in order for Muslims to win the favor of God and to enter paradise. In this chapter, we discuss the current Islamic discourse around the concepts of zakah and sadaqah, and the related notion that serving the poor is equal to serving God. This discourse is often central to the way in which Jordanian Muslim NGOs explain their own motivations and social ideals. In the subsequent three chapters, these motivations and ideals will be discussed in the case of three different categories of Muslim NGOs: The Muslim Brotherhood-dominated Islamists; current, politically unaffiliated conservative Muslim NGOs; and progressive Muslim NGOs. It must be noted that all data presented in this chapter was obtained from my interviews with the NGO's representatives. My interaction with them as a Western and non-Muslim researcher will necessarily have affected the nature of these data.

Zakah as a Binding Obligation

Many religious exhortations promoting social solidarity revolve around the duty of paying zakah. Zakah emerged as a wealth tax in the early Muslim community in Medina that was led by the Prophet Muhammad himself. According to several Qur'anic verses, eight categories of people are to benefit from the proceeds of this tax: the poor, the needy, zakah administrators, potential converts and Muslims "at risk" of renouncing Islam, manumitted slaves, debtors, people fighting "for the sake of God" and travelers.[1] Socially zakah was rooted in tribal Arabian customs that obliged anyone of sufficient means to assist orphans, widows, the sick and the undernourished. Under the Prophet Muhammad's leadership, however, the early Muslim community established a supra-tribal polity in the city of Medina from the year 622 C.E. onward. All Muslims that were financially stable were ordered to pay zakah to the bayt al-mal, the new Islamic state's treasury. Zakah became one of the five pillars of faith upon which every Muslim is expected to base his or her religion. As such, it was (and is) distinguished from sadaqah, which denotes more informal and unspecified forms of charity for the needy. While not mandatory (unlike zakah), engaging in sadaqah is also strongly encouraged by scripture and Hadith.

Not long after the Prophet's death, the payment of zakah became a source of disagreement, at times even violence within the burgeoning Muslim 'ummah. Preferring to keep matters in their own hands, recently converted tribes, for instance, resisted the centralization of taxes by the caliph.[2] Another controversy concerned the question over which kind of property zakah had to be paid. Initially, all assets were taxed. However, in response to demands among propertied Muslims to limit tax collections, the third caliph Uthman decided to tax only certain kinds of assets, mainly agricultural outputs. Payments over other kinds of wealth were apparently left to the individual Muslim's conscience.[3]

Aside from how to enforce the duty of paying zakah, Muslims have in subsequent centuries, and up to the present day, viewed zakah as a matter of conscience and moral obligation. The word zakah is derived from the Arabic root z + k + h, the meaning of which is most strongly connected to "purification" The general idea behind the institution of zakah is that, in giving up a portion of one's wealth (usually 2 and a half percent), one "purifies" the rest of it, as well as one's own spirit – since the zakah functions as a restraint on one's selfishness, greed and indifference to others' sufferings. The recipient, in turn, is purified from jealousy and hatred of the well off. Furthermore, actual basic human needs of the poor, like food and clothing, are supposed to be met through the observance of this religious duty by the economically better off. In several ways, then, zakah is believed to have a purifying impact on the 'ummah.[4] In societal terms, this purification may be regarded as resulting in social stabilization and harmony between the economic classes. The poor and the needy are, according to Islamic doctrine, entitled to receiving zakah. This entitlement or haq (right) enables them to accept it without loss of dignity. Paying the zakah concomitantly enables the rich to soothe their conscience and not to feel guilty about their privileged socio-economic status. Historical studies on Muslim societies in the Ottoman empire have demonstrated that voluntary zakah transfers used to flow to the most visible poor, such as the servants of the donors or the beggars who lived in the latter's own neighborhoods, rather than toward the neediest. Little thought was given to the challenges of overcoming the sources of need.[5]

Contemporary zakah practices are often of a fundamentally different nature. While donating zakah is still a voluntary affair in most Muslim countries,[6] the spending of it now has a much wider – even transnational – reach. It has also become increasingly motivated by notions of socio-economic and cultural development of the community as a whole. Hence, the emergence of Islamic banks as well as of modern-style NGOs in the Muslim world has significantly contributed to a much wider and comprehensive Islamic approach towards aiding the needy. Islamic banks receive zakah donations as well as "halal-ized" money.[7] With such funds, a great variety of social projects for the benefit of needy Muslim communities are supported, ranging from relief aid after natural disasters to the establishment of religious and cultural centers.[8] Ideas of promoting the empowerment and economic self-reliance of the needy have also been translated into ways of spending zakah donations by Islamic banks as well as by Muslim NGOs. According to 'ulama' like Yusuf al-Qaradawi – a popular Islamist thinker with roots in the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood – zakah funds may be used to help an individual set up his own business. Both Islamic banks and Muslim NGOs are participating in the trend of shifting from traditional charitable aid to supporting the launching of small and medium-sized businesses by needy families themselves.

On the discursive plain, the traditional Islamic idea of the "right" of the poor to assistance from the rich is expanded through the notion that the latter face the moral duty to help the former rid themselves of their own state of dependency, become self-supporting and, therefore, fully integrated (socio-economically) into an economically secure Muslim society. In the Islamic economic order envisioned by such thinkers, banks and NGOs, Islamic aid guarantees the morality of certain financial practices through their "halalization," and micro-credits for the poor so as to compensate for the inequalities produced by a competitive market. According to this ideal, business and solidarity should be integrated so as to lead to the increased circulation of wealth. Solidarity allows the poor to make their own living by setting up their own businesses or by other means (such as vocational training). Improving their own living standards might enable them later, in turn, to generate funds for charitable activities themselves.[9]

Whether non-Muslims can also be eligible beneficiaries of zakah is a matter of debate between Islamic scholars as well as Islamic NGOs.[10]

Sadaqah as a Moral Duty

It is often assumed that the difference between zakah and sadaqah is merely that the former is obligatory, whereas the latter is voluntary. Many socially committed Jordanian Muslims disagree with this assumption, however. They argue that every believer has a moral obligation to engage in sadaqah when confronted with other people's need and capable of helping them. According to a local teacher of social work at Jordan University in Amman, for instance, sadaqah refers to any voluntary effort to improve the welfare of the community. Every Muslim is duty-bound to perform it, even the poor themselves. A poor person does not need to offer financial support, but may help others in different ways, such as by engaging in voluntary work or assisting the old and handicapped in his or her own neighborhood. For, such efforts are also to be classified as sadaqah. At the same time, the basic human needs of food, clothing and housing will be guaranteed for all in society if this moral duty of mutual help is to be fully implemented by all.[11] The teacher in question grew up in a small rural village in the north of Jordan and had himself known poverty in his childhood. When he lived in the city of Irbid later on, he used to help poor relatives and neighbors by bringing them into contact with wealthy donors, or by helping them to apply for financial assistance from the National Aid Fund, which resides within the Jordanian Ministry of Social Development.[12]

Mahmoud Sartawi, lecturer in shari'ah and fiqh at the Shari'ah Faculty of Jordan University, concurs that sadaqah is a moral obligation that every Muslim ought to practice on an ongoing and regular basis. There are also special occasions when sadaqah ought to be given, for instance as a means of atonement (ghafara) for sins that one has committed, or the duty to feed ten poor persons if one has made an oath to God, but failed in practice to keep it (yamin).

Some parts of the Qur'an are universalistic and compassionate in tone regarding the well-being of humankind in general. Others emphasize differences with non-Muslims, condemning the kufar and mushrikun outright and, on occasion, the Jews and even Christians. Therefore, countless different interpretations of the Qur'anic message exist. Sartawi clearly advocates the universalistic line when he stresses that the shari'ah-based principle of mutual help and solidarity with people in need is boundless. Everybody in need deserves help, regardless of skin color, origin, nationality or religion. In support of this position, he cites a Qur'anic principle: "the Children of Adam (i.e. humanity in general) are honored and provided for by God" (Q. 17:70). Sartawi emphasizes that this verse, as well as the title of the Qur'anic chapter from which it is derived, *Surah al-'Insan* (Chapter of the Human) speaks of human beings in general, and not of Muslims in particular. In 'ayat 8 and 9 of this Surah, the believers are admonished to feed the poor, the orphans and the captives, in spite of the formers' own love for the food in question, and without expecting any reward or thanks. According to Sartawi's interpretation, the call to Muslims to feed their captives, or prisoners of war, shows that even enemies of the 'ummah deserve due respect as human beings and ought to be helped when they are in need.[13]

Other Jordanian Muslims active in the realm of social welfare also emphasize the universal nature of the Islamic duty to help those in need. Arafat Tamimi, Deputy Secretary General and Director of Development Projects and International Relations of the General Union of Voluntary Societies in Jordan, stresses that the Qur'an disapproves of pre-Islamic tribal habits to serve only one's own family or tribe. Working for human welfare, as Scripture prescribes it, must therefore benefit all in society, regardless of gender, origin and faith.[14]

This universality of the sadaqah principle notwithstanding, the shari'ah also stipulates, according to Sartawi, certain priorities in terms of the beneficiaries of aid. Qur'an and Hadith mention three categories of recipient who are always entitled to aid and support from any believer: relatives, neighbors and fellow Muslims. The duty to help one's relatives is expressed in ritual form during a religious feast like *'Id al-Fitr,* when brothers, sisters, uncles, aunts, (grand) parents and (grand) children visit one another, wish each other a happy 'Id and exchange gifts in money or in kind.[15] The Islamic duty to support one's relatives is sometimes used by Jordanians of a tribal background to justify prevailing patterns of tribal solidarity.[16] As is the case with relatives, the duty to help people living in one's own neighborhood pertains to all possible needs, no matter if it concerns food, money, health or emotional and moral support. Sartawi stresses that in these two forms of solidarity, with relatives and neighbours respectively, no discrimination on the basis of faith or origin is permitted. However, Muslims also have a special duty to support their coreligionists in need, and ought to cooperate in religious as well as in worldly matters.[17]

The hadith states that sadaqah may not be given to persons who – financially or physically, and depending on the nature of aid – are capable of providing for themselves. Indeed, Sartawi regards the emphasis on shouldering responsibility for oneself as an Islamic legitimation of modern approaches that foster economic empowerment of the needy, such as income generating projects or vocational training.[18] Likewise, several representatives of Muslim NGOs in Jordan cite, as a religious rationalization of such approaches, a specific hadith in which Muhammad states that it is better to give an axe to an able-bodied needy person who asks for help to make his own living than to give him bread.[19]

Serving the Needy is Serving God

Thus, as it has been described above, the principle of sadaqah demands that, from the perspective of many religiously and socially committed Muslims, the religious duty of aid and support to the needy cannot be reduced to the formal rule that, each year, a Muslim must pay 2.5% of his/her assets as zakah. According to them, paying zakah as well as giving sadaqah ought to express a spiritually motivated attitude of selflessness and living and acting *fi sabil li-llah* (for the sake of God). In the absence of the correct *niyyah* (intention), the act of helping and supporting the needy has no merit.

All other religious obligations are usually considered to be expressions of this same spiritual disposition. This view has a long tradition and has been highlighted by Islamic scholars during the middle ages. In his book on charitable activism in the Muslim World, Jonathan Benthall mentions Islamic scholar and religious judge Al-Mawardi (d. 1058), who wrote on this matter in his *Kitab 'Adab al-Dunyah wal-Din* (translated by Benthall as The Book of Right Conduct in Matters Worldly and Religious). Prayer, according to al-Mawardi, is to maintain the right mood of fear of God and religious ardor, which transcends the ego. Fasting helps the believer to have pity on the poor, so that we want to feed them, as well as to tame the bodily appetites. Pilgrimage to Mecca stimulates repentance for sins and, through the rigors of the journey, reminds of the value of generosity and hospitality toward travelers. Zakah, finally, comforts the poor, frees them from isolation, despair and jealousy and makes the well off respectful of the formers' social rights. Mawardi's approach did not challenge prevalent social structures, but was focused on improving the mentality and behavior of the believers in line with Islamic principles.[20]

In a sense, this approach toward social welfare and justice is still prevalent among present day proponents of Islamic social welfare activism. According to Sartawi, the performance of religious rituals should not be a mechanic or automatic affair. Prayer or fasting during Ramadan, he emphasizes, must be done with the sincere intention to surrender oneself to God and cultivate the proper behavior in social life. God accepts neither prayer nor fasting from someone with a selfish, dishonest and/or aggressive mental disposition. Islam, Sartawi argues, means modesty and rejection of selfishness, which must be reflected in ones social behavior as well.[21]

Islamic socio-economic ethics as described above are rooted in the belief (shared equally by Christians and Jews) that all wealth on earth belongs to God.[22] Here, human beings are merely trustees over wealth. Whatever we possess must be used to bring us closer to God. This implies social solidarity since, as one hadith warns, he who sleeps with a full stomach, while his neighbor goes hungry will be deprived of God's mercy.[23] This does not mean that these ethics accord with the communist denial of the right to possess means of production or distribution. Several Qur'anic verses do tolerate a measure of economic inequality. Many Muslims explain such tolerance by arguing that differences among human beings are inevitable in any society and these translate themselves also into differences in socio-economic status. However, they often stress that these differences are tolerable only within the framework of the Qur'anic principle of the dignity and fundamental equality of all human beings or bani Adam (Children of Adam). In socio-economic terms, this means that the human individual has the right to possess and enjoy wealth, provided that this happens in moderation. Wealth must not, of course, be fetishized. Qur'anic verses, such as ayat 1 and 2 of Surah al-Takathur and others from Surah al-Humazah, fiercely condemn the unfettered multiplication of wealth and warn that those who engage in such practices will end up in hellfire. Monopolization and ostentation of wealth will be punished as well.[24]

Since it is only God who provides humankind with all the resources it needs to survive and to prosper, the human being is indebted to Him, and obliged to serve Him in prayer, sacrifice and performing the zakah as well as engaging in sadaqah. All such ways of serving God are regarded as expressions of taqwah (piety) and unselfishness. It is this spirit that is most important; and not the physical or material aspects of the deeds in and of themselves.[25] Indeed, Qur'an 2:245 states that gifts to the poor are a "loan to God."[26]

The concepts of sadaqah and zakah are so closely intertwined with notions of purity and moral rectitude that all also apply to other realms of life, i.e. faithfulness to one God, the "correct" performance of rituals, marital fidelity and faithfulness to promises.[27] Advocates of Islamic welfare activism (including various established scholars), individual social workers and members of Muslim voluntary welfare NGOs stress that faith and good works are indivisible and cannot be separated from one another. "The merit of one's actions depends upon one's intentions" is confirmed in a hadith, supported by the Qur'an and plays an important part in Islamic jurisprudence (fiqh). Conversely, the same also applies: no belief can be sincere if it is not lived up to by the right kind of social behavior and good deeds. Thoughts as well as actions, they maintain, must be guided by taqwa or fear of God and good conscience. Hypocrisy and lip service are strongly condemned in the Qur'an (through the terms fisq and *nifaq*). Zakah, therefore, is both an act of social solidarity and an affirmation of faith. Muslim social welfare activists stress that this faith has to be lived, not by withdrawing oneself from the existing imperfect world, as ascetics in Christianity and other religious traditions have tended to do, but by practicing it in the real world.[28]

8. Social Welfare Discourse of Islamist NGOs

Islamic ethics pertaining to social welfare as they were depicted in the last chapter can be regarded, in Max Weber's terms, as the guiding Wertrationalität[1] (value-rationality) of discourses and practices cherished by members and workers of Muslim NGOs in Jordan. This is not to say that their activities can solely be explained in terms of this Islamic version of value rationality. Motivations of the individual actors within the NGOs are usually much more complex. First of all, Islamic discourses are not isolated from external influences. Muslim NGOs' discourses and practices are influenced by global development discourses that are not specifically Islamic and originate, to an important extent, from the West. At the same time, tribal and state discourses also have their impact on these NGOs' discourses. And last but not least, motives informed by value-rationality are naturally intertwined with other motivations, such as those of a self-serving, emotional or traditional nature.

This study, however, takes the NGOs' religious discourse as its point of departure, since it focuses on the role of voluntary associations as joint expressions of the normative reflexivity of (groups of) citizens, and the role of religion, in this case Islam, in this reflexivity. Reflexivity of citizens and of civil society institutions is to a great extent determined by shared values, principles and ethical ideals emanating from the lifeworld that are consciously held in common. This normative and ethical reflexivity becomes value rationality when translated into activities. The Islamic value rational discourses on social welfare, as it is espoused by these NGOs, will first be described and analyzed. Where possible, attention is going to be paid to the relationship between this and other value rational discourses, or to that between value rational and other types of motivation that inform the NGO members' and workers' activities. The analysis will take place in terms of the reflexivity expressed in these discourses on social religious motivations, on (the "right") attitudes toward the needy and on ideals pertaining to the envisioned Islamic order. In this chapter, the religious discourse of those NGOs closely related to The Muslim Brotherhood, will be dealt with. Since the activities of the Islamist movement, including those in the sphere of social welfare, are controversial among other circles in Jordanian society, such as those of secular and/or liberal Muslims and of Christians, discourses of the latter about the Islamist NGOs will be described later on in the chapter.

Acting for the Sake of God

During the *'Id al-Adha* feast in February 2003, Salah Qandil Shakir, the son of the president of the Islamic Charity Center Society (ICCS), accompanied me on a visit to Al-'Abura Center, one of the ICCS centers for orphans and poor in Amman, to witness the distribution of mutton to orphan families (families without at least a father) and other needy clients. On our way to the center, he began to explain the meaning of 'Id al-Adha. Commemorating the obedience shown by the prophet Ibrahim (Abraham) on being commanded by God to sacrifice his son to Him, as well as God's mercy in eventually allowing Ibrahim to sacrifice a sheep in lieu of his son, this feast symbolizes a Muslim's readiness to give up the most precious thing in life for God – fi sabil li-llah – a readiness which every Muslim ought to possess. In other words, to dedicate one's own life and one's daily actions to the service of God, rather than to follow one's own whims and self-interests at the expense of God's will and commandments.[2]

The phrase fi sabil li-llah, for the sake of God, may be regarded as the central tenet in the value-rational discourse of The Muslim Brotherhood and the Islamist NGOs. At times, they explicitly connect it with the concept of jihad, as a selfless exertion of the will in a sacred effort, be it social, political or military in nature.[3] Their representatives often regard adherence to this principle as the distinguishing feature between "Islamic" and "non-Islamic" NGOs. In the words of the treasurer of the Islamic Bani Hassan Welfare Association in Zarqa: "there are so many welfare associations in Jordan whose performance is very poor, because their leading personalities only think about their own interests and their own prestige […] the opposite of such a mentality is the true selfless effort in social work, to work fi sabil li-llah. Such a motivation leads to success," thereby linking value-rationality with the equally Weberian idea of means-end rationality denoting successful and efficacious activity. By way of illustration he added, referring to the fact that the interview took place on a holiday: "if I had thought only of myself, I would not have invited you to come for this interview. I would have decided to spend the day in my home to take a rest."[4]

Islamist associations regard the principle of working fi sabil li-llah as the rationale guiding their daily work practices. As Salah Qandil Shakir stated about the work culture within the ICCS:

> Prevailing practice (within the ICCS) is to give yourself and your energy for the cause of aiding the poor and the Islamic message. It is not about one's own honor or status; it is about serving faith and the community. It is wrong to impose oneself as a president, or as any other kind of functionary … of course there is competition when there are elections for the administrative board (of the ICCS), but this happens not out of selfish motives, but is part of the effort to serve the work of the organization. The winner of the elections will be assisted afterward by the losers in his job, because not personal honor and winning or loosing is at issue here, but working for Islam.[5]

It is hard to determine precisely what this idealised picture tells us about the practical state of affairs within the ICCS. That the reality is probably less rosy can be derived from what members of another Islamist association with many connections with ICCS figures have to say on the matter. According to them, internal ICCS-politics is characterized by heavy disputes and bloc formation. These disputes are mostly about personal matters, such as questions pertaining to who has the right to occupy which function.[6] But regardless of the question of the relationship between ideal and practice (never a straightforwardly positive one), it is, from the point of view of value rationality, meaningful to stress the centrality of the fi sabil li-llah principle in Islamist NGOs' discourse in terms of, for instance, unity of purpose. Such a value is contrasted with practices prevailing in other associations that are not considered to be specifically Islamic. According to Saleh Azioud, public relations officer of the Islamic Bani Hassan Welfare association, the strong orientation toward personal honor in traditional Bedouin culture is responsible for many conflicts within voluntary welfare associations of a tribal background. Conflicts about the results of elections to the administrative boards of such associations may lead to violence, even killing, he maintains. Financial fraud may take place as well. Associations guided by the Islamic spirit, Azioud asserts, work in accordance with the values of mutual respect, cooperation and prioritizing work for the charitable cause over personal considerations.[7] Likewise, female workers of Al-'Abura Center characterize the prevailing work climate as one characterized by a "team spirit of brothers and sisters." One of them stresses that they are working with each other "in a cooperative and brotherly manner, within the framework of the teachings of Islam." They described unity for the sake of success and improvement of the center's activities as the guiding rationale for their daily work.[8]

From the centrality of the fi sabil li-llah principle flows the denial of fiqh's solid distinction between the realm of *'ibadat* (i.e. forms of worship) and *mu'amalat* (i.e. all religious duties pertaining to relationships between people). In the words of Salah Kandil Shakir: 'ibadat are not a question of rituals only. Helping the poor, being sexually faithful to your wife in marriage, to go to the toilet in accordance with the right prescriptions (such as those related to hygiene and asking God for protection) are all 'ibadat. When Abu Nur (the chief social worker of Al-'Abura Center) does his job, he asks Allah to accept his efforts. To behave oneself in the right way also improves ones' prospects for the next life."[9]

Acting fi sabil li-llah is associated with uprightness, moral straightness, honesty and sincerity, since everything one does is watched and will be judged upon by God. As one donor of ICCS center Al-'Abura stated:

> Everything you do will be judged by God … two angels, one on your right shoulder and the other on your left, are watching. The right one registers your good deeds, the left one the bad. On this basis, God judges … What counts is that I am sincere and honest in my deeds, and that I don't lie or cheat. Even if one does something in hiding, God is watching everything.

According to the donor, the intention of serving God and ones' fellow human beings must be pure and sincere. This implies that one should not act in the interests of one's own prestige; and that the dignity of the recipient should always be respected.[10] Similarly, personnel of an ICCS clinic in Marka, one of Amman's eastern suburbs, emphasize with pride that the rates for consults, treatments and medicine "are fixed, and patients always know what they are up to." The latter pay according to their level of income, and orphans don't pay anything. According to the doctor who guided me on that visit, other private clinics engage in corrupt practices and may try to swindle wealthier patients, but Islamic clinics are "always straight."[11]

One may question whether the Islamists' incentives in helping others are always of such a selfless nature, or whether they involve some degree of prestige seeking. In fact, top level ICCS people are sometimes very attached to their prestige in terms of professional, political or social achievements. According to the ICCS president, charitable benefactors may serve as a "model" to others in serving other people.[12] It is, after all, difficult to conceive of someone serving as a public model without deriving some element of personal prestige from it. The same kind of ambiguity exists in regard to the Islamists' political influence. Two days before the parliament elections of 15 June 2003, the accountant of Al-'Abura Center told me that he was making efforts in his spare time to campaign for the candidates of the Islamic Action Front (IAF). He emphasized that the Islamist candidates "are known among the population for their high morality, their sincerity and their motivation to work for God…other candidates are often suspected of only looking after their own interests."[13] Abdul Latif Arabiyyat, one of the prominent IAF leaders and president of Al-'Afaf Welfare Society emphasizes that the IAF members want to serve the welfare of society and the cause of a modern, accountable and transparent law state. He denies, however, that there exists a (direct) connection between Islamist activities in the realm of social welfare on the one hand and the political role of the IAF on the other, since these social welfare activities are not carried out for the sake of any "worldly benefit" and happen only "for the sake of God." The only hope for reward that the Islamic volunteers in the cause of human welfare may hold to is the 'ajr, or God's permission to live in paradise after death.[14] The reality is, however, that the Islamists' (public and political) prestige has been greatly enhanced by their social welfare activities. Of course, it is impossible to establish the exact nature of peoples' motives, but the idea that the Islamists are also enjoying the prestige and that their social (as well as political) activities serve as a means to promote it does not, perhaps, appear too far fetched.

Value Rational versus Affective Motivations

"I and the supporter of orphans (will be) in paradise like these two (neighboring fingers)" is a statement of the Prophet Muhammad as related in a hadith. This hadith is highly popular as a source of inspiration for welfare work among figures of NGOs as diverse as The Muslim Brotherhood-affiliated ICCS[15] and the much more secular oriented Young Women's Muslim Association (YMMA), which is sponsored by princess Sarvath, wife of Prince Hassan, the brother of the late King Hussein.[16] The connection between engaging in charitable activities for the needy and one's prospects in the afterlife is frequently mentioned by Muslim NGO representatives. As Azioud of the Islamic Bani Hassan Welfare Association puts it:

> Since it is written in the Qur'an that he who sleeps comfortably at home while his neighbor suffers from hunger will not enter paradise, we are exerting our efforts for the poor, because we prefer not to sleep while others suffer from hunger. We like to enter the gardens of Paradise as well.[17]

Likewise, members and friends of Al-'Afaf Society emphasize that by helping others, one comes closer to God. Doing welfare work, they emphasize, is related to the question of entering paradise or hell.[18] A woman who teaches cooking to orphan girls at Al-'Abura Center explains her religious motivation as follows: "hoping to gain entrance to paradise through my belief in God. This means that I gain the reward from God for my work."[19]

Islamic value-rational discourse on working for the sake of God and for divine reward is often closely intertwined with affective motivations of compassion and solidarity with the needy. The same donor of Al-'Abura Center who spoke about being watched in everything one does by God also stated: "you have to help the poor. I can't be happy if my neighbor suffers from hunger, doesn't have clothes and is needy."[20]

The voluntary supervisor of the women's committee of Al-'Afaf Society gave the following account of what first engaged her in Islamic voluntary welfare activism:

> My inspiration to do social work came when my children were in primary school. One day, there was a party in this school that I attended as one of the mothers. A song was sung about the value of family life and what parents give to their children. One of the attending pupils was an orphan boy, who started crying. I and the other mothers went to the boy to see what happened to him, and tried to console him. It turned out that the song made him feel sad since he had only a mother (and no father), who lived in such dire circumstances that she couldn't give him much. Together with the other mothers, I started to do things for him, so that he would get everything in life he needed, including education. Now this boy is studying in the university. It was this event that made me realize that more efforts were necessary to bring about change in the lives of people.[21]

Other indications for compassion as a motive for doing welfare work could be derived from a remark made by Azioud on feeding poor people during Ramadan: "If one helps the poor, one makes them happy, which gives happiness to oneself as well."[22] The supervisor of Al-'Abura Center's female section stressed as a positive point in her work the aspect of working with and helping human beings, and as a negative point the "mental pressure from the clients in terms of their persistence when they ask for something for their children, and feeling sorry for their situations and the lack of somebody to support them."[23] The above indicates that motives of social workers in Islamist NGOs are at least as much of an affective nature as that they are of a value rational nature.

Value rational aspects of the Islamist NGO workers' motivations are not independent from the affective aspects. Many of them cite from Qur'anic 'ayat and the Hadith corpus on the value of compassion and care for fellow-human beings as a rationalization for their social activities, for instance. The director of the ICCS-center in Al-Baqa'a refugee camp spontaneously mentioned examples from the Hadith pertaining to the need of Muslims to be "brothers" for one another, and the duty to love one's "brothers" and neighbors as oneself.[24] A couple who participated in a wedding organized by Al-'Afaf Society and is befriended with the Society's general manager also mentioned the Hadith stressing that one should treat one's neighbor as if s/he is one's heir. They explained the meaning of it as a stress on the importance of consideration with neighbors, who should be treated as members of one's own family. If a neighbor is in need of anything, he or she should be helped, and one should share what one has with him or her. If someone is sad, one should comfort and console them.[25] The director of Al-'Abura center mentions the Hadith urging the believer to treat others as he or she likes to be treated by others. Respect, dignity and mercy have to be accorded to all fellow humans regardless of faith, as well as to animals and to plants.[26] A woman social worker of ICCS-center Abu Dhur in the Nasr area in Amman even explicitly stated to Danish researcher Marie Juul Petersen that "Islam says that when you do something, do it out of love, not because you have to do it."[27]

Obviously, many members and workers of Islamist NGOs make no distinction between humanitarian and religious considerations in engaging in welfare work. "There is one thing I want you to remember: there is no difference between Islam and social work," the treasurer of the Islamic Bani Hassan Society told me at the end of my visit.[28] A worker of the ICCS-center for orphans and poor in Jabal Nazeef, a poor neighborhood in Amman, emphasized that Islam "calls upon the believers not (just) to think about their own interests, but to be socially active and serve the well being of the community."[29] We may derive from such statements that, in the value-rational reflexivity of workers and participants of Islamist NGOs, the true moral distinction is not between other-worldly religious and inner-worldly secular humanitarian action, but between self-interested motivations on the one hand and selfless motivations characterized by true and sincere solidarity on the other. They equate the latter type of motivation with working fi sabil li-llah, for the sake of God.

A possible clue to the answer to the question of innerworldly versus otherworldly motivations in doing welfare work may be provided by drawing a parallel with the case of the Protestant entrepreneurs of the 17th and 18th century, about whom Max Weber wrote in his Protestant Ethics and the Spirit of Capitalism. One could ask the question whether these entrepreneur's primary motivation in their business activities was the wish to be predestined by God to go to heaven – since Protestant (especially Calvinist) theologians stress that hard work and success in business are indicative of divine predestination – or whether they also possessed the right capitalist attitude or spirit for entrepreneurial activity independent of such beliefs. Establishing peoples' motives with certainty is usually a very hard thing to do, but we may well assume that these entrepreneurs possessed the appropriate mental disposition for capitalist activity regardless of their religious beliefs. Likewise, the Islamist social welfare workers are often in the possession of (affective) dispositions and inclinations which makes them amenable to do social work. However, the conviction that they receive the ʼajr (reward in the afterlife) contributes to their motivation. As the director of Al-ʻAbura Center once informed me: the primary motivation for work is social, but one's religious faith also "embellishes" this.

In this regard, it is also important to realize that motivations are never a strictly individual affair. They are shaped by the social environment. Bedouin tribesmen internalize their mental and behavioral patterns of social solidarity in the communal environment in which they grow up, as rural villagers, members of ethnic minorities and Palestinian refugee camp dwellers.[30] At the same time, it is true that religious discourse is an important communicative element within such patterns. It may be stated that, within the Islamist NGOs, religious discourse is often used with a greater degree of consciousness and purposefulness in terms of daʻwah (Islamic mission) than is the case in more traditional settings.[31]

Understandably, there is considerable sense of power gained by delivering a service to people who, through their own lack of money, and/or material and/or knowledge resources are dependent on your help. In this regard, Steven Feierman characterizes aid activities in pre-colonial Africa as follows: "a peculiar combination of caring and dominance, of generosity and property, of tangled rights in things and in people, all in a time and place where the strong would not let the weak go under, except sometimes."[32] The British anthropologist Jonathan Benthall rightly emphasizes the universality of this "double-edged" nature of kindly help by stating that it equally applies to the modern philanthropic West.[33] As regards Islamist NGOs in Jordan, they often use their aid activities in order to obtain a measure of ideological, religious and moral dominance over their clients. The precise nature of this dominance will be described in more depth in Chapters 11 and 14. Here, it suffices to say that the sense of power and dominance could also be regarded as an expression of affective motivation, since it is driven by the world of emotions. It may also be expressed, in value rational discourse, through the use of patronizing language towards needy clients for instance.

The Just Islamic Society

On the level of value rational discourse, NGO participants link their motivations in doing social welfare work with broader ideas on the "ideal" or "best" society. It goes without saying that, for Islamist social activists, the best society is the "truly" Islamic society, governed by the laws, morals and values of the shari'ah. In this regard, it must be emphasized again that Islamists' societal visions are grounded first and foremost in religious moral injunctions on how believers should behave in their social lives. Institutional arrangements in the spheres of state, economy and society are often regarded as of secondary importance.

It seems then, that Islamist societal ideals are still, to a large extent, pervaded by traditional views on the moral duties of the believer. The Iranian religious thinker and philosopher Abdul Karim Soroush has pointed to the duty-oriented nature of traditional religious thought in general. He states that even where Qur'an and Hadith speak on some occasions about the rights of individuals, this is always put in the general moral framework of the societal duty for all to respect and fulfill those rights. Soroush contrasts the traditional religious societal vision, which is based upon a view on human beings as duty-bound "guests" living in the world by the grace of a merciful and compassionate God – who owns it, is its only master and to whom they are morally indebted – with the modern secular vision of a society actively shaped by human intervention in a systematic and "scientific" way. According to the second vision, the human agent, rather than God, is owner and master of the world. Through his rational interventions and his construction of technological, political, economic and social systems, the human agent him- or herself guarantees and promotes peoples' prosperity, welfare and rights.[34]

Soroush's characterization of traditional religious vision regarding society certainly applies to the realm of social welfare, where Qur'anic discourse, as described in the previous chapter, connects the "rights" of the needy to be supported and taken care of with an urgent call to the wealthier believer to respect and fulfill such rights. The extent to which present day Islamist movements can be classified as representatives of an age-old religious "tradition" or as phenomena of a modern society is a matter of controversy. It is obvious from statements by representatives of Islamist NGOs as well as from their publications, however, that much of their social welfare discourse is put in the traditional religious language of performing duties and responsibilities fi sabil li-llah.[35]

Islamists claim that the fulfillment of those duties by all members of society will greatly enhance communal welfare and, ultimately, bring added prosperity for all. They do acknowledge that, in modern (Muslim) societies, modern and institutionalized ways of guaranteeing social welfare are beneficial and even, on occasion, necessary. Thus, in terms of social welfare, they often contrast European social welfare systems positively against the state of affairs in the Arab world. The latter they view as seriously lacking in efficacy and justice due to the prevalence of corrupt and self-serving regimes.[36]

At the same time, however, Islamist NGOs insist that true social welfare in a religious sense can never be a matter of systems and institutions alone. It is the sincere intention of the believers to contribute to the general welfare fi sabil li-llah that gives welfare activities their true validity and legitimacy. Muslim Brotherhood and ICCS representatives believe that a properly Islamic state should institutionalize the payment of zakah as a legal obligation for all Muslim citizens living above a certain minimal subsistence level. At the same time, they believe that the duty of zakah, in its true and original meaning, can only be preserved if it springs from the right spiritual motivation. To be specific, zakah should only be given "from the heart."[37] Non-institutionalized and informal sadaqat in various forms and a (modern) revival of the traditional institution of awqaf (religious endowments with social objectives) will also contribute to a society wherein poverty no longer exists.[38] Unlike the mentality of charitable benefactors in Muslim societies of medieval and early modern times, for whom the overcoming of poverty as a societal phenomenon was of little if any interest, modern Islamist social activists regard the eradication of poverty as one of their ultimate objectives. As the director of the ICCS center for orphans and poor in Al-Baqa'a refugee camp argued, “hunger, thirst, homelessness and nudity (lack of clothing)” are ethically unacceptable conditions and Muslims have a duty to help one another.[39]

Thus, in terms of social welfare, the ideal Islamic society is based on a spirit of mutual care and support. The general vision of that society is summed up quite comprehensively in the explanation of Mufid Sarhan, general manager of Al-‘Afaf Society, of the meaning of the Islamic term ‘afaf. This term means, according to him:

> cleanliness and moral purity in a general sense. It means avoiding adultery, but also entertaining good relationships with others, being at peace with yourself, and dealing with others in a good, honest and trustworthy way. Islam loves sharing, togetherness and tolerance…Islam is asking for morality and relationships on the basis of respect and humanity, and not of power and force. Muslims want good, human relationships with people that are not based upon self-interest. It is a duty for a Muslim to help other people, also the non-Muslims. Even animals have to be helped and treated well. Islam means helping others.[40]

Apart from a self-evident horizontal dimension, this kind of mutual solidarity also has a vertical dimension in the sense of the strong having to support the weak and the rich having to support the poor. In the words of a worker of the ICCS center for orphans and poor in Jabal Nazeef: “The rich man has to support the poor and fulfill their needs, the big person has to take care of the small person and the strong of the weak.”[41] The philosophy of Al-‘Afaf Welfare Society stresses that that this principle has to be implemented first of all within the family. From their point of view, this applies not only to the nuclear family, but to the extended family as well. It vehemently rejects the phenomenon that is widespread in urban Western society of the isolated nuclear family that looks only after its own affairs. In Al-‘Afaf Society’s vision, grown-up children have to take care of their parents, even if the former are married and have children themselves. According to the Society’s president Arabiyyat, a retirement home is not a suitable place for old people to live. He told me that, while still living as a PhD-student in Texas in the USA, he had heard from an Arab American friend that his mother lived in such an institution. Arabiyyat’s response to him, as related to me, was: “the way you treat your parents is the way you will be treated later on. If you take care of your parents well, they will take care of you. And the Prophet Muhammad has said that if you take care of your parents well, you will enter paradise with them."[42] In the same vein, Sarhan praises the quality of relations and the frequent mutual visits among brothers, sisters, uncles, aunts and grandparents within the Arab extended family. He contrasts this with the atomization of individualized Western society, noting with pride that there are hardly any retirement homes in Jordan. He also praises the traditional norm that obliges wealthy relatives to support their needy ones financially and by other means. Islam, he stresses, endorses customs like these. "Really," he argued, "how much easier would life be, how soon all [social] problems would diminish, if only the Islamic message were [consistently] applied."[43]

It is this ideal of an Islamic (extended) family model, wherein solidarity is the rule, that should stand in Islamist association's discourse as an example of solidarity between the rich and poor in society at large. According to Arabiyyat:

> It is not good if rich people spend all their money on prestigious objects and if they care mainly about their (social) status. They should rather spend their money on the well-being of the poor, by financing the education and study of young people from needy families, for instance, and by paying for medical treatments that poor persons cannot afford, or by any other means. An attitude of modesty and compassion with the fate of others closes the gap between rich and poor and works for the benefit of all in society.[44]

Generally speaking the members and workers of Islamist NGOs cite narrowing of the gap between rich and poor as the goal to which this vertical solidarity between the socio-economic classes should lead. Sheikh Abu Baqi Gammo, president of the Islamic Educational Welfare Association in Zarqa and one of the founders of Jordan's chapter of The Muslim Brotherhood, spoke about the prophet Joseph who, while he was in Egypt, helped the poor and could not be happy when he saw others suffering. "If Islam were consistently applied in Jordan and in other Arab countries," he maintains, "the problem of poverty would be solved. There would be no needy people living next to people who dwell in palaces. There would be no war (or conflict). Islam is the ideal and perfect system." As an illustration, he stressed that if his association lacks anything in money, for instance to pay the tuition fees for children from poor families to attend the school run by the association, he will cover the expenses from his own pocket.[45] Likewise, the director of the ICCS center for orphans and poor in Al-Wihdat refugee camp spoke about the Islamic duties stipulated in the Qur'an and the Hadith to elevate the poor, needy and orphans from their state of suffering and want toward a better and higher level. By taking care of the poor through the payment of zakah and sadaqah, the rich prevent conflict and tensions within society, and harmony will be preserved, he argued. Asked whether those zakah and sadaqah consist simply of gifts in money and in kind, his answer was that this is not enough. Rather, he mentioned the efforts of his center to foster the self-reliance of orphans and poor children and their families by supporting the children in their school education and by offering them computer courses and income-generating projects.[46]

One of the goals stated by ICCS top-representatives is to improve the situation of the poor by promoting their socio-economic self-reliance through programs in the field of vocational training and income generating projects.[47] They consider the enhancement of productivity among all-able bodied members of the society as an important key to (Islamic) social justice. Likewise, the president of the female Al-'Ihsan Welfare Association in Zarqa, who had been working for the ICCS before she established her own association, regarded it as part of her Islamic mission to urge her poor clients to make use of opportunities to work and not to expect the association indefinitely to provide them with handouts.[48]

The Islamists' views on social justice are brought into sharper focus when we consider what these actors regard as social injustice. As one may expect, they condemn the unfair distribution of wealth that characterizes many Arab and Muslim societies as well as others. They usually explain this state of affairs as being the result of Western imperialist designs to keep the Arab nations and the Muslim 'ummah weak and divided. They also point out that in spite of the Arab countries' possession of the richest natural resources on Earth, they nevertheless suffer great social problems and injustices. In the words of the supervisor of the female section of the ICCS center for orphans and poor in Al-Wihdat Refugee camp: "Arabs live in the richest area of the world in terms of natural resources, but at the same time they [many of them] live in poverty. This is unjust, this is oppression."[49] Islamist social activists in Palestinian refugee camps point also to the plight of Palestinian refugees, the usurpation of their land and their expulsion by the "Zionist Aggressor." This they contrast, of course, with the sluggishness and apathy of the global political community in seeking to address the Palestinians plight.[50]

Wealthy Arab accomplices of the prevailing socio-economic unjust state of affairs are also targets of the Jordanian Islamists' criticism, especially those living in the Gulf region. When it comes to the Wahhabi Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, such criticism is often mixed with theological recriminations of nifaq (hypocrisy). To illustrate the true nature of The Muslim Brotherhood, one of The Brotherhood's executives, Abu Mahfuz, contrasted his own lifestyle with that of regime-sponsored 'ulama' in Saudi Arabia:

> We as Muslim Brothers provide an example to the people [of an honest and modest way of life]. I myself live in Zarqa among the [ordinary] people in a two room apartment. I have no telephone in my house, no satellite TV and no car. I use the bus when I go to my job in Amman. That's why the people accept me as one of them. Compare this to the attitude of 'ulama' close to the regime in Arab countries, such as Saudi Arabia. They live comfortable lives, are alienated from the rest of the people, yet they tell them what is halal [religiously sanctioned] and what is *haram* [religiously forbidden]. They are hypocrites!"[51]

Another target of the Islamists is the practice of wastah (favoritism/nepotism) that prevails within the Kingdom's state apparatus. The Islamists morally condemn the greed of many civil servants as well as the bureaucratic hierarchy that stifles any interest in genuinely serving Jordan's citizens. They contrast this with the Islamic voluntary associations' efforts of service on the basis of following one's "inner voice and conscience." Government officials, according to Abu Mahfuz, "get their salaries from a hierarchic government institution and do everything solely to satisfy their superiors. The people of the associations, however, work with an awareness of the afterlife in their minds."[52] Likewise, Atef Julani, chief editor of the Islamist Al-Sabeel weekly states: "government officials are often working too much out of official tasks and orders, and do their jobs mainly for the sake of their own salaries, while people from the private associations work out of their heart, their inner conviction to serve the poor and the common interest. This makes them more effective. They don't work for their own interests, for what they get in return, but for God."[53] According to ICCS president Qandil Shakir, Islamic societies "are really working from their hearts, from a motivation from inside. They don't work out of a formal duty to follow (bureaucratic) rules and regulations."[54]

In terms of socio-economic systems, Jordanian Islamist social activists regard capitalism as well as communism as unjust. The treasurer of the Al-Urwa Al-Wuthqa Welfare Association in Amman, that was founded at the beginning of the 1960s by Muslim Brotherhood figures, stresses that it rejects, on the basis of Qur'an and Hadith:

> the capitalist as well as of the communist societal model. In a capitalist society, you have social classes and a hierarchy between the better-off and the needy, while in an Islamic society everybody is equal regardless of what he owns. Communism is to be rejected as well, because it wants to abolish private property. Islam defends private property, but stipulates that it has to be used for the sake of general welfare.[55]

Islamism is especially opposed to neo-liberal versions of capitalism imposed on the Muslim and Arab worlds by Western-dominated international institutions like the IMF and the World Bank. What sort of socio-economic system do Islamists and their NGOs then propagate? What are their positions on the role of the public sector, the private sector and the civil society in the ideally envisioned Islamic socio-economic order?

In spite of the Islamists' description of Islam as a perfectly just system, I have not come across any elaborate and coherent visions on this topic among them. Rather, only the most general statements were given indicating a preference for a third way between socialism and capitalism, and for the need for complementary and harmonious relationships between all the actors within the state, the market and the civil society in order to make a prosperous and just Islamic society possible. In a regional, national as well as global sense, the need for economic redistribution from the rich in favor of the poor is emphasized. Likewise, the need for economic self-reliance and unity in the Arab and Muslim worlds and for there to be an economic exchange between the Western and the Muslim world is well appreciated. The Muslim Brotherhood executive and general manager of Al-Sabeel weekly, Al-Mahfuz, states that Muslims believe in the same political values as Western societies. Such values include democracy, pluralism, human rights and freedoms, women's rights, peace and the market economy. At the same time, he emphasizes that an Islamic economic policy entails a quasi socialist redistribution of wealth and socio-economic opportunities through the implementation of the practice and principles of zakah and sadaqah.[56] He also suggested to me that Jordanian Islamists in general disliked the capitalist pursuit of financial gain, in particular that of riba' (interest).[57]

In response to a question about his view on the type of social welfare systems to be found in countries like The Netherlands, Germany and Sweden, IAF leader Arabiyyat stated simply: "what is good is good." By this remark, he suggested that Islam is open to any concept, practice or system in the world that accords with its own ethical principles. Asked about his view on the respective roles of state and civil society institutions in the alleviation of poverty and social development, his answer was that both are needed and should complement one another. By way of illustration, he explained that a decent hospital that is open to the public needs the state for the provision of the right infrastructure and a clean environment, but the efforts of morally motivated volunteers are needed as well. "The IAF wants to enable and encourage people to improve their own situation as well as to help others," he concluded.[58] According to workers of the ICCS center in Al-Baqa'a refugee-camp, a just Islamic society depends on the believers' willingness to help and support one another. The latter should not depend for everything on the government. An Islamic government, they say, will distribute zakah among the poor, the orphans, the widows, the travelers and the *mujahidin* (military fighters in the cause of Islam). Muslim citizens, meanwhile, will engage in sadaqah of all possible kinds.[59]

Views of this kind suggest that the perfectly just Islamic society cannot simply be organized by the state from the top down, and that a profound moral commitment to the welfare of the society by all believers is needed. Such ideological understandings attribute supreme status to a religiously defined socio-cultural lifeworld or civil society in any truly Islamic society, and consider the role of the state as an important facilitator, but also as limited in its (moral) scope.

Members of Islamist NGOs may have their criticisms about the way government institutions function in the realm of social welfare.[60] At the same time, however, they realize perfectly well that they owe their own space in civil society to this very malfunctioning of government institutions, since they provide the needy as well as the middle class with an alternative, possibly less bureaucratic and less corrupt, system of services. Hence, they do everything possible to protect and defend this space.[61] On the level of religious discourse, we see once again that the perfect Islamic system so much lauded and praised by Islamists boils down to a moral and ethical system of injunctions, responsibilities and duties pertaining to honesty, integrity, accountability, justice and fairness. Every individual believer must fully adhere to it in all spheres of life, including the (civil) society, the state and the market. In other words, all of these spheres have to be moralized and Islamized. Yet, when it comes to the structural and institutional setup within, and among these different spheres, we do not find anything like a coherent and elaborate theory of a caliber like those developed by world-famous economic thinkers such as Adam Smith, Karl Marx, John Maynard Keynes, Kenneth Galbraith or Milton Friedman. Particular socio-economic systems may be borrowed, adopted and adapted from any corner of the world deemed to be in agreement with the ethical injunctions of Islam.

Outsider's Discourse on the Islamist NGOs

The highly value-laden and moralizing social discourse of the Islamists and their NGOs in Jordan raises certain expectations among the Jordanian public pertaining to their actual practices. Those practices are rarely as pure as the social and ethical ideals by themselves, however. Jordanian views from outside The Muslim Brotherhood Islamist movement on the Islamist NGOs and their practices range from respect for the Islamists' apparently lofty ethical code and sincere attempts to alleviate the suffering of the needy to expressions of hostility and accusations of hypocrisy. The following paragraphs place the Islamists' social discourse and description of their aims (as described above) within the wider perspective of Jordanian opinions on the Islamists. The focus will be on Jordanian outsiders of a well-educated background. My respondents included social scientists, political activists and members and workers of other voluntary welfare associations.

Sympathizers

Some Jordanian scholars belong to the more positive evaluators of the role and the function of Islamist NGOs. They emphasize the religiously grounded moral motivations of the members and the workers of these associations, and suggest that such motivations make their work more efficient and less susceptible to corruption. Political scientist Sami al-Khazendar has carried out research into the social networks of Islamists, including their social welfare NGOs, to find out how these relate to their political activities. Though considering himself as neither sympathizer with, nor opponent of, the Islamist movement, al-Khazendar's assessments are generally positive. His main observation is that, unlike his previous assumptions, workers and members of Islamist NGOs are not primarily motivated by considerations of political gain.

Al-Khazendar's findings suggest that Islamist NGOs distinguish themselves from others in their informal approach to spiritual care. In addition to financial and material aid, they provide their needy clients with solace and moral support. They do so by pointing to the potential of divine reward in the afterlife and by stressing that the Prophet Muhammad had once been a poor man and an orphan. According to al-Khazendar, this approach makes the needy clients more patient, yet not necessarily more passive. On the contrary, Islamist NGOs also encourage the poor to be economically active and to find jobs.[62]

Al-Khazendar does not deny that the Islamists' social activities have an important political function. His findings confirm that the "selfless" efforts of Islamist NGO members or workers help Islamists to gain votes. Such voters like to give something in return to their benefactors, and see this as a way to help secure the continued existence of the services in question. In general, al-Khazendar contends, the poor do not see a connection between political ideology and activism on the one hand and charity on the other. They simply consider themselves to be entitled to the Islamist NGOs' social services given their own disadvantageous socio-economic situation.[63]

Al-Khazendar maintains that the Islamist NGOs' strong and religiously motivated resolve in social work compensates for their political impotence vis-à-vis the state. While the services of government institutions are plagued by bureaucratic red tape, corruption and self-serving officials, Islamist welfare associations are inspired by a sincere enthusiasm and a high morale.[64]

In addition to the positive religious and moral aspects of their work, there are, according to cultural anthropologist Muhammad Tarawneh, strong organizational structures within Islamist NGOs that entail an effective system of internal monitoring. Likewise, he notes the role of local social networks as an important explanation for the Islamist NGOs' dedication to activities relating to the alleviation of poverty, and for the relative absence of corruption among them. According to his observations, it is often relatives, friends and/or neighbors who work together in such NGOs. These people are closely acquainted with one another and are often part of the wider social network encompassing the local community in which they work. The great measure of social control within these local communities makes sure that corrupt practices within these NGOs are strongly discouraged.[65]

The American social scientist Robert Putnam distinguishes between two different kinds of social capital: those of a bonding and those of a bridging nature. Bonding social capital is limited to the members of a certain identity group based upon tribe, religion, political conviction, class, ethnic origin or anything else, and excludes outsiders. Bridging social capital, in contrast, is open to people across such divides.[66] Tarawneh himself states that, in principle, the Islamist NGOs provide aid to all the needy regardless of religious background or practice – thus are both bridging and bonding. At the same time, he does not rule the possibility out that in actual practice, NGO workers do discriminate on the basis of criteria of "religious bonding."[67]

A more defensive approach regarding the Islamist NGOs was expressed to me by functionaries of the GUVS. Among its largest member organizations are Islamist NGOs. These functionaries regard religious convictions and discourse among NGOs as relevant only in terms of motivation and conduciveness to cohesion and cooperation among their members. They deny any impact on the NGOs' services and argue that they should only be judged on the basis of the quality of those services.[68] The Union's head, al-Khatib, who considers himself a pious Muslim though not an Islamist, questions the very concept of Islamist or Islamic NGOs. According to him, it is wrong to see NGOs like the ICCS and Al-'Afaf Society as extensions of The Muslim Brotherhood movement. They are first and foremost voluntary welfare associations like any other. Furthermore, he stresses that there is nothing special about their religious discourse, since religious aims – such as closing the gap between the rich and the poor, and the right of the poor to share in the wealth of the rich – underpin the ideology of all voluntary welfare associations in Jordan. Khatib tried to convince me that the principle of non-discrimination in terms of services and membership is not merely an official stipulation, but actual practice followed by the NGOs. In this regard, he mentioned to me the presence of Christians among the donors of Al-'Afaf Welfare Association's mass-weddings, as well as the "good work" of the ICCS-run Islamic Hospital in Amman and its Fund for Poor Patients. He does not believe, however, that practices related to da'wah play a major role in the activities of NGOs established by Islamists. He expressed to me his fear of NGOs being stigmatized by the Islamist label in the post 9/11 2001 context.[69]

The observation that the religiously motivated social endeavors of members and workers of Islamist NGOs enjoy wide respect and sympathy among the Jordanian public seems justified. Indeed, this is even true among people who do not feel attracted to Islamism as a political movement. One teacher at a training institute for social work at Jordan University told me that he did not feel any real affinity with any of the existing political groups and currents in Jordan, including the Islamists. Yet, he added that he appreciated the social work of Muslim Brotherhood-initiated NGOs and assumed that the dedication to religious goals and principles and the accompanying self-sacrifice made their work more effective.[70]

Neutral Views

Several of the human rights and civil rights activists, as well as academic experts in Jordanian civil society affairs, with whom I spoke, observed that many Jordanian citizens assume that religiously inspired groups work in an honest fashion and will not engage in financial fraud. This makes these citizens more inclined to donate money or other things to these groups in particular. In terms of the Islamist NGOs' political role, they affirm that candidates of the Islamic Action Front Party make use of the trust these NGOs generate in order to gain votes during their election campaigns. They put this into perspective, however, by stressing that this also applies to non-Islamist candidates: anybody known in his or her local community for his or her efforts to promote the well-being of the community, to protect the poor and the rights of Jordan's citizens has a better chance of getting elected than those without this reputation. Thus, not surprisingly, all use their social networks to that end.[71]

Political scientist Abu Ruman of the Al-Urdun Al-Jadid Research Center ascribes one specifically Islamist function to the Islamist NGOs: their role in The Muslim Brotherhood's strategy of the Islamization of Jordanian society. By implementing this grand strategy, The Brotherhood hopes to prepare the soil, eventually, for the creation of a "truly Islamic" government. By providing their social services, Islamist NGOs create, maintain and foster a social network of sympathizers, Abu Ruman stresses. An association such as Al-'Afaf Society, for instance, attracts prospective married couples who, to a greater or lesser extent, are drawn to the Islamist ideology and to the pious forms of lifestyle propagated by this association. Indeed, people who are employed by Islamist NGOs, and are therefore working with them on a daily basis, are increasingly likely to join Islamist circles. The same may apply to the needy recipients of the Islamist NGOs' services. This may affect their voting behavior during election time.[72]

According to press freedom activist Nidal Mansur, director of the Center for the Defense of the Freedom of Journalists and a secular liberal in his political orientation, social work is a convenient channel for political propaganda, because it generates all kinds of social networks through which political messages can be transmitted. Needy applicants for aid from Islamist social or medical institutions, for instance, may be sent to Islamist leaders to gain exposure to their discourse about the "better Islamic society and state." ICCS centers for orphans and the poor can utilize the goodwill they generate to disseminate political propaganda in areas in which they are working. Since, due to state repression, they are not able to do this in public, ICCS workers use informal contacts. Female Islamist social workers or Islamist male workers' wives can, for instance, talk to other women in the neighborhood about politics and elections and convince them that the IAF candidates stand for the "right Islamic" policy. Islamist teachers often have personal contacts with the families of their school-pupils, which they can also utilize for the sake of political propaganda.[73]

Hostile Views

Other secular-oriented scholars and activists view Islamist NGOs view in a much more negative light. Based upon the findings of this research, I would distinguish two different themes in their criticism: the theme of exclusivity, with its implications of discrimination and intolerance, and that of moral hypocrisy. A scholar like the sociologist Musa Shteiwi detects the existence of both themes in the political objectives that he ascribes to the Islamist NGOs. Hence, he is extremely skeptical about all claims that actions have been based upon a sense of social solidarity and/or responsibility for the common good. Rather, he is convinced that their purpose is mainly to build up and maintain a political following for the Islamist movement.[74] Shteiwi is also convinced that these associations are guided by an attitude of religious exclusivity toward their target groups. They certainly help only Muslims, he asserts, and are also disinclined to help any non-observant Muslim. If they do help others, it must be for aims of da'wah, conversion and political mobilization.[75]

Several secular Jordanian activists working in the realm of human rights, women's rights and/or social welfare regard the Islamists and their NGOs as a threat and as opponents of the changes they themselves advocate. With regret, they often note that the Islamist movement has come to dominate much of Jordanian civil society by infiltrating so many of the existing societal institutions, and through the spread of these voluntary associations. By so doing, they maintain, the Islamists have cultivated a close relationship with a large part of the Jordanian population, in particular the underprivileged and deprived. Likewise, human rights activist Sa'ida al-Kilani attributes the Islamist NGOs' success to their sources of income, such as the Islamic hospital in Amman, schools and Islamic banks, donors from other Arab and Muslim countries as well as to the wide social networks they have managed to build up. These networks, she states, provide them with a vast pool of support and cooperation on the basis of wastah mechanisms. She and like-minded activists view the activities of Islamist NGOs as manipulative and reactionary in nature, describe their *da'wah* activities as a "catastrophe," and lament that secular progressive forces, such as the women's movement, have not developed the same capability as the Islamists to reach the underprivileged masses through consciousness-raising efforts.[76] Some of these activists mention divine punishment and hellfire as means of pressuring people to adopt a religious life style, including the performance of rituals and the wearing of Islamic dress.[77]

Members and workers of voluntary welfare associations who carry out activities similar to those of the Islamist NGOs, but who strongly disagree with the Islamist movement's program of "Islamization", for political or religious reasons, have their own grudges against them. Due to the sensitivity of the topic, I will refer to them anonymously. Representative figures of a Greek Orthodox welfare association, for instance, look at Islamist NGOs in the perspective of the general relationship between Muslims and Christians in Jordan. They describe this majority-minority relationship as one that is too often characterized by unease and mistrust. They note positive relationships with "good Muslims," who are open toward the local Christian community and the West and treat people regardless of their faith. They stress, however, that a great many other Muslims are suspicious of the Christians and consider them as a potential fifth column in the service of the policies of Israel and the United States. They mention moments of Muslim hostility toward Christians that have, in the past, led to bombing attacks by "fanatics" against Churches and liquor stores. These representatives also classified Muslim Brothers among these fanatics. One of them stated:

> Thank God, the security forces have foiled [most of] these attacks; the Christians are protected very well by the Hashemite royal family. Look what has happened to Christians in other Arab countries, such as Egypt, or Algeria where monks have been slaughtered. We are fortunate here in Jordan, but without the protection and the support of the Hashemite family, the Christians wouldn't enjoy this degree of security here."

This association has only Christians among its donors, although not all of them are Orthodox. It does not approach Muslims for donations. "We know how they would respond if we asked them for donations," the Association's president told me. "Maybe they would give something, but they wouldn't do it from their hearts." When I spoke to them about the social services of Islamist NGOs, the Orthodox Association's representatives made a dismissive gesture with their hands. "They only help Muslims," they asserted. "Christians never benefit from them." By way of contrast, they proudly indicated the inclusion of two Muslim families on their own list of beneficiaries. And there was no mistaking a sense of Christian superiority when I informed them that the Muslim Al-'Aqsa Welfare Association in Madaba, a small town to the southwest of Amman, had, like they were planning to do, established a social club for the elderly. Their reaction was initially one of surprise. Thereafter, they dismissed the project as unlikely to be of any significance: "well, we can very well imagine how these Muslims are doing this. Surely, they don't offer all the services to old people that we offer. They are probably just drinking coffee there!"[78]

Equally dismissive of the Islamists are some members of liberal Muslim NGOs. These accuse Islamist NGOs of hypocrisy, exclusivism and of exploiting the aid relationship with the needy. In the words of the president of one of these liberal NGOs:

> In fact, the ICCS centers are blackmailing the needy, because they withhold the aid from them if they refuse to participate in their (religious) programs. And this is wrong, it is abusing the needs of people, like prostitution… the ICCS centers are stuffing the orphans and their families full with a biased religious program.

According to him, the distinction in religious approach between his own society and that of the ICCS is that, for the latter, religion serves as a totalizing and politicized ideology. This, he insists, is reflected in their approach toward their clients. In the case of the former, however, religion is merely one important element in a diversified social and cultural program that focuses on the empowerment of the needy.[79] He claims that ICCS centers for orphans and poor are oriented toward political and religious indoctrination and patronization of their clients, and reinforce their state of dependency.[80]

Workers of this Society used to have discussions with their counterparts at an ICCS center on the coordination of aid to their respective clients. They reported that, during those discussions, the executives of the ICCS center wanted to use aid in order to push the orphans to participate in their Qur'anic lessons (as well as other religious activities), and generally to adopt a more religious lifestyle. They also alleged that the center abuses images of the afterlife, paradise and hell to cajole and threaten clients into following their doctrine. Female clients, for instance, would be pressured to adopt the Islamic dress.[81] Basing themselves on the information from some of their own Society's clients who had also received support from the ICCS center, they also mentioned that ICCS clients were told to vote for Islamist candidates in the elections for parliament or for the municipality.[82] The ICCS would even use its aid-relationship with their clients to summon them to demonstrations organized by the IAF in order, for example, to protest against the US occupation of Iraq or in support of the Palestinian Intifada. One of them expressed the opinion that the ICCS line of policy "is not Islamic at all," because of its lack of religious and moral sincerity and the exploitation of the needs of others for the sake of political gain, influence and power.[83]

Such critics do sometimes distinguish between the motives of the leadership of ICCS and The Muslim Brotherhood on the one hand and that of ordinary workers in the ICCS centers on the other. They often describe the latter, on the basis of their own experience, as people mainly motivated by the need to make a living for their families as well as by the desire to help needy members of their own community.[84] "One has to distinguish between the ordinary ICCS workers, people belonging to the middle ranks and the top functionaries," stressed the president of the abovementioned Society. In his view, there are among the ICCS workers a significant number of people who are sincerely committed to helping the needy. His own Society has been able to cooperate well with such people.[85]

Islamist Social Work: a Genuine Social Endeavor or an Instrument of Political Hegemony?

What may be derived from the statements and views of the Jordanian outsiders on the Islamist movement is the importance they attach to the role of religious faith and discourse in Islamist voluntary welfare associations. Only their evaluation of this role is different. While the more positive commentators see a positive relationship between these NGOs' religious faith and discourse and values of social solidarity, cooperative action, compassion and care, the more hostile critics suggest that their religious discourse is merely a cover for very worldly aims of power, domination and wealth cherished by the Islamist leadership.

Religious discourse as employed by Islamist NGOs obviously serves to mobilize (middle class) people and resources as well as to reach needy clients. Does this mean that Islamist NGOs are mere instruments of the Islamist movement at large to serve its hegemonic political aims and that they cannot, therefore, be considered as genuine social and charitable initiatives? Closely related to this question is another: are Islamist NGOs religiously and politically manipulative, even coercive toward their clients, as some of their critics maintain? This in turn prompts us to inquire how exclusivist Islamist NGOs are in their approach toward clients.

Studies of Islamist welfare services and grassroots activities in Lebanon and in Palestine suggest that a more inclusive and nondiscriminatory approach toward clients has turned out to be much more beneficial for the public reputation and therefore the long-term political interests of the movements connected to them. Joseph Al-Agha, expert on the Lebanese Hezbullah movement, writes that the latter has built a network of infrastructure, civil institutions and social welfare in order to broaden its support base among the masses. These services are not only confined to Shiʻites or Muslims; numerous Christians of various denominations benefit from them too. According to the American scholar August Richard Norton, Hezbullah has "high quality social and health services, which have a reputation for being corruption free and nondiscriminatory."[86] No wonder that Hezbullah has managed to gain electoral support even among certain Christian communities in Lebanon. Likewise, the International Crisis Group (ICG) mentions in its report on Islamist social welfare activism in the occupied Palestinian territories that UN officials in the Gaza Strip confirmed that "Islamic social welfare organizations refrain from demanding allegiance to Hamas as a condition quid pro quo for services."[87] The ICG writes further:

> Hamas seeks to derive prestige and political profit from social welfare activism precisely by maintaining the professionalism and integrity of such institutions rather than politicizing them. It appears to understand better than others that if schools and medical clinics developed a reputation as recruitment centers, and services were provided in exchange for support, the crown jewels of the Islamist movement would be irretrievably debased in exchange for short-term gains of dubious value.[88]

These examples suggest that Jordanian Islamist NGOs would pay the Islamist movement no great service by telling clients to support the Islamic Action Front as a condition to receiving aid. Given the popularity they have gained over recent decades, it seems, generally speaking, more plausible to assume that the Islamist approach toward the political influencing of clients – as well as the wider public – through voluntary welfare associations has been of a more sympathetic, subtle and gradual nature. As Abu Ruman and other observers of Jordanian civil society and Islamist movement observe: the Jordanian Islamists exert mild pressure by building up social networks through the provision of social services and jobs. For the sake of public reputation, the Jordanian Islamists need to preserve the image of incorruptibility, impartiality and a non-discriminatory nature of their social services, an image that representatives of the Jordanian Islamist Movement try very hard to convey.[89]

Observations like these should not distract us from a reality in which favoritism and nepotism seem to be practiced within Islamist NGOs. This invariably occurs along religious and political lines. Raif Nijm, an architect who used to supervise the construction of the Islamic Hospital in Amman, head of the latter's Fund for the Poor and the Sick and ICCS member, observes that the prevailing mentality within ICCS centers is to prioritise clients known to be involved within the Islamist movement whenever special forms of aid need are allocated (for instance in the field of employment, education or training). Those clients who are politically non-involved, but at least have a reputation for being pious and observant Muslims are second choice; while non-observant Muslims come next; and non-Muslims barely get a look-in.[90]

This criticism, as well as those from several of the non-Islamist observers and analysts mentioned above, suggests that the mainstream Islamist movement in Jordan has developed its own subculture, distinct in values and lifestyle from many other circles in Jordanian society – the Islamist populist claims of representing "the authentic culture and interests of the people" notwithstanding. Examples of conflicts between Islamist normative socio-cultural demands and the preferences of other Jordanians, for instance regarding gender segregation or the consumption of alcohol, have already been mentioned in Chapter 2. For a further illustration consider the fact that, in spite of the protests by IAF parliamentarians against the "wasteful and immoral undertaking" of the pan-Arab song festival Superstar, in which Jordanian singer Diana Karazon was the celebrated winner in 2003, 75 % of Jordanian households are estimated to have watched the event on TV. Even many Islamists are aware that focusing on such kind of socio-cultural Puritanism does not enhance the Islamist movement's standing in public.[91] Rather the opposite: populist Islamist claiming to represent "true" Islam and "true Arab cultural authenticity" only antagonize other sections of Jordan's public already irked by the formers' Islamization of the public sphere. Many remain apprehensive about the usage of religious discourse by a movement for the sake of hegemonic political aims.

This phenomenon can be situated in terms of class. To be specific, the Jordanian Islamist movement, as Janine Clark states, focuses primarily on winning the sympathy and support of the relatively well-educated Jordanian middle class. This endeavor has undeniably been successful but also faces certain limits. Such limits are due to the fact that this middle class is deeply divided in terms of political orientation as well as social and cultural preferences. (Middle class) opponents of the comprehensive Islamization project as advocated by the Islamists, especially when they are civil society or social welfare activists themselves, are resentful of the Islamists' and Islamist NGOs' success in reaching the lower classes with their religious discourse. In other words, the abovementioned cultural battle implies even a (middle class) struggle for ideological and discursive hegemony over the lower classes and their socio-cultural lifeworld.

This struggle certainly contributes to patterns of bonding and exclusivity in the Islamist NGOs' social practice, pertaining to potential members as well as to prospective clients. Such practices are not an officially stated policy on the part of the ICCS or other Islamist NGOs, however. Indeed, it could not be so, given the stipulations in Jordanian legislation forbidding such discrimination. And it is most probably not carried out in a uniform fashion in terms of degree and nature by these NGOs or by their workers. According to the experiences of members of a non-Islamist association, like Al-Faruq Society in Irbid, openness toward and readiness to cooperate with outsiders "differs from ICCS center to ICCS center, and from ICCS worker to ICCS worker."[92]

To conclude: sincerity in social and charitable work and Islamist aims of sociopolitical hegemony are not, of themselves, mutually exclusive. Islamist NGOs could not have become so successful nor enjoy such strong relationships with significant parts of the communities if their activities had not been carried out by members and workers known to be sincerely motivated by a spirit of empathy, care and compassion for the needy. Such qualities ensure that these members are deeply respected by, and embedded within, the local community with all its many social networks. It is, however, just because of this sincere social enthusiasm, religious drive and local embeddedness that the NGOs have been so beneficial to the aims of the Islamist movement by influencing and dominating a significant part of Jordanian public opinion and civil society. As Jonathan Benthall and Steve Feierman note, caring and dominion are not necessarily opposed to one another – rather, in certain contexts, they sit very comfortably side by side.[93]

9. Politically Unaffiliated and Conservative Muslim NGOs

The main difference between the category of Muslim NGOs analyzed in this chapter and the Islamist ones is that the former have apparently few (if any) links with the founders and present members of the Islamist movement. Therefore, they cannot be considered part of any direct effort to implement the programs or strategies of an expressly political movement, such as The Muslim Brotherhood, which seeks the comprehensive Islamization of society. It has to be kept in mind that, in a strictly formal and technical sense, no recognized voluntary welfare association in Jordan, not even the ICCS, is affiliated to The Muslim Brotherhood or, for that matter, to any other political or religious movement. Looking at the overlap in membership and/or leadership between such associations and the Islamist movement and its social networks is the only way to find evidence of these links. Here, individual figures carry importance, not explicitly formulated official structures. In this regard, Waleed Hammad, researcher at the Al-Urdun Al-Jadid Research Center, observes:

> Even when these Islamic movements and groups exercise actual influence over these charitable, social and voluntary societies, the latter are still independent from the Islamic groups because they enjoy an independent legal entity. In fact, the degree of influence these Islamic groups can exercise on the societies depends on the personal role of the leaders of these Islamic groups in running these societies.[1]

Often, the difficulty lies in determining whether or not there is such a degree of personal overlap that an NGO should be seen as part of the Islamist movement. My own fieldwork experiences lead me to agree with Hammad's methodological observation that this difficulty derives from the (political) sensitivity of the matter as well as from obstacles the researcher faces in obtaining detailed personal information about members, which is a sensitive matter as well.[2] It has to be noted in this regard that due to the state of political repression in Jordan, political convictions and certainly active political involvement of people are often considered to be private, intimate and even "taboo" subjects in the context of welfare NGOs. The fact that personal overlap between voluntary associations and the Islamist movement is a diffuse matter, and exists to a greater or lesser degree from one association to another, implies that a clear-cut line of demarcation between Islamist and non-Islamist NGOs may not be drawn. The International Crisis Group (ICG) has written something similar about Muslim NGOs in Palestine:

> Because Islamic social welfare organizations are formally independent entities, their political affiliations are not immediately apparent. Some are politically as well as legally independent. Others are affiliated with a political entity, such as Hamas, Fatah or the PA itself. Affiliation, in turn, is often a matter of degree.[3]

The Islamic Welfare Society of Salt

This "matter of degree" may give rise to bewilderment in the case of some Muslim NGOs. The Islamic Welfare Society in Salt, a relatively old city situated between Amman and the Jordan valley, is a case in point. This association engages in various activities, including charitable aid for the needy, but focuses mainly on programs of (Islamic) education and da'wah. When I mentioned this NGO to a local inhabitant of Salt who espoused atheist and leftist convictions, he responded: "do you know that this association is affiliated to The Muslim Brotherhood movement?"[4] This is not the way the members of this association itself like to present themselves to outsiders. Months before, when I asked the general manager of this association, Muhammad Shawmali, the question about a possible affiliation with a movement like The Muslim Brotherhood, his answer was that the latter is mainly politically oriented, and that this is not the approach of the association. In the past, he stated, The Muslim Brotherhood used to be more engaged with purely religious activities, but at present, when one listens to sermons of Imams from that movement, one notices that they are "almost always about politics." The general manager did not fail to mention that Jordanian authorities strictly forbid political activities by voluntary welfare associations.[5] He did concede that the association had a Muslim Brotherhood member among its administrators, but added that he found him "a little bit extreme."[6] Shawmali certainly may not be considered an adversary of The Muslim Brotherhood movement as a whole. Rather, he emphasized that The Brotherhood knows relatively moderate as well as more radical figures, that it enjoys a good relationship with the government and that it abstains from the use of any violence.[7] Mentioning "unfair" accusations emanating from the West, he also seemed mildly defensive about Islamism in general. He as well as the chief voluntary worker at the association were convinced, for instance, that the massacres committed in the 1990's in Algeria by militants (mainly of the GIA) were not the work of Islamists but of other forces, since "Islamists don't do such things" (i.e. attack and kill innocent people).[8]

Members of this association also share the idea, so often espoused by Islamists, of a global conspiracy against Islam. According to this, the United States and "the Jews" have joined forces to launch their offensive against the 'ummah. Like the Muslim Brothers, Shawmali is convinced that "it is Islam that gives the Muslims and the Arabs their strength." "Before the advent of Islam", he asserted

> The Arabs were still weak and divided, and were battling one another. Islam united them, and enabled them to establish a flourishing empire and civilization. Strong and flourishing Islamic empires have existed, up to the Ottoman Empire. But this empire was destroyed and cut into pieces.[9]

He was clearly of the opinion that a worldwide plot is responsible for this state of affairs, a plot in which the Jews play a predominant role:

> The Jews are controlling the media in the United States and elsewhere, they spread lies and convey the false image of Israel as an innocent underdog that is threatened by the Arab countries and therefore deserves support… The Jews have always played a negative role, they have always been known for their lies and their deceptions, also in Europe. They have killed many prophets who are also the prophets of the Christians. Naturally, the Christians of Europe have always despised the Jews… everything that is Islamic is against Israel, that is why they [the Jews] are determined to make Islam vanish from the earth. Muslims fall prey to persecution in various places of the World: they have been slaughtered in Bosnia, in Chechnya, in Kashmir and so on.[10]

Arabs and Muslim, according to Shawmali, are "targeted and threatened by a hostile campaign and are denied their rights." They are deceived and deprived of their rights by the Americans, the Jews and the world media as well as by their own regimes. The West, in particular the United States and Israel, try to eliminate every truly independent Muslim regime. That is why the Americans have used their military to push Iraq back into a state of bondage, he made clear. He even stated that the worldwide campaign against Islam takes place in Jordan itself. He voiced the rumor that Britons were at work at Jordan's Ministry of Education to scrutinize the religious curriculum at Jordan's public schools. These foreign inspectors allegedly order the omission of any reference to politically laden Islamic terms, such as jihad, and leave only politically uncontroversial matters, like those pertaining to ritual obligations, in the curriculum.[11]

The present state of Islam in Jordan, in Shawmali's view, has grown so weak that many people are just nominal Muslims and do not practice their religion in any concrete sense. Islamic social trends have even been made suspicious in the country. Many Jordanian parents, he told me, are reluctant to send their children to Islamic centers and educational institutions out of fear that they may get involved in the Islamist movement or even in terrorism and face trouble with the authorities.[12] Such politico-religious discourse makes one almost think that the Islamic Welfare Society of Salt is an Islamist association. It should not be forgotten, however, that conceptions and conspiracy theories like these are by no means limited to the Islamist movement. They are widespread in Jordanian society and give expression to a real sense of anger, frustration, helplessness and vulnerability, no matter how fallacious, dangerous and anti-Semitic such perceptions may be. I have heard a very similar discourse on the Jews and their role in anti-Arab conspiracies among Christian Jordanians who were supporters of the pro-Saddam Hussein Jordanian Arab Socialist Ba'ath Party.

The Society's Religious and Social Origin

What distinguishes the leadership of this conservative Muslim association from that of the Islamist associations mentioned in the previous chapter is its traditional religious background. The leaders of Islamist NGOs are generally urban middle class professionals, such as educators, doctors or engineers that are often active, to a greater or a lesser degree, in The Muslim Brotherhood-dominated Islamist movement. Ostensibly, the main founder of the Islamic Welfare Association of Salt (also the grandfather of the general manager) is not an Islamist activist, however. He used to be a state-employed mufti in the city of Salt. In this capacity, he provided fatawa (religious edicts) as answers to questions of people pertaining to their daily social lives. As a mufti, he used to play an authoritative social role in the local community of Salt: he concluded marriages, served as a mediator in local disputes and made efforts to prevent them from turning into blood feuds; he was also headmaster of a secondary school and aided, financially and in kind, the poor and needy. His brother served as a *qadi* (Islamic judge) in the state-run shari'ah court of Salt. Their family belongs to a long lineage of state-employed religious scholars and jurists going back to Ottoman times. The general manager did not fail to stress the good relationship his grandfather enjoyed with the late King Hussein.[13] Apparently, it was the traditional religious and social prestige he enjoyed in the local community of Salt that enabled him to gather representatives of the various tribes and clans there to establish the Islamic Welfare Society, and not the backing of a political movement.[14]

Traditions of Shari'ah and Fiqh

During my conversations with Shawmali, he repeatedly emphasized the importance of the Islamic scholarly traditions of shari'ah and fiqh that his grandfather and ancestors used to represent. Indeed, he glorified this tradition, repeatedly mentioning that the true Islamic scholars of past ages, including his grandfather, used to spend up to forty years studying the traditional Islamic sciences. He lamented that modernization and secularization of Jordanian and Arab societies had brought the marginalization of this tradition. "In the past," he maintained:

> children used to learn to memorize all of the Qur'an but at present, they learn in the public schools to memorize only two pages a year. In Islamic schools such as those belonging to Dar al-Arqam [the ICCS-run chain of kindergartens, primary and secondary schools], this might be a bit more, like five pages, which is still not much. And at present, unlike in the past, you are already recognized as a sheikh once you have completed your four year shari'ah program at the university as a student.

Interestingly, he rejects the Islamist assertion that only the original sources of Qur'an and Hadith really matter as textual authorities. In contrast, he regarded the Islamic scholarly traditions of the muhadditun (collectors of *ahadith*) and *fuqaha'* (Islamic Jurists) as of immeasurable importance to modern Muslims.[15] On the basis of his religious stance, Shawmali and other members of the association are outspoken opponents of anything that smacks of Wahhabism. They reproach this current, as well as its intellectual predecessors like and Ibn Hanbal (d. 855 CE) and Ibn Taymiyyah (d. 1328

CE), for obliterating all the "valuable theological and legal scholarly work" carried out after the time of the Prophet Muhammad. "They even regard the generation of tabi'un (the generation of believers after the Prophet and his companions) as just ordinary people," Shawmali said with a sense of indignation.[16]

Dry Religion without Spirit

The criticism by the Islamic Welfare Association of Salt's members of Wahhabism as well as of a newer Islamic current with a similar literalist orientation – present day Salafism, pertains not only to views on Islamic intellectual history and authority. They also attack these trends for their religious and moral "dryness" and "hollowness." In the general manager's words:

> They [the Wahhabis and Salafis] read the Qur'an and the Hadith in such a literal fashion that they don't know any flexibility. When a hadith tells us, for instance, that the Prophet Muhammad wore a long white robe, they conclude from this that all Muslims should follow this practice. Islam, however, is a religion meant to be fit for any time and any place. In Jordan, for instance, it is cold in winter. In that season, such kind of clothing is definitely not appropriate…the ideas of currents like those of the Salafis and Wahhabis have made their religious convictions very dry, as just a system of rules and stipulations devoid of any spirit. They put too much emphasis on [physical and outward] form and disregard [spiritual and inward] substance. Spirituality is however of vital importance in observing the rules of Islam. Learning precisely how to perform the *salah* [prayer], for instance, only makes sense if you understand the meaning of it, and if you perform it with your heart and soul. It may never be reduced to a mechanic affair. And this one-sided emphasis on all kinds of literally conceived rules and details may easily lead to intolerance as well. So you have these people who declare everybody who does not think and act exactly as they do a *kafir* (non-believer). As has been expressed by violent groups like al-*Takfir wal-Hijra*…both deviant Sufis on the one hand and Wahhabis and Salafis on the other have superficial views on Islam. But the point is to find a balance: a combination between the rules of the faith on the one hand and spirituality on the other.[17]

Sufism True and False

In Shawmali's view, upholding such a combination is what serious Sufis are doing. These are Islamic mystics who, in his description, "conscientiously follow the 'ibadat, have a deep knowledge of Islam and live a truly moral life." He told me that he had met several of them in Syria and that he deeply respects and admires them.[18] Members of his own family and lineage, including the Society's founder, were and are practicing Sufis of the Naqshbandi order. He himself highly appreciates this order for its cultivation of a sincere surrender to God through practices like dhikr (inwardly and continuously repeating God's name in order to remember his greatness). Through this practice, the believer admits God entirely into his heart so that he will enter Him, as he explained it. True Sufis dedicate their whole inner spirit to God. Asked whether he regarded himself as a Sufi, he answered: "I hope to become one someday."[19] He noted that, in the vicinity of Salt, there is the tomb of the prophet Joshua. It used to be the focus of a practice of saint worship; every year, the people of Salt and its surroundings would gather there to pray for sufficient rain in the winter. The tradition has died out, and Shawmali mentioned with regret the marginalization of Sufism and even its demonization in the modern Jordanian public sphere – many present-day Jordanians regarding Sufism as a "false" form of Islam.[20]

According to Shawmali, false or degenerated forms of Sufism are promoted by so-called sheikhs who are not truly dedicated to God, but think only of themselves. Some, Shawmali says, get rich by asking ignorant people to pay huge sums for their help.[21] Others are interested merely in the prestige that so-called "miracles" (nothing more than tricks) will win them. False Sufi orders, in countries like Egypt and Syria, engage in sinful ecstatic practices like dancing, drinking wine, "sorcery" and even sexual escapades, according to Shawmali. They violate the basic rules of Islam. It is revulsion against such deviant practices (that wrongly claim to be Sufi) that has given rise to the equally erroneous, though intellectually and theologically opposing movements of Wahabism and Salafism. The true Sufi, by contrast, is a deeply devoted, spiritual and modest individual who shuns all forms of egocentrism and (worldly) self-interest.[22] In other words, s/he is the perfect model of someone living fi sabil li-llah, for the sake of God.

Shawmali believes that the kind of sincere and deep faith in (and surrender to) God as is advocated by the Sufis may lead to the ability to perform miracles defying the causal laws of nature. He mentioned in this regard the – Biblical and Qur'anic – reports on miracles performed by Moses and Jesus. He also mentioned instances in the lifetime of the Prophet Muhammad, such as the battle of Khaybar between the early Muslims and the Jews near the city of Medina. In that battle, Ali, cousin and son-in law of the Prophet, reportedly defeated the Jews while carrying a heavy gate as a shield. Another instance related to another of the Prophet's Companions taken as prisoner of war by the kuffar, who drank the poison of a snake without suffering any ill effects. Consequently, his captors became convinced of the truth of Islam. Furthermore, Shawmali mentioned instances from his own life experience, such as that of a religious sheikh who, by reading a certain *'ayah* over a cancer patient brought him to health, thus confounding the medical doctors who had all but given up hope; and of his own grandfather who was once able to open the door to a prayer room with a different key after praying for God's help.[23]

Social Islam

Here again we see a basic point of convergence in religious discourse between the Islamic Welfare Association of Salt and Muslim Brotherhood-affiliated NGOs: the motivational principle of living, acting and working fi sabil li-llah. In social work, not worldly self-interest should be the motivating force, but dedication and service to the divine. This, according to Shawmali, is not simply a matter of following specific rules and stipulations. Rather, it stands for a general attitude in life: the duty to help anybody in trouble or need. Through such a lifestyle, one obtains *'ajr* in the next life. Any religion sanctions this principle, he states, but in secularized societies it has been relegated to the margins. Nonetheless, he is of the opinion that divine reward does not pertain exclusively to the afterlife, but also to the present one. If one treats others well and helps them, he believes, one will be treated well and helped by others in return.[24] The chief volunteer named Abdul Latif, another of the Society's prominent figures, equates working fi sabil li-llah with the selfless motivation to work for the common good in general and the poor and needy in particular. Such social work may be carried out on the basis of a paid job and earning one's own bread, he states, as long as the motivation for the work itself is pure. It may not get mixed up with corrupt practices and selfish interests in enhancing one's own status and public prestige.[25]

According to members of the Society, it is a lifestyle of social solidarity and moral uprightness that originally enabled the Muslim 'ummah to become strong and successful. The 'ummah used to be reigned by a spirit of *'ithar* (mutual love, kindness and self-sacrifice for one another's wellbeing). This spirit resulted in a culture in which social ties, cohesion and cooperation were valued highly.[26] Islam as a belief and a lifestyle was not spread by conquest and force, although the Muslims' military successes created the conditions for its dissemination. Nor was it spread by mere verbal preaching. There is no way to impose the Islamic faith from the outside. It may only come from within, from peoples' inner spirits. It was first and foremost the example of pure moral behavior by the Muslims who had come to the non-Muslims' territories previously taken (or "liberated", in Shawmali's words) by the Muslim armies that inspired the native peoples there to become Muslim. Many of these Muslims were merchants. They acted faithfully in accordance with the religious injunctions to be honest and transparent in all their (commercial) dealings with the local people, asked fair prices and shunned any kind of deceit and fraud. They were just and respected the local peoples' rights.

The Muslim rulers did not oppress their subject-peoples. On the contrary, they implemented a just system in their territories, Shawmali maintains. The *jizyah* (poll tax) that the Muslim rulers demanded from their non-Muslim subjects was a very fair tax, since the proceeds were used to develop services for the whole population. Another example he mentioned was Caliph Umar, who refused to pray in Jerusalem's Church of the Holy Sepulcher. In Shawmali's reading, Umar did so out of respect for the rights and sovereignty of the local Christian community. At present, he laments, the spirit of 'ithar has largely been lost and, if we look at the prevailing hypocrisy, corruption and deceit in the contemporary Arab societies, we should not be surprised that the latter do not serve as models attracting others to Islam, but rather as the opposite.[27]

On the basis of these beliefs, the members of the Society are convinced that the aspect of mu'amalat (social dealings) between the believers, and even between the latter and other humans, deserves the highest priority in Islamic *tarbiyyah* (religious and moral education and training). Indeed, they consider them to be more important in God's eyes than the 'ibadat. Unjust and wrong behavior and disregarding other peoples' rights brings damage to society here and now. It has to be rectified in the present life. If those responsible do not do this, God will not forgive them on judgment day. Non-observance of 'ibadat, on the other hand, may be forgiven for those who sincerely repent this on the last day.[28]

According to the Society's members, a morally pure lifestyle, fi sabil li-llah, is also believed to be an indispensable condition for the engagement in military jihad. The only legitimate motive to engage in jihad is to serve God's Will. The only legitimate targets are those who attack and threaten Islam. In no way may self-interest and selfish instincts interfere in this holy struggle. Shawmali mentioned the example of caliph Umar, who had managed to overpower and disarm a kafir soldier in battle. The latter then spat in Umar's face. Umar was enraged and on the verge of killing him. Despite his wounded pride, he decided not to do it, out of obedience to God's ruling that no captured soldier should be killed. The enemy soldier in question was reportedly so impressed by the caliph's moral attitude that he converted to Islam afterward. Moreover, Shawmali refers to a related Islamic injunction prohibiting the mujahidin from killing any woman, child or old person and to cut trees and damage or plunder property.[29]

The true Islamic society, according to the members, is a just and balanced one. Honesty, harmony and solidarity between believers are vital in the establishment of a true Islamic society. Islamic rules and stipulations are not for their own sake, but in order to safeguard this general social harmony and well-being.[30] This also implies that Muslims are exonerated from observing certain rules if, in a particular context, this does more harm than good to human well-being or health. In the case of a food shortage, for instance, believers may eat pork if they have no other option. The Prophet Muhammad absolved wounded people or the chronically ill from the religious stipulation to ritually purify themselves before prayer, so that the cold water did not exacerbate their condition. Travelers and sick people do not have to fast during the holy month of Ramadan. The same applies to a pregnant woman, who may endanger the survival or health of the embryo in her womb by fasting.[31]

The Islamic Welfare Society of Salt's practical focus is on Islamic da'wah, or the call to the "right Islamic way of life" through its educational programs, rather than on aid to the needy. Its members certainly do subscribe to the principle of solidarity with and care of the poor as a religious aim in itself. Shawmali stresses, however, that social problems endangering the morality and the wellbeing of Muslim society are by no means limited to the needy. As he states:

> Problems with alcohol, drugs and sex are also to be found among the rich. If we take the problem of pornography, we can say that pornographic material is not freely available here in Jordan in the supermarket or the video shop, as it is in Western countries. But it does enter the [Jordanian] living room through the Internet, which can have dangerous consequences for teenagers. They may become oversexed. It may even lead to rape. In a rich neighborhood like Abdoun in Amman, young people experiment a lot with drugs and alcohol. If a boy there returns home in a drunken state, he may go to rape the Sri Lankan maid who is working in the house. This shows that (moral and social) awareness raising and Islamic education is important for all strata of society in order to counter all forms of immorality.[32]

In other words, the Society's members believe that, regardless of their varying socio-economic circumstances, all Muslims are equally in need of learning how to counter threats to the socio-cultural fabric of the Muslim lifeworld. Again, this religious approach (stressing above all else one's social morality) is wholly in agreement with the tone adopted by movements like The Muslim Brotherhood, and in particular with the more flexible and liberal versions of Islamism espoused by thinkers such as Yusuf al-Qaradawi.[33] A point of divergence between the Islamic Welfare Society of Salt and The Brotherhood seems to be the question of political involvement. Even if Shawmali shares much of The Brotherhood's convictions regarding the present, troublesome political and social state of the 'ummah in Jordan and elsewhere, the nature of his response to this state of affairs seems different. While The Muslim Brotherhood translates this concern into an active political involvement, Shawmali expresses an inclination to turn away from politics, out of disgust at its corruption and at his own impotence to change matters. Instead of miring himself in politics, Shawmali prefers to devote all his energy to da'wah-activities of a social and cultural nature.[34] In other words, he seems to advocate a non-political form of Islam. This non-political Islam is self-consciously distinct from the Salafi literalist focus on religious rules and stipulations. Instead, it promotes a spiritual vision of the common good close in spirit to the ideas of some of the more moderate Muslim Brothers. This vision does acknowledge the validity and importance of Islamic shari'ah-based rules, but seeks to contextualize these within a spiritual framework that emphasises the social, including emotional, well-being of every believer and of the 'ummah as a whole.

The Islamic Anwar Al-Huda Welfare Association

The Islamic Anwar Al-Huda Welfare Association in Wadi Sir, an old village to the southwest of Amman that became physically as well as administratively incorporated into the metropolis of the capital during the past decades, is a women's association led by Madiha Kokh, an elderly woman of Circassian origin. Until the beginning of the 1970s, she used to be the head of the secondary school for girls. Afterward, she opened her own primary school and kindergarten. She was also a very active person in the religious, social and charitable life of her local community. Her social involvement apparently gained her enough credit and social capital to be able to establish the abovementioned association in the beginning of the 1980s. She did this together with (female) friends of Circassian, East Bank Jordanian as well as Palestinian origin. The association provides charitable aid to needy members of the community. It also organizes lectures for women on various religious, social and health issues, such as the performance and the meaning of rituals, the marital relationship, the upbringing of children, family planning and how to deal with cancer. The president is not a political activist, and does not see any connection between the work of her association and political movement-driven programs of Islamization, such as those advocated by The Muslim Brotherhood. In her own words, she is "just doing her duty, in obedience to God." This self-evident duty is social solidarity.[35]

Kokh's religious background and education may not be as sophisticated as that of the Islamic Welfare Association of Salt's founder and its general manager. The nature of her religious social discourse, however, boils down to much the same: empathy with others is the key element. She summed up this element in succinct fashion with the following observation:

> A hadith states that when a part of the body is sick, the whole body is. One has to share one another's feelings; one cannot feast when one's neighbor has just died. As a Muslim, one has to help others and share with one another and not to damage or to hurt anyone. The one who prays but hurts other people at the same time can never be a good Muslim."[36]

Needless to say, she is able to mention many examples drawn from the Hadith as well as several Qur'anic 'ayat enjoining believers to treat others well and never to hurt them. Thus, she mentioned, for instance the 'aya that states that anyone who sleeps with a full stomach while his neighbor suffers from hunger will not enter paradise.[37] And the hadith that states that, if one possesses a date, one should share it with the needy. "Selfish people will not be blessed. You must give even the best you have to a needy person," she stressed.[38]

As is the case with the association in Salt, the social discourse of the Islamic Anwar Al-Huda Welfare Association is based on the basic rules of the shari'ah. Kokh mentioned stipulations related to the zakah, which multiplies in value when it is paid during the month of Ramadan, and to sadaqah, which, according to a hadith, has to be paid to ten poor persons by someone who has sworn an oath but failed to keep it.[39] As in the case of the association in Salt, such stipulations are placed in a wider social, moral and emotional framework and not simply put across as a dry list of "do's" and "don't's." Togetherness and social cohesion are of supreme importance. Kokh insists, for instance, that the performance of the salah should preferably take place in a group, since that makes it much more valuable. All Muslims are equal in prayer, regardless of socio-economic status. Likewise, the *'iftar* meals that the Association organizes during Ramadan are meant to create a warm family atmosphere for all those invited. Poor as well as rich women are invited, and a spirit of equality regardless of socio-economic status is meant to be stressed. However, putting ideals into practice is often far from easy. This can be derived from the Kokh's mentioning of the poor woman's "shyness" in an environment of middle class women at such feasts.[40] This doesn't weaken her conviction that all Muslims are equal. She rejects as sinful the idea that voluntary welfare associations may be based on ethnic clustering since Islam absolutely forbids believers to discriminate on the basis of racial origin. Likewise, the idea that differences in class and education could be a hindrance to intimate ties and friendship between people is rejected. "Education," she explains, "consists of someone's life experience and understanding, [and] not on having an official diploma."[41] Islam's egalitarian principles have, according to the associations' members, also an economic bearing: charging rent to debtors is unfair because that brings them into or keeps them in a state of poverty; the needy should, preferably, be enabled to make their own living and improve their own situation. Indeed, the latter is described as better even than worship.[42]

Like other Muslim NGOs, the Islamic Anwar al-Huda Association stresses Islam's approval of the values of honesty and sincerity, and its rejection of falsehood, cheating, fraud and corruption.[43] In this regard, Kokh stated that she didn't regard Jordanian society as a "good Islamic one," due to the spread of immoral practices such as lying, cheating, boundless greed and corruption.[44] Her answer to this state of affairs is a "positive moral approach," in which people are taught how to live in a moral way, called upon to perform good deeds and reminded of the resulting divine reward. She also praises Arab cultural habits relating to social cohesion, neighborliness, ties of friendship and social control. Preachers who are too "tough" in their sermons, sermonizing solely on hell and divine punishment and focusing exclusively on what is forbidden, hold no appeal for her.[45]

The Umar Ibn al-Khattab Association

The Umar Ibn al-Khattab Association in Zarqa, an industrial and Palestinian-dominated working class city to the north east of Amman, encompasses an orphanage for children who lost one or both of their parents. Its current president, Wael al-Taher, is an engineer by profession. In the 1970s, he used to live in Saudi Arabia, working there as director of the Department for Export at the Saudi Ministry of Finance while also running a trading company of building materials. After his return to Jordan, he became increasingly engaged in the social life of Palestinians originating from the northern West Bank city of Jenin, which is also his own place of origin. After a couple of years, he joined the association, which is mainly composed of Palestinians originating from the northern West Bank. He became its president in September 2001.[46]

The members of the association regard themselves as a "Muslim NGO," but like to distance themselves from the Islamist movement and from any political approach toward Islam. Like the other Muslim NGOs, they describe their motivation in mixed social and religious terms, between which they apparently do not distinguish. The main supervisor and guide of the orphan children described this motivation as a desire to "care for children nobody else is caring for." This is to be done, of course, for the "sake of God." Al-Taher added that "Muslims are brothers, and brothers should help one another, whether they ask for it or not." According to the members' own description, the Islamic nature of the association is furthermore expressed in shari'ah-based practices of gender separation: boys and girls sleep in separate rooms once they have reached the age of 10; and the female group leaders work with the children on the upper floor of the building while the (administrative and technical) male staff works downstairs. The latter may only come upstairs if they notify the female workers in advance by calling them. Religion is also an important part of the educational programs for the orphans. The members of this NGO share the idea that a hostile campaign is being globally played out against Islam. "Muslims only want to do good," the main supervisor clarified. "It is hostile forces threatening Islam who portray our religion as something bad."[47]

Conclusion

In this chapter, we have seen three main examples of politically unaffiliated Muslim NGOs that base themselves on Islamic religious traditions in terms of motive and/or social ideals. Even if the voluntary associations dealt with in this section are not affiliated – or not affiliated strongly – with Islamism as a political movement, we notice among them a lack of satisfaction with the world and the society in which they live. That society has moved away from true religion, its members forget too often the religious values of mutual care, solidarity and compassion; instead, they engage in lying and corruption for the sake of self-interest and do not (sufficiently) take care of orphans. The members of the NGOs discussed above wish to improve the society and the fate of the needy on the basis of the social and moral legacy of Islam. In the process, they create new bonds and a new sense of community. By applying this legacy, the social fabric and cohesion of the 'ummah will be restored and Muslims will once more enjoy the security, solidarity and moral direction they need. This conviction is what makes these associations socially conservative in nature. Unlike the Islamist associations, however, the NGOs dealt with in this chapter are founded and/or led by persons who derive their authority from something other than partisan political activity. This could be through a prominent engagement in the traditional Islamic sciences, by occupying the position of head of a school, enjoying a reputation as a successful, generous businessman or through any other capacity (though this is not to imply that such bases of authority never play a role in the workings of Islamist NGOs).

This category of associations is an expression of an Islamic cultural trend that is wider than Islamism the political movement. As was described in Chapter 1, from the 1970s onward a trend promoting the need for there to be a "return to Islam" became increasingly visible in Jordanian society. Certainly, the Islamist movement benefited greatly from this trend; yet, even large parts of Jordanian society that are not nominally supportive of this movement have been affected by it. Indeed, it is possible to compare this revival with the trend of social, cultural and political rebellion of the younger generation in Western countries against the older generation and the societal establishment during the 1960s and early 1970s. That trend has certainly known well-defined and organized socio-political movements, but it has also affected a great many people who were not directly involved in those movements.

While in terms of their socio-cultural discourse, the voluntary associations in question are hard to distinguish from ones affiliated to The Muslim Brotherhood, these associations are obviously distinct from Salafi groups in their orientation. The latter try to decontextualize Islam by adhering to an absolutely literal (self-consciously "pure") understanding of religious texts, while the Muslim voluntary welfare associations emphasize work within the prevailing social, cultural and political context. This makes the latter more pragmatic, not to mention flexible and sensitive when trying to apply Islamic teachings to Jordanian society. Such an approach could be oriented mainly toward conserving and reviving age-old religious traditions, as the NGOs described in this section mainly do, or toward explicitly and overtly reinterpreting and modifying those traditions along modernist lines. NGOs of the latter orientation will be dealt with in the next chapter.

10. Progressive Muslim NGOs

As with the distinction between "Islamist" and "non-Islamist" Muslim NGOs, the terms "conservative" and "progressive" voluntary welfare associations must only be applied with a degree of caution. Roughly speaking, the discourse of (relatively) conservative associations is primarily oriented toward the protection, strengthening and development of what may be considered Islamic tradition and heritage. In other words, it is focused on defending the Muslim lifeworld against (perceived) menaces emanating from (secular) modern society considered to be alien to Islamic – and therefore authentic – values. Such menaces usually involve temptations such as (free or openly exposed) sexuality and eroticism, drugs and alcohol and of materialism, consumerism and socially disintegrating individualism. The vision of progressive associations, on the other hand, is determined more by dissatisfaction with conservative or traditional interpretations of the Islamic faith, and by the need to change and modernize such interpretations. NGOs belonging to the latter type usually interact more intensively with foreign and international institutions, such as Western (but sometimes also Muslim) development-agencies, UNICEF, UNIFEM or foreign embassies, and with the social welfare and development discourses of the latter. The religious discourses of these NGOs are deeply affected by this interaction. They are less focused on (cultural) conservation and protection vis-à-vis external influences and more on (socio-cultural and religious) progress and change in tandem with such influences. This usually implies working for greater social, and especially gender, equality.

Conservative and Fundamentalist versus Progressive and Modernist

The distinction made here between conservative and progressive Muslim NGOs is partly inspired by a theoretical approach concerning the distinction between so-called "fundamentalism" and so-called "modernism."

Roughly speaking, these theories depict fundamentalism as a tendency oriented toward "Islamizing Modernity" and modernism as one oriented toward "Modernizing Islam." According to political scientist Ahmed Mousalli, both currents are similar in that they aim to raise Muslim consciousness and to induce a "social and political movement attaining material, political and spiritual progress." Mousalli states: "a new reading of Islam becomes, for both the modernists and the fundamentalists, the basic condition for starting a modern process of reformulating Islamic history and reforming Islamic civilization."[1] In other words, both stress the importance of human agency in improving the prospects of the believers, in this life as well as in the hereafter. Indeed, this is what all Muslim NGOs dealt with in the present study are doing.

In the words of Mousalli, the difference between fundamentalism and modernism relates primarily to the fact that:

> the process of regeneration [of religious understanding] is for the modernists always tentative, because it depends on a relative science, whereas the process of regeneration for the fundamentalists, especially the radicals, is always absolute because it depends on an absolute text …While the modernist entertains and judges the authentic in terms of the new [science], the fundamentalist subjects the new to the authentic [revelation]. The fundamentalist uses authenticity as the yardstick to measure all things, while the modernist uses the new as the yardstick."[2]

This difference implies, in my view, that the religious understanding of the fundamentalists is conservative in the sense that it is oriented toward the conservation and restoration of "authenticity," no matter how self-defined and constructed this may be, in the face of what is considered to be alien.[3] Authenticity serves here as a firm and immutable religious anchor. Unquestioning belief in an unchanging and eternal revelation must, according to fundamentalists, be the first and ultimate starting point for believers in the modern world. Modern means and understandings should be judged, and possibly used, in accordance with it. Modernists, however, postulate that revelation can only be understood and acted upon in modern times from the perspective of modern knowledge, understandings and developments. According to them, revelation cannot be understood and implemented unquestionably in its own right.[4]

The same difference has important bearings in terms of the question how Muslims should deal with knowledge, understandings and discourses originating from non-Muslim sources. According to fundamentalists and conservative Muslims, the latter cannot and should not affect the basic understanding of the Islamic message. Such foreign knowledge, understandings and discourses confirm this message at best, or have to be rejected as false at worst. As a Muslim Brotherhood founder in Jordan and the president of a Jordanian Islamist welfare association stated: "The Islamic faith is not developing. It is already developed" (i.e. it was perfected from the outset).[5] Modernists, however, believe that the understanding and practical application of Islamic moral teachings must be developed and modernized in line with the modern philosophy and politics of especially the West.[6]

19th Century modernist theologians and intellectuals, such as Sayyid Jamal al-Din al-Afghani and Muhammad Abdu from Egypt and Sayyid Ahmed Khan from India were, according to Mansoor Moaddel and Kamran Talatoff:

> impressed by the achievements of the West, ranging from scientific and technological progress, the Newtonian conception of the universe, Spencer's sociology, and Darwinian evolutionism, to Western style of living. They all argued that Islam as a world religion was thoroughly capable of adapting itself to the changing conditions of every age, the hallmarks of the perfect Muslim community being law and reason."[7]

In terms of political and social development, they:

> favored democracy and constitutionalism, and the de facto separation of religion from politics; and formulated modernist discourse on women by rejecting polygamy and male domination. The Islamic fundamentalists, in contrast, rejected the notion of social evolution and portrayed the West as having an aggressive political system, exploitative and materialistic economic institutions, and decadent culture. Rather than attempting to reform and modernize Islam, they aimed at Islamizing virtually all social institutions. They rejected the separation of religion from politics, defended Islamic political hierarchy in society and male domination and polygamy in the family.[8]

Such apparently contrasting observations are nuanced by Moaddel and Talatoff: "neither fundamentalism nor modernism should be considered as rigid categories. Given favorable sociopolitical and cultural conditions, a formerly strong fundamentalist movement could transform in a modernist direction."[9] The same scholars mention examples of Islamist movements and figures in Jordan and Iran who have come to embrace more democratic and pluralist visions of politics and society. In this regard, an authority on Islamism like Gilles Kepel speaks of a new brand of Islamists who celebrate a perceived "democratic essence" of Islam.[10] Another well known scholar, Asef Bayat, calls this trend "post-Islamism."[11] The irony is here that, while Islamists may define the Islamic revelation as an absolute yardstick with which to judge political and social concepts, global phenomena and recent developments, they move much closer to modernist opinions and standpoints once they rethink and reconceive of this yardstick in more liberal, democratic and inclusive terms.

In other words: the distinction between (conservative) fundamentalist visions and (progressive) modernist visions is often blurred. My own distinction between the categories of conservative and progressive associations is, therefore, necessarily a relative one. The NGOs that I termed "conservative" in the previous chapter also have aspects of progress in their discourses, as should become apparent in the following chapters. At the same time, NGOs that will be dealt with in this chapter sometimes have conservative features and may at times be defensive regarding certain Islamic values. My distinction is based upon the more predominant tendency in the NGOs' discourse, as well as in the way it is reflected in their activities. This predominant tendency is greatly determined by the social background and life histories of the founders and the members of these associations: those of the more progressive associations often came from a social environment wherein there was a greater opportunity and inclination to interact and cooperate with non-Islamic local, foreign and international institutions.

Al-Faruq Welfare Society for Orphans

This Society was established in 1991 by mostly well-educated inhabitants of the Palestinian refugee camp in the northern city of Irbid. Its founders and members are of different political leanings. Equally, some of them are secular, whereas others more religious in their socio-cultural convictions and lifestyle. There are some Christians among them as well. In general, they adhere to the basically secular Palestinian national movement as represented by its umbrella organization, the PLO. The Society's forerunner was the Club for Orphans at the Youth Center of the camp. Youth Centers in Palestinian refugee camps in Jordan are formally under the supervision of the Jordanian Ministry of Youth Affairs. Several of the Society's founders, including its president, used to be social workers in the Youth Center and the Club for Orphans. The latter was serving orphan boys of the camp in the realm of sports, recreational and cultural activities as well as supporting them in their school education. The Club for Orphans gradually separated itself organizationally and financially from the Youth Center. This was partially due to disagreements related to the usage of donated money. According to the Society's president, Hassan Harb, money donated specifically for the service of the orphans was used by the Youth Center for other goals. He regarded this as a violation of the donations' *waqf,* which is the Islamic term for religious endowment.[12] For another part, the workers of the Club as well as other camp inhabitants realized the need for a more comprehensive approach toward the problems of orphans. They decided to establish a Society that would offer expanded services to the families of orphans as a whole.[13] The Society came to encompass a polyclinic as well as services in the realm of income, employment, health, family and housing situation, recreation and social, medical and religious education. Its main center is in the Irbid refugee camp. However, two smaller affiliates have been established in Husn refugee camp, which is to the south of Irbid, and in a village to the north of the city.[14]

Islam's Place in the Discourse of Al-Faruq Society

Needless to say, Islam has a prominent place in the discourse of the Society. It is less dominant and all-pervading in terms of motivation and ideals, however, than in those of the NGOs dealt with in previous chapters. If Al-Faruq Society's members speak about religion, they do so with a greater degree of reflexive distance and relativism, and not from the starting point that certain things are binding and unquestionable. Asked about the role of Islam in the society's activities, Harb replied as follows:

> For sure, we are Muslims, and our religion knows the principle of *takaful* (social care and solidarity with the poor and the needy). But our society is in the first place a human undertaking: everybody will be helped regardless of a distinction on the basis of ethnicity, nationality, religion or whatever; we have Pakistanis and other foreigners among our recipients,[15] and we have Jordanians, Palestinians, Christians and Muslims. Our aim is not the dissemination, let alone the imposition, of a certain religious or Islamic message. Of course, religious values play a role, but only in a general sense. First there is the relationship between humans as humans. After all, we all belong to *bani adam* (humankind).[16]

This humanist perspective notwithstanding, the presence of motivational Islamic discourse becomes obvious during special events, such as the ʼiftar meals (meals breaking the fast during Ramadan), organized by the Society. At one such meal, held in a big rented hall, I witnessed a group of men performing the salah on a platform. After the prayer, a couple of speeches were given. One of them was religious in nature and dealt with social and charitable work and donating money that had to be undertaken fi sabil li-llah. The speaker stressed that this will lead to the attainment of the ʼajr or divine reward. Donations could be made during the meal and had to be registered by the donors themselves on a small form. On the top of this form, the Qur'anic ʼayah 26 of surah al-baqarah (Q.2:26) was elaborately written. The aya states that anyone who gives wealth for the sake of God causes its multiplication, like a seed that grows into seven new plants, each one of which will carry one hundred new seeds. The Muslim Brotherhood-based ICCS frequently refers to this ayah during its fundraising campaigns. Asked about the significance of such religious language, some of the members explained it in terms of "the culture of the people" which is strongly imbued by a religious consciousness and by the belief that one can obtain ʼajr in the afterlife through giving for the sake of God.[17] A remarkable difference between the discourse of Islamist and more conservative Muslim NGOs and that of the Faruq Society's representatives is that the latter did not speak about religious duty as if its performance were self-evidently binding upon everyone. Their main point was that religious discourse is an important part of the heritage, society and culture of "the people here." Terms and expressions such as "God says," "the Qur'an enjoins us to," or "the Hadith tells us to" were thus much less likely to be heard. The fact that they were talking to a foreign and non-Muslim researcher must have influenced their own discourse at that moment, but it still denotes a certain degree of relativism and "objectification" of the place of Islam in that discourse.[18]

Also during other conversations, some members pointed to the difference between Islamic and Western motivational approaches toward social work. They stressed that the Muslim approach is distinct from the Western one in the sense that the former is based upon the conviction that engaging in good works is done for God's sake and will lead to Paradise whereas the latter is framed in a more secular and humanist perspective. They did not believe, however, that the Muslim approach is necessarily at odds with the secular humanist one predominating in the West.[19]

Religious consciousness was also reflected sometimes in the Society's employees' discourse. A gynecologist working in the Society's polyclinic, for instance, voiced the widespread opinion in Jordan that Arab society's religious character makes it more moral and secure, and less vulnerable to crime, than secularized Western societies.[20] On the other hand, members of the Society, including its president, were eager to emphasize that the Society does not consider any religious belief as incumbent upon its members and workers. Such beliefs may provide the personal momentum for participants in the Society's activities, but they are not required. The Society as a whole is not bound to any particular religious belief, ideology or current. Its overriding goal to which all of its members and workers must subscribe is human welfare and development.[21] This is also reflected in the clothing women workers of Al-Faruq Society wear. Women working in ICCS centers all wear Islamic costumes with long dresses and headscarves and several of them even wear the *niqab* or face veil. Most of the women workers of Al-Faruq Society do wear headscarves, but none of them wears the niqab and are mostly dressed in traditional Palestinian costumes or simply wear trousers.

Empowerment, the Local Lifeworld and Islam

From the perspective of Al-Faruq Society's members, promoting human welfare means fostering the empowerment of the target group. In this endeavor, they regard it as of utmost importance to learn from the insights of international and foreign (often Western) institutions. If deemed suitable, they also like to adopt the latter's development programs. The Society has adopted, for instance, educational programs from UNICEF aimed to foster the empowerment and self esteem of parents and children.[22]

Furthermore, the Society has contacted international development agencies and listened carefully to their discourses on micro credit for the sake of economic empowerment of needy families. It was planning, at the end of my fieldwork, to implement this principle.[23] It has also applied to the European Union for a subsidy to implement a project on civic education dealing with matters like democracy, human and civil rights.[24]

Moreover, the Society has received support from the embassies of Japan and Canada and from the Mennonite Central Committee to develop its polyclinic.[25] Obviously, its approach is not to impose a dogmatic and essentialist vision on the public and neither does it consider suspicious anything foreign or non-Muslim. On the contrary, social evolution and development of the community as a whole and the target group of "orphan families" in particular is stated as the overriding goal, and any knowledge or approach that prove helpful regardless of origin should be adopted.

This development should take place, however, in a spirit that is in harmony with the socio-cultural lifeworld of the community. When it comes to gender roles within the family, for instance, the Society advocates consciousness raising of the local community that is geared toward a gradual change of traditional habits in the direction of more equality and respect for women' rights. It does not see the propagation of the more radical Western feminist ideas on the wholesale abolition of gender roles as appropriate, given their large distance from the social cultural beliefs and habits in the local community.[26] Harb does not, however, reject such ideas out of hand on the basis of the sacredness of the shari'ah or divine revelation. He simply underlines the need to be cautious in advocating changes in family and gender relationships in a socio-culturally conservative society.[27] Unlike fundamentalists and conservative Muslims, he does not cherish the vision of an immutable and essentialist Islam as the (only real) basis of the lifeworld that should be strengthened in the face of alien threats. His vision of the lifeworld is an evolutionary and progressive one, and open to influences from the outside, including non-Muslim, world.

The Society's members and workers do consider the Islamic faith an important part of the local community's socio-cultural lifeworld, and one that should be reflected in the Society's activities. They may castigate the ICCS for manipulating its clients with a biased religious ideology, but they too attach high importance to lessons in Qur'an reading for the children of client families.[28] The Society's president accused the ICCS of abusing the aid relationship to push female clients to wear the Islamic dress, but also conceded that he and the other members of Al-Faruq Society "like it" if a woman puts on the *hijab* (headscarf).[29] The nature of the Society's Islamic discourse is, however, considerably more inclusive, anthropocentric and rights-oriented than that of an ICCS-center like Al-'Abura. According to the chief (female) social worker of the Society, modern principles on human, women and children's rights that are enshrined in international treaties are all confirmed by the Qur'an and the Hadith and emanate from God.[30] In the Society's activities of raising awareness on improving the life circumstances of the family and on the rights of women and children, 'ayat from the Qur'an or hadiths are often quoted to confirm the modern insights of (secular) psychologists, social workers, pedagogues and social scientists.[31] Islamist NGOs are usually inclined to do the reverse: they quote the insights of such experts in order to confirm the truth of the revelation.

Ultimately, in Al-Faruq Society, religion is (re-) interpreted in terms of a vision of human progress and development since, according to the Society's members, it stands for human progress and development. Religion is at the same time viewed upon as a means to communicate progressive messages to the target group. It serves to convince the latter that modern and emancipatory approaches toward gender relations or the upbringing of children are in harmony with the message of Islam.

In light of the above, it is not surprising that, for the religious lectures organized by the Society, it prefers to invite modern educated 'ulama' who have progressive and inclusive theological views on society and who encourage believers to be tolerant and humane. The Society has no need for "those old-fashioned 'ulama' employed by the Ministry of Awqaf."[32]

The inclusive and "modernist" character of the Islamic discourse espoused by Al-Faruq Society's members may take other forms as well. They may adopt, for instance, ideas from secular political ideologies and liken them to Islamic beliefs. Harb once told me that he had read some of the writings of Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels and Vladimir Lenin and had not found their ideas so different from those of Islam. He referred to a statement from Lenin according to which it is best to drink from one's own "clean glass" instead of someone else's dirty one. This stands, according to him, for sexual fidelity in gender relations, something that Islam also calls for.[33] While disagreeing with communism's materialist and atheist philosophical underpinnings, he sees many similarities between communist and socialist visions on social justice and those of Islam, such as the idea of human cooperation in socio-economic life on the basis of equality and that society's members give to one another in accordance with their economic abilities and receive according to their needs, in a spirit of mutual solidarity. He likened this to Islamic socio-economic morality, which forbids the charge of interest and illegal self-enrichment and promotes fair and transparent economic transactions between people on the basis of equality and free will. Based upon this ideological vision, with its leftist as well as its Islamic inspiration, he rejects neoliberal economic measures like the imposition of price hikes by the International Monetary Fund on products that are essential to Jordan's less fortunate citizens as "unfair, illogical and unreasonable."[34]

Such blending of ideas and beliefs – borrowed from Islam on the one hand and from leftist ideology on the other – is not uncommon in the milieu of Palestinian refugee camp dwellers. It is not unusual in Palestinian refugee camps in the Kingdom of Jordan to hear young men – possibly wearing T-shirts with Che Guevara on them – espousing their admiration for Karl Marx before then referring to the Qur'an. In this milieu of dispossession and socio-economic deprivation, left wing orientations and Islamism have been competing with one another for adherents. A significant number of refugee camp inhabitants may have been caught in the tide of religious cultural revival, but remained at the same time faithful to their leftist ideals and did not turn to Islamism as a socio-political movement.

The Khawla' Bint Al-Azwar Association

A voluntary welfare association with a similarly "modern" and empowerment-oriented approach toward its target group but with a different socio-cultural and ideological background is the Khawla' Bint Al-Azwar Association. This association is based in the working class Hashemiya quarter near the city of Zarqa. It is a religious women's association headed by a woman working concomitantly as an officially licensed *wa'izzah*, or religious teacher, in a mosque. She is trained and supported by British development organization Questscope. The Khawla' Bint Al-Azwar Association works for girls from socially weak families with low incomes that live in the local community. These are broken families, or families where the father may suffer from an illness, or alcoholicism, or fails to earn a sufficient income. Most such families face severe problems in terms of communication between their members; and verbal and/or physical abuse of women and children is also generally rampant among them.[35] The association tries to empower the girls in question through various activities, such as literacy courses, income-generating handicraft projects, recreational activities and counseling on daily life issues for the girls and their mothers. These counseling sessions are conducted by the head herself as well as by a psychologist and a nurse, and take place on an individual as well as on a group basis.

Many of the associations' members, including its head, used to be active in the gender-mixed Islamic Bir Al-Sab'a Welfare Association,[36] but broke away due to differences over the aim of an income-generating project. The leadership of the previously mentioned association wanted to use the proceeds of this project to cover its own running costs, while the (female) dissenters who later on established the Khawla' Bint Al-Azwar Association insisted on devoting the rewards of the project to their target group. The membership of the Khawla' Bint Al-Azwar association is predominantly Palestinian in origin.

Islam's Role: Conservation for the Sake of Empowerment and Progress

To a certain degree, the discourse of the Association's president and other members represents Islamic authenticity-based conservatism. The president herself wears a niqab, and other members of the association don some version of Islamic dress, wearing at least the hijab. In her capacity as the association's president, she fulfills her role as a religious teacher in the same way as she behaves in the mosque. In both places, she emphasizes that being a wa'izzah involves translating the teachings of the Qur'an, the Sunnah (traditions on the sayings and the acts of the prophet), fiqh and *'aqida* (religious doctrine) into the practice of daily social life. A wa'izzah does not engage in academic theological exercises. Rather, she supports people on a religious basis in dealing with their own daily problems and dilemmas. According to her, Jordanian and Arab society has drifted away from religion due to the impact of Western political, economic and cultural hegemony. They have been affected by the influences and temptations of consumerism, materialism and hedonism and thus have lost much religious knowledge.[37] Lack of religious knowledge is, according to her, responsible for the fact that many people, including those of her own target group, are seduced by traditional, but non-Islamic *'adat* (habits) that are based on ignorance. "And that is why", she states, the women of the association "work at raising the people's consciousness of the true Islamic message, [by] transforming negative attitudes and behaviors into positive ones."[38] It is this criticism of traditional habits and advocacy of *'islah* (reform) in the direction of emancipation and empowerment that gives the association's discourse clearly progressive overtones.

Many of the 'adat the association is fighting through its consciousness raising efforts have to do with gender discrimination. Its members are vehemently opposed to the traditional mentality that accords preferences to boys over girls in areas like gaining attention from the parents, nutrition, educational opportunities and choice of marriage partners. Islam means gender equality and respect for women's rights in all those aspects of life, these women insist. It also means the right of the woman not to be abused, and to be treated with kindness and respect by her husband.[39] They also stress the women's right to work outside the home and earn a salary, though they refrain from questioning the (religious as well as traditional) conception of the responsibility of the husband to act as primary breadwinner for family. And since women must enjoy equal opportunities to education at all levels, they must also have the opportunity to use their skills in the labor market and to serve their society, according to the president. Interpretations asserting that Islam prevents women from doing this are simply wrong, she insists.[40] Transforming negative attitudes to positive ones relates also to the relationship between parents and children. The association makes efforts to transform this relationship away from heartless authoritarianism and abuse and toward greater empathy, partnership and understanding between them. The impact of Questscopes' philosophy on childhood development is here clearly discernible.[41]

The Associations' empowerment-oriented philosophy also has a socio-economic dimension. The Islamic duties of zakah and sadaqah are aimed at the alleviation of poverty, the association's president insists. This means that those who are unable to work or do not earn sufficient money must be supported in their livelihoods. However, it also means investment in productive undertakings for those who can work, in order to bring about a lasting improvement of living conditions. It is clear that, from the perspective of the association's members, the alleviation of poverty does not simply mean traditional charity. Rather, it means progressive development. They support this approach by references to religious sources: the hadith stressing that an able bodied needy person should be given an axe to make his own living rather than a piece of bread, and the Qur'anic call of *"'Iqra'!"* ("Recite!"), which they interpret as a call for the gathering of knowledge and educational advancement of and by all Muslims. In particular, they emphasise this search for knowledge in the context of the disadvantaged and the underprivileged in society. They also place the Islamic prohibition on riba', or charge of interest, within the same context. According to them, riba' is unfair to the poor. In this regard, the president pointed to the injustice of the prevailing economic world system, in which poor countries are deprived of their development chances due to their debt and interest burden.[42]

The Al-'Aqsa Association

Like the Khawla' Bint Al-Azwar association, Al-'Aqsa Association in Madaba, a small town of around 30 KM to the southeast of Amman, was established and is run solely by women. Unlike the former, the latter is of a multi-purpose nature and does not exclusively focus on one target group. First of all, it encompasses a primary school for deaf children. It also implements income-generating projects for women of needy families and engages occasionally in traditional charitable aid. Moreover, it has a social club for the elderly. Finally, it works towards awareness-raising on religious, educational, social, health and political affairs among socially disadvantaged families, and organizes courses and lectures on the same issues for the wider public. Its members and workers belong predominantly to Madaba's East Bank local community. What is particularly unusual about this association is the political background of its founder and president, Nawal Al-Fa'uri.

The Political Career of a Post-Islamist Woman

On one level, Al-Fa'uri could be regarded as a typical post-Islamist in the terms coined by Asef Bayat. From a very young age, she has been politically as well as socially active in society, and her religious convictions are nominally derived directly from the Qur'an and Hadith. Her interest in Islamic reformism made her decide to join The Muslim Brotherhood when she was only 14 years old. She did this without notifying her parents, who would not have allowed her to do so. In 1992, she became involved in the establishment of the Islamic Action Front Party. In the following year, she was elected as the first female member of the majlis al-shurah (the internal parliament) of this political party. Her personal charisma was apparently strong enough to overcome gender barriers and stereotypes within the local society, which is of a largely provincial and tribal nature, as well as within the Islamist movement to muster the necessary support and get elected as a representative of Madaba's IAF section within that council.[43]

Nawal Al-Fa'uri was, in part at least, attracted to The Muslim Brotherhood because of its program of tarbiyyah. She appreciated the profound study of the Islamic faith there, the discovery of Islamic morals and values and the endeavor to find the right mental balance as a believer. What made her a dissident within Jordan's mainstream Islamist movement was her frustration with the conservatism and socio-political strategies of exclusivism of many among The Brotherhood's leadership. She had great difficulty with the latter's inclination to shun political and social interaction with anyone who is obviously outside the Islamist movement. In contrast, Al-Fa'uri has always been of the opinion that dialogue with others, including non-Muslims, is of the utmost importance. Islam, she emphasizes, calls on all believers to be kind and friendly toward others, and to maintain good relations with them. She has also had problems with certain political decisions by The Muslim Brotherhood leadership. She could not agree with The Brotherhood's and the IAFs' boycott of the elections for parliament in 1997. This boycott had a lot to do with the desire of hardliners not to compromise the movement's ideological dogmas. Al-Fa'uri, however, believed that participation in the political process, opening up to other political forces and making the necessary compromises was vital for the development of an Islamic society.

Perhaps the largest bone of contention between the more conservative Muslim Brotherhood members and Al-Fau'ri has concerned the issue of gender. Al-Fa'uri considers the promotion of women within the Islamist movement as well as within Jordanian political, social and economic life in general as her main mission. For Al-Fa'uri, women's participation in all aspects of public life has to be expanded, including the assumption of leadership roles. The Brotherhood's leadership however, and, in particular, conservative hardliners like Hammam Sa'id and Abu Fares, would not hear of this. According to them, the time was not appropriate for women to become political leaders and representatives. Al-Fa'uri was stunned by their reasoning. She rather found that the Islamist movement was running out of time in issues of gender. She argued that the impact of globalization and of modernizing developments in realms like education, labor market and other aspects of society made it more urgent than ever to promote women's role in public life, including political life and including the Islamist movement. If not, she contended that the Islamist movement would quite simply lose touch with modern developments. According to Al-Fa'uri, moreover, the conservatism of The Muslim Brotherhood in issues relating to gender is not merely ideologically motivated. Rather, she maintains that self-interest and political expediency also comes into play: such leaders represent socially conservative constituencies that do not like to see emancipatory developments in the status of women to take place.[44]

Al-Fa'uri revoked her membership of The Muslim Brotherhood in 1993. In 1997, she ceased her activities in the Islamic Action Front Party and revoked her membership of that party in 2001. In the same year, she became one of the founders of the self-professedly, moderate Hizb al-Wasat al-Islami, The Islamic Center Party.[45] That party stands, in her own words, for "a democratic and progressive Islam that is in agreement with the demands and the developments of modern times, including the issue of women's rights."[46]

Islamic Modernism and Renewalism

In short, Nawal Al-Fa'uri's political biography denotes what we might call a modernist version of Islamic reformism that opposes exclusivist and socially conservative tendencies within the Islamist movement. "As Muslims, we need to look at the world around us, and open ourselves up to what is taking place there," she states. Muslims who isolate themselves from the wider world, develop fanatical attitudes and even resort to violence are drifting away from the right path, according to her. This kind of modernism is linked in her discourse to outspoken positions on Islamic renewal based upon the original sources. Islamic knowledge can never be merely theoretical, but has to be practiced in everyday life, she maintains in line with the teachings of The Muslim Brotherhood. She adds that it has to be interpreted and practiced according to its "true and original meaning" and not according to all kinds of traditional habits and convictions that have nothing to do with religion.[47] The interpretation and application of the original message of Qur'an and Hadith must always be re-adjusted to the demands of the time through the process of ijtihad (independent reasoning). Ijtihad must be performed by qualified experts who, according to Al-Fa'uri (if few others), can include women as well as men. It must be applied to all those Qur'anic 'ayat or ahadith that lend themselves to multiple interpretations.[48]

In the light of these renewalist convictions, it is not surprising that she has named the primary and secondary school she founded more then twenty years ago after one of the greatest historical proponents of this line of thought: the 14th century Islamic thinker Ibn Taymiyyah.[49] Unlike the Wahhabis, however, Al-Fa'uri emphasizes Taymiyyah's advocacy of independent (re) interpretation of Qur'an and Hadith rather than the former's inclination to use him as an advocate of their own rigid approach toward these sources.

Al-Fa'uri's relatively progressive, inclusive and politically and socially "bridging" version of Islamic reformism has translated itself on the social level into active involvement and cooperation with various non-Islamist institutions, local, foreign, as well as international. On the local level, she became involved in Jordan's National Commission for Women, which is chaired by princess Basma.[50] This institution is, among other things, engaged in the modernization of Jordanian shari'ah-based family law in order to eliminate or amend certain articles that are discriminatory to women.[51] Furthermore, she also chairs the General Federation of Jordanian Women (GFJW) in the Governorate of Madaba (see the chapter on Jordan's NGO sector). She was also a member of the Jordanian delegation to the International Women's Conference in Beijing in 1995. She came into contact with UNIFEM, the UN organization for women, and wrote a booklet on its request dealing with how internationally enshrined women's rights relate to the message of Islam. The question of Islam and gender was also the topic of a booklet she wrote on behalf of the "Higher Population Council," a government institution active in the realm of reproductive health and family planning, and of the UNDP office in Jordan. Moreover, her association has received support from the Jordanian Hashemite Fund for Human Development and from the embassies of the United Kingdom and Canada in the implementation of income-generating projects for needy families. Last but not least, she has participated in conferences on Muslim-Christian dialogue organized by the Council of Europe.[52]

Islam, Gender and Family

Unsurprisingly, a major part of Al-Fa'uri's Islamic reformist discourse deals with the issue of gender. Besides the religious message, she is motivated by concern for (and frustration with) the present state of affairs pertaining to women in Jordan. She is disturbed about the insurmountable obstacles women face in obtaining positions of leadership in public institutions and in political life. In a more general sense, she is angered by the persistence of traditional habits that continue to deny women full participation in society. According to her, traditional beliefs stating that, a woman's place is limited to her home and family, that the education of women is less important than that of men, that a woman should never travel alone, and that she should not work outside the home are merely 'adat with no tangible connection to the real Islamic message. "It is incredible that people are still sticking to such beliefs in the present time!" she exclaimed to me. Women, she argues, are denied their rights and kept down, especially in a traditional community such as that of the provincial town of Madaba. This oppression is justified in the name of Islam. The problem, Al-Fa'uri maintains, is that Islam has always been interpreted by self-appointed conservative male authorities who have justified the oppression of women in religion's name. Believers, men and women alike, should study the sources of Islam by themselves, know what is written there and never allow themselves to be misled regarding religion by other people. No human being on earth can be the yardstick of life, only God Himself can be this. Women, therefore, must be called upon to follow God and His message, and not to follow humans, including men.

According to Al-Fa'uri, the Qur'an is clear about equal rights for both sexes in terms of participation in society and politics.[53] She derives this conclusion from verses like the first 'ayat of Surah al-Nisa (Q. 4:1), which states that men and woman are created from one and the same figure, Adam. She derives the same axiom from the fact that the Qur'an addresses its call to a righteous and moral life to all believers, regardless of sex. Men as well as women are called upon "to enjoin the good and to prohibit evil," without any difference, she stresses. 'Ayat two and three of Surah al-Ahzab confirm that believers, men as well as women, have to worship and follow only God.

Moreover, the Prophet Muhammad states in a hadith that women are the sisters of men.

Shari'ah grants women rights that are equal to those of men in the economic sphere, Al Fa'uri maintains. The Muslim woman has an equal right to own and to dispose of property, and to engage in trade. In public and political life, the will and the opinion of the woman counts as equal to those of men, she insists. Al-Fa'uri also singles out for honorary mention several examples of women from the lifetime of the Prophet Muhammad or that of the first caliphs. The first partner and supporter of the Prophet was his wife Khadija. The first Muslim martyr, in a battle between the 'ummah and its enemies, was an elderly woman, Sumayyah. Another woman, Bint Ka'ab, played a prominent role as a warrior under the Caliph Abu Bakr in the so-called *riddah* wars against unfaithful tribes (632-634 C.E.). Al-Fa'uri presents all of these emancipatory views and interpretations with the same degree of certainty as the much more conservative Muslim 'ulama' and Islamist ideologues state their own positions. (The degree to which either may be said to be "correct" in their interpretations remains, of course, beyond the scope of this dissertation.)

Her emphasis on gender equality should not distract us from the fact that Al-Fa'uri does accept the validity of certain gender-based role differences within the family sphere. These differences are, according to her, derived from physiological differences between men and women. Since only women will get pregnant and deliver babies, they are emotionally better disposed than men to take care of the children, raise them and create a warm and happy atmosphere in the house. The husband, in turn, has a better disposition to work outdoors and take care of his family in terms of income and material affairs. It is in recognition of such differences, Al-Fa'uri states, that the Qur'an describes men as the caretakers and maintainers of women (Q. 4:34). Yet, she puts this 'ayah in the context of a husband-wife relationship that is characterized by complementarity in equality. God has created both sexes for a reason, she argues. This reason is that differences between men and women enable a fruitful cooperation between both on the basis of complimentary roles and characteristics. That is why the primary duty of the man in the family sphere is that of providing for the family's income and material well being, and why that of the woman is to be mother and housewife providing for the family's emotional well being. For this reason, 'ayat 4 and 5 of Surah al-Nisa' confirm woman's right to maintenance and good care from the husband, according to Al-Fa'uri. The wife has a right to her husband's income, while any income she herself may earn is for her alone.

Such differences between the roles of the sexes are mitigated in Al-Fa'uri's discourse by the woman's right to equal participation in the public realm, as well as by the husbands' duty to assist his wife in matters pertaining to household tasks and raising the children. Once the husband returns home from his job, he must cooperate with his wife in thinking about all the matters pertaining to the household and raising the children, and help her in carrying out these tasks. According to Al-Fa'uri, the Prophet Muhammad has done so in his own family, but present day Arab men have completely forgotten this. They are idle inside the home, while forbidding the women of their household to work outdoors. This, of course, is against the spirit of Islam.

In Al-Fa'uri's interpretation of the Islamic message, the differences between both sexes are purely physiological; in terms of spirit, they are equal. Like men, women are independent spiritual beings. Like a man, a woman must be free in the choices she makes in life, such as whether or not she wants to work (provided that this does not conflict with her role as mother and housekeeper), or whether or not she wants to believe in God. If she opts to believe in God and in the message of Islam, she is, like a male Muslim, only bound to follow God's injunctions and not those of other people, including those of men. From this, there follows the idea that marital life must be based upon cooperation and mutual respect for one another partner's rights, opinions and will. Islamic teachings that have traditionally been explained as a duty of obedience of the wife toward her husband are, in reality, about cooperation, consultation and partnership between both, she maintains.[54]

Apart from her discussion on gender, the raising and educating of children is another issue on which Nawal al- Fa'uri and the Al-'Aqsa Association focus in their endeavors at religious reform and development. Herself a pedagogue by training, Al-Fa'uri and her association – like the Khawla' Bint Al-Azwar Association – focus on the childrearing habits of mothers. In particular, they emphasise the need for these mothers to have greater respect for their children's needs, perceptions and opinions. The association also promotes family planning for the sake of the well being of the family in general and the mother in particular. Family planning is, according to Al- Fa'uri, in accordance with the teachings of Islam.[55]

Conclusion

The three associations dealt with in this chapter share the conviction that the right application of religious teachings naturally fall in line with internationally established humanitarian goals and principles. In this view, the ’ummah should not be inwardly oriented and isolationist; rather, it should focus on interaction and cooperation with the outer world. Even though these NGOs do conceive of religion as representing values, ideals and rules of morality that are eternally valid, they stress that, in their translation into practice, these must evolve according to the needs and the imperatives of our time. Their practical approaches do not simply focus on protecting and defending the Muslim lifeworld against “external” threats emanating from secular modernity or the non-Muslim world by asserting a conservatively conceived Islamic authenticity. Rather, they focus on the need to bring the understanding and application of the Islamic message in line with the demands of a modern present and future. What is noticeable from all three associations is their rights-oriented approach in this endeavor. Relatively conservative Muslim NGOs lay greater emphasis on the observation of religious duties in ritual and social life. The NGOs dealt with in this section, by way of contrast, do not deny such duties, but their goals are more pronouncedly focused on promoting the rights of women, children and needy people and on raising their awareness of their own rights and opportunities. The fulfillment of these rights is the goal of their development approach.

Differences between the three pertain first of all to the background of their founders and members. Al-Faruq Society is, in its background, the most secular. Neither supporters of political Islam nor religious functionaries or experts have been prominent in this society (if involved at all). The driving force behind Al-Khawla’ Bint Al-Azwar Association, however, is a pious mosque teacher. Al-’Aqsa Association is established and led by an independent-minded adherent of political Islam who came to oppose conservatism and exclusivism within Jordan’s mainstream Islamist movement and promotes a modernist and rights-oriented version of the Islamic message.

The question of what this means in terms of the “modernism versus fundamentalism” theories with which we began this chapter is significant. Al-Faruq Society is probably the closest to the definition of a modernist organization. It considers Islam mainly as an important element of Arab society’s cultural and ethical heritage, an indispensable yet at the same time evolving part of the process of human progress, development and modernization. The Islamic revelation and its injunctions are dominant in the discourse of Al-Khawla' Bint Al-Azwar Association. They interpret the goals of this revelation, however, as the promotion of human dignity and social justice through the empowerment of the deprived. At the same time, they perceive the knowledge and the observance of this revelation as under threat from external forces. Indeed, they attribute the apparent backwardness, obscurity and underdevelopment of much of Muslim society and its religious understanding to this state of affairs.

The revelation is also at the core of the discourse of Al-'Aqsa Society. Its charismatic president seems to be less worried, however, about the contamination of Islam and the 'ummah by forces, discourses and understandings emanating from outside the Muslim world. On the contrary, she regards it as of the utmost importance to keep in touch with the outside world, benefit from the best of its developments, understandings and discourses and to reform the 'ummah's interpretation and application of the Islamic faith accordingly. Apparently, she assumes that true faith in the Islamic sources and their ethical teachings should ensure that Muslims are confident enough to interact and, where possible, cooperate meaningfully with others. Thus, she arrives at a position much akin to modernism through a broad and inclusive version of Islamist ideology that, nonetheless, continues to take the revelation as the yardstick for all aspects of life.

Part Four

SOCIO-ECONOMIC AID

11. Financial and In-Kind Aid

This chapter describes the forms via which direct aid is provided by Muslim NGOs in Jordan to the needy: the poor, unemployed, orphans and widows. My observations of aid practices will be presented by way of illustration. As much as this is possible, these practices will be analyzed in light of the religious discourses described in the previous chapter. It must be said, however, that the impact of Islamic motivational discourses on the giving of aid is difficult to measure with any degree of accuracy. It simply cannot be demonstrated that such discourses achieve a more moral state of being – i.e. one in which there is greater self-sacrifice, unity of purpose, brotherly cooperation, purity of intention and honesty – than could be achieved from the practice of other religious, ideological or ethical traditions. Reference will be made, however, to discourse on ideals of social solidarity, harmony and cohesion as has been dealt with in part three, in an effort to demonstrate how they relate to the Muslim NGO's aid practices. The concepts of dependency, discipline and empowerment will figure highly in the analysis of the practical approaches toward such ideals.

Aid Distribution during Ramadan

On the 17th November 2003, during the month of Ramadan, dozens of women assembled in front of the premises of the Islamic Bani Hassan Welfare association in Zarqa. There they stood, chatting loudly with one another, obviously anxious about something or other. When the treasurer and general manager of the association opened the door for me, the look on his face conveyed deep concern – though he soon managed to compose himself, treating me to a broad smile. The association's members and workers in the building were also clearly worried. In the hall, a copious quanitity of sacks and bags had been placed in rows. They all contained food items such as rice, pasta, sugar, bottles of sesame oil, cans of fish, tea bags, and so on. These were Ramadan gifts for around 500 needy families. The smaller bags were destined for families of not more then 4 children; while the big sacks were for the larger families. In order to keep order, not more then five clients at a time, mostly mothers, were permitted entry into the hall. All had to show their client cards to the Association's president. The president compared the personal data on those cards with those on the clients' list. Sometimes he asked the client questions on matters like the number of people in her family. Then he told the female workers to hand over a bag or sack to the client in question. In some cases, two bags or sacks were given to one person. In those cases, one of them was destined for another family whose members were, for one reason or another, unable to attend the distribution. Clients volunteering to deliver food to other families were well known to the members of the association and trusted by them.

The interaction between the association's members and its clients did not always run smoothly. Several mothers shouted, cried or begged the associations' workers and members. The male workers usually responded in anger, protesting that "like you, there are dozens of other families in need here!" Indeed, on one occasion, the president himself bellowed at some women who came in: "Go away! You are not on the list!" The female workers, in contrast, were quieter, less aggressive, and more capable at calming the agitated women down.

Making more noise than most, one elderly woman protested that, as she was a poor widow and mother to many children, she was clearly entitled to one of the larger sacks. On the grounds that she had not been registered as particularly needy by the association, the president refused her request. The woman responded with a furious declaration of "shame on you!" before telling the president that he was not acting as a pious Muslim ought. Eventually, the female workers took her to the waiting room, imploring her to sit down and relax. Some time later, she returned and was given a small bag. She was still angry and told the president, albeit in a softer voice, that his treatment of her was not right. The president came under siege from a number of directions that day; his reaction was to grow increasingly inflexible. Another woman, armed with medical papers confirming that she had one disabled and one sick child, also told the president that she was a widow in need of help. Since she was not registered as a client, however, the president refused to budge. Rather, he declined her plea on the grounds that there "is no time for study now!" (His meaning, of course, was that this was not the time to investigate her socio-economic situation). Likewise, a woman who showed a paper proving that she had a mentally distubed daughter was resolutely turned away. Then there was the case of a young man who arrived with someone else's client card. The president obviously did not trust him and was on the verge of tearing the card into pieces. When the man protested, the president told him angrily to leave and shouted "and you want to teach us manners! (tu'alimuna al-'adab!)[1]

Historical Origins and Various Forms of Direct Aid

Financial and in-kind assistance to the needy by voluntary welfare associations in Jordan most often takes place on religious feast days. In the case of Muslim associations, distribution is particularly intense during Ramadan, 'Id al-Fitr and 'Id al-Adha. Several Muslim NGO workers expressed to me their belief that gifts during Ramadan bring greater spiritual reward. For the same reason, many Muslims choose Ramadan as the time in which to make their yearly zakah contribution to a charitable association. Christian NGOs, on the other hand, concentrate their activities of aid distribution around the times of Christmas and of Easter.[2] While voluntary financial and in-kind assistance is sanctioned by religious traditions, it also originates from local patterns of social solidarity prevalent in traditional Middle Eastern communities such as tribes, clans, rural villages and urban neighborhoods.[3]

Voluntary welfare associations in Jordan, regardless of their religious, ethnic or socio-political background, engage in various forms of providing direct aid to the needy. Sometimes, this involves the giving of simple gifts of money, food, clothes, blankets, heaters and medicines for needy families, school bags and stationary for needy school pupils and wheelchairs and hearing aids for the handicapped. At other times, fees are waived, or a discount or partial discount of expenses (of important services like education and health care) are granted. There is also the service of reparations free of charge of daily utensils or within houses of needy people. Apart from religious feast days, the timing of distribution of financial and in-kind assistance differs from association to association. Larger and financially well-to-do associations may give benefits to all of their clients on a monthly basis. Others give aid at irregular occasions only, aside from religious feast days of course. The aid practices of The Muslim Brotherhood-affiliated associations will first be discussed; this will be followed by some mention of other Muslim associations.

Islamist Associations

The Identification of Needy Recipients

In chapter 7, I observed that mainstream Muslim public opinion in Jordan – learned 'ulama' as well as laymen and women, state representatives as well as The Muslim Brotherhood-dominated Islamist movement – holds the view that according to Islamic ethics, help should be given to anybody and everybody in need. What, we now explore, are the criteria by which the genuineness of someone's needs is ascertained?

This is a question that has preoccupied Muslim thinkers from the early stages of Islam. The early medieval Muslim 'ulama', including the founders of the four main legal Sunni schools of law, were engaged in lengthy debates on the definition of need. They did so in order to establish the boundaries of jurisprudence relating to the implementation of zakah and the maintenance of the family.[4] During later centuries, however, the definition of need and the concomitant criteria of eligibility for social assistance became less a matter of formal jurisprudence. Rather, the category of "needy" was established subjectively within the local communities of the Muslim world. In the Ottoman period, for instance, eligibility – and therefore the fate of one's family – depended largely on face-to-face relations and day-to-day knowledge within the local community, and less on formal mechanisms of assessing people's need.[5] Charitable aid on a regular basis was given by relatively wealthy members of certain social networks – often based upon family, tribe, neighborhood or profession – to the relatively needy ones. Also, religious scholars and students were usually included in the category of poor who deserved to receive social assistance. Those not belonging to such networks or religious status groups could only hope for occasional help from time to time.[6]

From the 19th century onwards, modern bureaucratic states came into being in the Middle East. Their rulers and bureaucratic institutions became increasingly concerned with the economic productivity of the population as a whole. This question of productivity was increasingly perceived as related to public health and welfare. At times, the latter issues became reflected in the discourses and the practices of state bureaucrats, philanthropic activists, intellectuals and journalists alike.[7] In other words, need and poverty came to be regarded as public issues of society at large that warranted collective action to tackle them. This also implied that need was increasingly assessed by official welfare institutions on the basis of formal and uniform criteria related to a person's income, family-situation, health and ability to work.[8] Present-day voluntary welfare associations in Jordan and elsewhere in the Middle East rely to a greater degree than ever on formal procedures in order to determine the eligibility of applicants to their services.

Needy people in present-day Jordan wishing to apply for aid from a voluntary welfare association usually have to visit the association's office first, where s/he explains his or her exact conditions (of need). Such conditions may have persisted for years, or have been brought about suddenly by, for example, the death of a main provider in the family. Regardless of the nature of their appeal, each applicant fills in a registration form during this first visit. The applicant may have come on his/her own initiative or have learnt about the association from a third party. Typically, this third party is a member of the association in question, a potential donor willing to support him or her through the association, a relative, a friend or a neighbor.[9]

The initial visit by the applicant is usually followed by a home visit by one or more workers of the association. During such visits, the social circumstances in which the applicant family lives are investigated: a tally is made of the number of persons in the family, sons of working age; elderly or sick family members; whether or not there are disabled children; the family's sources of income; its ongoing expenses (rent, electricity, water); and its general health situation. The necessary papers concerning these matters are collected. In the case of orphan- or fatherless families, relevant data about life and death of the father as the former breadwinner are gathered as well.[10]

At the ICCS centers for orphans and poor, the task of investigating the socio-economic circumstances of the applicants of aid is usually assigned to salaried employees or regular volunteers specialized in this field. Such social investigators have usually completed training courses run by the Ministry of Social Development or by the main office of the ICCS. Both deal with how to assess a situation of poverty and how to approach applicants for aid.[11] The social investigator's relationship with an applicant for aid is, in principle, one of (a modern and formalized version of) control, since the latter's situation of need must be established by the former on the basis of uniform criteria and empirical socio-economic facts: the presence or absence of income and/or assets; expenses on rent, electricity and water bills, medical and educational costs of the family in question et cetera. The investigator writes down the answers to all such questions on a standardized form. However, moral language evoking the principle of self-sacrifice for the sake of God, and the need for honesty and sincerity is also used within the framework of ICCS trainings of social investigators. One of the ICCS instructions to the social investigator regarding his attitude to applicants or clients is to "humble himself in front of them, have compassion and sympathy with them, care for them, not to boast to them, and work with his mind for charity which leads to their enrichment."[12] I was not permitted to attend one of these social investigation practices myself. Yet, in all likelihood, an attitude of formal control versus one of affective compassion toward clients differs from one social investigator to another, and according to the mode of personal interaction between an investigator and a client. As stated in the last chapter: compassion and control are not necessarily at odds with each other, and this is certainly not the case in the context of personalized patterns of authority, such as those prevalent in the Middle East.

People known by the center and living in the neighborhood of the family that has applied for aid, often help the social investigators in their work. Such people are known as manadib (delegates, single: *mandub*). They might be relatives, friends or acquaintances of the ICCS center's workers. A very valuable kind of mandub is a *mukhtar*, the chief of a neighborhood who carries a great degree of social authority. A *mukhtar* is appointed by the municipality to solve problems and disputes among inhabitants (and sometimes within families) of a community by means of mediation and reconciliation. Not surprisingly, the same figure often possesses a wealth of information on the socio-pyschological situation of families and the quality of family relationships applying for help to an ICCS center. In general, the mandub provides additional information about the social situation of the family, and may also be present during the home visits of the investigators. Both men and women may serve as manadib, although women's activities in this regard are usually confined to dealing with aid applicants in their immediate vicinity, while males have greater freedom of movement in their aid activities.[13]

During his home-visit, the social investigator also checks whether the applicant family already receives aid from other sources, such as the National Aid Fund (a social welfare institution under the Ministry of Social Development), the local Zakah Committee (a charitable institution resorting under the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs), or other voluntary welfare association. Receiving aid from such institutions affects the decision of the ICCS center as to whether to give assistance or not, on the nature of the assistance and on the amount of money to be given.

After the visit, the social investigator writes his report about the social situation of the applicant family on the form, making to sure to include his own recommendations, and presents this to the administrative committee of the ICCS center, of which he is usually also a member.[14] The political scientist Janine Clark, who carried out field research on the ICCS, has observed that the voice of the individual social investigator is, in practice, the most important factor in the administrative committee's final decision as to whether a family merits aid.[15]

The administrative committee may also decide to send a second team, consisting of females, to the applying family in order to obtain additional information. These female investigators talk only to the women of the family and focus more on women's issues. This often means that intimate psychological and emotional aspects – e.g. daily experience as mothers, woman's role in public space and, possibly, health and sexual matters – figure highly in their contacts, whereas male investigators concentrate on the material and financial aspects of family problems.[16]

The officially stated policy of all licensed voluntary welfare associations in Jordan – including those under the control of the Islamists – is to admit clients solely on the basis of their socio-economic needs. Formal procedures to assess applicants' eligibility for aid are, in some respects, similar to institutions belonging to the welfare state in Western countries – the latter also demanding all kinds of papers relating to socio-economic circumstances from their clients. This impersonal and bureaucratic approach – based on the principle of formal equality in regulations, rights and duties of clients – also characterises many of the internal regulations of the ICCS. One such regulation specifically states that a social investigator may not grant any privilege to (prospective) clients on the basis of friendship, acquaintance or family relationship.[17] In practice, however, we see that the form of control and discipline exercised by an association like the ICCS over its (prospective) clients is much more likely to be connected to personal face-to-face relations in the local community, than would be the case in a European welfare state. This can be seen from the nature of the home visit and use of local social networks and contacts, such as the manadib, in establishing the validity of the application. ICCS centers are locally embedded institutions, their workers often live in the community in which they serve and thus make use of local social networks of trust in their selection of clients. As Clark notes: in practice, the views of social workers on the eligibility of clients are far more important then any set of formal criteria.[18]

There are indications that such personal, face-to-face approaches involve also the issue of the "morality" of applicants. One of the volunteers of Al-'Abura Center, who stresses the importance of informal personal contacts with clients on a day-to-day basis in his work, told me: "I am not helping families who engage in criminal activity like stealing or killing, acts of immorality or wasting their money on alcohol. Unless we feel that we can bring them back onto the right track again. And of course, our help prevents people from falling into the trap of crime and immorality."[19] In addition to the well-being of the individuals involved, this volunteer clearly had the reputation of the center itself in mind when considering the nature of his work.

Islamic value rationality seems to play an important part in the selection of clients as well. According to Raif Nijm, an ICCS member and architect, who used to supervise the construction of the ICCS-run Islamic hospital, the ICCS centers aim to make "better Muslims" out of the needy clients. In contrast, they do not want to waste their money and efforts on people with a reputation for duplicity, or committing crimes, or even for neglecting their religious obligations.[20] Again, we find stated a powerful inter-relatedness between the various Islamic ethical injunctions, as well as a denial of any distinction between ʻibadat and muʻamalat. In this case, this value rationality is applied to the selection of clients. The latter must be known to be honest, sincere, good mannered, respectful and religiously observant Muslims, or at least display a serious willingness to improve themselves along these lines.[21]

Religious or moral considerations in the selection of clients are also related to the concern that beneficiaries will spend the financial aid they receive in an appropriate fashion. The ICCS as well as other, like minded associations like to ascertain that clients spend the money in a way that is perceived as good for them, as regards this life as well the hereafter. "Ignorance" on social as well as religious matters is considered by ICCS representatives as one of the characteristics most widespread among needy people, besides poverty and illness. Islamist associations are middle class-based, and middle class members often posses a sense of social and moral superiority toward the lower classes, on the basis of their higher level of formal education and "greater knowledge." As a result, they often claim to know "what is best" for the lower classes, and may, rightly or wrongly, mistrust the capability of lower class members to judge what is best for themselves. Such a paternalistic approach takes, in the case of Islamist associations, the form of religion-based and moralizing daʻwah discourse vis-à-vis lower class people. ICCS instructions to social investigators state that families applying for aid must not have a reputation for habits of "waste in housing, clothes and food."[22] The president of the Al-'Ihsan Women's Association in Zarqa observed that what renders the work of her association authentically Islamic:

> is that [the] money and any other kinds of aid [that we provide] is truly satisfying the real needs of people…. [Thus, this] money may not be spent on things like smoking, drinking alcohol or other vain and even harmful matters. I talk about these matters with the clients and urge them to use the aid they receive in a good way, and not to waste it.[23]

The last issue to be dealt with regarding the identification of needy recipients pertains to ethnic or tribal origin. In theory, Islamism forbids discrimination between people on the basis of such criteria. The treasurer of the Islamic Bani Hassan Welfare Association, for instance, regards the principle of equality in helping one's fellow humans regardless of religion, sex and tribal, national or racial origin as intrinsic to the Islamic approach.[24] In practice, however, we have seen that Islamist associations are, in an operational sense, part of local communities in which familial, friendship and neighborhood ties and social networks of trust are indispensable to any kind of social activity. Not surprisingly, blood ties and ethnic identity happen to be very important factors in such networks. Hence, regardless of his egalitarian and pan-Islamic ideological convictions, the same treasurer told me that approximately 90% of the clients of the Bani Hassan Association belong to the Bani Hassan tribe. And the remainder of the clients generally has a strong relationship with some of the tribe's members, through marriage or other form of connection.[25] In short, in Jordan, one's tribal or ethnic origin continues to establish the degree of social trust necessary to receive aid from voluntary associations, including those with an Islamic background.

Approaches toward Distribution of Aid

As the account of the distribution of aid in-kind during Ramadan at the beginning of this chapter showed, the reality of assisting the poor may sometimes be far removed from the nominal Islamist ideals of closing the gap between rich and poor and enhancing social harmony. In practice, circumstances represent a state of friction and tension between, on the one hand, needy recipients who often struggle in an individual fashion for their survival and that of their families and, on the other, the association members, whose main concern is to maintain the rules they have set for aid distribution, while simultaneously preserving order and discipline. In doing so, the members try to safeguard their dominance and control over the multitude of clients, and to prevent the latter's demands from interfering in their own procedures. On the day of distribution (described at the beginning of the chapter), the members were clearly uncomfortable about the overall situation. This doubtless resulted from the overwhelming number of clients, their realization of the bitter plight of many of these, and the severe limitations they faced in trying to do something about it. Such limitations have worsened due to the dwindling of donations from Jordan's struggling middle classes, and the loss of financial support from charitable institutions in the Gulf Region. Its members attribute this loss of support to (post 9/11) US-instigated, repressive policies against the latter from the state authorities in that region, as well as in Jordan. Indeed, since the year 2002, the association has hardly been able to engage in activities of aid distribution, apart from the time of Ramadan.[26]

During my time there, I also witnessed calmer days for aid distribution in Jordan. For instance, at the ICCS center Al-'Abura on the 12th of February 2003, one of the days of 'Id al-Adha, sacks of mutton were distributed in an atmosphere of relative serenity to client families. The related registration process took place in a big hall where the mothers of dozens of client families were sitting quietly, in rows of chairs. The social investigator sat in front of them, behind a desk, with a list of beneficiaries in his hands. He called every family by name, and each time a mother came to the desk and printed her thumb with ink besides her last name on the list. Then the investigator wrote his signature besides the thumbprint. The mothers received small cards with numbers. After the registration, they went to the accountant's office downstairs, where they showed their cards to the workers there, who, in turn, handed the sacks of mutton over to them. The overall atmosphere of silence was only disturbed when a few girls asking for mutton were angrily sent away by one of the workers. They were not considered eligible for receiving this kind of aid, possibly because they were not registered as clients.[27]

The Islamic Bani Hassan Welfare Association is dwarfed in size as well as in financial recourses by the ICCS. The latter has more financial and material means at its disposal to institutionalize its relationship of patronage with its clients. This may account for the significantly greater degree of calm and routine during its activities of aid. Apart from the daily educational and counseling programs for orphans and their mothers, a subject that will be dealt with in subsequent chapters, it distributes financial benefits to its clients on a monthly basis. The amount of money distributed per family ranges from 10 to 50 Jordanian Dinar (approximately 15 and 70 Euros respectively), depending on social data like the number of family members and whether there are any additional sources of income.[28] According to the official ICCS guidelines, each sponsored orphan child below the age of 16 has the right to a monthly financial benefit of 20 JD.[29] My own observations suggest that this rule is not always strictly adhered to. Each ICCS center for orphans and poor enjoys financial autonomy, and has its own financial sources and amount of funding. This affects, in turn, the amount of money distributed to orphans and poor clients. Besides this, the personal judgments of ICCS social workers on the situation of client families have a tremendous impact on the matter.[30]

ICCS centers usually do not transfer the financial benefits to their clients' bank accounts, if the latter have any. Rather, they summon their clients on a monthly basis to their premises to receive their allowances in person. The distribution of these allowances takes place in a manner reminiscent of the distribution of mutton during the 'Id al-Adha meeting described above. Thus, during the giving out of financial benefits, the client mothers also have to sit and wait in the hall. They must have their client cards with data about their families and the amount of money they are entitled to with them. Again, the social investigator calls them one by one, and each one has to sign with her fingerprint besides her family name on the list. At one distribution I attended, the social investigator and accountant were sitting silently behind the desk, working in a serious, even stern mood. Outside the hall, women were queuing up to take their places in the waiting room. Some, who felt that they had waited for too long, came in and complained. The center's doorkeeper, whose role it was to maintain order, sent the complainers out and forcefully told them to wait their turn. When the social investigator had to leave because of his professional duties as an Imam, the head of the center's women's department took over. Though wearing the full niqab, she immediately brought a change to the hall's atmosphere by talking, telling jokes and laughing with the clients.[31]

Gender has a significant impact upon the way the needy are made to feel during these distribution meetings. At Muslim associations, the male workers often play the role of the hard taskmaster, enforcing discipline and turning people away who, according to the rules of the association, are ineligible to receive aid. Relations between male workers and female clients in general are characterized by hierarchical distance and a more impersonal attitude – traditional habits and Islamic value rationality ensure that these males keep their distance from unrelated females. By contrast, woman-to-woman contact brings in an affective and personal element, even if the relationship is one between service provider and client. Emotional comfort plays a more central role in these contacts. The head of the Al-'Abura Center's women's department was able to mix discipline with a more amicable approach toward her clients than that showed by her male colleagues.

The general pattern of aid distribution by Islamist associations seems to be characterized by a deliberate rationality of the enforcement of rules. The question concerning who is eligible to receive a certain amount of aid is determined beforehand through social investigation practices. The clients are carefully registered and listed in this regard. At the occasion of the distribution itself, they are told to wait their turn and to receive their share without further discussion. At the distribution of financial benefits described above, clients sometimes asked questions or made remarks concerning their social situation to the social investigator. The latter gave brief answers or promised to look into the matters raised by them. The disciplinary approach prevailing at distributions of aid by Islamist associations is possibly related also to Islamic values like purity of intention, honesty, and ensuring one's deeds are transparently fair. Accordingly, the workers try to ensure that the limited resources are distributed fairly to every entitled person and do not want to tamper with this under pressure of the impatient or demanding clients.

Such an approach also reveals, however, the class-based inequality between, on the one hand, the associations' workers and, on the other their beneficiaries (Islamist ideals pertaining to the basic equality of all believers and narrowing the gap between the rich and poor notwithstanding). Ultimately, a pattern of patronage and dependency is reinforced through which middle class based NGOs unilaterally determine and enforce their rules pertaining to client eligibility and the fair distribution of aid. Their lower class clients have no voice in the making of those rules.

Following-up on Aid

This relationship of discipline and control is an ongoing one, since one of its aims is to determine whether or not, or to what extent, circumstances initially judged to be sufficient reason for supporting clients still apply. Thus, social investigators of Jordanian voluntary welfare associations pay follow up visits to client families to determine whether, how and to what degree their situation has changed. The social investigator of Al-'Abura Center pays annual follow-up visits to all the client families in order to determine whether any changes in the latter's income, health, and housing situation and recurrent expenditures have taken place. The amount of money and the nature of other forms of aid the client receives may be changed by the administration of the center in accordance with these changes. Once more, we find that the association adopts a deliberate and rational approach toward the just provision of aid to clients – an approach that involves a (quasi welfare state) measure of control and discipline. At the same time, personalized patterns of hierarchical relationships may play an important part in this process as well. Al-'Abura center's social investigator himself is a volunteer. In his professional life, he works in a local mosque as a state-employed Imam. This function provides him with a wide social network and an authoritative status in Hussein Refugee Camp. He told me that it helps him to gain access to the families in question, because these people generally respect and trust him.[32]

There are other, more informal ways of following-up on the situation of clients. A client might drop in to the office of the director or president of a welfare association, Islamist or non-Islamist, and ask for help for an urgent need. This might range from difficulties with paying a hospital bill, water and or electricity rates, or the cost of mending a broken pair of glasses. The director or president usually acts upon such requests.[33] Apart from that, given the fact that a social worker of an association often lives in the same local area as the client, the former may informally meet the latter several times, in places such as the park, the sports center or the coffee house, where he or she might hear from the client about his or her situation. The social worker, in turn, may give advice or urge the client to do something or to change his or her behavior.[34] In such a setting, the relationship between aid worker and client takes place in the context of the informal relationships in local public space, something far less common in the Western welfare state.

Occasional Forms of Aid Distribution

Unlike the distribution of financial benefits to needy clients by associations such as the ICCS, the distribution of in-kind assistance takes place on an ad-hoc basis and is less formally structured. It is strongly concentrated in the times of Ramadan, the 'Id al-Adha and 'Id al-Fitr. Outside these religious occasions, distributions usually take place at moments when the association feels that enough items have been donated for the neediest families to receive their hand-outs. According to members of Al-'Abura Center and the president of Al-'Ihsan Association, this form of aid distribution takes place on an almost daily basis during Ramadan while outside this it will only happen, on average, twice a month.[35] Some associations only engage in the distribution of financial or in-kind assistance when certain families ask for concrete things, whether these be food, clothes, medicines, medical treatment or the costs of study.[36]

Does Financial and in-Kind Assistance Wholly Satisfy the People's Needs?

In spite of the Islamist claim that, through implementing the principles of zakah and sadaqah, poverty and want will be eradicated from society, the amount of help given by one individual association to a needy client falls far short of what s/he really needs in terms of food and clothing, let alone other requirements. The female director of the women's section of the ICCS center for orphans in Al-Wihdat refugee-camp told me that she regularly had "sleepless nights," because of the apparent impotence of her center to help families solve basic problems – such as not being able to pay rent or provide higher education for their children.[37] The accountant of Al-'Abura Center was very candid about the lack of monthly financial help his center could provide:

> they [the benefits] are by no means enough to cover all the needs of the clients. They may help them to buy a chicken, some rice, some clothes or whatever [once a month]. As far as other needs are concerned, poor and orphan families might have to be hungry for a day, or they might receive additional support from relatives, neighbors or the Ministry of Social Development.[38]

Members of other ICCS centers also admitted to me that the financial and in-kind assistance they provide is far from adequate in terms of many of their clients' basic needs for food and clothing.[39]

To ensure that they can support deserving clients with limited resources, the centers are compelled to be very selective before admitting them. The ICCS center in a refugee camp to the north of Amman, for instance, distributes its monthly aid of 5 Dinar (approximately 8 Euros) per person to the 300 orphan (or fatherless) families in the area, as well as to approximately 200 other poor families. The latter are considered eligible because they do not have any other sources of income, due to circumstances like the physical or mental illness or retardation of the family's head and/or absence of other income providers. They also confirmed that many of the client families get support from other sources, such as the Ministry of Social Development, the Zakah Committee,[40] or other associations.[41]

In order to alleviate their plight, needy families in Jordan try to find support from all quarters, from individuals as well as from institutions, from governmental as well as from non-governmental sources and from religious as well as from secular organizations.[42] Such practices lead at times to concern at the ICCS centers. The latter wonder how "deserving" (potential) beneficiaries are when they are already (relatively) well supported by several other donors, yet try to conceal this from the ICCS center in question. The ICCS branch in Zarqa is in the process of setting up a computerized database to coordinate the efforts of various associations and to document to whom exactly they provide assistance, in order to determine the eligibility of clients more efficiently.[43]

In practice, the strategies pursued by the ICCS to serve the middle as well as the lower classes are not wholly consistent with the Islamist ideal of serving as a religiously inspired model of social justice and narrowing the gap between rich and poor. Indeed, Clark notes that the level of assistance offered by the ICCS to the poor compares unfavorably with that offered by the state-run National Assistance Fund.[44] More importantly, she observes that profits accrued by the Society's commercial activities, such as those in the realms of education and healthcare, are invested directly back into the respective commercial activities and not toward the social welfare activities designed for the poor. The poor are financially unable to afford the services provided by those commercial ICCS institutions, like schools and the Islamic Hospital.[45]

Enabling Aid

This observation on the lack of institutionalization of principles of social justice within the ICCS as an overall organization is not to imply that its centers for orphans and poor are not serious in their attempts to improve the lot of their needy clients. Some forms of direct aid provision are not simply aimed at assisting them in their daily economic survival, but enable them to participate in certain activities that are essential to raise one's status in Jordanian society.

One such activity is education. Like many other voluntary associations in Jordan – including those sponsored by members of the royal family – ICCS centers distribute schoolbags and stationary to the orphans and poor children they sponsor at the beginning of each school year.[46] Another example is the payment of tuition-fees to needy students. The Al-Urwa Al-Wuthqa Association in Amman used to pay part of the tuition fees of orphan children who study at the university and provided them also with books, before being hit hard financially in the aftermath of the 11th of September 2001 when it lost much of the support from Islamic welfare organizations in the Gulf-region.[47] Likewise, the Islamic Bani Hassan Welfare Association supports needy school and university students by gifts of 40 JD to pay their fees.[48] Associations also sometimes pay the expenses of vocational training courses of young needy clients if the association itself cannot train the latter. If Al-'Abura Center does not succeed to persuade a vocational training institute to accept one of its orphan clients on a free of charge basis, it often pays the fees demanded by it.[49]

Another realm vital to people's life chances is access to health care. ICCS centers enable the orphan families they sponsor to go to government hospitals and clinics by paying for 75% of the medical expenses concerning physical as well as psychological care.[50] As far as care for the handicapped is concerned, Al-Urwa Al-Wuthqa Association used to finance wheelchairs for the physically handicapped and to pay the fees that the latter owe for their education at state-run schools for the handicapped as well as for the special medical care they need.[51]

A special example of enabling aid is provided by Al-'Afaf Welfare Society. It helps to enable couples participating in its mass weddings to cope with the financial and material burdens of starting a family. The mass weddings themselves are an expression of the Society's concern that the high expenses related to weddings and starting a family in Jordan put financial obstacles in front of young people wishing to marry that are sometimes insurmountable.[52] Interest-free loans are provided by one of the Society's committees to the participating couples to help them start their married life.[53] Different amounts of money are lent to different couples, according to their own needs and desires as well as the financial situation of the Society. A couple married at a mass wedding held in 2002 told me that they were given 500 Jordanian Dinar as a loan, which they paid back over a period of 11 months in installments of 42 JD. This couple could not be considered poor by Jordanian standards, since both worked as teachers, the husband in a high school and the wife in a university. Poorer couples may pay back lower amounts per month, and the poorest may receive the money a gift rather than loan.[54]

At the mass wedding itself, donated items such as clothes, utensils for kitchen and bathing room, furniture, as well as financial gifts were distributed to the couples at the wedding party in equal portions.[55] Donations to Al-'Afaf Society also enable the couples themselves as well as their visiting relatives, friends and acquaintances to enjoy cold drinks, sweets and other food at the wedding party. Furthermore, wedding dresses are lent to the brides free of charge and wedding costumes are offered to the grooms at a discount rate of 40% of the customary price. Before the wedding party, the Society arranges for the prospective brides to make use of a hairdressing salon of their choice where they are charged cut rate prices, or on occasion given treatment for free.[56]

Waiving Fees and Offering Discounts

Another practical translation of the Islamic principle of closing the gap between rich and poor involves waiving fees or offering discounts to the needy on services that the Islamist NGOs themselves provide. We speak here mainly of services in the realms of education, training and health care. As far as ICCS centers for aiding orphans and poor are concerned, mention must be made of their arrangements with the (ICCS-run) Islamic hospital. These centers make sure that members of client families who receive treatment there will also receive compensation from the hospital's Fund for Poor Patients. On top of this, the center will contribute 20% towards the rest of the expenses of treatment.[57] Like other associations, the ICCS organizes several times a year a free medical day for needy clients with health problems. On this day, doctors and nurses volunteer to give medical aid for free.[58]

On the ground floor of the building of Al-'Abura Center, there is a kindergarten belonging to the equally ICCS-run Dar al-Arqam school chain. Some of the children admitted to this kindergarten are orphans from client families of the center. These families are exempted from the payment of kindergarten fees. Likewise, orphans participate in various religious, tutoring, vocational training and cultural courses and other activities organized by the ICCS centers on a free of charge basis.[59]

One final example of services offered for free by ICCS centers to their needy clients is the reparation and rehabilitation of the latter's houses after fire or heavy rainfall (or in any other instance of natural damage).[60]

Ideological Manipulations of the Aid Relationship

Do Islamist welfare associations use their services of financial and in-kind aid in order to indoctrinate their clients through a religious or even religio-political ideology? The ideological influencing of clients is suggested sometimes by the discourse of ICCS representatives. These emphasize the associations "comprehensive approach," according to which the orphans and the poor are supported predominantly, if not solely, on the basis of (the associations's understanding of) Islamic faith and doctrine. In practice, this means that, in addition to financial and in-kind aid and other services of a socio-economic nature, the clients are invariably offered educational and cultural programs strongly imbued with an Islamist moral discourse. The purported aim of this "comprehensive approach" is to realize The Muslim Brotherhood-propagated ideal of cultivation of a "healthy, balanced and complete" Islamic personality.[61] The aspect of linking financial and in-kind assistance to orphan and poor children to educational and cultural programs is discussed below with ICCS center Al-'Abura serving as an example.

On 16 June 2003, mothers of orphan families gathered in the office of the director of Al-'Abura Center. The director himself was sitting behind his desk, and a male and a female social worker were also present. The mothers had been summoned because the center's *tarbawiyyah* (i.e. educational) department had discovered "problems" in their families. It turned out that these problems related to the failure of many of the children to show up at the department's courses and counseling sessions. Indeed, 100 of the 230 boys did not attend, as well as 60 of the 260 girls. The director admonished the mothers in a stern, paternalistic fashion, urging them to send their children immediately to the educational programs. "This is in your own interest!" He emphasized.

The Center regards the courses as a vital investment in the future of especially orphan children. Arguments by some mothers that the center's bus did not pick their children up on time were dismissed as false. One of the mothers had her son, aged between 11 and 13 years, with her. The director asked him: "what is the matter with you, why don't you come?" When the boy remained silent, the director said: "you will be here next Saturday, all right?" Once the mothers consented to send their children to the educational department, the director smiled again and became friendlier. Topics of discussion between him and the mothers also included the Qur'anic courses organized by the Center, and matters pertaining to salah (prayer), paradise and hell.

The social investigator of the center told me afterward that the attendance of the orphans to the center's educational programs was a compulsory matter. He explained that each contract between a muhsin (donor) and the center states that part of the formers' money goes to the educational and socio-cultural programs that the center provides to the orphan child. Much of the educational content disseminated in these programs is of a religious nature.[62] ICCS instructions to social investigators state that 25% of the amount of a donation to an orphan-child goes to "administrative, educational, health and social expenses" (emphasis added) of the Center itself.[63]

Pushing client mothers to send their children to educational programs, and institutionalizing this practice by making the orphan's participation an integral part of every donation to him or her, confirms the idea of patronage by Islamists of a middle class background over "ignorant" lower class clients. Yet, according to the coordinator of the tarbawiyyah department of Al-'Abura Center, direct financial sanctions against families whose children fail to show up cannot be applied. The reason is that it is not the Center, but the donor of orphans that is the source of financial benefits. The donor financially adopts one or more orphan children from a family on an individual basis through the Center. The latter does not pool donations. In the end, the Center's role in the financial aid relationship with orphans is merely one of distribution. The relationship itself is ultimately of a personal nature, between the individual donor and the orphan and his or her family. It is the donor who determines the fate of his or her donations.

However, the nature of relationships between donors and the social workers of the center is also often personal and close. Donors regularly visit the center and ask about the situation of the client family he or she is supporting. Workers of the tarbawiyyah department regularly write reports about this situation, including the participation of an orphan child in the educational programs, the latter's behavior, whether or not s/he attends and the extent to which s/he is motivated.[64] ICCS instructions for social workers state that the "behavior, interaction and activities" of orphan children and their parents must be observed at the premises of the center itself, in their homes and in "society," by which is meant public spaces like the street, the market and the play-ground.[65] The reports on these matters are handed over to the social investigator who keeps in touch with the director as well as the donors. If a donor hears that the orphan child s/he supports does not go to school or to the center's educational programs and prefers merely to loiter in the street, it is up to the donor to do something about this. In such a way, disciplinary measures against clients who do not satisfy the ICCS Center's requirements depend on the personal interactions between donors and the workers of the center, which are of a relatively horizontal nature. The donor, in turn, may utilize the vertical patron-client nature of his or her relationship with the client family to take any measure he or she deems fit.[66]

Obviously, an educational and cultural program for needy clients that is strongly imbued with a clear Islamist discourse serves here as an instrument to dominate and discipline in the framework of a relationship characterized by patronage and dependency. This discourse reinforces the process of disciplining by stressing values like patience and gratitude toward what is accorded to them by God, and the concomitant condemnation of jealousy, envy and greed.[67] A certain emphasis on work ethics and a moral condemnation of idleness and "unjustified" begging also forms a part of the same discourse.[68] Benefits offered by the ICCS centers to the clients are donated by others "for the sake of God." This implies that they are ultimately to be regarded as gifts from God Himself. We see here that patterns of disciplining are grounded in a duty-based religious discourse. This discourse presumes that if people of all economic strata observe such duties toward God, peace and harmony will prevail in society.

The institutionalized dissemination of this discourse by ICCS centers may contribute to the relatively high degree of discipline taking place at its distributions of financial and in-kind assistance, besides their rational procedures of aid distribution. However, the fact that not all families are as faithful in sending their children to the educational courses of Al-'Abura Center also indicates the limits of this disciplinary approach. As will be illustrated in the chapter on childhood development development activities, this failure can in large measure be attributed to these families' need to prioritize immediate economic survival over the need to attend the Center's educational programs.

Other Associations

The Identification of Needy Beneficiaries

In terms of formal and socio-economic criteria, the selection process of needy clients among voluntary Associations not involved (or to a significantly lesser extent involved) in The Muslim Brotherhood-dominated network is not largely different. For, social workers of non-Islamist associations also pay home-visits to aid applicants, collect the necessary papers from them, make use of relations in the local community based upon social trust to help in the process of verification of need, and so on. What is different is that, unlike those with connections to The Muslim Brotherhood, these associations are not established on the basis of a well-defined political and/or religious ideology and doctrine; and thus, they are generally less prone to discriminate in the selection process of beneficiaries along religious or political lines. This is not to say, of course, that discrimination along different lines – ethnicity, tribe or family – does not play a role. Voluntary associations of different backgrounds have different (but possibly also overlapping) social networks that will have different impacts on the selection process.

There is nothing uniquely Islamist about concern with the moral reputation of aid applicants. Any association that is serious about reaching out to the needy also cares about its own reputation and likes to be sure that any aid provided will truly satisfy needs. Conversely, no association likes the idea of inadvertently financing criminal or "immoral" practices in the local community. Moreover, not being Islamist or Muslim Brotherhood-oriented does not necessarily mean being less pious. Moral considerations regarding the selection of beneficiaries may very well play a part in a similar religious discourse as that engaged in by The Brotherhood-affiliated associations.

The Islamic Welfare Society of Salt, for instance, mainly focuses on activities relating to (largely religious) education and training. However, it also distributes aid to the needy on an occasional basis, in particular during Ramadan. The Society tries to implement the principle of "narrowing the gap between rich and poor" by selecting as beneficiaries the severest of cases from among the needy families in Salt. This includes orphan or fatherless families without children of working age, widows lacking support, poor families with a sick or disabled father, but also families in which the father is an alcoholic and/or (criminal) prisoner.[69]

Approaches toward Aid Distribution

Small associations usually do not have the means at their disposal to build up a structural relationship with needy clients in which disciplinary processes take place frequently and over a long period of time. However, patterns of dependency, inequality in power and status as well as discipline can also be observed at the events of aid distribution that such associations organize on an occasional basis.

I attended one distribution of in-kind assistance during Ramadan that was held by the Association of the Righteous in Jabal Luweibdeh – a relatively old neighborhood in Amman inhabited by mainly middle class people though also counting a number of needy families – where the social gap between the association's members and the recipients was immediately obvious. This women's association consists of a kindergarten that charges relatively low fees, and of religious courses on subjects relating to the Qur'an and Hadith for adult women. When I arrived at the kindergarten, between one and two dozen shopping bags containing food items such as rice, yogurt, sugar and chicken were placed in the small schoolyard. Needy recipients, always mothers or children, came to take these bags. The association's members took great care that everyone got the right portion and sometimes quizzed the beneficiaries on details regarding the family, to make sure that the correct amount of aid would go to the correct beneficiaries. After the sound of the *mu'adhdhin* from the mosque, the festive part of the event began in the form of the 'iftar meal, which breaks the fast after sunset. The meal was shared among the inner friendship circle of association members, who, if their rounds of laughter were anything to judge by, clearly enjoyed it. The poor beneficiaries were entirely absent from this occasion.[70]

The humanistic orientation of the more progressive Al-Faruq Society for Orphans in Irbid is also reflected in their ideas and practices related to aid distribution. In contrast to other such associations, the Society takes the perspective of the client family seriously. Thus the form distributed to all applicants includes a question on "The family's view on how to solve their own state of (economic and social) vulnerability."[71] Such a question is not to be found on the social investigation forms of ICCS centres like Al-'Abura. Seemingly, Al-Faruq Society gives greater room to the subjective experiences and views of its clients, and does not try to marginalize these in the name of an "objective" duty-based religious discourse instructing them to be patient and thankful. The Society's board members are also well aware of potential feelings of humiliation which being a needy client of charitable aid entails. To avoid such feelings in the distribution process as much as possible, they let the orphan-families open their own bank accounts and transfer the monthly financial benefits to the family in question. The Society does not object to personal visits by donors, who like to have a better idea about who they are supporting, to client-families. Al-Faruq Society itself arranges such visits, similar to the ICCS.[72]

The relatively humanistic and rights-oriented approach of Al-Faruq Society also translates itself in its policy regarding aid in kind. Clients are summoned to its premises only if there is a large amount of goods, such as food, clothes, blankets, mattresses or heaters, to distribute. This is especially the case during Ramadan, or when it concerns items for protection against the cold during the winter, such as blankets and stoves. Such central distributions take place in the school building of the association in the Palestinian refugee camp of Irbid.

The Society tries to integrate such distributions into its vision of the empowerment and the human dignity of its recipients. It does so by involving mothers of client families in the distribution activity. In this way, it tries to strengthen the relationship between the association and the client population and to smooth communication between the two sides. One such mother told me that it gave her a good feeling to do something in return for the association. Volunteering in distribution activity also has a social dimension: the mother in question heard from other orphan mothers during the distribution about their experiences and problems. When needed, she referred them to the president of the association to discuss such matters with him.[73]

In the case of small amounts of goods for distribution, Al-Faruq Society's workers will prefer to bring them to the houses of the people themselves, since they regard it as "humiliating" and "shameful" for them, in the words of the president, to insist that they must always make the trip to the association to pick it up. There is also the practical consideration that there are client-families that live in faraway places, like villages. The association will always bring their share of aid-in kind to their houses.[74]

Practical considerations of distance also play a role in aid distribution practices of other associations, including Islamist ones. The members of the Islamic Bani Hassan Welfare Association in Zarqa and those of the Southern Society for Special Education in Ma'an also bring aid to client-families who live in faraway villages.[75] A very different form of aid-distribution from door to door is practiced by the Orthodox Welfare Association in Fuheis. Besides distributing financial gifts to a few dozen needy families at the time of Christmas and of Easter, it distributes Christmas presents to them at Christmas time. Members of the association dressed as Father Christmas will go to their houses and hand over the presents.[76]

Satisfaction of Needs

If ICCS centers for orphans and poor – part of an extensive Islamist network capable of mustering vast resources of money, expertise and profitable social relations – are not able to adequately satisfy the basic needs of their clients, it is not surprising that other NGOs lacking such networks cannot do so either.

Despite their limitations, services provided by these voluntary associations often do make a significant difference to the lives of needy people. This is especially the case regarding the financially, organizationally and socially stronger associations. A single and divorced mother and her son who are clients of Al-Faruq Society, for instance, receive a monthly benefit of 20 Jordanian Dinar from this Society, on top of a monthly benefit of 50 Jordanian Dinar from the Government-run National Aid Fund. This financial aid is several times a year supplemented by the Society in the form of in-kind assistance, such as food, clothes and medicines. Al-Faruq Society's health center provides the mother with medicines free-of-charge for her psychological treatment. Meanwhile, at the beginning of each school year, her son receives a schoolbag from the Society with the necessary stationary for study. At the time of fieldwork, the Society even intended to enable them to travel and and settle in Pakistan, where her father's family lives, by paying for the airplane tickets.[77]

Enabling Aid, Waiving Fees and Offering Discounts

No clear-cut difference in the practical translation of Islamic social ethics pertaining to the duty of the strong to help the weak, and the bridging of the gaps between rich and poor, can be detected between, on the one hand, Islamist associations like the ICCS and, on the other, non-Islamist ones, like Al-Faruq Society and its peers.

The Al-Faruq Society has made efforts to integrate principles of (Islamic) social solidarity in its institutional setup.[78] It holds, for instance, a fund allocated to young orphan-boys and girls that excel academically so that they receive higher level vocational training or even university education.[79] Moreover, the educational center that the Society runs tries to implement the concept of social solidarity by allowing children from orphan families to enroll in its school-classes free-of-charge, and offers discounts to non-orphan children from poor families. This center consists of a primary school, a kindergarten and a nursery. Indeed, most children receiving an education there are not clients of the Society, but come from families of various socio-economic backgrounds in the Palestinian refugee camp of Irbid and its vicinity. As is the case with the ICCS run schools, the preservation of educational quality requires sufficient income for the educational center. To a large extent, this income is provided by parents who are capable of paying the monthly tuition-fees of 12 JD for their children.[80] Thus, the percentage of orphan children allowed to enroll free-of-charge does not exceed 20% in each school class. In the words of the Society's president: "every four children at the school have to subsidize one orphan-child." True to the principle of serving the weakest first, orphans from the largest and poorest families – since these suffer most from school-expenses – are the first to be granted free entry. However, the Society claims that it can afford only one child per orphan family on a free-of-charge basis. The client families do receive support from the Society in meeting the costs related to education in schools in general, such as books, stationary and uniforms. Al-Faruq Society also admits a limited number of non-orphan poor children to its educational center on the basis of a discount of between 30 and 50% of the tuition fees.[81]

Al-Faruq Society's medical center also endeavours to put the principle of social solidarity into concrete practice. This center functions as a polyclinic offering services in fields like general medicine, gynecology, pediatrics, dentistry and physiotherapy. All orphan children and their mothers are admitted to it free-of-charge. Other patients pay according to their level of income. And many pay only half the amount the price that regular private clinics charge.[82] Like ICCS centers, clients can participate on a free-of-charge basis in the social, cultural and vocational courses and trainings offered by Al-Faruq Society.[83]

There are also examples of associations that waive fees or offer discounts to needy persons that are supported by other people or institutions with which the particular association enjoys a cooperative relationship. A case in point is the sewing course offered by the Islamic Anwar Al-Huda Welfare Association in Amman. Any woman living in Wadi Sir, where the association is located, can participate in this course, irrespective of socio-economic status. In principle, the fee for a participant is 5 JD. Some participants are poor, however, and thus exempted from paying. They are often mothers of orphans who live in an orphanage with which the association maintains a close relationship. In such cases, the orphanage pays the fees for the mothers in question to the Anwar Al-Huda Association.[84] To enable its own needy clients to obtain medical aid, this association makes use of its local social networks as well. Members of the association ask doctors or pharmacies in Wadi Sir with whom they are familiar to provide medicine free-of-charge to their clients. Such requests are often successful, as long as the treatments do not become long-term.[85]

As a final example of offering aid free-of-charge and implementing the Islamic principle of selfless caring for the weak, the role of associations running orphanage institutions should be mentioned. Accepting children who miss both, or one of their parents, and whose families are financially unable to take care of them, these institutions provide housing, nutrition, clothes, health care, upbringing, education and leisure activities to orphans for free. In exceptional cases, children whose parents are both alive but suffer in conditions of extreme poverty are also accepted.[86]

The Question of Ideological Manipulation

Do non-Islamist associations, such as Al-Faruq Society, also manipulate the aid relationship they have with their clients? In the case of Al-Faruq Society, we find the same essential ingredients – a dependency based relationship between, on the one hand, a predominantly middle class group of service providers and, on the other, a group of economically, socially and often psychologically vulnerable clients – as exist between the Islamist NGOs and their clients. Such a relationship also gives Al-Faruq Society a degree of (paternalistic) power over its clients' lives and an ability to push the latter to change in a direction that is considered best for them. In terms of influence, the fact that the Society's president regards himself explicitly as a "father" figure for the orphans is telling.[87] While donations to Al-Faruq Society's orphan clients are not meant to finance a program of "obligatory schooling" for the latter, as is the case with the ICCS, it does offer its client families courses on topics like religion, hygiene and the upbringing of children designed by organizations like UNICEF.[88] A client family that needs the Society's aid badly may, psychologically speaking, have difficulty with openly resisting such offers, since it will prefer to satisfy rather than disturb the relationship with the Society's members and workers.[89] In other words, even if their means and discourse differ, Al Faruq Society, like the ICCS, utilizes its aid-relationship with its clients to promote its own vision of what is best for society as a whole. While "promoting" does not mean the same as "imposing," by virtue of being the main provider of aid, Al-Faruq Society seems to be in a position of power to induce clients to do what it likes them to do.

Conclusion

Financial aid and aid in kind to needy people is by nature strongly dependency-reinforcing. We have spoken of simple and direct forms of aid helping the beneficiaries to survive and to enjoy certain essential daily services (in particular, those services associated with health and education). The importance of such services to the lives and even the life chances of the needy should not be underestimated. Though underfunded and hence limited in their power to do good, they provide food, clothing, education and medical aid to people who would otherwise lack such essentials. However, the voluntary association determines the criteria of eligibility, the mode of distribution and the following-up on aid. The recipients, in turn, passively receive as far as the aid itself is concerned.

Being in the position of aid provider to dependent needy clients provides associations with a degree of disciplinary power over the former. This is especially true for larger associations that have enough resources to entertain an ongoing and structural aid relationship with clients. Since a relationship of socio-economic inequality and dependency between middle class based voluntary associations and needy recipients is a given, however, the question of the aim of using disciplinary power as well as its mode of using it is essential here. Discipline is not, by definition, humiliating or degrading to one's sense of dignity. Even Michel Foucault, the most prominent critic of (the evils of) modern disciplinary power structures has observed that (disciplinary) power "doesn't only weigh on us as a force that says no…it traverses and produces things, it induces pleasure, forms knowledge, produces discourse." According to Foucault, it is for these reasons that people who are subjected to disciplinary power consent with and accept it.[90] I would like to add to this observation that, while discipline often serves to reinforce dependency, it may also be instrumental in empowering people, as is reflected in the NGOs' financial support and their own services in the fields of education, health care, culture and (vocational) training.

Especially in the case of the Islamist NGOs, disciplinary practices are used to cultivate a dependency relationship between needy clients who are often deemed socially and religiously "ignorant," and NGO members and workers who claim to "know better." This dependency-based relationship is utilized to expose these clients to a religious discourse that emphasizes human dependency on God. The discourse claims to empower needy people to improve their chances in this life as well as in the hereafter by inculcating values – i.e. patience, thankfulness, learning and work ethics, good manners and love for others – that are derived from an equally dependent relationship with the divine. The pious and balanced Islamic personality is empowered to attain true happiness and success. The ICCS tries to contribute to this endeavor by utilizing the aid relationship with the needy clients to educate them in this vein and "make them progress" in religious consciousness, the quality of family life, the upbringing of children, school education, health and hygiene, moral behavior in public life, etc. This topic will be dealt with in greater detail in Chapters 13 and 14. It is the proclaimed knowledge gap between ICCS members and workers on the one hand and the clients on the other that serves as a justification for practices of discipline reinforcing a relationship of dependency.

The emphasis placed on discipline by small associations that provide aid on an occasional basis to needy clients is largely confined to procedural matters. Such matters pertain to a selection of deserving beneficiaries as well as to the distribution of, and following-up on, the aid itself. Even among them, however, religiously legitimized moral interference in the beneficiaries' lives on issues – an interest, for instance, in how money is spent, or in how family relationships are conducted – may occur, albeit in a less institutionalized form than within a large association like the ICCS. For the smaller associations, it rather takes place through the admonishment towards certain ethical choices of clients on an individual basis (at the association's office or through home visits), and not through group activities and courses.[91]

The more secular and developmentalist discourse of Al-Faruq Society emphasizes the empowerment of the needy as a goal in itself. This goes hand in hand with attempts to minimize the humiliation that a relationship that is entirely dependent on financial and in-kind aid entails. In its view, empowering the poor must take place through methods emphasizing the clients' rights and possibilities, instead of coercive means practiced by an ICCS center like Al-'Abura that go hand in hand with a stronger discursive emphasis on duty.

As regards the modes of discipline involved in Jordanian aid distribution, we see that there exist patterns of legal-rational as well as traditional authority in Max Weber's understanding of these terms.[92] Legal rational authority can be observed in practices like the use of formally uniform criteria and procedures in the identification of eligible beneficiaries, in the following-up on aid and the rational norms of fair distribution. Traditional authority, of a more personal nature, can be discerned in the usage of the personal social status of some of the association's members or workers (a good example is the respected imam who also works as a social investigator for Al-'Abura Center). It can also be discerned in contacts with authoritative figures in the neighborhood in the process of verifying need. The same goes for the role of the Associations' president or director as a dominant father (in the case of women's associations mother) figure to whom clients are directly referred to discuss certain problems, requests and questions and the moral surveillance of clients by the association's workers. The role of personal interaction between donors and association members in the process of disciplining clients to let them participate in educational programs at ICCS center Al-'Abura illustrates the same pattern of personal authority.

To summarize, the legal-rational form of the Muslim voluntary associations' practices in the realm of financial and in-kind assistance contains much traditional and personal authority in its daily substance. While the extent and form of disciplining differs from association to association, no clear difference can be established in the choice of Islamic concepts and terminology. All of them share a common lexicon that speaks of giving to the needy fi sabil li-llah, of the value of harmony, patience, care (takaful), love (mahabbah) and mutual tolerance (tasamuh), as well as of the need to narrow the gap between rich and poor and of serving the weakest to achieve this. It is the contrasting ways in which such concepts relate to their aid practices as well as to their interaction, or the lack thereof, with non-Islamic development actors and approaches that differences between the various associations can be discerned.

12. Employment-Oriented Activities

Apart from direct aid, representatives of many voluntary associations also underline their efforts to enable their clients to become economically independent. In part, these efforts are motivated by the ethical conviction that self-reliance and the economic empowerment of the needy is preferable to allowing them to remain in a state of dependency. This conviction is often supported by (and rationalized through) Islamic beliefs regarding human dignity. Murad al-Adeileh of the ICCS Social Care Council (the supervisory body of all ICCS centers for orphans and poor in the Kingdom) argues, for instance, that remaining a passive recipient of aid is, in the long run, bad for one's dignity. Those who are able to rely upon themselves to make a living must be encouraged to do so. He considers the hadith in which the Prophet Muhammad states that whoever meets a hungry person asking for help should give him an axe to earn his own bread, rather than a piece of bread to eat, an important religious basis for the idea of economic empowerment and self-reliance. Many members of other Islamic voluntary associations agree.[1] On another level, working for economic empowerment is also motivated by the associations' desire to decrease the number of clients dependent on their financial and in kind aid, and thereby to save their own resources.[2]

Activities to find employment-opportunities for clients by associations might be divided into three different types: a) offering opportunities for vocational training; b) looking for jobs in the labor market; c) sponsoring income-generating projects. In this chapter, these three types of activities, undertaken by various associations, will be described. Limited empirical observations could be made regarding some of these projects. Information on others is drawn mainly from interviews. It should be born in mind that here is presented a record of these associations' discourse on themselves, rather than an objective external assessment of their efficacy and/or success.

Vocational Training

Vocational training services provided by voluntary associations cannot be put into perspective without mentioning the role of the state in this field. The state is actively concerned with providing young Jordanian jobseekers, men and women alike, with skills required by the country's job market. The government-run Vocational Training Corporation (VTC) fulfills this function. Moreover, in addition to lectures on various social and health issues pertaining to youth, the elderly, children and/or the family in general, the Community Development Centers of the Ministry for Social Development, distributed throughout the Kingdom, offer vocational training programs in a wide variety of areas, such as sewing, weaving, computer skills, mechanics, shoe-making and hairdressing. Another task of the Ministry is to assist voluntary associations with setting up such training programs.[3] Here, vocational training programs offered by NGOs may be regarded as supplementary to state policies and programs.

Remarkable in the case of the Muslim voluntary welfare associations dealt with in this study is the overwhelming number of courses designed for female trainees. All the associations who have set up such programs seem to provide courses, in fields like sewing, tricot, embroidery, hairdressing, food preparation, glass painting and typing, exclusively for women. Some of these associations are run entirely by women, others are generally male-run, but employ female staff.[4] Apparently, Muslim Voluntary Associations attach a high priority to the development women's vocational skills to enable them to play a useful role in contributing to the family income, even though these skills can often be regarded as traditionally female.[5]

Some of the vocational training courses by associations have only a certain category of women as their target, such as orphan girls or women from broken and poor families. Other associations emphasize that their courses are open to any interested woman living in the area the association is serving, regardless of socio-economic status. Muslim associations offering such programs also emphasise that their Islamic nature generally has a reassuring impact upon traditional Muslim families who may otherwise be reluctant to let their daughters go outdoors to participate in vocational training. This is the case because Islamic associations are expected to uphold certain moral values, such as gender separation and chastity.[6] However, economic need may in some cases bring lower class young Muslim women to follow training courses or to work in "non-Islamic" places as well. Some Muslim women from Palestinian refugee camps, for instance, attend vocational training courses provided by the Middle Eastern Council of Churches or even work in industrial companies that are largely Israeli-owned.[7]

Apart from skills considered gender-neutral, relating to computer usage for instance, Muslim associations obviously presume that only certain jobs and vocations befit men, while others naturally befit women. Attributing gender division and separation solely to the religious ideology of these associations would be misleading, however. Any association serving needy communities, whether it is religious or secular, foreign or local, has to take the cultural perceptions and sensitivities of its target group into consideration.

The British development organization Questscope, for instance, which works for children from broken or socially weak families, also observes a clear-cut gender-based division regarding vocational training. It sends boys to the Vocational Training Corporation to train their technical skills, or helps them to establish small commercial ventures, while girls are trained in vocations such as sewing, embroidery or cooking.[8]

The biggest project set up by an Islamic NGO in the area of vocational training is undoubtedly the Islamic Community College in Zarqa, run by the ICCS. This school for higher vocational education is open to female students only. There are around 1000 students and a wide variety of subjects, including shari‘ah, social work, English, Arabic, Kindergarten teaching, pharmacy, sewing, accounting, computer-skills and management, are taught.[9]

Regarding ICCS centers for orphans and poor, most of their vocational training facilities are exclusively for girls and women, in particular orphans and widows. The Al-‘Abura Center has two vocational training workshops: one for sewing and tailoring and the other for the production of food, in particular pastries and sweets.[10] Whether these workshops may be seen as part of a conscious endeavor to promote the economic empowerment of women is questionable: according to the head of the Center’s male department, training in such fields is part of a teenage girl’s preparation for her future role as housewife. Food products as well as clothing produced at the center are marketed and sold. The women (mainly older orphan girls and their mothers) working there earn a modest salary.[11] Some teachers at Al-‘Abura’s vocational training center used to be orphan girls themselves and had initially been trained there, as the center’s male head of the educational department proudly mentioned.[12] The food production instructor is a widow from the Al-Hussein refugee camp and a mother of orphans.[13]

Apart from its own vocational training programs, Al-‘Abura Center’s workers state that they arrange for places in government-run vocational training centers for teenagers among the orphans, especially when they have difficulties with learning in a regular school. Orphans sent to external training centers are almost always boys. Families of orphans are often reluctant to send their daughters to a center outside of the camp, due to traditional beliefs regarding gender roles.[14]

Other ICCS centers for orphans and the poor offer similar vocational training courses, in particular sewing and tricot.[15] The center in Jabal al-Zuhur, in southern Amman, also teaches hairdressing.[16] Women and girls who follow training in sewing at the ICCS center in Al-Wihdat camp may receive a sewing machine in order to work at home to earn a living and become economically self-reliant, according to the director.[17] In its brochure, the Social Care Council of the ICCS also mentions training courses preparing male orphans to work as carpenters, smith and electricians.[18]

So far, Al-Faruq Society in Irbid does not have workshop-facilities on its premises, although teenage orphan boys served by it may participate in training in certain technical skills, such as repair, carpentry and computer programming, at the Youth Center of Irbid Refugee Camp. Girls receive some training in sewing, cooking and assembling artificial flowers at the Society's girls' committee.[19] Toward the end of my fieldwork period, at the beginning of 2004, the Society had plans to open a vocational training center for boys and girls, in fields such as computer program design and embroidery with the help of a state subsidy.[20] The Al-Faruq Society, like the ICCS center Al-'Abura, reportedly looks for vocational training opportunities for orphan teenagers at external institutions, in particular for those who do not well in regular schools.[21]

Another special target group for vocational training by (Muslim) NGOs is the handicapped. The Young Women's Muslim Association (YWMA), patronized by Princess Sarvath, has a vocational training program for mentally retarded youth who are educated in its special school. They are trained in skills such as weaving, gardening, ceramics and carpentry. During the first year, they receive introductory courses in all those vocations. Following that year it is decided, after consultation with the children and their parents, in which area they are going to specialize. Mentally retarded students earn the very modest amount of 15 JD a month with their work. In the case of piecework, they may earn up to 25 JD a month. Handicraft works produced by them are sold in bazaars.[22]

In some cases, associations working with deaf children also offer vocational training projects for the latter. At the medical center run by the Southern Society for Special Education in Ma'an, a few young deaf women are employed to produce hearing moulds, essential to the functioning of hearing aids, under the supervision of the centre's staff.[23] In 2003 and 4, the Al-'Aqsa Association in Madaba was planning to set up a new primary and secondary school for deaf girls in the town. For those of 15 years and older, a workshop for the making of hearing-moulds was to be built. Also a hairdressing saloon, a sewing workshop and a computer lab, each of them for training-purposes, were planned for these girls.[24]

Several other voluntary welfare associations offer vocational training courses to the general public, in particular women.[25] The sewing course offered by the Islamic Bani Hassan Welfare Association goes some way towards fulfilling the stated goal of "raising the status of women." According to workers at the association, 50 women in total had obtained a certificate in its sewing course by 2001.[26] The course is open to all women who are interested; the needy may participate for free. Repairing as well as tailoring clothes is taught to the participants, as the workers told me. This is meant to enable them to work and sell at home, a convenience for mothers and housewives. After obtaining the certificate, the women can turn to the Women's Income Fund, a governmental institution, for a loan to buy a Tricot-sewing machine for themselves.[27] The-all male Al-Urwa Al-Wuthqa association in Amman reportedly finances the participation in sewing courses and the provision of sewing machines to young girls from needy families with the aim of providing them with a source of income.[28] The Islamic Welfare Society in Salt offers computer courses to young men and women, in order to enhance their skills in programs such as Windows, Word, and Excell, and in navigating the Internet. The certificates participants obtain often helps them gain access to secretarial jobs in the public or the private sector.[29]

Looking for Jobs

Apart from training orphans, the poor and needy for the labor market, several NGOs make efforts to find jobs for clients through mediation and the utilizing of social networks. In particular, associations with an extensive network including donors and others working in business or enjoying strong ties with employers are successful in this endeavor. Associations focusing on continuous care for and development of children and youth, in particular orphans, seem to be most active in finding jobs for them once the latter have reached adulthood. Smaller associations with a more limited donor network and/or a less intensive contact with client families seem to have less capability or incentive to carry out this task for the clients.[30]

ICCS centers have an extensive network involving members, workers, donors, clients or relatives who are well placed at several types of businesses or other employing institutions. Orphan and poor children may find jobs there once they reach 15 years old. In Al-'Abura Center, jobs may even be found for children of a younger age who do not do well in school, provided that the workplace is "trustworthy." Requests from families of orphans to find a job mostly occurs in the case of boys, but sometimes also with girls.[31] The supervisor of the female section of Al-'Abura Center singles out two main responsibilities as: "finding job opportunities for those who would rather work than study, and teaching them a profession to work with."[32]

The director of the ICCS center for poor and orphans in Al-Wihdat refugee camp claims that computer courses provided by his center enables many orphans, boys as well as girls, to work in places like printing shops, graphic design companies and as secretaries in offices. As he told me, upon graduating some orphans from its computer courses will be employed by the Center itself before later finding work elsewhere. Likewise, there are orphans who first find a job as a teacher in the center, and are later employed as a teacher in a school.[33]

Al-Faruq Society in Irbid also tries to find jobs for its orphan clients. It insists, however, that they must have completed their education or vocational training first. Jobs are found in various fields: technical jobs mostly for orphan boys; factory work for boys as well as for girls (unlike Al-'Abura Center); and jobs for both sexes in the educational and health sector.[34] Finding jobs for their clients is not always easy, according to the workers. It is particularly hard to find something for them in the public sector, because prevailing wastah practices put Palestinian job seekers at a distinct disadvantage. Al-Faruq Society is more successful in finding jobs for their orphan clients in the private sector, where it enjoys significantly stronger social connections.[35] According to the president, two dozen orphan families have benefited from such mediation efforts by the Society.[36] Like ICCS centers, Al-Faruq Society deals with children who have learning problems at regular schools and helps them to find a place in a vocational school or training center. Unlike the ICCS, however, letting children at school age drop out and work instead in certain places considered to be "trustworthy" is something the Al-Faruq Society rejects out of principle. For the sake of their future, children must learn and train first, the Society insists.[37]

Some voluntary associations point to the people they themselves employ as proof of their commitment to alleviating unemployment and poverty. Such employees may otherwise have been jobless and destitute.

The president of Al-Faruq Society points to the dozens of doctors, nurses, teachers and other personnel working in its health and educational centers.[38] Likewise, the President of the Southern Society for Special Education in Ma'an points to its 60 employees – including audiologists, physiotherapists, speech therapists, computer training teachers, school teachers, outreach workers, doctors, nurses and assisting staff – to show that his Society makes a valuable contribution in generating employment and providing income to families.[39] Given the high rate of unemployment in Jordan, which stands officially at 15%, and the practices of wastah prevalent in the public sector, it is probable that some voluntary associations do provide jobs to skilled persons from the middle classes who otherwise would have great difficulty in finding employment suitable to their training or educational level.

Income-Generating Projects

More purposeful and deliberate in terms of economic empowerment and providing jobs to the needy are income-generating projects aimed to foster economic self-reliance and productivity among poor and/or unemployed families. In such projects, a needy family receives capital in the form of a loan, a gift and possibly also equipment from a governmental or non-governmental institution in order to set up a business. Empowering the needy socio-economically is an aim advocated by the Jordanian state as well as by Jordan's foreign donors and development partners. We may even speak of a state-promoted discursive trend in which traditional alms giving is regarded as a necessary evil at best, and as a negative dependency-reinforcing practice at worst. According to this discourse, the ultimate aim of social care and support for the needy must be their socio-economic self-reliance.[40]

This topic of discourse is translated into actual policies. In 2003, for instance, the National Aid Fund, a branch of the Ministry for Social Development that provides monthly financial allowances to families deprived of any income out of work, embarked on a new policy according to which financial support for jobless families is conditioned upon the readiness of their able members to participate in vocational training or income-generating projects.[41] The Ministry makes use of NGOs to carry out income-generating projects for needy families. Its Community Development Centers, present in various urban neighborhoods and rural areas, have the task of supporting NGOs financially and through their technical expertise and experience gained from establishing and running these projects.[42]

During my last meeting with the accountant of the Islamic Bani Hassan Welfare Association in Zarqa, he spoke enthusiastically about concrete plans to establish some 15 income-generating projects in cooperation with the Ministry of Social Development. It is, however, not only the state that tries to pursue policies of fostering socio-economic self-reliance. Already in the 1970s, debates on how to shift from a traditional welfare approach to a modern development approach had grown increasingly popular within Jordanian intellectual circles, the government, the media and the NGO sector alike (see Chapter 6). Ideas on modern social development and fostering self-reliance were put into practice on a large scale by the royal NGOs.

The Jordanian Hashemite Fund for Human Development (JOHUD) has, since the end of the 1970s, focused on establishing income-generating projects with the general aim of strengthening the grip of needy families and communities on their own socio-economic situation. The Fund's underlying philosophy is the promotion of democratic values of participation in social and political development. Its credit program provides loans, as well as advice and training, to jobless families in order to enable them to establish small businesses in the sphere of agriculture, food production, handicraft making, cattle-raising, sewing, repairing clothes and the like. The loans are provided either directly by the Fund or through smaller local NGOs.[43] Hundreds of such projects have been established. Especially women are targeted as potential micro-finance entrepreneurs. According to the Fund's figures from 1997, 512 families benefited from its home-gardening project alone.[44]

Virtually all of the Muslim NGOs included in this study are, in one way or another, also affected by this debate. Several of them have been engaged in setting up income-generating projects for the needy. Thus, representatives of NGOs, e.g. the ICCS, the Al-Faruq Society in Irbid, the Islamic Welfare Society in Salt, and the Al-'Aqsa Association in Madaba are all able to mention implemented projects, such as the provision of sewing machines to needy clients, and providing credits or grants to needy families to set up businesses. Such businesses may be in the spheres of stock-breeding (cows, sheep or rabbits), or of agriculture (farming of thyme, lentils, barley or medicinal herbs as well as beekeeping). They may also consist of grocery stores or other kinds of shops or of workplaces, in fields like shoe-making, or photography.

The extent to which these projects succeed in bringing their beneficiaries out of the cycle of poverty, improving their situation in terms of income and, most importantly, empowering them in terms of socio-economic capabilities and opportunities cannot be established with any degree of certainty on the basis of the findings of this research.[45] Some NGOs are candid enough to admit that some projects are less successful than others, and that some of them fail outright. This was the case with agricultural projects set up under the supervision of Al-Faruq Society in Irbid, for instance.

Apart from the sheep-raising and bee-keeping projects, the agricultural projects did not last. Families running them worked on land rented by the Society from landowners on the basis of a contract of 5 years. Their revenues turned out not to be sufficiently profitable. Only the sheep-breeding and beekeeping farms have lasted until the present day, since the families in question have been able to buy the land on which they worked.[46]

Nawal Al-Faʻuri of Al-ʼAqsa Assocation in Madaba speaks about ten families, whose only or main breadwinners are women, that were helped by her association in setting up income-generating projects in the sphere of stockbreeding, gardening or agriculture, through the provision of micro-credits, support and counsel. It also arranges for the training of the participant women in fields like management and marketing with institutions like the Ministry of Planning or the General Federation of Jordanian Women. According to Al-Faʻuri, the projects are, generally speaking, doing well, but she admits that success varies "depending on the possibilities and capabilities of the families involved."[47]

There is reason to believe that (lack of) experience and knowledge from the side of NGOs themselves is another decisive factor in the (lack of) success of income-generating projects. Strong will and motivation on the part of the NGO are by themselves insufficient guarantees for successful development efforts, after all. Walid Hammad mentions in his book on Jordanian women's NGOs and sustainable development the constraints these NGOs are facing, such as lack of financial means, training, accounting skills and fund raising ability as hampering factors in such efforts, especially in the case of smaller associations.[48]

Interviews with such associations' representatives make clear, however, that there is an active interest on their part in making a fundamental difference to the lives of needy beneficiaries. This they plan to do by helping them establish income-generating projects, and learning from past mistakes in order to make these more successful. By the time of fieldwork, Al-Faruq Society had decided to adopt a program of providing credits to the orphan families to set up their own business projects, instead of the grants it used to provide in the past. Its members had reached the conclusion that providing loans gives more of an incentive to those families to make their efforts, since they will have to earn the money lent back to them. This will give these families the sense that the project is, in its entirety, the result of their own efforts – psychologically favorable in terms of building self-worth and dignity and, therefore, of generating success.[49] According to the Society's representatives, it was contacts with international humanitarian organizations that gave them the push to start anew with income-generating projects on the basis of micro-credit.[50]

Principled reflection on how to go about establishing such projects also takes place at a value rational level and may involve religious discourse. Al-Faruq Society clearly shows itself as a religiously inspired Muslim association when it voices objection to the fact that the GUVS credit program involves the taking of interest.[51] After all, such an objection is motivated purely in terms of Islamic principles. During one of my visits, the president of the Society was arguing with one of the other staff members about taking credits from a bank and, more specifically, whether this had been done in the "Islamic way."[52] In the eyes of Al-Faruq Society's members, however, religious rules in this instance do not simply apply for their own sake; rather, they argue that, for their poor beneficiaries, it is often difficult if not impossible to pay back the interest. In their view, such down-to earth considerations of social solidarity are intertwined with religious ethics.[53]

The same Islamic socio-ethical considerations regarding the issue of charging interest could be heard at the Khawla' Bint Al-Azwar Association, working for teenage school-dropout girls in a working class area of the industrial city of Zarqa, as was mentioned already in Chapter 10. This association has a handicraft-workplace in which the girls as well as their mothers participate. Activities taking place there include embroidery, glass painting and other forms of popular art. The double aim of this project is to provide the participants with a source of income and to enhance their sense of dignity and self esteem. The associations' members told me that the products of the handicraft program are sold at fairs in various institutions, such as schools with which the association members maintain personal contacts, the Zarqa department of the Ministry for Social Development and the Zakah Fund, which resorts under the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs.[54] Half of the profits are paid as wages to the participating girls and mothers, and the other half goes to the treasury of the Association.[55] At the time of fieldwork, the association bought the raw materials for the girls and their mothers. In order to make the women in question more independent, the association hoped to be able to obtain funds for (riba'-free) credits to enable the women to buy the necessary materials and items by themselves.[56] With the help of

British development association Questscope, it tried to obtain such funds from an international church-based NGO like CARITAS.

In the case of the Al-'Aqsa Association in Madaba too do we see the connection between cooperation with a variety of development actors, including governmental and foreign institutions, and a strong motivation to carry out projects of economic empowerment. The Association's projects' credits are financed by the Ministry of Social Development, the GUVS, the Jordanian Hashemite Fund and the Canadian Embassy.[57] Al-Fa'uri motivates her social development activities with the conviction that Islam means working for change for the better and a willingness to learn from the outside (including non-Muslim) world to that end.[58]

These examples of development-oriented Muslim NGOs, who all belong to the category of progressive NGOs dealt with in chapter 10, show that there is no inevitable contradiction between, on the one hand, a modern, empowerment-oriented development approach and cooperation with transnational development actors from inside as well as from without the Muslim world and, on the other hand, profound adherence to religious convictions and a pious lifestyle, in spite of widespread assumptions that religion induces one to charity rather than to development. Representatives of the Al-'Aqsa Association and of the Khawla' Bint Al-Azwar Association, for instance, refer to the Qur'anic exhortation "'Iqra'!" ("Read!"), which they interpret to mean development through learning and openness to the outer world and to new ideas and methods, as well as to Qur'anic verses related to respecting the dignity of the needy as a religious legitimation for development.

As regards Muslim Brotherhood-affiliated NGOs, the ICCS is by far the largest of all Muslim NGOs in the Kingdom with an extensive resource-base in terms of money, training, skills and social networks. Some of the ICCS centers for orphans and poor sponsor income-generating projects for their client families through the provision of loans.[59] Critics of the Islamist movement are often skeptical regarding ICCS' genuine interest (and success) in empowering needy families. In the words of a local social worker of the UNRWA working in Irbid-refugee-camp:

> If they [ICCS representatives] talk about self-reliance and income-generating projects for the needy, it is only because this is regime policy and discourse, and they need to follow that. Their leaders are not really interested in a lasting improvement of the living circumstances of their clients. By the way, they themselves are privileged and living in expensive villas.

Janine Clark states that the ICCS "focuses predominantly on charity activities and not on development efforts per se."[60] Asef Bayat, an expert on civil society and social movements in the Muslim world, maintains the same in the case of Islamist NGOs in Egypt.[61]

In the case of the Jordanian ICCS, this picture lacks nuance. As indicated in this chapter, ICCS centers do have vocational training facilities and income-generating projects aimed at the economic empowerment of the needy. They also uphold a religious discourse that strongly emphasizes educational and work ethics and social and economic self-reliance as a way for the needy to regain their dignity and improve their prospects and circumstances in life. Examples of this discourse can be found in the ICCS newsletter Al-Kheir wal-'Ata, as when it advertises the opening of new computerlabs by ICCS-centers for orphans and the poor, for instance, or these centers' scouting activities. They can also be found in interviews with ICCS workers and orphans benefiting from their services (see Chapter 14 below). This reflects, of itself, an orientation towards development. On the other hand, for a nationwide NGO of this size, the number of 41 income-generating projects mentioned by the ICCS Social Care Council in its brochure does not seem particularly impressive. Moreover, many more pages in Al-Kheir wal-'Ata are devoted to the issue of selfless giving (for the sake of God) than to social development and economic empowerment.

The ICCS' Islamist ideology of promoting and strengthening notions of religious identity and morality in the face of the perceived threats of materialism, Westernization and secularization in Jordanian society, with the accompanying moralizing and patronizing practices toward clients, might occur at the expense of a modernist development approach that entails receptivity to, and active cooperation with, foreign (in particular non-Muslim) development-actors, although this does not always seem to be the case.[62] On the other hand, the findings of this research do not suggest that Islamist ideology has any intrinsic bias against notions of social development and economic empowerment as such. This ideology propagates an "authentic" Islamic form of development as opposed to one that is dependent on the outside world, in particular the West.

Conclusion

Besides offering direct aid, many Muslim voluntary welfare associations perceive the need to help beneficiaries to acquire employment as basic to their charitable mission, though this often formulated in religious terms. Acquiring an independent income is regarded by many associations as necessary in order to enhance the sense of dignity among the needy, and to pave the road for their later full participation in society. This aim may be regarded as part of a more general trend in discourse and practice, within the state apparatus as well as the NGO sector, which regards practices that reinforce the dependency of the needy to direct aid as a negative traditional practice to be rid off so that the poor may help themselves.

Relatively traditional ways of helping the needy to obtain income out of work are the provision of vocational training that is relevant to the labor market and obtaining jobs for them by utilizing social connections. The mediation services of voluntary associations in the fields of jobs and training depend very much on their social connections with persons well-placed in businesses, employing institutions and vocational training centers. Large associations, like the ICCS and, to a lesser extent, Al-Faruq Society are much richer in social connections than smaller ones and seem, therefore, to be more successful in these endeavors.

Whether this type of mediation on behalf of clients on the basis of personal connections or wastah mechanisms always happens on an equitable basis is questionable. The last chapter has shown how the ICCS center, Al-'Abura Center, uses the aid relationship with its client families and the concomitant dependency to pressure clients to fulfil the center's expectations in terms of proper (religious and moral) conduct and participation in educational programs. As a result, the Center's relationship with those clients who fail to live up to these expectations may suffer. The idea that the quality of these (vertical) NGO-client relationships is also consequential for the readiness of NGO workers to mediate on their behalf for jobs or vocational training places does not seem to be far-fetched, given the widespread culture of favoritism in Jordanian society. And this may apply to non-Islamist NGOs as well.

A more novel form of employment-provision allows clients to establish income-generating projects, which are often financed by micro-credits. The success of such newly established businesses depends on several factors, among these favorable market-conditions, guarantees against failure and, not least, the entrepreneurial skills of the beneficiaries themselves. This study demonstrates a high degree of motivation among many Muslim NGOs to engage in this highly empowering form of poverty alleviation. Religious faith and discourse does not seem to present a hindrance to such forms of economic empowerment. On the contrary, it can serve very well as a source of inspiration for them.

What seems to be of decisive importance in programs of establishing income-generating projects is the willingness and ability to cooperate closely with relevant outside institutions, such as state institutions promoting social development, royal NGOs and/or foreign donors, including those who may not be Muslim. The isolationist discourse of an Islamist NGO – like that of the ICCS – focuses on the development of a more or less "pure" and "authentic" Muslim personality and society. This vision entails a rejection of any non-Muslim influence that may jeopardize this development and, as a consequence, could lead to a refusal to cooperate closely with (non-Islamist/non-Muslim) outsiders. This may give the impression of a lack of interest in "true social development" to those outsiders. As the coming chapters will show, however, Islamist approaches to social issues, no matter how patronizing they appear, have their own developmental logic.

Part Five

EDUCATION AND CULTURE

13. **Cultural Approaches**

Muslim voluntary welfare associations' services to their clients are not limited to the material or socio-economic realm. In the views of their members and workers, material poverty is often intertwined with a whole set of other social problems, such as conflicts between family members or among the local community, domestic violence, psychological abuse, sexual "immorality," alcoholism, drug addiction, (petty) theft, violent crime, dishonest behavior, pollution and illiteracy. Apart from the issue of poverty, such phenomena may be regarded by Muslim NGOs as social problems that require tackling in one way or another. Dealing with these problems takes place from cultural perspectives that are often strongly informed by religious values, as is the case with socio-economic forms of aid.

This chapter provides an overview of various responses to these problems by Muslim voluntary welfare associations. Central to the cultural approach underlying these activities is the value of social harmony. Therefore, our overview begins with an analysis of this value within the general context of Arab societies and within the cultural and social activities of Jordanian Muslim voluntary welfare associations in particular. This analysis also points out the ramifications of views on social harmony in terms of dependency, patronage and empowerment.

Social Harmony

The overriding priority of the value of social harmony and sound social relationships, within the family as well as within the wider community in the Muslim associations' discourse, is largely informed by the predominance of collectivist values in traditional Arab societies like Jordan. In this regard, Barakat notes that:

> a highly distinctive feature of Arab society is the continuing dominance of primary group relations. Entering into these relations means that individuals engage in unlimited commitments to the group. Instead of asserting their

> separateness and privacy as independent individuals, they behave as committed members of a group – hence the significance of family, tribe, neighborhood, village, sect, and so forth … Solidarity with the group may require the individual to identify with other members by sharing their joys and sorrows, achievements and failures, victories and defeats. Members of the same group expect a great deal from one another.[1]

The most basic and dominant of these group formations in the life of Arab individuals is the family, in a nuclear as well as in an extended sense. Alan al-Krenawi and John R. Graham, with valuable experience of social work practices in Arab societies, observe that (extended) family members "may be expected to be involved (in dealing with problems of other members) and may be consulted in times of crisis. When a family member experiences a problem, its restoration may be of concern to many other family members.[2]

Given these cultural values, it is not surprising that Muslim NGOs in Jordan generally attach the utmost importance to family cohesion and harmony. Islamist NGOs like the ICCS and Al-'Afaf Welfare Society are outspokenly zealous in defending the Muslim Arab family's unity and cohesion in the face of the perceived threat of a Western-style individualism. The latter phenomenon is rejected for its disintegrating, atomizing and demoralizing impact on social life in general and on family life in particular. Murad al-Adeileh, head of the ICCS Social Care Council, emphasizes with pride that his organization works for the welfare of families as a whole and not for individuals in an isolated sense as, according to him, Western- or Western-oriented social workers are doing.[3] In the vision of such associations, women, and mothers in the first place, have a pivotal role to play in the preservation of family unity and harmony. Therefore, feminist approaches that advocate a complete gender equality of (individually conceived) roles, liberties and rights are considered threatening to the social fabric of the family and, by extension, to Muslim society as a whole.

The traditional norm in Arab societies that the solution of individuals' problems should take place "within the family" often goes hand in hand with a (partial or total) concealment of those problems from the outer world. According to Maleis and La Fever, who have written on American psychiatric practices in multi-cultural contexts, Muslim Arab peoples may "value privacy and guard it vehemently" vis-à-vis the world outside of the family unit. Within that unit, however, "their personal privacy is virtually non-existent."[4] Exposure of private problems to the outer world, whether they relate to relationships within the family (such as cases of serious conflicts or abuse), sexual behavior or even material poverty may make a family vulnerable to the loss of honor in the local community and to a -sometimes unbearable – sense of shame.

The concepts of honor and shame relate to social pressures to conform to the norms of the collective. Barakat writes that Arabs, in general, "are exposed to immense family and community pressures, and to constant interference in the most private aspects of their personal lives. Demands for conformity," he continues, "undermine individuality, the formation of independent views and free self-expression."[5] This culture of conformity and shame has implications for the discussions taking place at events organized by Muslim voluntary welfare associations. According to women social workers of Al-'Afaf Welfare Society, attendants of the Society's seminars and lectures on marriage and family issues are inclined to discuss marital problems in general terms or to ask general questions about them and remain reluctant to venture forth with examples of their own specific problems. Yet, at least one of them expressed her regret about this attitude of shame regarding one's own difficulties and hoped that through the Society's activities, a more open climate of (public) discussion regarding "private" family problems could be created.[6]

This same remark indicates that members in an association like Al-'Afaf Society can display reflexive attitudes and criticise aspects of traditional culture, such as the notion of shame arising from personal problems and/or failures. It possibly indicates tendencies toward empowerment and a greater autonomy for the individual, in this case. On the other hand, many social harmony-related values rooted in traditional (in particular peasant and village) culture, such as brotherhood, marriage, respect for parents and the elderly, patience, cooperation and neighborliness[7] are highly cherished by the same Society, as by other Muslim associations.

Barakat writes: "even in the present transitional period, Arabs, whether rural or urban, continue to maintain intimate affiliations from which they derive a great deal of intrinsic satisfaction and a strong sense of belonging."[8] Such affiliations naturally imply mutual dependency in social relationships. This raises the question of what, precisely, Muslim NGOs' efforts to deal with social problems mean in terms of (individual or collective) empowerment versus the reinforcement of relationships of patronage and dependency.

The role of Islam is important in this regard, since religion is central in dealing with social problems in most Arab cultures and societies. Al-Krenawi and Graham have found that, unlike in the West, most Muslim clients of social work "constructed problems and their solution with a strong reference to religion."[9] They emphasize the ways in which "religion provides individual catharsis and psychological relief, self-actualization, natural forms of social support, conflict resolution, familial and marital mediation, and group cohesion and support."[10]

Conflict Resolution

Working for *sulha*, or reconciliation, is regarded by Muslim NGOs as an important religious duty, one that is directly related to the goal of preserving social harmony. Sulha is prescribed by Islamic law as a legally binding contract designed to "end conflict and hostility among believers," and to promote Islamic norms of harmonious individual and community relations.[11] Apart from a formal contract, however, it is also a deeply rooted traditional practice, especially in Arab peasant and village life. In the latter, informal commitments have always prevailed over contractual commitments, and mediation and reconciliation as a way to resolve conflicts has always been preferred to formal legal action.[12] Even in present-day modern and urbanized Jordan, there are attempts by the Ministry of Justice to revive these traditions of dispute resolution as a way to reduce demand on courts.[13]

Members and workers of Jordanian Muslim voluntary welfare associations – often operating in urban settings that are, due to the rural background of its predominantly Palestinian or Transjordanian inhabitants, still greatly affected by the values of village life – attach great importance to the informal and personal resolution of conflict.

The chief volunteer of the Islamic Welfare Association in Salt, for instance, emphasized that he regularly goes on home visits to families in the local area to discuss their problems and offer advice.[14] Female clients of the Islamic Anwar Al-Huda Association in Wadi Sir in Amman who face family problems or conflicts can either go to the associations' premises to discuss them with the workers or to see its president, Madiha Kokh, personally in the Kindergarten she runs. Subsequently, volunteers of the association may visit these clients at home to try to deal with such problems. The president states that she does what she can to console such clients and look for solutions.

Her explanation of conflicts and relational problems among the poor client families is strongly colored by traditional role divisions and a hierarchical understanding of the relationship between husband and wife. According to this view, a husband is responsible for many problems if he neglects his role as breadwinner of the family, drinks alcohol, leaves his family to its fate and is unwilling to work. She asserts that some husbands are too lazy and unmotivated to work and claims to know several cases of families that have disintegrated because the father was fed up with the wife and the many children in the house, abandoned them and found another woman.[15] On the other hand, she stresses that wives/mothers from such families often face difficulties because they don't know any other way of dealing with their children except by shouting and beating.[16]

The sulha or reconciliation the association's members try to bring about is likewise based on these gender-based roles. Women, Kokh states, are taught to deal with more patience with their children as well as their husbands and communicate with them on the basis of attention and understanding. Men are first and foremost called upon to uphold their responsibilities for their families, to look for a job and provide for the family's income.[17] This approach toward dealing with conflicts within families takes for granted the traditional relationship of dependency between the husband as income-provider and head of the family and the wife as patient mother and housewife. It "empowers" both of them to resolve those conflicts by stressing their respective duties and responsibilities on the basis of these traditional roles.

Something similar applies to the case of another Muslim women's association, the Al-'Ihsan Welfare Association in Zarqa. The volunteers of this association tell mothers of client families to behave patiently, be polite in public life and dress themselves modestly. Husbands are called upon not to abuse and beat their wives. Parents in general are urged not to abuse their children. Leaving aside the question of gender, the Muslim associations' approach toward resolving conflicts and problems in social relationship stresses notions of social duty and responsibility toward others, rather than notions of asserting ones own individual rights. The act of mediation and resolution of conflicts itself is also regarded as such a social – and religious – responsibility. In the case of conflicts within families or between neighbors in the local community, workers and friends of Al-'Ihsan association will speak to the persons involved, try to mediate and then help them find a solution. The Association's president stresses the importance of not leaving people who behave offensively to their fate. Constructive communication must take place in order to convince them to change their behavior and to offer them the chance to reintegrate into the community.[18]The same principle was stressed to me by the chief volunteer of the Islamic Welfare Association of Salt. He mentioned the example of a father who had complained to him about the quarrels he was having with his 17-year old son. The chief volunteer told him that he should not pressure his son too much, but, rather, "treat him more like his brother" (i.e. listen to him more closely and take his feelings and demands more seriously).[19]

Blood Feuds

In addition to run of the mill family or neighborhood problems and conflicts, some associations counter a more serious kind of dispute that continues to occur in the tribal sections of Jordanian society: the blood feud. Of this, the renowned American anthropologist Eickelman observes that:

> conflict with other (tribal) groups, including a feud resulting from homicide and the theft of animals, can be defined as an attack on collective honor. In such a situation, members of the segmentary group are expected to support one another. An integral element of segmentation…is the high value placed upon the autonomy and honor of groups, and a balanced opposition of honor bearing persons and groups.[20]

Al-Krenawi and Graham write that the blood feud "provides a system of justice in the absence of formal apparatuses, the legal specialists or the police forces."[21] It must be emphasized in this regard that, during the last century or so, Muslim Arab societies have, generally speaking, become increasingly familiar with formal apparatuses, legal specialists and police forces. Moreover, they have become increasingly urbanized. This must have made the phenomenon increasingly less acceptable in the eyes of not only Arab state authorities, but of those of (urbanized) Arab populations at large as well. Such developments have reinforced Islamic discourses on the need to prevent and overcome vengeance and blood feuds for the sake of social harmony.[22]

This confluence between the reconciliatory aspects of the Islamic faith and the emergence of modern Arab states and societies comes to the fore in the discourse and practice of the Islamic Bani Hassan Welfare Association in Zarqa. The members of this association publicly condemn the blood feud as un-Islamic at the meetings they organize. For, they stress that, according to Islam, only the individual perpetrator is responsible for his or her misdeed. The latter's relatives may never be threatened or assaulted. According to the association's accountant, the perpetrators' family may only get involved in a case of killing when it comes to the shari'ah-stipulated payment of *diyah* (blood money) to the victim's family.[23]

The Islamic Bani Hassan Welfare Association has occasionally been involved in mediation efforts. Its members have been alarmed by the fact that families of the perpetrators of murder or manslaughter in the local community often feel themselves compelled to move to a different village or city, from fear of revenge by the victims' families. Alongside other association members, the association's founder and first president, Bassam Umush, a moderate Islamist politician and former minister and ambassador, went to a small locality to visit the family of the victim of a murder. He encouraged them to view the situation calmly, and attempted to convince the various parties that seeking revenge would only worsen the overall situation.

Care for the Elderly

Respect and care for the elderly has already been mentioned as one of the core values of social cohesion prevalent in traditional, but also modern Arab culture, as well as in the (Muslim NGOs') religious discourse. Apparently, there is a concern among socially involved Muslim and Christian citizens and NGOs in the Kingdom that modernising (and individualizing) socio-economic developments will lead to the undermining of this value and to the social marginalization of the elderly. According to members of the Orthodox Welfare Association of the Christian town of Fuheis, Jordan's elderly – while more respected than those living in Western societies and, in many cases, still looked after by their families – at present often spend their days in relative isolation. They further state that their children do not have sufficient time for the elderly since the former are busy with their jobs and are sometimes far away from home.[24] Nawal Al Fa'uri stresses that her Al-'Aqsa Association wants to transmit the Islamic message to the elderly, as well as to the community at large, that old people need to be taken care of, and that the society can only benefit from them as well as from their experience. The elderly, she asserts, should not live in special homes, but with their families, since the family is the foundation of society.[25]

The Orthodox Association's president visited clubs for the elderly during his travels to the United Kingdom and the United States. This inspired him to establish something similar in his hometown of Fuheis. At the time of my fieldwork, a new building was erected by the association for a club where the elderly can socialize, drink coffee and entertain themselves with games like billiard, basketball and keep-fit exercises.[26]The Al-'Aqsa Association had already established such a club at the time. True to Al-Fa'uri's modernist Islamist emphasis on education and enlightenment, this club organizes lectures for the elderly about religious and health topics of interest as well as providing TV programs and televised lectures. There is also space for informal socializing over a cup of coffee and during outings with picnics and at the yearly celebration of the International Day of the Elderly.[27] In the case of both associations, we may speak here of modern and institutional ways of socializing a special segment of the local community. This process is occuring in response to modern developments that threaten to lead to the marginalization and isolation of Jordan's elderly population. The same process is derived from the traditional as well as religious value of respect of, and care for, the elderly.

Sporting, Festive and Recreational Activities

We arrive at another important aspect of working for social cohesion. Specifically, I refer to the basic need for the kind of social harmony and bonding that arrives when people go to parties, and/or play sports together. Many voluntary welfare associations, Muslim as well as Christian, organize such activities.

Sports and physical exercise is important for social bonding, but is also related to health concerns. The fitness center for women at the Islamic Bani Hassan Welfare Association that opened in 2002 is a case in point. According to the Association's treasurer, a number of female students asked the association to establish the facility because of the increasing problem of obesity among women of all ages.[28] Such an initiative is not unique to this relatively small association. ICCS centers for orphans and the poor, for instance, offer women possibilities for increased fitness as well.[29] In a Muslim Arab society like Jordan, fitness exercises are not to be carried out in a gender-mixed setting, so are usually provided for males only. In turn, voluntary associations respond to a demand for fitness-facilities for women only.

Regarding festive activities, it must be noted that several Jordanian voluntary associations – religion based as well as secular ones – join the Jordanian government in endeavouring to raise awareness on the dangers of the traditional and celebratory practice of shooting in the air, which often takes place during wedding parties or on other festive occasions. Among the associations included in this study, the Islamic Bani Hassan Welfare Association and the Islamic Welfare Society in Salt actively warn the public against this practice on the grounds that accidents are thus regularly caused. They do so in the name of Islam, which calls upon the believers to safeguard life, health and security.[30]

On the other hand, several times a year, religion also provides the occasion for such associations to organize their own festivities. Ramadan is always an opportunity to organize festive ʹiftar meals. At the ʹiftar dinner of Al-Faruq Society, held on 18 November 2003 in a huge rented hall on the edge of the city of Irbid, a group of orphan-boys, dressed in uniforms with green shirts, sang several songs accompanied by drum beating. The topic of one of them was the "liberation of Jerusalem," the holy city whose Arab character had to be preserved.[31] Associations may also organize ʹiftar meals specifically for orphans and/or their mothers, as ICCS centers as well as the Islamic Bani Hassan Welfare Association are doing.[32]

Apart from religious holidays, the Islamic Bani Hassan Welfare Association organizes feasts for young tribe members who graduated from the university. It is an occasion of tribal bonding between graduates, but also one in which tribal and national identities are linked and loyalty to the Hashemite monarchy is expressed. The Jordanian prince Faisal has patronized one of the celebrations for university graduates organized by the Islamic Bani Hassan Welfare Association. The Association also organizes other celebrations at certain national events, for instance birthdays of members of the royal family and Independence Day.[33] The Welfare Association for the Care of Orphans in Wadi Sir in Amman organizes similar feasts at national and Hashemite holidays, along with religious holidays, for the orphan children living in its orphanage.[34]

Christian NGOs are no different in this regard. The Orthodox Association of Fuheis organizes feasts for the town's inhabitants at the times of Christmas, Eastern, New Year's Eve as well as Hashemite occasions like the King's birthday. The association's scouting club, which consists of a few dozens of men, performs theatrical acts at these occasions, often on topics related to the daily life of the town. This club also functions as a music band. Through such activities, the association apparently contributes to the process of bonding of the inhabitants of this town dominated by members of Jordan's Christian minority.[35] All these festive activities strengthen processes of social bonding and a sense of social belonging to the (religious, tribal or local) community as well as to Jordan as a nation-state (and thus promote unquestioning loyalty to the monarchy). Such festivities, and in particular those in which the Hashemite hegemony is confirmed, reinforce patterns of patronage. At the same time, the strengthening of social ties and networks taking place there can also foster a sense of empowerment among the participants, since social relations of mutual support are central in Arab societies, like Jordan's, to all kinds of social, economic and political opportunities (in fields like employment, education and political leadership) – possibly even more so than in the liberal-individualist cultures of the Western world.

Recreational outings organized by voluntary associations have a function in social bonding and empowerment similar to that provided by feasts. Some associations claim that the reason for organizing them is to provide opportunities for deprived people like the needy, women or widows – to break their daily routines and to learn more about their environment and country. The Islamic Anwar al-Huda Women's Association used to organize trips with picnics to pretty places in Jordan for many women in the area, including elderly women who live in relative isolation. According to Mrs Kokh, this helped "to bring these women out of their daily routine, stresses and concerns."[36]

Combating Illiteracy

A more direct way by Muslim voluntary welfare associations to empower the underprivileged involves the combating of illiteracy. Several associations provide literacy courses to illiterate adults, often on the ethical basis of the Islamic imperative of "'Iqra!'" ("Read!"), with its implications for individual as well as societal development. The Al-'Aqsa Association gives such courses mainly to illiterate elderly women. After completing the course in almost one year, the participants receive a certificate from the Ministry of Education.[37] The Islamic Bani Hassan Welfare Association and the Islamic Educational Welfare Association, both in Zarqa, provide such courses for adult men and women alike, against nominal fees. The former association organizes three-month courses on different levels that are taught by a female association member. According to the Association's treasurer, after completion of thhe courses, participants should be able to read simple newspaper articles.[38]

Public Meetings, Lectures and Campaigns

Muslim voluntary welfare associations regularly organize informative meetings, workshops and lectures for the public in the local community. They set out to attract members of the local community to such events by advertising in local media, by putting up posters, and by spreading word of mouth through the local social networks of association members.

Such events can deal with a variety of topics. Those related to child development and gender relations will be dealt with specifically in the next two chapters. Others aim to empower the public to deal with environmental issues. The Al-'Aqsa Association in Madaba, for instance, regularly invites representatives of the Jordan Environment Society as well as those from the Ministry of Environment to give lectures on environmental issues to the local public in Madaba.[39] Topics dealt with relate to the town's rural environment; hence the speakers discuss how to save on daily water usage and the damage caused by chemical pesticides in agriculture and in gardening, before offering tips on environmentally friendly agriculture. Needless to say, the importance of keeping air and water clean is particularly emphasized. Other recommendations made at such lectures to the audience are in the sphere of vaccinations against possible health hazards and keeping children as well as the locations of new houses away from polluted places and polluted water. At the time of fieldwork, the Al-'Aqsa Association was planning to establish a biological agriculture project where natural instead of chemical fertilizers would be used.[40]

Since the end of 2002, the Islamic Bani Hassan Welfare Association has been involved in a public awareness raising campaign regarding pollution by industry and cars. This particularly concerns the effects of oil refineries and petro-chemical industry near the city of Zarqa on the health of those living in nearby working class neighborhoods (diseases like asthma or even cancer are cited as possible consequences). [41]

Lectures on rituals, holy places, religious and other events are used as occasions for Muslim voluntary associations to convey certain social or political messages. In the case of the Islamic Anwar Al-Huda Welfare Association, for instance, a lecture on the ritual of washing corpses in Islamic funeral ceremonies was used as an occasion to condemn widespread practices of corruption, cheating and illegal self-enrichment. The message was that the corpse is wrapped in nothing but a plain kafan (linen wrap), signifying that he or she takes nothing to the grave. Corruption, cheating and exploitation are of no use to any believer because eventually, we all enter the grave empty handed.[42] Likewise, the Islamic Bani Hassan Welfare Association uses Ramadan as an occasion to stress the social values of love, kindness, honesty and social solidarity with people in need, especially within the context of family, friendship and neighborhood relationships.

In not dissimilar fashion, the commemoration of (religious) events related to Jerusalem,[43]or of the military conflicts between followers of the

Prophet and Jewish tribes, as well as the UN-sponsored Human Rights Day, are used to highlight the “crimes” of Zionism. On the Day of Combating Illiteracy, a lecture was held by the Al-Urwa Al-Wuthqa Association on the importance of learning and science as a Qur’anic value. Mention is made of the fact that the Prophet Muhammad himself was reportedly illiterate, and that the angel Jibril first conveyed to him God’s message through the imperative “’Iqra’!”[44] A political scientist speaking at the Islamic Bani Hassan Welfare Association dwelt upon the issue of the rights of women to political participation and equal access to positions of leadership.[45] The topics of such lectures must not prove too controversial to Jordanian state authorities. Indeed, they may even agree with official regime objectives and policies. Al-Fa‘uri’s Al-’Aqsa Association has even participated in the implementation of a state-sponsored civic education program on democracy, rule of law and human rights.[46]

14. One Islamic Association's Approach to Education

Many of the examples mentioned in the last chapter highlight the central place of religious faith and discourse in many awareness-raising activities undertaken by Muslim voluntary welfare associations. Religious education, in one form or another, plays a very dominant role in the socio-cultural activities of Muslim NGOs through which they hope to tackle social problems or to affect change for the better within families and the community. In this chapter, the approach of an Islamic voluntary association that specializes in religious education will be described and analyzed. First, the way in which the association's members perceive the – actual as well as ideal – status of religion and religious doctrine will be pointed out. Subsequently, its vision and discourse on social relationships and social harmony that flow from this perception will be dealt with. This will be followed by some observations on the role of discipline and agency in the association's educational approach. The chapter will conclude by mentioning some theoretical implications for the civil society concept of the preceding material.

View on the State of Religion in Modern Jordan

The Islamic Welfare Society's office in Salt is housed in a modern building on the top floor, perched over a number of small stores in the middle of the oldest existing town of (what now comprises) the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. Situated on the slope of a hill, in one of Salt's many narrow streets, I paid regular visits to the place. The Society's general manager, Muhammad Shawmali, was always eager to talk about various religious and social issues that occupied his mind. Being the grandson of a prominent 'alim in Salt, one of the Society's original founders as well as its president, Shawmali is well versed in the Qur'an and Hadith, including reports of the rightly guided caliphs, as well as Islamic mystical traditions. When I first called him to ask whether we could meet, he appeared happy to receive me; and, when

I arrived in his office for the first time, he welcomed me in with a broad smile. He was a man in his early thirties, tidily dressed in a regular modern office suit and with a neatly trimmed black beard. During my various conversations with him, he regularly used religious expressions, particularly those enunciating reverences to the Prophet Muhammad, for instance when he wanted to show his amazement. Other people, most often Abdul Latif, the Society's chief volunteer, joined the conversations at times. The latter was teaching Islamic ethics at the Islamic Welfare Society to children and youngsters from the city. Adbul Latif's appearance was slightly different from that of Shawmali: the former was modestly dressed in jeans and sweater and had a long, though neatly trimmed beard. The impression he conveyed was that of a highly motivated, energetic and active fieldworker, impassioned and enthusiastic about effecting change. He wanted there to be religious development in the life of the individual, the community and Jordanian society as a whole.

Neither the general manager nor the chief volunteer agreed with the assumption held by Jordanian citizens of more secular orientation, as well as many local and foreign observers. According to this assumption, the role of religion in Jordanian society has grown increasingly strong over the past decades. Shamali and Abdul Latif, by contrast, perceive the dominant socio-cultural trend in the Hashemite Kingdom to be one of secularization amidst the gradual disappearance of religious morals and values from people's daily lives. As manifestations of this trend, they mentioned phenomena like extra-marital sex, usage of (and addiction to) drugs and alcohol and the seductions of consumerism and materialism. They explicitly linked the current spread of such phenomena to the impact of globalization and Westernization, felt most through channels like the internet, the educational system and (global) business life. They acknowledged, however, that such "vices" have indigenous roots as well. They also stressed the interrelated nature of Jordanian society's various ills. Shawmali reasoned, for instance, that poverty and despair give rise to addiction to alcohol and drugs, which, in turn, contributes to sexual immorality and violence. All these threats to the integrity and moral fabric of Muslim society necessitate, according to this view, educational efforts to remind young and old alike of Islam's basic truth of *tawhid*, the oneness of God, as well as that of His almightiness and absolute moral authority. Abdul Latif phrased this message accordingly:

> God has created every human being in the way he is, each one with his own characteristics. Blond hair, brown hair, happiness and anger, all of these char-

> acteristics come from God. The good things in life emanate from God, but the same goes for the bad things. If we do not recognize that, it amounts to disbelief *(kufr)*. Because if certain things in reality are not created by God, who else created them? The human being himself? That would imply that the human being is also a god, while the truth is that God is the only creator. Some people believe that there exists no god, which is kufr as well. Truth is also that He cannot be identified with anything He created. He is not similar to the human being, to an animal or to anything else in the universe. He is highly elevated above all of this. Human beings have to serve Him. Performing good deeds and working for the common good is only accepted by God if it is done for His Sake.

At first glance, Abdul Latif's emphasis on God's omnipotence and His role as creator of both good and evil might seem like a call for passive resignation to one's fate. However, the end of his statement points clearly in a different direction: human beings are obliged to serve God, which implies the active performance of good deeds and working for the common good for His Sake. This demands from the believer a high degree of engagement and moral agency in changing their own lives and conditions as well as that of the community at large. As pointed out in an earlier chapter, in the Society's discourse serving God equates to a selfless attitude via which the common good is promoted. It is a matter of al-amr bil ma'ruf wal-nahy 'an al- munkar, to ordain good and to prohibit evil, in private as well as in public life. In other words, it is precisely because God demands that human beings (actively) apply what is good and discard what is evil that He has created both forces. A precondition is that human beings learn the difference between good and evil and, to this end, God has delivered His prophets. "For Muslims," he stressed, "the sayings and deeds of the prophet Muhammad are their guidelines in (a virtuous) life. He has indicated why and how immoral acts, such as lying, stealing and fornication, should be avoided."[1]

In the view of the members of the Society in Salt, spirituality is closely related to all aspects of life in society, in its public as well as its private aspects. In this regard, Abdul Latif stresses the rational nature of the call of the Islamic message to humankind. His approach is a "modern" one in Talal Asad's sense, in that he regards it as highly important that any believer obtains explicit and profound knowledge about the basic truth of Islam, uses his or her own rational faculties to that end and does not blindly follow what others tell him or her to do.[2] He stressed repeatedly that "action should be preceded by knowledge." In order to function and work properly and actively in society, people must have knowledge and insight into what they are doing regarding aims, results and consequences.[3] Secularly educated as an accountant and having worked as a general manager at the office of the General Union of Voluntary Societies in Salt (an institution with close interactions with international development agencies and profound engagement with global development discourse), Abdul Latif appreciates the legacy of Western rationalism. "The West owes all of its (political, economic, social and medical) successes to the wise and purposeful application of its knowledge," he states. He regards this rational attitude as a sine qua non for the success and well-being of Muslims and Muslim society at large. As GUVS representative, for instance, he promotes the idea that the needy should get rid of their dependency on alms. They should learn to use their own rational faculties to change their situation through projects like vocational training and micro-credit schemes.[4] Likewise, he promotes the idea that women should have the opportunity to participate in society through education, and/or to earn their salaries through professional or manual work.[5]

However, his admiration for the West's rationalist tradition obviously does not amount to secular and relativistic liberalism. His vision of the common good is not so much based upon the ideal of the supremacy of personal autonomy and value pluralism, but upon one of a virtuous society in which all members strive to live in accordance with Islam's laws, morals and values.[6] That is to say, rational knowledge seeking for him is not merely a question of political and socio-economic development and modernization, although he obviously considers this an important part of it. Neither is he content with the kind of liberalism that simply leaves the formation of the normatively oriented socio-cultural lifeworld to the individual preferences of citizens, within the bounds of (procedural and secular) law. For Abdul Latif, the desire to seek knowledge is rooted in the Islamic revelation and pertains to all aspects of life, not least of them social and family life. While not denying the right of the individual to choose between several options in life, his assumption is that the morals, values and laws of the Islamic revelation determine the confines, and are at the same time constitutive of these options. The malaise that he perceives in Jordanian society is of a moral and ethical nature, undermining the social fabric and Muslim society's capability to resist challenges and overcome problems. Therefore, the society is in urgent need of proper knowledge about the ethical guidelines laid down by God and conveyed by His messenger, the Prophet Muhammad, to humankind.

Social Relationships and Harmony

True religion, according to the voluntary teacher and the other members of the Islamic Welfare Society, is not simply or even mainly a state of mind, in the way Talal Asad characterizes modern approaches toward religion.[7] Religious life depends crucially on one's actual behavior and activities in this world. Active observance of the ethical guidelines is at the core of, and not merely secondary to, the Islamic faith. The Society's members refer regularly to the afterlife and emphasize that one's actual behavior, for better or for worse, determines one's prospects of reward or punishment in the next life. But, in their view, there is more at stake than simply the relationship between individual believer and God. Rather, at stake is the moral quality of relationships between Muslims as well as the ethical standards, well-being and social cohesion of Muslim society as a whole. In educating adults, youth and children about religious guidelines, the rationalization of these guidelines is considered important for their comprehension. This rationalization is often presented in terms of social well being, harmony and health and overcoming social problems. On the basis of this kind of value rationality, they criticize the literalist Salafis for merely sticking to the supposedly outer appearances of piety and dry religious rules as a way to salvation, and for not adopting a more rational approach toward problems of society.[8] While the voluntary teachers of the Islamic Welfare Society – two men (Abdul Latif being one of these) and one woman – regard the disciplining of individual's believers' relationship with God in terms of doctrine (iman) and ritual (fiqh) as very important, the true test of sincere piety, from their point of view, resides in one's social behavior. This realm is divided by the Society's chief voluntary teacher into two more or less distinct areas: mu'amalat, or the more positively formulated principles and rules pertaining to social dealings and relationships, and *akhlaq*, which are more negatively defined in terms of abstaining from sinful acts.[9]

When he was still a student of accountancy in a community college, Abdul Latif already identified sexual temptation between the sexes as a main problem capable of leading young people to sinful behavior. While stopping short of pleading for strict spatial gender separation, he now urges the young to avoid situations that might be morally compromising in this regard, for instance by physically and visually restraining oneself during interaction with unrelated persons from the other sex, observing an appropriate distance from the latter, and not to remain alone in the same room with an unrelated person of the other sex. In other words, he focuses more on individual moral self-discipline than on collectively imposed practices of separating the sexes.[10] Practices of (preventative) disciplining against (illegitimate) sexuality as well as against other behaviors considered sinful or harmful, like the usage of alcohol, drugs, cigarettes and violence in public as well as in one's private life, are dealt with at the Society by verbal warnings using concrete examples of where this behaviour may lead. The importance of listening to the "knowledgeable and the experienced," and not to the jahilin (ignorant) and those lacking intelligence or "proper" knowledge in health, social, ethical or religious matters is particularly stressed.[11]

While still a student, Abdul Latif identified the problems of envy, aggression, and strife in human relationships. Such things, he claimed, invariably lead to violence. According to him as well as to other members of the Society, gossip also destroys good relationships between people.[12] Underpinning all this is the belief that the community of believers must be preserved as a whole, and all of its members must be considered as vital parts of the whole. Anybody transgressing ethical norms should not be rejected as a person, as happens in the practice of gossip; rather s/he needs to be talked to and persuaded to improve his or her behavior, so that s/he may be reintegrated into the moral community of believers.[13]

This practice of moral correction toward fellow believers in horizontal relational settings is prevalent among Islamic piety and da'wah movements in other Muslim countries as well. It results at least partially from a relatively modern approach toward da'wah in which every believer, and not just the elite of formally trained religious scholars (as used to be the case until the twentieth century), is entrusted to call one's fellow-believers to join the right path.[14]

Gossiping about gossipers is something equally forbidden in Islam, the Society's members stress. One can either ignore gossiping about oneself or, if one feels confident enough in his or her relationship with the gossiper, approach the latter to discuss his/her undesirable behavior. Besides, Abdul Latif advocates discussion of the issue of gossip and warning people against its harmful and sinful implications as part of religious educational efforts. People must be called upon to adjust their behavior in the direction of a more harmonious and unified Islamic society.[15]

The idea that strengthening social ties and cohesion within the 'ummah is serving God is reflected in the Society's calls to the local community to change mutual dealings or mu'amalat in a positive direction. Abdul Latif stresses, for instance, that morality and strong social ties are far superior in value to financial and material wealth. "Even if one has a lot of money", he stated, "without the right knowledge and the right (ethical) attitude, one can easily lose what one possesses."[16] In the chapter on Politically Unaffiliated Conservative Muslim NGOs, the way in which the Society's general manager values the principle of 'ithar or self-sacrifice and selfless aid and support toward one's fellow-believers and fellowmen in general has been addressed. To mention a similar instance from Jordan, Richard Antoun has analyzed a sermon of a mosque preacher in a Jordanian rural village on the religious concept of *rahmah*, which stand's for the womb in a woman's body as well as for compassion. According to Antoun, the sermon conveyed the message that: "since birth has severed man from his source of physiological compassion, the womb, man must now seek God through ethical compassion (service to his fellowman, his kinsman and co-religionist … Man's individual salvation is [thus] strongly linked with his group's destiny."[17] The last chapter pointed out the importance of the cultural value of social solidarity – a value expressed through notions of brotherhood, cooperation, neighborliness, respect for parents and for the elderly – in Arab peasant and village life. Since the Islamic Welfare Society in Salt was established by members of rurally based tribes and communities in the Jordanian governorate of Balqa, of which Salt is the capital, it may well be argued that Islam provides a means for them to preserve and promote such traditional values in a more modern and urban environment. Their educational efforts are focused on religiously inspired reform that accord with such values.

For the sake of a socially more cohesive, stronger and easier to live in 'ummah, the Society's members promote modes of behavioral reform that extend into the tiniest details. They want to encourage people to be kind and friendly to one another and to express this attitude through civilized pleasant body (and verbal) language – wearing a smile on their faces, for instance. An atmosphere and (embodied) attitude of stress, annoyance and chagrin that can be witnessed on peoples' faces in the Jordanian street, and which several Jordanians attribute to the tough daily economic struggle for survival and making ends meet, must be countered and transformed into something more positive.[18] Observing (religiously construed) standards of hygiene is equally linked to reform of social behavior. Washing oneself regularly ensures that one has a pleasant odor. Likewise, decency in dress and table manners contributes to an amenable social atmosphere.[19] While such ethical exhortations may sound banal to a reader of a secular liberal mindset, this is not the case from the religio-ethical code of discipline to which the members of the Islamic Welfare Society adhere. That view has roots in an Aristotelian worldview according to which ethical behavior and inward ethical dispositions do not simply emanate from one's "natural" and spontaneous individual self, but must be consciously and actively developed and cultivated through continuous training and practice pertaining to even the tiniest details of one's daily life.[20]

Values of honesty, probity and transparency, as opposed to practices of fraud, deceit and corruption, are stressed in the realm of economic dealings. The Society's members mention a hadith stipulating that, in financial transactions, prices must be agreed upon in a candid and transparent manner that binds seller as well as buyer. In the case of the relationship between landlord and tenant, for instance, the former is not allowed to raise the rent in violation of his or her agreement with the latter.[21] Abdul Latif translates the Islamic concept of *'amanah* (faithfulness) into the economic realm as respect for one another's property. One needs to ask the owner of a certain property for permission to use it, to do that with care after permission has been granted and to avoid any damage. As a concrete example, he mentioned the workers in the printing house he used to own, whom he urged to make careful use of the material and instruments they were working with.[22] We may speak here of a (petty) bourgeois ethic regarding the sanctity of private property and economic probity and transparency in an Islamic form that is not devoid of self-interest. However, the meaning of 'amanah as used by the Society's members is much wider then that. It stands for social dealings on the basis of mutual respect and care, and the avoidance of insult and injury.

The Society's members give expression to this ethical value by mentioning examples from the Hadith that stresses the need to be considerate toward and take care of one's neighbors and their (material as well as psychological) needs.[23] Another religious concept stressed by the Society's members is *sabr* (patience). Sabr has multiple meanings and is often interpreted by pious Muslims as (individual) perseverance and fortitude in the face of adversity. Members and workers of Muslim voluntary welfare associations, however, often utilise this concept in the context of their social work activities. They also translate it as an attitude of kindness and forgiveness in social interactions. Abdul Latif gives meaning to the concept in the context of vertical social relationships as well, such as those of teachers toward their pupils, doctors toward their patients and engineers toward their clients. He tries to spread the message that people with an advanced level of education, knowledge and understanding must not arrogate themselves toward those whose level is less in these regards. They must adapt their mode of communication to the latter's level of understanding and be accommodating and friendly during interactions with them.[24]

Piety, Discipline and Agency

All these elements of a discourse of piety are geared toward the building of pious individual characters that must result in the construction of a pious and harmonious community of believers. "Serving God" here is an ongoing project pertaining to all aspects of life. It is the notion of selflessness meant to be developed and internalized in the Muslim individual in ritual as well as in social, private as well as in public life. In the view of this Society's members, what one does or says in private has ramifications for the whole of one's personality and all of one's activities, including those of a public nature. Uttering phrases like bismillah (in the name of God) and al-hamdulillah (thanks be to God) before and after the meal and after sneezing has implications assumed to go beyond one's maintenance of his or her individual relationship with God. Such actions are part of the process of cultivating one's personality and mentality in accordance with standards of piety, devoutness, gratitude and selflessness that is supposed to have a bearing on one's behavior in social and public realms as well. Notions of order, discipline and conscious, rational efforts to improve one's own actions in life, which implies taking one's responsibility toward one's fellowmen and the society at large as well, are highly prevalent in the Society's members' discourse.[25]

Sabah Mahmood analyzes discipline in the case of the women's mosque movement in Egypt as an embodied process of internalization of beliefs and values through conscious practices like ritual, dress, physical comportment in daily life and way of speech.[26] Several of these aspects of embodiment can be recognized in the discourse of piety expressed by the members of the Islamic Welfare Society in Salt. My own opportunity in observing embodied practices at this society has been limited. In terms of educational methodology, the chief voluntary teacher emphasized the importance of entertaining activities like listening to CDs with songs about Islamic beliefs and morality accompanied by the sound of drums, singing these songs after listening and group activities in the realm of sports, games and outings to natural areas as (embodied) means of inculcating Islamic values into the young and the children, besides the more "serious" means of lectures and discussions, which have their own implications in terms of embodiment.[27] Such activities of pleasure and relaxation are, in fact, seen as part of the process of disciplining the body against the temptations of sin and vice, since they are meant to constitute an alternative to the latter.[28] However, the (embodied) activities of the Society's voluntary teachers are not limited to the visiting children and youngsters themselves. They also consider keeping in touch with the latter's parents and families, visiting them at their homes and offering them advice and counsel as an important part of their work.[29]

Implications for the Civil Society Concept

Obviously, educational activities undertaken by the Islamic Welfare Society of Salt are based on a conscious drive to reform individuals and the local community along religious lines and, moreover, to turn the latter themselves into conscious agents of reform and change. This conscious nature is underlined by the fact that the Society's members see their activities in terms of combating *jahl* (ignorance) in matters of religious doctrine as well as of social practice. It is also consciously regarded as a way of protecting and strengthening the local Islamic socio-cultural lifeworld against the threat of an increasingly hegemonic Western-dominated global culture, even though state policy and legislation preclude them from publicly expressing any political statement in this regard. The Society is doubtlessly engaged in a form of working on peoples' reflexivity which, in turn, is basic to the latter's social, and in the end to their political agency. In chapter 1, I described such reflexivity and agency as a fundamental basis of any civil society. That this reflexivity is based on a religious doctrine of which the fundamental premises are not to be questioned is not relevant in this regard. Something similar could be stated about the doctrine of liberalism that is based on the sanctity of individual autonomy and freedom. Liberalisms' claim to represent human nature cannot be considered more universally valid and neutral than that of social or political Islam. In the words of Talal Asad:

> The assumption is surely mistaken that modern liberal politics precludes any direct commitment to particular moral norms, or any space for ideologically based criticism. To the extent that modern politics employs the language of rights (individual and collective), ideological principles are central to it. Civil rights and human rights … are not merely neutral legal facts, they are profoundly moralistic values constantly invoked to guide and criticize modern politics.[30]

In the following two chapters, the (religiously informed) reflexive discourse of various Muslim voluntary welfare associations in Jordan that are related to their activities in the realm of, respectively, the development of children and gender will be dealt with. Questions regarding the relationship between discourse derived from Islamic revelation on the one hand and global rights discourse informed by the ideology and values of liberalism and enlightenment on the other will receive attention in this regard.

15. Various Muslim Approaches toward Education and Child Development

This chapter highlights different approaches toward religious education as an answer to social ills that are basic to educational activities of Muslim voluntary welfare associations. In the chapter's first section, theoretical observations on religious education in Muslim Arab settings will be presented. Subsequently, a closer look will be taken at the interrelationship between religious education and indoctrination. The remainder of the chapter analyzes discourses related to various Muslim voluntary welfare associations' educational activities in the realm of the development of children. The central question involves how notions of disciplining, empowerment, dependency and agency play a role in these discourses and practices, and what the possible implications of these notions are in terms of the shaping of reflexive (future) adult individuals and citizens. The chapter concludes by putting this question in the framework of modernizing developments in Jordanian society at large.

Approaches toward Religious Education

Historical Background of Religious Education in the Muslim Arab World

Religious education as a means to deal with contemporary social issues and ills is necessarily aimed at understanding and interpreting the meaning and the current social, cultural and political relevance of religious texts. Such a stress on explicit meaning is not a self-evident matter from a more traditional Islamic point of view on religious education. At least until the nineteenth century, educational methods in the madrasah or mosque college throughout the Muslim world largely focused on repetitive methods, like memorization, recitation, and grammar, as well as on ritual purity practices. Explanation and interpretation of the meaning of the Qur'an was considered a specialized science accessible only to those with years of religious study behind them.[1] These formal forms of religious disciplining did not, of themselves, disappear with the advent of modernity. They are still an important part of religious education taking place in mosques and in movements of piety. What has gradually disappeared in the modern age, however, has been the monopoly of specialized religious scholars regarding the explanation and the interpretation of the Islamic textual sources. Such knowledge and education became accessible to the wider public, under the impact of developments like the spread of mass literacy and mass media.[2] At present, states as well as religious social movements in the Muslim world make use of this public access by advocating their own "correct" interpretations of Islam and by promoting "Islamic" solutions to the problems of the individual, the family and the society at large. These solutions have become part of rational public debates in which the question of what it means to be a good Muslim, and to live in a truly Islamic society and state – and thereby the concept of authentic identity – are central.

The Islamist Approach

Concerns with identity became increasingly urgent under the impact of Western colonial as well as post-colonial dominance, as Chapter 2 pointed out. According to Islamists affiliated to movements like The Muslim Brotherhood, an authentic identity that is free from corrupting non-Islamic influences can only be developed through a pious lifestyle. In The Muslim Brotherhood's view, such a lifestyle must be acquired through all kinds of disciplinary practices. Among the most important of these is included (collective) prayer, fasting, engaging in sadaqah toward the poor, reciting the Qur'an and cultivating one's own moral self so that it is characterized by an attitude of honesty, trustworthiness and modesty in one's dealings with others. Such an attitude should, ideally speaking, be reflected in one's daily speech and behavior. In this way, Muslim Brothers are expected to shake off the "corrupting" influences from the existing "ignorant" society and create a new society of fraternity and love between believers for the sake of God.[3] These "corrupting influences" are to an important extent attributed to a Western cultural assault spreading materialism and immorality. In the words of ICCS general manager Lafi Qaba'a:

> Western civilization is materialist. Everything there is oriented toward material and financial gain, and that destroys morality and social life. We want the people here to trust God, to follow His will, to find peace in Him. Then they can grow into balanced personalities. Our educative efforts are necessary, because some people are in danger of being seduced by the Western materialist view of life of wanting to posses more and more… and they are going to follow it.[4]

"Finding peace" in God is not only an individual but also a social affair, and it is supposed to lead to a more peaceful and harmonious Islamic society. As Ahmad Mousalli notes in his analysis of Islamist social ideology:

> Before world peace can be realized [according to the Islamists' vision], peace must first be found in the individual, family and society. The peace of the individual, which is the real seed of positive peace, gives the supreme power to the spiritual part of the human being to discipline desires and purify the soul. As such desires are balanced and controlled by spiritual yearnings, an equilibrium between the spiritual and material is made.[5]

Islamists identify the family as the fundamental site for cultivating the values essential to build a peaceful Islamic order. In the words of Mousalli: "This peace extends to the family and becomes the focal point of love, mercy and tranquility. In turn, the peace of the family constitutes a building block for a peaceful society."[6] As already stated, Islamist NGOs try to translate this vision into practice in their approach toward family issues. In the words of ICCS Social Care Council head Murad al-Adeileh:

> Orphan and poor families are educated (by our workers) in good behavior, the values of mutual respect, good family relationships as well as relations with others in the community. They must learn to love their own community and society. Lapsing into alcohol usage, drugs, crime and bad behavior must be prevented.[7]

Charles Hirschkind and Sabah Mahmood have analyzed in the case of Egypt how this religious morality with the concomitant disciplinary endeavors has become a more general socio-cultural trend permeating public as well as private spheres – a trend in which believers exhort, persuade and deliberate with one another on various behavioral matters pertaining to a pious way of life.[8] As the coming two chapters highlight, Islamist NGOs engage in such practices of moral exhortation and persuasion through lectures, workshops, educational meetings with children and adults as well as informal contacts. From a liberal point of view, religious and moral disciplining may be regarded as authoritarian and oppressive toward the freedom and self-realization of the individual. However, within Islamic da'wah and piety movements as well as NGOs, such disciplining is considered – and functions – as a different form of agency and capacity building for the individual.[9]As Mahmood points out, engaging in various kinds of ritual and social practices in a disciplined fashion is conceived of within piety movements as developing one's personality in the desired, that is to say pious, direction. It internalizes values that are assumed to bring a believer closer to God and to contribute simultaneously to a pious and harmonious Islamic society. It is through this emphasis on moral duties, rather than a contrasting and liberal emphasis on personal autonomy and choice in normative matters, that the individual is supposed to realize him- or herself.[10]

In her work on the Islamic piety movement in Egypt, Mahmood distinguishes two different trends within the Islamist current: one is focused on the cultivation of Islamic virtues in one's personal lifestyle as a Muslim; while the other is more concerned with the outward expression of Islamic identity as a way to publicly promote the Islamic 'ummah as an authentic civilization and culture, and to change society and polity in accordance with Islamist notions of freedom and justice.[11] The orientation of the former could be described as one of acting upon the individual self in order to achieve greater levels of piety; the latter's orientation, meanwhile, may be described as one of acting the (Islamic) self out upon society and (national and international) politics in order to achieve the desired changes on a larger scale. In the case of Islamist NGOs, these two approaches complement one another.[12] Moreover, both have prominent roots in The Muslim Brotherhood movement, whose founder and leader, Hasan al-Banna, regarded Islam as an all-encompassing project for moral reform on individual, familial, societal as well as political levels.[13]

When the emphasis in religious education is on the formation of a collective Islamic identity and solidarity and the promotion of a truly authentic 'ummah in the face of hostile forces from the outside, such as Zionism and Western imperialism, Islamists, including Islamist NGOs, often make use of parallels with earlier historical periods when, as is also true today, Muslims were under attack and had to fight back. Examples are the medieval crusades or the time of the Prophet Muhammad himself and the early Muslim community. Through such parallels, Islamists try to promote their own legitimacy, influence and power as a socio-political movement. Antoun has called such usage of historical parallels, by Islamists or by others, "assaults on historicity." He observes in this regard: "In terms of persuasion, the paradoxical result of this assault on the historicity of events is to make them alike, in some sense scripturally anticipated, and to enhance feelings of unity and solidarity of the audience not only with their historic past but also with one another in the living present."[14]

The Humanist-Modernist Approach

There exists also a fundamentally different approach to Islamic education. This does not take the protection and development of a supposedly pure and authentic Islamic 'ummah, in the face of external (and internal) threats as its (main) point of departure. Rather, it focuses on the reinterpretation of the Islamic message in line with global human, women's and children's rights discourses and approaches, as these are enshrined in international documents and UN-conventions and translated into practice by various international development actors.

A non-Islamist NGO dealt with in this study, Al-Faruq Society for Orphans, tries to implement the approach of UNICEF toward child development. This approach is reflected in a manual by UNICEF-Jordan that was originally written for Muslim preachers in order to help them espouse a modern Islamic vision on child development in their sermons in line with the Universal Declaration on the Rights of the Child issued by the UN in 1959. Jordanian pedagogues, social scientists, jurists as well as religious scholars have contributed to it. A copy of this manual was given to me by the president of the Al-Faruq Society, who told me that it serves the Society's awareness-raising program on child development

Instead of emphasizing conformity to a pious lifestyle, this manual, as well as other UNICEF material used by the Society espouses individualizing principles such as: "respect for individual differences between children;" the importance of developing the "internal motivation of the child that leads it to undertake self-directed activities" for the sake of his or her own personality building;[15] offering children "chances to bear responsibility and make choices;" "stimulating the child's own originality;" "enticing the child to regulate itself to guarantee and ensure its personal freedom and responsible behavior;" and "the importance of developing the children's (own) ideas and opinions and their expression thereof."[16]

Such principles are a clear departure from more traditional Arab approaches toward the parent-child relationship. In traditional Arab families, children have, in Barakat's words, often "been socialized into dependence and escapism." There, the "principle technique of child-rearing… is shaming, while the learning process emphasizes physical punishment and talqin [rote-learning] rather than persuasion and reward." Such strategies, according to Barakat, result in "dependency, inequality, and the downplaying of challenges and difficulties." In such traditional parent-child relationships, "downward communication may be accompanied by anger and punishment" and "upward communication may be accompanied by crying, self-censorship, obfuscation and deception."[17]

The UNICEF manual for Muslim preachers interprets injunctions expressed in Qur'anic 'ayat and hadiths in a fairly liberal spirit in order to make them correspond with modern principles and insights regarding children's rights and child development. A prophetic injunction like "honor your children and improve their manners" is cited as a legitimization of the UNICEF approach toward the upbringing of children described above, for instance.[18] As an example, consider the way in which the guide interprets the following Qur'anic 'ayah: "And your Lord has decreed that you worship none but Him. And that you be dutiful to your parents. If one of them or both of them attain old age in your life, say not to them a word of disrespect, nor shout at them but address them in terms of honor" (Al-Isra': 233).[19] On this, the manual comments:

> The disobedience of children toward their parents in their arrogance can be [used as] a precedent for the disobedience of parents toward their children. Here we can mention the story of Umar bin al-Khattab and the man who came to complain to him about the disobedience of his son. When Umar brought the son to reprehend him for his disobedience toward his father, the latter complained to Umar about the disobedience of his father toward him.

This story, according to the manual, is meant to warn parents against "malicious punishments of [i.e. abusive measures against] their children and against disregarding the latter's rights."[20]

The UNICEF manual also espouses the idea of gender equality. It states that "equality and justice" between boys and girls is legally enjoined (by Islam) and that the transgression of this principle is haram (sinful/forbidden). The guide calls for equally distributing rights, duties and responsibilities over all members of the family regardless of gender, and condemns habits according to which "girls are given all the housework tasks while the boys are playing or doing their homework for school." Any discrimination between boys and girls, the guide stresses, deviates from the Islamic shari'ah and acts to the detriment of positive and mutually supportive relations within the family. In this vein, it condemns those fathers who only take their sons out to places like the mosque or the market and deprive girls of the opportunity to enjoy such "different social and life experiences."[21]

UNICEF in Jordan also tries to encourage fathers to take up their own role in the upbringing of their children, something relatively new to the culture. It recommends fathers to participate in all different aspects of their children's development, such as taking care of their health, showing them affection by hugging and kissing them, singing with them and telling them stories, showing trust in them and respecting their feelings and emotions, stimulating their interest in their environment, giving them opportunities to choose between different options and take their own decisions.[22] Revolutionary ideas indeed when compared to the traditional role of the Arab father as depicted by Halim Barakat and others. According to that, the father is to have limited presence in his children's life and to limit his role to that of exercising of punishment. Moreover, a child's difficulties and challenges are to be downplayed and the expression of a child's individuality is to be restrained.[23]

The above depiction of two different approaches within Islamic education, the Islamist and the humanist-modernist one, is not meant to suggest that the two are necessarily always at odds in terms of the content of their messages on, for instance, the upbringing of children or gender relations. The basic difference between the two is that the Islamist approach is aimed at Islamization, that is to say, the development and fortification of a supposedly "pure" and "authentic" Islamic identity and way of life, on individual as well as on collective levels, in the face of everything considered to be non- or even anti-Islamic.

However, given the fact that Islamists want their Islamic message to be relevant in (and to) modern society, we also find among them a critique of certain traditional Arab practices and habits; in particular, this occurs in the realms of child development and gender relations. This critique can make the Islamists' discourse sound very similar at times to that of the humanist-modernist approach and may even lead to the explicit adoption of modern rights-based principles.

The more progressive Islamists are more outspoken in this tendency than the more conservative ones. Head of the Al-'Aqsa Association and ex-Muslim Brotherhood member Nawal al-Fa'uri, for instance, emphasizes the importance of educating women, not only to make them good mothers and housewives but also to enable them to participate in the social, economic and political life of their (Islamic) societies on an equal footing with men. Regarding the reproductive role of women in "developing countries," she writes:

> Assuming this role well requires education, enlightenment and much study about the affairs of life to enable her to offer her sons and daughters anything. However, the [societal] focus is only on being married or not, delivering children and [questions like]: why didn't she deliver a child yet? Why did she postpone her marriage? How many boys and girls will there be once she has got children? In this pattern of diminishing the capabilities of the woman, her education and aspirations, there is complete frustration for half of the society in participating in its development in an exemplary way.[24]

Even some ICCS centers have adopted a more modernist approach in their educational activities and their educational discourse. ICCS Center Abu Dhur started to cooperate with UNICEF already in 1997, out of a concern with promoting sustainable development and the whish to get rid of the trap of providing dependency-reinforcing charitable aid only. Interviews conducted by Marie Juul Petersen with UNICEF-trained woman workers of this center reveal how much notions of rights and of the empowerment of women and children are part of their (Islamic) educational approach. According to the Center's director, the plan of the new ICCS-administration is that within two years from 2007, 25% of the ICCS centers for orphans and poor all over Jordan will have adopted the UNICEF approach.[25]

Religious Education, Dependency-Relationships and Indoctrination

In Chapter 8 we noted that opponents of the Islamists accuse the latter of religiously indoctrinating the clients who depend on their services. Being a dependent client implies vulnerability in terms of one's socio-economic status and often psychological vulnerability as well. That is to say clients are entwined in a patronage relationship that renders them unusually sensitive to what the patron has to say on any given matter. Being a child usually makes one even more sensitive in this regard. And if these patrons are firm adherents of a dogmatic religious ideology, indoctrination seems to be all the more likely. Accordingly, even well-educated adults – vulnerable in the socio-economic, political, cultural and psychological context in which they live – are targeted. What specifically does indoctrination involve in the present context, however, and how does it work? Before moving on, some scientific insights on the phenomenon of indoctrination will be presented.

Indoctrination on an Individual Level

> The Muslim Brotherhood Movement as a whole, including Sayyid Qutb and his writings, advocate Islamization from the bottom up! One cannot even impose Islam from the top down. Islam can only be implemented by people and by a society who voluntarily and sincerely embraces it!

This point was made by Murad al-Adeileh, director of the ICCS Social Care Council. He had grown agitated because I had reminded him of the famous Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood thinker Sayyid Qutb who had promoted the idea of a religiously purified Islamic vanguard to take over power by force, and to push through the Islamization of the entire society from the top down.[26] However one likes to interpret Sayyid Qutb's thought – which can be done in various ways[27] – the point I would like to make here is the truth contained in the idea that religion, or any conviction for that matter, cannot simply be imposed from the top down.

Both indoctrination and brainwashing refer to practices of coercive persuasion and mind control. Through such practices certain beliefs and ideas are imposed upon people to the exclusion of other beliefs and ideas. The emphasis in the concept of brainwashing is on the prevention of rational and critical thinking about beliefs presented as absolute "truths."[28] Indoctrination as a concept denotes teaching people to be exclusivist in their thinking, in other words to believe unconditionally in a dogmatically given "truth" and to reject anything that deviates from that.[29]

Dick Anthony and Thomas Robbins, who have written on the topic of conversion and brainwashing in new religious movements, suggest clear limits to the power of practices of mind control. No matter how sophisticated a brainwashing technique is, it can only be successful with those who are already receptive to the message in play. On the basis of data derived from research on conversion to "new" religious movements in the United States such as the Moon Sect, the Jesus Movement, Baghwan and Hare Krishna, as well as on the experiences of American prisoners of the Korea war who have been exposed to intensive indoctrination efforts in Maoist China, they refute the thesis of the proponents of the "Brainwashing Model." Theories starting from that model have an "extrinsic" view on brainwashing. They assume that in its process:

> [a] presumptively passive convert is overwhelmed by dynamic overpowering stimuli and converted to ideas and to a self-conception which would previously have been highly distasteful to the convert…the subject is assumed to be passive, without choice or freedom of will to escape his or her brain being laundered.[30]

According to Anthony and Robbins, the findings of the above-mentioned research have demonstrated that ideas, beliefs and self-conceptions cannot be imposed upon people who are unwilling to embrace them. Even in the extreme case of prisoners of war, who were also physically incarcerated and subject to physical duress and threats, indoctrination efforts positively affected the inner beliefs and convictions of only a few among them. They attribute the receptivity of these exceptional few to their "pre-conversion personalities, past history, emotional strains and identity-problems."[31] In other words, indoctrination practices must have an appeal to certain pre-existing personality-traits, emotions, values, beliefs and ideas of its subjects in order to succeed.

Here again, Foucault's statement that power and discipline are not only negative in their functioning but must have positive features and produce "pleasure, forms of knowledge and discourse" in order to operate effectively comes to mind. 25 years ago, Anthony identified such positive aspects in the case of converts to alternative religious movements. He mentions the rehabilitation of drug users, rewarding interpersonal relationships, renewed vocational commitment, suicide prevention and relief from depression and anxiety.[32] He and Robbins stress that research findings on converts to such movements suggest that there is a clear connection between aspects of the converts' pre-conversion selves and their receptivity to the discourse of those movements.

The "new self" that results from a conversion experience is not an ego-alien one. Phrased differently, those who are successfully "indoctrinated" or "brainwashed" by a religious movement feel that they have a psychological, social and possibly also an economic or even political interest in getting "indoctrinated." This feeling emanates from their previously existing selves with all their psychological, social and cultural aspects. The high rate of defection of previous converts from such movements, once they come to feel that the latter did not meet these interests, only confirms this thesis. The authors conclude: "there is generally some 'elective affinity' [a term derived from Max Weber] between the group and the recruit, which commences a process of interaction in which certain types of individuals and certain types of groups jointly create a religious milieu."[33]

Indoctrination on a Collective Level

The concept of "elective affinity" is not only applicable to individual psychological cases. Its relevance also extends to more collective levels of being. On the level of societies and nation states, there are several examples showing that systematic attempts to ideologically mold a population into a belief system it does not genuinely accept does not work in terms of controlling inner convictions and beliefs, even if it has a powerful impact in terms of outward behavior and expressions by the people living in those societies. The ultimate fate of Communist one-party states in the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe are a case in point, as well as the massive protests and calls for democratization and liberalization of well-educated Iranians – in particular from the younger generation – in opposition to the ideological strictures of the Shiite clerical regime in Iran. Islamists in Jordan and elsewhere have always understood that their message has to resonate with the ideas, sentiments and feelings that predominate in the society they operate in if they are to have a chance of expanding their movements' social and political influence.

Indeed, any voluntarily and sincerely embraced belief system cannot simply be imposed from the top down. In past centuries, Christian missionary organisations as well as Muslim Sufi orders had to adapt their religious discourse to the worldviews and the cosmologies of native peoples in newly "discovered" lands in order to make their message appealing to the latter. Something similar applies to activities of religious education carried out by present day Muslim NGOs. If the messages conveyed by these educational activities are to be successfully transmitted, they have to resonate with the experiences, ideas, interests and values of their local target groups. In other words, they have to be geared toward the socio-cultural lifeworld of the latter, even if they aim to transform this lifeworld in certain respects. This insight has to be kept in mind when evaluating the activities of religious education of Muslim NGOs. Such education may even have aspects of fostering individual empowerment.

Al-'Abura Center's Approach

On 16 June 2003, a meeting took place between Al-'Abura Center's staff and mothers of client families. Problems related to the daily lives and the behavior of some of these mothers' teenage sons were discussed. One mother complained about her 12-year old son who wouldn't listen to her, did not go to school and was spending his time hanging around in the street. Another woman said that her 14-year old son couldn't go to school since he was forced to take up various temporary manual jobs, in factories or in farms, to contribute to the family's economic survival. Yet another mother, tired and sorrowful, talked about her 17-year old son who failed to obey her, behaving aggressively and smoking all the time, abusing her and his younger siblings verbally as well as physically.

In most of these cases, the director responded to the various complaints by telling the male social worker present at the meeting whose task it was to deal with the boys among the orphan clients, to visit the families in question in order to find out more about reasons and circumstances underlying behavioral problems and to find ways of tackling them. In the case of the aggressive teenager, the male social worker mentioned to me that referral to a psychologist could be one option. In the case of the boy who was engaged in paid labor to the detriment of his school education, the director suggested raising the monthly financial benefit to the family in question so as to enable the boy to go to school again. The mothers in question were invited to the meeting to discuss problems that were noted by the center's workers in their daily interactions with the orphans.[34]

Problems of Orphans – The Workers' Perception and Discourse

The kind of behavioral problems among orphan boys raised and discussed at this meeting, such as failure to go to school, disobedience, hanging around in the street without clear purpose, addiction to cigarettes and aggressive and abusive behavior is regarded by workers of Al-'Abura Center as resulting from the general condition of poverty and want in the refugee camp. Apart from a lack of income, this entails the crowded and often unhealthy living conditions there. Related psychological stresses and frustrations may lead to escapism among the orphan boys in the form of addiction and to aggressive behavior within the family or outdoors. Apart from poverty, the absence of the father in orphan families is often identified by Al-'Abura Center's workers as a cause for behavioral problems among especially orphan boys. This absence is often equated with the absence of control and discipline, which they regard as indispensable to the orphan's mental development and future prospects. To borrow the words of the supervisor of Al-'Abura's women's center: "boys are usually unmotivated because they have no fathers and the mothers cannot control them."[35] According to the same supervisor, the absence of the father as "teacher and supervisor in life" creates "mental problems as well as pain and suffering, not to mention health problems due to the lack of nutrition because of their poor economic status."[36] The workers point to the situation of needy mothers or widows who have to bear the double burden of bringing her children up and ensuring the family's economic survival which leads to mental stresses and anxieties among them.[37]

A third cause for the problems in the upbringing and the development of orphan children identified by workers and representatives of the ICCS is ignorance (jahl) on the part of the mothers of orphans. Murat al-Adeileh, the ICCS director who is in charge of these centers all over Jordan, points to mothers who discipline their children in a rude, insulting and abusive way. He stresses the need for teaching the mothers a more patient, refined and friendly approach toward their children.[38]

The sequence in which such orphan children end up in trouble is explained by the center's (male) supervisor of the orphan boys as follows: children – and boys in particular – who lack motivation get in trouble with their teachers and may eventually drop out of school.[39] Many of them eventually find poorly paid jobs in shops or workplaces. They may be subject to verbal or physical abuse by the owners or adult workers there before eventually being dismissed without remuneration. Once they spend their daytime in the street, they may engage in (sexually) "immoral," addictive and petty criminal behavior, like stealing.[40]

Religious Education

In the view of ICCS workers, it is necessary to provide the orphan families with moral guidance, education, training and purposeful Islamic socialization in order to give them a sense of moral and social direction. The director of the ICCS center in Al-Wihdat refugee camp in Amman, for instance, considers "keeping the orphans from the street, far from people with criminal or immoral intentions and bringing them into an atmosphere of moral motivation with a sense of (common) purpose" its central mission.[41] Workers of Al-'Abura Center stress the importance in their work of "raising new generations that respect religion and moral values" and "helping human beings with their energies, emotions, souls and morals." The women's section supervisor goes so far as to say that "a person without religion is a person without being."[42]

The moral disciplining of Al-'Abura clients takes a persuasive form similar to attempts described by Hirschkind in Egypt. In the words of one of the male workers:

> When we try to solve social problems or conflicts between people, we do our best to convince them that a certain behavior is not desirable. But this often happens naturally, because we have personal contacts with clients in the camp (such as in places of sports or recreation). So it is often easy and natural to speak to people (also) on moral and religious issues.[43]

Female workers speak about home visits to client mothers, which they describe as taking place in a spirit of "good neighborliness", "friendship" and "sisterhood." They stress the importance of "listening to the mothers and their daughters and letting them know that we feel and care for them."

The ICCS centers' educational program for orphans as well as their mothers is explicitly presented by ICCS representatives as an alternative to the "evil temptations" and "corrupting influences" of materialism and consumerism, as well as an antidote to the negative behavioral inclinations of aggression, bitterness and envy toward those who are better off. It is supposed to shape a more pious, harmonious and "balanced" personality out of the needy beneficiary, who should learn to be patient, grateful toward God and sincerely strive to obtain the divine reward in the afterlife.[44]

The head of Al-'Abura Center's educational department for orphan boys speaks about its educational activities as a way to instill a "quieter" and more disciplined attitude into the boys. Part of that program involves warning orphans, sometimes in the presence of their mothers, against the adverse consequences of "harmful" behaviour like not going to school, smoking, drinking alcohol, theft, lying and giving in to "evil" temptations such as the loose sexual conduct one finds in films or on the internet. The workers urge the orphans to completely avoid interaction with other poorly behaved youngsters. The disciplinary approach against all of these temptations is based upon religious values of faith in God, inner peace, patience and perseverance in following His way.[45]

Every week, the orphans receive Qur'anic lessons in ICCS centers. These are a vehicle for religious disciplining in the form of instruction in the memorization and recitation of the Qur'an and of the performance of ritual obligations, such as salah. Concomitantly the duty to attend the weekly khutbah (sermon) in the mosque is also much emphasised. They also involve instruction in social values derived from the Qur'anic text, like respect for the elderly, honesty, faithfulness and prohibition of gossip. Such values are often discussed in reference to the orphan's concrete experiences and daily lives.[46] Discussions with orphan girls at Al-'Abura Center of between 10 and 12 years of age indicate something of the effects of such religious disciplining. They spoke, for instance, about seeing sick and miserable people, among them alcohol addicts, during a visit to a hospital, which they regarded as a lesson about the vital importance of good health and gratitude toward God regarding one's own health. Their response to seeing a man there whose arm had been amputated was simply: "thank God that I still have my arm." Another message of gratitude, spiritual contentment and patient endurance was expressed while discussing a father who died a martyr in Palestine. This was not to be regarded as a cause for sorrow since the children would meet him later in Paradise.[47]

Harmony in Family and Society

To prevent the sort of behavior among children that might lead to the disintegration of families, the workers of Al-'Abura Center encourage orphans belonging to the same family to stick together and support one another. In concrete terms, according to the Center's supervisor of orphan boys, this means that older brothers should be encouraged to take care of the younger ones. The oldest brother, who takes the place of the father in an orphan family, is taught to use his position responsibly. He must pay close attention to the situation of his younger siblings, make sure that they go to school, as well as listen to what they have to say about their problems. The younger brothers are, in turn, taught to obey the oldest one in the house as well as in matters pertaining to life outdoors.[48]

Such discourse reflects a straightforward orientation towards the fulfillment of one's duties and responsibilities. It is congruent with traditional Arab family values, in which self-denial of each member for the sake of the well being as well as the moral integrity and reputation of the family as a whole is the norm.[49] It also reflects traditional patterns of hierarchy within the family.[50]

However, statements of Al-'Abura Center's workers as well as those of ICCS representatives such as Murad al-Adeileh (mentioned above) seem also to indicate a desire toward reform of the parent-child relationship. Such reform polishes down the severer aspects of this hierarchical relationship and places a greater stress on empathic care by the older children toward the younger ones, whose human dignity should be respected. This vision is reflected, for instance, in game activities taking place in the women's section of Al-'Abura Center. The participating girls, ranging from 5 to 18 years of age, are divided into three age-based groups. Girls from the oldest group are obliged to make regular visits to a group of younger children, play games with them and help preserve the order in the group, under the supervision of a female worker.[51]

Pious Discipline as a Vehicle of Empowerment

The Islamist reliance on religious and moral disciplining as a form of agency in the building of the individual became most apparent during a discussion with Al-'Abura Center's orphan girls. They understood the importance of the Centre's activities in terms of religious notions of responsibility, dignity and the strengthening of one's own capability for doing good. Likewise, they stressed the new experiences they underwent at the center and the new things they were able to learn there, for instance, computer training, and first aid. They were also positive about the visits they had made to historical and religious places, including 'umrah (the lesser pilgrimage) to Mecca, and how they had learnt to recite and interpret the Qur'an and the Hadith in a way that rendered these texts instructive for their daily behavior.

The same feelings of empowerment through learning and education were also expressed when the girls spoke about the importance of knowledge-seeking in general, the pride they expressed regarding the school achievements of their brothers and sisters, and the boys who cause trouble to their mothers by dropping out of school. During religious counsel received by the girls, much importance is placed on the development of 'adab (good manners) as a way to cultivate good relationships with others. This includes proper eating habits, modest outward appearance – including the eventual donning of the hijab – and polite and civilized behavior and speech during daily social interactions.[52] Mothers of orphans receive religious instruction at the Center's women's department as well, amongst others on their duty to become "good Islamic mothers."[53]

Collective Identity Formation

Besides the cultivation in ICCS centers of virtue in one's personal life, the expression and cultivation of a collective Islamic socio-political identity has an important place in the educational programs for the orphans. A language class that took place at Al-'Abura Center provides a clear example of the construction of a collective Islamic political identity in the face of "alien" hostile powers. The voluntary teacher of this class was a man in his thirties whose professional life was spent as a teacher of Islam in a government school.

On one particular occasion, he was sitting together with a small group of seven or eight orphan boys of between 8 and 12 years old around a table. The first part of the language class was devoted to exercises in ruqʻah writing. Once the boys had completed them under the supervision of the teacher, who approached them in a didactic, calm and encouraging manner, they received a homework assignment in the form of a text entitled rabb al-ʻalamin (Lord of the two Worlds) which they were told to write in ruqʻah. Next came a poetry session, in which all the boys were told to read aloud a poem on the Prophet Muhammad, after the teacher himself had done so. Some of them recited the poem in a melodious voice. Once everybody was done, the teacher asked the pupils about the poem's meaning. When no verbal response was forthcoming, he started to emphasize that understanding the meaning of the text was essential. Then he highlighted several themes in the poem: praise to the Prophet Muhammad who is the best of God's creatures and a light in darkness and oppression; the Prophet's own orphanhood; the jahilin of Mecca who mocked the Prophet, accusing him of being a liar and attacking him physically; and the necessity for the Prophet and his followers to fight their enemies in order to emerge victorious from their weak and vulnerable position. The teacher stressed that, in order to live as good Muslims, the Prophet and his followers needed to become strong and to acquire political power themselves.

Subsequently, he drew a parallel with the present time, in which Arabs and Muslims once again live in a state of weakness and vulnerability. His argument was that, due to the fact that the Arabs and Muslims are divided and fragmented, they are oppressed by the West in general and the United States in particular. In a rhetorical fashion, he asked the boys: "would the Americans have been able to invade Iraq if the Muslims were strong and united? Would the Jews have been able to take Palestine if the Muslims were united?" The teacher concluded his comments by saying that all Muslim countries could be invaded by the Americans, including Jordan.[54]

The class speaks volumes about the educational approach of ICCS centers for orphans and the poor. First of all, we see the centrality of religious topics and material when teaching linguistic skills like handwriting and poetry. Second, we see, as with the Islamic Welfare Society of Salt described in the previous chapter, that the approach to religious knowledge is a modern one in the sense that its content is expected to be comprehended in an explicit and rational manner. Furthermore, it was obvious that the teacher of this language class attached great importance to fostering a sense of collective Muslim consciousness and identity among the orphan boys as a way of relating to the outside world.

From the teacher's point of view, the boys must understand that the (political as well as social) problems and weaknesses Arabs and Muslims currently face, and which greatly affect the boys' own lives as (often orphaned) children of Palestinian refugees, are caused by the lack of a solid (political) Islamic identity. Likewise, the teacher had no doubts that the way to overcome these problems and for Muslims to regain their dignity is for all true believers to follow in the footsteps of the Prophet Muhammad and his early Companions. Thus, they are unconditionally to adhere to a commonly held Islamic faith, to practice mutual solidarity and to stand united in the face of the enemy of the modern 'ummah (the forces of [US] imperialism and Zionism). In this spirit, Muslims will regain their power and dignity. The usage of the Prophet Muhammad as a model of (collective) empowerment for the orphan boys was apparent from the teacher's emphasis on the Prophet's own orphanhood.

Similar political messages were conveyed at the women's department of Al-'Abura Center as preparations were made for a celebration to mark the end of the summer. Part of these was the rehearsal of a theatre play performed by orphan girls under the supervision of women teachers. This play dealt in a satirical vein with the politically hot topics of Palestine and Iraq. One of the girls played the role of a minister of an unnamed Arab country. She was "interviewed" by another girl who played the role of a journalist. The "minister" tried to soothe and placate the audience with reassuring words. When the "interviewer" asked her about the American occupation of another Arab country, the "minister" answered that the Americans should be considered friends and reasonable people, with whom everything can be discussed and arranged in a fair spirit. When the issue of Palestine was raised, her response was that the Jews are victims deserving of pity, and that maintaining good relations with them was of the utmost importance. Needless to say, the play was intended to elicit ridicule and mockery from the audience and, presumably, it succeeded in doing just this.

After the rehearsal, singing exercises began. The first song dealt with the life of an orphan family suffering from poverty and unable to afford the kind of food and clothing that other people enjoy during the time of 'Id al-Fitr. The second song dealt with the exile of Palestinian refugees who miss their country and family and long for a return to their homeland. That song was accompanied by traditional Palestinian dabka dance. At the end, a song about the Prophet Muhammad was sung.[55]

The activities taking place at this event also illustrate how the purportedly Islamic educational message at Al-'Abura Center is colored by the experiences and multiple identities of the inhabitants of a Palestinian refugee camp in Jordan. The play cannot be explained other than as a thinly veiled protest against the type of government they live under as Arab citizens who, moreover, carry the status of Palestinian refugees who often feel excluded and discriminated against. Its message was that this government cares more about its relationship with the "enemies" of the Arab nation then about the well being and rights of the bulk of the members of this nation itself, and in particular the Palestinian people.

The first song dwelled upon the experiences of orphanhood, poverty and socio-economic inequality. It gives expression to experiences common to needy single-parent families living in the Al-Hussein refugee camp. Their situation was contrasted with that of people who can afford an abundance of food and clothing during the feast of 'Id al-Fitr. To a certain degree, the issue of social class came to the fore here. Apparently, the song reflects a form of protest against the lack of solidarity on the part of the wealthier classes with the underprivileged. This lack of solidarity is most painfully felt during a religious feast like 'Id al-Fitr, which must be experienced as a betrayal of the feasts' true religious and ethical meaning, which calls for the inclusion of the poor and orphans.

The second song, on the fate of Palestinians exiled from their homeland, gave direct expression to the Palestinian experience and identity. This was underlined by the accompanying dabka dance, a cultural symbol of Palestinian identity. The last song, about the Prophet Muhammad, was specifically related to the Islamic message.

Piety and Social Mobility

ICCS representatives and workers often stress the need to work for upward social mobility of the orphan clients, mainly through education and training. Apart from interviews with them, this is reflected in their publications, where values like self-reliance, building one's own personal character, obtaining success and progress are emphasized in reports on activities like scouting, computer training or employment provision to needy clients.[56] Their religious view on this matter apparently is that while only God knows and determines how successful one will be in life, it is the duty and responsibility of every needy believer to exert all efforts to overcome their situation of need and the duty of every wealthier believer to assist and support the former in this regard.[57] This spirit of social betterment and advancement through education is reflected in the following statement a worker of Al-'Abura Center's food production unit, who is a widow and used to be a needy recipient herself, about what she tells her own children: "I do everything I can for you and work from early in the morning until the evening. I do not allow myself to be tired, but please, do your utmost at school and get high marks. When I walk in the streets, I am proud of you."[58]

Working on Social Mobility and Economic Prospects

ICCS centers' program of supporting orphans in their (future) socio-economic development and/or mobility consists first of all of tutoring lessons for children in any school subject they have difficulties in coping with. The center's educational workers may pay visits to schools where the client children are enrolled, talk to the teacher about the latter's learning results and problems and subsequently draw up a plan for tutoring them, and assisting them in their home-work assignments at the center.[59] If a child's learning problems are related to an unstable family situation at home, a female worker, possibly accompanied by a male worker, may visit the family in question to look for ways of improvement. They may encourage the mother to be more positive and rewarding toward her children, and the child to be more disciplined and obedient toward his mother and to do his or her best at school.[60]

As already mentioned in Chapter 12, children who "do not fit" within the regular school system may be send to vocational training centers, or may even find employment opportunities in places like garages, groceries, carpentry workshops or construction sites that are considered "trustworthy" by the Center's workers.[61] On the other hand, orphan boys considered talented enough may, with the help of Al-'Abura Center, get places in institutions of higher education, such as those for advanced IT-learning. Like in other ICCS centers, there is in Al-'Abura Center itself a small computer lab where orphan boys as well as girls receive elementary computer training in order to support them in their school education.[62]

Al-'Abura Center also organizes lectures and discussions for boys as well as girls on social issues that are of relevance to their lives. These may be led by the Center's workers themselves or by experts such as medical doctors, formally trained social workers or pedagogues invited by the Center. They are sometimes open to the public in the local community, and not confined to the clients alone. Topics raised and discussed at these events range from health issues, such as the effects of sexual diseases, smoking and the drinking of alcohol, to proper social conduct and the children's prospects in terms of their future education and work. Advice, counsel and warning are given at these events.[63] According to the Center's female workers, orphan girls can bring in any subject relevant to their own lives in these sessions and receive counsel. The Center's educational teachers regularly organize a quiz on issues discussed with the orphans. Those who win receive a price.[64]

Gender Separation and Role Differentiation

Orphan boys and girls participate separately in educational activities at ICCS centers. From Saturday till Thursday, the boys are supposed to come to Al-'Abura Center between 4 and 5 pm., and to stay there until the beginning of the evening. They number 120 at most. The attending boys usually divide themselves into three age-based groups; these roughly correspond to the ages of kindergarten, primary and secondary school age. Each group will work in a different room and is supervised by one of the three male educational workers employed by the center, or by a male volunteer.[65]

The girls arrive in the morning at the Center and stay until early or mid-afternoon with the Center's women workers. They are similarly divided into the three age-based groups. At separate times, boys as well as girls make use of the same rooms and facilities, such as the computer lab, the library and the video recorder.

There are, however, obvious differences in the nature of educational activities for boys and for girls. On Friday, for instance, the male workers take the orphan boys to Al-Hussain Club, Al Hussain Refugee Camp's youth center, where they engage in sports and in cultural activities like theatre, singing, story writing and poetry.[66] Moreover, several times of the year, the bus of the Center brings the boys and their guides to a forested place south of Amman, where they camp for three days. There they engage in various marching exercises (equipped with solid wooden sticks), as well as in other scouting activities.[67] Girls, while also engaged in similar cultural – though not the same kind of sportive – pastimes, spend less time outside the premises of the Center; rather, they spend a considerable amount of time being prepared for future roles as mothers and housewives, learning to cook and clean well.[68]

This does not a priori mean that, from an Islamist point of view, girls cannot engage in activities similar to those of boys; merely that these have to take place on a gender-separate basis. The male director of the ICCS center in Al-Wihdat refugee camp in Amman, for instance, talked about plans to establish a scouting club for the orphan girls, parallel to the already existing one for boys.[69] The women's department of Al-'Abura Center regularly organizes outings and picnics to natural areas and places of (historical and religious) interest for the orphan girls and their mothers, as well as excursions to various social institutions.[70]

In terms of gender, we may conclude that Islamist social welfare centers situated in culturally conservative communities like Palestinian refugee camps are not that conservative, let alone reactionary, when compared with prevailing traditional culture. While they reproduce traditional gender roles and divisions, they offer certain opportunities in terms of education, vocational training, social awareness and activities to underprivileged girls and their mothers that may otherwise not have been available to the latter. In other words, they try to work through their own (religiously inspired and gender-separated) ways on the latter's social, psychological and educational agency and empowerment.

Al-Faruq Society for Orphans in Comparison with ICCS Center Al-'Abura

In terms of function, activities and target group, Al-Faruq Society for Orphans in Irbid, which is mainly active in the Palestinian refugee camp of that city, is similar to ICCS centers for orphans and poor in Jordan. Both work with children from orphan families who face the same problems and risks, such as lowly educated or even illiterate mothers who face severe difficulties in providing for their basic needs and helping them with their school education, dropping out from school and ending up in child labor or in practices like petty theft, alcohol abuse and (homo-)sexual experiments.[71]

Both also use methods like home visits [72] and offering the orphan children educational, cultural and recreational activities intended to keep them from spending too long on the streets, where the dangers of crime, addiction and "immorality" lurk, and on giving them new perspectives.[73]

Al-Faruq Society versus the ICCS: Two Different Discourses

Having said this, generally speaking, Al-Faruq Society is run by people with more secular or liberal religious orientations than those working in the ICCS centers. Moreover, Al Faruq Society does not insist that its client families make use of its educational and cultural services, unlike an ICCS center like Al-'Abura. At the time of fieldwork, the latter stipulated that any donations paid to an orphan family also meant the obligatory usage of such services by the recipients. Only 45 orphan girls participate in Al-Faruq Society's Girls Committee, for instance, while it serves in total approximately 700 families with an estimated 3,500 individuals. The Committee's head explained this relatively low number with a simple remark: "everybody is free to register or not."[74] Likewise, the President affirmed that nobody could be forced or even pressured to participate.

This difference can be attributed to a vision specific to the place of religion in individual, social as well as political life, as well as to the way in which this vision translates itself into (varying) approaches to social work. An ICCS center like Al-'Abura works on the premise that following the Islamic revelation with its injunctions and admonitions to act "for the sake of God" must be the ultimate and only real aim in the lives of the believers. Their representatives mention with pride that these injunctions and admonitions pertain to "all" aspects of life, including the tiniest and most intimate details, like going to the toilet or the sexual behaviour between a husband and wife.[75] From this follows the idea that there exists no correct form of social work outside of the Islamic doctrine as they understand it. This also means, in practice, that those who benefit from ICCS centers' services must be willing, "for their own good," to be guided in the direction of a religious worldview and to become part of a collective effort of religious reform, with its implications in terms of personal piety as well as socio-political identity. This worldview and effort is the one espoused by Jordan's major Islamist movement.

Al-Faruq Society, on the other hand, does not have the Islamization of society in general and of clients in particular as its aim. Central to their discourse is the idea that clients must be enabled to empower themselves, to be made aware of their own rights and opportunities and to learn to grasp the latter in accordance with their own preferences and desires as well as in harmony with their social environment. The practical results of this approach may not be totally unlike those of the one applied by ICCS centers. The latter's vision of the "truly pious" Islamic personality includes notions of taking one's own responsibility to grasp one's (religiously legitimate) opportunities to improving one's own (spiritual as well as socio-economic) conditions in life, in harmony with duties toward one's own family and community. Moreover, Islamic faith has a prominent presence in Al-Faruq Society's discourse as well. It does not, however, take the promotion of piety and a collective Islamic identity that is defined in opposition to non-Islamic (for instance secular or Western) identities as its starting point in social work. Besides the Islamic revelation, it pays equal attention to global human, women's and children's rights discourses that are enshrined in international treaties. The latter indicate the direction in which change in the lives of the Society's beneficiaries as well as in the wider community should take place. Such discourses are based upon a relatively liberal notion of individual rights, wherein the individual must have the freedom to acquire the self-esteem to express him- or herself in the attainment of self-directed goals. This includes the choice as to whether or not to engage in a certain (religious) lifestyle or not. [76]

Al-Faruq Society's Educational Approach toward Orphans

In Al-Faruq Society's discourse, Islam as a revelation offering values and injunctions for a better life accords well with a liberal and humanist developmental vision, also when it comes to child development issues. The remarks of a father of a school child who is enrolled in the elementary school run by Al-Faruq Society may here serve as an illustration. According to the head of the school, a middle-aged woman, its teachers always use examples derived from the daily social lives of the children in order to illustrate religious values. As important examples of those values, she mentioned *sidq* (honesty) and 'amanah (reliability and faithfulness). The visiting father in question spontaneously explained these concepts in terms encouraging the child to express his or her true feelings and opinions in an atmosphere of freedom. Only in such an atmosphere, he stressed, can lying and hypocrisy, the opposite of those values, be countered.[77]

Interviews with Al Faruq Society's workers about their own activities related to child development indicate as well a greater stress on individual choice, learning and creativity, and a lesser focus on values of obedience and (sacred) duties toward the family and the accompanying conceptions of values like sabr (patience) and gratitude. This is reflected in the words of the Society's President who said:

> for sure, the orphan children must learn to memorize the Qur'an, but it is as important for them to learn computer skills, for instance, to engage in sports or to have fun … for us, religion is just one element in our overall program, while at the ICCS, religion dominates everything.[78]

Accordingly, the Society's members argue that they want to give boys and girls the opportunity to make their own choices, "and this could mean working with computers, with something in the area of religion, in the medical realm or whatever."[79]

The question remains to what extent such different ideological outlooks really translate themselves into different practical approaches. ICCS centers too present their orphan clients with different possibilities in terms of vocational training or orientation. This seems to indicate that social workers employed by ideologically different NGOs apply much the same methods of education and empowerment in practice, even though the accompanying socio-cultural discourses may significantly differ. This is also reflected in the activities Al-Faruq Society organizes for its orphan boys and girls.

The Society offers much the same types of socio-cultural activities and vocational training to its orphan clients as ICCS centers do. They receive aid and support in their school education and their homework assignments, for instance. Apparently different is that Al-Faruq Society insists that every child must follow a certain type of modern education or training, whether this is academic or vocational. Its president strongly rejects one practice that I found at Al-'Abura Center. Specifically, I refer to the tradition that children who do not learn well at school may prefer to work in a "trustworthy" place, with an uncle for instance, instead of going to school.[80] Apparently, when it comes to the enhancement of children's own socio-economic prospects, Al-Faruq Society's approach is more disciplinary, whereas Al-'Abura centers' disciplinary approach placed, at least at the time of fieldwork, a heavier emphasis on religion and piety.

Like ICCS centers, Al-Faruq Society enables boys to follow vocational training in various areas like repairing engines or electrical devices, carpentry or even more advanced techniques like computer programming at the youth center of the refugee camp.[81] Primary school age girls are trained at the Society itself in the production of ceramics, artificial flower making and embroidery. The chairwoman of the Society's girls committee presents the aim of the latter activity as offering the participating girls (aged between 6 and 13) the opportunity to be engaged in a productive and creative vein. She emphasises that there are few possibilities at home for activities of a creative and enjoyable nature. The girls also receive the necessary materials and tools from the committee to carry out these activities in their own houses.[82] The products that are the fruit of such manual activities are publicly displayed at exhibitions at times, and may be sold. If that happens, the proceeds are used for the benefit of the committee and its programs.[83] With the same aim of developing their own creative skills, the girls are also encouraged by the committee to give presentations on topics in which they are interested. Many other activities, like helping the participating girls with their school assignments, watching educational films on subjects like health, animals or history, excursions to places like hospitals, centers for the handicapped, religious institutions and natural areas, staging theatre plays on subjects like daily behavior, religious or historical themes and computer training, seem to be similar to those of ICCS centers.[84]

In spite of all these similarities, however, the emphasis on creative self-expression in the discourse of the committee members, rather than of living and acting "in the way of God," points to a difference in (sub-) cultures. What may be indicative as well of the Society's own approach is the desire expressed by its president to acquire more useful toys and devices for the children to play, including musical instruments. When asked whether playing music conflicted with Islam's teachings, an opinion held by Islamic figures of stricter interpretations, he replied: "we are not fanatical about such (faith-related) issues."[85]

The discourse of individual creativity and empowerment can also be heard at the primary school the Society is running. The staff of this school prides itself on its strict adherence to the legal stipulation prohibiting any form of corporal punishment of children – something that cannot be said of a significant number of other schools in Jordan – and in its application of methods of playful and creative learning, which they contrast with other school's more traditional methods of rote-learning.[86] Encouraging children in a rewarding and positive spirit, instead of humiliating them and emphasizing their mistakes, is explained as the correct approach.[87] They told me that they try to promote this approach toward the parents of schoolchildren as well.[88]

Individual Development in a Social Context: Activities toward Parents

Similar messages are transmitted to parents – client mothers as well as others – who attend the Society's public lectures or courses on the upbringing of children. These are usually taught by UNICEF's affiliated experts, and include themes like health, hygiene, sexuality, children's right to protection against abuse and positive and rewarding ways of communicating with, and encouraging children that is conducive to the development of their individual selves.[89] According to the Society's president, these lectures or courses are often well attended, due to the social relevance of the topic. One of the Society's client mothers, a divorced mother with a teenage son, stressed the benefits she received from such a course. It taught her how to defuse conflicts with her often defiant son, how to listen to his concerns, engage in constructive discussions and to find workable solutions that are acceptable to both of them, instead of reacting aggressively and merely shouting.[90]

Apart from referring client mothers to courses, problems in the upbringing of their children are also discussed in personal contacts with the Society's social workers. The head of the Society's girls' committee reminded me of the suffering of the orphan girls: daughters of needy widows who were living in overcrowded housing conditions and facing financial problems. Such situations invariably give rise to an atmosphere of tension and conflict within the home; often the arguments will stem from money-based concerns. Poorly educated (or completely uneducated) mothers, she states, are often unable to understand their daughters' needs, such as the need to play; instead, they tend to overburden their children with all kinds of household duties. Needless to say, this often occurs at the expense of the relationship between mothers and daughters. The members of the committee try to overcome this by talking to these mothers, advising them to pay more attention to their daughter's situation, needs and feelings and to promote a more open form of communication between them, in which desires, problems and difficulties can be mutually expressed.[91]

It is obvious, then, that the idea of empowerment of the individual means at the same time working on the social, on improving patterns of communication and strengthening social relationships. Al-Faruq Society's president explicates this in the following words:

> The Society attaches great value to the preservation of good relations in the family… if there are conflicts, for instance the oldest son is frustrated because things are not going well with him, he cannot find a job, he expresses himself in an aggressive manner and abuses his younger brothers and sisters and we hear about this, I will intecede together with the social investigator. We will do our best to convince him that there is a way out, and we want to restore these (family) relationships.[92]

Islamic Concepts of Social Cohesion

It is in the realms of familial as well as wider social cohesion that Islamic concepts come most clearly and directly to the fore in Al-Faruq Society's workers discourse. While the Qur'anic language may primarily be regarded as a language of duty and obedience, something that is most clearly present in ICCS discourse, Al-Faruq Society's workers connect this with the modern language of rights by interpreting religious duties as a call for people to respect one another's rights. This happens out of the awareness that each individual is dependent on others in the family as well as in the local community to realize those rights. In terms of the parent-child relationship, for instance, the workers understand the children's right to a healthy individual development as well as the parent's rights to be respected through the Islamic notions of rahmah (care and compassion) and 'ihtiram (respect and honoring). The former quality ought to be displayed by parents toward their children; while the latter should inform the attitude of a child towards his/her parents. Concomitantly, when dealing with neighbors and others in the wider community, the workers try to instill in the orphans the value of respect for everyone else's dignity by emphasizing the religious concepts of tasamuh (mutual tolerance and forgiveness) and sabr. The message conveyed to the orphans is that life can be made easier if one is considerate and patient with others. The right to be taken care of, to be applied in particular to the weak and vulnerable, is also part of the same message. And the same goes for the value of respect for one another's property, from which admonitions – such as not taking or using someone else's possessions without the latter's permission, or peeping at another's schoolwork – are derived.[93]

Last but not least, the Qur'anic and legal concept of *taharah* (purity) is invoked when it comes to emphasizing children's right to grow up in healthy and hygienic circumstances. Parents are made aware of the religious importance for children to take a shower or to bathe regularly. The same concept is also used to warn orphan children against engaging in sexual experiments, stealing or drug abuse, all of which are classified as "impure" forms of behaviour. Qur'anic visions of divine reward and punishment may be used to underline such ethical messages pertaining to health and social well being.[94] To confirm messages from secular experts on issues like child-parent relations or hygiene, a relevant 'ayah from the Qur'an or a relevant hadith is often included because, in the words of the Society's president, "in the culture of the people here, religion relates to all aspects of life."[95]

Role Differentiation and Gender Separation versus the Ideal of Gender Equality

The Society's approach of working for social development in harmony with the socio-cultural fabric of the local community means, in practice, that traditional perceptions of gender relations are also reflected in the activities it organizes for orphan children. According to its president, "given the traditions prevalent within the community," gender separation is needed when it comes to discussing with orphans topics like sexuality, the physiological and psychological changes taking place during puberty, and relationships within the family. He is of the opinion that "girls need a specialized and careful approach" in discussing such matters, one that is "implemented by female teachers." Boys are assumed to talk in a different way about these topics, one that is unsuitable for girls.[96] When asked about differences in approaches toward orphan boys and girls respectively, the head of the girls' committee stressed that girls are not allowed to spend hours outside of the house and wander in the streets in the way boys are doing. A girl may go to certain safe places like the school, the hairdresser or to a (girl)friend's house. Islam, she stresses, does not allow her to be adventurous and wander around without a clear and legitimate purpose. That is not good for her honor and dignity.[97]

While especially the latter view appears to convey an image of conservatism in terms of gender issues, the question remains as to whether Al-Faruq Society's members and workers regard practices of gender separation and traditional role divisions as immutable and sacred, or whether they consider these merely as necessary concessions to traditional and prevalent social mores. Involved in the abovementioned conversation with the head of the girls' committee, the president expressed a desire to go beyond such traditional attitudes. He claimed that once a child, a boy or a girl, reaches puberty, he or she should "discover his or her own way in life," regardless of ascribed gender roles.[98]

Theoretically, the president and other members of the Society are ready to go to great lengths in allowing for the possibilities of change, also in terms of gender relations. On this level, they are influenced by global rights discourses pertaining to gender equality. Practically however, they still seem to be largely bound by the local mores of the community in which they themselves are part.[99] Traditional gender-based differences are reflected as well in the different types of activities, courses and trainings for boys and girls respectively mentioned above. In some activities, however, like excursions to companies, the university or other social institutions, intermingling between boys and girls is not considered a problem since such activities are of a gender-neutral nature.[100]

In terms of ideals, an emancipatory vision of children's rights and gender equality is present among Al-Faruq Society's members and workers. A vision in which injunctions derived from the Qur'an and the Hadith are interpreted as conditions for the (equal) rights human beings, including women and children, should enjoy.[101] At the same time, discussions with its members revealed that the Society follows a cautious approach in this regard, out of fear of offending people's traditional convictions and of generating suspicions that “alien, immoral and inauthentic ideas” originating from outside are being introduced. Moreover, most members and workers of the Society come from the same community as their target group. They have, generally speaking, a close cultural affinity with the latter and have been socialized in much the same traditional values. My discussions with them suggest, however, that they also engage in reflection on certain traditional patterns in ways I did not find in Al-‘Abura ICCS center. Take, for instance, the way in which the Society’s president discussed the case of a (hypothetical) daughter who lives with her parents, works outdoors, possibly even at night, and earns more money than her father. He explained the traditional view on this by observing that such a practice would undermine:

> the balance in the family and the authority of the father – and that is really a problem, in the light of the reputation of the family in the community. In this society, the man is expected to be the head of the family, since it is a male-dominated society. A daughter may contribute to the family income, but there are limits [even] to that.[102]

The very fact that the president used the term “male-dominated” points to a certain reflexivity, an awareness of different patterns of (and different views on) gender relations, as well as an interaction with (global) discourses that express those views. And he knew how to explicate such differences to me on my own terms, in a way that Al-‘Abura Center’s workers did not. The latter, by contrast, seemed to take traditional gender roles wholly for granted. Thus, my questions needed to be particularly explicit to obtain any kind of clarification on these matters. Further, when they did arrive, these clarifications presented the Center’s own approach to gender separation as if it were entirely natural. They were not reflective of gender based role divisions as something that could be problematized, let alone changed. My observations at Al-‘Abura Center suggest a significant degree of isolationism vis-à-vis global secular discourses. At Al-Faruq Society, in contrast, I experienced a much more active and conscious interaction with the latter.

Child Development Education in Other Associations

In spite of differences in philosophy and (religious) ideology, a common desire for reform and change in the upbringing of children can be noted in the discourse of the various Muslim NGOs included in this study.

This reform and change is based on the idea that the preservation of happiness, harmony and cohesion in the family and the wider society requires that children's individuality, their own thoughts, feelings, desires and creativity must be taken more seriously by adults, and in particular by their parents, than has been – and continues to be – traditionally the case. Suppression of the child's individuality, in particular in the form of (verbal, physical as well as sexual) abuse, is something to be warned against, countered and combated. This idea comes also clearly to the fore in associations focusing on other target groups then orphan families.

Islamist women's and children's rights activist and head of the Al-'Aqsa Association Nawal al-Fa'uri for instance, identifies as a problem of child development in traditional communities the parents' lack of recognition of their children's independent natures and needs, and their tendency to resort to corporal punishment as a way of disciplining. Her association tries to encourage mothers to stimulate their children by giving compliments and rewards for positive behavior, to play with them and take them, and in particular their daughters, to outside places like shops and recreational places as a way of acquainting them with the wider world. As she informed me, her association sometimes organizes discussions on childhood issues, in which children are invited to talk about problems pertaining to their relations with others at school, at home or elsewhere. At these meetings, parents, teachers and pedagogic experts are invited to give them counsel in return.[103]

According to Mufid Sarhan, the general manager of the Islamist Al-'Afaf Welfare Association, parents have to learn to listen better to the needs and the views of their children, especially when they reach puberty. "Even though parents have more life experience, this does not mean that they know things always better then their children," he stated to me. "A child might have an idea or a desire which is different from that of their parents, but which is still a good one. In this society, there is the widespread misconception that being older always means that one knows better."[104] This association organizes courses for prospective brides and grooms who are going to participate in one of its yearly mass weddings, as well as courses for parents from the general public, on the issue of bringing up children. Two women who had participated in such courses stressed to me independently from one another the importance of a patient, positive, rewarding and stimulating approach toward children and the abjectness of corporal and humiliating punishments as important eye-openers conveyed to them. Underlying this idea of a more patient approach toward children is also the

Islamic insight that children are still morally and socially "ignorant" or "innocent" and in the process of building their personalities.[105]

At the same time, Al-'Afaf Society stresses that encouraging children's development as individuals should be combined with the instilling of a sense of civility, decency and respect in them. Such values are promoted at workshops organized by the Society for school children. According to Sarhan, children there learn the habit of respectful dialogue and of how to prevent the deterioration of mutual differences into mutual aggression and fights. The traditional Islamic theme of respect for the elderly in general and one's parents in particular is put across by Al-'Afaf Society in the framework of the same conception of civility. Children, Sarhan argues, have a legitimate right to express their wishes, needs and opinions to the elderly, but must learn to do so in a polite manner.[106]

Some Muslim associations make use of Islamic discourse in order to counter traditional forms of shame that present an obstacle to a healthy development of certain categories of children in modern society. An example is mentally or physically disabled children. They are often kept from public view in traditional Arab families because their presence is considered as a disgrace. The Southern Society for Special Education in Ma'an tries to convince parents of disabled children to cherish their children as worthy members of family and community, since their disabilities are given by God. Accordingly, their parents are encouraged to do everything possible to develop the talents their children do have and enable them to participate more fully in society. It offers such families medical diagnosis and treatment, various forms of therapy, counsel as well as special education for their disabled children.[107]

School Dropouts as a Target Group

The Khawla' Bint Al-Azwar Association serves school dropout girls from needy and socially weak families, as well as their mothers in the outlying Hashemiya quarter near Zarqa city, with the support and training it has received from the British development organization Questscope. These girls usually come from the many broken families there, or else from families where the father is an alcoholic or suffers from illness, is unemployed or does not earn a sufficient income. These families' financial difficulties (making it difficult to cover the costs of school fees, books and stationary), in combination with the girls' learning and behavioral problems and the deeply-ingrained traditional habit of favoring boys over girls in terms of educational opportunities, often causes the girls to abandon school.[108]

This is especially true as the girls reach puberty; for, at this time, the parents themselves often withdraw them from school. Indeed, many consider their teenage daughter's school attendance a threat to her morality and, by extension, to the honor of the family. Notwithstanding the fact that secondary government schools in Jordan are mostly gender-segregated, the girls can easily meet boys on their ways to and from the school – and thus, in their families' eyes, run the risk of being morally compromised. Likewise, in the school itself, the girls are free to talk with their classmates about (contact with) boys. And sexual harassment and assaults in the streets are real risks faced by these school-going girls.[109] Once they have left school, in contrast, they are usually compelled by their mothers to carry out all kinds of household tasks and to take care of their younger siblings. In so doing, the girls rarely enjoy the opportunity to leave their homes; they are isolated both from boys and from their wider society.[110]

At times, the girls as well as their mothers are victims of abuse by their fathers or husbands. According to the Association's president, Ahlam, the girls often suffer from neglect as well, because their mothers are economically compelled to work outside for long hours, as cleaning ladies with other families, for instance, or as street sellers. Nor do the fathers take sufficient care of their children. While boys from these families often wander around in the area and may express their frustrations by aggressive behavior at school or in the street, girls are more likely to turn inward, resulting in feelings of shame and low self-esteem. They are ashamed, for instance, that their mothers have to go outdoors to work as cleaning ladies, something that must be concealed from the wider community in order to avoid stigmatization. The mothers themselves often vent their own frustrations and suffering by verbally and physically abusing their children in turn.[111]

Working on Dignity and Empowerment

The Khawla' Bint Al-Azwar Association opens from 9 am to around 1-2 pm. Its educational program, sponsored by Questscope, consists of literacy lessons, a handicraft program, counseling sessions and recreative outings. This program is a substitute for a regular school education and is recognized by the Jordanian Ministry of Education as such.[112] (Indeed, during my visit to the association, I was shown a room where some of the girls were completing their writing exercises.[113])

However, in the vision of the workers of the Khawla' Bint Al-Azwar Association, development cannot be restricted to cognitive learning alone, particularly not among the target group in question. Given the latter's situation of poverty and economic marginalization, bolstering their dignity by means of engaging them in productive activity is considered essential in terms of offering a source of income as well as a sense of self-worth.[114] At the time of my fieldwork, this productive activity took mainly the form of a handicraft project where works of embroidery and painting are produced.[115] The association's workers emphasize the interrelationship between socio-economic productivity and the issue of tackling socio-psychological problems. In their view, the fostering of *karamah* (dignity) can never take place in the mind alone. It has to be based upon an (embodied) activity, like a handicraft project. Becoming productive and self-reliant in such a way is expected to enhance karamah. The workers emphasize the social aspect of this process as well. The girls and their mothers must be offered a place where they can escape and at times even "forget" the difficulties of their home situation. This is equally supposed to be a place where they can gain confidence in their own capabilities in a creative and co-operative atmosphere, and where they can share their personal problems and experiences.[116]

The Association's president leads the counseling sessions in her capacity as wa'izzah (religious teacher) and social worker, with the assistance of a psychologist and a medical worker. These sessions may take place on a collective or on an individual basis with the girls or their mothers. All discussions are meant to be confidential, since the association wants to encourage girls and their mothers to deal frankly with the problems and challenges they face, including personal matters, family-problems, economic difficulties, life in the community, religious questions and so forth.[117] In the counseling room of the association, I was shown puppets meant for the girls to play with in order to express their experiences with issues that are discussed in these sessions.[118]

While, as a male, I was not been able to observe these counseling sessions, interviews with the association's workers made clear that a religiously inspired vision of greater gender equality informs their approach toward child development. The president outspokenly condemned several examples of gender discrimination in the upbringing of children as jahl. According to her, still prevalent customs – such as receiving the news of a male birth with great joy, while that of a girl merits merely shrugs of indifference, boys being placed in cradles, while girls are put on the floor, boys being fed better food than girls, and young women being denied the right to choose a marriage partner – are in no way valid Islamically. Rather, Islam's endorsement of gender equality in all such fields is stressed by the president as central in the awareness raising efforts taking place at the counseling sessions.

Another theme stressed by the president is overcoming the shame the girls and their mothers suffer from in their daily lives, in order to "turn negative feelings and attitudes into positive ones." Participating girls are told, for instance, that their mothers' engagement in work like cleaning other people's houses is not shameful because it is done so that she can take care of her family and to feed and clothe her children. In this way, the Association tries to legitimize this practice in terms of the traditional – as well as religiously conceived – role of the mother.[119]

Moreover, the Association's workers stress the importance of encouraging the mothers to listen more attentively to their daughters, to be more empathetic toward the latter's feelings and needs, to give them the opportunity to express these and to discuss them openly and honestly. This stress on individual dignity and expression notwithstanding, the association members also emphasise that such emancipation must take place within the realm of the family unit. Rather than (absolute) individual independence, social interdependence within the family unit is therefore emphasized as a divinely ordained given that is basic to the attainment of dignity and true self-esteem. The workers want to prevent situations in which children are tempted to run away from home and leave their parents. They start from the premise that a unified and harmonious family life is fundamental to the healthy development of the individual and, by extension, of the society at large.

Sabr as a Path towards Empowerment and Social Reform

Improving the family environment implies that, in the Khawla' Bint Al-Azwar Association workers vision, fathers and husbands also have to change their attitudes and behaviors. Men must be made aware of the fact that Islam grants them no right to physically or verbally abuse their wives. Nor do they have a right to carry on affairs with other women. Islam orders them to treat their wives with respect, kindness and fidelity, as much as mothers have to learn to treat their own children on a basis of love, kindness and respect.[120] From the Association workers' view, such improvements in family relations must be brought about by the instilling of sabr in the girls and their mothers. Patience here has an active rather than a passive meaning. It stands for steady perseverance combined with the realization that their problems will not disappear overnight, but will be gradually ameliorated if one persists along the path of dignity. The girls and their mothers are told that their own will and efforts are a sine qua non for the prospects of improving their situation.[121]

The workers' assumption is that, by providing training, work and counsel for the girls and their mothers, relations between mothers and daughters will be improved in the direction of greater mutual, as well as self-respect. This, in turn, is expected positively to influence the father/husband's attitude in the family. In this regard, it should be mentioned that cultural conventions in the local community do not allow the workers of the association, who are all women, to approach the fathers or husbands of their clients in order to confront them with the need to change their own attitudes. They hope to achieve such change indirectly and over time, by enabling mothers and daughters to discover the value of their dignity in a safe women's environment first.[122]

In her work on the women's mosque movement in Egypt, Sabah Mahmood has contrasted the view espoused by some of its protagonists on sabr (as a value that should be practiced by every believer in the path of God) with that of more secular or liberal Egyptians who place a much higher emphasis on the value of self-esteem as the primary means to attain self-directed goals.[123]

Trying to fit the Khawla' Bint Al-Azwar Association into one of these two categories is not simple. On the one hand, members and workers of this association and in particular its president, who wears a niqab, present themselves as advocates of a duty-oriented discourse of piety. For instance, she mentioned the duty of husbands to treat their wives with respect and kindness in one breath with the duty of all believers to observe ritual obligations "because people who do not act in accordance with God's Will shall be punished by Him." Her stress on the need to restore an authentic Islamic lifestyle that Muslims in Jordan have often forgotten under the impact of Western hegemony, materialism and consumerism points in the same direction.[124] As we have seen, sabr as an attitude of perseverance under all circumstances plays an important role in the Association's discourse as well.

However, a discourse of self-esteem and (restoring one's) dignity as a way of empowerment to attain self-directed goals is equally observable here. This can be discerned from the way in which they emphasise the importance for mothers and daughters to take one another's individual views, feelings and desires seriously, and to discover their capabilities and creativity in productive work, as well as in plans to turn them into self-sufficient small-business women through the provision of micro-credits.

The Association's president and her workers obviously put sabr in the context of a mission of social change and development – a mission that is, moreover, strongly affected by the empowerment discourse of an international development organization. In its framework, they try to tackle the particular problems of a particular target group and to alleviate its suffering. In the context of this project, sabr is meant to serve the attainment of a certain social goal that is, in turn, determined by the value of self-esteem that plays such an important role in global development discourse. In the discourse of the Khawla' Bint Al-Azwar Association, pious action means working on self-esteem. The experience of the Khawla' Bint Al-Azwar Association and its cooperation with Questscope suggests that the two orientations, the pious and the secular, can find common ground when there exist certain conditions inducing people in both camps to work for the same goals of social reform.

Conclusion

Two themes can be distinguished – though not separated from one another – in the discourse of all these Muslim voluntary welfare associations regarding child development: the need to socialize children behaviorally into harmonious familial as well as wider social settings, and the need to work on empowerment and agency-building among these children on an individual level as well as among parents, whose capability in bringing up their own children in modern Jordanian society must be enhanced.

Socialization for the sake of collective harmony and stability often entails a duty-oriented discourse. Duties and responsibilities are related here to the behavior of the individual toward other individuals, within the family or within other social settings, with their various – often age and/or gender-based – roles and statuses. This orientation on duty is central to efforts of socialization into a pious lifestyle, an endeavor in which some of these NGOs are engaging. The language of the Islamic sources – primarily the Qur'an and the Hadith – corresponds closely with such an orientation. Notions of duty and responsibility are most prominently present at ICCS centers.

Such notions, however, are not necessarily dependency-reinforcing alone. They have empowering aspects as well, which could be observed at Al-'Abura Center. There orphans were stimulated to study, to work and to engage in common activities in which new skills are learned. Associations more clearly inspired by a (global) rights discourse, like Al-Faruq Society, reconcile duty-based Islamic (and, in particular, Qur'anic) language with such a discourse by attributing to social injunctions derived from Qur'an or Hadith the role of sanctioning modernly formulated human – including children's – rights. Their liberal orientation toward childhood development emphasizes individual self-expression and is not so focused on the promotion of conformity to religious ideals.

The processes of modernization that have taken place (and are continuing to take place) in Jordanian society – such as urbanization, the spread of mass-education (which itself is gradually undergoing a modernization process away from traditional methods of memorization and rote-learning and toward individual creativity and experiential learning), and the spread of the mass media – have upset traditional relations of authority and dependency between parents and children. It is thus becoming less and less possible for Jordanian parents to instruct their children to follow in their own (traditional) footsteps. The latter have often been too exposed to multiple forms of information, knowledge and socio-cultural influences that arrive as part of an increasingly globalized, as well as individualized, society to want to preserve such patterns.

This development is reflected in the Muslim associations' activities and discourses in the field of child development. While these associations strongly oppose forms of hyper-individualism that put the very value of community, family ties or of marriage at risk (and which they associate with the West), most of the same associations do acknowledge the necessity to take the needs and perspectives of the individual child more seriously in order to preserve and enhance the strength of family ties. The result, it is believed, will be a stronger and more harmonious society. This kind of empowerment of the individual child within family and community possibly points in the direction of a (potential) change in the nature of parent-child relationship. This change should bring greater equality and reciprocal communication between parent and child and, thus, prevent the continuation of traditional forms of corporal punishment.

In the cases of some target groups, like the disabled or school dropouts, traditional shame is explicitly condemned by such associations as an obstacle to the children's empowerment and social integration. In such cases, religious discourse often serves to justify and promote empowering changes. This discourse reflects the values of an urbanized, well-educated and modern middle class. Values that stand for a different kind of authority that is, more than ever before, based upon persuasion, reward and reciprocal communication.

By promoting such changes in the name of Islam, these associations seek to construct their own, authentic or indigenous form of modernity and modernization in the realm of family and child development. Finding a balance between tradition and modernity, authenticity and globalization and individual and collective consciousness is a major concern for these associations in the realm of gender and marital relations as well. This concern provides the focus for the next chapter.

16. Discourse and Activity Regarding Marriage and Gender Relations

This chapter deals with the discourse of Jordanian Muslim NGOs on gender relations among adults, in connection with their activities in this realm. As in the previous chapter, the topic will be approached from the question of the NGOs' relationship toward local traditions; we will also consider its notions of autonomous agency and openness toward change, and the degree and manner of reflexivity it shows in this regard. More concretely, the question of whether, and to what extent, Muslim NGOs see the role of the woman as limited to the family sphere and as subjugated to her husband, or as an autonomous and equal being (with a rightful space for herself and an independent role to play in private as well as in public spaces) will here be dealt with.

Yvonne Yazbeck Haddad distinguishes the conservative Islamic approaches of various traditionalist 'ulama' (corresponding largely with the first view) from more progressive Islamist approaches (that tend to embrace the second).[1] This chapter tries to assess the manner in which this distinction applies to the discourses and related practices of Jordanian Muslim NGOs. It will start, however, with a description of one of Al-'Afaf Society's annual mass weddings,[2] and with an analysis of the Society's discourse (as well as that of other like-minded associations) on marriage as an overriding priority in Islam. This will be followed by an analysis of their discourse on a closely interrelated issue: honor and honor crimes. Subsequently, Muslim NGOs' discourse and (discursive) activities related to different aspects of the marital relationship itself will be dealt with. Finally, attention will be paid to these NGO's attitudes toward the question of women's participation in public life.

The Wedding Ritual

Since its establishment in 1993, the Al-'Afaf Welfare Society has staged a yearly mass wedding in order to translate its vision of marriage – as the linchpin of a harmonious, cooperative and virtuous Islamic society – into practice. On the 25th of July 2003, the Society held its tenth mass wedding party; 52 couples participated. The party was held in the affluent Al-Rashid quarter in NorthWestern Amman, at one of the Dar Al-Arqam schools that belong to the Islamic Center Charity Society (ICCS). When I arrived there, the street next to the school was filled with cars, vans, buses and invited families. Some of the vehicles were decorated with flowers. Banners with welcoming phrases were hung in the street. Some policemen were present, but the bulk of the task of maintaining order at this mass event was shouldered by men in green uniforms of the Jerusalem Scouting Association, another Muslim Brotherhood-affiliated institution.

The celebration took place on a gender-separate basis. The males were celebrating the event in the schoolyard, while the females did so within the school building. An enormous tent with an open entrance covered part of the schoolyard. The yard's floor, inside as well as outside of the tent, was covered with many rows of chairs. They were facing a platform on which a sign was erected with the names and the logos of the Al-'Afaf Welfare Society and of the ICCS Dar Al-Arqam school chain. The Jerusalem Scouting Association men supervised the multitude of visitors and gave them directions in order to prevent disorder and accidents. During the event, they also distributed glasses with the halal Mecca Cola beverage to the attendants. The crowd consisted of males of a wide range of ages, from little boys to elderly men.

After taking the microphone and welcoming all the visitors, a representative of Al-'Afaf Welfare Society thanked God for enabling all present to attend the party and made sure to thank everybody who had made this great "Islamic wedding" possible through their donations. He specifically mentioned some prominent donors, such as the Islamic Bank of Jordan, for having contributed 100 Jordanian Dinar (around 150 euros) to each newly wed couple, and the (ICCS-run) Islamic Hospital, which had offered each couple the opportunity to deliver their first baby free of charge in the hospital's maternal unit. He then presented the program of the wedding party and announced the beginning of "a joyful time." Subsequently, another person started to recite Qur'anic verses relating to the theme of marriage. Then the earlier spokesman took the microphone again. He greeted the visitors for the second time and spoke about the benign values of marriage, sharing, cooperation, solidarity and love. He expressed the wish that "our fatherland be a land of love and well-being for everyone."

After the opening, The Muslim Brotherhood-affiliated male singing group Yarmuk started to sing about the marriage, the bride and the bridegroom. Their voices were loud and solemn at the same time, and the songs were rhythmic. The only musical instruments used were powerful drums. Men started to clap and a group of young men started to dance, carrying a few other young men on their shoulders. Subsequently, the 52 bridegrooms were led into the schoolyard by members of a dance troupe dressed in traditional robes and wearing white kuffiyat (traditional Arab male head covers). The grooms themselves were dressed in dark-blue costumes. In the meantime, other male choirs made their own rhythmic performances, singing about Allah and the living of a pious life. Once the grooms entered the schoolyard, white foam was poured over them. A circle was created within which the grooms started to dance. Some jostling and pushing among the crowd of visitors occurred. The Jerusalem Scouting Association men immediately intervened and urged the people to sit down. Their orders were followed without question or argument.

Once the singing and dancing was over, Al-'Afaf Society president Abdul Latif Arabiyyat took the microphone. With a broad smile, he emphasized that the Society's message of love, togetherness and unity was addressed to all people in the fatherland, and that everybody, "in the north, south, west and east" of the country was invited. He described the celebration as a "popular feast," and stressed that the Society's work was open to people from all classes and layers of Jordanian society. He spoke about the success of the association and its wedding parties, and thanked all donors who had contributed to this. He underlined the Society's overriding aim of promoting a harmonious marital life that corresponds with Islamic values as well as with "modern life."

Subsequently, the spokesman who had opened the event began his concluding speech. He mentioned all donors by name. The first one was a Christian Orthodox businessman, who was followed in his list by a whole range of individuals, men as well as women, and companies like the Jordan Islamic Bank and Mecca Cola (a firm that produces and sells its own Islamic brand of cola drink and donates part of its profits to charitable causes in the Palestinian territories).

The dancing troupe, who had led the grooms into the schoolyard in the middle of the event, started to perform a dabka accompanied by the sound of drums. One of the dancers led the performance by swinging his stick. At the end, the dancers bared their fists and sang about "liberating the homeland from the Zionist enemy." Subsequently, each bridegroom received on the platform a present with a card in an envelope. Then the feast was over and everybody left. Local and foreign media were present throughout the event for coverage.[3]

As a male researcher, I was not able to observe what went on inside the school building, where the females were celebrating. The information that I have on the female section of the wedding party was provided to me later by two women working for the women's and children's committee of Al-'Afaf Society. According to these, the women volunteers first welcomed the brides into the hall, offering them a seat and something to drink. They also engaged them in informal conversations and paid attention to their needs. If anyone expressed dissatisfaction with her appearance or her bridal dress, for instance, the volunteers tried to solve it. They also did their utmost to prepare the brides for their wedding ceremony, mentally as well as physically. The female relatives and friends were seated in another part of the hall. All of the attendants were offered food (sweets) and drinks (water and juices) throughout the party. They also engaged in singing and dancing. One section of the hall was left vacant for the reception of the bridegrooms. Once they arrived, their brides joined them at their side. Flowers were thrown over the couples, traditional Arab wedding songs were sung and balloons released into the air. At this ceremonial occasion, the brides were fully veiled, including their faces. At the end, the couples then received their gifts, contributed by the donors of the wedding party, in the form of furniture, household utensils, clothes, and so on.[4]

Preparations for the Wedding

Any couple wishing to hold their wedding at Al-'Afaf Society's collective wedding party can visit the Society for a conversation with the general manager, or perhaps another functionary.[5] The couple must show their marriage contract. It is customary in Jordan that the signing of this contract precedes an actual wedding party by months or even years, due to all the preparations and expenses involved in the latter. However, according to workers and beneficiaries of the Society, custom as well as Islamic beliefs require that the couple will only consummate their marriage and start to live together after their wedding party. The rationale behind this is the importance of making it known to all the neighbors, friends and acquaintances that the man and the woman in question are married. During the intake at the Society, the prospective married couple is informed about the procedural as well as the normative and religious aspects of the mass wedding. The intake is followed by the choice of wedding dress by the bride and the reception of the wedding costume by the bridegroom. Shortly before the ceremony, the prospective couple, and in particular the bride, undergo their beautification in a beauty saloon free of charge that is arranged for by the Society. About one week in advance of the mass wedding, however, they have to attend a workshop on marital life organized by Al-ʻAfaf Society.

Teachers at this workshop are usually medical doctors and Islamic scholars specialized in family law. Prospective brides and bridegrooms participate in it on a gender-separated basis. Since both husband and wife are presupposed to assume different and complimentary roles within the family, both receive different messages in their own workshops.

The prospective bride receives information on healthy behavior during pregnancy and childrearing, as well as on the psychological aspects of raising children. She is taught about her role as a mother who is patient toward her children, and as a wife who is patient toward her husband. The husband is encouraged at the course to assume his masculine role as the "solid pillar" of the family. Accordingly, he is to place his financial and material responsibility for his family above everything else. The wife does not have a similar duty, even though she has the option to work, earn money and contribute to the family income provided that her husband agrees to this. One husband who had participated in an earlier mass wedding considered the Islamic value of kindness and respect in the marital relationship and the prohibition on abusing one's wife as an important lesson of the workshop.[6]

Besides a workshop for the prospective brides and bridegrooms, another one is organized for their mothers. The aim of the latter is to tell the mothers how they can contribute to a happy marital life of their sons or daughters. Respect for the privacy of their married children and abstaining from interfering in their private lives is reportedly central to the message conveyed at that particular workshop.[7]

Timely and Accessible Marriage as a Religious and Social Priority

Of the couples who participate in the mass-weddings organized by Al-ʻAfaf Society Quintan Wiktorowicz and Suha Taji Farouki observe the following:

> Participants are usually more financially strained than deeply religious, but members of the organization hope those who enjoy the benefits of the collective wedding will be inclined to practice their faith more diligently and pass Islamic values on to their children.[8]

The Society's president, Arabiyyat states that while many participating couples are from needy backgrounds, there are also others, educated middle-class people, who underwrite the Society's message and partake in the wedding merely out of principle.[9]

One such couple, who married at Al-'Afaf Society in 2002, had originally met when students at Jordan University. As the wife told me, she heard about the possibility of participating in a mass wedding organized by the Society while listening to a radio interview with its representatives. She then suggested to her fiancé that they make use of this opportunity. The financial advantage of holding a cheap wedding party was not the motive, according to the couple. The wife's parents had a joint monthly income of 5000 JD (approximately 7000 Euros), so organizing and financing a regular wedding party would not have been a problem for her family. The couple stated their motive in terms of their aversion against the extravagant and luxurious nature of "customary" weddings, with their display of expensive jewelry and clothing. Older sisters of the wife had wed in such a style. She and her husband were of the opinion that such customary weddings are about profane and idle things, like outer appearance and the display of wealth and prestige, rather than about the true values of marriage, like mutual love, harmony and cooperation. In the words of the husband: "we do not care about this world (dunyah). We want to live for God (fi sabil li-llah)," whereby "this world" stands for materialism and worldly prestige and living fi sabil li-llah stands, amongst other things, for mutual affection, attention and care. The couple decided to register with the Society for the mass wedding, even before they notified their own families. "After all", the wife said, "the aim of Islam is to facilitate essential things for the human being, like marriage, not to make them more difficult."[10]

Financial and Material Obstacles to Marriage

According to scholars like Hoodfar and Singerman, the most pressing socio-economic problem for families in the Middle East is the rising cost of marriage.[11] On the same matter, Wiktorowicz and Taji Farouki write:

> Because marriage is central for expanding family ties, enhancing social networks and providing social security, its rising cost directly undermines the reproduction of the family unit… As in many countries, the cost associated with marriage in Jordan has become exorbitant and prohibitive. Social pressures to 'keep up with the Jones' have led to extravagant weddings in luxury hotels, which are often well beyond the financial resources of the couple and their families, even as they devastate the household economy and channel resources away from other necessities. Lavish wedding feasts, hotel parties and expensive wedding dresses are culturally expected.[12]

It is exactly this state of affairs which is so vehemently criticized by the members of Al-'Afaf Welfare Society. As Sarhan notes disapprovingly:

> The average monthly income in Jordan is 130 Dinar, but the expenses involved in wedding parties are often in the thousands of dinars. People want to have an expensive wedding party, where golden jewels and expensive clothes are worn, and where women want to have a haircut by a distinguished hairdresser. Furthermore, they want to rent an expensive car for the wedding feast.[13]

Added to this criticism, informed by a religious anti-materialist and anti-consumerist ideology, is sometimes criticism of the attitude of the wealthy classes vis-à-vis the poor. Al-'Afaf Society president Arabiyyat, for instance, speaks about wealthy people who spend many thousands of dinars for extravagant and ostentatious wedding parties, while the poor do not have the money for the simplest of weddings.[14]

As far as the bride's *mahr* (dowry) – the responsibility of the bridegroom's family – is concerned, Sarhan stresses its symbolic value, as an expression of the care and attention the wife deserves from her husband. Yet, Islam also stipulates, he asserts:

> that the mahr, and the costs related to marriage in general, should be modest. In Islam, marriage is considered as a priority (and should therefore be easily accessible). Unfortunately, many people in Jordan developed ideas that deviate from what Islam stipulates.

As far as other expenses related to marriage are concerned, he states:

> They [many Jordanians] think: first I have to find a job and acquire a good income, then a beautiful house, then a beautiful car and only then am I going to marry. But Al-'Afaf says, on the basis of Islam, that marriage life and marital love are a fundamental requirement for the well-being of the human being … material expectations have to be lowered, and a higher priority has to be put on the warmth and the love of marriage …There is too much of a mentality in which people with modest incomes are taking the life-style of the rich as an example."

Thus, in addition to Arabiyyat's criticism of the wealthier classes, Sarhan criticizes the consumerism and materialism among the lower income groups.[15]

Prolonged Bachelor/Spinsterhood

The obstacles to young people marrying have led to a rise in the average age of marriage and, in some cases, to prolonged bachelor- or spinsterhood. As Islamists in general do, Al-'Afaf Society's members and workers stress that this phenomenon brings the risk of a spread in sexual immorality and a list of negative feelings, among which are included anxiety, loneliness, lack of self-confidence and simmering frustration. In the end, they argue, this combination may even contribute to the disintegration of the fabric of Muslim society.[16] Basing themselves on the Qur'an, Islamists attribute to marriage and family a fundamentally protective function for every Muslim individual and, by extension, for Muslim society at large. If this function is undermined, the happiness and well being of Muslims as well as the integrity of Muslim society is placed in jeopardy.[17]

This view was clearly reflected in the discourse expressed at a seminar organized by Al-'Afaf Society on 26 April 1999. At this event, speakers stressed that Islam provides for social coherence and that marriage is a constructive path for healthy relations between man and woman.[18] Apart from the psychological consequences, they emphasized that prolonged bachelor/spinsterhood leads to macro-economic problems, such as the increase in state expenses involved in tackling the spread of sexually transmitted diseases, the decrease of production due to the psychological problems of lonely unmarried people and the birth of a higher number of handicapped children delivered by women who marry at a late age.[19] Obviously, prolonged bachelor/spinsterhood represents for the members of this Society and their (Islamist) sympathizers a sense of moral and social malaise that reflects the impotence and incapability of Muslim society to solve its problems and satisfy its needs on its own terms.

Foreign and Indigenous "Hindrances"

It is clear from their discourse that "Western influence" is a major, if not the major, culprit responsible for prolonged bacherlor/spinsterhood. Arabiyyat speaks about the "ancient Greek and Roman roots" of modern Western civilization that used to portray the woman as a commodity. He believes that these roots are responsible for the current Western practice of "excluding" the woman from the family circle and "encouraging bachelor/spinsterhood and individualism" so characteristic of the materialist and capitalist systems. He contrasts this with Islam, which has paid special attention to the building of human communities on solid bases and has made the family the primary element of these communities.[20]

Therefore, the Society states in one of its publications:

> Let us sow the seeds of goodness in a good society … let us set up the pillars of the Muslim home without over-spending and extravagance, in order to shut the society's doors in the face of the winds of the foreign … corruption … which is drowning the youth in its mud … to open the path of happiness for all couples … and let our slogan be ʻafaf (chastity, virtue, purity).[21]

Accordingly, Arabiyyat laments the "absence [in Jordanian society] of authentic values which govern individual and collective social conduct and customs … in a framework of projects for Westernisation which are backed by wealth, experience, and deadly means." This absence, he stresses, leads to "social illnesses and an epidemic of (Westernized) customs, ways of behaving and values that threaten our edifice from its foundations."[22]

Apart from materialism and consumerism, lecturers at workshops and seminars organized by the Society also blame several other habits and customs for the phenomenon of prolonged bachelor/ spinsterhood. Some of these may be attributed, in whole or in part, to the impact of globalizing Western and secular culture on Jordanian society. Examples are "deviation of social conduct (i.e. extra-marital sexual activity) as a result of (unnecessary) mixture between the sexes," "feeble awareness of the importance of marriage (as an institution regulating sexuality as well as a social bond of harmony and love) due to lacking religious awareness"[23] and, possibly, unrealistic and idealized expectations about the personal character of the future marital partner, be it husband or wife, a phenomenon for which contemporary media culture is largely blamed.[24]

Other customary hindrances to early marriage mentioned are obviously more indigenous in origin, like marrying only with spouses from one's own environment, such as the extended family or the village, and the habit among some families stipulating that a younger daughter cannot marry as long as an older one has not.[25] Both of these customs limit the range of possible marriage partners. The same goes for the tendency among males to choose females who are younger then them and less in education and socio-economic status, and for the opposite tendency among females.[26]

In this regard, it is interesting to note that, of the two families of the couple married at Al-'Afaf Society's mass wedding, that of the bride was clearly the better off. The father of the wife used to work as an accountant in a government department and her mother used to work as a teacher. The husband's father, in contrast, used to be a truck driver and his mother was housewife. Further, while both partners had originally met each as students at university, the wife was, at the time of the interview, teaching chemistry at a university; the husband, on the other hand, taught the same subject at a high school. That is to say, his socio-economic position was certainly the more modest of the two. Neither did they belong to the same extended family, and were ethnically different: the husband was Palestinian in origin, and the wife Transjordanian.[27]

This case illustrates that there are anti-traditionalist elements within Al-'Afaf Society's discourse that are rooted in real life experiences and attitudes of many of its members, workers, and beneficiaries. They are people who are often from an urbanized, upwardly mobile and well-educated middle class background. These people usually do not want to turn the clock back to pre-modern times. They try to locate (social, economic, cultural and psychological) stability in a modern society in accordance with their reading of the Islamic revelation. In this endeavor, they may experience aspects of Western-dominated globalizing culture as disruptive and disturbing, but the same applies to certain local traditions and customs.

Being modern does not necessarily entail being "liberal" however – and certainly not in the contemporary Western sense of the word. In Al-'Afaf Society's discourse, heterosexual marriage and the begetting of children (if biologically possible) is regarded as a religious duty of every Muslim, and as the only kind of adult lifestyle that corresponds to the human being's true nature. There is absolutely no room in this discourse for lifestyles that deviate from that pattern. Illiberal restrictions are reflected in the "religious measures" to facilitate marriage endorsed by shari'ah expert Ali Sawwa, one of the speakers in the Society's seminar on bachelor/spinsterhood. They are the following: 1) fighting adultery and "deviant" (homo) sexual relations and punishing these in accordance with the shari'ah; 2) prevention of "unnecessary" mixture between the sexes and respecting "moral norms" (of chastity) when such mixture cannot be avoided; 3) prevention of the spread of immorality by censuring films, TV shows and "bad pictures" enticing its viewers to such immorality.[28]

Within this shari'ah-bound framework, however, the Society promotes a certain liberalization or facilitation of access to marriage, as well as the choice of partners. It emphasises, in the name of Islam, that consent or rejection of each other by both prospective marriage partners is essential for any decision on whether or not to marry. It also speaks about facilitating meetings (albeit in a protected and familial environment) between those who "wish to marry for God," sees engagement as a step to know one another and stress that different ways of communicating and signaling between candidates are possible in Islam, either directly or indirectly through a go-between person, "depending on each situation."[29] While the Society regards pre-marital sex as a significant sin that must be prevented at all costs, it does not view traditional Arab customs of enforced pre-arranged marriages (in which the two partners may not even know one another beforehand) favorably either.

The Question of Honor

As the previous section has shown, a central aspect of Al-'Afaf Society's rationalization of prioritizing (early) marriage as a religious and social duty is the extremely dishonorable nature of pre- or extra-marital sexual activity. The Society organized a seminar on the issue of honor in 2001. At this, prominent Muslim Brotherhood figure and former Minister of Awqaf and Islamic affairs Dr. Ibrahim Zaid al-Kilani argued that Western society's tolerance of pre- or extra-marital sexual relations has devastating consequences for the structure of the family as well as for the individual personality. It leads, he announced, to the spread of diseases, nervous breakdowns and a proclivity for crime among children born out of wedlock.[30] Society president Arabiyyat remarked at the same occasion that nations and peoples differ in their intellectual and value systems; and that "honor is … highly important in our life and social system." He added that today the Islamic 'ummah faces an unfair campaign that targets its social system in its entirety, in order to replace it with an alien one.[31]

The Traditional Conception of Sexual Honor

The traditional Arab conception of sexual honor can be described as the need for men to maintain the chastity and virginity of their female family members by monitoring their behavior and their movements in outer space, so as to prevent them from any activity that may put their chastity and virginity at risk. After all, a man's masculine status and reputation depends in traditional Arab communities on his ability to control the female members of his family and to preserve their chastity and virginity. If anyone of the latter compromises or destroys this reputation by any kind of behavior that is interpreted in the local community as sexually immoral or as suspect in this regard, the only way for the man to restore his masculine reputation might be to kill her.[32] What position, we now ask, do Jordanian Muslim NGOs, and in particular Islamist ones like Al-'Afaf Society, take on this issue?

Defending Honor against Westernization and Zionism

In many ways, Islamists present themselves as spokespersons of a religious version of Arab nationalism. For them, the message of the Islamic revelation stands for the "truly authentic" cultural heritage and values of the Arab nation. They attempt to construct an "authentic", that is to say Islamized, version of modern Arab life that must be defended against the assault of Westernization and global consumer culture.

Regarding the issue of honor crimes, this defensive attitude takes in the case of Al-'Afaf Society often the form of downplaying the phenomenon in the face of (real or perceived) demonizations of the Muslim orient. Sarhan speaks about the issue of honor crimes as something that is blown out of proportion by Western voices as part of an anti-Arab and anti-Muslim campaign. He claims that statistics presented in one of the Society's publications prove that the problem is very limited. Al-'Afaf Society, he states, sees it as its main task to prevent such negative phenomena by focusing on the positive values of Islam regarding compassion, love and harmony between the marital partners and in the family.[33]

Jordanian Islamists, as well as tribalists, regard the struggle for women's rights and against honor crimes undertaken by local liberal or feminist circles as a cover for promoting sexual immorality, an aim they attribute to imperialist powers. In Arabiyyat's words, this is the "work of the Zionists to devalue our society."[34] Sarhan describes the use the West makes of its ostensibly lofty principles of women's and human rights and democracy as a form of abuse – implemented so as "to promote its own interests and hegemony" in Arab and Muslim societies. "Islam is against every kind of murder, for sure," he stated emphatically, "but the West uses the honor crime issue in an aggressive campaign against Islam and Arab society."[35]

Islamic Honor versus Traditional Honor

The Islamists – including Al-'Afaf Welfare Society – are not entirely in favor of traditional cultural notions of sexual honor. According to such notions, the mere suspicion of dishonorable sexual activity by a woman may prove sufficient reason for male relatives to kill her in order to preserve their (masculine) reputation within the local community. These Islamists acknowledge that the shari'ah does not allow any believer to carry out a punishment that is unauthorized by Islamic law. The pre-meditated execution of an honor crime, therefore, is not justifiable in their eyes; while a spontaneous defense by a male of his honor, by contrast, is.[36] Such a spontaneous defense may only occur in reaction to what he really observes – as occurs in the true *crime passionelle*, but not on the basis of rumors and guess work. That is why Al-'Afaf Society president Arabiyyat limits the definition of honor crimes to the killing of "innocent" women and girls that take place on the basis of unproven allegations.[37] This point of view was expressed as well at the Society's seminar on "The Question of Honor," where it was stated that Islam disapproves of honor killings based on accusations and rumors.[38]

Criticism of the phenomenon of honor crimes is directly linked to criticism of at least two more general kinds of custom: resorting to self-justice and gossip. To illustrate how much Islam disapproves of judging people on the basis of gossip or non-solid evidence in matters of honor, the general manager of the Islamic Welfare Society in Salt emphasised that, according to Islamic law, four men should have witnessed the act of adulterous sexual intercourse in order for it to lead to punishment:

> If I saw a man and a woman practicing zina (adultery) alone, all I could do is reprimand them for their sinful act. I cannot use what I have seen as an affidavit in a legal procedure against them. I cannot even talk about what I have seen to other people, because then I would deserve punishment myself. I would have to be whipped with eighty lashes, since this is considered in the shari'ah as slandering others.[39]

Likewise, his grandfather and founder of the Society in Salt, Muhammad Amin Zaid al-Kilani notes in connection with the issue of self-justice that individual acts of murder – which he considers as remnants of pre-Islamic tribal customs – are also condemned by Islam. Indeed, al-Kilani concludes by arguing that Islam does not recognise the right of self-justice as a substitute for resorting to a legal judgment.[40]

In other words, Islamist and like-minded Muslim NGOs preserve the notion of sexual honor and chastity in their discourse, but give it a different basis. The basis for judging matters of this order should not, ideally speaking, consist of mere suspicion, gossip and considerations of personal (masculine) reputation in the local community; rather they should consist of careful and objective legal judgments rooted in the rules of the shari'ah as well as in the cultivation of a moral conscience strong enough to prevent believers from engaging in illicit sex practices. It implies a certain individualization of the concepts of morality and honor, and a move away from the traditional culture of "shame," toward a more modern culture of (individual) responsibility and guilt.

Therefore, the solution promoted by Islamists and their NGOs for the twin issues of illicit sexual behavior and honor crimes is the following: there should be strict application of shari'ah, including moral education and practicing gender separation where needed, as well as the *hudud* punishments, which form the proper alternative for the – illegitimate and un-Islamic – practice of honor killings. At Al-'Afaf Society's seminar on the issue of honor, Dr. Ibrahim Zaid al-Kilani asserted that people resort to "*jahili* practices of honor crimes" because secular law is applied in the country. Likewise, sheikh Muhammad Amin Zaid al-Kilani of the Islamic Welfare Society in Salt blames Westernized legislation in Jordan and elsewhere in the Arab world for the phenomenon of honor crimes, since it fails to punish adulterers and forces people to take the law into their own hands.[41]

Noticeable is the fact that Islamist and conservative Muslim NGOs do not tackle the aspect of gender discrimination, or the fact that it is always women who are the victim and that men usually get away with "violations" of sexual honor. When I confronted Sarhan, Al-'Afaf Society's Executive Director with this idea, he answered, with a sense of anger and indignity: "there exists a lot of ignorance about Islam in this (i.e. Jordanian) society. Islam does not discriminate between men and women in such matters. Men and women in Islam have the same punishments, and enjoy the same rights!"[42]

In theory, representatives of such NGOs do endorse the Islamic principle of "equality in punishment for equal crimes," regardless of gender. At the same time, many of these NGOs seem to stick, to a greater or lesser degree, to – traditional but religiously justified – patriarchal notions of the "rationally superior male" as the guardian of family honor.[43] In their eyes, males continue to enjoy a privilege over their female spouses and relatives so that the religious morality and honor in the family may be preserved. It shows the continuation of traditional gendered patterns in their thought about sexual honor that are expressed in the name of religious faith, shari'ah and the restoration of a morally clean Islamic society, rather than so as to preserve one's own masculine reputation in the local community. Al-'Afaf Society's representative Sarhan, for instance, told me that he saw the monitoring of a girl's movements by her family as something positive, since the purpose was "to protect her, and not to oppress her."[44]

Jordanian anti-honor crime activists disagree with their Islamist as well as tribalist opponents especially on the aspect of gender discrimination in honor issues, apart from the inhumane nature of honor crimes as such. Inconsistency, from the point of view of gender equality, between the "equality in punishment" principle and that of male guardianship over the honorable conduct of female family members in Islamist discourse cannot be denied. In this regard, the legal scholar Abu-Odeh states: "the fundamentalist agenda itself is not devoid of its own ambiguities. An important question for the Arab world today is: what is the meaning of gender when the traditional, nationalist and fundamentalist texts intersect?"[45]

The Marriage Relationship

During an interview, two workers of Al-'Afaf Society's women's committee spoke to me about the duty of a husband and wife to "respect each other's rights." They regarded this message as central in the lectures and workshops they were organizing. When asked what these rights entailed, one of them, the head of the women's committee, stated: "if the wife obeys her husband, she obeys God."

I asked them how the principle of a wife's obedience toward her husband could be compatible with the principle of an equal relationship between both, something Al-'Afaf Society purports to advocate as well. The other woman worker, who performed a coordinating function in the same committee, responded:

> Obedience in the shari'ah does not mean that the husband can simply give orders to his wife, lock her up and prevent her from going out of the house and

> so on. No, the wife has her own life, is free to do what she wants and to have contacts and activities outside of the home. I studied shari'ah science at the Jordan University, so I know what I am talking about. The duty of obedience relates to very fundamental issues that are basic to the well being of the family as a whole. Issues in which the woman cannot act against her husband's will. For example, once I raised with my husband the idea of working outside of the house. He said: 'if you are going to work outdoors fulltime, what about the household tasks and the care of the children?' I had to consent to his objection, but decided to work as a volunteer for Al-'Afaf Society. My husband understands very well that I need to do something outside of the home. He even supports me, and tells me: don't sit all the time at home, you will get sick of boredom …my parents grew up with much more traditional ideas. My mother always had to follow my father's orders; there was not much room for her own desires and demands. Really, I wouldn't be able to live like that![46]

Apparently, in the Islamized educated middle class atmosphere to which this Al-'Afaf Society woman belongs, women do not slavishly dote on their husbands, awaiting their every order. Rather, there is room for mutual consultation, reasoning and the exchange of ideas in arriving at decisions. In other words, there is room for negotiated compromise between husband and wife, even though it is still the husband who has the last say. His educated wife certainly has means at her disposal to influence and persuade him in his decision-making, though.

This middle class-based Islamist subculture also allows for the possibility of men to take their share in the family's household duties. According to Sarhan, the idea that assigning housework exclusively to women is Islamic is wrong. He asserts that Islam defines the marital relationship as one between two partners, in which the husband must assist his wife in her household tasks.[47] The coordinator of Al-'Afaf Society's women's committee is also of the opinion that the husband should assist his wife in her housework in order to relieve her from part of her burden. She mentioned to me a hadith stating that the Prophet Muhammad cleaned the carpets of his house as part of his household tasks.[48]

During discussions at the lectures and workshops organized by Al-'Afaf it became clear that one of the main problems among Jordanian married couples relates to money. In particular, husbands are traditionally reluctant to give wives a share of their income, or to delegate to her any responsibility that requires her to spend money. According to the workers, the husband has to be urged to share his money so that his wife has enough to satisfy her needs around the house, not to mention her movements and activities outside of it. They base their insistence that husbands do co-operate financially with their spouses on the Islamic principle that a husband must provide for the needs of both his wife and family.[49]

A Complimentary Division of Roles

The abovementioned statements of Al-'Afaf Society's women workers show that it is impossible to classify the discourse of Islamist voluntary associations as either conservative or progressive within the Jordanian context. Progressive elements can be detected when people speak about the right of the woman to run her own life independent of her husband, about the need for there to be reasonable consultation between husband and wife based upon an exchange of arguments, and about the duty of husbands and sons to assist their wives or mothers in her household tasks. The discourse sounds much more conservative when the topic is that of complementary role divisions as the basis of a harmonious and happy family life. Then, to a large extent, it corresponds with the views of conservative 'ulama' who want to limit the woman's sphere of activity as much as possible to that of home and family, in subservience to her husband.[50]

Underlying this discourse of complementariness is a view on family and community that emphasizes the duty and responsibility of each person to satisfy, in accordance with age and gender, the rights of others. In the words of the husband who had married in one of Al-'Afaf Society's mass weddings:

> Everybody in Islam has his or her responsibility in the community. The husband is responsible for his mother as well as for his wife, but the responsibility for his mother enjoys overriding priority. The wife, on the other hand, is first responsible for her husband, but she will also gain the responsibility of her son. This is written in a hadith. In this way, everyone gets what one is entitled to.[51]

The discourse of Al-'Afaf Society and other Islamist and conservative Muslim associations, like the Islamic Welfare Society of Salt or the Islamic Anwar Al-Huda Welfare Association, stresses, first of all, the husband's role of satisfying the family's needs financially and materially. At Al-'Afaf Society's seminar on marital love and harmony, administrative legal expert Abd al-Qadir Al-Sheikhali spoke in his presentation of the husband's duty to satisfy all the basic needs of his family and the house, such as nutrition, clothing, furniture and medical care.[52] According to Sarhan, this responsibility of the husband sets the priority in spending the money he earned, over which his wife and children enjoy the first right. Only after meeting these needs can the husband spend money on anything outside of the family sphere.[53]Other duties of the husband mentioned in Al-'Afaf Society's discourse is to "educate wife and children on affairs concerning life and the world," since he is usually "older in age and richer in experience,"[54] providing his bride with the mahr[55] and kindly treatment.[56]

Woman participants in the Society's discourse promote the latter duty of the husband with a great passion. Haifa' Kamal, for instance, in the Al-'Afaf Guidebook, states that in a proper Islamic marriage a husband should treat her wife as follows:

> Console her emotionally when she is tired and don't hesitate in (satisfying) her right to a sign of your attention.
>
> Bring her a present now and then.
>
> Speak to her about your admiration of her, consider her circumstances and forgive her.
>
> Don't demand from her the impossible.
>
> Help in the household duties has a positive impact on her soul.
>
> Don't neglect her and she will be protected, don't underestimate her mental capabilities and she will understand you, don't be nasty to her and she will be dignified.
>
> Don't treat her from a view of inferiority because the woman is the full sister of the man.
>
> Beware of humiliating your wife in front of others. [57]

Such discourse puts the husband's duty to consider his wife's feelings, circumstances as well as rational capabilities in the framework of the traditional and complimentary role division between the husband as income provider and the wife as mother and housewife. In this sense, it is of a rather conservative nature.

This conservatism comes even more clearly to the fore in the Society's discourse on the wife's duties. Al-Sheikhali mentioned at the seminar on marital harmony the wife's duty of decent and "timid" or modest behavior. Within this, he directed women to watch their language and outer appearance. She should also provide good and healthy cooking for the family (no fast-food), ensure that she looks after herself in terms of hygiene and cleanliness, attend to the clothes of family and all parts of her house, and abstain from controlling her husband. "Some wives," he states, "believe that the way to marital happiness is realized by possessing the husband as an individual property and subsequently controlling him." This attitude disturbs the marriage relationship.[58] In addition, Haifa' Kamal emphasizes the psychological and emotional aspect of the wife's duties by mentioning stipulations like: "let your husband share with you his feelings, his sentiments, his aspirations and his sorrow," "thank him for his wonderful actions," "beware of an abundance of grumbling and complaints and choose the right moment to put forward your complaint," "make yourself beautiful for him and receive him with a smile and with delightfulness," "let him feel your love and respect and show him your admiration for his strength and capability," and "don't leave his house without his permission."[59]

In this discourse, the right of the one is always satisfied and respected through the other's fulfillment of his or her duty. The rights of the husband, for instance, are mainly phrased by the Society at large in terms of his wife's obedience. Al-Sheikhali stated in the above-mentioned seminar, in line with conservative 'ulama', that the husband has the right to be obeyed by his wife, provided that he behaves piously and morally; "there is no obedience to a madman or an adulterer."[60] Shari'ah expert al-Qara'in concurs, and states that the husband's duty as family provider gives him the right to exercise control and guidance over the affairs of the house and the upbringing of the children. If any member of the family deviates from "the order and the rules [with] which the shari'ah has determined the Islamic family and its security," it is the husband's right to exercise his authority and control. In so doing, he guarantees the "solidarity and unity of the family." This, however, does not imply that he may "inflict damage on his wife by beating and abusing her, which is considered by the shari'ah as legal ground for the wife to leave the house of her husband without losing her rights."[61]

Regarding the rights of the wife, Sarhan likes to emphasise the "special place" which the Muslim woman enjoys in the family and wider Islamic community. Islam, he stresses, guarantees the woman her right to choose a husband, use her own property as she sees fit and to spend her income or money in the way she likes. Unlike her husband, she is under no obligation to spend any money she might possess or earn to the family household, although Islam does not prohibit her from doing so either. "She can even make a request to her husband to hire a housemaid (to assume her burden of household duties) if she wants to work," he stated.[62] A more conservative explanation of the rights of the wife is put forward by Al-Sheikhali. He stresses, amongst others, the wife's right to care for the interior of the house. "The house," according to Al-Sheikhali, "is a paradise for the wife." The wife is "the expert of the affairs of the house. She is the one who knows its needs and she is capable of organizing it in accordance with her own insights."[63]

Gender, the West and Traditional Culture

The ideal complimentary relationship between husband and wife in Islam is often contrasted with the economic and sexual "exploitation" of women in Western societies. Abu Hisan, a judge working at the Jordanian High Court of Justice who wrote a booklet for Al-'Afaf Society entitled Al-Mar'ah baina al-Islam wal-Nizam al-Gharbi (The Woman between Islam and the Western Order), states: "while the woman is, in Western theories, a being with complete equality to man in terms of rights, duties and competences of work, she is, in reality, still regarded in the West as merely a body that is useful solely for pleasure."[64] The Western woman, Abu Hisan argues, becomes degraded through what he calls her "instrumental" equality. This happens when she is socially and economically pressured to work as a secretary, a waitress, a mannequin or any other job in which she has to show her physical beauty. This causes her to lose her humanity for the sake of financial gain. Paid work by women, the author stresses, should be regarded as a means to her own well being and, especially, that of her family and not as an end in itself. The best situation for a woman is that she can make herself free to take care of her home and her family.[65]

Al-'Afaf Welfare Society's president Arabiyyat considers the introduction of "certain Western values" in Arab and Muslim societies as a part of a grand plan to expand the military, political, economic and social invasion of the Arab and Muslim worlds and reinforce the "Western-Zionist hegemony" over them.[66] Likewise, Sheikh Muhammad Amin Zaid al-Kilani, founding father of the Islamic Welfare Society of Salt, sees it as his task to warn Muslims against the "cultural, social and political offensive" of the West and the Zionists. He states that since the family is basic to the "Islamic system," Islam's enemies have targeted it. They do so, he argues, by using the oppressive and cruel character of some tribal and "backward" values as a pretext in order to defame Islam. They try to abolish the authority of the Muslim husband and deprive Muslim women of their purity, give them unlimited freedom and encourage them to destroy the solid and eternal (family) law of Islam.[67]

Such perceived socio-cultural threats emanating from the West are used by Islamist NGOs to urge Muslim women to follow the "right Islamic way" and resist these alien influences. According to Haddad, "for the Islamists, women are maintainers of tradition and are relegated to the task of being the last bastion against foreign penetration." That such a fear-based defensive and reactive discourse easily assumes a conservative character is not surprising. Haddad writes: "Given the perception of the collapse of Western society, it is clear that traditional family values in the Arab world will be propagated strongly for fear of loss of social cohesion."[68]

As we have already seen in the case of Al-'Afaf Society's women workers, when the emphasis is put on the oppressive and un-Islamic character of indigenous habits and customs, Islamist discourse becomes significantly more progressive in tone. Instead of focusing on the defense of traditional values and relationships in the face of perceived external threats, the emphasis is put on what needs to be changed internally in order to improve one's own socio-cultural lifeworld. Nawal al-Fa'uri's Al-'Aqsa Assocation, also Islamist in terms of sociopolitical ideals, is an outspoken advocate of such change. Not once in her writings nor during my interviews with her did al-Fa'uri resort to the kind of conspiracy theories and phobia for what is alien (and in particular Western) as many of the representatives of the associations quoted above are so prone to do. Al-Fa'uri mainly attributes problems in contemporary Arab marriage relationships to the centuries of corruption of the Islamic message. On the issue of "human rights and the present situation of Arab and Islamic societies," she writes: "All these rights which Islam established for the human being are applicable … to men, women, boys, girls and the elderly, as it is spelled out in detail in the noble Qur'an and the sunnah of the immaculate prophet." The Muslims, however, forgot about them in subsequent centuries, so as to follow:

> traditions that have strengthened with the passage of time and that have nothing to do with Islam… These deviations and loss led to ignorance regarding the rights of the woman and the rights of the society and to the delay of human development in Arab and Islamic societies, in addition to the presentation of wrong models of the social roles of man and woman in Islam toward other countries of the world.[69]

In terms of the marriage relationship, Al-Fa'uri sticks to the husband's status as provider and (albeit democratic and consulting) head of the family and wife's status as deliverer of children and the family's nurturer. On the other hand, she takes modernizing developments and change into consideration when she writes:

> change in the (distribution of) tasks between husband and wife is in the interest of both and in the interest of society, if both of them make themselves available for duties that suit them and which the creator prepared for them, if the circumstances of family or society require change in tasks or the assumption of additional tasks, and if this affair is discussed in an objective spirit within the family and the decisions reached are subsequently built upon.[70]

Interviews with her clarify that what she means here is flexibility in gender roles, including women's possibilities to work outside of her home for an income and to assume public responsibilities. Likewise, she places the onus on men to take their share in household tasks and to bring up the children.

Al-Fa'uri told me that for a women's association in a conservative provincial town in Jordan, it is very difficult (if not impossible) to approach men directly in order to try to change their convictions and attitudes toward women. Prevalent cultural notions of male superiority as well as gender separation prevent traditional men from engaging with women's views.[71] Interviews with the head of another women's association, the Khawla' Bint Al-Azwar Association in Zarqa, working for school dropout teenage girls and their mothers, clarify the extent to which such cultural notions limit Muslim women's associations in their work for change. When asked what her association could do when abusive husbands victimized some of its woman beneficiaries, she explained that she and the other association's workers would give these women advice to avoid or avert confrontation with the latter. These women are told, for instance, to be at home when the husband arrives and to make sure that the food is ready by then, or to withdraw to another room when he is moody and angry.[72] If the husband demands money from her, she is advised to give it to him in order to avoid further trouble. If the situation really becomes unbearable, the woman in question is advised to leave her house for good and return to her own family. However, this solution has its price: she will have to leave her children with her husband.[73]

The association tries to compensate for its impotence vis-à-vis abusive husbands through the psychological, social and economic empowerment of the dropout girls and their mothers, especially through its income-generating handicraft project. Indeed, such empowerment is expected to have a positive impact on the behavior of their fathers and husbands in the long run. The association assumes that it would motivate the latter to look for work and become more responsible toward their families.[74] They also expect that it would make the husband respect her more and stop beating and abusing her.[75] In other words: the association hopes to improve the status of women, inside as well as outside of her family, precisely by invoking traditional gender-based role divisions: the wife as mother and nurturer of her family, of which her work outdoors is an extension, and the husband as the main breadwinner.

The idea that the economic empowerment of women will enhance their husbands' respect seems to contrast not only with the observations of Al-'Afaf Society's workers, but also with those of the president of the non-Islamist Al-Faruq Society for Orphans in Irbid. The workers stress that situations in which both husband and wife work, or wherein the wife is the only breadwinner, often give rise to much tension between both spouses because they are quite simply unacceptable in the culture. Al-Faruq Society's president Hassan Harb gives the example of a husband coming home from his job while his wife had gone off to her own job without having had sufficient time to do the housework. In a culture where male dominance and traditional role divisions are taken for granted, such a situation often leads to anger and may even result in the wife's physical abuse.

In the name of the Islamic concept of rahmah, Al-Faruq Society tries to counter such patterns of women's oppression and abuse through its public religious courses for men and women alike. These courses advocate an attitude of empathy and dialogue between both spouses instead of verbal and physical violence. Both of them should listen to one another's needs and desires in order to realize a better coordination of familial tasks and reach satisfactory solutions.[76]

The Spirit of Rahmah and Good Communication

Harmony and good communication as goals characteristic of a good marriage relationship are also shared by an Islamist association like Al-'Afaf Society. According to the couple married at one of the Society's mass weddings that was mentioned in the section on the wedding ritual, a married life truly dedicated toward God is characterized by mutual attention, care and cooperation. Material demands and luxury are of minor or no importance. "We do not own a car," the husband said, "and we live just in a small apartment. But one doesn't need to start one's family life in a villa."[77] At the Society's seminar on marital harmony – and very much in the spirit of The Muslim Brotherhood – Al-Sheikhali positively contrasted the value of rahmah with a materialistic lifestyle when he said: "the feelings of compassion vary greatly according to the ideal people are imagining. If this ideal is built upon the force of materialism, then rahmah gets fragmented. If it is built upon the force of spiritualism, rahmah becomes firmer and greater, and rahmah only turns into true love when the human being counts himself as the brother of every human being." Compassion, he stresses, is one of the attributes of God who calls, through the Qur'anic message as well as through sayings of the Prophet, for compassion between spouses and other family members.[78]

When the Society speaks – orally or in writing – about the values of harmony, rahmah and good communication within the marital relationship, its discourse adopts a more egalitarian tone. Apart from role division between husband and wife, the Society also recognizes the common rights and duties of both. Among these are mutual respect, tolerance (of one another's differences in background and character), forgiveness (of one another's mistakes), goodwill, kindness and friendliness (including laughter, humor, smiles, greetings, kind gestures and the keeping of common secrets), understanding (for one another's thoughts and feelings, in order to allow for positive behavioral adjustment aimed at greater harmony),[79] honesty, trust and empathy.[80] Examples from the Hadith and reports about the Prophet's wife Aishah and his companions are used to religiously substantiate these marital values.

Questions of sexuality are also part of Al-'Afaf Society's discourse on the harmonious and compassionate marital relationship. When Al-Sheikhali states that the wife has "no right to reject the husband's call" to have intercourse with him, except when she is sick, tired or menstruating, he seems to confirm once again traditional claims of male dominance and gender inequality on the basis of the Hadith. He mitigates such claims, however, by emphasizing that the woman is a "combination of feelings, sentiments and emotions" that the husband should respect, and that the husband does not have a right to reject his wife's desire for sex either.[81] Again, ambiguous discourse is expressed, possibly to simultaneously accommodate more traditional and more modern views on the marriage relationship.

He also emphasizes the husband's and wife's "mutual right to jealousy" (or fear and revulsion against extra-marital affairs or romantic contacts with persons from the other sex by the marital partner) and the mutual duty of chastity. These are, he states, expressions of honor feelings that are conditional for a strong, mutually involved and harmonious marital relationship.[82] Significantly, his emphasis on mutual jealousy and chastity between husband and wife – while potentially imposing on both of them serious restrictions in social interaction with unrelated persons from the opposite sex by prohibiting activities like dancing or meetings in private settings[83] – departs from traditional Arab culture in which only the woman's chastity and the man's jealousy is of importance.

The values of marital love, harmony and compassion in Al-'Afaf Society's discourse are also approached from a rational point of view as necessary for the smooth running of family life. Cooperation, compassion and harmony enable the married couple to organise their energies, financial and human resources and time, to solve family problems, plan their future, take thoughtful decisions in order to avoid a negative impact on the family, reach goals and deal with financial difficulties. Here, the stress is on the couple's responsibility to engage in this planning and decision making endeavor, and not just to limit this to the husband, which possibly suggests a more democratic and egalitarian style of negotiation, discussion and counsel between the genders.[84] According to this discourse, rationality, in turn, contributes to happiness.

All of the discourse expressed by representatives of Al-'Afaf Society is presented in the frame of its official goal: "searching for a new vision concerning the values of marriage and the formation of the family by means of disseminating good customs based upon the teachings of our true religion and our original Arab values." Put mildly differently, the discourse aims "to offer a practical model in order to strengthen the positive values regarding marriage."[85] The Society endeavors to carry out this mission by speaking to the media, organizing public lectures as well as expert seminars and publishing leaflets and booklets, and by organizing its yearly mass weddings. Three of its committees are directly involved in these activities. To be specific, these include the Culture and Media Committee, The Social and Public Relations Committee, and the Women's Committee.[86]

Several times a year, the Society's women's committee organizes public meetings and lectures on the socio-cultural and psychological aspects of the marriage relationship. Most of these are for women only, but some have married couples among the audience.[87] Meetings for women only are meant to discuss marital and family issues relating to, for instance, financial matters, daily social dealings with the husband and family in-law and the upbringing of children. Problems discussed may be reviewed afterward by experts, for instance psychologists or social workers belonging to the Society's network. Subsequently, a follow-up workshop might take place in which these experts discuss possible solutions or approaches of dealing with them with the women-attendants. In mixed meetings for married couples, marital issues are discussed in a more general fashion. According to the women workers, couples that participated in one of the Society's collective weddings are most likely to attend.[88]

Domestic Violence

When asked to mention valuable lessons from the workshop on marital life they had to attend as participants in Al-'Afaf Society's mass wedding, the husband of the couple referred to above answered: "I learned that abusing and (harshly) beating your wife is prohibited by Islam. In popular culture, it is acceptable, but Islam teaches you to treat your wife with respect and dignity. You may not treat her like an animal."[89] His own mother, he told me, had been abused by his father in the past, and had suffered medical repercussions from this treatment.

According to a survey conducted by, among others, Jordan's Ministry of Health in the summer of 2006, 53 percent of young unmarried women in the country believe a husband is justified in hitting his wife if she insults him. Remarkably, only 40% of their male counterparts share this opinion. Women's Rights activist Iman Nimri of the Jordan Hashemite Fund for Human Development made the following comment on these figures: "Although one would assume that the younger generation would tolerate abuse less, young girls see their mothers accepting it."[90]

As is the case with the issue of sexual honor, however, criticism of an indigenous traditional habit like domestic violence is easily sacrificed in Islamist efforts to defend Muslim society and identity against – real or perceived – orientalist attacks and recriminations by pointing the finger back to the West. "It is not we who are irrational but the West, [for] we do not deny our women a human existence but Western society does so with its women," "our culture does not encourage violence but Western society does." When I asked Sarhan of Al-'Afaf Society whether physical abuse of the wife is an issue the Society is dealing with, he rushed to answer: "we do, but this problem is by no means as serious in our society as it is in the West."[91] According to *shaikh* Muhammad Amin Zaid al-Kilani of the Islamic Welfare Society in Salt, men in the West beat their wives unjustly and unnecessarily under the influence of alcohol, to point where they injure and kill them, while the just, moderate and alcohol-free system of Islam prevents men from committing such horrifying acts.[92]

When Al-'Afaf Society members, beneficiaries and workers say that beating (daraba) of the wife by the husband is not justified, it is questionable whether they mean to rule out all kinds of beating. Al-Sheikhali maintains that Islam prohibits the husband to beat his wife harshly, even in the case of disobedience, because that shows cruelty and is a form of domestic violence. At the same time, however, he stresses that the husband has a right to "discipline" his wife when she disobeys. This may entail the refusal to have sex with her; though, in the case of persistent disobedience, a (light) beating is also permissible, so as to convey the message of anger to her. He refers to Qur'an 4:34 to prove his point.[93]

In other words: Islamist and conservative Muslim NGOs make a distinction between severe abusive beating, which is to be condemned under any circumstance, and non-abusive light beating, which is approved of when a wife overtly and persistently defies the will and/or honor of her husband. Madiha Kokh, president of the Islamic Anwar Al-Huda Association, for instance, asserts that the beating, when it has to take place, should be carried out in a manner that is not really physically hurting, but should teach the wife a "psychological lesson."[94] Amin Zaid al-Kilani of the Islamic Welfare Association in Salt speaks about "moderate beating" that husbands can exercise against wives who commit sins like meeting other men without the husband's consent or behaving malevolently toward him.[95] Again, traditional patriarchal structures are reproduced in these NGO's discourse. In comparison with the past, however, when husbands felt free to abuse their wives as they saw fit, it is also true to say that these structures have been significantly refined.

The Privacy of the Nuclear Family

The transition from the extended to the nuclear family in Jordanian society is another topic dealt with by especially Al-'Afaf Society. High up the list of 'adat (traditional habits) regarded by the workers of the Society as a hindrance to modern Islamic family life is interference by the husband's relatives in the life of the couple – and, in particular, their tendency to dominate and control the wife and demand from her all kinds of services in the sphere of household tasks. "This is not good," according to the coordinator of the Society's Women's Committee:

> because the wife gets overburdened in this way. The wife's duties pertain to her own house and her own husband, and not those of others. She needs to have her privacy and her own space in her own house. And it isn't good, anyway,

> if the wife moves into the house of his husband's family. Husband and wife should have their own family life in their own house. These things are changing in Jordan, fortunately, but especially in rural environments, these habits are still widespread.

In addition to this, the Women's Committee's head added the wrong practice of "marriage partners who discuss their mutual problems with their own families instead of with each other." This only worsens their problems, she asserts: "because their families will interfere, which creates a very complicated and escalating situation. Both (marital) partners must learn to solve their problems among themselves and should listen to each other, without the interference of others."[96]

The same discourse was also expressed at Al-'Afaf Society's public seminar on the married couples' relationship with the mother in law. This event reflected an attempt to cope with the transition from the traditional extended to the modern nuclear family. On the one hand, it emphasized the need for more privacy for the nuclear family; and, on the other, it focused on the need to preserve harmony within that family as well as in the relationship with the extended family, and in particular with the mother-in-law. Islamic law and ethics were in general regarded as the appropriate frame of reference for providing solutions.[97] Such solutions arise in an urbanized, educated and middle class environment that is increasingly emancipating itself from old tribal and rural patterns. At the same time, concern was expressed about the cohesion of the (nuclear as well as extended family) and a turn to religion as a source of renewed stability in modern society was advocated.

The Question of Divorce

What most emanates from Al-'Afaf Welfare Society's discursive stress on marital harmony and familial unity and solidarity is its strong dislike of the practice of *talaq* (divorce). In a seminar organized by the Society on the issue, sociologist Muhammad al-Diqs stressed that although, in the case of necessity, Islam permits talaq, it has a powerful aversion towards it and, therefore, imposes restrictions so as to ensure it only occurs when matters between both spouses can only worsen if they remain together.[98] As adverse consequences of divorce, al-Diqs mentions the damage it does to the divorced couple's children. These, he notes, must live separated from one of their parents, adapt to live with a step-parent, and endure the struggle between biological parents over the rights to raise them. He also mentioned the "material, social and psychological problems and conflicts" between the divorced husband and wife themselves and the damage it does to the society by causing social problems and contributing to the society's "fragmentation."[99]

Among the causes for the magnitude of the problem of talaq in present day Jordanian society, al-Diqs singles out for blame the lack of religious and moral awareness that makes couples seek divorce too easily, illiteracy among women (because he ascribes to educated women a greater capability of solving family problems), and "the woman who goes out to work." In particular, going out to work strengthens a woman's sentiments of "individualism and independence in an economic sense," making it easier for her to divorce.[100] The solutions he suggests include awareness raising and providing counsel for couples on a healthy and harmonious marital life and the prevention of divorce, as well as the "development of a family law… that accords with the Islamic shari'ah."[101]

Limitations to the woman's autonomy in favor of her husband are again noticeable in Al-'Afaf Society's discourse when considering its opposition against the (temporarily enacted) khul' law in the Kingdom. This law allows a wife to divorce her husband without his permission on condition that she returns the mahr and forfeits all financial rights. The Society's members are of the opinion that, before a woman can divorce her husband, a qadi should intervene to determine whether the woman has suffered real damage in her marriage. Sarhan thinks that since the husband bears heavy responsibilities in providing and caring for his family, he is entitled to a certain privilege in divorce matters. Moreover, "women are (in general) more emotional, impulsive and capricious in the decisions they make and therefore, putting the final say in divorce matters into her hands alone would not be responsible." The Society organized a meeting on this law as well.[102] The same opinion of the khul' law was expressed to me by Muhammad Shawmali, general manager of the Islamic Welfare Society in Salt.[103]

President of the Al-'Aqsa Association, Nawal al-Fa'uri seems to have a more liberal conception of women's right to divorce. She argues that, according to the shari'ah, women have the "full right to demand the power of divorce in their marriage contract" and that a woman is entitled to initiate the dissolution of her marriage through the judicial court when she "fails to fulfill her marital duties and obligations toward her husband as a result of hatred or due to their lack of understanding."[104]

Women's Participation in the Society

Jordanian women's movements, such as the Jordanian Women's Union and the women's organizations sponsored by Princess Basma, have for many years been involved in a struggle to change policies and legislation in the direction of equal rights for women in the wider society, in political, social and economic respects. Yet, the issue of gender equality in the public realm is virtually absent in the discourse of an Islamist group like Al-'Afaf Welfare Society. The reason for this omission can be attributed to the Society's Islamist ideology according to which the woman can participate in public life, work and earn money only after fulfilling her primary responsibilities towards her house, husband and children.[105] In other words: the woman's status in public space is not regarded by the Society's members as a priority issue, since her primary role lies elsewhere. In this respect, its discourse is predominantly conservative.

In a practical sense, however, Islamist organizations such as Al-'Afaf Society do offer women channels to be active, within their organizational structures, in the public realm. The Society also counts a great number of educated women among its sympathizers and beneficiaries who often work outside of the home. Its ideology does not disapprove of working or publicly active women, provided that their work or activity outdoors does not impede upon their role as housewives and mothers and occurs in an "honorable" manner. This means that certain jobs in the realm of heavily physical or "unsafe" work are considered off-limits to these women, since they are deemed undignified.[106] The general manager of the Islamic Welfare Society in Salt, who shares this view, had the following to say about the ideal of total gender equality in economic life:

> Obviously, there is no way. Women have their own rights and men have their own rights, and that needs to be developed, but there are jobs that are not suitable for women, for instance in the construction sector, or as cab or bus driver. Just imagine! Women can very well have other kinds of jobs, such as school teacher, doctor or architect, like my own sister.[107]

There are other ways in which it seems perfectly clear that, while Muslim NGOs approve of the woman's movement and her general participation in modernized and modernizing Jordanian society, their consent depends upon women adopting jobs that are morally acceptable, especially to its male members. This moral acceptability invariably includes a modest outer appearance and dress, including the headscarf.

Generally speaking, the norm of moral acceptability does not require absolute gender segregation in public spaces, since even in many Islamist institutions, including the ICCS-run Islamic hospital, Al-'Afaf Society and the Islamic Action Front Party, many men and women do collaborate in work situations as "brothers" and "sisters," as they themselves like to describe it.[108] Instead, it implies precautionary measures preventing mixing between men and women from turning into sexual temptation and seduction. Besides modest behavior and dress for women (including the headscarf) and early marriage, the general manager of the Islamic Welfare Society in Salt mentions as an example of such measures the implementation of the hudud for illicit sexual activity that the Islamic state should, ideally speaking, enforce. He emphasizes the deterrent nature of these punishments against engaging in adultery by men and women alike. Its execution requires four men testifying that they had witnessed the act, and those who genuinely repent may be pardoned, as the prophet commanded.[109]

Some women Islamists and Muslim NGOs are more outspoken, explicitly advocating the rights of women in the public domain, including the Khawla' Bint Al-Azwar Association and Nawal Al-Fa'uri's Al-'Aqsa Association. Their argument centers on women's need to use her skills and education to contribute to Jordanian and Muslim society at large, and not just her own home and family.[110]

Al-Fa'uri insists on women's equal civil and political rights and her right to engage in economic transactions independently of men. In support, she draws from Qur'anic verses and the practice of politically and economically active women in the earliest Muslim community as examples.[111] To illustrate the woman's "right to express her opinion and protest," she mentions the example of Umm Salma, who successfully advised the Prophet against the conditions of a peace treaty. Furthermore, she mentions Caliph Umar Ibn Al-Khattab, who was reprimanded for wanting "to limit the dowries." According to this report, the woman stopped and asked Umar: "how can you do this while the Noble Qur'an says: '(if) you have given one of them (wives) a qintar (an amount of gold equal to the dowry) take not the least bit of it back'"? (4:20). Apparently, Umar was chastened, admitted his culpability and reversed his decision on the matter of dowries.[112] As pointed out earlier in this chapter (as well as in chapters 10 and 13), Al-Fa'uri heavily criticizes certain local mores and customs limiting women's role in society. On the one hand, her position, as an ex-member of The Muslim Brotherhood, agrees with the latter's tradition of emphasizing the woman's role as a motherly "educator of the next generation." On the other hand, she puts a greater stress than would most male Muslim Brothers on enhancing women's role in society and in developing her potential in a way that transcends motherhood and housewivery.[113] In Al-'Afaf Society as well, I found women workers most outspoken and explicit in their condemnation of customs and traditions that were seen as detrimental to the woman's status. The males in the Society's leadership tend to put greater stress on external threats to the Muslim family, such as those emanating from globalization and imperialism, which leads to a more conservative discourse.

Al Fa'uri's Al-'Aqsa Association tries to put its vision of developing women's potential and enhancing her role in the wider society into practice through its Committee for Families – a body that helps the mothers of poor and marginalized families. She describes these mothers as "living in a state of isolation, who sit passively at home, lack education, have a limited social and cultural horizon and face problems in bringing up their children." The Committee members, including Al-Fa'uri herself, try to raise these women's awareness on various issues, like child raising (see previous chapter), hygiene, healthy food preparation, gardening as well as various societal and religious issues and developments.[114] These activities take the form of conversations and guidance during home visits, or invitations to informative meetings at the association's premises. The mothers can participate there in literacy courses, listen to experts lecturing them on topics (such as the bringing up children, or the rights of women) and watch TV programs on various societal topics and developments, including programs from international stations.[115] As discussed in the chapter on employment-oriented activities, the association also works with micro-credit programs to enable such families to set up agricultural projects as a means to economic empowerment.

According to Al-Fa'uri, "these women need to learn to invest their time well, because the more their capabilities improve, the more they can contribute to their society." They need, furthermore, "to be taken out of their isolation and learn to communicate with others in the society by obtaining more knowledge about the world around them." "Islam," she stresses:

> teaches you to open your mind to new developments, knowledge and information, no matter where these comes from. We teach these women to ask questions about things that are important, because the reality of Islam is that this religion has an answer to each question. They must learn to follow this message, and not blindly imitate the traditions, norms and habits which they inherited from their parents and ancestors.

Al-'Aqsa Association's president admitted, however, that these awareness-raising efforts were neither smooth nor easy affairs. Promoting change among these women is fraught with difficulties, she said, "because they often don't care much about these things. Change proceeds with difficulty. It takes time."[116]

Conclusion

None of the Muslim associations dealt with in this chapter, or in this dissertation for that matter, openly and radically defies the traditional patriarchal family structure, which ties the woman first and foremost to her home as mother and housewife. A structure in which males in general and the husband in particular are traditionally regarded as superior to the woman in terms of rational decision making abilities, and rights to control the family's affairs. Such superiority entitles him to have a dominant position and leadership role, in the name of guarding the family's integrity, unity, honor and the well-being of all of its members. Especially in the discourse of Al-'Afaf Society and like-minded associations, the leadership role cannot be left to females alone, since they are understood to be rationally less stable and more emotional. The underlying assumption is that, if they were given an entirely free hand, chaos and decay would reign. In this vein, such associations continue to give expression, albeit in a subtle and modified form, to a religious ideology that, in Barakat's words, "considers women to be a source of evil, anarchy and *fitnah* (social disorder), and *kaid* (trickery or deception)."[117]

It must be acknowledged, however, that the associations would themselves never conceive of their message on gender relations in such crude terms. Emphasising the equal spiritual and moral value of the sexes as well as the values of mutual consultation in decision making, and the need to take account of one another's needs, their discourse is much more ambiguous than that. To begin with, they redefine patriarchy in terms of the democratic or consultative leadership that the husband should exercise. In the words of the website of the Muslim Sisters, the women's section of the transnational Muslim Brotherhood movement:

> Every type of group including the family must have a leader to guide it within the limits of what Allah has ordained… This role is not one of repression, hegemony or tyranny, but one of kindness, love and gentleness. It directs to the right path of wisdom in wisdom and benevolence. It is fundamentally based

> on consultations…There is also a specific order for consultations in the affairs of marriage.[118]

Many women are involved in the work of these associations. They are often well educated and aware of all kinds of social, psychological and political issues. Both their male and female members face, on the one hand, the pressures of certain traditions and, on the other, those of modernization within their family lives. For, as regards role expectations in the relationship between husband and wife, there is little doubt that modernization brings considerable potential for disruption. These women try to get across their own needs and desires – for the respect and attention from their husbands, for the opportunity to work (whether paid or unpaid) and for the husband's assistance in household duties – within the framework of moral sanction and acceptability that religious discourse provides. In more general terms, this religious discourse seems here to serve as a framework for the negotiation and balancing of, on the one hand, traditional and patriarchal values and, on the other, the influences of modernization and globalization. By claiming that, as long as we uphold our natural and religiously endorsed duties, everyone's rights will be respected, the same discourse offers both the family and the wider society the prospect of a harmonious life.

The power of religious discourse to act as a legitimizing framework for gender relations is noted by the American political scientist Laurie A. Brand. Writing on Jordan's general women's movement, she observes that:

> the vast majority of Jordanian women are concerned that issues related to women's rights and their role in society be addressed within a framework that upholds Islam and societal traditions. The percentage of women who feel comfortable with trying to move beyond that framework remains small. Activists who go to villages or refugee camps stress the need to base any discussion with women on Islamic principles; otherwise, women assume that what is being proposed contradicts religion, and will likely reject the ideas presented.[119]

In the Jordanian context, this legitimizing framework for social (and potentially political) action reproduces deeply embedded structures of patriarchy and (gender) inequality. Inequalities pertaining to gender relations may be morally justified by such an ideological framework in terms of "natural differences" between the sexes and of the need for the weaker sex to be protected by the stronger, exactly as we have seen in the discourse of several of the Jordanian Muslim NGOs. In other words, it may reinforce male patronage over females. [120]

This chapter has equally shown, however, that an ideological framework for discourse and action aimed at moral understanding could also be utilized to modify, change or even overturn existing structures, possibly in the direction of greater equality. On the one hand, some of the Islamist and more conservative Muslim associations show themselves to be strongly defensive of patriarchy when it comes to legal-social issues, such as honor crimes and divorce. On the other hand, modern education and an enhanced participation of women in labor market and public life have led several Muslim associations to criticize certain traditional forms of patriarchy and to advocate greater equality and (a consultative version of) democracy into the marital relationship. Islamic discourse is also used for a critical reflection on dilemma's pertaining to gender in modern Jordanian society. In particular, certain women's associations now insist that the role of the woman is wider then only the family sphere and try to enhance women's rights in the wider society and the public domain.

CONCLUSIONS

Conclusion:
Muslim Social Activism as a Phenomenon of Civil Society: Empowerment or Patronage?

In the first chapter, civil society was defined as the realm in which citizens associated on a voluntary basis to serve common goals (interests, values, norms, morals, and ideals) and whose decisions and practices in this regard are relatively autonomous from state policies as well as from economic objectives. In doing so, a civil society gives an organized, conscious and reflexive expression to social relationships, solidarities and cultural values in the socio-cultural lifeworld of its citizens.

In chapter 3, two different angles from which the existence of such a civil society in the Muslim Arab world is problematized were dealt with. First, some scholars, most notably Sami Zubaida, have maintained that most of the associations established by citizens in those societies serve mainly to continue traditional patterns of patronage and hierarchy. According to these scholars, the associations are based upon primordial ties of tribe, family, ethnicity or religion, rather than representing the kind of reflexive, voluntary, inclusive and egalitarian institutions a "modern" civil society is supposed to consist of. Second, such associations have been described as in the grip of state control and policy to the point that they cannot function as autonomous citizens' initiatives. This concluding chapter aims to deal with this problematic. Here, I assess the degree to which Muslim voluntary welfare associations in Jordan foster the empowerment and autonomy of citizens as opposed to reinforcing patterns of patronage and dependency.

These conclusions draw especially from the contrasting observations of two scholars in particular, Sami Zubaida and Janine Clark, regarding the vertical versus the horizontal aspects of especially Islamist voluntary associations – a discussion dealt with in chapter 3. Subsequently, a closer look will be taken at these associations' socio-ethical discourse in order to establish how it reflects patterns of empowerment and/or patronage. The next part of the conclusions deals with the wider political context in which these associations find themselves and focuses especially on their relationship with the state. Finally, an attempt is made to formulate an answer to the problematic of these associations' nature as civil society institutions.

Islamist NGOs: Horizontal Networks or Vertical Patronage?

Janine Clark's analysis of the sociopolitical role of Islamist NGOs focuses primarily on their nature as the embodiment of more or less horizontal middle class-based networks in religious form. On the other hand, Sami Zubaida points to a more vertical pattern of moral patronization (or "colonization") targeting beneficiaries that characterizes the approach of such NGOs.

My own observations suggest that both of them reveal part of the truth, while overlooking certain other important aspects of it. Clark's observation that these NGOs strengthen horizontal ties among the (relatively underprivileged) well-educated middle class – ties with empowering implications for its members in terms of the social, economic and even political opportunities they offer – may serve as a useful correction to Zubaida's description of Islamic voluntary associations as "neo-traditional formations." After all, for Zubaida, these associations merely continue patterns of authoritarianism, paternalism and ascribed membership inherited from the premodern mujtama' ahli. And it is true that traces of this traditional culture can be found in contemporary (Islamic) voluntary associations, such as a strong emphasis on the (exclusive) personal role of leadership exercised by the NGOs' presidents, often at the expense of a more democratic institutional structure,[1] and the role that sectarian, familial or tribal ties may still play in the founding of and the ongoing membership within NGOs.[2] Yet, I agree with Clark when she states that, with the emergence of a modern educated middle class in the Middle East, new patterns of associational life came into being. Generally speaking, members of contemporary voluntary associations, including the Islamic and the tribal ones, do not simply join them because they belong to certain familial or tribal formations. Even if religion or tribe is the basis for the existence of certain NGOs, many of their members have acquired educational levels and been exposed to modern forms of media that enable them to make their own individual and rationally informed choices to join the association in question.[3] Of course, beneficial social ties and a sense of social duty remain important in this process; but these are usually of a horizontal nature and based upon mutual interdependence of needs, resources and skills. Besides, there are also many Muslim voluntary welfare associations in Jordan that are of an inter-familial, inter-tribal or even inter-ethnic nature. Associations affiliated with The Muslim Brotherhood have an ideological basis transcending such forms of identity; and this is often reflected in their membership. Clark succinctly describes how Islamist associations in countries like Yemen, Egypt and Jordan have the potential to expand their networks, and to reach out and recruit other members of the middle class previously not involved in Islamist networks.[4]

In terms of religion, tribal affiliation and ethnicity, the neighborhoods of modern cities in an Arab country like Jordan have become increasingly mixed. This fact is also reflected in the existence of a mixed associational life that bridges traditional forms of identity. Family and tribe remain important factors in the formation of social capital, but are by no means as exclusive or dominant in terms of personal identity, protection and socio-economic survival as they used to be in the past. Consequently, in terms of membership, social capital and discursive processes, the contemporary associations often have something distinctly modern about them. They are based on a relatively conscious and voluntary membership and generally possess reflexive and critical attitudes toward prevailing modern, as well as traditional patterns in wider society. This pertains to issues as diverse as consumerism, the environment, gender relations, upbringing of children or habits like gossip and tribal and familial feuds. Such attitudes often play a critical role in the self-definition of Islamic identity.

What Clark seems to overlook, or at least downplay, however, is that Islamic NGOs also make serious efforts to influence and "educate" their needy recipients in the name of Islamic da'wah. As discussed in chapters 13-16, these attempts take place through activities like counseling, guidance, lectures and courses on reading and memorizing the Qur'an, performing Islamic rituals, and responding to various familial and social problems. Religious values are also expressed to the recipients in connection with activities such as tutoring school students, vocational training, mediation in finding jobs, income-generating projects and recreational and cultural activities. Through such programs, Islamist associations in particular endeavour to instill a sense of piety, dignity and responsibility in the recipients. A serious willingness among members and participants of various Islamist as well as other Muslim NGOs to raise the educational, cultural, socio-economic and "moral" level of their beneficiaries can be found. The latter may even be pressured by such NGOs in question to participate in such educational programs, as we saw in the case of ICCS centers for orphans and poor in Amman.[5]

It is difficult to ascertain the impact of such activities on the attitudes and mindset of recipients. That there is something of an impact, in particular among the children and the youth among them, is indicated by the interviews and discussions by a local female research assistant of mine at the women's section of an ICCS center for orphans and poor in a Palestinian refugee camp in Amman, and by other activities in which political messages were also transmitted. These were described primarily in chapter 15. Several other Muslim associations in Jordan working for the poor, the needy and/or the orphans give similar kinds of guidance and make similar kinds of educational efforts toward their clients. Such associations are, in fact, actively engaged with the values of the lifeworld emanating from their social environment – be this an urban neighborhood, a Palestinian refugee camp or a rural village – often on a religious basis. This pertains not only to the level of motivation of the NGO workers themselves, but also to their communication with their needy clients. And in the interactions with the latter, various degrees of reflexivity toward their lifeworld and its social problems are displayed.

As far as class differences and the concomitant social gaps between NGO workers and their needy clients are concerned, it must be pointed out that, in many cases, these are mitigated by familial, tribal, ethnic and/or neighborly ties between the workers and clients. Some educators of ICCS centers, for instance, were once needy recipients of those centers themselves.[6] And it must be borne in mind that members and workers in such voluntary associations, even if they now belong to the educated middle class, may have experienced poverty during their youth. This is the case with many Palestinian NGO workers who initially arrived as refugees in Jordan, but it also applies to many East Bank Jordanians with a tribal background. Over the last half century, Jordan has known a significant measure of social mobility, due to the spread of mass education. The point to be made here is that the concept of class, while an important and useful tool of analysis, should not be reified too much. In many cases, NGO workers have a great deal of affinity with the lifeworld of their needy clients and their social problems, for reasons mentioned above.

Various scholars, notably Bayat and Clark, have pointed out that Islamic NGOs have established commercially beneficial projects in the realms of education and health care that mainly serve the middle class. However, there are also efforts made for members of the lower classes that aim to develop the latter socio-economically, educationally, religiously and morally. In some cases, such services may offer opportunities for the recipients and their families to enter the educated middle class. No matter how scarce the resources (in comparison to commercially based projects), and how many obstacles they face in reality, these efforts may not be dismissed. In the frame of such activities, ties between NGO workers and (at least some of) their needy recipients may at times be strong, and contribute substantially to the lives of the latter. They are, however, of a different nature in comparison to the ties among NGO members, workers, donors and clients who are all from the middle class. They are, indeed, much more characterized by vertical relationships, patronage and one-way dependency.

This brings me to a point on which I agree with Sami Zubaida when he speaks of efforts undertaken by Islamist NGOs to Islamize the population in terms of religious observance and ethical conduct. In paternalistic fashion, this process places a heavy emphasis on the family (and, I would add, public) morality of their recipients. This aspect of Islamization may well contribute to the ideological influence or even hold of Islamist movements over large sections of the population, including the lower classes. The latter may also be politically important as voters and participants in demonstrations. It also emphasises, however, the patronizing nature of such relationships. Even if certain forms of support for the poor and needy may be empowering in educational and socio-economic respects on an individual level, the latter remain in the role of recipients of aid and other services, and do not participate in decision-making regarding the NGO and its activities. Moreover, the lower classes are not politically organized by Islamic NGOs in order to fight for their own rights. Islamists do not bring class relations in the society into question on a structural level. Rather, they assume that social justice will be attained by changing and Islamizing the "mentality" of all members of Muslim society, from the unemployed and destitute to the richest businessmen and the heads of government and state, and by urging the state to promote such a religiously informed mentality through the implementation of the shari'ah. On the level of NGO-client relations, this moralism translates itself in a patronizing attitude. The NGO-workers always assume that they know "what's best" for their clients. In this sense, such NGOs may indeed be the inheritors of the authoritarian and paternalist mentality of the historical mujtamaʻ ahli. Islamists, however, do not hold a monopoly on this attitude. Patronization is inherent in any relationship between NGOs run by middle class members who have a significant amount of social capital, financial resources and organizational know how at their disposal, and needy clients.

Political and Socio-economic Empowerment

Social scientist Bayat's observation that Islamist associations in the Arab world do not politically mobilize the poor on a class basis applies to all other legally registered voluntary welfare associations in Jordan, whether Islamist or not, since state policy and law strictly forbids them from doing so. Efforts of ICCS centers to patronize their clients ideologically and to build their identity and moral personality on a religious basis seem to imply, however, an approach to socio-economic empowerment on an individual and familial basis, making use of much the same kind of activities and projects which the other – including non-Islamist – voluntary welfare associations are using. Examples are vocational training, mediating for jobs in the labor market and income-generating projects. In other words, patronizing and paternalistic leadership does not seem to rule out every kind of empowerment for the clients. Religion- or ideology-based forms of paternalism in 19th and 20th century Europe, accompanied by significant social pressure as well as encouragement, were reasonably successful in galvanizing people into taking different forms of political, social, cultural and economic action – which may now be considered as forms of empowerment.[7] Likewise, in present day Jordan, such an (empowering) approach is supposed to be realized through the dependency of the individual on his or her social environment and its patrons, rather than by making him or her independent from these.

Through such dependency-relationships, practices of wastah (favoritism) take place as well. Allegations that ICCS centers give preferential treatment to beneficiaries from their own Islamist network in the provision of development opportunities were mentioned in chapters 8 and 11. Again, there is no reason to assume that the ICCS significantly differs in this regard from other, including non-Islamist, NGOs.

This is not to say that the prevailing pattern of paternalism within voluntary associations does not affect and limit the results of their work in terms of empowerment. Vulnerable people with limited resources do not have a sufficient base to empower themselves on their own account, and have no negotiating power vis-à-vis service-providing NGOs. If, in practice, these NGOs themselves are structured along lines of paternalism and personal authority, and if the association's workers are largely dependent on the will or the judgment of its head, as is usually the case, one cannot expect them to empower their beneficiaries to participate in the decision-making processes of the organization.[8] The NGOs' head has to ensure the conformity of his or her organization and its workers with government-policies and legislation and ensure its obedience to the state, at least outwardly. The association, in turn, ensures that the beneficiaries behave in conformity with the associations' rules, in which they themselves have no say. Such associations may have projects for economic empowerment, but whether they also turn their beneficiaries into autonomous and vocal citizens who can fully participate in the public sphere appears doubtful.

Empowerment and Gender

There is one more aspect of empowerment in the Muslim associations' work – especially as it pertains to the socio-economic levels of the actors – that must be mentioned: gender. On the issue of gender and economic participation in the Arab world, the Arab Human Development Report of 2002 observes that:

> Women's economic participation remains unacceptably low, even though their capabilities have grown significantly (while still far less than is desirable). Their opportunities both to contribute to and to gain from such participation remain circumscribed by convention and legal restrictions… the feminization of unemployment can be reversed by removing gender bias in labor markets, including gender-based occupational segregation and unequal returns on education.[9]

In the chapter on employment-oriented activities of Muslim NGOs, I observed that while many of the vocational training programs run by these associations have women as their target, apart from computer skills, the nature of the vocations in which they are trained – sewing, embroidery, food preparation and glass painting – are traditionally associated with females. Instead of reversing them, they would seem, therefore, to reinforce gender-based occupational segregation and possibly, by consequence, unequal returns on education as well. This is to be attributed largely to gender-based cultural biases in the local community rather than to religious ideology as such, since even the secular UK-based development organization Questscope finds itself compelled to provide separate and different training activities to boys and girls respectively. It is obvious then that reversing trends of occupational segregation is easier said than done in impoverished and culturally conservative communities in the Arab world. In such socio-economic and cultural environments, reversing the feminization of unemployment as such, even if the employment offered is of a traditionally female nature, seems to be the only attainable form of economic empowerment of women, and many Muslim NGOs contribute to this. Indeed, religiously inspired Muslim NGOs are capable of attracting women from traditionally low-income families to their vocational training programs (as well as to other educational activities) precisely because of their reputation of upholding pious norms of gender-based virtue and segregation.

An Islamist ideology that explicitly identifies woman's primary tasks as mother and housewife may constitute a hindrance to reversing the feminization of unemployment and gender-based occupational segregation. However, women who sympathise with, actively support or participate in the Islamist movement in Jordan do work outdoors to make a living, often in gender-mixed settings, sometimes as highly educated professionals. A few of them are represented in the elected *shurah* council of the Islamic Action Front Party and one is a parliamentarian for this party. As Nancy Ammerman, a specialist on American Christian fundamentalism argues, to judge the impact of a religious movement, one shouldn't listen to its (patriarchal) rhetoric only. Actual practice in the movements' members' lives may differ significantly and have a decisive impact on the movements' practice.[10] Lisa Taraki points out that Islamist discourse and ideology on gender in Jordan have been significantly modified, adjusted and renegotiated due to trends of attaining higher educational levels by women and their entrance into the labor market and the public sphere.[11] Moreover, Islamist Welfare NGOs themselves offer Muslim women venues to work and be active outdoors, either in a paid or in an unpaid fashion. Some of them are entirely run by women. This is certainly not to say that Islamist institutions have ceased to be patriarchal in nature. However, in terms of gender-based possibilities and constraints in socio-economic empowerment, no obvious practical difference can be discerned between the activities of Islamist and non-Islamist NGOs.

A Discourse of Social Ethics

Ethics of Duty, Obedience and Harmony

Attitudes of paternalism prevailing among Muslim NGOs toward their beneficiaries are, especially among conservative and Islamist NGOs, related to a religious ethical discourse that is focused on duty. Such a discourse, especially in its Islamist form, does not empower certain groups within the society to stand up for their own rights so much as call upon them to fulfill their duties toward others as well as toward God. The underlying premise is that rights and empowerment can never be primarily based on the assertive autonomy of individuals, social groups or classes. They can be realized only in an environment of social harmony and solidarity in Muslim society as a whole. This implies that rights and empowerment of individuals or groups are necessarily embedded in social relationships of dependency. Each one's duty fulfills the other ones' rights.

Instead of calling upon their needy beneficiaries to organize themselves on a class basis and fight for their own rights, for instance, Islamist NGOs call upon Muslims from the wealthier strata of society to give selflessly and generously, fi sabil li-llah, to the poor and orphans. By fulfilling this duty, the living circumstances of the needy are supposed to improve and their socio-economic prospects to become brighter. The wealthy donors themselves get rid of their own egoism and greed and their chances for divine reward in the afterlife are enhanced. The needy beneficiaries are told to counter their own greed as well as their jealousy vis-à-vis the wealthier strata, be patient and thankful to God for what He has made available to them, equally with an eye on their chances in the afterlife. Both the wealthy and the poor are taught about the viciousness of materialism and called upon to be pious, honest and helpful in their religious and social dealings. Such a spiritual attitude, Islamists reason, will lead to true social harmony and economic prosperity, implying that the blind pursuance of self-interest as well as one's "own rights" by any separate individual, group or class will lead to the undermining of Muslim society and, ultimately, its disintegration.

In a similar vein, children are not called upon to assert their own will against that of their parents, older brothers and/or sisters, but rather to respect and obey their parents and the elderly in general. Parents and older brothers and sisters, in turn, are told to take good care of their children or younger siblings, listen to their needs and legitimate desires and give them proper and positive guidance. Women, finally, are called upon not to rebel against their husbands. The wife must obey her husband as head and provider of the family, provided that he himself deals with her on an Islamic basis, does not abuse and/or humiliate her physically or verbally, respects her dignity and is attentive toward her needs, feelings and opinions.

A specific kind of conservatism cannot be denied in this type of social worldview. It implies a confirmation and legitimation of existing social hierarchies and dependency relationships along the lines of class, age and gender, even though the "stronger" are called upon to exercise their power with good care and consideration for the "weaker." It is this combination of power and care that creates relationships of paternalism and patronage. What such dependency relationships can imply in practice is made painfully clear by the president of the Khawla' Bint Al-Azwar Association, who explained to me that she and the other association's members cannot or will not advise client mothers to openly resist the abusive behavior of their husbands. Islamist and other, like-minded, NGOs,[12] start from the belief that true dignity has to be obtained through enhancing ones' level of religiosity and piety, with its ritual as well as its social aspects.[13] With connotations of endurance, active perseverance as well as tolerance in social behavior, the notion of sabr (patience) is central to this understanding of how people can achieve greater dignity. This includes, in such associations' discourse, learning and work ethics to improve one's prospects in life. It may also include influencing persons in relatively powerful positions in a subtle and polite manner. It does not include, however, directly confronting class, age, and/or gender-based power relationships in society and in the public sphere. The authority of the wealthy, the elderly or men is not, therefore, to be challenged.

Moreover, such conceptions of dignity and empowerment may be questionable from the liberal point of view of respect for individual freedom and choice. This becomes clear when dependent clients are pressured by an ICCS center to participate in religiously and ideologically shaped cultural programs, for instance, or when (early) marriage is promoted by Al-'Afaf Society as the overriding duty for each and every believer.

Rights and Duties

A focus on duty and social harmony in religious discourse does not a priori exclude, however, the inclusion of a rights-based discourse among Muslim NGOs. Al-Faruq Society, for instance, combines the religious language of ethical duty of respect for one another's dignity with a discourse on human, women's and children's rights. The latter is unquestionably inspired by global institutions and documents like international rights conventions, UNICEF and foreign – including Western – development agencies. In this discourse, the integrity of the individual with his or her own qualities, thoughts, feelings and rights (rather than the conformity to strictly conceived religious injunctions as the basis of a harmonious community life) is central. A form of hybridization between duty-oriented religious ethics and rights-oriented secular ethics takes place in the discourse of Al-Faruq Society. It appeals to the Qur'anic principle of protection of the woman and concepts, such as rahmah (compassion), tasamuh (forgiveness and tolerance) and sabr, in raising awareness against domestic violence and oppression of women and children within the family, and to redirect communication within client families in the direction of mutual empathy, understanding, respect and greater democracy in daily relationships. This also implies a greater stress on the egalitarian aspects of Islamic social ethics, rather than on the virtues of hierarchy and obedience.

In the case of Al-Faruq Society, religious discourse is merely the inspirational element of an effort that is aimed at the social and economic development and empowerment of the orphan families in the local community, and not a part of an overall Islamization effort. It does not start from the assumption of a pure and monolithic Islamic identity to be defended and fortified in the face of an equally monolithic and hostile Western materialist culture and civilization. It pays equal attention to globally formulated rights discourses and modern development approaches as authoritative sources in social work and developmental activities, and interprets the Islamic message accordingly.

However, even among several associations with a more orthodox Muslim or Islamist background, we see a readiness to embrace modern rights discourses and to cooperate with international, including non-Islamic, development actors. The Khawla' Bint Al-Azwar association, led by a woman mosque teacher with orthodox religious convictions and wearing orthodox dress, and the Al-'Aqsa Association, led by Islamist and ex-Brotherhood member Nawal Al-Fa'uri, are cases in point. Both condemn traditional practices that discriminate against women in terms of social and educational opportunities in the name of Islam, as well as from the perspective of human, children's and women's rights. Both also cooperate with secular and/or foreign development actors. Such examples show that authenticity is never a straightforward or uncontested affair in local settings. In the name of Islamic authenticity, people can link up with global rights discourses and even build alliances with foreign and non-Muslim institutions to battle what they regard as distorted forms of traditional cultural identity. As more recent research has demonstrated, even some ICCS centers are affected by this trend.[14]

Criticism of traditional popular practices deemed to be detrimental to the rights and the well being of people and, in particular, of women and children can also be heard in Muslim Brotherhood-affiliated associations. Workers and beneficiaries of Al-'Afaf Society criticize the verbal and/or physical abuse of one's wife, any lack of consideration of her (financial as well as emotional) needs, opinions and views, the interference of the extended family, in particular the husband's mother, into the affairs of the married couple and the denial to any women of a place in the labor market or the public realm.

Such anti-traditionalist elements in Islamist discourse are not surprising if we take the basically modern nature of such movements into account. Martin E. Marty and R. Scott Appleby define religious fundamentalism, on the one hand, as an effort to fortify religious identity by providing it with a firm and dogmatic basis that is – albeit selectively – derived from a tradition, in other words, from the past. On the other hand, religious fundamentalism wants to be relevant in modern society since it tries to respond to modern needs, dilemmas and predicaments.[15] This means that at least in practice, fundamentalists, including Islamists, do engage in reinterpretations of their faith, since they want religion to have meaningful solutions to offer people – themselves included – who are part of a modern society. In the case of a modern Arab society like Jordan's, modernization processes, such as urbanization, mass education, globalization of economy and mass media and the increased participation of (educated) women in the public sphere and labor market has led to serious dislocations. Concomitantly, traditional patterns, such as the extended family, patriarchal authority, the tribe and the small scale local community have suffered some degree of erosion. Islamists, including workers of Al-'Afaf Society among other associations, try to translate the truth of Islam (that is conceived of as eternal and absolute) into answers that take such real life conditions of modern society into account and that may be critical, therefore, of certain traditional practices.

This approach could be characterized as a form of adaptive conservatism. That is to say, a form of conservativism that is adaptable to modern conditions and circumstances. Their overriding aim is the attainment of socially stable, harmonious and secure conditions that provide Muslims with a sense of moral direction, certainty, dignity and possibly even power. The result is a kind of social ethics that could be characterized as a hybrid, in the sense of a combination of traditional and modern elements – all its claims of representing "pure and divinely inspired truth and authenticity" notwithstanding.

It must be noted in this regard that a rigid distinction between "fundamentalist" and "modernist" approaches to social ethics cannot be made. Not only Islamists, but also members and workers of a more liberal NGO like Al-Faruq Society regard Islam as a vital component of their authentic selves and are wary of the political, socio-economic as well as cultural impacts of Western-dominated globalization. This applies to most of Jordan's citizens, including the more liberal and secular among them. The latter differ from the Islamists mainly in terms of a less rigid sense of Islamic authenticity as well as a significantly lesser degree of predominance and centrality of religious doctrine as an "absolute yardstick" in their overall socio-ethical vision.

The Political Significance of Muslim NGOs

Constraints imposed by the State

The context in which Muslim NGOs operate in local communities with their social activities and their (religiously informed) socio-ethical discourse is significantly shaped by the politics of the Jordanian nation-state. The state allows them room to maneuver as long as they serve the policy-objectives of the regime and pose no challenge to the country's political and social stability. As chapters 3, 4 and 6 made clear, repressive government policy and vaguely formulated legal restrictions prohibiting welfare associations from serving any "political" or even "religious objective"[16] successfully disempower these associations by preventing them from expressing criticism, let alone opposition in the public sphere – an essential characteristic for any civil society to function freely and autonomously. As I noticed consistently during my field research, this legislation and policy generates among members of Muslim NGOs, and, in particular, their leading personalities, a great deal of anxiety. This tended to be manifested when sensitive political issues, ranging from Islamist political activism to the US invasion of Iraq were raised in my (a foreign researcher's) presence. The fear of government measures, such as arrests, detentions or even closure, against the association in question became obvious as soon as any kind of "political activity" came under discussion.

At the time of fieldwork, such anxieties were compounded by the turbulent political circumstances in the Middle East Region: the US-led "war on terrorism," the US/UK-invasion of Iraq and the bloody cycle of Israeli repression and Palestinian resistance in the occupied Palestinian territories. Among many Jordanians, this state of affairs contributed to a sense of being under siege by hostile foreign powers. Representatives of several associations, among these the Al-Urwa Al-Wuthqa Association, the Al-Faruq Society and the Islamic Bani Hassan Association, complained about the loss of funds from abroad for their programs of financial sponsorship of orphan clients, a form of aid that used to be arranged for by transnational Islamic NGOs.[17] This loss was always attributed to the repressive measures taken by authorities in the Gulf States or in Jordan itself, under pressure of the United States, against transnational Islamic aid in the wake of the terrorist attacks of the 11th of September 2001.

Whether for internal or external reasons, the Jordanian state seems deliberately to create apprehension and anxiety among members and workers of voluntary welfare associations as regards potentially "illegal political activity." In the words of Wiktorowicz, this allows it to "control organizational space and prevent the emergence of an organized opposition through civil society."[18] The vagueness surrounding the definition of "political" or even "religious" objectives appears to keep voluntary associations in a perpetual state of uncertainty about what can or cannot be said or done within the framework of associational work. After all, as the president of the Jordanian Writers Union once remarked: "any cultural activity will one way or another include politics in it."[19]

Relationship of Mistrust

The presence of restrictive legislation and government policies to monitor and politically control the voluntary welfare sector does not necessarily mean that government institutions exercise full control of everything voluntary associations are *actually* doing. According to the Jordanian anthropologist Muhammad Tarawneh, who is in close contact with (top) officials of the Ministry of Social Development, the prevailing climate between such NGOs and the state is often one of mistrust and mutual unease. He observes that the relationship between both sides is not yet institutionalized, because the high proliferation of such voluntary associations all over Jordan is still relatively recent. State officials often feel that they do not really have a grip on what is going on among these associations. To compensate for this impotence, these officials may behave in ways that seem to NGO members as authoritarian, interfering and oppressive. Such behavior is certainly not conducive to the latter's own transparency toward the state authorities, which, in turn, reinforces the mistrust of state officials toward the former.[20]

The Ministry of Social Development's director of Supervision of the Voluntary Associations himself spoke to me about "associations abusing their activities for improper commercial, religious or political purposes."[21] Scholars as well as civil society representatives speak about "hidden" agendas prevalent among many NGOs, which are often related to the instrumentalization of NGO work for the sake of the "private" interests of the NGO founders and members. This can be social prestige in the local community, the usage of income-generating projects for the sake of profit (which may be seen as an illegal entanglement between charitable purposes and commercial interests),[22] outright financial fraud and embezzlement, increasing one's chances of getting elected as a candidate to municipality or parliament and patronizing power over one's own local community, kin or tribe.[23]

Serving State Interests

State-imposed restrictions and tensions in State-NGO-relationships notwithstanding, the Jordanian state's withdrawal from the domain of social welfare and employment provision, especially in the form of cutting subsidies of essential food and fuel items and of shrinking employment opportunities in the public sector, has created space for citizens (usually of a well-educated middle class background) to organize themselves into voluntary associations and to deliver services to their local communities, and in particular the needy there. By delivering these services, a measure of contributing to social cohesion and harmony, and prevention of social unrest, disintegration and crime is achieved by these associations. In this sense, the activities of these NGOs, along with the accompanying (religiously informed) social values correspond with the interests of the state. In concrete terms, they help to take away a significant part of the burden of social care and (indirectly) contributing to public order and security from the state. Activities of economic, social and psychological empowerment on an individual level, especially in the case of women and children, also accord very well with development policies of the regime. The latter feels the need to modernize in the direction of a more individualized citizens' society based more concretely upon a competitive knowledge-based economy. State institutions on a governorate and district level are actively engaged in coordinating the delivery of social services with the NGO sector and try to steer the latter in the desired direction.[24]

Serving Community Interests

This is only one side of the coin, however. The other side is that these associations are initiated, established and developed by citizens who want to promote their own interests, beliefs, norms and values. Putting the paternalistic nature of decision making in many of such associations to one side, all their activities around the provision of services reinforce cooperative ties between citizens – members, employees, donors and even some clients of the association – of a reciprocal and relatively horizontal nature. One example of this strengthening of ties is the festive, recreational and mutual support activities undertaken by the members of the Islamic Anwar Al-Huda Association with the women in the neighborhood who support it. Another one is the ways in which the ICCS keeps its relationship with its donors warm, by letting their children enroll in ICCS schools against reduced fees, letting their family members undergo relatively cheap treatment in the Islamic Hospital or by giving them, males and females alike, jobs in its institutions.[25] As has been stated in this chapter's first section, the strengthening of such ties has empowering potential in terms of providing socio-economic opportunities as well as in a psychological sense.

Islamic beliefs and values, mostly related to conceptions of social harmony, well being and justice, happen to play a central role in the discourse taking place within these social networks. The underlying cause for this centrality of religious discourse within Muslim Arab lifeworlds and civil societies can be attributed to the protective role of religion in situations characterized by chronic distress, deprivation and vulnerability. Such situations are often prevalent in authoritarian and socio-economically frustrated Arab and other Muslim societies. In these conditions, religion provides identity, a system of justice, hope and communal solidarity as well as a sense of security.[26] In other words, it appears as the appropriate vehicle for psychological, social and possibly political empowerment. Members of Muslim voluntary welfare associations in Jordan, as well as Jordanian citizens in general, are often convinced that ethics are greatly lacking in the state apparatus. State authorities are often seen as inefficient, incompetent, motivated more to satisfy their superiors than to serve the public, self-serving, nepotistic and corrupt. In contrast, religiously inspired voluntary welfare associations describe their own approach to social services as fi sabil li-llah, and thus based upon selflessness, honesty and on discarding expectations of worldly gain. A discourse that is very appealing to wide sections of the Jordanian public.

Religion and Politics Intertwined

In such a context, religion has a potentially subversive tendency, since it is one of the few outlets (if not the only one) through which protest against the existing societal order of things may be expressed, no matter how covert or indirectly this needs to be. Religion tends to get politicized, either in favor of, or in opposition to, the regime or state policy. Fear of opposition explains why Jordanian state authorities are so keen to control or even to prohibit the usage of religion by civil society institutions like voluntary welfare NGOs.

Observations of activities for orphans at an ICCS center like Al-'Abura reveal that religiously inspired political protest does play a part in its educational activities. The message told to orphan boys in a language class about Muslims having to unite in order to defeat Zionism and US imperialism, a theatre play staged by orphan girls ridiculing Arab rulers who collaborate with the Americans and the Israelis and a song on 'Id al-Fitr highlighting prevalent socio-economic inequality in the society are telling enough. Such political messages are transmitted there in an Islamist ideological framework, although they are not unique to such a framework. Even the lessons given at the center as well as at other Islamist associations on how to be a good Muslim, in a ritual as well as a social sense, have political importance in terms of resistance against a secular, materialist and hedonist culture that is disseminated by Western-dominated globalization.

This could be ground for accusing such associations of ideological indoctrination, in particular those who work with children such as ICCS centers for orphans and the poor. And, due to the obvious vulnerability of their status, children and needy recipients of aid are in all likelihood more susceptible than others to efforts of indoctrination. These efforts can only succeed, however, if the messages are connected to their personal selves as well as the collective lifeworld in which they live. Themes like resistance to Zionist occupation and colonization, US imperialism, state oppression, poverty and social inequality are by no means alien to the inhabitants of the Palestinian refugee camp from which the orphan clients of Al-'Abura Center come. The same goes for this kind of Islamic religious discourse. If these center's workers use such familiar themes in order to indoctrinate their clients in a coherent and dogmatic religious ideology, they may be successful in this endeavor, especially given the fact that these workers often share in their beneficiaries' experience as refugee camp dwellers. However, given the fact that the success of an indoctrination programme depends on the susceptibility of its objects, the ability of the ICCS centres to shape the minds of their beneficiaries is not without its limits, especially when one remembers that the first concern of needy people is socio-economic survival and not bulked up ideology.

This study provides indications that the public sympathy Islamists try to generate through social welfare activities, along with the religious and political discourse Islamist association members and workers try to disseminate in the local community, is most utilized during election time. This should not be surprising: in non-Islamist settings (tribal, rural as well as urban) election candidates also utilize their reputation and the social networks generated through activities of serving the local community as a way to garner votes and possibly other forms of political support.[27]

Local Political Sentiments in Muslim Voluntary Associations

It can be argued that the social and cultural activities of the associations dealt with in this study, such as those related to (Islamic) social ethics, marriage, gender and family have a strong political dimension and are always part of some kind of politics. This could be the politics of Islamization as a defense against Westernization and globalization, of social development and progress as opposed to "non-modern" or "oppressive" traditional local customs (a discourse which is often inspired by the politics of transnational development agencies), or of both at the same time. Moreover, provision of services to underprivileged groups cannot be separated from the realm of socio-cultural values expressed in views on the individual, the family and the society that are part of certain (implicitly or explicitly held) political visions.

If such associations are close to the local community in which they are based and/or which they are serving, political sentiments prevalent there will affect, one way or another, activities and discussions of the voluntary associations' members and workers. They may even be part of the reason for the associations' original foundation. The treasurer of the Islamic Bani Hassan Association, for instance, gives a very political explanation for the establishment of this association. The original intention, he told me, was to establish a so-called rabitah, a lobby or interest group that would formally represent the whole Banni Hassan tribe. Fearful of the grassroots pressure such an association could mobilize, the state authorities, however, refused to accept this. In the final event, they settled for the establishment of a welfare association, which resorts under the supervision of the Ministry of Social Development. The associations' main founder was Bassam Umush, a moderate Islamist politician.[28] It is obvious, then, that the association represents an overlap between tribal and Islamist sociopolitical spheres in Jordan.

The Council of Islamic Organizations and Associations in Jordan, of which, amongst others, the Al-Urwa Al-Wuthqa Association and the Islamic Welfare Association in Salt are members, regularly sends letters to government figures raising various issues, ranging from protest against events related to "Zionism" and "imperialism" to corruption to religious social morality in order to urge these figures to take action upon them.[29]

Members of Palestinian-dominated Al-Faruq Society in Irbid complain about anti-Palestinian discrimination by government institutions affecting the socio-economic chances of their clients from Irbid refugee camp, and also affecting the Society's general work. Officials at the Ministry of Social Development, usually of an East Bank tribal background, are often, in the view of its president, ignorant people expert only in creating obstacles. He had to face their distrust on several occasions. They questioned him, for instance, as to how and where he got a certain paper, and demanded all kinds of unnecessary proofs.[30]

To illustrate how interference by regime representatives in social aid may invoke oppositional thought and emotions among the members of a voluntary association, the following episode should prove informative. When I arrived one morning in the president's office, there were two employees who were clearly upset also waiting there. The president had to receive some members of parliament, who had unexpectedly arrived in Irbid refugee camp with some donations for the Society's families, including nineteen heating stoves for the winter. The Society's staff saw this as a problem: to whom should they give these stoves when the Society had hundreds of families to support? The president was indignant later about this undertaking of regime-loyal parliament members, reportedly filmed by the state media. He described it as a mere publicity show by the government, aiming to generate goodwill because politically important events were taking place – such as the parliament's vote of confidence in the government and the launching of a Jordanian supported Middle East Peace Initiative in Geneva including representatives of the Palestinian Authority and the Israeli Zionist left. "Compared to the aid we distributed during Ramadan, this is nothing," the president stated. "And anyhow," he continued, "some days ago this same government announced an increase in the prices of fuel and electricity, from which the poor are suffering heavily!"[31]

This example shows how such associations, as citizen's initiatives creating bonds of social solidarity in local communities, contribute indirectly to a public sphere in which political opinions, ideas and emotions are exchanged. Jordan's semi-authoritarian state, with its professional security and intelligence apparatus, is obviously aware of this phenomenon and tries to contain it by prohibiting such associations from making explicit political statements in the public sphere. In this way, the state effectively frustrates them in terms of an essential function of civil society, of contributing to a lively and inclusive public sphere in which criticism and opposition can be voiced, even collectively organized from the bottom up. Voluntary welfare associations suffer from this policy to a significantly greater extent than other civil society actors, like professional associations, trade unions or political parties, even though the latter are facing state repression as well. This may be attributed to the state authorities' fear of the mobilizing potential of middle class-based voluntary associations working for the most underprivileged, deprived and disaffected sections of Jordanian society.

It may be one of the reasons for the weak role most of these associations play in the Jordanian public sphere, especially on the level of mass media, besides lack of financial resources or of connections with prominent people. Most (Muslim) voluntary welfare associations rely mainly on personal, face-to-face connections and social networks as far as activity in the public sphere is concerned. Besides, they may distribute some folders and brochures, visit schools and organize small-scale public events.[32] Social ties along the lines of religion, political conviction, tribe, family or locality are important in such networks, even though not all of them are always decisive.

Muslim Associations as Civil Society Players

Reasons to establish or join voluntary welfare associations can be multifarious, but it is obvious that they are often related to a certain reflexive awareness regarding certain issues in modern society. Examples of such issues are (real or perceived) social problems: the growing gaps between rich and poor, threats of social disintegration, lack of opportunity to marry, lack of religious awareness, pollution, addiction, crime, domestic violence, (blood) feuds, illiteracy, and the denial of fair opportunity to groups like women, girls, school dropouts and/or the handicapped. This awareness and reflexivity is shaped by factors like local knowledge, personal experiences with political and socio-ecomic developments (for instance the arrival to Jordan of Palestinian refugees or urbanization), the relatively high levels of modern education members and workers of such associations have enjoyed, political involvement, contacts with other development actors (governmental or non-governmental, local or foreign) and, last but not least, discourses and debates on social and developmental issues taking place in the public sphere, in particular the mass media.

What we see in Jordanian society in general and among the Muslim associations in particular is the centrality of religious faith in discourse on various social and developmental issues. This faith can be dealt with and interpreted in a dogmatic and exclusive fashion, as is the case with various Muslim-Brotherhood affiliated associations, or in line with global rights-oriented development discourses, as takes place within the more progressive NGOs. What both approaches have in common, however, is that unlike in much of the premodern period, such issues are usually seen as problems of society and attributed to structural injustices and wrongs rather than as God-given facts. These injustices and wrongs are often attributed to the Western-dominated world system as well as to indigenous habits considered un-Islamic and oppressive. Islam serves then as a discourse of independent and authentic empowerment vis-à-vis these injustices and wrongs, and as a spiritual source providing norms and ideals for a better life and society.

Having said this, people rarely behave fully in accordance with the norms and ideals they profess, no matter if these are religious or secular in nature. Expressing an Islamic discourse of selflessness, compassion and solidarity can – to varying degrees – go hand-in-hand with self-interested, or even selfish behavior. Examples include the general manager of a pious Muslim association who expressed his eagerness to engage in financial speculation through a pyramid fund, or the way in which some heads of associations liked to promote their personal status and/or exaggerate their "good works." Perhaps more importantly, observation of aid practices highlights the unequal dependency relationships that put NGO members in a position of power toward their recipients. The warm religious language of compassion and harmony often conceals the bitter and harsh aspects of such relations. Exercise of power may take the form of strict disciplining of clients waiting to receive aid, the rude manner of turning away clients who were considered ineligible and the paternalistic language used at an ICCS center to remind clients of their duty to attend educational programs "for their own good."

Educative programs offered by Muslim voluntary welfare associations to especially needy and dependent beneficiaries may be considered a form of discursive patronage of the latter by the former, since the association's members often presume to know what is "best" for their clients. Especially Islamist associations often work on the premise of the "only true religious" doctrine whose injunctions and stipulations are considered "best" for the believers in general and for the beneficiaries in particular. Conveying such a doctrine can take the form of indoctrination, in the sense of imposing a certain world view on clients to the exclusion of other worldviews. As emphasized here, however, such indoctrination can only succeed if the message sufficiently accords with the life experiences of the recipients and if the latter have the feeling that they benefit from the education offered. Such education may provide a sense of togetherness, dignity and moral purpose. Yet, it should be added that not only the needy but also many Jordanian Muslims of the middle class are inclined to voluntarily embrace an Islamist moralist discourse of piety and duty, as the attendance of workshops and lectures by Al-'Afaf Society and of other associations also shows. Whether one should call this indoctrination depends on the degree of exclusivity of the discourse and the forcefulness with which it is conveyed.

Education offered by a more liberal NGO like Al-Faruq Society is based mainly on the UNICEF approach. This approach tries to empower clients to deal with their own problems and to improve their own living circumstances as empowerment-oriented goals in themselves. In the Society's implementation of this approach, religious discourse plays a powerful role as well, since it is an integral part of the lifeworld of the beneficiaries. The stress of UNICEF on self-reliance and individual choice seems to be less paternalistic and doctrinaire as compared to the Islamist approach. One should realize, however, that a concept like indoctrination is a highly loaded term that is generally used in a subjective vein to label the educational activities of opponents.

Voluntary membership and reflexivity as a basis for civil society activism does not rule out patterns of hierarchy in voluntary associations' practical functioning. Nor are Jordanian Muslim voluntary welfare associations insulated from the authoritarianism and patrimonialism of the regime that pervades Jordanian society, no matter how mild this might be in comparison to the situation in other Arab states. Indeed, such authoritarianism seems to be mirrored in the associations' internal patterns of decision making, which is often highly concentrated in the hands of a dominant leading personality. In their relations toward the clientele, these associations often seem to reproduce the dependency relationship which is inherent to welfare states. Moreover, the Jordanian regime pushes voluntary welfare associations into the role of dutiful partners in a state-led effort of "national progress and modernization." The associations' practices of patronage as well as their patronizing socio-ethical discourse, in which an attitude of generosity, care and benevolence is expected from the stronger in their relationship towards the weaker, seems to be reminiscent of the way in which the Jordanian monarch is presented by state-dominated media as a father figure, and the Jordanian queen and princesses as mother figures. Such figures are understood to be benevolent and considerate of Jordanian citizen's wellbeing, progress and needs, but may also be seen to dominate them through this very attitude.

At the same time, such voluntary associations embody in their activities the social relationships, solidarities, socio-cultural and political values prevalent in their local communities as well as in the wider society. Through the social networks these associations are reinforcing, they help to maintain and strengthen socio-cultural spheres that are relatively autonomous from the state and through which more or less independent political opinions and messages are expressed. As such, they can contribute indirectly to a public opinion that the state authorities have, in one way or another, to take into account. These associations represent, therefore, a highly imperfect and frustrated, but nevertheless real, motivated and changing civil society.

Notes

Notes Introduction

1 Jude Howell and Jenny Pearce, *Civil Society and Development, a Critical Exploration*, Boulder and London, Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2001, pp. 13–38.
2 The same (deconstructing) line of argument can be found in the work of the above-mentioned authors. See e.g. Howell and Pearce; John Keane, *Civil Society, Old Images, New Visions*, Cambridge and Oxford, Polity Press, 1998; Neera Chandoke, *State and Civil Society, Explorations in Political Theory*, New Delhi, Sage Publications, 1995; and Maha M. Abdulrahman, *Civil Society Exposed, The Politics of NGOs in Egypt*, London and New York, Tauris Academic Studies, 2004.
3 This distinction is central to the argument of the author's book. See Howell and Pearce.
4 Fatton quoted by Howell and Pearce, p. 186.
5 Interview with Khalil Na'imat, Advisor on Voluntary Associations at the Ministry of Social Development on 8 June 2003 and with Abdullah Khatib, president of the General Union of Voluntary Societies on 30 July 2003.
6 This strategy is laid down in "The Fundamental Law for The Muslim Brotherhood in Jordan," Article 5, sections a) and d), and was confirmed to me during interviews with Yahia Shaqra (official spokesman of The Muslim Brotherhood) on 9 June 2003 and with Abu Mahfuz, Muslim Brotherhood Executive Member and general manager of the Islamist *Al-Sabeel Weekly*, on 23 June 2003.
7 I have met evangelical Christians from several countries who hold a similar attitude regarding the question of organizational affiliation. They dismiss the question of belonging to a particular church community as unimportant, and stress the overriding priority of a sincere belief in "Jesus Christ" as "Savior." Here, we see a similar disregard for institutional life and the prioritization of belief and ethical life.
8 Basma Bint Talal, *Rethinking an NGO, Development, Donors and Civil Society in Jordan*, London and New York, I.B. Tauris, 2004, pp. 117–118.
9 Bint Talal, pp. 186–187.
10 Bint Talal, pp. 191.
11 Interview in Amman on 3 February 2002.
12 Interview with Heytham al-Mihyar, Program Supervisor of Questscope on 10 February 2002, in Amman.
13 Interviews with Mufid Sarhan on 15 September, 2002 and 27 May, 2003.
14 For an explanation of Jordanian society' s composition in terms of ethnic and social groups, see Chapter 4.

Notes chapter 1

1 Keane, pp. 5–6.
2 Jean L. Cohen and Andrew Arato, *Civil Society and Political Theory*, Cambridge and Massachusetts, MIT Press, 1992, p. x.
3 Cohen and Arato, pp. 426–429.

4 Cohen and Arato, pp. 434–436.

5 Cohen and Arato, p. 441.

6 Cohen and Arato, p. 439.

7 Keane, pp. 17–19.

8 Robert D. Putnam, *Making Democracy Work, Civic Traditions in Modern Italy*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1993, p. 181.

9 Christopher G.A. Bryant, Civic Nation, Civil Society, Civil Religion in John Hall ed., *Civil Society*, *Theory, History, Comparison*, Cambridge, Cambridge Polity Press, 1995, p. 145.

10 Berthold Kuhn, *Entwicklungspolitik zwischen markt und Staat. Möglichkeiten und Grenzen Zivillgesellschaftlicher Organisationen*, Frankfurt am Main/New York, Campus, 2005, p. 82.

11 Keane, p. 51.

12 Keane, p. 50.

13 Keane, p. 141.

14 The concept also extends to dealings between citizens and their civil institutions on the one hand, and with representatives of state institutions on the other, in the sense that these should be non-violent and peaceful as well. Since state officials can also be regarded as citizens and as members of their societies, such dealings pertain to the same norm of social peace.

15 Bryant, p. 144.

16 Robert Mabro, Civil Society in the History of Ideas and in European History in *The Role of NGOs in the Development of Civil Society: Europe and the Arab Countries*. Proceedings of a seminar held in Amman, Jordan on December 6–7, 1997 (Amman and Vienna, Arab Thought Forum & Bruno Kreisky Forum, 1999), p. 36.

17 Cohen and Arato, pp. 106–107.

18 This was a comment by Kettani to a presentation by Jos Lemmers and Hany Helmic entitled: “Analysis of the history and status of the concept of civil society. The Arab Role of NGOs in the Development perception of civil society” in *The Role of NGOs in the Development of Civil Society*, 26.

19 Bryant, p. 145.

Notes chapter 2

1 Yahya Sadowski, The New Orientalism and the Democracy Debate in Joel Beinin and Joe Stork eds., *Political Islam, Essays from Middle East Report*, London and New York, I.B. Tauris Publishers, 1997, pp. 34–40. This argumentation of Lewis and Kedouri can be found in *The Middle East and the West* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1964) written by the former and *Democracy and Arab Political Culture* (Washington, D.C. : Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 1992) by the latter.

2 Sami Zubaida, *Civil Society, Community and Democracy in the Middle East* (unpublished document), pp. 3–4. This analysis of Gellner can be found in his work *Conditions of Liberty: Civil Society and its Rivals* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1994).

3 Amr Hamzawi, Normative Dimensions of Contemporary Arab Debates on Civil Society. Between the Search for a New Formulation of Democracy and the Controversy over the Political Role of Religion in Amr Hamzawi ed., *Civil Society in the Middle East*, Nahost-Studien 4, Berlin, Verlag Hans Schiler, 2003, pp. 24–26.

4 Zubaida, pp. 13–14.

5 Zubaida, p. 14.
6 Hamzawi, pp. 28–29.
7 Hamzawi, p. 37.
8 Zubaida, p. 8.
9 Hamzawi, p. 38.
10 Zubaida, pp. 8–9.
11 Hamzawi, p. 38.
12 Zubaida, p. 9.
13 Hamzawi, pp. 43–44.
14 Hamzawi, pp. 44–45.
15 Rachid al-Ghanuchi, Secularism in the Arab Maghreb in John L. Exposito and Azzam Tammimi eds., *Islam and Secularism in the Middle East*, London, Hurst & Company, 2000, pp. 111–112.
16 Al-Ghanuchi, pp. 112–123.
17 Al-Ghanuchi, pp. 70–71.
18 Emmanuel Sivan, The Islamic Resurgence: Civil Society Strikes Back in Lawrence Kaplan ed., *Fundamentalism in Comparative Perspective*, Boston, University of Massachusetts Press, 1992, pp. 96–107.
19 Sivan, pp. 45–46.
20 Ahmad S. Mousalli, Discourses on Human Rights and Democracy in Anders Jerichow and Jørgen Baek Simonsen eds., *Islam in a Changing World/Europe and the Middle East*. Proceedings from a conference of the same title held in Copenhagen (Copenhagen 1996), pp. 81–82.
21 Zubaida, pp. 15–18.
22 Hamzawi, pp. 34–35.
23 Hamzawi, p. 36.
24 Mahmood Monshipouri, *Islamism, Secularism and Human Rights in the Middle East*, Boulder and London, Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1998, pp. 16–17.
25 Ibrahim, The Troubled Triangle in Anders Jerichow and Jørgen Baek eds., *Islam in a Changing World*, Richmond, Curzon Press, 1997, pp. 19–21.
26 Ibrahim, pp. 24–27.
27 John L. Esposito, *Islam and Civil Society*, Working Paper of the European University Institute, Badia Fiesolana, Italy, European University Institute, 2000, pp. 1–10.
28 Esposito, *Islam and Civil Society*, pp. 24–28.
29 Esposito, *Islam and Civil Society*, pp. 26–30.
30 Esposito, *Islam and Civil Society*, pp. 30–32.
31 Gilles Kepel, *Jihad, the Trail of Political Islam*, London and New York, I.B. Tauris, 2003, pp. 375–376.
32 Kepel, pp. 367–368.
33 Kepel, pp. 361–365.
34 Kepel, p. 368.
35 Kepel, pp. 364–365.
36 Kepel, pp. 373–374.
37 Kepel, p. 375.
38 See, for instance, the comments of Roy Wallis and Steve Bruce on the historical pattern of sharply opposed clerical and anti-clerical blocks in such countries in their article, Secularization: The Orthodox Model in Steve Bruce, *Religion and Modernization, Sociologists and Historians Debate the Secularization Thesis*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1992, p. 15.

39 Wallis and Bruce, 15–17.

40 Interview in Amman on 21 June 2003.

41 Interview in Amman on 22 July 2003.

42 Interviews with Nidal Mansour, director of the Center for the Defense of Freedom of Journalists took place on 22 July 2003; those with Abu Ruman, political analyst of the al-Urdun al-Jadid Research Center occurred on 2 September 2003; and the conversations with other secular oriented Jordanians happened toward the end of 2003.

43 Nazih N. Ayubi, *Political Islam, Religion and Politics in the Arab World*, London and New York, Routledge, 1991, pp. 1–2.

44 Ayubi, p. 35.

45 Ayubi, pp. 156–157.

46 Ayubi, p. 231.

47 Oliver Roy, *The Failure of Political Islam*, Cambridge, Massachussetts, Harvard University Press, 1996, pp. 61–63.

48 Roy, pp. 135–137.

49 Ayubi, p. 231.

50 Interview in Amman on 2 September 2003.

51 Jonathan Benthall and Jérôme Bellion-Jourdan eds., *The Charitable Crescent, Politics of Aid in the Muslim World*, London and New York, I.B. Tauris, 2003, pp. 33–34. *Awqaf* is the plural of *waqf*. The *waqf* is a Muslim institution in which a believer dedicates part of his money or property to a project for the benefit of the community. Examples of the recipients of such projects include mosques, hospitals, and institutions of learning, charities for the needy and for students, agricultural farms, public fountains and bridges. *Awqaf* were essential to the socio-economic infrastructure of Muslim societies from the 10th century until the 20th century. They also constituted an important socio-economic power base for the religious elite of the *'ulama'*.

52 Cohen and Arato, p. 436.

53 S.M.A. Sayeed, *The Myth of Authenticity*, *A Study in Islamic Fundamentalism*, Karachi, Royal Book Company, 1995, pp. 271–273. See also Albert Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age 1798–1939*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1970, pp. 136–154.

54 Sayeed, pp. 272–273, and Hourani, pp. 227–240.

55 Sayeed, pp. 87–95.

56 Ibrahim M. Abu Rabi', *Intellectual Origin of Islamic Resurgence in the Modern Arab World*, New York, State University Press, 1996, pp. 66–74.

57 Ayubi, p. 131.

58 The statement was made by Hamza Mansur in response to a question about the Jordanian Islamists' attitude toward people with a secular orientation. The occasion was a conference on Islam and Democracy in Amman on 21 January 2004.

59 Jordanian Islamist women's and children's rights activist Nawal al-Fa'uri, for instance, who promotes emancipatory ideas regarding gender- and parent-child relations, firmly grounds her modernist visions in the text of the basic Islamic sources and within the framework of an "Islam that provides an answer to every question." Al-Fa'uri expressed her views to me during interviews on 15 December 2003 and 7 January 2004 and in a brief private conversation later.

60 Kepel, p. 368.

Notes chapter 3

1 One of the founders of the modern science of sociology, Emile Durkheim, analyzed the phenomenon of religion in his work *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, New York, The Free Press, 1995. For Durkheim, religion amounts to the signification and symbolization of all the social ties and values that members of a given community hold in common. Many Arab Muslims (and presumably Christians too) see this the other way around, regarding religion itself as the source of social values and cohesion.

2 In the case of Jordan, see for instance Robert B. Satloff, *Troubles on the East Bank, Challenges to the Domestic Stability of Jordan*, Washington Paper No. 123 (Washington DC: The Center of Strategic and International and Strategic Studies, 1986), pp. 59–74.

3 Francois Burgat, *Face to Face with Political Islam*, London and New York, I.B. Tauris, 2003, pp. 43–48.

4 Kepel, pp. 62–68; and Olivier Roy, *De globalisering van de islam* (original title: *L'islam mondialisé*, translated into Dutch by Walter van der Star, Amsterdam, van Gennep, 2003), p. 16.

5 Quintan Wiktorowicz, Introduction, Islamic Activism and Social Movement Theory in Quintan Wiktorowicz ed., *Islamic Activism, A Social Movement Theory Approach*, Bloomington & Indianapolis, Indiana University Press, 2004, p. 15. More examples of the constructing of new "communities" and social ties through the use of Islamic discourse can be found in the case studies included in that volume. In particular, see Diane Singerman, The Networked World of Islamist Social Movements, in Wiktorowicz ed., pp. 143–163; Janine A. Clark, Islamist Women in Yemen, in Wiktorowicz ed., pp. 164–184; Carrie Rosefsky Wickham, Interests, Ideas and Islamist Outreach in Egypt, in Wiktorowicz ed., pp. 231–249; and M. Hakan Yavuz, Opportunity Spaces, Identity and Islamic Meaning in Turkey, in Wiktorowicz ed., pp. 270–288.

6 Sami Zubaida, pp. 19–21.

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11 Bayat, pp. 13–14.

12 Janine A. Clark, *Islam, Charity and Activism, Middle-Class Networks and Social Welfare in Egypt, Jordan and Yemen*, Bloomington & Indianapolis, Indiana University Press, 2004, 146.

13 Clark, *Islam, Charity and Activism*, p. 147.

14 Clark, *Islam, Charity and Activism*, pp. 148–149.

15 Clark, *Islam, Charity and Activism*, pp. 154–156.

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18 Wiktorowicz, Embedded Authoritarianism, Bureaucratic Power and Limits to Non-Governmental Organizations in Jordan in George Joffé ed., *Jordan in Transition*, London, Hurst & Company, 2002, pp. 115–122.

19 Judith P. Harik, *The Public and Social Services of the Lebanese Militias*, Centre for Lebanese Studies Paper No. 14 (Oxford UK: Centre for Lebanese Studies, 1994), pp. 28–29.

20 Conversation with Joseph al-Agha, political scientist specialized in the Hezbullah movement attached to Leiden University in the Netherlands, on 1 February 2005.

21 John L. Esposito and John O. Voll, *Makers of Contemporary Islam*, New York, Oxford University Press, 2001, p. 100 and pp. 102–103.

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24 Cited in Wiktorowicz, *The Management of Islamic Activism: Salafis, Muslim Brotherhood and State Power in Jordan*, Albany, State University of New York Press, 2001, pp. 108–109.

25 Quintan Wiktorowicz & Suha Taji Farouki, Islamic NGOs and Muslim politics: a case from Jordan, *Third World Quarterly*, 21 (4): 2000: pp. 687–688.

26 Carrie Rosefsky Wickham, Interests, Ideas, and Islamist Outreach in Egypt in Wiktorowicz ed., *Islamic Activism, A Social Movement Theory Approach*, pp. 239–243. In this regard, I would like to note that Islamists' attitudes differ according to the socio-economic and political context in which they are active. The mainstream Islamist movement in Jordan is generally dominated by professionals who value formal educational achievement, technical proficiency and professional standards. Concomitantly, they promote a modern form of their "Islamic solution," through projects such as the Islamic Hospital in Amman with its advanced medical facilities, the Islamic Community College in Zarqa with its advanced computer training courses, and the ICCS centers' encouragement of educational achievements for the more gifted orphaned and poor students. It is hard to reconcile Wickham's description of Islamists, as belittling the importance of (secular) education, with this picture. Rather, mainstream Jordanian Islamists consider educational advancement a full characteristic of "Islamic behavior."

27 Interview in Amman on 5 August 2003.

28 Wickham, pp. 243–245.

29 See Clark, *Islam, Charity and Activism*, pp. 47–48 on the public health sector in Egypt. In Jordan, numerous accounts were given to me on the state of affairs of services in the Jordanian public sector, such as those in the realms of education, health care and social welfare. These are often marked by over-crowdedness, the presence of underpaid and therefore insufficiently motivated employees, bureaucratic hurdles faced by applicants for social welfare services which are difficult to surmount, as well as by patterns of favoritism (*wastah*) when it comes to employment or study places. I should mention in particular the information I received from the political scientist Sami al-Khazendar on 27 January 2002 in Amman, the anthropologist Mohammad al-Tarawneh on 15 January 2004 in Amman as well as many others, including NGO representatives and the needy themselves, during the winters of 1993/4, and 2003/4.

Notes chapter 4

1 Lauri A. Brand, In the Beginning was the State…The Quest for Civil Society in Jordan in Augustus Richard Norton ed., *Civil Society in the Middle East*, Leiden, New York and Köln, E.J. Brill, 1995, pp. 148–185.

2 Adnan Abu Odeh, *Jordanians, Palestinians and the Hashemite Kingdom in the Middle East Peace Process*, Washington DC, United States Institute of Peace Press, 2000, p. 13.

3 Brand, In the Beginning was the State, p. 153.

4 Abu Odeh, p. 14.

5 E.V. Thompson, *Democracy, Authoritarianism and Islam: Jordanian and Arab States,* PhD-thesis submitted in 1999 at the University of Michigan, (Michigan: UMI-Dissertation Services, 1999), pp. 84–90.

6 Abu Odeh, pp. 14–17.

7 Thompson, pp. 91–96.

8 D. E. Price, *Islamic Political Culture, Democracy and Human Rights*, *a Comparative Study*, Westport: Praeger Publishers, 1999, p. 52.

9 Brand, In the Beginning was the State, p. 153.

10 Mansoor Moaddel, *Jordanian Exceptionalism, A Comparative Analysis of State-Religion Relationships in Egypt, Iran, Jordan, and Syria*, New York, Palgrave, 2002, pp. 67–70.

11 Brand, In the Beginning was the State, pp. 154–155.

12 Brand, In the Beginning was the State, pp. 157–158.

13 The term "Transjordanian" is intended to include the inhabitants of the former Emirate of Transjordan and their direct descendants, thus excluding the Palestinians who have been incorporated into the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. This Kingdom became the successor of the Emirate after the British overlords granted it formal independence in 1946. While the term may be incorrect in a geographic sense, since it also includes those Jordanians who inhabit central and southern parts of the country where the Jordan River does not run, it is generally used in this sense by academic commentators on Jordan. Indeed, this usage may be justified in a politico-historical sense, since the area to which it refers used to be that of a polity known as "Transjordan."

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15 Abu Odeh, pp. 198–201.

16 Brand, In the Beginning was the State, p. 158.

17 Yitzhak Reiter, The Palestinian-Transjordanian Rift: Economic Might and Political Power in Jordan, *The Middle East Journal*, 58 (1): 2004: pp. 91–92.

18 Brand, In the Beginning was the State, p. 158.

19 Brand, In the Beginning was the State, p. 156.

20 Reiter, p. 72 and p. 87.

21 Brand, In the Beginning was the State, p. 159.

22 Abu Odeh, p. 228, pp. 235–236.

23 Brand, In the Beginning was the State, p. 160.

24 Abu Odeh, pp. 240–248.

25 Abu Odeh, p. 275.

26 Conversations with the son of the president of the Muslim-Brotherhood affiliated Islamic Charity Center Society on 12 February 2003 and the general manager of the equally MB-affiliated Al -'Afaf Association on 9 February 2003.

27 Judith Maria Joolen, *The Quest for Legitimacy, the Role of Islam in the State's Political Discourse in Egypt and Jordan* (PhD-thesis), submitted to the Faculty of Letters of the Catholic University of Nijmegen, Nijmegen 2003, p. 174.

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38 Layne, p. 73.

39 Joolen, p. 160.

40 Joolen, p. 174.

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43 Joolen, p. 166.

44 Joolen, pp. 167–168.

45 Joolen, p. 167.

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49 Abdulrahman, "King urges youth role in political development," *Jordan* Times of 30 March 2004, Petra News Agency, "Prime minister underlines youth role in political development," *Jordan Times* of 3 May 2004 and Petra News Agency, "Youth urged to participate in political development process," *Jordan Times* of 9 May 2004.

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53 "Monarch says training conduit to better media performance," *Jordan Times* of 14 October 2004.

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56 Shyrock, p. 63.

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60 Abu Odeh, p. 197.

61 Brand, In the Beginning was the State, p. 180.

62 Schirin H. Fathi, *Jordan – An Invented Nation? Tribe-State Dynamics and the Formation of National Identity*, Harmburg, Deutsches Orient Institute, 1994, pp. 176–180.

63 Satloff, pp. 61–62.

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65 Moaddel, *Jordanian Exceptionalism*, 35.

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67 Shyrock, p. 62.

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72 Shyrock, p. 62.

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92 Joolen, p. 47.

93 Joolen, p. 46.

94 Interview with Fawzi Samhouri, 21 June 2003.

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Research Center and Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, *Directory of Civil Society Organizations in Jordan*, Amman, UJRC and FES, 2001, pp. 437–442.

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111 Cohen and Arato, pp. 142–149.

112 Fathi, p. 236.

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Notes chapter 5

1 Some theorists refer to the sphere of parliament and political parties as that of "political society," which they distinguish from civil society. See, for instance, Cohen and Arato, p. ix.

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15 Robins, pp. 154–155.

16 Sattloff, pp. 70–71.

17 Rath, p. 538.

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21 Rath, pp. 538–540.

22 Ali Kassay, The Effects of External Forces on Jordan's Process of Democratization in George Joffé ed., *Jordan in Transition*, London, Hurst & Company, 2002, p. 51.

23 Fathi, p. 191.

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27 Robins, p. 171.

28 Robins, p. 172.

29 Robins, p. 176.

30 Robins, pp. 174–75.

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48 Sana Kamal, "Inviting Arab fury," in *Middle East International* of 16 January 1998, p. 9.

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50 Kamal, "Playing safe," *Middle East International* of 13 march 1998, 9 and "Forty-five years on a tightrope," *Middle East International* of 8 May 1998, 8.

51 Kamal, "Arab Summit on hold," *Middle East International* of 19 June 1998, 7.

52 Kamal, "Protests turn to violence," *Middle East International* of 22 February 1998, 7–8 and "Playing safe," 8–9.

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61 Kamal, “Elections at last,” *Middle East International* of 7 March 2003, p. 26.

62 Dieterich, The Weakness of the Ruled, p. 145. Also note Ali Shukri Hamzeh: “IAF seen as taking lead again over opposition parties,” *Jordan Times* of 14 June 2001, Tareq Ayoub, “Islamists rally at UJ,” “Islamists students stage rally at Yarmouk” and “Marches protest attacks on Afghanistan,” *Jordan Times* of respectively 12 October, 17 October and 24 October 2001 and Kamal, “Severing ties?” “Public anger” and “Quiet on the streets,” *Middle East International* of 5 April, 19 April and 17 May 2002.

63 Kamal, *Middle East International* of 22 November 2002, pp. 14–15,

64 Kamal, “Defining the Vision,” *Middle East International* of 24 January 2003, pp. 24–25.

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74 Dieterich, *Transformation oder Stagnation?* pp. 269–270.

75 Al-Urdun Al-Jadid Research Center, *Directory of Civil Society Organizations*, p. 75 and p. 77.

76 According to the *Jordan Times* In her article “Syndicates fight back” in the *Middle East International* of 18 March 2005 (21), Sanaa Abdullah notes the existence of a membership of around 150,000.

77 Dieterich, *Transformation oder Stagnation*?, p. 268.

78 Al-Urdun Al-Jadid Reserach Center, *Directory of Civil Society Organizations*, pp. 87–88.

79 Dieterich, *Transformation oder Stagnation*?, p. 268.

80 Dieterich, *Transformation oder Stagnation*?, pp. 269–270.

81 Al-Urdun Al-Jadid Research Center, *Directory of Civil Society Organizations*, pp. 97–110.

82 Dieterich, *Transformation oder Stagnation?*, pp. 269–270.

83 Al-Urdun Al-Jadid Research Center, *Directory of Civil Society Organizations*, 77.
84 Dieterich, Transformation oder Stagnation?, pp. 264–265.
85 Brand, In the Beginning was the State, p. 166.
86 Al-Urdun Al-Jadid Research Center, *Directory of Civil Society Organizations*, 78.
87 Al-Urdun Al-Jadid Research Center, *Directory of Civil Society Organizations*, 77.
88 Brand, In the Beginning was the State, pp. 165–166.
89 Dieterich, *Transformation oder Stagnation?*, pp. 266–267.
90 Dieterich, *Transformation oder Stagnation?*, p. 265.
91 Al-Urdun Al-Jadid Research Center, *Directory of Civil Society Organizations*, pp. 77–78.
92 Brand, In the Beginning was the State, p. 166.
93 Dieterich, *Transformation oder Stagnation?,* p. 271 and Brand, In the Beginning was the State, p. 166.
94 Dieterich, *Transformation oder Stagnation?*, pp. 271–272.
95 Bachelani, pp. 130–131.
96 Al-Urdun Al-Jadid Research Center, *Directory of Civil Society Organizations in Jordan*, p. 78.
97 Dieterich, *Transformation oder Stagnation?*, pp. 281–182.
98 Dieterich, *Transformation oder Stagnation?*, p. 283.
99 Dieterich, *Transformation oder Stagnation?*, pp. 281–183.
100 Dieterich, *Transformation oder Stagnation?*, p. 267.
101 Dieterich, *Transformation oder Stagnation?*, p. 280.
102 Dieterich, The Weakness of the Ruled, p. 140.
103 Dieterich, *Transformation oder Stagnation?*, pp. 272–277.
104 Al-Urdun Al-Jadid Research Center, *Directory of Civil Society Organizations in Jordan*, p. 78.
105 Dieterich, *Transformation oder Stagnation?*, p. 271.
106 Dieterich, *Transformation oder Stagnation?,* pp. 275–278.
107 Dieterich, *Transformation oder Stagnation?*, pp. 281–282.
108 Dieterich, *Transformation oder Stagnation?*, pp. 283–285.
109 Al-Urdun Al-Jadid Research Center, *Directory of Civil Society Organizations*, p. 78.
110 Kamal, “The King’s Quest,” *Middle East International* of 8 November 1999, p. 10.
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112 Kamal, “The King’s Quest,” *Middle East International* of 8 November 2002, pp. 10–11.
113 Kamal, “Blow to the Syndicates,” *Middle East International* of 20 December 2002, pp. 10–11.
114 Abdallah, “Democratic Process,” *Middle East International* of 22 August 2003, p. 19.
115 Kamal, “Public Anger,” *Middle East International* of 19 April 2002, pp. 17–18.
116 Abdallah, “On the Map,” *Middle East International* of 28 May 2004, p. 11.
117 Abdallah, “Regional Role,” *Middle East International* of 12 September 2003, p. 26.
118 Dieterich, *Transformation oder Stagnation?,* p. 281.
119 See, for instance, Kamal, “Arab Summit on Hold,” *Middle East International* of 19 June 1998, p. 7.
120 Kamal, “King Seeks Debt Relief,” *Middle East International* of 21 May 1999.
121 Abdullah, “Limits of democracy,” *Middle East International* of 4 February 2005, p. 9.
122 Abdullah, “Syndicates fight back,” *Middle East International* of 18 March 2005, p. 21.
123 Reported by the *Jordan Times* of 2 May 2005.
124 Dieterich, *Transformation oder Stagnation?*, p. 281.

125 Kamal, "Shubaylat rejects his pardon," *Middle East International* of 5 June 1998, pp. 13–14.
126 Dieterich, The Weakness of the Ruled, p. 140.
127 Al-Urdun Al-Jadid Research Center, *Directory of Civil Society Organizations*, p. 346.
128 Al-Urdun Al-Jadid Research Center, *Directory of Civil Society Organizations*, pp. 345–346.
129 Hermann, p. 59.
130 Al-Urdun Al-Jadid Research Center, *Directory of Civil Society Organizations*, p. 317.
131 Brand, In the Beginning was the State, pp. 167–168.
132 Hermann, p. 59.
133 Brand, In the Beginning was the State, pp. 167–168.
134 Hermann, pp. 59–60.
135 Brand, In the Beginning was the State, pp. 168–169.
136 Hermann, pp. 60–61.
137 Herman, p. 61 and Al-Urdun Al-Jadid Research Center, *Directory of Civil Society Organizations*, p. 317.
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144 Anne Sofie Roald, *Tarbiya, Education and Politics in the Islamic movements of Jordan and Malaysia*, Malmö, Sweden, Almqvist &Wiksell International, 1994, p. 115.
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146 Roald, pp. 131–136.
147 Roald, pp. 143–149.
148 Roald, p. 120 and pp. 202–205.
149 Interview with Yahia Shaqra, official spokesman of the Jordanian Muslim Brotherhood, on 24 June 2003.
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151 Shmuel Bar, *The Muslim Brotherhood in Jordan*, Tel Aviv, Moshe Dayan Center for Middle Eastern and African Studies, 1998, p. 10.
152 Boulby, p. 42.
153 Ali Abdul Kazim, The Muslim Brotherhood, the Historic Background and the Ideological Origins in Schwedler ed., *Islamic Movements in Jordan*, Amman, Al-Urdun Al-Jadid Research Centre, 1997, p. 15.
154 Moaddel, *Jordanian Exceptionalism*, pp. 97–98 and p. 153.
155 Boulby, pp. 47–48.
156 Abdul Kazim, p. 16.
157 Thompson, pp. 190–191.
158 Boulby, pp. 47–48.
159 Bar, pp. 11-12.
160 Boulby, pp. 51–52.
161 Bar, p. 14.
162 Kazem, p. 17.
163 Moaddel, *Jordanian Exceptionalism*, 99.
164 Boulby, pp. 56–57.

165 Boulby, p. 53–54.
166 Boulby, p. 72.
167 Boulby, pp. 60–62.
168 Bar, p. 25.
169 Boulby, pp. 60–62.
170 Bar, p. 25.
171 Boulby, pp. 60–62.
172 Boulby, pp. 61–65
173 Bar, p. 29.
174 Thompson, p. 205.
175 Bar, p. 29.
176 Thompson, pp. 205–206.
177 Bar, p. 32.
178 Thompson, p. 137 and p. 207.
179 Bar, p. 32.
180 Brand, In the Beginning was the State, p. 164.
181 Quintan Wiktorowicz, Islamists, the State and Cooperation in Jordan, *Arab Studies Quarterly*, 21 (4):1999: p.11.
182 Leftist Jordanians told me how, in the beginning of the 1970s, the then Minister of Education, Ishaq Farhan, prescribed George Orwell's *Animal Farm* as obligatory literature for students, along with Islamic material, to warn of the horrors and inhumanity of Communism.
183 Boulby, pp. 83–86.
184 Bachelani, p. 123.
185 Boulby, pp. 86–88. See the section on the role of professional associations in this chapter.
186 Boulby, pp. 88–90.
187 Boulby, p. 31.
188 Boulby, p. 92.
189 Boulby, pp. 92–95.
190 Satloff, pp. 36–40.
191 Satloff, pp. 48–49, and cf. pp. 38–40.
192 Boulby, p. 101. The Syrian Ba'ath regime was traditionally hostile towards Jordan's pro-Western Hashemite monarchy. Indeed, as a show of support for the PLO (when the latter was under attack by the Jordanian army), the Ba'athists undertook an – albeit limited – military invasion of the north of Jordan in 1970.
193 Thompson, pp. 212–214.
194 Boulby, p. 101.
195 Thompson, p. 216.
196 Al-Khazendar, pp. 154–155.
197 Boulby, pp. 102–103.
198 Sabah al-Said, *Between Pragmatism and Ideology, The Muslim Brotherhood in Jordan 1989–1994*, The Washington Institute Policy Paper no. 39 (Washington DC: The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 1995), pp. 43–60.
199 Lauri A. Brand, The Effects of the Peace Process on Political Liberalization in Jordan, *Journal of Palestine Studies*, XXVII, 2: 1998: p. 54.
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201 Boulby, p. 144.
202 Milton-Edwards, A Temporary Alliance with the Crown, pp. 96–103.
203 Boulby, p. 146.
204 Milton Edwards, A Temporary Alliance with the Crown, p. 105.
205 Boulby, pp. 146–147.
206 Milton-Edwards, A Temporary Alliance with the Crown, p. 106.
207 Boulby, pp. 147–148.
208 Milton-Edwards, Climate of Change in Jordan's Islamist Movement, pp. 127 –134.
209 Sa'ida Kilani ed., *Islamic Action Front Party*, Amman, Al-Urdun Al-Jadid Research Center, 1993, p. 28.
210 Al-Kilani, pp. 139–140.
211 Brand, The Effects of the Peace Process, p. 59.
212 Wiktorowicz, *The Management of Islamic Activism*, pp. 61– 62.
213 Abdullah, "Stifling the Brothers," *Middle East International* of 24 September 2004.
214 Moaddel, *Jordanian Exceptionalism*, pp. 122–146.
215 Moaddel, p. 135.
216 Moaddel, p. 136.
217 Gudrun Krämer, The Integration of the Integrists, a comparative study of Egypt, Jordan and Tunisia in Ghassan Salamé ed., *Democracy without Democrats? The renewal of politics in the Muslim World*, London and New York, I.B. Tauris, 1994, p. 221.
218 Atallah Abu-Latifeh, *Die Muslimbruderschaft in Jordanien, zwischen Ideologie und Pragmatischer Anpassung*, PhD dissertation submitted to the Political Science Faculty of the Free University in Berlin, Germany, in November 1997, pp. 277–283.
219 Interview with Abu Ruman of the Al-Urdun Al-Jadid Research Center on 22 June 2003 in Amman; cf. Bar, pp. 47–50.
220 Moaddel, *Jordanian Exceptionalism*, pp. 136–145, and Abdul Kazim, pp. 30–35.
221 See Chapter 4, The Salafi Movement and Informal Networks of Wiktorowicz, *The Management of Islamic Activism*.
222 "Public gives 5 out of 10 score to level of democracy," *Jordan Times* of 19 October 2004.
223 Dieterich, The Weakness of the Ruled, p. 143.

Notes chapter 6

1 On the extension of Ottoman administrative state power in the area, see Fathi, pp. 80–84.
2 Waleed Hammad, *Jordanian Women's Organisations and Sustainable Development*, Amman, Al-Urdun Al-Jadid Research Center, 1999, p. 25, and Hermann, p. 62.
3 Musa Shteiwi, *Voluntarism and Volunteers in the Arab World, Case Studies*, no loc., The Arab Network for NGOs, 2001, pp. 39–40, and Hammad, p. 25.
4 Shteiwi, pp. 39–40 and Hermann, p. 62.
5 Al-Urdun Al-Jadid Research Center, *al-Munazamat al-tatawa'iyya fil-Urdun* (unpublished document), p. 2.
6 Hermann, p. 62.
7 Laurie A. Brand, *Women, the State and Political Liberalization, Middle Eastern and North African Experiences*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1998, pp. 120–121.
8 M. Boulby, pp. 42–46.

9 Hermann, p. 63.

10 Hammad, pp. 27–28.

11 Al-Urdun Al-Jadid Research Center, *Directory of Civil Society Organizations in Jordan*, p. 27.

12 Brand, *Women, the State and Political Liberalization*, p. 121.

13 Bint Talal, p. 45.

14 Al-Urdun Al-Jadid Research Center, *al-Munazamat al-tatawa'iyya fil-Urdun*, 2 and *Directory of Civil Society Organizations in Jordan*, p. 27.

15 Hermann, p. 73.

16 Bint Talal, p. 45.

17 Brand, *Women, the State and Political Liberalization*, pp. 121–123; and Hammad, *Jordanian Women's Organisations and Sustainable Development*, p. 29.

18 Dabbas, p. 214.

19 Interview in Amman on 27 January 2002.

20 Interview in Amman on 26 July 2003.

21 Atallah Abu-Latifeh, *Die Muslimbruderschaft in Jordanien*, PhD dissertation submitted at the Political Science Faculty of the Free University in Berlin (Germany) in 1997, pp. 103–104; and Dabbas, p. 214.

22 Wiktorowicz, Islamists, the State and Cooperation in Jordan; and Boulby, pp. 81–82.

23 Bint Talal, p. 52.

24 Bint Talal, p. 52.

25 Al-Urdun Al-Jadid Research Center, *al-Munazamat al-Tatawa'iyya fil-Urdun*, p. 2.

26 Al-Urdun Al-Jadid Research Center, *Directory of Civil Society Organizations in Jordan*, 27.

27 Bint Talal, p. 53.

28 Shteiwi, *Voluntarism and Volunteers in the Arab World*, 41.

29 Ibid, 41–42.

30 Quoted in Bint Talal, p. 67.

31 That is to say, all kinds of social development actors worldwide, including institutions belonging to national governments, the European Community or Union and the United Nations, as well as transnational NGOs, academics and individual anti-poverty activists.

32 Bint Talal, pp. 124–125.

33 Al-Urdun Al-Jadid Research Center, *Directory of Civil Society Organizations in Jordan*, pp. 439–441. See also Bint Talal, Hermann, pp. 93–98 and Brand, *Women, the State, and Political Liberalization*, pp. 158–159.

34 Al-Urdun Al-Jadid Research Center, *Directory of Civil Society Organizations*, pp. 31–32.

35 Brand, *Women, the State and Political Liberalization*, pp. 124–125.

36 Brand, pp. 126–127 and pp. 150–155.

37 Hammad, *Jordanian Women's Organisations and Sustainable Development*, p. 136.

38 Al-Urdun Al-Jadid Research Center, *Directory of Civil Society Organizations in Jordan*, pp. 27–28.

39 Shteiwi, pp. 41–42.

40 Rula Majdalani, The Changing Role of NGO's in Jordan: an emerging actor in development, *Jordanies, Research and documentation: politics, economy & society*, CERMOC periodical, 12 (2): 1996: pp. 121–123.

41 For more information on this global trend, see Howell and Pearce, pp. 65–68, and Bint Talal, pp. 4–11.

42 Majdalani, p. 123.

43 Wiktorowicz, *The Management of Islamic Activism,* p. 23

44 Wiktorowicz, *The Management of Islamic Activism*, pp. 23–24.

45 Al-Urdun Al-Jadid Research Center, *Directory of Civil Society Organizations in Jordan*, pp. 125–136.

46 Majdalani, p. 127, Hermann, pp. 77–78, Shteiwi, pp. 42–43; Bint Talal, pp. 88–89; and interview with social scientist Abu Ruman at the Al-Urdun Al-Jadid Research Center in Amman on 22 June 2003.

47 Al-Urdun Al-Jadid Research Center, *Directory of Civil Society Organizations in Jordan*, pp. 223–239 and pp. 395–422.

48 Brand, *Women, the State and Political Liberalization*, pp. 164–167.

49 Interview in Amman on 25 June 2003.

50 Hermann, pp. 112–114.

51 Bint Talal, pp. 88–90.

52 Interview with Sa'ida al-Kilani on 25 June 2003.

53 Quoted by Bint Talal, p. 90.

54 Bint Talal, p. 90.

55 As was emphasised in the last chapter, membership in the relevant association is legally mandatory for a professional, such as a journalist, to work.

56 Wiktorowicz, *The Management of Islamic Activism*, p. 31.

57 Wiktorowicz, *The Management of Islamic Activism*, p. 28.

58 Interview with Fawzi Samhuri on 21 June 2003.

59 Articles in the *Jordan Times* provide many examples of this.

60 See also *Jordan Times*.

61 Brand, *Women, the State and Political Liberalization*, pp. 158–164 and p. 173.

62 Brand, *Women, the State and Political Liberalization*, p. 157.

63 See the first section of Chapter 16.

64 Anne Marie Baylouny, Creating Kin: New Family Associations as Welfare Providers in Liberalizing Jordan, *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 38: 2006: pp. 349–368.

65 Bint Talal, pp. 186–187. The Jordan Times regularly publishes articles on this and other charitable and social welfare initiatives by members of the royal family.

66 Al-Urdun Al-Jadid Research Center, *Directory of Civil Society Organizations in Jordan*, p. 441.

67 Al-Urdun Al-Jadid Research Center, *Directory of Civil Society Organizations in Jordan*, pp. 31–32.

68 The Kingdom consists of twelve governates or provinces: Amman, Irbid, Kerak, Ma'an, Zarqa, Balqa, Mafraq, Tafileh, Aqaba, Madaba, 'Ajlun and Jerash.

69 Wiktorowicz, *The Management of Islamic Activism*, p. 34, and Hermann, pp. 73–74.

70 General Union of Voluntary Societies in Jordan, *al-Ittihad al-'Am lil-Jam'iyyat al-Khairiyya, Taqrir al-Majlis al-Tanfidhi*, p. 15.

71 Interview in Amman on 27 January 2002, Hermann, pp. 73–74 and Wiktorowicz, *The Management of Islamic Activism*, pp. 33–36.

72 Wictorowicz, *The Management of Islamic Activism*, pp. 35–36.

73 Hermann, p. 74.

74 Wiktorowicz, *The Management of Islamic Activism*, pp. 35–36.

75 Hermann, p. 74.

76 Wiktorowicz, *The Management of Islamic Activism*, p. 34.

77 Interview on 27 January 2002.

78 Interview in Amman on 30 July 2003.

79 "Jordan is heading to enact a new NGO law!" is the title of this Word document; the author's name is left unmentioned.

80 Francesca Sawalha, "Controversial draft law for NGOs causing apprehension – Government pledges to consult with civil society," *Jordan Times* of 1 June 2005, Home News (digital edition).

81 See Richard T. Antoun, Fundamentalism, Bureaucratization and the State's Co-optation of Religion: a Jordanian Case Study, *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, 38: 2006: pp. 387–391. Antoun observes mutual entanglements in the relationship between the state and Islamic fundamentalism in Jordan; yet, the same also applies to the state's relationships with various other social forces.

82 Interview on 30 July 2003.

83 Interview with Munif F. Abu Rish, director of the Social Development Department of the Jordan Hashemite Fund for Human Development at the Young Women's Muslim Association (established by Princess Sarvath, wife of former Crown Prince Hassan) on 3 and 11 February 2002 in Amman.

84 This classification is not my own. Rather it is adopted from pages 29 and 30 of the *Directory of Civil Society Organizations in Jordan* published by the Al-Urdun Al-Jadid Research Center.

Notes chapter 7

1 Timur Kuran, Islamic Redistribution through Zakah in Michael Bonner, Mine Ener and Amy Singer eds., *Poverty and Charity in Middle Eastern Contexts*, Albany, State University of New York Press, 2003, p. 278.

2 Kuran, pp. 277–279.

3 Kuran, p. 277.

4 Jonathan Benthall, Financial Worship in Benthall and Bellion Jourdan eds., *The Charitable Crescent*, p. 9.

5 Kuran, pp. 283–284 in Bonner *et al*. In the same volume, see also Miriam Hoexter, Charity, the Poor and Distribution of Alms in Ottoman Algiers, pp. 151–158 and Eyal Ginio, Living on the Margins of Charity, Coping with Poverty in an Ottoman Provincial City, pp.165-184.

6 The exceptions include countries like Saudi Arabia, Pakistan and Sudan, where the payment of *Zakah* is legally enforced upon every Muslim citizen of sufficient means.

7 The latter refers to funds derived from interest that are reconverted for the benefit of charitable works. Interest for its own sake is described as *riba* (usury) and prohibited by the *'ulama'*. According to several of these, however, it may be rendered religiously legitimate (*halal*), if used for laudable purposes. On this point, see Benthall and Bellion-Jourdan in Benthall and Bellion-Jourdan eds., p. 42.

8 Benthall and Bellion-Jourdan in Benthall and Bellion-Jourdan eds., pp. 42–43.

9 Benthall and Bellion-Jourdan in Benthall and Bellion-Jourdan eds., pp. 43–44.

10 Benthall in Benthall and Bellion-Jourdan eds., p. 10.

11 Interview in Amman on 16 June 2003.

12 Interview in Amman on 23 June 2003.

13 Interview in Amman on 30 December 2003.

14 Interview in Amman on 27 January 2002.

15 Interview in Amman on 30 December 2003.

16 Interview with social work teacher on 23 June 2003. See also Layne, p. 100, who reports tribalist senator Hayel Srour, in a debate on tribalism in 1985, as saying: "I believe

in the righteous tribal traditions, for God said in his Sacred Book, 'we created you peoples and tribes' not parties and classes."

17 Interview in Amman on 4 January 2004.
18 Interview 30 December 2003.
19 Interview with members of the Khawla' Bint Al-Azwar Association on 6 October 2003, with the director of the ICCS Social Care Council on 28 May 2003 and with members of the Anwar al-Huda Association on 16 January 2002.
20 Benthall in Benthall and Bellion-Jourdan eds., pp. 15–16.
21 Interview on 30 December 2003.
22 Benthall in Benthall and Bellion-Jourdan eds., p. 24.
23 Benthall in Benthall and Bellion-Jourdan eds., p. 9.
24 Benthall in Benthall and Bellion-Jourdan eds., p. 15.
25 Benthall in Benthall and Bellion-Jourdan eds., p. 23.
26 Benthall in Benthall and Bellion-Jourdan eds., p. 21.
27 The Arabic word "*sadaqah*" is related to the word "*sidq*," which denotes honesty and faithfulness. Thus, it should not come as a surprise that, when pronounced differently (putting the stress on the second instead of the first vowel), the word "*sadaqah*" comes to mean friendship.
28 Benthall in Benthall and Bellion-Jourdan eds., p. 26.

Notes chapter 8

1 With the term *"Wertrationali tät,"* the famous early twentieth century German social scientist Max Weber denoted a type of social action motivated by "a conscious belief in the value for its own sake of some ethical, aesthetic, religious, or other form of behavior, independently of its prospects of success." Value rational action, according to Weber, always takes place in response to moral or ethical "demands" or "commands" that are considered to be binding by the actor. Besides value-rationality, Weber distinguishes three other types of action: "means-end rationality" or *zweckrationali tät*, which is oriented toward a rational selection of ends as well as of the means to reach those ends; affective action, which results from feelings and affective states; and traditional action, which takes place more or less automatically and without conscious reflection in response to certain commonly held norms, values and habits. On these ideas, see Stephen E. Kalberg, *Max Weber's Comparative-Historical Sociology*, Cambridge, Polity Press, 1994, pp. 24–26.
2 Conversation in Amman on 12 February 2003.
3 This idea can be found in articles published by the ICCS newsletter *Al-Khair wal-'Ata'* (Charity and Giving) and was also expressed to me by the chief editor of the Islamist *Al-Sabeel* weekly in an interview on 19 June 2003.
4 Interview in Zarqa on 1 January 2004.
5 Interview in Amman on 17 February 2002.
6 Interview in Amman on 5 June 2003.
7 Interview in Zarqa on 13 February 2002.
8 Interview in Amman on 2 August 2003.
9 Conversation in Amman on 12 February 2003.
10 Conversation in Amman on 7 June 2003.
11 Visit to the Abdul Rhaman bin 'Auf Center in Marka, Amman, on 21 January 2002.

12 Interview in Amman on 9 June 2003.

13 Interview in Amman on 15 June 2003.

14 Interview in Amman on 23 July 2003.

15 Interview in Amman with Murad al-Adeileh, chairman of the ICCS Social Care Council on 13 January 2002 and with Raif Nijm on 6 February 2002, also in Amman.

16 Interview in Amman with Mrs. Ghusoon Diab Kareh, chairwoman of the educational program of the YWMA, on 3 February 2002.

17 Interview in Zarqa on 13 February 2002.

18 Interview in Amman on 5 August 2003.

19 Interview in Amman on 2 August 2003.

20 Interview in Amman on 7 June 2003.

21 Interview in Amman on 23 December 2003.

22 Interview in Zarqa on 13 February 2002.

23 Interview in Amman on 2 August 2003.

24 Interview in Al-Baqa'a camp on 31 August 2003.

25 Interview in Amman on 4 August 2003.

26 Conversation with the director of Al-'Abura Center on 12 May 2003.

27 Interview by Marie Juul Petersen in Amman on 21 August 2007.

28 Visit to the Islamic Bani Hassan Welfare Society in Zarqa on 17 February 2003.

29 Visit to the ICCS center in Jabal Nazeef on 3 September 2003.

30 In this regard, workers of ICCS center Al-'Abura also mention pre-existing as well as existing social relationships in Al-Hussein Refugee Camp as an explanation for their motivation. A spirit of social solidarity is inculcated early on through school, family and neighborhood. At the time of the center's foundation, members formed a social network of friends and neighbors, all of whom were personally aware of cases of orphanhood and other social problems in the camp. In terms of ongoing social relationships, they mention spaces in the camp – the school, the sports club or the park – where the center's workers, clients and their children frequently see and talk to one another.

31 A good example of the internalization of a conscious Islamist discourse among representatives of Islamist NGOs is provided by the life history of Dr. Qandil Shakir, the president of the ICCS. He originates from a peasant family in the Khan Yunis area in Palestine. In 1948, as a 17-year old boy, he left for Cairo to study medicine. There, he was brought in to contact with The Muslim Brotherhood by Egyptian students, and soon became actively involved in the movement. To explain why he joined the Brotherhood, Dr. Shakir mentions his own religious family-background and Qur'anic education, his desire to guide and help others in the society as well as the need to rectify the injustice brought upon the Muslim world by colonialism and imperialism. Though eventually leaving Egypt, he remained a member of The Muslim Brotherhood and, after settling in Jordan as an internist in 1963, he became one of the founders of the ICCS.

32 Steve Feierman as quoted by Benthall in Benthall and Bellion-Jourdan eds., p. 21.

33 Benthall in Benthall and Bellion-Jourdan eds., p. 21.

34 Abdulkarim Soroush, De betekenis en essentie van secularisme in Max Sparreboom ed., *Religie en Moderniteit, Fatima Mernissi, Sadik al-Azm, Abdulkarim Soroush, Winnaars Erasmusprijs 2004*, Breda, Uitgeverij De Geus, 2004, pp. 171–176.

35 The yearly ICCS newsletter *Risala al-Khair wal-'Ata'* (The Message of Charity and Giving), as well as brochures from other Muslim NGOs, frequently touch on this theme.

36 Interviews with Salah Qandil Shakir on 12 February 2003, Murad al-Adeileh on 16 March 2003, Abdul Latif Arabiyyat , president of the IAF *Shurah* (consultative) council and president of Al-'Afaf Society on 23 June 2003 and Mufid Sarhan, general manager of Al-'Afaf Society on 10 August 2003, all in Amman.

37 Interview with Murad al-Adeileh on 16 March 2003 in Amman and with workers of the ICCS center for orphans and the poor in Al-Baqa'a refugee camp on 31 August 2003 in Al-Baqa'a.

38 For a more extensive description of the phenomenon of *waqf* (plural: *awqaf*), see n. 84 in Chapter 2. The president of the (non-Islamist) Al-Faruq Society once used the term in connection with income-generating projects from which the Society benefits, like renting out buildings or investment in other income-generating ventures like its school or its medical center. An Islamist NGO like the ICCS also has income-generating projects that may be regarded as *awqaf*.

39 Interview in Al Baqa'a refugee camp on 31 August 2003.

40 Interview in Amman on 15 January 2002.

41 Interview in Amman on 2 September 2003.

42 Interview in Amman on 23 July 2003.

43 Interview in Amman on 12 January 2004.

44 Interview in Amman on 23 July 2003.

45 Interview in Zarqa on 11 February 2002.

46 Interview in Amman on 1 September 2003.

47 Interviews with ICCS- president Dr. Qandil Shakir on 13 January 2002 and with the director of the ICCS Social Care Council on 13 January 2002, on 16 March 2003 and on 28 May 2003.

48 Interview in Zarqa on 21 September 2003.

49 Conversation in Amman on 1 September 2003. Also conversation with ICCS general manager Lafi Qaba'a on 24 June 2003 and interview with general manager of the Islamist weekly *Al-Sabeel* and Muslim Brotherhood and IAF executive Sa'ud al-Mahfuz on 30 July 2003, all in Amman.

50 Conversations at the ICCS centers in the refugee camps of Al-Hussein, Al-Baqa'a, and Al-Wihdat, on 12 May 2003, 31 August 2003 and 1 September 2003, respectively.

51 Interview in Amman on 30 June 2003.

52 Interview in Amman on 30 June 2003.

53 Interview in Amman on 19 June 2003.

54 Interview in Amman on 9 June 2003.

55 Interview in Amman on 20 February 2002.

56 Interview in Amman on 23 June 2003.

57 Interview in Amman on 30 June 2003.

58 Interview in Amman on 23 July 2003.

59 Interview in Al Baq'a on 31 August 2003.

60 Interviews with political scientist Sami al-Khazendar on 27 January 2002 and 22 October 2003, and with editor in chief of *Al-Sabeel* on 19 June 2003, all of them in Amman.

61 Interview with political scientist Abu Ruman of the Al-Urdun Al-Jadid Research Center in Amman on 2 September 2003.

62 Interview in Amman on 27 January 2002.

63 Interview in Amman on 27 January 2002.

64 Interview in Amman on 27 January 2002.

65 Interview at the Center of Strategic Studies at Jordan University in Amman, on 18 February 2002

66 Putnam, *Bowling Alone*. On these two different kinds of social capital, see Putnam's introduction.

67 Interview in Amman on 18 February 2002.

68 Interviews with Mr. Khatoum, GUVS functionary at the main office of the union, on 10 January 2002 in Amman and with Dr. Khalil Na'imat, GUVS functionary and at the time of the interview adviser on voluntary welfare associations at the Ministry of Social Development on 8 June 2003.

69 Interview at the premises of GUVS in Amman on 30 July 2003.

70 Interview in Amman on 23 June 2003.

71 Interview in Amman on 21 June 2003.

72 Ibid. on 22 June 2003.

73 Interview in Amman on 22 July 2003.

74 Conversation in Amman on 22 May 2003. See also Shteiwi ed., p. 32.

75 Interview in Amman on 12 June 2003.

76 Interview in Amman on 25 June 2003.

77 Interview on 28 January 2002.

78 Interview on 22 December 2003.

79 Conversation on 12 December 2003.

80 Conversation on 8 January 2004.

81 Conversation on 13 January 2004.

82 Conversation on 8 January 2004.

83 Conversation on 13 January 2004.

84 Conversation on 13 January 2004.

85 Conversation on 13 January 2004.

86 Joseph Al-Agha, Hizbullah's Gradual Integration in the Lebanese Public Spere in *Sharqiyyât*, 13 (1): 2001: p. 51.

87 ICG, *Islamic Social Welfare Activism in the Occupied Palestinian Territories: A Legitimate Target?*, ICG Middle East Report No. 13, Amman/Brussels, International Crisis Group, 2 April 2003, p. 15.

88 ICG, p. 21.

89 ICCS president Kandil Shakir seems never to tire of emphasising that the social services of his Society "are not related to politics in any way." In fact, he said exactly as much to me in a letter dated 17 September 2003. Editor-in-chief Atef Julani of the weekly Islamist magazine, *Al-Sabeel*, acknowledges that the Islamist NGOs services contribute to the popularity of the Islamist Movement, but also stresses that they should not be regarded as instruments to gain political support and power. During an interview on 30 June 2003, the magazine's general manager (and prominent Muslim Brotherhood and IAF member) Abu Mahfuz expressed his sense of frustration to me through allegations that Islamist NGOs have become nothing more than political instruments:

— Really, I can't lie as a Muslim. In the beginning, when the *jam'iyyat* (associations) were still new, their activities might have contributed to much of the popularity of the Islamist movement, but now you see almost the opposite: a significant part of public opinion judges us on the basis of the performance of the *jam'iyyat*. When something goes wrong there, we as Muslim Brothers get the blame. I am sometimes so fed up with this that I am almost inclined to see the *jam'iyyat* as only a stumbling block to our cause.

90 Interview in Amman on 26 July 2003.
91 Interview in Amman on 2 September 2003.
92 Interview in Irbid on 13 January 2004.
93 See page 194 and ns. 604-05 in the present work.

Notes chapter 9

1 Hammad, p. 170.
2 Hammad, pp. 169–170.
3 ICG, p. 10.
4 Conversation at the sidelines of a conference held in Amman on Civil Society in Jordan on 19 January 2004.
5 Interview in Salt on 16 September 2003.
6 Interview on 23 October 2003. One of the founders of the Society in 1961 was actually Abdul-Latif Abu Qura, who was also the main founder of the Jordanian Muslim Brotherhood in 1945. As observed earlier (see section on The Role of the Islamist Movement), Abu Qura's approach to Islamism was mainly socio-cultural. He had to step down as Muslim Brotherhood leader in 1953 in favor of a leadership that opted for a more political approach. His approach seems to accord well with that of this Society in that it pursues a socio-cultural strategy of Islamization, rather than a directly political one.
7 Interview on 16 September.
8 Interview on 23 October 2003.
9 Interview on 16 December 2003.
10 Interview on 16 December 2003.
11 Interview on 16 December 2003.
12 Conversation on 16 September 2003.
13 Interview on 23 October 2003.
14 Interview on 16 September 2003.
15 Interview in Salt on 23 September 2003.
16 Interview on 15 January 2004.
17 Interview on 15 January 2004
18 Interview on 23 September 2003.
19 Conversation on 15 January 2004.
20 Interview on 23 September 2003.
21 Conversation on 23 September 2003.
22 Interview on 15 January 2004.
23 Conversations on 23 September 2003 and 15 January 2004.
24 Conversation in Salt on 1 October 2003.
25 Interview on 23 October 2003.
26 Interview on 28 October 2003.
27 Interview on 16 December 2003.
28 Conversation on 28 October 2003.
29 Conversation on 16 December 2003.
30 Interview in Salt on 28 October 2003.
31 Interview on 16 December 2003.
32 Interview on 16 September 2003.

33 Qaradawi used to be the dean of the Shari'ah College at Qatar University.At present, he is president of the Jerusalem Foundation, an Islamic institution for the support of the Palestinian Intifada, and as head of the European Council for Fatwa and Research.
34 Conversations on 23 September 2003 and 16 December 2003 in Salt.
35 Interviews on 23 February 2003 and 4 June 2003.
36 Interview on 23 February 2003.
37 Interview on 19 February 2003.
38 Interview on 23 February 2003.
39 Interview on 23 February 2003.
40 Interview on 23 February 2003.
41 Interview on 4 June 2003.
42 Interview on 16 January 2002. To put this principle into action, the association had been planning to establish an income-generating project in the form of a kitchen where poor women would be employed. Due to a lack of funds, it was unable to carry out this project.
43 Interview on 16 January 2002.
44 Interview on 19 February 2003.
45 Interview on 19 February 2003.
46 Interviews on 12 February 2002 and 9 February 2003.
47 Interview on 23 February 2003.

Notes chapter 10

1 Ahmed S. Mousalli, *Moderate and Radical Fundamentalism, The Quest for Modernity, Legitimacy and the Islamic State*, Gainesville, Florida, University Press of Florida, 1999, p. 44.
2 Mousalli, *Moderate and Radical Fundamentalism*, p. 45.
3 In the end, all conservative visions, including Western ones, are based upon constructed and self-invented images of the authentic, the traditional and the indigenous.
4 This is not to say that fundamentalists are not affected by modern concepts and insights when interpreting the Islamic sources. But I am writing solely of the ideological claims of both currents.
5 Interview with Abdul Baqi Gammo, one of the founders of the Jordanian chapter of The Muslim Brotherhood and president of the Islamic Educational Welfare Society in Zarqa, on 11 February 2002.
6 Mousalli, *Moderate and Radical Islamic Fundamentalism*, p. 44.
7 Mansoor Moaddel and Kamran Talattof eds., *Contemporary Debates in Islam: An Anthology of Modernist and Fundamentalist Thought*, Basingstoke, Macmillan, 2000, p. 2.
8 Moaddel and Talattof eds., pp. 3–4.
9 Moaddel and Talattof eds., p. 4.
10 Kepel, p. 373.
11 Interestingly, Bayat elaborated on this term during his inaugural lecture on 26 April 2005 at Leiden University.
12 Supporting and sponsoring orphans is usually considered to be a highly religious affair in Jordanian and Arab society.

13 Interview with the Society's president on 16 October 2003 as well as conversations with other members later on. In Arab societies, orphans are generally considered to be children missing at least one parent, usually the father, who is generally perceived as the family's breadwinner.

14 Interview on 16 October 2003.

15 These foreigners are often married, or used to be married, to local people.

16 Interview on 16 October 2003.

17 Observations conversations during the '*iftar* meal held by Al-Faruq Society on 19 November 2003 in Irbid.

18 In this context, I use the term "objectification" to mean that they were capable of establishing a certain distance and dispassion while considering the place of religion in their community and their identity as believers.

19 Interview in Irbid on 27 October 2003.

20 Conversation in Irbid on 14 December 2003.

21 Interview on 27 October 2003.

22 Interview on 4 December 2003.

23 Interview on 8 January 2004. The Society had already implemented dozens of income-generating projects for client families in the past, but not yet on the basis of micro-credit.

24 Conversation on 21 December 2003.

25 Interview on 16 October 2003.

26 Conversation on 4 December 2003.

27 Conversations on 4 December 2003 and 31 December 2003.

28 Conversation on 21 December 2003.

29 Conversation on 13 January 2004.

30 Conversation on 1 December 2003.

31 Conversation on 4 December 2003.

32 Conversation on 27 October 2003.

33 Conversation on 4 December 2003.

34 Conversation on 14 December 2003.

35 Interviews in Amman on 2 October 2003, and in Zarqa on 6 October 2003.

36 This association was established by, and mainly composed of, Palestinian refugees originating from the former Palestinian town of Bir Al-Sab'a, which is now the Israeli city of Beersheva.

37 Interview in Amman on 2 October 2003.

38 Interview in Amman on 6 October 2003.

39 Interview in Amman on 2 October 2003.

40 Interview in Amman on 2 October 2003.

41 Interview in Amman on 19 October 2003.

42 Interview on 6 October 2003.

43 Interview in Madaba on 15 December 2003.

44 Interview in Madaba on 15 December 2003.

45 Telephonic Interview on 7 January 2004. *Hizb al-Wasat al-Islami* was mentioned in chapter 2, at the end of the section entitled "The Role of the Islamist Movement."

46 Interview on 15 December 2003. In the Jordanian political context, terms like "moderate" and "centrist" usually denote political positions and attitudes that are close to regime policy. In contrast, "radical" or "hardline" stands for position and attitudes that are confrontational to the regime, whether these originate from the left or right wing (the right usually being Islamist).

47 Interview on 15 December 2003
48 Interview on 7 January 2004.
49 Interview on 15 December 2003.
50 Interview on 15 December 2003.
51 Conversation with one of its working members on 10 or 11 January 2004.
52 Interview on 15 December 2003.
53 Interview on 15 December 2003.
54 Interview on 7 January 2004.
55 Interview on 7 January 2004.

Notes chapter 11

1 Observation at the Islamic Bani Hassan Welfare Association on 17 November 2003 in Zarqa.
2 Interviews with members of the Orthodox Association in Fuheis on 22 December 2003, and with various Muslim NGOs in Jordan during 2002 and 2003.
3 Benthall in Benthall and Bellion-Jourdan, eds., pp. 21–19. The president of the Islamic Anwar Al-Huda Association mentioned to me some of the old, informal ways of aiding those in need about half a century ago, when there were hardly any formally organized voluntary welfare associations. These included the provision of food to landless people, helping one's neighbors to build a new home, and support from one's female neighbours in doing the household duties.
4 See Ingrid Mattson, Status-Based Definition of Need in Early Islamic *Zakah* and Maintenance Laws in Bonner *et al* eds, *Poverty and Charity in Middle Eastern Contexts*, pp. 31–51.
5 See, for instance, Hoexter, p. 156.
6 See Ginio, pp. 165–184 (in particular pages 167–171), and Hoexter pp. 148–151.
7 This theme is dealt with by a selection of authors in Bonner *et al* eds: Mine Ener, The Charity of the Khedive, pp. 185–201; Juan R.I. Cole, Al-Tahtawi on Poverty and Welfare, pp. 223–228; Beth Baron, Islam, Philanthropy and Political Culture in Interwar Egypt, The Activism of Labiba Ahmad, pp. 239–254; and Kathryn Libal, The Child Question, The Politics of Child Welfare in Early Republican Turkey, pp. 255–271.
8 Ener and Cole in Bonner *et al* eds., pp. 186–192 and pp. 220–223 respectively.
9 Various interviews with members and workers of Islamist associations in Amman and Zarqa conducted in 2003.
10 This information was gained from the same Islamists, as well as those distributing social investigation forms for the ICCS Center Al-'Abura, Al-Faruq Association and Human Appeal International (an internationally operating Islamic welfare society based in the United Arab Emirates). Cf. Janine Clark, p. 109.
11 Various interviews with ICCS representatives in 2002 and 2003.
12 *Tatbiqat al- bahth al-ijtima'i* (Implementation of Social Investigation), 3, an unpublished list of instructions obtained from ICCS center Al-'Abura.
13 Interviews with a social investigator from Al -Abura Center on 15 and 16 June 2003. There is a Women's Committee of Friends of Al-'Abura Center whose members, at particularly busy times, distribute food and clothing to client families and can function as *mandubah*.
14 Interview with a social investigator from Al-'Abura Center on 27 May 2003.

15 Clark, p. 109.

16 Various interviews with a social investigator from Al-‘Abura center in May and June 2003, and with the president of the Islamic Anwar Al-Huda Welfare Association on 4 June 2003.

17 *Tatbiqat al-bahth al-ijtim*a‘*i*, p. 3.

18 Clark, p. 109.

19 Interview on 21 May 2003.

20 Interview in Amman on 6 February 2002.

21 Interview in Amman on 26 July 2003.

22 *Tatbiqat al-Bahth al-Iijtima‘i,* p. 5.

23 Interview in Zarqa on 21 September 2003.

24 Interview in Zarqa on 17 February 2003.

25 Interviews in Zarqa on 20 May and 27 July 2003.

26 Interview on 1 January 2004.

27 Observation at Al-‘Abura Center on 12 February 2003.

28 Interviews and observations based on meetings at the ICCS in May and June 2003, Al-Faruq Association in Irbid on 16 and 27 October 2003, and Al-’Ihsan Association on 21 September 2003.

29 *Nizam al-Musa‘adat li ‘am 2003* (System of Aid for the Year 2003), leaflet of ICCS Center Al-‘Abura, 2, and Clark, p. 108.

30 Clark, p. 108.

31 Observation on 27 May 2003.

32 Interview in Amman on 26 May 2003.

33 As observed several times at Al-‘Abura Center as well as Al-Faruq Society.

34 Conversation with a volunteer social worker at Al –‘Abura Center on 21 May 2003.

35 Interviews with the accountants of Al-‘Abura Center on 27 May and 15 June 2003 and with the president of Al-’Ihsan Association on 21 September 2003.

36 Interviews with Nawal al-Fa‘uri of the Al-’Aqsa Association in Madaba on 15 December 2003 and at the Anwar Al-Huda Association on 4 June 2003.

37 Interview at the ICCS center of Al-Wihdat Camp on 1 September 2003.

38 Interview on 15 June 2003 at Al-‘Abura Center.

39 Visits to ICCS centers in Al-Baqa‘a refugee camp, north of Amman on 31 August 2003 and in Jabal Al-Nazeef, a popular neighborhood inside Amman on 2 September 2003.

40 *Zakah* committees are largely composed of volunteers and are answerable to the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs. They collect *zakat* (donations) from donors among the Jordanian Muslim public and subsequently spend these on various forms of aid and services to the needy. Their programs are usually very similar to those of registered voluntary welfare associations.

41 Interview at the ICCS-center of Al-Baqa‘ah Camp on 31 August 2003.

42 This image was also conveyed to me by the president of Al-Faruq Society on 16 October 2003, the president of Al-’Ihsan Association on 21 September 2003 and the president of the Anwar Al-Huda Association on 4 June 2003.

43 Clark, p. 110.

44 Clark, p. 109.

45 Clark, p. 112.

46 Several interviews as well as observations at various ICCS centers, the Islamic Bani Hassan association and Al-Faruq Society in February 2002, in 2003 and in January 2004, as well as folders, magazines and leaflets from these associations.

47 Interview with the accountant of the Al-Urwa Al-Wuthqa Association on 20 February 2002.

48 Interview with a secretarian at the Islamic Bani Hassan Welfare Society on 10 February 2002.

49 Interview with the head of the educational department of Al-'Abura Center on 4 June 2003.

50 Interview with a social investigator from Al-'Abura Center on 16 June 2003 and *Nizam al-Musa'adat li 'Am 2003*, p. 2.

51 Interview with the accountant of the Al-Urwa Al-Wuthqa Association on 20 February 2002.

52 Interview with the general manager of the Society on 15th of January 2002, 17th of February 2003, 27th of May 2003 as well as folders and booklets of this association.

53 Interview with the Society's president, Abdul Latif Arabiyyat, in Amman on 23 July 2003.

54 Interview with the married couple and with the Society's general manager in Amman on 5 August 2003.

55 Interview with Arabiyyat on 23 July 2003 and with the general manager in Amman on 31 July 2003.

56 Interview with married couple on 5 August 2003 and with women workers of Al-'Afaf Society on 23 December 2003 in Amman.

57 Interview with the Social Investigator of Al-'Abura Center on 16 June 2003. Raef Nijm, who heads the hospital's Fund for Poor Patients, told me during an interview on 6 February 2002 that it reimburses a maximum of 25% of the expenses of treatments such as operations.

58 The yearly ICCS newsletter *Al-Khair wal-'Ata'* reports on such days. The Islamic Bani Hassan Welfare Association also organizes such events.

59 See *Al-Khair wal-'Ata'* reports.

60 Interview with Murad al-'Adeileh, director of the ICCS Social Care Council on 13 January 2002 in Amman, with the executive committee of the ICCS center for orphans and poor in Al Baqa'a camp on 31 August 2003 as well as ICCS leaflets.

61 Interview with Murad al-Adeileh on 16 March 2003 and with Lafi Qaba'ah on 24 May 2003.

62 Visit to Al-'Abura Center on 16 June 2003.

63 *Nizam al-Musa'adat li-'am 2003*, p. 2.

64 Interview on 26 June 2003 in Amman.

65 *Al-Muwazeh al-Muham lil-'amal al-Maidani* (The Distribution of Fieldwork Tasks) in Muhammad Mahmud Abu Quteish ed., *Awraq al-'amal dawra … al-bahth al-ijtima'i wa tahdid al- ihtijat al-tanmawiyyah*, Amman, Islamic Charity Center Society, General Administration, 2003, p. 178.

66 *Al-Muwazeh al-Muham*, p.178.

67 Interview with Murad al-Adeileh on 16 March 2003 and with the chief of Al-'Abura Center's *Tarbawyiyah* Department on 26 May 2003.

68 Interview with Al-Adeileh on 28 May 2003.

69 Interview in Salt on 1 October 2003.

70 Visit to the Association of the Righteous on 8 November 2003.

71 *Istibyan Awda' Al-'Usr* (Clarification of the Situation of Families), the social investigation form designed and used by Al-Faruq Society.

72 Interview on 27 October 2003 in Irbid and brochure *Jam'iyyat Al-Faruq al-Khairiyyah lil-'Aytam* (Al-Faruq Welfare Society for Orphans), p. 1 and p. 5.

73 Interview at Al-Faruq Society on 8 January 2004.

74 Interview in Irbid on 1 December 2003.

75 Conversation at the Islamic Bani Hassan Welfare Association on 17 November 2003 and with the president of the Southern Society for Special Education in Ma'an on 8 December 2003.

76 Interview with the president of the Orthodox Association on 22 December 2003.

77 Interview with the president of the Orthodox Association on 8 January 2008.

78 As pointed out in the last chapter, Al-Faruq Society members also regard principles of social solidarity as being rooted in the Islamic faith. Unlike the ICCS, however, they conceive of them as pertaining to a universal humanitarian and developmental endeavor that transcends the bounds of religious faith and identity.

79 Information gained from an interview with the Society's president on 16 October 2003, and from the association's brochure.

80 This fee is relatively low in Jordan.

81 Visit to the school and interview on 21 December 2003.

82 Information gained from interviews with one of the center's patients on 28 January 2002, with a doctor at the center on 29 January 2002, with its president on 16 October 2002 and from the Society's brochure.

83 Interview on 16 October 2003.

84 Interview at the Association on 4 June 2003.

85 Interview at the Association on 4 June 2003.

86 Interviews with the director of the Welfare Association for the Care of Orphans on 5 February 2002, and at the Umar Ibn al-Khattab Association on 12 February 2002. Both took place in Amman.

87 Conversation with the president on 8 January 2004 in Irbid.

88 Interview with the president on 14 December 2003.

89 My own landlord in Amman, a journalist, used to work for the Ministry of Information. He observed that "it is very difficult for the people here to deal with one another in equal terms, unlike the West, where the rule of law prevails and brings a measure of equality." He maintains that it is common in Jordanian social relationships for one person to assume an attitude of dominance, in combination with care, over another. While the former derives a degree of status and power from such a position, the latter often finds it convenient to be cared for by and to follow the former.

90 Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge, Selected Interwiews and other Writings*, New York, Pantheon Books, 1980, p. 119.

91 Interview at with the Islamic Anwar Al-Huda Welfare Association's president on 4 June 2003 and with Al-'Ihsan Association's president on 19 September 2003.

92 An overview on Weber's theory on the three different types of authority, i.e. the charismatic, the traditional and the legal-rational ones, can be found in Weber, General Definitions of Social Action and Social Relationship in S.N. Eisenstadt ed., *Max Weber on Charisma and Institution Building*, Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, 1968.

Notes chapter 12

1 Interviews with Al-Adeileh on 16 March and 28 May 2003, with the president of the Anwar Al-Huda Association in Amman on 16 January 2002 and with the president of the Khawla' Bint Al-Azwar Association on 6 October 2003.

2 Interview with Dr. Sami al-Khazendar in Amman on 27 January 2002. Al-Khazendar is a political scientist who has conducted a study on social networks among Islamists, including voluntary associations.

3 Interview with Meisoun Bedour, director of the department of the Ministry responsible for the coordination with foreign NGOs, and Ahmed Tegheir, the man responsible for the supervision of local NGOs, on 19 February 2002. See also the Ministry of Social Development's *Al-Taqrir al-'Am 2000* (General Report of the Year 2000), p. 116.

4 Interviews with the president of the Anwar Al-Huda Association on 16 January 2002 and 4 June 2003, the president of the Al-'Ihsan Association on 21 September 2003 and the Islamic Welfare Association of Samma Village on 28 January 2002, amongst others.

5 Some members of Islamic women's associations are particularly outspoken about women's rights regarding education and paid work. Examples of these include Nawal al-Fa'uri, president of the Al-'Aqsa Association in Madaba (interview on 15 December 2003) and the president of the Khawla' Bint al-Azwar Association in Zarqa (conversation on 6 October 2003). Male representatives of other associations, such as the accountants of the Islamic Banni Hassan Welfare Association in Zarqa (interview 10 February 2002) and the Al-Urwa al-Wuthqa' .Association in Amman (interview 20 February 2002), have also indicated their interest in widening the employment prospects of women.

6 As stated to me by the sewing teacher of the Islamic Bani Hassan Welfare Association on 17 February 2003, and by the president of the Islamic Anwar Al-Huda Welfare Association on 16 January 2002.

7 Interview with Huzama Jaradat on 28 January 2002.

8 Interview with the Heitham al-Mihyar, Programme Supervisor of Questscope, on 10 February 2002.

9 Interview with the director of the ICCS Social Care Council on 13 January 2002. See also Clark, p. 95.

10 Interview with the Director of Al-'Abura Center, on 21 May 2003.

11 Interviews with the male supervisor of the *Tarbawiyyah* department on 4 and on 26 June 2003, and with the female sewing and food preparation instructors on 2 August 2003.

12 Interview on 4 June 2003.

13 Conversation of research assistant with food preparation instructor on 5 June 2003.

14 Interview with the supervisor of the male *Tarbawiyyah* Department on 4 June 2003.

15 Interviews at the ICCS center in Al-Baqa'a refugee camp on 31 August 2003, at the ICCS centers in Jabal al-Zuhur and in Al-Wihdat refugee-camp in Amman on 1 September 2003 and the ICCS center in Jabal Nazeef in Amman on 2 September 2003.

16 Interview with the (female) director of the center in Jabal al-Zuhur on 1 September 2003.

17 Interview with the (male) director of the center in Al-Wihdat camp on 1 September 2003.

18 Interview with the Murad al-Adeileh, the president of the ICCS Social Care Council, on 13 January 2002, and brochure of this council. ICCS publications do not mention where the vocational training workshops for males are actually located.

19 Interview with the president of Al-Faruq Society on 16 October 2003.

20 Interview with the president of Al-Faruq Society on 1 December 2003.

21 Interview with the president of Al-Faruq Society on 14 December 2003.

22 Interview with the chairwoman of the Educational Program of the YMMA, on 3 February 2002. I was given a round tour of the workplaces. Given the fact that the minimum wage in Jordan is around 110 JD, insufficient to satisfy the basic needs of a small family, the money earned by mentally retarded students amounts to little more than pocket money.

23 Round tour in the medical center of the Southern Society for Special Education on 8 December 2003.

24 Interviews with Nawal al-Fa'uri on 15 December 2003 and 7 January 2004.

25 Interviews with representatives of the Islamic Bani Hassan Association in Zarqa , the Al-'Ihsan Association in Zarqa , the Anwar Al-Huda Association in Amman, Al-Urwa Al-Wuthqa Association in Amman and the Islamic Welfare Association in the village of Samma in the northern governorate of Irbid.

26 Interview with the accountant and the sewing teacher at the association on 10 February 2002.

27 Interview with the Public Relations Officer of the association on 13 February 2002.

28 Interview with the accountant of the Al-Urwa Al-Wuthqa Association on 20 February 2002.

29 Interview with the Executive Director of the Society on 1 October 2003.

30 Nawal al-Fa'uri's Al-'Aqsa Association in Madaba gets little support from local private donors and considerably more from governmental institutions and foreign embassies. She told me that finding jobs for clients is not really the goal of her NGO. "If a woman we support and educate makes a request for finding a job, I will do my best to inquire among my relations. But there is no guarantee for success," she said in a telephone interview on 7 January 2004.

31 Interview with the chief male *tarbawiyyah* worker at Al –Abura Center, on 26 June 2003.

32 Interview with female workers at Al-'Abura Center on 2 August 2003 by research-assistant.

33 Interview with the director of the ICCS center in Al-Wihdat in Amman on 1 September 2003.

34 Interview with the president of Al-Faruq Society in Irbid on 16 October 2003.

35 Conversation with workers at Al-Faruq Society on 27 October 2003.

36 Conversation with the Society's president on 8 January 2004.

37 Conversation with the president of Al-Faruq Society on 4 December 2003.

38 Conversation with the president of Al-Faruq Society on 1 December 2003.

39 Interviews with the president of the Southern Society for Special Education in Ma'an on 7 December and 8 December 2003.

40 Interview with Ghada Abu Dur, programme coordinator of Questscope on 30 September 2003 and conversation with officials at the Ministry of Social Development on 22 January 2004. Trends of discourse and practice in Jordan regarding social development and self-reliance of the needy is also dealt with by Princess Basma, sister of the late King Hussein, in her book *Rethinking an NGO*.

41 Interview with Ghada Abu Dur 30 September 2003 and conversation with officials of the Ministry of Social Development on 22 January 2004.

42 Interview with Meisun Bedur, director of coordination with foreign NGOs at the Ministry for Social Development on 19 February 2002.

43 Interview with Munif M. Abu Rish, director of the Social Development Department of the Jordanian Hashemite Fund in Amman on 11 February 2002.

44 Annual Report of the year 1997 of the Queen Alia Fund for Social Development in Jordan, p. 13.

45 The Arab Human Development Report 2002 distinguishes, on pages 5 and 6, income poverty from opportunity and capability poverty.

46 Conversation on 13 January 2004.

47 Interview with Al-Fa'uri on 15 December 2003.

48 Walid Hammad, *Jordanian Women's Organisations and Sustainable Development*, pp. 82–85.

49 Walid Hammad, *Jordanian Women's Organisations and Sustainable Development*, pp. 82–85.

50 Interview with Al-Fa'uri on 13 January 2004

51 Interview with Al-Fa'uri on 13 January 2004

52 Interview with Al-Fa'uri on 13 January 2004, and observation on 14 December 2003.

53 Conversation on 8 January 2004.

54 Interview with the Association's president in Amman on 19 October 2003.

55 Interview with the workers on 6 October 2003.

56 Interview with the Association's workers in Zarqa on 6 October 2003.

57 Interview with the Association's workers in Zarqa on 6 October 2003, and interview with Al-Fa'uri on 15 December 2003.

58 Interview with Al-Fa'uri on 15 December 2003.

59 Brochure of the ICCS Social Care Council, published in the year 2001, interview with the Council's president on 13 January 2002 as well as with the director of the ICCS-center for orphans and poor on 31 August 2006.

60 Clark, p. 92. In n. 54, she mentions an Islamist who complains: "Islamists do not do any real development work, only charity."

61 Bayat, p. 12.

62 Field research carried out in the spring of 2007 by Marie Juul Petersen, from the Danish Institute for International studies in Copenhagen, indicates that there are some ICCS centers that do cooperate with non-Muslim Development actors. ICCS-Center Abu Dhur, for instance, cooperates with UNICEF, Save the Children, and International Relief Development. However, the director of this center indicated to Petersen that there was:

— some internal criticism [within the ICCS] of the new approach [of opening up to outsiders]… [The old guard] are afraid… [because] as Muslims we used to think that we could not meet with women [that did not wear a] veil [for instance], but we learned that we should be open to all kinds of people, all kinds of Muslims. This way we also had better chances of gaining influence.

— Interview by Marie Juul Petersen in Amman on 27 March 2007.

Notes chapter 13

1 Halim Barakat, *The Arab World*, *Society, State and Culture,* Berkeley, Los Angeles and Oxford, University of California Press, 1993, p. 201.

2 Alean al-Krenawi and John R. Graham, Principles of Social Work Practice in the Muslim Arab World, *Arab Studies Quarterly*, 25 (4): 2003: p. 76.
3 Interview in Amman on 16 March 2003.
4 Maleis and La Fever quoted by Al-Krenawi and Graham, p. 85.
5 Barakat, pp. 201–202.
6 Interview in Amman on 23 December 2003.
7 As listed by Barakat, p. 58.
8 Barakat, p. 201.
9 Al-Krenawi and Graham, p. 78.
10 Al-Krenawi and Graham, p. 84.
11 M. Khadduri quoted by al-Krenawi and Graham, p. 83.
12 Barakat, p. 59.
13 "Grants to further judicial sector upgrade," *Jordan Times – Home News* (digital version) of 2 August 2006.
14 Interview on 23 September 2003.
15 Interview in Amman on 4 June 2003.
16 Interview in Amman on 16 January 2002.
17 Interview in Amman on 4 June 2003.
18 Interview in Zarqa on 21 September 2003.
19 Conversation on 23 October 2003.
20 Dale F. Eickelman, *The Middle East, an Anthropological Approach*, New Jersey, Prentice Hall and Eaglewoods Cliffs, 1989, p. 132.
21 Al-Krenawi and Graham, p. 81.
22 See, for instance, chapter 6 of Richard Antoun, *Muslim Preacher in the Modern World,* where the author describes a Muslim preacher's attempts to convince a traditional village population of the reprehensibility of the blood feud and the importance of solving conflicts peacefully.
23 Interviews with the Association's public relations officer and its accountant, on 13 January 2002 and 1 January 2004, respectively, in Zarqa.
24 Interview with the association's president, Furad Furra, as well as with the head of its Scouting Club, on 22 December 2003 in Fuheis.
25 Interview on 15 December 2003.
26 Interview on 22 December 2003.
27 Interview on 15 December 2003.
28 Interview on 10 February 2002. The fitness equipment in the association's hall was shown to me during a visit on 17 February 2003.
29 Interview at Al-'Abura Center on 5 August 2003, at ICCS center for Orphans, Anwar Al-Huda in Jabal al-Zuhur in Amman on 1 September 2003, at Al-'Ihsan Association on 21 September 2003 and with the Program Coordinator of Questscope on 15 October 2003.
30 Interviews with members of both associations. The *Jordan Times* regularly reports on government campaigns against the traditional phenomenon of festive firing, which involve voluntary associations and local community leaders as well.
31 Attendence of the '*Iftar* on 19 November 2003.
32 Interview with the director of the ICCS Social Care Council on 13 January 2002, and with women workers of Al-'Abura Center on 2 August 2003. I myself attended an *'iftar* dinner for orphan boys at the Islamic Bani Hassan Welfare Association in 2003. It took place in an atmosphere of strict discipline and quiet.
33 Interview with the Association's public relations officer on 13 February 2002.

34 Visit to and interview at the orphanage on 2 February 2002.
35 Interview with the head of the Association's scouting club on 22 December 2002, who proudly and enthusiastically showed me the pictures of the club's festive activities.
36 Interview on 16 January 2006.
37 Interviews on 15 December 2003 and 7 January 2004.
38 Interview on 27 July 2003.
39 Interview on 15 December 2003.
40 Telephone interview with al-Fa'uri on 7 January 2004.
41 Conversation with the accountant of the Islamic Bani Hassan Welfare Association on 17 February 2003 as well as a leaflet of the Association.
42 Interview on 16 January 2002.
43 Interview on 13 February 2002.
44 Interview with the Association's treasurer on 20 February 2002. I have received some of the associations' published material as well as donated material.
45 Interview on 13 February 2002.
46 As reported by the *Jordan Times* late 2004.

Notes chapter 14

1 Interviews on 9 and 23 October 2003.
2 Talal Asad, *Genealogies of Religion*, *Discipline and Reasons of Power in Christianity and Islam*, Baltimore and London, The John Hopkins University Press, 1993, p. 36.
3 Interview on 16 September 2003.
4 Interview on 23 September 2003.
5 Interview on 9 October 2003.
6 The distinction between these two set of ideals is highlighted by Charles Hirschkind, see Hirschkind, Civic Virtue and Religious Reason: An Islamic Counterpublic, *Cultural Anthropology*, 16 (1): 2001: p. 4.
7 Asad, *Genealogies of Religion*, 47.
8 Interviews on 16 September and 9 October 2003.
9 Interview on 23 October 2003.
10 Interviews on 9 and 23 October 2003.
11 Interviews on 9 and 23 October 2003.
12 Interview on 23 September 2003.
13 Interview on 23 October 2003.
14 We note that Charles Hirschkind gives a particularly enlightening analysis of this phenomenon in the case of Egypt, see Hirschkind, *Civic Virtue*.
15 Interview on 23 September 2003.
16 Interview on 23 September 2003.
17 Antoun, *Muslim Preacher in the Modern World*, pp. 113–114.
18 Interview on 23 October 2003.
19 Interview on 23 September 2003.
20 Sabah Mahmood has analyzed this approach in her account of the women's mosque movement in Egypt. See Mahmood, *Politics of Piety, The Islamic Revival and the Feminist Subject*, Princeton, US and Oxford, UK, Princeton University Press, 2005, pp. 134–139.
21 Interview on 16 September 2003.

22 Interview on 9 and 23 October 2003.
23 Interview with the Shawmali on 9 October 2003.
24 Interview on 23 October 2003.
25 During a conversation on 23 September 2003, Muhammad Shawmali even mentioned bringing one's children to bed on time and not spitting after drinking as particularly "Islamic" acts.
26 Mahmood, pp. 118–152.
27 Interview on 23 September 2003.
28 Interview with the general manager on 16 September 2003.
29 Interview with the chief volunteer on 23 September 2003.
30 Asad, *Genealogies of Religion*, *Discipline and Reasons of Power in Christianity and Islam*, Baltimore and London, The John Hopkins University Press, p. 234.

Notes chapter 15

1 Richard T. Antoun, *Muslim Preacher in the Modern World*, p. 262; and Gregory Starett, The Hexis of Interpretation: Islam and the Body in the Egyptian Popular School, *American Ethnologist*, 22 (4): 1995: p. 960.
2 Antoun, *Muslim Preacher in the Modern World*, 262; and Mahmood, pp. 53–55.
3 Roald, pp. 143–149.
4 Interview on 9 June 2003.
5 A.S. Mousalli, *Moderate and Radical Fundamentalism*, p. 63.
6 Mousalli, *Moderate and Radical Fundamentalism*, p. 63.
7 Interview on 16 March 2003.
8 Hirschkind, pp. 13–15 and pp. 19–22. See also Mahmood.
9 See in particular Mahmood, chapters 1, 4 and 5.
10 This is the central argument of Mahmood's *Politics of Piety*.
11 Mahmood, pp. 51–53.
12 Mahmood contrasts Islamists who, on the one hand, focus on personal piety with those, on the other, advocating Islam as a socio-political identity to be recognized by state and outside world. Yet, while I would not deny differences in emphasis and strategic choices among Islamist circles, one should beware of dichotomizing this distinction. In the case of many Islamist groups, the two approaches often go hand-in-hand: people and institutions. Indeed, in the case of Islamist women activists in Morocco, Connie Carøe Christiansen highlights how the two are intricately intertwined. See Christiansen, Women's Islamic Activism, Between Self-Practices and Social Reform Efforts in John Esposito and Francois Burgat eds., *Modernizing Islam, Religion in the Public Sphere in Europe and the Middle East*, London, Hurst & Company, 2003, pp. 145–165.
13 Abu Rabi', p. 83 and Mousalli, pp. 108–112.
14 Antoun, *Muslim Preacher in the Modern World*, 231.
15 UNICEF-Jordan and Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs and Holy Places, *Dalil khutaba' al-masajid fi tanmiyyah al-tufulah al-mubakirah*, Amman, UNICEF-Jordan and Ministry of *Awqaf*, 2003, p. 27.
16 UNICEF-Jordan, *Nahu Bidayah 'adilah lil-Atfal,* Amman, UNICEF, date of Publication unknown, p. 27, p. 32 and p. 49.
17 Barakat, *The Arab World*, 105–106.

18 UNICEF and Ministry of Awqaf, *Dalil al-Khutaba' al-Masajid*, p. 45.

19 Translation taken from Muhammad Taqi al-Din al-Hilali and Muhammad Muhsin Khan, *The Noble Qur'an, English Translation of the meanings and commentary*, Medina, King Fahd Complex for the Printing of The Holy Qur'an, 1420 A.H., p. 371.

20 UNICEF and Ministry of Awqaf, *Dalil al-Khutaba' al-Masajid*, p. 47.

21 UNICEF and Ministry of Awqaf, *Dalil al-Khutaba' al-Masajid*, pp. 49–50.

22 UNICEF and Ministry of Awqaf, *Dalil al-Khutaba' al-Masajid*, pp. 28–30.

23 Barakat, pp. 101–102 and pp. 105–106.

24 Al-Fa'uri, *Al-Nahu al-Ijtima'i min Manzur Islami*, Amman, Higher Population Council, 2003, p. 9.

25 Interviews by Marie Juul Petersen in Amman, on 27 March 2007 and on 21 April 2007 respectively.

26 Interview in Amman on 28 May 2003.

27 In his study of Sayyid Qutb, William E. Shepherd has pointed out the significant diversity of ideas to be found in Qutb's writings. Such diversity has led to multiple interpretations and applications of Qutb's ideologies after his death. See Shepherd, Sayyid Qutb's Doctrine of *Jâhiliyya*, *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, 35, 2003, p. 538.

28 Collin Cobuild, *English Dictionary for Advanced Learners*, Glasgow, Harper Collins Publishers, 2001, p. 176.

29 Cobuild, p. 798.

30 Dick Anthony and Thomas Robbins, Conversion and "Brainwashing" in New Religious Movements in *CESNUR Center for Studies on New Religions*, available at http://www.cesnur.org/2003/brain_conv.htm, p. 5.

31 Anthony and Robbins, pp. 7-8.

32 Anthony and Robbins, p. 16.

33 Anthony and Robbins, p. 31.

34 1034 Observation from 16 June 2003.

35 Interview on 2 August 2003.

36 Interview on 2 August 2003.

37 Interview on 2 August 2003.

38 Interview in Amman on 16 March 2003.

39 Children in Palestinian refugee camps visit UNRWA schools that are severely understaffed and under-equipped, and where classes larger than 50 children are not unusual. This state of affairs contributes to the generally poor level of concentration and motivation among the students.

40 Interview on 4 June 2003.

41 Interview in Al-Wihdat on 1 September 2003.

42 Interview with women workers at the Center on 2 August 2003.

43 Conversation on 21 May 2003.

44 As expressed by Murad al-Adeileh, director of the ICCS Social Care Council, and Lafi Qaba'a, general manager of the ICCS.

45 Interview on 4 June 2003.

46 Interview on 26 June 2003 with the head of the boys' department at Al-'Abura Center, as well as conversations at some other ICCS centers for orphans and poor in Amman at the beginning of September 2003. Interview with Salah Kandil Shakir, son of the ICCS president, on 17 February 2002.

47 Discussion conducted by (female) research assistant on 5 August 2003.

48 Interview on 26 June 2003.

49 Barakat, p. 98.

50 Barakat, p.106.

51 Observation on 5 August 2003.

52 Conversation on 5 August 2003.

53 Interview with the social investigator on 7 June 2003 and with the bus driver, who transports orphan children as well as their mothers from their homes to the center, on 10 June 2003.

54 Attendance of the class at Al-'Abura Center on 30 July 2003.

55 Observations by research assistant at Al-'Abura Center on 5 August 2003.

56 Such reports can be found in, for instance, the ICCS yearly newsletter *Al-Khair wal-'Ata'* (Charity and Giving).

57 This information is based on various interviews with representatives of ICCS' centers, as well as with the Islamist political leader Abd al-Latif Arabiyyat, in the summer of 2003. Noteworthy in this regard is that Islamists all over the Arab world regularly use the phrase that "God only helps those who help themselves."

58 Conversation with research assistant at Al-'Abura Center on 5 August 2003.

59 Interview with the head of the boys' section of Al-'Abura Center's Educational Department on 4 June 2003 and 26 June 2003, as well as with representatives of other ICCS centers at the end of August and the beginning of September 2003.

60 Interview on 2 August 2003.

61 Interview on 4 June 2003.

62 Data based on time spent observing computer learning by orphan children at ICCS centers.

63 Interview with head of the boys' department on 26 June 2003.

64 Interview conducted by research assistant with female workers on 5 June 2003.

65 Interview with department's head on 4 June 2003.

66 Interview on 26 June 2003.

67 Conversation with Al-'Abura Center's bus driver on 10 June 2003.

68 Interview with head of the Boys' Department on 26 June 2003 as well as research assistant's conversations at the Women's Department on 5 August 2003.

69 Conversation on 2 September 2003.

70 Interviews and conversations with female workers as well as orphan girls on 2 and 5 August 2003.

71 Interview with the Society's president on 4 December 2003.

72 Interview with the Society's social investigator on 1 December 2003.

73 Interview with the president on 14 December 2003.

74 Interview on 31 December 2003.

75 Interviews and conversations with Salah Kandil Shakir, son of the ICCS president, on 17 February 2002 and 12 February 2003, and Murad al-Adeileh on 16 March 2003.

76 For an elaboration on these two different approaches toward empowerment and change, see Mahmood, pp. 171–174.

77 Visit to the school on 21 December 2003.

78 Conversation on 21 December 2003.

79 Conversation on 31 December 2003.

80 Interview on 4 December 2003.

81 Interview on 16 October 2003.

82 Interview on 31 December 2003.

83 Conversation with the president on 8 January 2003.

84 Interview on 31 December 2003.

85 Conversation on 31 December 2003.
86 Interview on 21 December 2003.
87 Interview with the president on 31 December 2003.
88 Interview on 21 December 2003.
89 Interview with the head of the Society's social work department on 1 December 2003.
90 Interview on 8 January 2004.
91 Interview on 31 December 2003.
92 Interview on 16 October 2003.
93 Interview on 31 December 2003 with the chairwoman of the Girls' Comittee. These social values of mutual respect were also expressed in the hall of the Society's primary school, where a huge painting of a colorful tree was displayed. On its leaves, the "seven values of *Ramadan*" were written, among them Charity, Family Relations, Tolerance and Patience.
94 Conversation on 14 December 2003.
95 Interview on 4 December 2003.
96 Interview on 16 October 2003.
97 Visit on 31 December 2003.
98 Visit on 31 December 2003.
99 Interview on 27 October 2003.
100 Interview with the president on 16 October 2003.
101 Thus, the chief (female) female social worker of the Society told me: "human rights find their origin in religion and come from God. And the rights that the women enjoy to the preservation of her well-being and her protection are guaranteed by God's commandments, as they are mentioned in the Qur'an and the Hadith."
102 Conversation on 31 December 2003.
103 Telephonic interview on 7 January 2004 and visit to the Al-'Aqsa Association on 15 December 2003.
104 Conversation at Al-'Afaf Society on 12 January 2004.
105 Interviews at the Al-'Afaf Society on 5 August and 23 December 2003.
106 Conversation at Al-'Afaf Society on 12 January 2004.
107 Visit and interviews lasted from 7 until 9 December 2003 at this society.
108 Interview in Amman on 2 October 2003.
109 Interview at Questscope on 10 February 2002.
110 Interview at Questscope on 15 October 2003.
111 Interview with the president in the office of Questcope in Amman on 19 October 2003.
112 Interview at Questscope on 30 September 2003.
113 Visit to the Association on 6 October 2003.
114 Interview on 17 October 2003.
115 Visit on 6 October 2003.
116 Visit on 6 October 2003.
117 Interview on 2 October 2003.
118 Visit on 6 October 2003.
119 Interview on 19 October 2003.
120 Interview on 19 October 2003.
121 Interviews on 6 and 19 October 2003.
122 Interview on 19 October 2003.
123 S. Mahmood, pp. 170–173.
124 Interview on 2 October 2003.

Notes chapter 16

1 See Haddad, Islam and Gender: Dilemmas in the Changing Arab World in Yvonne Yazbeck Haddad and John L. Esposito eds., *Islam, Gender and Social Change*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1998, pp. 3–25, esp. pp. 12–21.
2 See the chapter "Defining and Categorizing Muslim NGOs" for a basic description of Al-'Afaf Welfare Society.
3 Observation of the mass wedding party on 25 July 2003.
4 Interview with two women workers at the Society's premises in Amman on 23 December 2003.
5 Wiktorowicz and Taji Farouki write about matchmaking services for clients by Al-'Afaf Society, in particular by its women's committee, see Wiktorowicz and Taji Farouki, pp. 691-7. Muhammad Abdul Karim al-Hourani, however, observes that the Society is not involved in the process of acquainting marital candidates with one another. See al-Hourani, *Jam'iyyat Al-'Afaf, dirasah hala* in *Qadayyat al-Mujtamma' al-Madani*, Al-Urdun Al-Jadid Research Center, 5: 2001: 26-29.
6 Interviews at the Society with a married couple and with workers on 5 August 2005 and 23 December 2003.
7 Interviews with Sarhan 27 May and 31 July 2003 in Amman.
8 Wiktorowicz and Taji Farouki, p. 695.
9 Interview in Amman on 23 July 2003.
10 Interview on 5 August 2003.
11 Singerman, 1995 and Hoodfar, 1997 as referred to by Wiktorowicz and Taji Farouki, p. 688.
12 Wiktorowicz and Taji Farouki, p. 688.
13 Interview in Amman on 27 May 2003.
14 Interview in Amman on 23 July 2003.
15 Interview on 27 May 2003.
16 Interview with the general manager in Amman on 15 January 2002.
17 Wiktorowicz and Taji Farouki, pp. 689–691.
18 Faruq Badran and Mufid Sarhan eds., *Al-'Anusah, al-Waqi', al-Asbab wal-Hulul*, proceedings of a workshop held by Al-'Afaf Society, Amman, Al-'Afaf Welfare Society, 2001, pp. 23–28.
19 Badran and Sarhan eds., *Al-'Anusah*, pp. 42–44.
20 Badran and Sarhan eds., *Al-'Anusah*, pp. 19–22.
21 Quoted by Wiktorowicz and Taji Farouki, pp. 691–692.
22 Wiktorowicz and Taji Farouki, p. 692.
23 Badran and Sarhan eds., *Al-'Anusah*, p. 79.
24 Badran and Sarhan eds., *Al-'Anusah*, pp. 161–162.
25 Badran and Sarhan eds., p. 117.
26 Badran and Sarhan eds., p. 120.
27 Interview on 5 August 2003.
28 Badran and Sarhan eds., *Al-'Anusah*, pp. 71–74.
29 Badran and Sarhan eds., *Al-'Anusah*, pp. 75–85; and interview with general manager on 27 May 2003.
30 Badran and Sarhan eds., *Qaddiyyah Al-Sharf* , proceedings of a workshop held by Al-'Afaf Society, Amman, Al-'Afaf Welfare Society, 2001, p. 97.
31 Badran and Sarhan eds., *Qaddiyyah Al-Sharf*, pp. 14–145.

32 Lama Abu-Odeh, Crimes of Honour and the Construction of Gender in Arab Societies in Mai Yamani ed., *Feminism and Islam, Legal and Literary Perspectives*, Berkshire, Ithaca Press, 1996, pp. 151–153.
33 Interview on 15 January 2002.
34 Nadia Taleb, *Frauen, Ehre und nationale Identität. Die Debatte über die Ehrenverbrechen und die Abschaffung des Artikelns 340 in Jordanien (1998–2000)*, Masters thesis submitted at the Institute for Islamic Science of the Free University of Berlin in December 2001, pp. 98–99.
35 Conversation on 27 May 2003.
36 Taleb, *Frauen, Ehre und Nationale Identität*, 79–81.
37 Ibid, 82**.**
38 Badran and Mufid Sarhan eds., *Qaddiyyah Al-Sharf*, pp. 89–90 and pp. 104–106.
39 Interview on 28 October 2003.
40 Amin Zaid al-Kilani, *Insaf al-Mar'ah fil-Islam*, no loc: Sharika Kilani wa Sakur/Matabi' al-Aiman, 1998, p. 44 and p. 47.
41 Zaid Al-Kilani, pp. 45–46.
42 Conversation on 12 January 2004 in Amman.
43 Taleb, *Frauen, Ehre und Nationale Identität*, 85–86.
44 Interview on 27 May 2003.
45 Abu-Odeh, p. 188.
46 Inverview at Al-'Afaf Society on 23 December 2003.
47 Interview on 15 January 2002.
48 Interview on 23 December 2003.
49 Interview on 23 December 2003.
50 See Haddad in Haddad and Esposito eds., pp. 13–17.
51 Interview on 5 August 2003.
52 Badran and Sarhan, eds., *Al-Sakinah wal-Muwaddah wal-Rahmah baina al-Zawjain*, proceedings of a workshop held by Al-'Afaf Society (Amman: Al-'Afaf Welfare Society, 2001), pp. 69–70.
53 Conversation on 12 January 2004.
54 Conversation on 12 January 2004, and Badran and Sarhan eds., *Al-Sakinah wal-Muwaddah wal-Rahmah*, p. 68.
55 Badran and Sarhan eds., *Dalil Al-'Afaf (mutakhasis fi shu'un al- zawaj wal-zafaf)*, Al-'Afaf Society's guidebook for prospective and actual married couples, Amman, Al-'Afaf Society, 2000, pp. 50–52.
56 Badran and Sarhan eds., *Dalil al-'Afaf*, p. 54.
57 Badran and Sarhan eds., *Dalil al-'Afaf*, pp. 41–43.
58 Badran and Sarhan eds., *Al-Sakinah wal-Muwaddah wal-Rahmah*, pp. 78–79.
59 Badraneh and Sarhan eds., *Dalil Al-'Afaf*, pp. 43–44.
60 Badran and Sarhan eds., *Al-Sakinah wal-Muwaddah wal-Rahmah*, pp. 60–61.
61 Badraneh and Sarhan eds., *Dalil Al-'Afaf*, pp. 55–56.
62 Interview on 27 May 2003.
63 Badran and Sarhan eds., *Al-Sakinah wal-Muwaddah wal-Rahmah*, pp. 74–75.
64 Muhammad Abu Hisan, *Al-'Usrah baina al-Islam wal-Nizam al-Gharbi*, Amman, Al-'Afaf Welfare Society, 1993, p. 117.
65 Abu Hisan, pp. 115–116.
66 Badran and Sarhan eds., *Al-Sakinah wal-Muwaddah wal-Rahmah*, pp. 11–12.
67 Zaid Al-Kilani, pp. 15–19.
68 Haddad in Haddad and Esposito eds., pp. 21–22.

69 Al-Fa'uri, pp. 21- 22.
70 Al-Fau'ri, pp. 33–34.
71 Interview on 15 December 2003.
72 Interview on 2 October 2003.
73 Interviews on 12 and 19 October 2003.
74 Meeting with the Associations' members and workers on 6 October 2003.
75 Interview on 2 October 2003.
76 Various conversations with members of the Society.
77 Interview on 5 August 2005.
78 Badran and Sarhan eds., *Al-Sakinah wal-Muwaddah wal-Rahmah*, pp. 29–31.
79 Badran and Sarhan eds., *Al-Sakinah wal-Muwaddah wal-Rahmah*, pp. 40–60.
80 Badran and Sarhan eds., *Dalil Al-'Afaf*, pp. 44–45.
81 Badran and Sarhan eds., *Al-Sakinah wal-Muwaddah wal-Rahmah*, pp. 42–44.
82 Badran and Sarhan eds., *Al-Sakinah wal-Muwaddah wal-Rahmah*, pp. 45–49 and pp. 50–52.
83 Such prohibitions are derived from conversations and interviews with members of this, as well as various other Islamist and conservative Muslim NGOs.
84 Badran and Sarhan eds., *Al-Sakinah wal-Muwaddah wal-Rahmah*, pp. 81–103.
85 Badran and Sarhan eds., *Dalil Al- 'Afaf*, p. 15.
86 Badran and Sarhan eds., *Dalil Al- 'Afaf*, pp. 17–19.
87 Interview on 23 December 2003.
88 Interview on 23 December 2003, and interview with general manager on 27 May 2003.
89 Interview on 5 August 2003.
90 Victoria Macchi, "Over half of young women believe wife beating is justified – survey," *Jordan Times* of 31 May 2006 (home news – digital version).
91 Interview on 27 May 2003 in Amman.
92 Al-Kilani, p. 65.
93 Badran and Sarhan eds., *Al-Sakinah wal-Muwaddah wal-Rahmah*, p. 62.
94 Interview in Amman on 19 February 2003.
95 Zaid Al-Kilani, pp. 58–60.
96 Interview on 23 December 2003. The general manager, Mufid Sarhan, also expressed the opinion that, for the well-being of a married couple, it is best for them to share a separate household from the wider family.
97 The proceedings of this seminar were published in the Society's booklet *Nahu 'Alaqat 'Usriyyah Rashidah, al-'Alaqah ma' al-Hamah*, edited by Faruq Badran and Mufid Sarhan, Amman, 2000.
98 Badran and Sarhan eds., *Al-Talaq, Ab'adihi al-Shari'iyyah wal-Ijtima'iyyah*, Amman, Al-'Afaf Welfare Society, 2001, pp. 69–70.
99 Badran and Sarhan eds., *Al-Talaq, Ab'adihi al-Shari'iyyah wal-Ijtima'iyyah*, pp. 83–86.
100 Badran and Sarhan eds., *Al-Talaq, Ab'adihi al-Shari'iyyah wal-Ijtima'iyyah*, pp. 75–82.
101 Badran and Sarhan eds., *Al-Talaq, Ab'adihi al-Shari'iyyah wal-Ijtima'iyyah*, pp. 86–89.
102 Conversation on 23 December 2003 in Amman.
103 Conversations on 23 September 2003 in Sal and 23 December in Amman.
104 Al-Fa'uri, *An Overview of Women's Human Rights in Shari'ah Stipulations and CEDAW Articles*, Amman, UNIFEM WARO, unpublished at the time of fieldwork, p. 36.
105 Interview with general manager on 27 May 2003 and with women workers on 23 December 2003.
106 Interview on 15 January 2002.
107 Conversation in Salt on 16 December 2003.

108 Lisa Taraki, Jordanian Islamists and the Agenda for Women: Between Discourse and Practice, *Middle Eastern Studies*, 32 (1): 1996: pp. 153–154.
109 Conversation on 28 October 2003 in Salt.
110 Al-Fa'uri, *Al-Nahu al-Ijtima'i min Manzur Islami*, p. 24.
111 Al-Fa'uri, *Al-Nahu al-Ijtima'i min Manzur Islami*, pp. 23–24.
112 Al-Fa'uri, *Al-Nahu al-Ijtima'i min Manzur Islami*, p. 25.
113 On latent gender-based tensions within the Jordanian Muslim Brotherhood, see Roald, pp. 150–156; and Boulby, pp. 110–113.
114 Interview in Madaba on 15 December 2003.
115 Telephone Interview on 7 January 2004, conversation during the Conference on Islam and Democracy in Amman on 20 January 2004 and the 1998 annual report of the Al-'Aqsa Welfare Association, *Taqrir 'am 'an Nashatat Jam'iyyat Al-'Aqsa al-Khairiyyah/ Madaba, Ta'asasat bi-Tarikh*, *29/5/1991*, pp. 1–3.
116 Conversation on 20 January 2004.
117 Barakat, p. 102.
118 "The Role of Women by Ikhwan," http://www.jannah.org/sisters/ikhwom.html, p. 5.
119 Brand, *Women, the State and Political Liberalization,* p. 173.
120 As Dale F. Eickelman points out, inequalities of control over persons and resources within lineage groups of Egyptian Bedouin tribes are often morally justified in terms of "protection and dependency." The same happens in the gender discourse of Muslim associations. See Eickelman, pp. 251–252.

Notes Conclusions

1 See, for instance, Hammad, *Jordanian Women's Organisations and Sustainable Development*, p. 58, and Hammad, Islamists and Charitable Work in Jordan in Al-Urdun Al-Jadid Research Center's publication *Islamic Movements in Jordan*, p. 170; and Hermann, pp. 106–107. My own field experiences confirm their observations of a high concentration of decision-making power in the hands of the Association's head. Despite the formal presence of democratic structures, the head's role is as gatekeeper, entirely responsible for contacts with outsiders and there is next to no delegation of responsibility that does not pass through him.
2 See for instance Antoun, Civil Society, Tribal Process and Change in Jordan, pp. 458–459; Hammad, *Jordanian Women's Organisations and Sustainable Development*, p. 86; and Al-Urdun Al-Jadid Research Center and Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, *Directory of Civil Society Organizations in Jordan*, p. 29. The last authority concludes that voluntary associations with a tribal character in Jordan "have risen as an extension of the clan or headship of the traditional village."
3 The Islamic Bani Hassan Society in Zarqa, for instance, is largely made up of educated and relatively young members of their tribe who share a common concern with socio-economic, environmental as well as ethical problems in their community, and a desire to do something about them. On the basis of their understanding of Islam, they are critical of modern secular culture as well as of certain traditional habits, as pointed out in Chapter 13. The same goes for most of the other associations with a tribal or religious basis that I visited.
4 Clark, pp. 106–107 and pp. 131–142.
5 Visit to this center on 16 June 2003.

6 Interview on 2 August 2003.

7 In this regard, one could point to various movements: Social Democracy, Communism, Fascism and Nazism, as well as various forms of church-based activism. Indeed, in its struggle against Communist hegemony in the country, perhaps the Polish Solidarity Movement of the 1980s (with a strong base of support in the Polish Roman Catholic Church) is perhaps the most remarkable example of all.

8 See also Hermann, pp. 110–111.

9 Arab Human Development Report 2002, p. 11.

10 Nancy T. Ammerman, "The Challenge of Fundamentalism as a Public Phenomenon: Definitions and Issues," an unpublished keynote address presented at the conference *Fundamentalism and Ethics* in Huissen, The Netherlands, on 28 August 2006.

11 Lisa Taraki, Islam is the Solution, *British Journal of Sociology*, 46 (4): 1995: pp. 643-661; and Jordanian Islamists and the Agenda for Women, *Middle Eastern Studies*, 32 (1): 1996: pp. 140-158.

12 To repeat: I distinguish Islamist NGOs from others on the basis of the (non-) existence of links with political Islam.

13 A view that is also central to the women's mosque movement in Egypt, see Mahmood.

14 This research was carried out by Marie Juul Petersen in the spring of 2007.

15 Karen Armstrong, *De Strijd om God, Een Geschiedenis van het Fundamentalisme*, original title: *The Battle for God*, translated into Dutch by Carola Kloos, Albert Witteveen and Shirah Lachmann, Amsterdam, De Bezige Bij, 2001, pp. 8–9.

16 When raised with the treasurer of the Islamic Bani Hassan Welfare Association the issue of religious education, the latter responded: "this is, as a matter of fact, a transgression of the law." He then showed me the Association's form of registration with the Ministry of Social Development. It includes the stipulation that "no activities with a political, tribal or sectarian purpose" are permitted. "In terms of religion, we are seriously constrained in our acticities by the state," he further remarked.

17 Examples are the Saudi-based International Islamic Relief Organization, the United Arab Emirates-based Human Appeal International and the Sudan-based Islamic Relief Agency.

18 Wiktorowicz, *The Management of Islamic Activism*, p. 29.

19 Wiktorowicz, *The Management of Islamic Activism*, p. 32.

20 Interview on 15 January 2004.

21 Interview on 19 February 2002.

22 In Chapter 10, I described how the later founders of the Khawla' Bint Al-Azwar Association broke away from the Islamic Bir Al-Sab'a Association due to disagreements about how to use the revenues of an income-generating project.

23 Interviews and conversations with representatives of the Islamic Welfare Society in Salt, the Al-Faruq Welfare Society for Orphans in Irbid and the Islamic Bani Hassan Welfare Association in Zarqa , in addition to interviews with Ghada Abu Dur, Program Coordinator of Questscope in Amman, that took place on 30 September and 15 October 2003 in Amman.

24 As noted in interviews at the Al-'Ihsan Welfare Association and the Al-Faruq Society and with officials of the Ministry of Social Development. Clark also pays attention to this pattern in *Islam, Charity and Activism*, p. 110.

25 This is what the ex-head of the ICCS *diwan* in Zarqa and treasurer of the Islamic Bani Hassan Association told me on 23 July 2003.

26 As mentioned by Rami G. Khouri, columnist of the Lebanese *Daily Star* newspaper, in his article "Muslim faith and Muslim anger," *Jordan Times* of 22-23 September 2006, Opinion Section (Digital Edition).

27 As various Jordanian experts and civil society activists often told me.

28 Interview on 23 July 2003.

29 Council of Islamic Organizations and Societies in Jordan, *Al-Taqrir al-Idari li-Majlis al-Munazamat wal-Jam'iyyat al-Islamiyyah fil-Urdun*, administrative report of this council, pp. 6–12.

30 Conversations on 8 and 13 January 2004.

31 Conversations on 1 and 4 December 2003.

32 Hermann, p. 109.

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— *Istibyan Awda al-Usr* (Clarification of the Situation of Families), the social investigation form designed and used by this Society.

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List of Abbreviations

AWF	Arab Women's Federation
FTUJ	Federation of Trade Unions in Jordan
GFJW	General Federation of Jordanian Women
GUVS	General Union of Voluntary Societies
IAF	Islamic Action Front Party
ICCS	Islamic Center Charity Society
ICG	International Crisis Group
IMF	International Monetary Fund
ISI	Islamic Social Institution
JOHUD	Jordanian Hashemite Fund for Human Development
JWU	Jordanian Women's Union
NCC	National Consultative Council
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NSP	National Socialist Party
PLO	Palestine Liberation Organization
TNC	Trans-Jordanian National Congress
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
UNRWA	United Nations Relief and Work Agency for Palestine Refugees
WEF	World Economic Forum
WFJ	Women's Federation of Jordan
YWMA	Young Women's Muslim Association

Glossary of Arabic Words

Adab	Good manners or refined and civilized behavior.
‘Adat	Habits or traditional customs.
‘Afaf	Chastity, virtue, purity.
Ahadit	Plural of hadith (English plural, hadiths, often used in text).
Ajr	The divine reward one receives in the afterlife after having lived a virtuous and pious life on earth.
Akhlaq	Morals or ethics.
Al-Amr bil-ma‘ruf wal-nahy ‘an al-munkar	To ordain the good and to prohibit the evil. (General Islamic guideline for proper Muslim behavior and action in all aspects of life).
‘Alim	Islamic religious scholar. Plural: ‘ulama’.
Al-Nahda	Awakening, rebirth or renaissance. It is also the name of the main Tunisian Islamist party led by Abd al-Rashid al-Ghanuchi.
Al-Takfir wal-Hijrah	“Excommunication and Emigration.” This is the name of an extremist Islamist group established in Egypt. The group condemned those deviating from its views as infidels (“excommunication”); it withdrew itself from Egyptian society (“emigration”) because it considered it un-Islamic, and therefore open to attack.Though the group has ceased to exist in a concrete, political sense, takfiri ideology continues in certain circles. It is renounced by most Muslims.
Amanah	Faithfulness or reliability.
‘Aqidah	Religious doctrine of Islam.
Awqaf	Plural of waqf.
Ayah	Qur’anic verse. Plural: ayat.
Bani Adam	“Children of Adam,” i.e. humankind.
Da‘wah	The call or invitation to Islam. In terms of action, it is comparable to the Christian concept of mission.
Dhikr	The practice of repeatedly remembering God in order to cultivate one’s piety, for instance by uttering his name continuously, praising him frequently on a daily basis or, as some Sufi orders are practicing, by performing certain ritual dances.

Diyah	Money which the family of a perpetrator of bloodshed, murder or manslaughter pays to the family of the victim in order to avoid prolonged (bloody) conflict. Islamic concept and practice.
Dunyah	World.
Emir	Prince (Arabic: Amir)
Fatwah	Religious edict or legal opinion issued by a mufti on any possible matter in life.
Fitnah	Chaos, strife and anarchy.
Fiqh	Islamic jurisprudence
Fi sabil li-llah	(Acting) For the sake of God.
Fuqaha':	Islamic jurists.
Gharar	Any element of uncertainty in a contract, which is forbidden by the Shari'ah.
Hadith	The reports on the sayings and deeds of the Prophet Muhammad. Plural: Ahadith/hadiths.
Halal	Anything that is religiously approved in Islam.
Haram	Anything that is religiously forbidden in Islam.
Hijab	Islamic headscarf.
Hizb al-Tahrir	Liberation Party. Islamist party calling for the overthrow of all existing regimes in the (Muslim) world so as to replace them with a final Islamic Caliphate.
Hizb al-Wasat al-Islami	Islamic Center Party. Moderate Islamist party. Originally tablished in Egypt in 1994. Later, in 2001, a similar party with the same name was established in Jordan.
Hudud	Punishments stipulated in the Qur'an for a number of crimes. These crimes are llicit sex engaged in by unmarried persons (lashing), adultery by married persons (stoning to death), drinking wine (lashing), theft (amputation of hand or foot), robbery with murder (execution) and falsely accusing someone of illicit sex or adultery (lashing). While these penalties are severe, rules of evidence are also strict and repentance by those convicted can lead to commutation of the penalty.
'Ibadat	One's obligations toward God as a Muslim. Traditionally conceived of mainly in terms of ritual

	behavior. Many Islamists, however, insist that social behavior in accordance with the Shari‘ah is equally an obligation toward God and that no real distinction exists, therefore, between ‘ibadat and mu‘amalat.
‘Id	Feast or celebration.
‘Id al-adha	The Islamic feast of sacrifice, commemorating the near-sacrifice of Isma’il by his father, the prophet Ibrahim (Abraham), as a symbol of dedication to God’s will.
‘Id al-fitr	The feast that concludes the holy month of Ramadan.
Iftar	The fast-breaking meal that is consumed during Ramadan, often immediately after sunset.
Ihsan	Charity and goodwill (religious concept).
Ijma‘	Consensus or unanimous decision. One of the bases of Islamic jurisprudence, besides the Qur’an, the Hadith and analogous reasoning.
Ijtihad	Independent religious reasoning or (re-) interpretation.
Iqra’	Read! or Recite! The command given by the angel Jibril to the Prophet during the first Revelation. Most of the chapters in the Qur’an begin with this exclamation.
Islah	Reform
Ithar	Islamic religious concept denoting mutual love, affection, sharing and sacrifice.
Jahili	Ignorant (adjective) or an ignorant person. In Islamic discourse, it is often used to signify any attitude or behavior that is considered as un-Islamic, or as remnants of the habits of pre-Islamic times.
Jahilin	The ignorant. Islamic reference to the Arabs living in the time before the vent of Islam. At present it is also often used to label all people of the past, the present or the future who are seen as unaware of (the proper meaning of) Islamic injunctions and values in their daily lives.
Jahl	Ignorance.

Jihad	Holy struggle for the sake of God. This implies military fight against those considered as enemies of Islam as well as a spiritual battle against any human disposition or tendency considered as running counter to the will of God.
Jizyah	Poll tax which Christian and Jewish subjects of the pre-modern Muslim empires had to pay their to Muslim rulers for their protection, security and rights as a religious community. Muslims justified this special tax by the fact that Christians and Jews, unlike Muslims, were exempted from military service and didn't have to pay the Zakah.
Kafir	Infidel or non-believer.
Kaid	Deception or misleading behavior.
Karamah	Dignity.
Khula'	Divorce initiated by a woman without resorting to a verdict of the qadi, in return for forfeiting her rights to alimony and any other form of support from her (ex-)husband. It is derived from the Hadith and has been made legal in a number of Arab countries, including Jordan, because possibilities to obtain the talaq through a Shari'ah court are much more limited for women then for men. Khula' laws are heavily criticized by Islamists and conservatives, however, who fear the consequences of the widened possibilities for women to divorce their husbands.
Khutbbah	Sermon in a mosque.
Kuffar	Plural of kafir.
Kufr	Unbelief.
Mahabbah	Love, affection.
Mahr	Dowry which the bridegroom pays to the bride in the form of money, gold or jewelry.
Majlis al-Shurah	Consultative Council. The elected bodies of Islamist institutions like The Muslim Brotherhood and the Islamic Action Front Party are named as such.
Mandub	Delegate. In the context of Jordanian voluntary welfare associations, the mandub is a go-between

	between the association and (prospective) clients since he or she is familiar with both. Plural: manadib
Maslahah	General interest or common good. Islamic legal concept.
Mu'adhdhin	The announcer of prayer on the minaret of a Mosque.
Mu'amalat	The realm of social dealings or relations. In partnership with the 'ibadat, this is the central domain of fiqh.
Mufti	Islamic religious expert with the authority of issuing legal opinions (fatawa)
Mujahidin	Jihad fighters.
Mujtama' ahli	Peoples' society. The term denotes the realm of popular (i.e. non-state) civic institutions that used to organize social life in pre-modern Muslim societies.
Mujtama' madani	(Modern) civil society.
Mukhabarat	Intelligence agency or secret police.
Mukhtar	Chief of an Arab village or neighborhood.
Nifaq:	Hypocrisy or paying lip service (religious term).
Niqab	Face veil that is often worn by very orthodox female Muslims.
Niyyah	Intention (religious term).
Qadi	Islamic judge.
Qur'an	The holy book of the Islamic faith.
Rahmah	Womb, but also "compassion."
Ramadan	The Islamic holy month of fasting.
Riba'	Charging interest, or usury.
Riddah	Apostasy. The Riddah wars were fought shortly after the Prophet Muhammad's death by the early Muslim community, under the leadership of caliph Abu Bakr, against newly converted tribes who defied his authority. It has often been assumed that these tribes were about to leave the Islamic faith, even though several other factors may have played a role in their opposition to Abu Bakr.
Ruq'ah	The most prevalent form of Arabic handwriting.
Sabr	Patience, fortitude or perseverance in the face of adversity. In the field of social relations, it has also connotations of tolerance and kindness.

Sadaqah	Voluntary and informal forms of aid to anyone in need. It is an Islamic concept and practice but unlike the zakah, there are no stipulations in terms of form or amount. Nonetheless, many Muslims consider it a general moral duty for every believer.
Salah	Prayer, which every Muslim is supposed to perform at least five times a day.
Shari‘ah	Literally: path. Islamic law, which is based on the values, morals and injunctions derived from the Qur’an and the Hadith. It includes many guidelines for one’s daily behavior as a Muslim besides legislation pertaining to society as a whole.
Sharif	A descendent of the prophet Muhammad.
Shaikh	A wise (and often elderly) person. The concept refers in particular to tribal chiefs and to authoritative religious experts.
Shurah	Consultation in decision-making.
Sidq	Honesty or truthfulness.
Sulha	Reconciliation, conflict resolution or peace-making.
Sunnah	Tradition; in particular the tradition of the Prophet Muhammad and the first generation of Muslims. This is in Sunni Islam considered as the authoritative model of behavior for all Muslims.
Surah	A chapter of the Qur’an.
Tabi‘un	Followers. In Islamic theological terms: the generation of Muslims after the prophet Muhammad and his companions.
Taharah	Ritual purity, hygiene, cleanliness as well as (moral) purity.
Takaful	(Mutual) social care and solidarity.
Talaq	Divorce obtained at an Islamic court through a verdict of the qadi.
Taqwah	An attitude of fear of God, or piety.
Tarbawi	Educational.
Tarbiyyah	Education or training.
Tasamuh	Tolerance or forgiveness.
Tawhid	The absolute oneness of God.
Turath	(Ancestral) heritage.
‘Ulama’	Plural of ‘alim.

Umma	Community of believers (Islamic term). Alternate meaning “nation.”
Usrah	Family. In The Muslim Brotherhood, members are called upon to consider themselves and their fellow members as a family. The basic unit of the organization, consisting of a small number of members, is therefore called ’usrah.
Wa‘izzah	A female religious teacher in a mosque.
Waqf	Income or property dedicated by the owner to religiously and socially beneficial undertakings (for instance mosques, charity for the needy, hospitals or education). Plural: Awqaf.
Wastah	Practices of favoritism or nepotism.
Zakah	Wealth tax stipulated by the Qur’an. Any Muslim with property has to pay it for the benefit of the poor, the needy, the administrators of this tax, recent converts, manumitted slaves, debtors, the fighters of the jihad and the wayfarers.

English Summary

In this dissertation, the religious discourse and the social work practices of Muslim voluntary welfare associations in Jordan are analyzed on the basis of civil society theory. It begins, therefore, with a close look at the civil society concept and the ways in which this relates to Islam, Islamist movements and Islamist NGOs.

Civil society is understood here as the realm wherein citizens associate together on a voluntary basis in order to serve their common interests, ethical values, ideals and opinions, whatever these may be. Some academics, such as Ahmed Mousalli, Giles Kepel, Saad Eddin Ibrahim, John L. Esposito and Sami Zubaida, recognize the possibility of Islamically-inspired civil society forces. Others believe that Islam and civil society are forces incompatible with each other; or, the opposite assumption, that only Islam can be the basis of an authentic civil society in the Arab World. In general, this work identifies with the views of the first group of scholars (i.e. Mousalli, et al). The historical trajectory of civil society in the Arab Muslim world significantly differs, however, from the one in the West. Several civil society forces in the powerful and wealthy Western world have criticized or attacked aspects of traditional life, including marriage, family and religion itself. Civil society forces in the Arab Muslim world, however, developed in the context of the need to react to Western political, economic as well as cultural hegemony. This defensive attitude gave rise to the increasing preponderance of relatively dogmatic and fundamentalist Islamic currents, such as The Muslim Brotherhood, in Muslim/Arab civil society.

One important way in which such currents have influenced civil society is through the establishment of voluntary welfare associations. A scholar like Sami Zubaida stresses that voluntary associations established by Islamists are engaged in efforts of religious and moral colonization of their beneficiaries. Janine A. Clark and Asef Bayat, on the other hand, emphasize the nature of Islamic NGOs as middle-class based institutions that mainly strengthen middle-class based social ties. While both approaches reveal part of the truth, it must also be said that the actual nature of these associations is heavily affected by repressive state legislation and policy. This limits them in their attempts to politically mobilize needy beneficiaries and prevents them from playing an oppositional role in the public sphere. Nevertheless, these associations succeed in giving expression to a set of socio-cultural values, derived from Islamic sources, so as to offer an alternative to the country's prevalent political, economic and socio-cultural state of affairs.

To put the religious discourse and social work practices of these associations into a wider perspective, the nature of relations between state and society in Jordan and efforts by the regime to patronize and control the Jordanian people is dealt with in this dissertation's second part. To the present day, the Hashemite dynasty plays the role of final arbiter between Jordan's state and society by implementing a framework of authoritarian pluralism. This role is upheld through an ideologically flexible and pluralist discourse embracing Islam, secularism, tribal heritage, modernizing progress, democracy, civil society, as well as unquestionable loyalty to the Hashemite patrimony. Actual practices of cooptation have resulted in the domination of the state apparatus by Jordan's indigenous tribes, and in a preponderance of Palestinians dominating the country's professional and educational spheres. Moreover, state policies protect ethnic and religious minorities as well as political and cultural Islam. While institutions of parliamentary democracy and a measure of democratic rights and freedoms exist in the Kingdom, they are limited by repressive legislation and state policies. As a result, the regime continues to maintain its hegemony over Jordanian society by skillfully employing policies of cooptation and repression.

On the one hand, these policies allow the existence of civil society forces like political parties, professional associations, employers' organizations, trade unions and the Islamist movement, to channel oppositional sentiments in ways that are often acceptable to the regime itself. On the other hand, the regime will never let skip the political reins and, therefore, consistently makes efforts to contain the influence of opposition forces. Since the 1980s, such forces have been dominated by Islamist movements; and the state takes repressive measures against these movements when it deems such measures necessary.

From the establishment of the Hashemite polity in the beginning of the 20th century, non-governmental organizations trying to serve and promote societal interests outside of the realms of state and economy have been steadily growing in number and importance. Some of these associations focus on charity and/or social development. Others are advocacy groupings that aim to influence legislation and policy in areas like human rights, gender equality, the environment or democracy. The focus of this dissertation is on the former category of associations. In particular, it analyses the way in which religious faith and discourse affect their social work approach. Therefore, its third part takes a closer look at this discourse, in terms of motivations and ideals among Muslim NGOs.

These motivations and ideals are rooted in an age-old religious social tradition in which the institutions of zakah (weath-tax aimed at supporting the needy), sadaqah (voluntary social aid) and the notion that serving the needy is serving God are central elements. The idea that helping the poor must be done for the sake of God rather than for one's self-interest is dominant in the motivational discourse of Islamist NGOs. This Islamic value-rational discourse may also go hand in hand with affective motivations of compassion toward the poor. It is also tied to visions of a moral and just Islamic society based on the "right" moral attitude of all of its members. As local critics point out, the aid given by these NGOs does contribute to the Islamist movement's political and social influence. They could not have been so successful in this regard, however, had their members and workers not been driven by genuinely social as well as religious motives.

There are also Muslim NGOs with a very similar religious approach to those affiliated with The Muslim Brotherhood, but who do not have clear ties with this, or any other political movement. Then there are more progressive NGOs whose main aim is the economic, social and psychological empowerment of the needy and who cooperate with non-Islamic, including Western, development actors. They promote generally modernist and liberal interpretations of the Islamic message rather than the fundamentalist defence against the perceived onslaught of (Western-originated) materialism and immorality often so prevalent in the discourse of Islamist and conservative Muslim NGOs.

The aim of the dissertation's fourth part is to establish the relationship between the Muslim associations' religious discourse and the socio-economic aid they provide. Islamist and non-Islamist NGOs engage in very much the same kind of provision of financial and in-kind aid. In the case of the Muslim-Brotherhood based Islamic Center Charity Society (ICCS), however, the aid-relationship is also used to pressure their clients from single-single parent "orphan" families (lacking regular breadwinners) to participate in educational programs that are strongly colored by an Islamist religious ideology. Muslim associations also engage in employment-oriented activities for their clients in the field of vocational training, finding jobs and income-generating projects.

In the fifth part, the dissertation deals with these NGOs' educational and cultural activities and the role Islamic discourse plays in them. In the case of Islamist and conservative Muslim NGOs, this discourse is focused on enhancing levels of piety. Conformity to norms of pious behavior, in a ritual as well as a social sense, is regarded as not only the path to salvation in the next life, but also as the proper way towards the realization of social harmony and family contentment in the present one. In Islamist ideology, the social integrity of Muslim society must be defended against the onslaught of Western-dominated globalization, materialism, consumerism and hedonism. A more progressive Muslim NGO, such as Al-Faruq Society, however, is inspired by UNICEF. Thus, it emphasizes the importance of developing one's individual personality and the creativity of one's children, rather than conformity to strictly conceived religious norms. The Islamic message is interpreted by Al-Faruq Society in accordance with modern rights principles. However, even some ICCS centers have modernized, or are modernizing their educational approach along these lines.

In their educational and cultural activities, Muslim NGOs express criticism (usually in the name of Islam) of the impacts of Western-dominated globalizing culture in their society. They are also critical of some traditional habits which they perceive as hindrances to the development of Muslim society in modern times. Both forms of criticism come clearly to the fore in their discourse on gender relations. The Islamist Al-'Afaf Welfare Society tries to promote its vision of a better Islamic society, characterized by chastity, modesty and justice, by organizing annual mass weddings untarnished by the customary traditional displays of luxury and ostentation. In the eyes of its members, materialism, consumerism and even deliberate Western plots undermine the Muslim family as the basis of Islamic society. Al-'Afaf Welfare Society also promotes its vision of the harmonious Islamic marriage and family through the organizing of lectures, workshops and courses. Especially the women who are active in this (as well as in other voluntary welfare associations) emphasize the un-Islamic nature of traditional habits discriminating against women in their educational and social opportunities. Other traditional habits condemned by Muslim NGOs in the name of Islam are tribal feuds, social isolation of the disabled and festive firing.

The findings presented in this dissertation affirm the middle class nature of Islamist NGOs, but acknowledge at the same time their efforts to educate their needy beneficiaries toward greater levels of piety and to work at their moral reform in a paternalistic fashion. In many cases, Islamist NGO workers live in the same neighborhood as their clients, are personally familiar with their plight and have ethnic, even family ties with them. This enables them to exercise moral patronage over them with greater effectiveness.

The dissertation concludes that the Jordanian regime forces voluntary welfare associations into the role of dutiful partners in a regime-steered effort to ensure socio-political stability and peace. In this process, the associations themselves enjoy a stake in cooperating with the state for the sake of their own service-delivery objectives. Regime authoritarianism and patronage seems to be mirrored in the associations' internal patterns of decision making and in their relations toward the clientele. Apparently, it is also mirrored in the socio-ethical discourse of many Muslim associations, where an attitude of obedience and loyalty is expected from the "weaker," such as the poor, women and children, and one of generosity, care and benevolence is expected from the stronger and wealthier individuals in society. Ironically, such an exchange is reminiscent of the way in which the Jordanian monarch is presented by the state-dominated media as a considerate father figure; while the Jordanian queen and princesses, concerned with the citizen's well-being, progress and needs, occupy the role of a kind and loving mother. The same kindness-centred discourse, of course, may also be said to dominate the citizens of the country.

This is not to say that, within these associations, things remain entirely static. To varying degrees, the forces of modernization and change (to some degree promoted by the monarchy itself) have at times profoundly affected these Muslim associations' attitudes towards gender, family, education and traditional habits. Moreover, it is possible that the potential for political opposition and protest might now be building beneath the docile surfaces of these associations. As this dissertation illustrates, the same associations represent, therefore, a highly imperfect and frustrated, but nevertheless real, motivated and changing civil society.

Nederlandse samenvatting

Deze dissertatie analyseert het religieuze discours en de sociale zorg van particuliere moslimwelzijnsorganisaties in Jordanië op basis van theorieën over het maatschappelijk middenveld. Ze begint daarom met een nadere beschouwing van dat begrip en de wijze waarop het zich verhoudt tot de islam, het islamisme en islamistische NGO's.

Sommige wetenschappers, zoals Ahmed Mousalli, Giles Kepel, Saad Eddin Ibrahim, John L. Esposito en Sami Zubaida, erkennen de mogelijkheid van het bestaan van islamitische krachten binnen het maatschappelijk middenveld. Anderen gaan ervan uit dat de islam en het maatschappelijk middenveld onverenigbaar zijn of juist dat alleen de islam de basis kan zijn van een authentiek maatschappelijk middenveld in de Arabische wereld. Dit werk identificeert zich het meest met de gezichtspunten van bovengenoemde auteurs. De historische ontwikkeling van het maatschappelijk middenveld in de Arabische en moslimwereld verschilt echter wezenlijk van die van het westen. Diverse krachten van het maatschappelijk middenveld in de machtige en welvarende westerse wereld hebben de vrijheid genomen om elk aspect van het traditonele bestaan, waaronder het huwelijk, het gezin en de religie als zodanig, ter discussie te stellen. Krachten binnen het maatschappelijk middenveld in de Arabische wereld echter ontwikkelden zich in de context van de noodzaak om een antwoord te formuleren op de westerse politieke, economische en ook culturele hegemonie. Deze defensieve houding gaf aanleiding tot het toenemende gewicht van relatief dogmatische en fundamentalistische islamitische stromingen, zoals de Moslimbroederschap, in het Arabisch maatschappelijk middenveld.

Een van de wijzen waarop islamisten hun aanwezigheid in dat maatschappelijk middenveld hebben versterkt, is door het oprichten van particuliere welzijns-NGO's. Een wetenschapper als Zubaida benadrukt dat particuliere verenigingen die door islamisten zijn opgericht zich inspannen om hun begunstigden religieus en moreel te koloniseren. Aan de andere kant benadrukken Janine A. Clark en Asef Bayat het karakter van islamitische NGO's als instellingen die hun basis hebben in de middenklasse en die vooral de sociale banden binnen die klasse versterken. Beide benaderingen werpen licht op een deel van de waarheid, maar het daadwerkelijke functioneren van islamistische NGO's kan ook niet los worden gezien van repressieve overheidswetgeving en beleid. Deze repressie beperkt de mogelijkheden van deze NGO's om hun behoeftige cliënten politiek te mobiliseren in ernstige mate en belet hen om een openlijke rol te spelen van politieke oppositie en protest in de openbare sfeer. Daarom geven ze vooral uiting aan sociaal-culturele waarden, ontleend aan de islamitische bronnen, als een alternatief voor de gevestige politieke, econonomische en sociaal-culturele orde.

Om het werk van islamistische en andere moslim-NGO's in een breder perspectief te plaatsen, behandelt het tweede deel van de dissertatie de aard van de relaties tussen staat en samenleving in Jordanië in het kader van de inspanningen van de eerstgenoemde om de laatstgenoemde te bevoogden en te beheersen. Tot op de dag van vandaag neemt de Hashemitische dynastie de rol op zich van scheidsrechter voor de diverse krachten binnen staat en samenleving in het kader van een autoritair pluralisme. Deze rol gaat vergezeld van een ideologisch flexibel en pluralistisch discours dat zowel islam als secularisme omvat, zowel tribale erfenis als moderniserende vooruitgang, zowel democratie en maatschappelijk middenveld als onvoorwaardelijke loyaliteit aan het Hashemitische patrimonium. Feitelijke praktijken van inkapseling hebben geleid tot de overheersing van het Jordaanse overheidsapparaat door de autochtone stammen en tot het overwicht van de Palestijnen in het bedrijfsleven, het professionele leven en het onderwijs. Verder beschermt het overheidsbeleid zowel etnische en religieuze minderheden als de politieke en culturele islam. Alhoewel instellingen van de parlementaire democratie en – tot op zekere hoogte – democratische rechten en vrijheden aanwezig zijn in het koninkrijk, worden die in de praktijk toch ernstig beperkt door de repressieve wetgeving en het overheidsbeleid. Het regime lijkt tot op de dag van vandaag succes te hebben gehad in het veiligstellen van zijn hegemonie over de Jordaanse samenleving door een combinatie van inkapseling en repressie toe te passen.

Dit beleid staat enerzijds de aanwezigheid toe van krachten van het maatschappelijk middenveld, zoals politieke partijen, beroepsorganisaties, werkgeversorganisaties, vakbonden en de islamistische beweging, vaak met het oogmerk om oppositionele sentimenten te kanaliseren in een richting die acceptabel is voor het regime. Aan de andere kant wil het regime zijn eigen greep op politiek en samenleving behouden. Daarom spant het zich in om de invloed van oppositiekrachten, die sinds de jaren tachtig worden gedomineerd door de islamistische beweging, in te dammen en neemt het repressieve maatregelen tegen hen wanneer dat noodzakelijk wordt geacht.

Vanaf de vestiging van het Hashemitische staatsbestel in het begin van de twintigste eeuw groeiden niet-gouvernementele organisaties, die maatschappelijke belangen proberen te dienen en te bevorderen buiten de terreinen van staat en economie om, in aantal en in betekenis. Sommige van deze NGO's richten zich op liefdadigheid en/of sociale ontwikkeling. Anderen proberen wetgeving en beleid te beïnvloeden op terreinen als mensenrechten, gelijkheid tussen mannen en vrouwen, het milieu of democratisering. Deze dissertatie richt zich in de eerste plaats op de eerste categorie van NGO's, en vooral op de manier waarop religieus geloof en discours hun benadering van sociale zorg beïnvloeden op het vlak van motivaties en idealen.

Het derde deel bekijkt de religieuze motivaties en idealen die bij moslim-NGO's aanwezig zijn van nabij. Deze zijn geworteld in een eeuwenoude religieuze sociale traditie waarbinnen de instellingen van zakah (belasting om de behoeftigen te ondersteunen), sadaqa (sociale hulp op vrijwillige basis) en de notie dat het dienen van de behoeftigen gelijkstaat aan het dienen van God de centrale elementen zijn. Het idee dat het helpen van de armen ter wille van God moet plaatsvinden en niet ter wille van het eigenbelang is dominant in het motivationele discours van islamistische NGO's. Deze islamistische waarde-rationaliteit kan vergezeld gaan van affectieve motivaties van compassie ten aanzien van de armen. Het is ook verbonden met visies op een morele en rechtvaardige islamitische samenleving die gebaseerd is op de juiste morele attitude en mentaliteit van al zijn leden. Zoals Jordaanse critici beweren, draagt het sociale werk van deze NGO's inderdaad bij aan de politieke en maatschappelijke invloed van de islamistische beweging. Zij zouden daarin echter niet zo succesvol zijn geweest als hun medewerkers niet door reëele religieuze en sociale motieven gedreven werden.

Er zijn ook moslim-NGO's met een zeer vergelijkbare religieuze benadering als NGO's die met de Moslimbroederschap verbonden zijn, maar die geen duidelijke banden hebben met deze, of met welke andere politieke beweging dan ook. Dan zijn er nog de meer progressieve NGO's die zich vooral de economische, sociale en psychologische empowerment van de behoeftigen ten doel stellen, samenwerken met niet-islamitische, waaronder westerse, ontwikkelingsactoren en meer modernistische en liberale interpretaties van de islamitische boodschap promoten. Zij richten zich niet zozeer op een fundamentalistische verdediging tegen de vermeende aanval van (westers) materialisme en immoraliteit die het discours van islamistische en conservatieve moslim-NGO's beheerst.

Het vierde deel van de dissertatie gaat in op het verband tussen het religieuze discours van de moslim-NGO's en hun sociaal-economische hulpverlening. Islamistische zowel als niet-islamistische NGO's houden zich grotendeels met dezelfde vormen van financiële hulpverlening en hulp in natura bezig. In het geval van de met de Moslimbroederschap verbonden Islamic Center Charity Society wordt de hulprelatie echter ook gebruikt om druk op de cliënten uit eenoudergezinnen of "weesgezinnen" (die een reguliere kostwinner missen) uit te oefenen om deel te nemen aan educatieve programma's die sterk gekleurd zijn door een islamistische religieuze ideologie. Moslim-NGO's houden zich ook bezig met werkgelegenheids-geörienteerde activiteiten voor hun cliënten op de terreinen van vakopleidingen, het vinden van banen en eigen werkgelegenheidsprojecten.

Het vijfde deel van de dissertatie behandelt de culturele en educatieve activiteiten van moslim-NGO's, en vooral de rol die het islamitisch discours daarin speelt. In het geval van islamistische en conservatieve moslim-NGO's is dit discours gericht op het verhogen van het niveau van vroomheid. Conformiteit aan normen van vroom gedrag, zowel in de rituele als in de sociale sfeer, wordt niet alleen gezien als het juiste pad naar verlossing in het leven na de dood, maar ook als de manier om sociale harmonie en geluk te verwezenlijken in zowel het gezin als in de wijdere samenleving. In het islamistische discours moet de sociale integriteit van de moslimsamenleving verdedigd worden tegen de aanval van westers-gedomineerde globalisering, materialisme, consumentisme en hedonisme. Een meer progressieve moslim-NGO als Al-Faruq Society wordt geïnspireerd door UNICEF, die het belang benadrukt van de ontwikkeling van de individuele persoonlijkheid en creativiteit van kinderen en niet zozeer van hun conformiteit aan streng opgevatte religieuze normen. De islamitische boodschap wordt door Al-Faruq Society in overeenstemming met moderne en mondiaal vastgelegde rechtenprincipes geïnterpreteerd. Ook enkele centra van the Islamic Center Charity Society zijn de laatste jaren echter deze weg in geslagen.

In hun educatieve en culturele activiteiten uiten moslim-NGO's, vaak in naam van de islam, kritiek op de impact van de westers-gedomineerde globaliserende cultuur in hun samenleving, maar ook op traditionele gewoonten die als hindernissen worden gezien voor de ontwikkeling van de moslimsamenleving in moderne tijden. Beide vormen van kritiek komen het duidelijkst naar voren in hun discoursen over man-vrouwrelaties. De islamitische Al-'Afaf Society probeert zijn visie op een betere islamistische samenleving, die gekenmerkt wordt door deugdzaamheid, bescheidenheid en rechtvaardigheid, te promoten door jaarlijkse massabruiloften te organiseren als een alternatief voor de gebruikelijke dure familiebruiloften die vaak gekenmerkt worden door uiterlijk vertoon en luxe. In de ogen van zijn leden ondermijnen materialisme, consumentisme en zelfs doelbewuste westerse complotten het moslimgezin als de basis van de islamitische samenleving. Al-'Afaf Welfare Society promoot zijn visie op het harmonieuze islamitische huwelijk en gezin ook door lezingen, workshops en cursussen te organiseren.

Vooral vrouwen die actief zijn in deze of in andere particuliere welzijnsorganisaties benadrukken het on-islamitische karakter van traditionele gewoonten die vrouwen achterstellen in hun educatieve en maatschappelijke kansen. Andere traditionele gewoonten die moslim-NGO's in naam van de Islam veroordelen zijn stamvetes, het sociale isolement van gehandicapten en het schieten in de lucht tijdens feesten.

De bevindingen van deze dissertatie bevestigen het middenklassekarakter van islamistische NGO's maar belichten tegelijkertijd hun inspanningen om hun behoeftige begunstigden middels educatie tot hogere niveaus van vroomheid te brengen en te werken aan hun morele hervorming. In veel gevallen leven medewerkers van islamistische NGO's in dezelfde buurt als hun cliënten, zijn ze persoonlijk bekend met hun lot en hebben ze etnische en soms zelfs familiebanden met hen. Dat stelt hen in staat om deze cliënten des te effectiever moreel te patroniseren. Daarnaast concludeert de dissertatie dat het Jordaanse regime particuliere welzijnsorganisaties dwingt de rol te spelen van plichtsgetrouwe partners in een door het regime geleide inspanning om de sociaal-politieke stabiliteit en de binnenlandse vrede veilig te stellen. In dit proces raken die organisaties vanzelf geïnteresseerd in de samenwerking met de staat terwille van hun eigen doeleinden van dienstverlening. Het autoritarisme en paternalisme van het regime lijkt weerspiegeld te worden in de interne patronen van besluitvorming binnen deze organisaties en ook in hun relaties met de cliëntèle. Blijkbaar wordt het ook weerspiegeld in het sociaal-ethisch discours van vele moslim-NGO's, waar een attitude van gehoorzaamheid of meegaandheid wordt verwacht van de "zwakkeren", zoals de armen, de vrouwen en de kinderen, en een van edelmoedigheid, zorg en liefdadigheid van de sterkeren. Zo'n uitwisseling herinnert aan de manier waarop de Jordaanse monarch in de door de overheid gedomineerde media wordt gepresenteerd als een vaderfiguur en de Jordaanse koningin en prinsessen als moederfiguren die liefdadig en zorgzaam zijn ten aanzien van het welbevinden van de Jordaanse burgers, maar die hen door deze houding tegelijkertijd ook domineren. Dat betekent niet dat de zaken er eenvoudig en statisch voorstaan in dit opzicht. Moderniserende veranderingen, die ook door de monarchie zelf worden gepromoot, hebben in verschillende mate invloed op het discours en de praktijk van moslim-NGO's omtrent man-vrouwverhoudingen, gezin, onderwijs en traditionele gewoonten. Daarnaast kunnen onder de oppervlakte van politieke volgzaamheid en gezagsgetrouwheid politieke oppositie en protest wel degelijk aanwezig zijn bij hen. Deze organisaties vertegenwoordigen daarom een zeer onvolmaakt en gefrustreerd, maar desalniettemin echt, gemotiveerd en veranderend maatschappelijk middenveld.

Curriculum Vitae

1967	Geboren te Dordrecht.
1988 –1989	Propedeuse Geschiedenis aan de Katholieke Universiteit Nijmegen. Cum laude geslaagd.
1989 –1995	Doctoraal Midden-Oosten Studies aan de Katholieke Universiteit Nijmegen. Inclusief veldwerk in Jordanië naar de opvang en de integratie van Palestijnse vluchtelingen uit Koeweit. Scriptie heeft hoge waardering gekregen.
1996 –1997	Juridisch begeleider voor asielzoekers en vluchtelingen bij Vluchtelingenwerk Nijmegen.
1998	Onderzoeksassistent bij het Verwey Jonker Instituut te Utrecht in trendstudie Allochtone Jeugd en Welzijn.
1999 –2001	Spreekuurmedewerker bij de Stichting Het Inter-Lokaal, een sociaal-juridisch adviesbureau voor migranten te Nijmegen.
	Mphil-cursus bij het ISIM (International Institute for the Study of Islam in the Modern World) te Leiden.
2001–2007	Promovendus bij het ISIM te Leiden.
2007	Onderzoeker aan de Radboud Universiteit Nijmegen naar bekering tot de islam in West Europa.
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