Al-Mubadara - Third Current Politics of the Second Intifada

Remobilizing politics in a de-powered Palestinian Authority

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My admiration goes to those righteous people who fight with dignity for their freedom.

Among those, thank you to my respondents in Palestine for their time and contribution.

Oslo, May 18th 2007

Martin Bergsbakk Holter

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List of abbreviations

AAWC – Anti Apartheid Wall Campaign

CEC – Central Election Commission

DFLP – Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine

DoP – Declaration of Principles

DWRC – Democracy and Workers' Rights Centre

FIDA – Palestine Democratic Union

HDIP – Health, Development, Information and Policy Institute

IA – Interim Agreement

IWC – Independent Workers Committees

PA – Palestinian Authority

PARC – Palestinian Agricultural Relief Committees

PCBS – Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics

PCHR – Palestinian Centre for Human Rights

PENGON – Palestinian Environmental NGOs Network

PFLP – Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine

PLC – Palestinian Legislative Council

PLO – Palestine Liberation Organization

PNC – Palestine National Council

PNGO – Palestinian NGO Network

PPP – Palestinian People's Party

PRCS – Palestinian Red Crescent Society

PWWSD – Palestinian Working Women Society for Development

UPMRC – Union of Palestinian Medical Relief Committees

1. Introduction

In 2002 the Palestinian Authority suffered its until then darkest moment. Two years into the al-Aqsa Intifada, the second Palestinian uprising, the Israeli army reoccupied the Palestinian cities in the West Bank, rampaging its public institutions. Since 1995 these cities, known by the Interim Agreement (IA) between Israel and the PLO as area "A"[1], had been under control of the Palestinian Authority (PA).

In the same year as the PA was stripped of its pretence of power, in a much less noted event, a group of prominent Palestinian public figures launched a new political initiative. Claiming to be "a response to popular demands from men and women calling for increased participation by Palestinian citizens", the Palestinian National Initiative - or al-Mubadara[2] - was launched to "become the means for the development of a wide-scale national democratic movement" (al-Mubadara 2002). Critiquing the undemocratic conduct of the PA leadership al-Mubadara presented democracy as an urgent national issue. With the aim of promoting Palestinian liberation through democratizing Palestinian institutions and promoting civil resistance, al-Mubadara has towards the end of the second Intifada attempted to build new movement and party structures in the occupied Palestinian territories.

Three years after its announcement, in January 2005, one of the co-founders of al-Mubadara, Dr. Mustafa Barghouti, was the front opposition candidate in the elections for the presidency of the Palestinian Authority, attracting 20% of the vote. On a platform supported by the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) as well as al-Mubadara, he seemed to draw considerable support not seen for a candidate of his kind earlier. Some saw it as a sign that it could be possible to establish an

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[1] The Interim Agreement divided the West Bank and the Gaza Strip into three different categories of territory, area A, B and C. In areas A, mainly the Palestinian towncenters, the Palestinian Authority would be responsible for both security and civil affairs. In areas B, mainly around Palestinian villages, the Palestinian Authority would be responsible for civil affairs and public order, while Israeli forces would be responsible for security, while in areas C, mainly Israeli settlements, non-populated areas and Palestinian villages close to Israeli installations, Israel would retain total control.

[2] "The Initiative" in its common English transliteration from Arabic. "Al-Mubadara" will be used hereafter.

effective third force as a challenge to the two dominant political forces in Palestinian politics, Fateh (whose candidate Mahmoud Abbas won an overwhelming victory in the elections), and the Islamist Hamas (who boycotted the elections).

Leading a democratic "third current" in Palestinian politics has been a central ambition for al-Mubadara. This thesis will explore the role of al-Mubadara as an effort to establish a third force in Palestinian politics in the period of reform and electoral openings that characterized the PA towards the end of the second intifada. It will seek to map out factors which have affected on al-Mubadara in its effort to mobilize such a third force.

1.1 Context for analysis

The Palestinian Authority was established in 1994 as a result of the Oslo Accords agreed upon by the state of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). On the eve of the second intifada that erupted in year 2000 the PA was formally on extra time. The Oslo Accords had established the Palestinian Authority to exist for an interim period of five years (1994-1999), after which time a final settlement to the conflict over Palestine would be negotiated. The second intifada witnessed the fragile nature of the PA, at the same time as it was a catalyst for reform and democratization of its institutions. On the one hand it became clear from the Israeli incursions in spring 2002 that the PA was virtually powerless. People started disbelieving in the capacity of the PA to change the circumstances under which they lived. On the other hand they took part in a series of elections marking the end of the second intifada[3] which reaffirmed the position of the Palestinian Authority as the central political face of the national aspirations of the occupied population.

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[3] There may be different opinions on the time frame of the second intifada. Though the uprising reached its height in 2002 I treat the joint agreement found in Cairo in spring 2005 between all the Palestinian factions to implement a unilateral ceasefire as constituting its cessation.

The intifada not only challenged the Israeli grip on the agenda for Palestinian state-building. It challenged also the tight grip on the PA's institutions held by the previously exiled national leadership of the PLO. The leadership had returned to the occupied territories in Palestine in 1994 to take control of the Palestinian Authority as it was established. Within Fateh[4], historically the main faction of the PLO and the main tool for securing the PA with a political base, a growing number of voices called for a renewal of leadership and reform of the PA. Hamas[5], which had rejected the Oslo Accords and formed the main opposition (outside the PA), saw its popularity rise as the corrupted Fateh rule came to the surface, and slowly came closer to actually engaging the PA. The secular leftist factions of the PLO were split and confused over the political developments since Oslo.[6] It was rather the NGOs that they had established in the 1980s that had come increasingly to the fore in the 1990s to voice discontent against authoritarian tendencies and mismanagement in the PA.[7] In the second intifada they tried to stage a civil resistance against the building of the separation wall that Israel started erecting inside the occupied Palestinian territories in late 2002. The wall became one of the few issues were a civil resistance could find space in an intifada which at an early stage had become highly militarized.

The relation between political factions of the Palestinian national movement and leading NGOs makes up an interesting entry point for studying Palestinian politics and efforts of democratization on the eve of the second intifada. The NGOs in Palestine have a history that is closely linked with the political factions. As Jensen

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[4] Fateh, reverse acronym in Arabic for the Palestinian National Liberation Movement, was founded in exile in 1959 and has since 1969 been the dominant force in the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO).

[5] Hamas, acronym in Arabic for the Islamic Resistance Movement, was founded in Gaza in 1987 by people related to the Gaza branch of the Muslim Brotherhood.

[6] Palestinian politics can hardly be analyzed on a traditional western left-right scale. "Left" or "leftist" here though refers to factions of the PLO that have had a clear ideological origin in the Marxist tradition, notably the Palestinian People's Party (PPP), the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP), and the Palestinian Democratic Union (FIDA). The PFLP and DFLP has formed the main opposition to the dominant non-ideological national liberation movement of Fateh inside the PLO.

[7] "NGOs" in the following will refer to the NGOs with historical ties to the leftist PLO factions. Through the Palestinian NGO network (PNGO) it is these which have been active in portraying themselves as NGOs. They include organizations working within fields such as health, agriculture, women, culture and human rights.

(2005) asks, the question arising in the later stages of the second intifada was whether it would be possible to have a political spillover from a renewed civil resistance against the separation wall Israel started to erect in the Palestinian territories from 2002. If a vacuum was created between the dominant forces, Fateh and Hamas, could a new political force emerge to fill it? (Jensen 2005:21)

When the call for al-Mubadara was launched it was clearly based within a tradition of secular left leaning politics in the Palestinian national movement. Two of its founders, Dr. Haidar Abdel Shafi, and Dr. Mustafa Barghouti, both had their political background from the Palestinian Peoples Party (PPP)[8], and as leaders of well reputed NGOs in Palestinian society, the Palestinian Red Crescent Society in Gaza and the Union of Palestinian Medical Relief Committees (UPMRC) respectively. In the 1990s Barghouti had been one of the most prominent and successful of all NGO activists, emerging as spokesperson for "civil society". Now he returned fully to politics, this time not with the PPP, but with a new creation, al-Mubadara. Presented as less ideological in content and less rigid in organization than the existing secular leftist factions the ambition was to form a new movement that could renew and lead a third political trend.

The rise of the Islamic Resistance Movement, Hamas, during the past two decades has triggered a booming academic literature on its ideology, organization, activity and political impact. The weakness of the leftist factions of the PLO since the first intifada has led to a low in the writings on that part of the Palestinian national movement. Besides the voluminous literature on the establishment of the Palestinian PA and the consequences of the Oslo Accords, the literature on the forces outside the PA (including the role of Fateh in it) and Hamas, has been a range of studies into the notion of a Palestinian *civil society*. In these studies NGOs like the UPMRC have been analyzed as important actors. This literature coincides with the rise of civil society as a main concept in international development discourse, and the idea of a

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[8] Former Palestinian Communist Party (PCP), renamed after the downfall of the Soviet Union

Palestinian civil society as a haven for opposition to the authoritarian tendencies of the PA.

This thesis relates to the efforts of establishing a third *political* force in Palestinian politics within a legacy of civil society NGOs and leftist political factions. Not yet a strong force, academic interest has yet to provide extensive coverage of the nascent phenomenon which I here term "third current politics". Interest may be on the rise though, as may be indicated by the set up of a research project in late 2006 by the Development Studies Programme at Birzeit University in Ramallah, under the heading "Palestinian political landscape: questions on the viability of a 'third way'". It touches upon many of the questions raised throughout this thesis, but does not follow the effort of al-Mubadara in particular. This thesis may hopefully form part of a complementary effort to analyze a field that until now has not been subject to systematic academic scrutiny.

In a rather optimistic account of NGO activities during the second Intifada Jensen (2005) finds that forms of civil resistance have been reactivated, in particular related to the Israeli building of the separation wall inside the occupied territories. Jensen asks whether the relatively successful presidential campaign of Mustafa Barghouti, NGO leader and head of al-Mubadara, achieving 20 % of the votes in the 2005 presidential elections, may have been "a turning point of the democratic left". In conclusion he points to the possibility for establishing new political initiatives that could be able to capitalize on this revived political engagement and bring it into a new political force. It is exactly the basis for such an effort this thesis seeks to investigate further.

1.2 Statement of the problem and assumptions for analysis

The research questions for this analysis are the following:

- How and to what extent has al-Mubadara been able to establish a third force in Palestinian politics, to challenge the hegemony of Fateh and the rise of the Islamists in an attempt to be a force for democratization?

- What explains the degree to which al-Mubadara has been able to establish such a third force?

It is clear that Palestinian politics is heavily influenced by external forces (Hilal 2003). The arrangements of the Oslo Accords and the continued physical presence of the Israeli occupation very much impact on and define the borderlines for Palestinian politics. So too does the heavy intervention by international donors on the parameters for the conduct of the Palestinian Authority and Palestinian organizations, and international powers dealing with the conflict. Internally the institutions and power structures of the PA have changed over time. The bipolarization of the political arena between Fateh and Hamas has to a large extent been the defining structure from the time Hamas emerged as the main opponent to the framework set up by the Oslo Accords, and especially since Hamas, in spite of this opposition, decided to engage the political system of the PA (Usher 2005). It is arguably important to look at these political structures in order to identify the circumstances under which a new political challenger is emerging and what opportunities and constraints these circumstances pose.

In the 1990s, while the secular leftist parties found themselves in crisis, the NGOs flourished. They were able to attract international funding within a new developmental paradigm, and to assume the role as a "non-political" opposition. The NGOs occupy a social space that it shares with the political factions on the left, from which they emerged in the first place. It is impossible to disconnect the new political project of al-Mubadara from the history and developments of the NGOs. The donor

supported developmental and civil society paradigm that dominated after the Oslo Accords had a profound effect on the NGO sector (Hammami 1995, 2000). Planning, efficiency in service delivery and reporting required new skills, resulting in professionalized and depoliticized NGOs that to a large degree were separated from the grassroots. The results in terms of constituency and possibilities for mobilization for political action and support should be taken into account, specifically also for the case of al-Mubadara.

The upsurge in political organization and politicization in the first Palestinian intifada (1987-1993) coincided with the emergence of a new generation of middle class activists, generated by a boom in higher education in the occupied territories. In the general Arab context state-centric middle class formations have been presented as one explanation for the relative lack of liberal democracy in the region (Waterbury 2001). In Palestine the establishment of a PA bureaucracy and a neopatrimonial system of political allegiance have pointed in the same direction, while the NGO sector has provided another arena for middle class engagement. During the second intifada the economic situation for the people under PA rule worsened drastically. Marginalised sections of society have been plunged into acute poverty in need of emergency aid for basic needs, while the middle classes were also affected by high unemployment rates and relative deprivation. The relation between the changing social formation and the modes of political engagement and allegiance may provide another important entry point to understand the relative success of al-Mubadara in establishing a third force.

Al-Mubadara has not been the only party to aspire to a position as a third force. A range of old and new factions have competed for this position, notably in the race for parliamentary elections in 2006, claiming to be the true "democratic" alternative. The political content of such a position draws on both the legacy of the old left wing factions of the PLO, and the ideas of the liberal civil society paradigm that has characterized the NGOs. In opposition to Hamas "democratic" would basically mean secular. And in opposition to the historically secular Fateh, "democratic" would mean

clean governance. Within these frames however, there has been a contest to establish a platform for a third political current. Al-Mubadara was originally launched in 2002 to gather the secular non-Fateh forces under a joint vision and platform. The realities have made al-Mubadara one out of many contenders to represent a third current. In this process of competition to represent the meaning of a third democratic opposition may lie another key to capture their effort to establish a third force in Palestinian politics.

The above observations may be summarized in the following four explanatory perspectives:

- The contextual political space of opportunities for political mobilization.
- The impact of the professionalization of the NGO sector.
- The socio-economic conditions and changing social formations.
- The competition over the political meaning of a "third current" in Palestinian politics.

This point of departure suggests an analysis within the more general field of social movements studies. I rely particularly on the one synthesized by McAdam et al. (1996). They present three central dimensions that I find most relevant, conceptualised as political *political opportunity structures*, *mobilizing structures*, and *framing processes*. As this framework and its relevance will be elaborated further it will serve as a crucial guide to answer the earlier stated research questions.

1.3 Further outline

The research project has been conducted in the form of a qualitative case study. It is based on a theoretically guided analytical framework to conceptualize the empirical reality of Palestinian politics, to try to shed light over processes of political engagement in Palestine. Even though I introduce a set of factors to see if they may contribute in explaining a condition I remain modest as to the explanatory power of

this particular study. Research methodology, design and data for the study will be further elaborated in chapter two.

Politics in Palestine is subject to certain specific circumstances. The PA is a political entity which is neither a national liberation movement nor a state. Rather it is a sort of a quasi state, an entity with limited powers and authority. It is marked by the regulations of the Oslo Accords and subsequent agreements between Israel and the PLO, Israeli military force, and Palestinian ambition to expand its power towards statehood. Chapter three traces these contextual features of Palestinian politics, and situates an approach to a third political current within this context. Drawing on literature on social movements it outlines how *political opportunity structures, mobilizing structures* and *framing processes* can support the above proposed explanatory factors, and thereby integrate and conceptualize an approach to al-Mubadara and their contribution to establish a third force in Palestinian politics.

The subsequent three chapters are structured on the approach outlined in chapter three. Chapter four describes a *political opportunity structure* with reference to the developments in the second intifada, and analyses the emergence and fortunes of al-Mubadara with reference to these developments. Chapter five outlines the legacy of the political factions and the NGOs as part of a *mobilization structure,* to trace how the effort to establish al-Mubadara has been able to draw on organizational structures and resources. This is further related to the way in which socio-economic developments relate to ways of mobilizing for political support and action, and how this has affected al-Mubadara and third current fortunes. Chapter six analyses the meaning of "third current politics" in Palestine, seeing its outlook as a result of *framing processes*, and reviews how al-Mubadara has tried to develop a new political outlook primarily referring to "democratic values". The crowded space filled with political contestants that want to present themselves as a third force in Palestinian politics, calls for asking what the results of this framing contest are and the role of al-Mubadara in it.

The findings of the study are further summarized in conclusion in chapter seven. I find that al-Mubadara has played a notable yet limited role towards the end of the second intifada. Al-Mubadara has not been able to create a structure that could supersede the existing structures of left leaning, secular and democratic forces in the occupied territories. Neither has al-Mubadara been able to remobilize any major constituency for civil resistance and political activism. The Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC) elections of 2006, where al-Mubadara's electoral coalition "Independent Palestine" scored 2,7 % of the vote for the national lists, indicated that al-Mubadara had become one out of many small contenders to lead a possible "third force" in Palestinian politics. The proposed factors for explanation have been valuable in accounting for this state of affairs. The context of political institutions and forces, forming an *opportunity structure*, relevantly places the emergence and challenges of al-Mubadara. The legacy of demobilization in the 1990s and the function of the professionalized NGOs, in addition to problems of socio-economic circumstances and clientelist mechanisms clearly, as *structures of mobilization*, have had an impact on al-Mubadara fortunes in establishing a third political force. The lack of a distinctive and practical political outlook and a blurred image as the champions of democracy, seen as *frames* for collective action, has not been helpful in elevating al-Mubadara above other contenders to represent a "third force".

2. Methodology, design, and data

Like for any other research the quality of empirical research into social phenomena rests to a large degree on the method. In a qualitative study like this one, issues of methodology, design and data are crucial in order to present a study that by a certain analytical order can contribute to enhance our understanding of social phenomena. In the following I present the methodology of this study, its design, data, scope and ambition for explanation.

2.1 Al-Mubadara in third current politics – a case

The notion *third current politics* refers to the secular political movements, factions, and initiatives that try to emerge as a third force in Palestinian Politics in a space besides Fateh and Hamas. Further I narrow the empirical study down to a concrete political initiative, and study more closely *al-Mubadara* as one of those initiatives searching to form a third force. Al-Mubadara is, as the name suggests, an initiative to promote a democratic movement as a strong third alternative in Palestinian politics, an initiative that includes the building of party like structures. In a way this defines "a case within the case", as al-Mubadara also can be seen as a test example for the viability of third current politics. In general terms it refers to a set of actors within certain institutions, operating within a larger context of social forces, national institutions and violent history. The analysis of this case then is "an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in its real-life context" (Yin 1994:13).

The motivation for the present case study of al-Mubadara emanates from a particular interest in the field of inquiry itself. The questions asked are empirical and related to a single case. I apply a theoretical framework from the tradition of social movement studies to support my propositions for factors which may explain a certain condition, the role of al-Mubadara in the second intifada with regards to political mobilization an the building of a third force in Palestinian politics. As such this is a case study

where theoretical guidance is used to support the understanding of the case in itself
(Andersen 2005:69).

As it is implicit in the notion of a "case" that a case study highlights the significance
of one case in itself, however, defining a case also implies the question of what the
case is a case of - an empirical or theoretical universe. This can be related to the
debate on the role of area studies in the field of comparative politics. Seen as detailed
inquiries into the specific conditions of a certain country or region, often depicted as
particular in culture or political history, area studies have not easily been bridged
with traditions of comparative politics which emphasize cross case comparison and
building of general theories of political development on a higher level of abstraction.
As Bates argues however, it should be a goal to bridge this discussion, and let area
studies inform such endeavours and vice versa (Bates 1997).

Following this argument, as this case study falls in the category of area studies, it
should not be excluded as material for more general debates. With no pretension to
further development of generalized theory by this study in itself, it could be seen as a
brick in the larger puzzle to inform such endeavours at a later stage. The issues
involved and an analytical framework that is clearly developed with an ambition of
generating more general answers in the comparative literature on social movements,
establish grounds for such relevance. But first and foremost it can be seen in this
regard as a contribution to complement the study of politics within the Palestinian
national movement, with special regards to politics within the framework of the PA, a
context which specific traits are highlighted.

The challenge then, is to establish a clear conceptual framework based on a careful
and fruitful description of the particular context, previous research, relevant concepts
and theoretical guidance, in order to avoid "a lengthy narrative that follows no
predictable structure and is hard to write and hard to read" (Yin 1981:64).

2.2 Design

How to go from a research question to relevant answers to them? What falls in between is the question of how to organize the study, how to relate empirical evidence, concepts and assumptions so as to make sure that results have some degree of validity. In forming a study that has some explanatory ambition, it is therefore essential to maintain a focus on how the study is designed. A main problem in this regard is to handle the issue of the enormous amount of factors that may have an explanatory impact. A crucial question will be how to treat the challenges in establishing analytical control Yin (1994).

A main component in a strategy to establish analytical control is to draw on insights from previous research and theoretical propositions for explanatory frameworks to guide data collection and analysis (Yin 1994:13). Defining a study with regards to keeping analytical control is much about definition and configuration of different concepts into an explanatory framework. In my case it is the discussion of the basic developments forming Palestinian politics under the PA together with the guidance found in social movement theory to form an analytical framework, that forms the mechanism for establishing analytical control.

In their attempt at synthesis of approaches to social movements McAdam et al. (1996) propose *political opportunity structures, mobilizing structures,* and *framing processes*, as distinctive yet complementary approaches to explain the emergence, function and fortunes of movements. An analytical framework based on such theory, as an approach to an effort of political movement mobilization within the confines of the Palestinian national movement and the Palestinian Authority, is argued for and presented further in chapter three and subsequent analytical chapters. While I argue for their relevance the degree to which they actually provide such relevance will always be open for contest.

At this point I will emphasize the role of these perspectives in structuring the approach of this thesis. As they highlight different aspects of an undertaking like al-

Mubadara to mobilize for a third force in Palestinian politics and as they draw on a synthesis of a long tradition of research into politics of contestation and movements, these three approaches in sum can bee seen to provide a framework of complementary explanatory factors. This framework largely sums up the content of the propositions I hypothesized in chapter one could explain al-Mubadara fortunes. However, it is important to assert that this framework does not include an ambition of causal stringency or precision. The approaches suggested are not intended to form variables in a strict causal model for this research. They are also not meant to be mutually exclusive, and their possible interrelations are not predetermined in this study.

To sum up, I have stated for this research a problem that calls for explanation and have hypothesized four explanatory factors (1.2). These are supported by three explanatory approaches. This does not amount to anything like a full model of causal explanation. Rather it is an exploration to see if these approaches may contribute to find empirical support for the proposed explanatory factors, and thereby contribute to explanation building relevant to the research questions. My explanatory ambition is thus there, but remains limited.

2.3 Data

To a certain degree one can say that data are not just "found" when conducting a qualitative case study. Not necessarily having to join the constructivist camp, it is plausible to say that the selection of data, and their makeup, is very much linked to the process of focusing the relevant variables and the relations they are expected to be part of (Andersen 2005:24). As such focusing data is very much related to the process of defining the case itself as suitable for research.

A challenge in conducting a qualitative case study is to handle the possibility of bias in the process of selecting the data. In contrast to the random statistical sample to be found in for example statistical surveys, the selection of written material and a

smaller number of objects for interviewing by the researcher might produce a skewed pool of data for the analysis. This underlines the importance of proceeding with conscience when setting criteria for generating data. It is nevertheless inevitable that the final selection to some extent will lean on the subjective verdict of the researcher. The aim for the literature review has therefore been to achieve a reasonable overview given the time and language skills available, to be able to present relevant interpretations of the matters at hand from different perspectives. The arguments for the selection of key actors and informants for interviews are therefore open and referred below.

When conducting research in close contact with political actors, the danger of letting political agendas influence our interpretation and treatment of evidence must be taken carefully into account. As highlighted by Ottar Dahl (1973:75-6) the ability and willingness of the source to give a truthful account of happenings must be scrutinized. An important element in trying to mend this problem is that of data triangulation. When relying on a plurality of sources, and data of different kind, there will be greater chance for reaching more reliable and valid conclusions.

2.3.1 The data for this thesis

The data for this thesis consists mainly of theoretical and empirical literature related to the topical and geographical area of study, found in a range of articles, anthologies and monographies. Another main source of data underpinning the findings is a number of interviews with key actors and informants conducted during fieldwork in the occupied Palestinian territories in December 2006. There are in addition official documents, reports, statements and publicly available statistical material.

I also draw on personal experience from a number of visits to the occupied territories during the last intifada. Informal conversations with people, activists, politicians and political analysts, notably also during my presence as an officially accredited observer to both the presidential (2005) and parliamentary elections (2006) form an invaluable background to my understanding of Palestinian politics.

Literature

There is in existence a considerable amount of literature related to the issues raised in this thesis. However, as mentioned in the introduction, academic research has to a large extent focused on issues regarding Palestinian *civil society*. There is little academic research, published in English at least, specifically on the issue of third current politics. Still a long range of journal articles on Palestinian civil society and politics inform this study. Most monographies and anthologies are on the more general topics concerning Palestinian politics, institution building and democracy. Noteworthy some of the political activists from NGOs and political factions have also contributed to the academic discussion, providing articles on developments, challenges and policy propositions. Mustafa Barghouti (1989, 1994) is one such activist, writing on among other things the political role of the NGOs. Leading scholars in the debate have also been active within NGOs, such as Reema Hammami.

Some articles in the literature list have been published in Arabic. These have been translated in writing into Norwegian or English to me by persons knowledgeable of Arabic.

Interviews

Twenty interviews were conducted during fieldwork in the period between December 11th 2006 and January 1st 2007. Most interviews were conducted in Ramallah. One interview was conducted in Oslo at a later stage. For reasons of security and difficulties of physical access, a planned trip to the Gaza Strip was cancelled. Possible consequences of this cancellation for the scope of the data are discussed below (2.4).

Interviewees included first and foremost key actors within third current political factions, NGOs and al-Mubadara in particular. In addition they included other civil society, grassroots and political activists, and prominent Palestinian scholars who have been following the developments of Palestinian third current politics closely. Notably all scholar respondents are also represented in the literature list of this thesis.

Interviewing scholars is helpful to test key assumptions and arguments and to enhance the understanding of the broader picture. When similar interpretations and answers are given by a range of scholars this strengthens the reliability of core arguments. Interviewing scholars is also helpful as it gives an opportunity to expand on and clearify questions from the literature.

Interviewing key actors allows for more close descriptions of social and political processes. It may give access to the actors' self understanding, their perceived dilemmas and strategies. Selection of interviewees should ensure both relevance, and as noted be sensitive to bias. I have tried, as Rubin and Rubin (2005:65-67) suggest, to choose interviewees that have experience, closeness, and knowledge to provide relevant accounts of events, and ensure that a variety of perspectives are represented. The background and position of the interviewees are taken into consideration for analysis of the interview data, their consistency and credibility. The questions at hand are highly political, and the belonging to a certain political faction, NGO or political tradition will colour the answers. At the same time, it is exactly their proximity to real political processes and their position that makes them valuable respondents.

Interviews were conducted as semi structured conversational interviews (Mikkelsen 1995). Different interview guides were prepared for the interview of different categories of informants. Each interview guide included a set of key questions relating to specific topics covering the central aspects of the main research question and the explanatory propositions. All interviews, except three, were recorded digitally. Except for three interviews conducted in Arabic, the rest were conducted in English. The three interviews were conducted with credible translation from Arabic into English. In some instances where sensitive arguments or statements based on interviews are used in the text they are referred without naming the respondent(s). Two respondents chose to remain anonymous.

Reports, statements and other documents

There are a number of reports, statements and documents published by NGOs political factions and other institutions that have been used as both background

information and first hand sources, including statistical material from reliable Palestinian research institutions and official electoral accounts from the Palestinian Central Election Commission (CEC). Some material has been found on the internet, where a growing number of documents are available. Citations are then marked by time of access, as internet sources may be open to changes or manipulation over time. The internet sources used are mainly from websites of reliable institutions and organizations, where material that can also be apprehended physically are published and accessed on the net.

2.4 Scope, reliability and validity

2.4.1 Scope

The Palestinian polity refers to the "jurisdiction" of the Palestinian Authority in both the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. There are however important differences, culturally, economically and politically between the two areas (Roy 1996). During history, and especially since the establishment of the PA, they have most of the time been physically cut off and isolated from each other. The secular NGOs related to the leftist factions of the PLO seem to have had more difficulties in gaining ground in Gaza, and to a large degree seem to be located in the central areas of the West Bank. Al-Mubadara seems to have had more difficulties establishing itself as a party and mobilizing politically on the ground in Gaza. The question is highlighted by the fact that it was not possible to visit the Gaza Strip during fieldwork to conduct face to face interviews. Despite the problem this might cause to the valid scope of possible conclusions I will treat the PA as one polity constituting the scope of the case.

2.4.2 Reliable and valid?

As much as some may have objections to the application of terms such as reliability and validity to assess the quality of a qualitative study, if freed from their often close association with quantitative designs and measures they may be of value to articulate general insights on how social science should aim to provide clarity and analytical

rigor to ensure credible results. In the following I make use of the terms to express a few general points concerning the methodology of this study.

When asking a question multiple times, do you get the same answer? If so the data and investigation may be said to be reliable. It is naturally more difficult to conduct the same operations of a qualitative study like this over again, than to do so with the statistics of a regression analysis. It is still important to conduct the study in a way that makes the procedures open for scrutiny. To contribute to reliability literature records and interviews are kept open, and conscientiously referred to. Arguments and inferences made from the existing data are kept open and documented in the text. This is to contribute to making the research open for scrutiny, to keep it open for "public procedure", a feature stressed by King, Keohane and Verba (1994:8) as a key to possible judgement of the reliability and validity of social science research.

In general, the overall validity of a study refers to whether or not the conclusions are really providing answers to the questions asked. Many things need to be in place to achieve this. Are the assumptions in line with reality, does the design reflect reality in a way that makes the following conclusions valid? Do the data relate to the question, or do they really tell another story than the one they are presented to tell? And do the conclusions follow logically from the data?

As noted above one pitfall might be the selection of data. The use of multiple sources and forms of data should contribute to amending this problem, at least partly. The validity of the conclusions will further rely on the explanatory framework and the extent to which this provides a fruitful account when matched with empirical realities. The choice of analytical framework will always be a matter for a certain subjective judgement, and discussion over alternative approaches that may provide more valid answers to the research questions is welcomed. The framework of explanation in this thesis is established with guidance from previous research and theory, providing a degree of analytical control that may be crucial for the validity of the study as a whole.

3. Contextual considerations and theoretical support for an analytical framework

The aim of this chapter is to further establish an analytical framework for the empirical analysis. A description of the Palestinian political arena after the Oslo Accords serves as entry point to situate third current politics in the second intifada. The context of a demobilized society and a neopatrimonial Palestinian Authority forms the background for a discussion of how efforts to promote political mobilization for a third political force besides Fateh and Hamas should be approached in order to answer the research question in the best way. Palestinian political groups in the context of self-rule under military occupation function both as (liberation) movements and parties, and I will argue on this background that approaches taken to social movements provide a fruitful framework for reviewing efforts of establishing a third political force.

3.1 Security first - demobilized interim democracy

The signing of the Declaration of Principles (DoP) in 1993 between Israel and the PLO led to the subsequent establishment in 1994 of the Palestinian Authority on parts of the West Bank and Gaza Strip. State-like institutions were established to form an authority that was regulated by the Oslo Accords to function as an interim body of limited self-rule. As a Palestinian effort of state-building this changed the forms of political engagement. An exiled national leadership that had been running militant factions of the liberation movement returned to set up government like bodies. The existing political organizations in the territories, the underground branches of the national factions and a range of service delivering NGOs and mass movement organisations faced new realities as the incoming Palestinian Authority was situated between Israel's demands for security and the population's demands for economic development and national liberation.

The logics behind the creation of the PA and the institutional setup it derived from the accords were not necessarily promoting the development of a democracy. Brown (2003:3) argues that the emphasis on Israeli security that was reflected in all parts of the accords that led to the establishment of the PA built the grounds for an authoritarian PA. To be able to quell violent opposition to the accords and violence against Israeli targets, also in the occupied territories, the PA needed to have a strong security apparatus. The Declaration of Principles (DoP 1993) stressed in article VIII the setup of a "strong police force", and in the Interim Agreement (IA 1995)[9] article IV of Annex I described the makeup of six different branches of the security: Public Security, General Intelligence, Emergency Services and Rescue, Civil Police, Preventive Security and Presidential Security. The high attention given to Israeli security concerns gave Arafat considerable leeway in bolstering a strong executive power, a necessity also in terms of the need for a returning leadership to implement a nationally controversial fait accompli.

The Oslo Accords did not stipulate any end game in terms of Palestinian sovereign statehood. What the accords did stipulate was a set of institutions to make up a "Palestinian Interim Self-Government Authority". This would stay in effect until the end of a transitional period of maximum five years, when the negotiations between Israel and the PLO over the final status issues (borders, settlements, Jerusalem, refugees) would produce a final settlement to the conflict (DoP 1993: article V). Additionally, the accords in letter prescribed that these interim institutions should be subject to democratic elections, providing "a democratic bases for the establishment of Palestinian institutions" (IA 1995: Preamble).

The dilemma emerging from the emphasis on Israeli security (necessitating a strong executive) to be aligned with the idea of having a democratic foundation for the self-government institutions, was not easy to bridge for a PA holding few sovereign powers. To control and if necessary crack down on opposition versus building

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[9] Also known as the Oslo II Agreement

accountable democratic structures and rule of law reflected the basic contradiction in building democracy without sovereignty. To establish democracy in the sense of having a government with policies that reflect a popular will (based on a principle of internal/people's sovereignty), necessarily presuppose that the government has a sovereign right (and a large degree of ability) to implement its policies (based on external/state sovereignty). In the words of Rustow: "a clearly defined state with firm and undisputed boundaries is an essential precondition for democracy" (Rustow 1970). Formally the PA, based as it was in the accords between the PLO and Israel, had only limited control over affairs that would normally reside with a sovereign power. This did not include physical control with its own territory and borders, as a precondition for managing a national economy and keeping law and order.

3.2 PA-society relations

The security setup and logic of the Oslo Accords demanded that the PA as it was established could manage to "neutralize society's capacity to mobilize against Oslo or the PA" (Parsons 2005:6). It carried what Parsons calls a "mandate of demobilization" (Ibid.). The social mobilization that had led the masses to participate directly in the first intifada had to be quelled as the PA now became the responsible part to keep the people from involving themselves in resistance activity against Israeli occupation. The security services and the need for physical control directed internally was one side of the coin, the other was the need to secure a social base for the project in the interim period. If the people were to be held as bystanders while the leadership kept their future in their hands in further negotiations with Israel over the nature of the Palestinian Authority and possibly on a final solution to the conflict, then a mechanism to connect the PA with a social base was needed. The mechanism was found in a system of patronage, securing a base by coupling Fateh structures and a swelling "state" bureaucracy.

The Palestinian Authority was not a state, but nevertheless took position as the focal point of Palestinian political life. The state like structures that was set up impacted on

Palestinian political life in terms of the links between the political institutions and society, as new institutions were created and society changed. Changes in the political structures of the PLO, ongoing social transformations, legacies of mobilization from before the advent of the PA, and changes in the way society outside the PA were organized should be taken into account.

3.2.1 The political level – patronage, opposition or disengagement

Robinson assesses the process of the establishment of the PA by reviewing how the incoming PLO elite had to establish a political base for their project (Robinson 1997:177). He comments on their mandate: "The PLO in Tunis successfully captured political power in the West Bank and Gaza not because it led the revolution but because it promised to end it."

According to Robinson (Ibid:177) Arafat relied on four groups for a political base: The security forces, "state" bureaucrats, the notable social class, and a reconstructed Fateh cadre system. The establishment of the PA necessitated building a state-like bureaucracy in addition to the already mentioned security apparatus. This bureaucracy swelled already at an early stage and became an instrument for securing support, by appointments as benefits (Ibid.:178). As the natural recruitment base Fateh worked as support base for a neopatrimonial system[10] of Arafat's rule.

On the level of political factions, while Fateh was the main base for the PA, Hamas became the most vocal opposition. The Islamic Resistance Movement had gained a role in the resistance of the first intifada, and strongly criticized the Oslo Accords and the formation of the PA. Hamas rejected the Oslo Accords, and fought the status quo militarily, including suicide bombings against Israeli targets. At the same time they

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[10] Neopatrimonialism refers to systems of political authority based on personal and bureaucratic powers involving a system of patron-client relationships. Informal social structures of patrimonialism are intertwined with the formal and legal structures of the state-, or in the case of the Palestinian Authority, the quasi- or proto-state. For a discussion of neopatrimonialism in the context of the PA see Brynen (1995).

promoted their own movement by their extensive social work, building a network of social institutions on the side of the PA.

The leftist secular factions of the PLO were already weakened. The downfall of the Soviet Union and their marginalization within the PLO had dried up their resources. Politically they found themselves split and in disarray over how to react to the new situation. The "crisis of the parties" (Giacaman 1998:8), especially those on the left, resulted in the parties loosing their mass base from the first intifada. Seemingly miles away from being able to deliver the promises of their programmes, lack of hope in a national project that seemed to have reached a dead end as the intifada ended in Oslo, meant lack of hope in the parties.

In the end the parties split between a "pragmatic" and an "ideological" opposition (Butenschøn and Vollan 1996:52). The Palestinian Peoples Party (PPP) and the new party FIDA[11] aligned with Arafat and joined the structures of the PA, while the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) and the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP) principally rejected the Oslo Accords and refused to take part in the PA. But still for example the PFLP, being in financial and political crisis, decided to allow their cadres to be recruited in the government bureaucracy below a certain level of authority (Shuabi 2006 [interview]). But in general, as Giacaman points out (1998:8), politically speaking, "most members of the PLO (as well as Hamas, which was not) found themselves not merely outside the political process, but outside politics altogether."

3.2.2 A civil society of NGOs?

The PA was not established in an empty political geography or a social vacuum. The exiled PLO leadership returned to a territory where organized movements had politicized the population and led the struggle at a time when the exiled leadership

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[11] Palestinian Democratic Union, a split party from the DFLP formed as the DFLP rejected the Oslo Accords

was becoming politically marginalized internationally. The massive popular struggle that was sustained through the first part of the intifada that started in 1987 had a decisive impact on the political developments that made it possible for the PLO to negotiate a deal with Israel (Giacaman 1998:2). Since the 1970s the factions of the PLO had established a constituency also in the occupied territories. The occupation kept the political factions under ground as they were defined as illegal. The visible part of the movement was the development of a range of mass based voluntary associations working to develop self subsistence as a means of defiance for the occupied population towards the occupying power. These associations were mostly connected to the political factions, and provided a base for recruitment, political education and mobilization against the occupation. They organized community based health services, agriculture committees, youth-, students- and women associations. In the 1980s this development was also boosted by a generation of higher education, fostering a new national political elite in the occupied territories (Robinson 1997, Schou 1996).

The PA also instigated change on this level of "civil society" which came to be advocated and represented mainly by NGOs. The mass organizations that had been developed in the 1980s on the eve of the intifada had turned increasingly into professional NGOs. Donor sources changed gradually from solidarity movements in Europe to philanthropist and government sources, and focus shifted from mobilization to "development". Established in the absence of a nation state, with the arrival of the Palestinian Authority the NGOs saw their role changing. From being part of a self help movement to mobilize against the occupation, they were facing a PA that would seek to regulate them and a developmental donor scheme connected to the peace process. They came to see themselves as representatives of a c*ivil society.*

Most of them originally established by political factions, some of these NGOs had turned highly independent from their mother factions, while some were still affiliated. The NGOs that had been related to Fateh were soon incorporated into the new government structures. The others sought to establish an autonomous space to

function outside the PA, to be constitutive for a new civil society. In 1993, in a response to the signing of the Oslo Accords, they formed the Palestinian NGO Network (PNGO) to promote the role of the NGOs in Palestinian Society. The PA saw the NGOs as a challenge both in terms of competition for funding and as an arena for political opposition. The main achievement of the PNGO in relation to the PA was the lobbying effort to change a draft for an NGO-law. In 2000 an NGO-law was passed that secured the independence of the NGOs from the state, a law described as maybe the most liberal in the Arab world (Craissati 2005:64, Hammami 2000:18).

The relative prominence of the NGOs sparked a debate among actors and scholars in Palestine over their political role vis a vis the political factions. Even though the NGOs could not play the political role of opposition in terms of representation in a political system and organize transformative politics, it was hard to change the fact that the "affiliated" parties were struggling and relatively the NGOs were thriving. To a large extent the NGOs were acting as the visible opposition in terms of formulating critique of authoritarian tendencies, lack of service provision, human rights abuses, mismanagement and on the increasingly misleading formulas of the peace process. As George Giacaman points out however, the crisis of the parties should not be blamed on the NGOs as such (Giacaman 2006 [interview]). The prominence of the NGOs was a result of the crisis of the secular Palestinian factions (excluding Fateh), not the other way around. The NGOs drew leadership and human resources that had formerly worked within the parties. They could attract funding and play a political role as a form of a "civil" opposition.

What they could not do was to mobilize a popular political opposition and present an alternative leadership, reflecting the political deficit and limits of the liberal civil society paradigm. Even though the NGOs could show some degree of success in a liberal sense of checking state excesses and building an autonomous sphere for civil action, their actions in themselves were not able to produce any transformative force. As Chandhoke emphasizes, NGOs are not in the business of representation

(Chandhoke 2006). The heavy reliance on foreign funding, professionalization and lack of the grassroots groundedness that characterized their own mass organization predecessors may also have contributed to the process of demobilization taking place under the PA.

3.2.3 Al- Mubadara – between civic and political

In her account of the structural environments for "new social movements" in Palestine, Craissati (2005:47) identifies three dominant fields of analysis in the literature on Palestinian politics. The first focuses on the establishment of new forms of social organizations under occupation, represented by the voluntary mass movement organizations formed in the late 1970s and in the 1980s. The second is the "political track", following the strategies of the PLO and later PA, and the political factions/parties. The third one follows what she calls the "NGO movement" developing under the PA, and how they are "marking democratic politics in Palestine". The last refers to the prominence of the idea of civil society in the 1990s.

Al-Mubadara as an attempt to establish a third political force should be related to all these three fields seen in relation. They are all vital to come to understand the dynamics of Palestinian politics, the politics of al-Mubadara and the phenomena of "third current politics", as they are deeply intertwined and as the context of Palestinian politics in the second intifada clearly is formed by this interrelation. The new forms of social organizing and political mobilization in the occupied territories in the 1980s was crucial in the historical trajectory leading to the establishment of the PA. It laid the grounds for the resistance of the first intifada. Politically it was connected to factions of the PLO, and later it formed part of the social structures where the PA had to accommodate itself. The leadership of the PLO and the PA had to relate to the social makeup and existing structures in the occupied Palestinian territories, as well as it would create new institutions and power structures that existing and new social forces would engage, as the NGOs did in their way. There is also the direct continuous link between the new forms of social organizing that

Craissati refers to and the NGOs, and there is a continued link in terms of political affiliation, personnel, ideas and social base between the NGOs and the factions.

Al-Mubadara itself is a political initiative that has roots in both the ideas of the new forms of social organizing and the NGO movement after the establishment of the PA, at the same time as it seeks to enter Palestinian politics on the institutional level through competing in elections. The personal history of political activity of their key leading figure Mustafa Barghouti is both instructive and possibly bears important entry points for later analysis. Barghouti was one of the founding members of the Union of Palestinian Medical Relief Committees (UPMRC), one of the leading mass movement structures that contributed to a new form of social organizing and mode of national resistance at an early stage. The UPMRC was connected to the Palestinian Peoples Party (PPP), where Barghouti was also an active member. The UPMRC developed over time an impressive community based health care infrastructure. In the 1990s, under Barghouti's leadership, they developed into an increasingly professional service delivering NGO, taking up a leading role in the PNGO network. In UPMRC Barghouti advocated strongly for the independence of the NGOs from the political factions and separated UPMRC from the structures of the PPP. Barghouti also founded and directed the Health, Development, Information and Policy Institute (HDIP), a policy institute that would gain a strong position in terms of funding and position as a vocal NGO. Barghouti himself became a vocal spokesperson in the debate over the role of the NGOs as bearers of a civil society that should be secured an independent sphere vis a vis the PA, and advocated the NGOs role as promoters of democracy. In 1996 he ran for parliamentary elections in the district of Ramallah for the PPP. If it weren't for the Christian quota system he would have secured a mandate. And in 2002 he was one of the initial signatories on the call for the establishment of a Palestinian National Initiative (al-Mubadara), of which he has since been the leading figure.

Before turning to the ways in which these relations have formed the efforts of al-Mubadara in the second intifada, here it has served to illustrate the close relation between the social, civil and political level.

3.2.4 Movements or parties?

After the establishment of the PA a situation emerged where Palestinian political groups found themselves in disarray over how and for what to mobilize. The rule of the PA was characterized by personalized and partly patrimonial rule and demobilization of society. A process of building a state like political system with electoral politics basically would mean normalization in the sense that liberation movements should be replaced by political parties to compete for power in a coming state. In reality, however, the occupation had not disappeared and the national struggle was not over. Brown (2005:14-15) describes how in this context Palestinian political groups have not been able to decide whether to remain pure liberation movements, to become full fledged political parties, or whether and how to combine the two.

Offe (1990) places movement activity within the formal political sphere, and points to the close relation between movements and political institutions in general. He shows how social movements when institutionalizing their efforts to sustain their struggle, over time also tend to transform into political parties. Most interesting though, is how he points to the dilemmas and difficulties in such a transition. Crucially, attempts at keeping valuable traits of movements and parties side by side may prove difficult. It is hard to combine the organizational logics of movements' loose participatory structures and party hierarchies, and both institutional and extra institutional means.

As an aim of this chapter is to situate actors that have tried to mobilize for a third democratic force in the late second intifada, this is a central feature to consider. As indicated al-Mubadara has strong ties to the history of the leftist factions of the PLO, the tradition of civil resistance and it is closely connected to NGOs. It is seemingly an

attempt to create something beyond party politics in the context of occupation and PA institutions, to be a national social and political movement and a political party at the same time.

An analytical framework, as that of "comparative perspectives on social movements" presented by McAdam et al. (1996), should allow us to take this special feature into consideration. It directs us to address both political opportunity structures, the social resources and modes of organizing, and the way the actors seek to develop their agenda, outlook and approach to the population. As briefly presented in chapter one, this framework supports the proposed factors that may explain the role of al-Mubadara in political mobilization for a third democratic force towards the end of the second intifada. Below I present this framework and relate it to the Palestinian case.

3.3 Arguing for an analytical framework

In their review on the literature on social movements/revolutions Mc Adam et al. identify three common approaches that shed light on their emergence and development: *Political opportunities*, *mobilizing structures*, and *framing processes* (McAdam et al. 1996:2). I argue here that a suitable framework for structuring our understanding of al-Mubadara as a political challenger in the context of the PA in the late second intifada could draw on this framework of "comparative perspectives on social movements". This framework allows for a large degree of contextual specificity, it takes structural features as well as institutions and grounded actors on board. Below I outline how this is relevant in the Palestinian case.

There are some reasons to apply this approach with care in the Palestinian case. The literature on social movements focuses to a large degree on contestation outside the formal political system of representation in sovereign states. Much of the literature has to a large degree referred to western contexts as for example in work on civil rights movements in the United States or women movements in Europe. There is the question of the non sovereign PA, and there is the question of the context of

liberation. The forces under study are not social movements as such neither are they pure liberation movements or political parties. Rather, they are a bit of each.

I believe it is more appropriate to turn to approaches to movements rather than for instance the vast literature on political parties and party systems focusing on consistent cleavages and electorates that have been produced with reference to the development of European liberal democracies. The context of a national movement before independence, in an undetermined transition to an electoral political system, the side by side institutional and extra institutional means adopted by Palestinian factions, and the degree to which the framework of McAdam et al. (1996) seems to support the factors I context specifically argued for in chapter one, directs me rather towards adapting approaches to social movements.

Stokke and Ryntveit (2000), in their analysis of the Tamils in Sri Lanka, argue that studies of national movements should benefit from the approaches taken in studies of social movements, referring basically to the same approaches that are adopted in this study. Both Younis (2000) and Craissati (2005) establish the relevance of the literature on social movements to the Palestinian case. Younis does so in an attempt to comparatively analyze the South African and Palestinian liberation movements and find reasons to their relative successes. She claims national liberation movements can be seen as "social movements in amplified form" (Younis 2000:22), "collective efforts to achieve political objectives through extra-institutional means". Drawing on both the ideas of resource mobilization theorists and political opportunity structure approaches, she adds specific attention to social structure in the form of class, as a main structure in which social forces are embedded and where resources are specified and distributed. For Craissati social movements provide an entry point to a different form of democratic development than the formal institutional one. She claims that the mass based voluntary associations that grew out of the occupied society from the late 1970s may be seen as New Social Movements that on the level of society "potentially contribute to a new democratic culture and to genuine socio-political and economic change" (Craissati 2005:3). One of her prime examples is the UPMRC and their

community based health work, today one of the main NGOs that is seen to be connected to al-Mubadara. For al-Mubadara it is clear that they see themselves as both a *national, political and social* movement within a larger national movement, and that they are trying to establish structures to sustain a role to mobilize for national resistance *and* to institutionalize their work as a political party within the framework of electoral politics in the PA (al-Mubadara leaders and activists 2006 [interviews]). Thus electoral activities and results should be seen in relation to movement mobilization and extra institutional activities as well.

In chapter two I suggested how an analytical framework building on *political opportunity structure*, the organizational and social *mobilizing structures*, and *framing processes* in line with McAdam et al. sees these as complementary approaches. Each by themselves they highlight different aspects of the same phenomenon. At some points they are interrelated and overlap, together they form an integrative analytical framework.

3.3.1 Political opportunities

Above I have briefly outlined the makeup of the political system that took shape after the establishment of the PA. The argument to follow is that the developments within this system in terms of changing power structures and institutional arrangements will have an impact for those who want to be a contesting party to it, as a movement for civil resistance and as an electoral party, impacting on their emergence, shape and relative success. In addition I will emphasize the relevance of external powers and institutions that strongly intervene in the Palestinian arena, be they superpowers, occupying powers or international donors.

In 2002, the same year al-Mubadara was announced, the Israeli Army reoccupied all the self-ruled Palestinian cities in the West Bank, occupied and rampaged most PA institutions, and held its president under siege in his compound. The power of the PA reached its bottom mark. It was neither able to deliver development, protect its people, or even protect itself from the might of the occupying power. The internal

call for reform of the PA structures had grown increasingly strong, also within Fateh itself and the PLC (Klein 2003). From the outside the pressure for change of the political leadership of the PA grew. On June 24th 2002 George Bush declared that support for a Palestinian State was contingent upon a comprehensive reform of the PA and "a new leadership" (implying the sidelining of Yasser Arafat) in order to have a renewed peace process. Later the same year the so called "Road Map" for peace sponsored by the diplomatic "Quartet"[12] specified the demands for institutional reform, including the holding of elections. Israel hoped reforms could produce a new and different leadership in the PA and believed that reform would be a sign of Palestinian weakness (Ibid.). It was, however, not until the death of Arafat that the political system would open up in terms of having new elections to allow newcomers into the political system.

Political opportunities refer to "how changes in some aspect of a political system created new possibilities for collective action by a given challenger or a set of challengers" (McAdam et al. 1996:17). It is a way of situating a movement in a certain political system with its power structures, institutions and players, constituting opportunities and constraints that may be decisive in both determining the emergence and fortunes of a certain movement. The link between institutionalized politics and movements can lead to assessments of how "changes in the structure of political opportunities can contribute to our understanding of the shifting fortunes of a single movement" (Ibid:12).

In addition to the institutional opening of the political system in the PA, other things should be considered as part of a political opportunity structure for al-Mubadara as a challenger. In addition to the heavy international emphasis put on the change of Palestinian institutions, also external impact on the factional struggle within should be considered. So should the nature of the conflict with Israel, as the military nature of the second intifada that would lay premises for modes of political engagement. As

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[12] The diplomatic "Quartet" comprises the United States, the EU, Russia and the UN

the power structures within the occupied territories came to be characterized by an emerging bipolarized political contest between the two main political factions Fateh and Hamas, the question is if these developments have provided any space for a third alternative to emerge.

3.3.2 Mobilizing structures

We have also seen that Palestinian politics after the Oslo Accords does not easily identify with clear cut political parties or movements, but that they combine features of both due to their historical circumstances. One distinction between political parties and movements would be over the means they adopt to achieve political change. While movements resort to extra institutional means (Younis 2000:22), political parties generally adopt institutional means. On the other hand Kriesi separates between s*ocial movement organizations* (SMOs) and *parties and interest groups* over their relation to their constituency. Whereas movements depend on the active participation of their constituency in their activities to achieve their goals, political parties are taken to adopt more elite driven representation, and only to mobilize their constituency from time to time (Kriesi 1996:153).

Palestinian politics does not seem to promote these dichotomies. The electoral institutions of the PA for sure direct the activity of the political factions towards institutional means, but at the same time the context for these institutions is of a character that directs the factions to maintain other means, be it civil or military resistance. To the degree that the factions function as parties, party structures and institutionalization of representation has been poorly developed. Related to the extra institutional civic or military means that the factions continue to make use of, a participatory constituency is a vital component.

Mobilizing structures changes focus to aspects of the movement itself. What are the "institutional locations of mobilization", what is the nature of the organizational processes and profile, and how does this facilitate or constrain the prospects of the movement? (McAdam et al. 1996:18) And on the other hand, what are the social

resources the movement can draw upon, how are the movements embedded in their social environments and affected by social stratification? (Rucht 1996:190, Younis 2000:29)

Al-Mubadara sees itself both as a movement and a political party (Barghouti 2006, Saife 2006 [interviews]). Its organizational structures are until present diffuse. It builds on a constituency of individuals, community groups and NGO activists to be part of the larger movement, and it works at present to develop a party like organizational structure to form the core of this movement. There seems to be a substantial overlap in terms of leading figures between NGOs and the emerging party structure. The process of building these structures and the organizational landscape it works within need consideration. The development from mass voluntary organizations into NGOs, and the impact of the professionalization of these for the present efforts to mobilize for a new political structure are taken as a main entry point to assess the mobilizing structures of al-Mubadara.

In addition to this focus on the concrete formations of mobilization within al-Mubadara, I emphasize in this part the social and economic environments in which these are embedded. Social formations are considered to assess what social resources one have been able to draw upon, and how this has affected on the ways people are actually mobilized to support a certain movement or party. The patrimonial system that to some degree has characterized the politics of the PA and the dire economic strains on the society at large especially during the second intifada, leads us to investigate how these social conditions have related to the established mobilizing structures. This includes the role of class formation and the impact of mechanisms of clientelism.

3.3.3 Framing processes

Since the advent of the Islamic Hamas as the main opponent for Fateh, there has been a range of efforts to try to form a political identity for a third alternative. Al-Mubadara is but one of a range of contestants bidding to represent a "third current" in

Palestinian politics. The main components of such an identity have been democratic and clean government, some criticism of the Oslo peace process, and inclusion of a social component that Fateh has been missing – all of course subsumed under the national issue.

The various initiatives to form frames for a third political force have been based in the factions on the left in the PLO, in NGOs, or with people who have split from either Fateh or the leftist factions. An understanding many of these seem to share is the idea that a large portion of the population would prefer another political force than Fateh or Hamas.[13] Al-Mubadara frames this even as a "silent majority" that is seen as ripe for mobilization for a third force. Supposedly this shows the potential for a third force to emerge. In the PLC elections of 2006 however, at least four lists tried to lay claim to represent such a third force, but even their combined national vote did not reach more than 12,1 %. There seems to be an ongoing problem of creating a meaningful presentation of a third force that would be perceived as a credible challenger and mobilize people for action.

Framing processes are defined as "conscious strategic efforts by groups of people to fashion shared understandings of the world and of themselves that legitimate and motivate collective action" (McAdam et al. 1996:6). Framing processes refer to the ideational side of what constitutes the basis for collective action, "at a minimum people need to feel both aggrieved about some aspect of their lives and optimistic that, acting collectively, they can redress the problem"(Ibid:5). Meaning and identity form part of construction and dissemination of new ideas (Ibid:6), and the opportunities (and constraints) that lie in the political context needs to be defined and expressed as something to base action upon (Ibid:8).

In our Palestinian context the idea of framing processes meaningfully conceptualizes the efforts of the various actors, including al-Mubadara, that seek to establish a

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[13] Giacaman estimates this segment to have varied around 25-50 % over time (Giacaman 2006 [interview])

position as a third trend in Palestinian politics. The search to build an identity as a "democratic" third force is a conscious struggle to create meaning of the material conditions, opportunities and constraints, ideologies, ideas and sentiments in the Palestinian arena, and to build a proactive program that people could see change their living reality. The contest over the framing of the third current is on the next level a contest with the efforts of a clientelist Fateh and a religious Hamas to present an understanding of reality that would promote popular participation and garner support. Both these processes and the extent to which these efforts have been able to find any resonance with people may help situating and explaining how al-Mubadara has been able to create a role in the Palestinian political landscape. In al-Mubadara's own terms, their effort is inherently based on a perceived "need to change the value system" of Palestinian society (Barghouti 2006, Saife 2006 [interviews]); away from clientelism or religious ideology, towards a secular voluntary democratic virtue resembling democratic politics in western countries.

3.4 Palestinian democracy towards the second intifada

Given the non-sovereign status of the PA I argue democratization in the context of Palestine should be related to two levels. One is the struggle for the sovereignty of power that is needed for any democratic system to be meaningful. The other is the existing Palestinian institutions and the struggle to make them more democratic by making them increasingly representative and accountable. In other words to democratize the limited self-rule and the continued national struggle. Taking the essence of democracy as "popular control of public affairs based on political equality" (Törnquist 2004:201), *public affairs* in this sense would refer to the two main components of Palestinian politics: the self-rule, and the quest for national sovereignty. The confused nature between these blurs the nature of democracy in the Palestinian context. The self-rule calls for democratic political representation and rule of law. The liberation struggle's various forms calls for pragmatic elite agency (negotiations), mass participation (civil resistance), and/or military guerrilla

organization (military resistance). Liberation movements historically have relied on popular mobilization rather than democratic procedures of representation. Democratization in the context of Palestine then can be seen as increasing popular control of the PA through enhanced democratic mechanisms of representation *and* the building of mechanisms for allowing people to take part in the struggle for liberation in its various forms.

Hilal (2003) finds that the history of the Palestinian national movement over changing periods have produced what he terms "a plurality of "autonomous" centercenters [sic!] of power" (Ibid:163). He argues that the structures and processes that generate and reproduce these are "the crucial factors in establishing and reproducing political democracy". Both the pre 1948 period of the British Mandate and the PLO in exile produced such centercenters, and established a tradition for pluralism in the Palestinian national movement. The lack of early independence, and later of a territorial base, however, did not make democracy a pressing issue. The declared vision of a Palestinian state, as in the "Declaration of Independence" adopted by the PLO's Palestine National Council (PNC, 1988), included references to a liberal democratic order, but still "the narrative of Palestinian nationalism, as in many other national movements, did not articulate democracy as an urgent or central issue. However Palestinian political life did experience a political, ideological, and organizational pluralism" (Hilal 2003:164).

Based on its massive popular participation and politicization the first intifada could be seen as a highlight of democratic development in Palestinian history. Craissati (2005) conceptualises this as the impact of new social movements, bringing new forms of democratic practice to the Palestinian arena. As mentioned above one of her main examples is the UPMRC, and their community based health work. Younis (2000:22-23) argues that in the context of liberation struggles, participation should be seen as a core feature of democratization. The mass nature of the struggle in the first intifada did not produce a sustainable outcome in terms of institutions that could continue to include mass voluntary participation to forward the national political

demands. Rather the first intifada and its mass nature was gradually contained by an increasingly brutal military Israeli response, and the effort of the PLO to control its direction. The Oslo peace process that followed moved agency towards the hands of an elite, and resulted in the demobilization of Palestinian society. The PA elite were put in squeeze between the demands of the colonial power and an increasingly dissatisfied population.

Hilal (2003) supports those who say that the Oslo accords did not bode well for democracy in Palestinian state formation. The asymmetry of the accords demanded asymmetry on the internal arena, centralization of power and Fateh as an instrument securing a base for power. The election for presidency and a legislative council in 1996 on the surface did produce a representative government and turnout was quite high.[14] No real opposition could manifest itself inside the system though, leaving the door open for continued personal, patrimonial and semi-authoritarian rule. The PLC was unable to establish influence over the executive. While the secular left was weakened, split and in disarray over where to go Hamas could emerge as the alternative opposition to the ruling Fateh, outside the PA system. At the outbreak of the second intifada a contest between two dominant forces with their own power bases had emerged to occupy the political scene. Fateh ruling the Palestinian Authority and Hamas challenging it from the outside. According to Hilal (Ibid:170) "this carries with it the prospect of political democracy or the attempt by one of the main parties to impose its domination (…)". It could be well argued that the emergence of a third force with an autonomous power base would make domination less likely. The question is which structures and processes could produce such a third force.

The second intifada, erupting as a popular uprising in the streets following the controversial visit of then Israeli opposition leader Ariel Sharon to the Haram al-

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[14] 75,4 % of registered voters voted. About 90 % of the population eligible to vote had registered as voters (Butenschøn and Vollan 1996:38).

Sharif in Jerusalem on September 28th 2000, was a turning point in the sense that it can be seen as a reaction to the failure of an elite negotiated transition process, both in terms of external state-building based on the peace negotiations, and in terms of internal state-building lacking representative and accountable institutions. In the following chapters I look into the role of al-Mubadara in forming a third political force from the second intifada and what has formed their contribution towards these issues.

4. The second intifada - political opportunities and constraints

I personally believe that in each historical period during the last decade there have been objective realities that require a new movement. In the first intifada the new movement became Hamas and Jihad, in the second it became the Mubadara. And it's a movement of the future. As much as Hamas was a movement for the future in '89. They didn't look like they look now. But they were building for now. I believe that Mubadara will be the party that will build for the future.

Mustafa Barghouti, Ramallah 27.12.2006

It was not coincidental that al-Mubadara was born in 2002. At the height of political crisis, the launch of a new political initiative was but one of many reactions to the manifest failure of the peace process to produce a Palestinian state, symbolically painted out by PA institutions in ruin under the destructive force of the Israeli army. The failure of the PA and its leadership triggered an intensified debate over its conduct, and the need for a change of direction. The violent realities of military power released a dynamic for change.

This chapter outlines the changing political opportunities for al-Mubadara through the second intifada, influenced by foreign powers, the occupation forces and the political power structures and institutions in the Palestinian Authority. It is argued that the announcement of al-Mubadara should bee seen as part of the reform debate that escalated in 2002, and further that the militarization of the intifada and the strong bipolarization of the political landscape dominated by Fateh and Hamas has posed constraints for al-Mubadara to mobilize for a third force. On the other hand the opening for civil resistance against the wall and the electoral opening of the political

system from 2005 could be seen as opportunities to establish and promote such a force.

4.1 Structure of opportunities and constraints

Tarrow (1994:85) define political opportunity structures as "consistent – but not necessarily formal or permanent – dimensions of the political environment that provide incentives for people to undertake collective action by affecting their expectations for success or failure". Within the tradition of social movements, focus has been on how changes in political systems provide opportunities or constraints for protest movements to mobilize and impact in the formal political system. Meyer and Minkoff (2004:1459) account how this concept has been adapted in a number of different meanings and to a number of different types of collective action. They see it as a challenge to establish which aspects of external matters affect a movement, which factors relate to which kind of movement, and for whom a certain development would become a political opportunity.

Departing from Meyer and Minkoff's search for defining one stricter version of opportunity structures, here I apply this approach rather loosely as the changing contextual circumstances outside the actors reach during the second intifada that may have had an impact on en effort to mobilize a third force in Palestinian politics. I argue that circumstances relating to the institutions of the Palestinian Authority and the second intifada constitute opportunities and constraints for al-Mubadara both to mobilize a force for active resistance and to enter the political system of the PA and challenge the status quo as a third political force.

4.2 The opening for reform

Questioning of the conduct of the Palestinian Authority leadership, and calls for change, did not arrive all of a sudden in 2002. From nearly all directions, as from the NGO leaders in the PNGO network, from intellectuals in academic institutions, from

both the "pragmatic" leftist and Fateh opposition within the PLC, and from the donor countries, a long range of critical interventions was put forward towards the end of the 1990s, making up an agenda for reform (Brown 2002:17).

One early and strong critic of the personalised rule and mismanagement in the PA, who was later to become one of the co-launchers of al-Mubadara, was Haidar Abdel Shafi. Abdel Shafi's popular credentials were unquestionable. As a leading nationalist figure in the occupied territories, he led the Palestinian delegation to the Madrid peace talks in 1991. At that time the PLO was still officially rejected by Israel and the USA as the representative of the Palestinian people. A group of political leaders from the occupied territories therefore had to represent the Palestinians, as part of the official Jordanian delegation. Even though the talks did not lead to any concrete results, Abdel Shafi gained considerable respect among the population for the principled way he presented the Palestinian case in Madrid. Upon his return from Madrid he was treated as a homecoming national hero, attracting huge crowds in the streets around his house. In 1996, already then a vocal critic of the Oslo Accords, especially for its failure to explicitly put an end to Israeli settlement activity in the occupied territories, Abdel Shafi ran for elections to the legislative council, drawing the largest vote of all candidates, and beating all Fateh candidates in Gaza City by margin. His term on the council was short though, as he withdrew in protest in 1998 over what he claimed to be Arafat's patronizing treatment of the council. Since then he continued to hold a position as a vocal caller for reform of the PA.

Many examples could be taken to account of opposition and calls for democratic reform of the PA. Both Klein (2003) and Hammami and Hilal (2001) point to the internal opposition in Fateh as the most important force for reform in this period. A number of popular local leaders came out to criticize the personalized rule, mismanagement and lack of success in bringing about the promised liberation. These would often be people from the internal generation of the first intifada, often known

as local leaders of the Fateh Tanzim.[15] Often sidestepped in processes of appointments in the patronage system of the PA, especially in the West Bank they resided mainly outside the formal PA structures. This Fateh opposition maintained that reform should support continued resistance. They argued building of transparent effective institutions should be accompanied with armed resistance as a means of liberation, to complement the track of negotiations (Klein 2003:203). More dovish reform leaders within Fateh, like the Oslo architect Mahmoud Abbas, held that the reform agenda should call for an end to armed resistance, and focus on issues of governance, state-building and negotiations. Lastly the more conservative circles around Arafat on the other hand represented the view that real reform basically had to be a matter for after liberation (Ibid:204).

No organized movement outside Fateh had been able to create any real momentum behind a call for democratic reform. Hammami and Hilal (2001) account how groups and individuals belonging to the leftist factions of the PLO and/or NGOs had been among "the main purveyors of reform talk", while lacking a programmatic plan on how to effect such reforms, as well as an organizational structure and a mass base. Hamas on its side, as it entered the second intifada about half a year after it was pushed forward by the Fateh Tanzim, was mainly preoccupied with opposition in terms of resistance, bringing the resistance into Israeli cities in the form of suicide bombings. It was only later that Hamas took the last step in moving form an "extra-authority" opposition (Klein 2003:203) that saw itself as an alternative to an illegitimate PA, to an opposition that would challenge the power structures of the PA by seeking to enter and change it from within.

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[15] Tanzim is the name of the local ground level of the Fateh movement, meaning literally the "organization". Structured mainly around local leaders from the first intifada and the Shabiba (youth) movement, Tanzim has sought to promote a new generation of leadership to reform Fateh. Tanzim was the leading force behind the al-Aqsa Intifada, led notably by the popular leader of Fateh in the West Bank, Marwan Barghouti (Usher 2000).

4.2.1 A turning point

I would argue that the full scale reoccupation of the Palestinian population centres by the Israeli army in spring 2002 represents a turning point in that it created an increased opening for reform initiatives. This is in line with Brown (2005:9), who refers to this as the start of "the reform wave of 2002-2003". As Arafat stepped out of the rubble remaining of his headquarter, on May 15th he announced that PA institutions required reform (Klein 2003:195). Generally the crisis had two interrelated results. It made it easier for Palestinian dissent from within as it was obvious to everyone that the PA institutions was worth nothing in the face of Israeli might. Also it triggered increased international pressure for reforms to pressure the Palestinian leadership politically.

According to Brown (2005:10) there was a clear tendency that internal and external reform priorities diverged: "domestic reformers emphasized constitutional issues and the judiciary, whereas international actors focused on security and financial reform". Where agendas converged, change was most likely to take place. For the US and Israel reform on areas that could contribute in weakening Arafat became the main reform areas of interest, as he was seen since the failed final status negotiations in year 2000 to be a major obstacle to a development in line with Israeli demands. Thus reform on the areas of finance (the control over the money flow) and institutional power structure (the powers of the presidency) became the main areas of actual change. Democratic reform, as in the holding of presidential elections, was not a priority, as the popular support for Arafat's person kept steady, even as popular discontent with corruption, mismanagement and the failure of the PA to support the public through the intifada grew.

An example where internal and external agendas converged was in the drive to establish a post for prime minister. On this issue the interests of the international powers, US and Israel on the one hand, and the Palestinian secular opposition in the form of the NGO lobby converged (Butenschøn and Vollan 2006:46). Israel and the US saw the issue as one of ridding Arafat of power and weakening the Palestinian

leadership, while the internal opposition saw it as a way of cleaning up the structures of governance, de-personalizing power, and thereby strengthening the PA institutions in the long run.

The launching of al-Mubadara in summer 2002 should be seen as part of this ongoing discussion, heightened in intensity, on reform of the PA. It can be seen as an attempt to lay out the grounds for a new platform for a movement to support real reform and democratic change. As a position paper on Palestinian reform released by the Palestinian Centre for Human Rights exemplified (PCHR 2002), there was a fear among NGOs and other democracy promoters that reform talk would amount to no real democratic reforms, but rather stay part of the diplomatic game on the elite level only. The program that was presented as al-Mubadara was launched, stressed the importance of having the Palestinians themselves involved in deciding on the content of reform agendas, and that reform of the PA was a necessary measure to face Israeli occupation. It was argued that the absence of true reform was playing into the hands of the Israelis (al-Mubadara 2002). The demobilization of Palestinian society after the Oslo Accords needed to be reversed in order to allow people to participate actively in the national struggle and keep leaders accountable. The program urgently called for elections and institutional reform at all levels as the best way of promoting the implementation of Palestinian national rights.

At this point al-Mubadara was only another initiative in the reform debate, not an organized force to push it forward. It was meant as a platform for secular forces to convene under, not a recipe for a political party. Among the co-launchers, Mustafa Barghouti was still a member of the PPP at the time. With the lack of a clearly articulated idea of how such a force should be organized in order to support such a platform, it could not hastily change what Hammami and Hilal observed already in 2001:

> The intifada has provided the context for a widening internal debate on the limitations of the present leadership, as well as the need for democratic reform. But the continued absence of independent political movements capable of mobilizing a challenge based on these issues,

added to the constraints imposed by the current crisis, means that democratic transition is unlikely (Hammami and Hilal 2001).

The opening for reform produced a program for a new secular democratic political movement, but did not generate an organized force to push it forward. The structures of mobilization that can account for this state will be discussed in more detail in chapter five.

4.3 The militarized intifada

The first intifada, as noted earlier was at least during its first years a mass civil uprising (Younis 2000:162-5). Unarmed protest, civil disobedience and programs of self management, were modes of activity supported by mass associations and NGOs, many of them strongly connected to the leftist factions of the PLO. There was no Palestinian Authority and few weapons on the street. The nature of the first intifada represented an opportunity for these political forces to take on a leading role.

For al-Mubadara the legacy of civil resistance from the first intifada is still a major reference point. Civil resistance is held to be a strategic means for achieving liberation. As it would activate popular participation and political mobilization, it should supposedly go hand in hand with institution building and a strengthened position in peace negotiations (Saife; Jarrar, A. 2006 [interviews]). But the nature of the second intifada has not been conducive to civil resistance. The militarized nature of the second intifada has posed constraints upon those who have wished to promote a civil resistance.

The question of resistance is a deeply political matter in the context of Palestine. The second intifada could be seen as a renegotiation of the relationship between governance and resistance as means to achieve liberation. In the face of continued occupation, the nature of resistance forms part of a political environment, and its political significance is unquestionable. It renders opportunities for some modes of political action and constraints upon others.

The circumstances surrounding the second intifada differed in a number of ways from those surrounding the first. The Palestinian Authority was there, with a mandate to keep Israel secure. The occupied territories were loaded with weapons, and the geography had changed. Israel had set up a "matrix of control"[16] in the occupied Palestinian territories based on the physical separation of areas controlled by the PA and areas under the control of Israel.

The first striking feature, as the intifada started with mass demonstrations at checkpoints and Israeli military installations, was the brutality of the Israeli response. The second intifada presented a new form of crowd control by snipers (Hammami and Tamari 2000:9). An overwhelmingly high number of targeted upper body injuries and fatal wounds suffered by civilians were reported in effect of this measure.[17] This experience soon made efforts of mobilizing civil resistance difficult, as the tolls were becoming extremely high.

On the Palestinian side, the capacity of armed groups was considerably larger than before. A large amount of lighter weapons had found its way into the occupied territories under PA rule. In the Tanzim, there was an overlap with the various security forces, for Fateh distributing weapons and incorporating cadres into the conglomerate of official police and security services had been a way of upholding loyalty in a period were cadres were generally demobilized (Klein 2003:202).

Thus the second intifada soon turned into armed resistance mainly conducted by Fateh Tanzim groups. Attacks on settlements, military installations and Israeli traffic on the Israeli settler only roads that had been built in the occupied territories, were

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[16] The phrase was put forward by Israeli anthropologist Jeff Halpher to describe the Israeli system of control in the occupied territories, as it includes three levels: Physical control over key geographical areas, bureaucratic restrictions, and the use of violence to enforce control (Halper 2000).

[17] Upper body injuries amounted to 75.6% (West Bank) and 60.3% (Gaza Strip) of all injuries during the first two months of the intifada, according to the HDIP report Health Care Under Siege (HDIP 2001). According to the report "Mary Robinson, the UN Human Rights Commissioner, told reporters after a one week visit to the Palestinian occupied territories between November 7th and 13th 2000 that "[t]here were a disproportionate number of injuries to the upper body, the head and many from live ammunition or rubber-bullets fired at very close quarters", and that there is a "disturbing pattern" to the bullet wounds received by Palestinians shot by Israeli soldiers during the daily clashes."

met with fierce response from the Israeli military. Soon the use of heavy tanks, helicopter fire and fighter planes put an end to civil participation in the resistance. As Hamas joined the second intifada in winter 2001, the resistance of the intifada took a qualitative turn, from attacks inside the occupied territories to suicide attacks inside Israel, followed by heavy retaliation and collective punishment on the population in the occupied territories.

Even though the militarization of the intifada seemed to block the way for forces that would rely on civil resistance, the intifada did open up some spaces for action where NGOs could contribute. Some of the NGOs, like UPMRC, could maintain a strong presence with ambulances and emergency relief to villages and neighbourhoods. Distribution of first aid kits to every family in local communities and training courses for the youth was another activity of the UPMRC. Combined with Mustafa Barghouti's presence in the local communities during demonstrations this contributed to considerable popularity and credibility during the first years of the intifada.[18]

What was obvious was that the PA was seen as unable to provide both leadership to the intifada and emergency relief to its population (Hammami and Hilal 2001). The inability of the PA departments to cope with the situation contrasted not only some of the action taken by NGOs like the UPMRC, but even more so the commitment, relief and welfare provided by Islamic organizations.

In conclusion however, the militarization of the intifada was a blow to the forces that would promote a civil resistance. This is also the dominant perception among the interviewed representatives of al-Mubadara and other contenders for the promotion of a third political force (2006 [interviews]). Fateh and Hamas competed to lead the military response and to show commitment to face the violence of the occupation. Fateh saw it necessary to escalate its military participation to match Hamas' growing

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[18] This observation is established and confirmed in interviews with people both inside and outside al-Mubadara (2006 [interviews])

popularity. Eventually, the PFLP also entered the race, albeit with a militia of more limited capabilities.

In general, people involved with al-Mubadara hold the opinion that the militarization of the intifada has posed a strategic problem for al-Mubadara (2006 [interviews]). The rise of Hamas is largely attributed to its role as the spearhead of military resistance, as those willing to fight back by any means against the humiliating situation under which the population saw themselves. However, some still believe that the need for a change to civil resistance has had considerable resonance among people, and that there are unexploited possibilities to further organize civil resistance in order to turn around a process where people are alienated by the militarization of the intifada. As one formulated it: "It [the military resistance] didn't bring anything. When you want to fight a strong military enemy, you don't go against his strongest side you have to go around it…" (Saife 2006 [interview]). There is clearly agreement within al-Mubadara that the promotion of civil resistance is the kind of opportunity for mobilization where al-Mubadara should take a leading role.

If there was one issue that came to trigger civil resistance in the second intifada it was the building of the separation wall. When pointing out its role in the national resistance this is also the main point of issue that al-Mubadara refers to. Could the wall issue be an opportunity for a third force to mobilize?

4.4 The Wall

When Israel started building the separation wall in the northern West Bank in late summer 2002 it took the Palestinian political establishment by surprise. Hardly no strategic reaction came out on behalf of the PA in the first period. The wall, consisting of sophisticated barbed wire fences in rural areas and eight meter high concrete blocks in urban areas, was built largely inside the West Bank, and it soon

became clear that it would be built in the entire West Bank including Jerusalem and expropriate large parts of it to the settlements.[19]

The wall came to be an arena where civil resistance and popular mobilization took precedence over militant action. For NGOs and their so called civil society activists, it became *the issue* over which to construct a base for political action. For them it represented first and foremost an urgent matter to deal with, as the catastrophic political and humanitarian consequences were understood, but it also represented an opportunity for action in an intifada where the militant groups had been at the forefront.

The issue was first taken up in a comprehensive manner by the Palestinian Environmental NGOs network (PENGON). PENGON started collecting information and mobilizing people in the local communities that were affected by the building of the wall, and established the Anti-Apartheid Wall Campaign (AAWC)[20] as a means to fight the wall.

The campaign took action on mobilizing local communities to protest the wall, lobbying on the PA to take on the question of the wall, and in working with the community of international solidarity movements. They have succeeded to the degree that the popular protest against the wall has been the main arena for civil resistance in the second intifada. In villages such as Jayyous and Bili'in in the North-Western part of the West Bank, the local communities have protested with demonstrations and civil disobedience. In many villages the issue of the wall has triggered the formation of local joint popular committees to organize the efforts against the wall.

As al-Mubadara was not thoroughly established with structures of a political organization before well into 2004, it was not part of the initial work on the issue of

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[19] Only 20% of the wall will be constructed along the "green line", the border line between the West Bank and Israel as of 1967. The wall is planned to have a total length of 703 km (OCHA 2006).

[20] www.stopthewall.org

the wall. However the NGOs such as UPMRC and HDIP in which many of the people who later came to be crucial in the work of al-Mubadara, were among those trying to make efforts on the issue of the wall. In February 2004 Mustafa Barghouti, in his capacity as NGO leader, was in place as part of the official Palestinian delegation to the opening of the hearings at the International Court of Justice in the Hague on the question of the wall, as representative of Palestinian "civil society".

As al-Mubadara came to develop its own network of activists around a new organizational identity, the wall was an obvious issue for Mubadara to take on. For al-Mubadara the civil resistance against the wall is a main point of action according to leaders and activists alike. Mustafa Barghouti may well be the political figure who has spent most time showing up in local demonstrations against the wall. Yet it does not seem like Mubadara in itself, as a political organization, has been able to be a main organizer and mobilizer behind the civil resistance. Rather al-Mubadara sees itself to a certain extent as a political representative for those who do, and uses this self portrayal actively in its self presentation.

In conclusion the issue of the wall may well bee seen as an opportunity in an otherwise militarized environment for political forces like al-Mubadara to take up a role and mobilize political action and support. We return to the issue in the coming chapter when discussing further the mobilizing structures of al-Mubadara, the role and relations between NGOs, al-Mubadara and the AAWC, and the possibilities for Mubadara to capitalize on this question.

4.5 The electoral opening

The question of elections did not come up all of a sudden after Arafat's death in 2004. Elections had been on discussed and on the preparation table for a while already even though no legal provisions demanded elections to take place. While neither the text of the Oslo Accords, nor the Election law passed by Arafat in 1995 to regulate the 1996 election stipulated elections beyond the transitional period, it was

first by the amendment of the Basic law in 2005 and the new election law passed the same year that elections were stipulated to take place every fourth year.

Palestinian NGOs had been among the vocal callers for new elections to renew PA leadership and strengthen the PA's democratic legitimacy among the population, as the interim period that the PA was established for expired in May 1999. In the reform opening of 2002, the platform that introduced al-Mubadara provides another clear example of this reasoning. One of the main demands of the al-Mubadara platform was to have elections on all institutional levels as part of a drive to have a leadership that would be accountable to the Palestinian population rather than to external forces. At that time though, elections had elevated to the agenda of the PA leadership as well. As part of the reform promises made by Arafat after the devastating Israeli incursions, elections were announced to be held in the beginning of 2003. However neither the US nor Israel were keen on helping elections come about, as they acknowledged they would likely restate Arafat's legitimacy as the Palestinian leader, rather than push Arafat aside (Brown 2005:12). International focus therefore, shifted from elections to the demand that a prime minister should be appointed to take over many of the powers of the president of the Palestinian Authority (Seitz 2003). As the Palestinians would not be able to arrange elections without the consent of the occupying power for transportation of material and freedom of movement for voters, international consent and active backing was an absolute necessity.

After Yasser Arafat's death in October 2004 there were no such hinders set by the external actors. The Palestinians strictly followed the procedures provided by the Basic Law[21] following the death of Arafat. Presidential elections were scheduled for January 9th 2005, the stipulated 60 days after the death of the former president.

The presidential elections provided a political opening for mobilization and contestation, and can in my view be treated as a political opening of the system. For

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[21] The Basic law regulates the conduct of the PA institutions until statehood is achieved, when a constitution would replace it. It was passed by the PLC in October 1997, but was not ratified by the president until May 2002.

forces that would seek to mobilize politically in the framework of the PA it changed the *opportunity structure*. For almost a decade political power had been uncontested in the sense that no opening had emerged where political forces could mobilize support to enter the existing institutions of the political system, other than the patronage system personalized by Arafat. An example of that mechanism would be how Mustafa Barghouti as he was in the process of co-founding al-Mubadara, according to himself, was offered a position in the government by Arafat in summer 2002, to co-opt him into the fold as part of the PA aligned PPP of which he was still a member (Hazan 2005:128). The elections, without Arafat - the historical leader, opened for the establishment of an independent opposition, rather than continued patronage.

Hamas, which would have been the main challenger for a Fateh candidate, choose to boycott the elections for the same reasons it boycotted the elections in 1996, the claimed illegitimacy of the PA institutions. Among the population however, many were keen to show their disapproval of the Fateh leadership and were looking for an alternative. The door was open for an oppositional candidate to step forward.

For al-Mubadara the election emerged as an early opportunity to join the political system and promote Mustafa Barghouti as a national opposition leader. Elections had been one of the main concerns of al-Mubadara, for the NGOs in the PNGO network, and the secular left in general over the second intifada. The argument for elections had been to see them as means to enhance the democratic nature of the Palestinian political system and reassert Palestinian institutions in the face of Israel's policies. The founders of al-Mubadara had officially registered it as a party through the Ministry of Interior in late 2004. Participation was not a question, the question was how.

The election was also an opportunity to gather forces around a joint candidate for those wishing to promote a third force versus Fateh and Hamas. However, Barghouti did not succeed in making al-Mubadara an umbrella for all the other factions. The only organized political faction willing to join to support Barghouti's candidacy, was

the PFLP. PFLP did not want to run with a candidate of their own as they still had their ideological reservations over the PA, but supported Barghouti on a joint political platform. Throwing in their organizational structures in the campaign they provided an important contribution to Barghouti's candidacy. The other parties, like the PPP that Barghouti had just left a couple of years before, and the DFLP, ran with their own candidates, gathering only a few percent electoral support, not superseding their own core constituencies.

In the end Mustafa Barghouti emerged as the main oppositional candidate. On the official registration Barghouti was presented as an independent candidate, but with the emblem of al-Mubadara residing beside his name on the ballot.

Managing to come out as the main opposition candidate, Barghouti most certainly drew a large number of protest votes, from those who wanted to vote for someone not associated with the PA. His 19,8% of the vote was considered a noticeable opposition, while the comfortable win for Mahomoud Abbas (62,3 %) was partly attributed to the need to fill the vacuum after Arafat with someone that the international community could accept. Even though the presidential elections represented a formal opening for political opposition mobilization, the external pressure on the process was tremendous. Both the US and the EU pointed to Abbas as the candidate that should be chosen, the moderate leader that needed a mandate to fit into their plans for "a revival of the peace process" and to keep Hamas marginalized.

Mustafa Barghouti himself summarized the political importance of the elections in these words:

> The elections discredited the notion that Palestinian society is polarised between Hamas and Fatah. The Western and Israeli press have long pushed this line. What the presidential elections revealed was the existence of a third, democratic trend. Its representatives won up to 30 per cent of the vote if we discount suspect ballots and the repeat voting that occurred in the last three hours of the poll. This fact supports the findings of opinion polls which for some years now have indicated that there is a silent majority of at least 40 to 45 per cent of the population that gravitates towards neither Fatah nor Hamas (Barghouti 2005).

The "suspect ballots" and "repeat voting" refers to events during election day, when polling was extended for two hours after Fateh allegedly had put pressure upon the Central Election Commission (including shooting in the air in the vicinity of the CEC headquarters) to extend the opening hours of the polling stations (Butenschøn and Vollan 2006:114). The absence of Hamas in the elections however puts a question mark on the claim that the vote for Barghouti represented support for a third current rather than a protest against Fateh and the existing PA leadership. In the months following the presidential elections it became clear that Hamas would join the political system and contend in the elections for a self-rule parliament. As the two stronger political forces took the centre stage, the strength of the third current would be taken to the test.

The presidential elections generally strengthened the functions of the factions as political parties. According to Dwaik (2005:10), "participation served, for example, as an important tool in terms of organizational mobilization, the gathering of supporters, the activating of cadres, and the measuring of strength and size of the faction". For Mustafa Barghouti and al-Mubadara, the presidential election served to secure him a spot as a popular political figure, while on the organizational level it was clear that the PFLP had contributed a lot in terms of organizational resources, although campaigning for a candidate not of their own party. The relation between the elections and the functioning of the factions as parties highlights the relationship between the electoral opening as a change in political opportunity structure, and the processes of mobilization, which we return to in the next chapter

4.6 The bipolar contest

The decision of Hamas to enter the political system of the PA is considered the last of the notable changes in the political opportunity structure of the second intifada. In a way it also marks the end of the intifada. In March 2005 thirteen Palestinian political factions met in Cairo, Egypt. They negotiated a political agreement under which a unilateral Palestinian ceasefire was established, where it was agreed that all factions

respected the authority of the PLO as the representative of the Palestinians as a people, and that all factions should be included in the PLO. It also asserted the legitimacy of the PLC elections that were scheduled to come up on July 17th.

This marked a turning point for Hamas. From rejecting the PA as an illegitimate political entity altogether, having been a movement intent on representing an alternative model and structure to the PLO and the PA, now Hamas decided to take advantage of the popularity it had accumulated to become the strong opposition within the system (Usher 2005). In addition focus changed from having insisted on resistance as the means to end the occupation rather than the diplomacy line held by the PA leadership, to a combination of resistance, diplomacy and governance. For the future, a Hamas leader was cited in 2005, "Our aim is governance and one can only govern through the institutions of government" (Usher 2005).

During spring 2005 the discussion revolved around the possibility of conducting the scheduled PLC elections on July 17th. Hamas appeared as a strict advocate of holding the elections on time, stressing the need to follow the principles laid down in the Cairo agreement. Within Fateh worries were growing that Hamas would be a strong challenger in the elections. Marred by internal fragmentation Fateh needed time to organize an electoral challenge and hoped that the announced Israeli withdrawal from the Gaza Strip would strengthen Fateh in the eyes of the public. This may have been the main reasons for the eventual postponement of the elections (Butenschøn and Vollan 2006:49).

The official reason though, was the long time taken by the PLC to pass a new election law. Much deliberation was taking place over what kind of system to adopt. President Mahmoud Abbas advocated a fully proportional list based system. This would also have been helpful for runner ups, and opportunities for third current challenges, and was also advocated by al-Mubadara, NGOs and other aspirers for a third political force. At one point Abbas also suggested to have a joint list comprising all secular forces, those of the PLO factions plus other factions and individuals, such as al-Mubadara, as a means to secure a majority against the challenge of Hamas (Yaghi

2005). Within the PLC the interests turned different, as many of the locally strong Fateh personalities were unlikely to gain a spot on a national list to be decided by the Fateh Central Committee. Therefore the system adopted turned out as parallel voting for national lists with proportional representation for half of the PLC mandates, and block votes in sixteen multi-member constituencies for the other half.[22] This system clearly was to the disadvantage for the fortunes of a possible third force in elections if compared to a possible fully proportional system, as smaller runner ups would have a hard time to have candidates elected in the block vote system.

Despite this, the PLC elections provided another political opening in extension of the presidential elections. For third current forces like al-Mubadara however, the decision of Hamas to participate would come to be a major challenge. It marked the start of a period where the political debate was increasingly bipolarized.

If we would take opinion polls as a point of entry, it is clear that the bipolarization of the Palestinian political landscape did not start in 2005. Ever since the advent of the PA, Hamas had been the main challenger, and Fateh the main bearer of the PA. According to opinion polls from the Jerusalem Media & Communication Centre (JMCC) however, it was not until the breakdown of the Camp David peace negotiations in 2000 that Hamas could garner a steady 20 % + of public support (JMCC, 2007). The new to the situation from 2005 was the fact that this contest was now to take place within the parameters of the existing PA structures. This is also what distinguishes the parliamentary elections of January 2006 from the presidential elections of January 2005. In the presidential elections Hamas still boycotted the proceedings; allegedly based on its principled stand to the PA it had held since before the 1996 elections. The role as opposition was therefore open, and it was this role that Mustafa Barghouti could take up backed by his al-Mubadara project and the PFLP. Emerging as the stronger contender, he could capitalize on the protest vote against the candidacy of Mahmoud Abbas and Fateh.

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[22] See Butenschøn and Vollan (2006) for a detailed presentation of the electoral system and how it was decided upon.

As it became clear that Hamas would join the race and be the main challenger to Fateh, the political discussion increasingly took the form of a bipolar contest. The state bearing Fateh that had ruled for a decade, against the Islamist opposition. But Hamas did not put all their weight on ideological and national issues, but rather focused much attention on the conduct of the government. In the end they named their platform for the elections "Change and Reform" to highlight the opposition to the mismanagement and perceived corruption of the PA that Fateh had been running.

The main reason cited for the massive vote for Hamas was the process of protest voting against the reign of Fateh for over a decade (Usher 2006, Zweiri 2006). As Hammami and Hilal projected already in 2001, "What is certain is that this intifada will leave a collective memory of government failure in the face of mass hardship" (Hammami and Hilal 2001). Over the same period Hamas had bolstered its position by leading the resistance, continuing to provide social services, and building a strong organization. Adding to the picture was the intense international pressure. During 2005 representatives of Israel, the US and other countries constantly reiterated how Hamas had to be kept out of power, and the Fateh "moderates" had to be kept in. During fall Israel even threatened not to allow elections to take place if Hamas was allowed to participate.

Thus the international agenda indirectly supported the bipolarization of the debate in the run up to the PLC elections, and contributed to marginalize the aspirers for a third force. A vote for the opposition came increasingly to be depicted as a vote for Hamas. For the secular opposition this bipolar contest was a massive hinder. They shared many of the issues of Hamas when it came to cleaning up governance, but they were not seen as a credible and strong alternative to Fateh.

Adding to these circumstances, the third current was not able to get together in one joint effort. As in the run up to the presidential elections one year before, deliberations were many and they included the factions, such as PFLP, DFLP, PPP and FIDA, al-Mubadara, and independent figures such as Hanan Ashrawi and Salam Fayyad. Whether for political differences, personal ambition or factional pride, it

proved impossible to establish a joint list and make one strong electoral effort. Rather the third current intensified the already heavy bipolarization of the political landscape by keeping split in smaller streams. PFLP ran on their own, PPP, DFLP and FIDA established a coalition called al-Badeel (the Alternative), while al-Mubadara went on to create their own platform called Independent Palestine, comprising al-Mubadara personalities mixed with other NGO leaders and known social activists. Fayyad and Ashrawi tellingly established their own list, by the name "the Third Way".

4.7 Opportunities lost?

In the end none of these electoral platforms managed to come out anywhere near Hamas and Fateh.[23] The 2,7% vote for al-Mubadara's list "independent Palestine" indicated, as in 2006 people voted for change, that the third current was not perceived as capable of delivering. They had just not been able to be a platform for mobilization enough to build a power base in society. The bipolarization had taken its toll, but the organized political forces had not contributed by getting their act together either. Despite the militarization of the intifada there were signs in 2004 that a rising engagement on the issue of the wall could be an opportunity for al-Mubadara to move to the fore. However the emergence of an electoral arena meant that an effort to mobilize a movement for civil resistance was facing the need to promote electoral candidates, a mighty task for a new political organization. In the next chapter I take a closer look at mobilizational structures and resources, organizational legacies and social formations to further review the effort of al-Mubadara to establish a third force.

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[23] The results of the PLC election for the proportional list mandates: Change and Reform 44,5 %, Fateh 41,4 %, PFLP 4,3 %, al-Badeel 2,9 %, Independent Palestine (al-Mubadara) 2,7 %, The Third Way 2,4 %. Results available at the website of the Central Election Comission, www.elections.ps [15.03.07]

5. Mobilizing structures – party, movement and NGOs

Hamas charitable societies for example, are about building a constituency, and providing services, and about a commitment to the community, all at once. What makes it different is that it is linked to a political project. A formal political project, a political movement that wants power. The NGOs are not linked to a formal political project anymore. Most of them are into this abstract we want to build a better society kind of thing. And in the process have nice jobs. Then you do have the one case of political project NGO thing, and that is the Mubadara.

Reema Hammami, Ramallah, 18.12.2006

Al-Mubadara is still young, created in 2002 as a political initiative that was meant to gather as many of the secular national forces outside Fateh as possible. Organizationally it is as of 2006 somewhat in limbo between this ambition of being a wider "movement", the relation to the rest of the "democratic" or "leftist" parties, and the process of establishing a new political party structure as the core of this movement.

When al-Mubadara was announced in 2002 calling for democratic reform, increased popular participation, and the gathering of the secular national forces in face of the Israeli reoccupation and failure of the PA, there was no readily organized force to lead such a campaign. As al-Mubadara set out to organize a political movement under its name, it found itself situated in a legacy of leftist political factions and NGOs, and a deprived and disillusioned middle class.

This chapter outlines the structures of mobilization as al-Mubadara sought to organize a political force on the eve of the second intifada. It assesses how al-

Mubadara has tried to establish organizational structures resembling a political party, with the ambition of leading a wider movement of already organized social forces. It is argued that the legacy of party-NGO relations and the professionalization and de-politicization that have characterized the increasingly donor influenced secular NGO sector involves major constraints for the struggle to remobilize a constituency for a third political force.

5.1 Structures of mobilization, resources and organizations

Focusing on the rational search for resources and building of organizational structures to promote a certain movement's agenda has been an important development within research on social movements, under headings such as resource mobilization and mobilizing structures. The availability of mobilizational structures is seen as vitally important to support collective action, to get it underway and to sustain it. According to McAdam et al.(1996:18) "movements may largely be born of environmental opportunities, but their fate is heavily shaped by their own actions. Specifically it is the formal organizations who purport to speak for the movement, who increasingly dictate the course, content and outcomes of the struggle." In addition to this, the organizational structures of mobilization are situated in a social and economic context, where its relation to social groups and economic circumstances are seen as important factors for the effectiveness of the organization in promoting participation and politicization.

From this perspective it is argued that the organizational structures of al-Mubadara should be considered as important in order to understand its role in political mobilization for a third political force. The way these structures are able to support mobilization, how they are able to attract resources, and how they work with regards to mobilization in its social and economic context. For al-Mubadara, crucial questions relate to the role of NGOs and how social groups can be mobilized to join the structures of a new political movement.

As repeatedly pointed out the continuous transitional nature of self-rule under occupation, an authority with state like political institutions, has blurred the lines between political organizations as parties or movements. Al-Mubadara holds an explicit ambition to combine features of both. Herein lies maybe the most important dilemma for building the structures of a third political force. In the words of Mustafa Barghouti:

> There will be a constant contradiction all the time between being a party that is well organized and being a movement which is not partisan in its nature. And that contradiction could be a source of development, or it could be a source of failure. (Barghouti 2006 [interview])

5.2 Party structures

It remains unclear whether it was the original ambition to establish party like structures for al-Mubadara. What is clear is that al-Mubadara did not succeed in being an umbrella for the existing factions. Thus the option of establishing organizational structures of its own became necessary in order to develop a sustained political identity.

Recruitment of cadre for a political organization started in 2003. People were recruited from local communities in the West Bank for two workshops in the Grand Park Hotel in Ramallah, in Saife's words (2006 [interview]), to gather "people that we felt are somehow supportive and open to new ideas", and to present for them "the values of al-Mubadara". "At that time al-Mubadara as a name, as a party, as a movement, it was just as an infant. So we needed a way to tell people this is al-Mubadara."

Before the structures of a political organization was really in place, al-Mubadara found itself fighting two electoral campaigns, the presidential for Mustapha Barghouti in January 2005, and the parliamentary at the core of the coalition "Independent Palestine" in January 2006. Again, as the "head of organization"

Khaled Saife expresses it (Ibid.), "we really didn't have much time to think about organizing ourselves", referring to the fact that al-Mubadara barely had started organizing a structure before it would join to fight two electoral campaigns in one year.

The lessons from the electoral campaigns have triggered al-Mubadara to institutionalize increasingly as a political party. In the campaign for Mustafa Barghouti in the presidential elections January 2005, in the coalition with PFLP the experience was that the PFLP had by far the most to contribute in terms of organizational structures and manpower. In the following campaign for the January 2006 PLC elections al-Mubadara was on its own as the core of the list "Independent Palestine - Mustafa Barghouti and independents", and experienced the lack of an organizational apparatus as a serious constraint in the campaigning (Barghouti 2006 [interview]).

Khaled Saife and others have during the time up until late 2006, managed to set up a party like structure for al-Mubadara, forming a hierarchy from local community groups to a secretary general. The content and function of these structures however, is to date rather informal. The fact that to date there has not been a general conference for al-Mubadara means that most top positions are still filled by personal agreement among the leaders. Some close observers claim that an early process of centralization is a main problem for its organizational and political development (2006 [Interviews]). If strategy and decision making is centralized within the informal circles around the general secretary it is argued that this hinders the growth of local initiative and activism among cadre and supporters.

As a main component of organizational development, calls for having a congress have been long debated, but seem to be on hold. Some suggest that this is for reasons that the current leadership feel insecure if they can keep their position through such a process. Others suggest it is for reasons of practical matters, time needed to finish a membership registry, political timing etc. that a congress is delayed. According to Saife: "Somehow we are organized, but until now we didn't have a conference. It

needs preparation and some sort of new consciousness" (Saife 2006 [interview]).
Saife stresses how the building of al-Mubadara structures is supposed to bring a new
form of organizational thinking, breaking with the centralized models of the other
leftist factions in Palestine, providing a more open and flexible model. There is no
clear vision of how this is going to be implemented in practical terms though, and the
structures that have been sketched so far resembles those of a hierarchical party
structure.

There already seems to be issues of control and power inside Mubadara that puts
further institutionalization on hold. At present organizational bodies are configured
informally, on the bases of personal agreements, including an "assistance committee"
that works "to support the secretary general" (Milhem 2006 [interview]). Under the
surface there seem to be some dissatisfaction with the leadership. In one village the
local al-Mubadara representative clearly put blame on the central leadership and the
centralization of decision making for the difficult situation of the party locally
(Anonymous 2006 [interview]).

5.3 Movement ambitions

Al-Mubadara does not only want to be a political party, but mainly to represent and
strengthen a wider movement. A movement in two senses: A wider coalition of forces
in a less rigid organizational umbrella, and a non-secterian pragmatic coalition of
representatives from all sectors of society; private business, NGOs, "marginalized
groups" (youth, women and rural people), and organized labour. While the original
idea seems to have been to establish a platform under which also to bring together as
many of the secular factions as possible, focus shifted to a less ambitious goal of
representing different organizational expressions of a democratic secular society. This
shows how the movement ambitions have been translated in practice into ambitions
of forming coalitions for elections, rather than an even more challenging task of
establishing a sustained movement structure for civil resistance and mass
participation. After the failed attempts to form a united list of third forces for the

parliamentary elections in 2006, according to al-Mubadara leaders the door is still open for cooperation with other factions, but they do not see it as worth "to waste the time" (Jarrar, A. 2006 [interview]) waiting for the other factions to "let go of their factional pride" to join a larger movement.

The idea of bringing together all sectors of society for a common national agenda raises a parallel to the ideas of Fateh from the outset of the national liberation movement in the 1950s. In a period of struggle against occupation and dispossession, focus on the national issues was to bring different social forces together under one movement. For al-Mubadara, however, the constituency for such a movement is not the entire nation (as it was for Fateh), but those "democratic" forces that are/have been independent of the Palestinian Authority under Arafat rule, and those who are politically secular.

Up until now al-Mubadara has been relying more on existing organizational structures than on being able to organize social groups itself. The nature of the electoral list that Mubadara featured in the PLC elections represents an example. The list, in the end given the name "Independent Palestine" and promoted as "Mustafa Barghouti and Independents" was a coalition that did not comprise different political factions as hoped, but a number of personalities representing different sectors, NGOs and associations. These included among others Amal Khreishe (director of Palestinian Working Women Society for Development), Kamil Hassouneh (businessman, Vice-President of the Society of Palestinian Businessmen), Mohammed Dahman (Independent Workers Committees in Gaza), Allam Jarrar (UPMRC), and Ziad Amr (former director of the General Union of Disabled People). These were personalities known for their NGO activities that could be seen as candidates that would "represent" different sectors.

The critique against personalization and centralization of strategy and decision making is reflected also with regards to the electoral coalition. Both the profile of the campaign, focusing most attention to the leading figure by promoting the list officially as "Mustafa Barghouti and Independents" without prior agreement, lack of

funding for profiling other senior candidates, and lack of accountability for other strategic decisions including financial matters, are claimed by members of the electoral list to be main flaws caused by personalization and centralization (2006 [interviews]). For the list it was established a "Coalition Council" of 101 members to which the electoral list and the candidates would be responsible. According to candidates, both candidates and the Council have met only twice, were poorly informed, not presented with an overview of financial sources, and not able to partake in decision making for the electoral coalition.

5.4 Relation to other factions – competition and fragmentation on the secular left

The long time crisis of the parties on the historical left in Palestinian politics forms the landscape of political organizations surrounding al-Mubadara. The parties traditionally belonging to the left (PPP, PFLP, DFLP, FIDA) in the period between the establishment of the PA and the height of the second intifada (1994-2003) lost half of their constituency (Hilal 2006).

Symptomatically for the state of these political organizations, according to a member of the central committee in the PPP, the activity of the party would consist of 85% internal discussion, and 15 % external action (Abu Jesh 2006 [interview]). For these parties this period was first and foremost marked by their inclusion under the patronage of Arafat, especially for PPP and FIDA, while their activities on the ground disappeared more or less totally. Officially rejecting the framework of the PA, but at the same time allowing their cadre to be subsumed in the administrative apparatus of the PA, the PFLP and DFLP were politically marginalized.

When the second intifada erupted in year 2000, these parties were more or less totally unable to take part in or promote any substantial popular action (Giacaman 2006 [interview]). Publishing statements was their main activity, placing them mainly in a position as bystanders rather than partakers. A core of supporters remained around a

formal organizational structure, but their state left them far from constituting any dynamic political force with noticeable impact. These stiffened and void structures are cited by Hilal (2006 [interview]) as a main hinder for the development of a third force in Palestinian politics. In his words it is a difficult hinder to overcome, as "Old habits die hard".

According to al-Mubadara leadership and activists (Saife2006, al-Deek 2006 [inteviews]), most of the people engaged in al-Mubadara are people with their background from other parties, like PPP, PFLP and also Fateh. The bulk of human resources consist of ex-party people, rather than people working in NGOs. According to sources both inside and outside al-Mubadara, a stream of people came to al-Mubadara in the years leading up to the 2005 presidential elections, in search of a promising political force.

However, some observers would claim that al-Mubadara may have become even more centralized than the other parties, not presenting any new platform for participation. Centralization has according to the same sources been personalized more than institutionalized in formal structures, all in all causing people who came to al-Mubadara from the other parties in the beginning to leave again. According to one close observer: "A lot of people supported al-Mubadara, they wanted to be members, asking what they can do. After they engage in al-Mubadara they have no task, nothing to do. So what's the difference between al-Mubadara and the others?" (2006 [interview]). This is in stark contrast to the way al-Mubadara, represented by Saife (2006 [interview]), admits that some of those who came to join al-Mubadara have left, but then claims that this has been for the reasons that these people were not able to access top positions or gain personal benefits.

Instead of becoming a platform that could unite the existing secular and leftist forces, al-Mubadara has become one of a number of organizations in this sphere, competing within a structure of political and personal conflict. The debates and negotiations in front of the PLC elections provide a good example, as it brought all these forces together in an attempt to form a joint list for the elections.

Azmi Shuabi, an outgoing PLC member who partook in the negotiations to establish a joint platform, claims that the main obstacles were found on the organizational and personal level rather than in political differences (2006 [interview]). This view is shared by other participants as well. Both Mustafa Barghouti, independent figure Hanan Ashrawi, and the PFLP are said to have insisted on securing the top spot. All having their main candidate from the West Bank, the question of having Gaza represented among the top names would come at the expense of the other contenders for the top spots, complicating matters further. Since the presidential elections one year before the relation between PFLP and al-Mubadara had somewhat soured. The PFLP felt they were not credited for their effort and contribution to the campaign and the result. Both PFLP and Barghouti/al-Mubadara saw the elections as a sign of their own political strength, thus going into negotiations high on self confidence. Between the PPP and al-Mubadara there were natural strains since Mustafa Barghouti left the PPP over political and organizational strategy only few years before. And for the factions it was important not to let the list be dominated by independent figures.

In the end there was no success in bridging the legacy of factionalisation and personal rivalry in order to stop the fragmentation of the secular forces outside Fateh. As documented above (4.6) the result was a range of competing electoral lists all claiming to be leading a third political current.

5.5 Relation to the NGOs

It is difficult to pass by that al-Mubadara by affiliation of its leader, its upper cadre and some of its activities are seen as closely connected to certain NGOs, UPMRC and HDIP in particular. Unable to present an exact account of the background of leaders and activists in al-Mubadara, it is an impression that especially in the circles around the central office in Ramallah, and the General Secretary, there is a large overlap. Mustafa Barghouti, not anymore with an official position in the HDIP, still keeps an office in the premises of HDIP and has his personal secretariat there.

Since their joint existence up until the first intifada, most NGOs have increasingly separated from political parties in Palestine. Mustafa Barghouti has been one of the main proponents of such a development, separating the UPMRC from the PPP. Above it was accounted how the crisis of the parties in the 1990s led to the relative importance and also political role of the NGOs (3.2).

The link between parties and NGOs have still been visible up until today though, and especially through the upper cadre (Hanafi and Tabar 2005:218). Generally in the words of Hanafi and Tabar (2005:232), there has been and is an overlap of persons who "remain directly active in political parties and move between the structures of the NGO and the party, acting on two fronts of civil society, and entering the public arena through both of these structures". Also in al-Mubadara there is a clear tendency that the upper level leadership around Mustapha Barghouti comprises many NGO leaders, former or still active in NGO leadership.

Al-Mubadara sees itself as promoters of a new form of party-NGO relation. NGOs should not be organizationally linked to the party, they should be separate structures, and act independently. NGOs should not take their directions from the party and vice versa. Rather they should be seen as part of the same democratic movement for the values they share and the society development they promote. They should cooperate under the umbrella of a larger movement. For Saife, "this is the new form of movement" (2006 [interview]). As such the NGOs are seen to play a vital role for the efforts of al-Mubadara, but only as part of a larger democratic movement.

On the other hand it is obvious when talking to different activists and leaders in NGOs and al-Mubadara alike, that the boundaries between NGO activities and al-Mubadara activities over time are rather blurred. There is for example a tendency to see NGO activities that predate the launch of al-Mubadara as part of the same political movement in terms of people and their effort. The relief work of UPMRC during the first two years of the intifada, bringing ambulances and emergency rescue to demonstrations and clashes, and supporting people with food and medical supplies, are but one of such examples. When one interviewee says that "everybody in this

country know the contribution of our movement" (Saife 2006 [interview]), he refers to this wider understanding of what al-Mubadara is and has been even before it was established.

While the NGOs' prominence in the 1990s was related to the failure of the political parties and the NGOs became separated from the parties, the relation between al-Mubadara and NGOs could be seen as an attempt to rejoin NGOs with a political movement so as to have a mutual benefit for a common cause, without the one controlling the other. But the NGOs of the second intifada were different than they were at the beginning of the first intifada a long decade before. Developmental, professional and depoliticized, their shrinking social base and potential for political action have had consequences for al-Mubadara as well as third current politics. The following assesses this development and its consequences.

5.6 Mobilizational structures – the legacy of the NGOs

5.6.1 From mobilizational to developmental

The grassroots self help organizations that were established in the late 1970s and in the 1980s were clearly vehicles to promote support for the particular political factions they were belonging to. Broadly speaking they were about mobilizing the population to resist the occupation. They were based on a new form of participatory resistance, expressed by the Arabic concept *sumud muqawim* - steadfastness as active resistance (Craissati 2005:50), meaning that "popular development initiatives were seen as a means of actively resisting Israeli integration of the occupied territories" (Hammami 1995:57).[24]

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[24] According to Craissati (2005:50) the term *sumud muqawim* was elaborated during conferences organized by the Arab Thought Forum in Jerusalem in the early 1980s. Ibrahim Dakkak, notably one of the co-founders of al-Mubadara in 2002, was at that time chairman of the Forum.

About halfway through the first intifada these organizations started changing into professional development centres. Institutionalization, change of donor sources and change of goal orientation contributed to a development that can basically be described as going from being mobilizational to being developmental, from being grassroots and mass based, to being professional (Hammami 1995:56-7). With the advent of the Palestinian Authority and the state-building project in 1994, the NGOs increasingly institutionalized their role as service providers, educators on "civic" values and lobbyists. Funding changed from solidarity groups into foundations and governments. Demands for long term planning and development projects linked to service provision and training courses replaced "mass campaigns and voluntary work camps" (Ibid.). According to Hammami in this process "NGOs became distanced from the wider community of which they were once an organic part" (Ibid.).

Hanafi and Tabar (2003, 2005) discuss the same trends and find that the neo-liberal paradigm relating to civil society, development and social change that became asserted through the donors in the 1990s have deeply influenced the way the NGOs are related to the community. One assumption in the paradigm that has asserted itself is that the community is already organized into different interest groups that NGOs can approach and "empower" (Hanafi and Tabar 2003:216-7). While it should still be a task to actually organize and politicize the community, still under occupation, in the words of Hanafi and Tabar the current NGO-society relation can be described thus:

> Society becomes the problem field for NGOs to act upon, and social groups and the grassroots, insofar as they are mentioned, maybe factored as inputs or outputs of whatever "gap" or "problem" the NGO is fixing. (Hanafi and Tabar 2005:224)

Or in the words of Hammami:

> (…) in Palestine, while mobilization was formerly the keyword, in the new discourses it was displaced by the more amorphous notion of empowerment. Moreover, empowerment was generally linked to bringing about social change through development – as opposed to political transformation through mass resistance. (Hammami 1995:57)

Both Hanafi and Tabar and Hammami therefore question the ability of the NGOs to act as agents for social change. The NGOs do not have any social base anymore. The entry of the NGOs into aid channels has served to remove them from a mobilizational role into a developmental role that has profound limits under continued occupation.

5.6.2 Professionalization vs. Voluntarism

Another side of the same development regards the human resources of the NGOs. The NGO sector has to a large extent become professionalized. The developmental paradigm came with a set of demands for certain skills. Project proposals, reporting and accounting according to standards set by the donors required recruitment of professional staff. A generation of young educated middle class professionals, mainly from urban areas has been the main base of recruitment. The NGO sector has provided good employment and possible career paths onto the international level, a platform for upward social mobility (Hammami 2000:27, Jensen 2005). While in the 1990s the parties were in crisis and the PA bureaucracy was filled up with people affiliated with Fateh, the NGOs provided one of the few arenas for professional employment.

While the massive growth in paid professional staff have characterized the NGO sector, at the same time voluntarism has plummeted (Hanafi and Tabar 2005:240). This is a development some NGOs are critically aware of, confirmed by interviews with NGO leaders (Jarrar, A., Shiha, Abu Jesh, Nasser 2006 [interviews]). NGO activities within the developmental paradigm do not encourage voluntarism. At the same time it is appropriate to see this as part of a larger transformation of social activity in Palestinian society. The NGOs entry in to the developmental paradigm coincided with the Oslo accords and the establishment of the Palestinian Authority which in large contributed to promote de-mobilization and patronage rather than political activism and voluntarism.

On the basis of the professional developmental paradigm, an NGO elite with relatively high salaries, steady employment and international connections has emerged. Some have spoken of an NGO class. According to Hammami:

> NGO pay scales are higher than professional and semi-professional salaries in the mid-to-lower level PA bureaucracy or in the public sector generally. The greatest discrepancies are found between NGO salaries and those of the appallingly underpaid public sector: teachers, social workers and the police (Hammami 2000:27).

The NGO sector was also able to keep its level of income over the second intifada. The middle class people involved in the NGOs were able to maintain their economic privileges over a period of deep economic crisis in the community as a whole (Hilal 2006 [Interview]). As of the access to and dependency on foreign donors, critics have claimed that the NGO sector has turned into a kind of business, where employees and NGO leadership have ended up in rent seeking on behalf of organizational interests (Hanafi and Tabar 2004:231-32). This has further contributed to the formation of an elite detached from a social base, seeing society more as a field of problems to be solved by projects rather than a constituency that should be mobilized for political action.

5.6.3 The NGOs in the second intifada - consequenses for building a third political force

The above described developments crucially have been the grounds for the role of the NGOs in the second intifada, and have impacted on the possibilities of building a third political force. While some portray the second intifada as a period where NGOs returned to mobilization for a national agenda, for example related to activities against the separation wall (Jensen 2005), there are clear indications that the overall response of the NGOs was still very much circumscribed by the developmental paradigm they had been aligned to. As such it was the professional response one could expect: emergency relief from the health organizations, information collection and lobbying at the international level, and statement-writing and reform-calling internally. Put sharply, according to Hammami the internal reaction within the NGOs

as the intifada unfolded was approximately like this: "Oh my god, we are not civil society, we can't do anything!" (Hammami 2006 [Interview]).

What the NGOs could do, was to activate a network of international solidarity. Largely abandoned by the PLO elite after the Oslo accords, solidarity groups in Europe had worked with NGOs and the PNGO network as a main contact base in Palestine. The bringing of hundreds of international activists into the occupied territories as observers and shields after the Israeli reinvasion in 2002 may be one of the greatest successes of the NGOs in this period. The effort was advocated by Mustafa Barghouti and institutionalized as the GIPP (Grassroots International Protection for the Palestinian People) organized by the PNGO network.

The work of the NGOs on the issue of the separation wall is also telling. The NGOs seem in the end to have been more capable of running a professional information drive for the international audience than to organize a sustained mobilization among the affected Palestinians themselves. The Anti Apartheid Wall Campaign that originally emanated from the environmental NGO network PENGON, has since its establishment sought to distance itself from the NGOs and has become more of an independent grassroots campaign. NGOs such as HDIP, ARIJ[25] and others have developed their own material on the issue of the wall to lobby internationally. In the popular resistance committees against the wall in the local communities, NGOs have not been a driving force. As was the case for the popular demonstrations that were taking place in the beginning of the intifada (Hanafi and Tabar 2003:206). Although NGO leaders have vocally criticized the military nature of the intifada, suicide bombings in particular, such statements have been marked by their lack of a presented alternative, which adds to the impression that they are not in a position to organize a sustained civil resistance, something they share with the factions and initiatives of the political third current.

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[25] Applied Reasearch Institute Jerusalem

If it remains unclear exactly what role the NGOs should play as part of al-Mubadara as an effort to form a larger "democratic" movement, what is clear is that the NGOs cannot function as a mobilizational base as they did in the first intifada. There is near consensus among all actors, in NGOs, political factions and al-Mubadara alike, that the professionalization of the NGOs and the distancing of the NGOs from a social basis, has been detrimental for the possibilities for a third force to be organized. Professionalization has made it harder to mobilize people for voluntary political activism, and the NGOs do not anymore have a social base in the sense that they can mobilize social groups for a political cause. However, among al-Mubadara representatives working with NGOs there is a tendency to see themselves as less affected. They tend to claim that NGOs such as the UPMRC, through its community based health programs, have been able to maintain a social base (Barghouti 2006, Jarrar, A. 2006 [interviews]), and that it should still be a role for the NGOs to contribute importantly to mobilize "mass popular action on the ground". Nevertheless these actors do admit that these developments have affected all NGOs, and that it has impacted negatively on the effort to establish a third political force (Ibid.), and there may well be reason to doubt the ability of the NGOs to promote such mobilization.

According to actors involved both in NGOs and in al-Mubadara, a main role of the NGOs such as the HDIP and UPMRC as part of a larger movement to promote a third political force, has been and should be rather to present people with a "democratic model" and a "democratic value system" (Barghouti 2006, Jarrar, A. 2006, Milhem 2006, Saife 2006 [interviews]). The NGOs should serve community as a whole and through their projects promote the value of democracy they would share with al-Mubadara as a political project. As an example, in front of the PLC elections the civil society program of the HDIP conducted a massive civic education campaign in order to encourage people to vote. As Abbas Milhem in HDIP (also a senior activist in al-Mubadara) explains, the program had no political bias whatsoever, except for the promotion of democratic participation through the ballot box as a central democratic value (Milhem 2006 [interview]). However he admitted that later, after the meagre election results for all "democratic" forces, there had been a debate whether such

programs should have a clearer political focus to indicate who were seen as the actual political representatives for true democracy. This in order not to support al-Mubadara specifically, but rather to point in the direction of a "third democratic alternative" (Ibid.). The same picture is painted by people in PARC[26], which also had its "civic education" campaign in relation to the elections (Abu Jesh 2006 [Interview]).

5.7 Patronage and social transformation

There is little doubt, and a considerable literature indicating (Brynen 1995, Khan 2004, Parsons 2005), that forms of clientelism and patronage is a widespread feature of the Palestinian political system, especially related to the settling of the Palestinian Authority in the society of the occupied territories, as discussed above (3.2).

Both observers and actors point to this culture of patronage as a main constraint for third current mobilization. This does not necessarily mean that this is an imminent feature of the general political culture. It can also bee seen as a rational way of utilizing resources for building a political base, and from below as adaptation to socio-economic deprivation and existing options in a certain social and political context. Thus the socio-economic situation is important to consider.

The general economic crisis in the second intifada has made it more difficult to maintain a system of benefits. At the same time the economic deprivation has made it more difficult to mobilize on the basis of voluntarism, as people are in desperate need of income. Some findings suggest that this is a problem for al-Mubadara. Especially as people may confuse Mubadara with the NGOs, they may attract people who want a job rather than wanting to contribute by voluntary political activism. There seems therefore to be a link between the socio-economic developments and mechanisms of patronage.

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[26] Palestinian Agricultural Relief Committees

Al-Mubadara devotes particular attention to what they see as a culture of political patronage. They claim to want to fight this and promote mobilization based on equality, participation and contribution to a common political project (Barghouti, Jarrar, A., Milhem, Saife 2006 [interviews]). It has not been possible during the research for this thesis to determine whether the structures of al-Mubadara itself include mechanisms of patronage or not. What emerges though, from conversations with former party activists and people in a village in the West Bank (Anonymous 2006 [interview]), is that al-Mubadara also has attracted people that expect to have benefits in return for their activism. Without data to indicate if this remains a widespread reality, it serves as an indication. One person had been recruited in the workshops in Ramallah in 2003 (see above, 5.2) and volunteered as a campaigner for Mustafa Barghouti in the presidential election. Then time went by and he was not able to receive anything in return for his engagement, and as he wanted some sort of benefits, most importantly employment, he gave up on al-Mubadara. In his view al-Mubadara "Have nothing to offer people, like the other parties have" (Ibid.).

The expectations in this case to have economic benefits or more important maybe to have a job in one of the NGOs linked to Mustafa Barghouti and al-Mubadara, shows that the circumstances produce a certain amount of opportunism also around al-Mubadara, even if Mustafa Barghouti is keen to assert that for al-Mubadara it is very important to fight political patronage, and that as a political party "We are very poor, but that's not a problem. It means no one comes to us out of opportunism" (Hazan 2005:125). Saife (2006 [interview]), however, confirms that opportunism is a problem. Of those who were initially recruited in 2003 he says that many are still around forming a core of activists, but that some seemed to expect that in a new organization there would be employment and money, and that most of these people have left. Blaming the framework of the Oslo accords and Fateh in particular for establishing a political culture of patronage, he concludes: "We are trying to create a new form of party depending on a new consciousness. This is very delicate and I can say we face big problems." "Now [after Oslo] you can't easily recruit people because they are poor and they ask for money if they will work for you" (Ibid.).

Without this phenomenon necessarily representing a culture of clientelism, it may be a rational consequence of the social and economic hardships on the level of society, and a perception among people that al-Mubadara is linked with an NGO sector where employment and income is available. However, as Hilal points out (2006[interview]), the number of jobs available in NGOs are still very much limited and tied up in projects, so it would not represent a large base for a patronage system.

5.8 Social groups mobilized?

Palestinian society has been marked over the past by significant social transformations, highly influenced by the nature of the conflicts Palestinians have been experiencing over changing political periods. The PLO brought a social as well as political revolution to Palestinian society. Before 1948 politics was mainly an activity maintained by the large landowning families. The dispossession of the Palestinian people in 1948 threw old social cleavages around.[27] The PLO that grew up in exile had its base in the refugee camps and produced a generation of leaders from lower and middle class backgrounds. In the occupied territories the educational revolution and the growing impact of the PLO-led nationalism from the 1970s produced a politically conscious and active middle class that were behind the establishment of the mass based organizations in the 1980s. The rise of the grassroots movements in the 1980s to a large extent overlapped the rise of a professional middle class, following the rapid rise in higher education (Robinson 1997). It is still this generation of middle class activists that are leading the factions of the left today, including al-Mubadara.

If we take an exit poll from the presidential elections in 2005, we may have some pointers as to what kind of social background supporters for a third alternative led by

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[27] Close to 800.000 Palestinians were dispossessed during the war between Palestinian and Zionist forces, and later Arab and Israeli armies in 1948 (Pappe 2006). The events of 1948 are for the Palestinians known as the *Nakba,* the "catastrophe".

al-Mubadara would have. According to the exit poll conducted by the Palestinian Centre for Policy and Survey Research (PCPSR, 2005) people who voted for Mustafa Barghouti (al-Mubadara) were generally more educated and they were younger. They were primarily from the private sector as opposed to the public sector voting for Mahmoud Abbas (Fateh), but on average they had about the same income. This may lead us, though based on vague results, to say that al-Mubadara would draw its support mainly from those among the middle classes that are not close to the PA.

It is this middle class that seems to be the natural constituency for a movement like al-Mubadara according to most analysts. The spirit it evoked in the first intifada is very much the spirit that al-Mubadara says it is trying to reawaken. However, the political demobilisation of this class after the Oslo accords, the influence it suffered from the system of patronage under the PA, and its relative deprivation since the second intifada, may have made it less ripe for politicization. According to Giacaman (2006 [interview]), still the middle classes are the main prospective supporters for a project like al-Mubadara. He projects that under more "normal" political circumstances (an end to the occupation), al-Mubadara would capitalize on a growing middle class that would demand a different type of politics than the traditional liberation movement (Fateh) and the Islamic resistance can offer. This outline though somehow works around the problem for al-Mubadara and the effort to establish a third force. Since al-Mubadara is an attempt to be a political force that would mobilize people to change Palestinian society and push forward the end of the occupation, then the issue of constituencies for mobilization relates to the present time, not a future outcome generated by external forces.

According to al-Mubadara themselves (Barghouti, Saife, Jarrar, A. 2006 [interviews]) more marginalized groups in society are also both possible supporters, and an important base for political mobilization. These groups are conceptualized rather in the forms of women, rural people and underprivileged, than in terms of classes (Ibid.). The second intifada has clearly enlarged the groups of underprivileged. Rates

of unemployment and poverty have taken a rapid rise.[28] In the effort to establish a "coalition of social forces" on the list for the 2006 PLC elections, the inclusion of the Independent Workers Committees (IWC) in Gaza provides an example of how al-Mubadara has been trying to connect with an organized social group as part of building a larger movement.

Trade unions have traditionally been weak in Palestine, and the trade unions in place, like the official Palestinian General Federation of Trade Unions, have been closely linked to the upper levels of Fateh and the PA. After three years of intifada groups of unemployed and workers who experienced that their working conditions worsened organized spontaneous mass protests in the streets of Gaza. With a lack of trust in the existing trade unions they left their protest outside the organized union structures and instead established the Independent Workers Committees. Supported by the Democracy and Workers' Rights Centre (DWRC), a leftist NGO working on research, policy and education on workers rights, in mass meetings among the protesting labourers a structure of local workers committees was established in order to sustain their struggle. At a conference in Gaza in 2004 elected representatives from the committees met to establish structures, by-laws and political aims of the Independent Workers Committees. At its peak 9000 workers were organized under this structure.[29]

As the elections for the PLC came up, the IWC decided to seek to have a candidate elected. The coordinator of the DWRC, since the IWC conference also the representative of the IWC, participated in the negotiations among the leftist factions and independent figures to form a joint electoral list for a third political force. As the negotiations broke down, Mustafa Barghouti was the first to offer the IWC a prominent position on an electoral list. The IWC accepted, and their representative would have the fourth position on the list "Independent Palestine" which al-

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[28] Unemployment rates rose from 14% before the intifada to 29% in 2002 (PCBS 2002). According to the World Bank in 2002 58 % of the Palestinian population were living below the poverty line (2,1$ a day) (World Bank 2004:30).

[29] The presentation of the IWC is based on interview with the coordinator of the DWRC, and later PLC candidate, Mohammed Dahman (2007 [interview]).

Mubadara was setting up as their coalition for the elections. According to the same representative (Dahman 2006 [interview]) it was easier for the workers to accept a list that was not connected to one of the older leftist factions.

From the IWC however, eventually there was strong opposition to the nomination for the second and third spot on the list, which were assigned to a representative of the largest traditional bourgeois family in Gaza (Rawia Shawa), and a well known wealthy businessman (Kamil Hassouneh) respectively. Worsening the matter, Dahman (Ibid.) claims that these nominations were decided against former agreement and without the knowledge of the IWC, during the last twenty-four hours before the deadline to submit the lists to the Central Election Commission. In the end the workers of the IWC, claims Dahman, did not want vote for the list, as they would not see themselves voting for such representatives.

In contradiction to the official image promoted by al-Mubadara that the electoral coalition was a valuable gathering of social forces, the above would suggest the failure of an attempt to establish a broad coalition of different sectoral interests, meant to be subsumed under the common interest of the national cause and democratic reform. Eager to have independent organized workers included in this coalition, it indicates that it was overly optimistic to hope that they would go easily together with persons symbolizing the top level social strata. According to Dahman, no joint campaigning activities were organized with the two top candidates from Gaza, Rawia Shawa and himself, so fundamentally different in politics and style. Since after the election the workers have no relation to al-Mubadara and do not see themselves as part of their coalition or movement. Apparently neither did Shawa as the second figure on the list. Shortly after the election (where she gained a seat in the PLC), she announced her withdrawal from the electoral coalition.

5.9 Confused structures

In conclusion the organizational realities of trying to establish a third force do not indicate the establishment of any coherent and sustainable structures to unite a coalition of forces. Al-Mubadara has not become a large umbrella for a third political force. The mobilizational structures it has been trying to advance have been confused between party structures, movement ambitions and problematic electoral coalitions. Social conditions seem to make it difficult to engage people for voluntary political work. The model of engaging already organized social groups under a coalition has also proven little success. The role of the NGOs remains unclear. Since their professionalization within the developmental paradigm in the 1990s they are not anymore a force for social or political mobilization, and it is worth asking whether a non-political focus on "democratic values" will promote a third political force. In the next chapter we turn to this level of ideas, political meaning and construction of a political outlook for a third current.

6. Framing processes – Defining and promoting a third democratic current

No ideology. This is very important.

Khaled Saife, Ramallah 25.12.2006

Al-Mubadara claims to represent something new in Palestinian politics. A democratic force that aims at leading a new movement for national liberation based on democratic principles and values. By their effort to articulate democracy as an urgent national issue they aspire to introduce new forms of meaning to the Palestinian political field.

At the core of politics, be it in the form of movements or parties, are processes of interpreting social reality, present it and promote political change based on this interpretation. While ideologies are sets of beliefs and values that constitute long lasting guiding structures in politics, social movement theory leads us to expand from this and consider how actors engage in *framing processes* and produce *collective action frames* that negotiate and innovate shared meaning as a basis for political action, often in dialogue with existing ideologies (Benford and Snow 2000:613). The point of departure for this chapter is how framing processes can direct us to understand the processes of al-Mubadara in constructing a basis of meaning for political action in the Palestinian context, and if possible whether these processes can shed light on the fortunes of al-Mubadara in asserting itself as a political movement.

Al-Mubadara is part of a so called third democratic current in Palestinian politics. This concept has emerged after the establishment of the Palestinian Authority and the rise of political Islam (Hamas). It can be seen as a reaction to the crisis of the traditional left of the PLO and a search to establish a new political identity that could

promote a political challenge to the two dominant forces and a new direction for the national struggle.

This chapter examines the political meaning of such a third current, focusing on the way al-Mubadara has the ambition to lead the process of defining a third current. It asks how the idea and content of meaning for a third force has been and is being formed, with emphasis on the processes of al-Mubadara, and the output in terms of concepts and political agenda. It is argued that those who seek to constitute a third force have not managed to distinguish a credible political platform for action based on current realities facing the Palestinian national project. Al-Mubadara has thus not been able to present themselves as a relevant and ready democratic alternative that would lead a third trend.

6.1 Action frames, identity and resonance

Arguably the notion of a third current can be seen as a collective action frame. Over time actors have created a set of shared understandings meant to be a basis for a political identity, mobilization and collective action. Under the name "third current politics" such frames are strongly connected to an identity as the democratic opposition.

What is of particular interest in this case is to review what Benford and Snow (2000:619) calls the *resonance* of such frames for collective action, as a lead to assess the impact of framing processes on political fortunes. According to Benford and Snow the degree of such resonance – "why some framings seem to be effective or "resonate" while others do not" - can be analyzed with regards to their *credibility* and *salience* respectively.

The credibility of a frame, according to Benford and Snow (Ibid.), can be attributed to its *consistency,* its *empirical credibility,* and the *credibility of the frame articulators or claims makers.* The consistency of a frame refers to whether or not there are obvious contradictions in among the claims included in the presentation a

movement actor gives, or if there are contradictions between the claims presented and the action taken by the actor. Empirical credibility refers to whether a claim refers to an empirical reality that makes it believable, while the credibility of the frame articulators relates to the status of that person/those persons in the eyes of the people exposed. As defined by these factors, the credibility of a movement's message can form part of explaining its resonance.

The salience of a frame to the targets of mobilization, on the other hand, can accordingly be attributed to its *centrality*, its *experiential commensurability*, and its *narrative fidelity.* How essential, or central, is the content of a frame presented by a movement to the lives of the target population? Do the framings fit with the everyday experiences and life situations of the target population? And to what extent do the framings touch upon or correspond with existing "cultural narrations" (Benford and Snow 2000:622). As with a frame's credibility, it's salience, in sum, are expected to impact on the resonance of a frame, and ultimately form a possible part of an explanation for the fortunes of a movement in mobilization.

6.2 The third current

The process of establishing content of meaning, an identity and an outlook for a third current in Palestinian politics must be seen in relation to the situation that emerged in the occupied Palestinian territories after the establishment of the Palestinian Authority. The framework established by the Oslo Accords produced a set of dilemmas challenging the nature of the Palestinian liberation movement's programmatic base. In a generally depoliticized environment, the dilemmas created by state-building under continued occupation for issues such of resistance, liberation, leadership and the role of governance and the newly established PA, proved too big a challenge for the existing Palestinian leftist opposition. Since the realization that Hamas had become the one viable oppositional force to the PA of Fateh, the search for grounds on which to build a third current in Palestinian politics emerged.

The official line of the PLO and PA leadership was, in line with the Oslo accords, that liberation was to be achieved through further negotiations with Israel, while setting up functional state like structures for the eventual state along the way. Hamas on the other hand, rejected the Oslo accords as a betrayal both to the national cause and to the goal of preserving Palestine as part of the Islamic land. It wowed for continued resistance, and introduced the use of suicide attacks in side Israel, also as a way of sabotaging the political process. Recalling the developments described in chapter three, the parties on the left split in two reactions. Rejection, seeing the Oslo framework as betrayal of national principles, and thereby marginalization as Palestinian politics moved its centre to the activities of the PA in the occupied territories. Or alignment, accepting the framework and thereby taking place under the Patronage of the PA leadership, thus becoming marginalized in terms of activity outside PA circles.

The development of a third current can be seen as an effort among proponents for a third force to negotiate this reality. The building of a new political platform providing solutions to these problems, and a new political identity that could be established in this reality. Among the issues that have emerged as important to these efforts have been a critique of the Oslo peace framework, democracy and governance, and to a lesser extent social issues.

6.3 The idea of al-Mubadara – building a distinct identity in a third current

More than the traditional factions on the left of the PLO, al-Mubadara can be seen as embodying the idea of seeking to promote and represent a third current. According to al-Mubadara the need for a new movement stems from the factional nature of the other parties, their long history and lack of willingness to seek new political solutions. To adapt to a new context for the national liberation movement the demand is for a clear agenda for democracy and popular participation (Barghouti 2006 [interview]).

A main component of the idea of al-Mubadara, is the insistence on representing a project that will be *independent* from the two large forces Hamas and Fateh. According to this idea, a main problem of the other factions claiming to be part of a third current, is that they are in some way or the other aligned to Fateh, or moving towards the positions of Hamas. FIDA and the PPP are the main victims of the first accusation, since their participation in the PA governments and alignment within the patronage system of the PA structures has made them different to separate politically from the Fateh leadership on the national questions, even though an internal opposition in these parties have been critical of the conduct of the PA, and among the callers for reform. On the other hand the PFLP is accused of aligning themselves with Hamas, although this criticism is less vocal, and al-Mubadara has expressed that the PFLP may be the faction with which they have had the most in common in analysis and outlook on current political matters.

Hammami (2006 [interview]) does not think that establishing an independent platform is an easy undertaking in the Palestinian political sphere:

> I think the real problem is that we are such a small and intimate society. You don't get new faces. Even someone like Mustafa (Barghouti). For how long he split from the party? He allied himself with different people, and reformulated himself. Ask anybody: "Communist!" (Hammami 2006 [interview])[30]

The fact that there are many contenders for a stake in a third current, and that these are deeply connected to a long history of national movement, makes it difficult to be part of that same political landscape and then step out as something new and different that could attract interest and renewed mobilization. As the quote above suggests, a well known personal background may put restrictions on achieving such an independent outlook.

One of the ways in which al-Mubadara has been trying to distinguish themselves from the other contenders in the third current, is by distancing themselves from

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[30] Referring to the PPP, of which Barghouti resigned in 2003.

ideological interpretations, and branding the others as too ideological. It is highlighted both by declarations such as "No ideology. This is very important" (Saife 2006 [interview]), and the idea to have a national coalition across ideological and social divides. As a way of distinguishing al-Mubadara from the rest one is particularly eager at trying to rid oneself of the legacy of the old PLO parties that got stuck in their ideologies, and did not manage to adapt to a new political context after the downfall of the Soviet Union and the collapsing of the national project into the Oslo framework. According to Saife (Ibid.) al-Mubadara is an attempt to create something "home-made", based on a practical and pragmatic assessment of the current reality and a strong commitment to the national cause, whereas the leftist factions have found their solutions in foreign ideologies such as the legacy of Marxism, and while the Islamists turn to religion to formulate their program. Without assessing the tendency in his portrayal of the other political forces, this can be seen as a way of building a particular identity for al-Mubadara.

As discussed in the previous chapter, one of the new ideas of al-Mubadara, is the ambition to form not only a new political party, but the core of a new non-factional movement, national and social. Distancing the framing of this project from ideology is in line with the emphasis of having a broad coalition of national secular forces across ideological and social divides. While Fateh was born as a pragmatic national liberation movement and came to take the lead position in forming the revived Palestinian national movement in the 1960s, the room for a new movement based on the same pragmatic principle today is considerably narrower. Fateh is still around with its legacy of being the bearer of the national cause as its main asset. For a new movement to emerge on the side, based on a critique of Fateh's governance and weak performance on the national questions since Oslo, it has to face up to the fact that Hamas has gained credibility on these issues while the left and so called secular democratic forces have been in disarray over how to handle them and present them in a consistent manner.

6.4 The outlook of a third current

For al-Mubadara, and for the processes of a third current in general, three main policy areas, where processes of interpretation and construction of political meaning for a third current, can be identified. They are the *national, democratic* and *social* issues.

6.4.1 National

Any political platform in Palestinian politics will first and foremost have to deal with the national questions. As long as the occupation and dispossession is not an issue of the past, one cannot but focus on the questions of liberating the nation. For al-Mubadara, as a new partaker in the national movement, it remains a challenge to present a credible platform for the national issues. What new formulas are there to come up with, after half a century of national struggle? Like for all the other parties and movements within the Palestinian national movement no new radical solutions or ready made practical programs for solving the issues of occupation and dispossession are on offer.

The aims regarding the national questions are not something that would distinguish a third trend. As Hamas has been moving towards accepting a two state solution, and Fateh has been trying to assert that they are not willing to give up on the national rights, there has been a national convergence in that regard, making the Palestinian national movement more in line than ever on the main national questions. The problem facing all factions and political initiatives is the fact that no one really has a very good answer to how national rights can be achieved, given the failure of the militants to gain ground on the Israeli army during the second intifada, and the reluctance of Israel to move a diplomatic process anywhere in the direction of realizing Palestinian rights. Al-Mubadara has attempted to promote a critique of the lack of reference to Palestinian rights in the Oslo peace framework and the need for a Palestinian leadership to take a more assertive stand against Israeli and international pressures. The alternative of civil resistance though, a core component of al-Mubadara's self understanding and contribution as a frame for action related to the

national issues, has as discussed above suffered from the militarized environments and lack of structures to sustain a successful civil resistance campaign. Thus declarations for liberation, statehood and the return of the refugees have tended to become slogans of necessity for al-Mubadara as for other groups. What have emerged as the main issues for promoting alternative understanding and political program, has been related to reform and democracy. In the words of Hammami: "What was fascinating in the elections was that everyone was saying that they were the party of clean governance. Because no one could fix anything else…" (Hammami 2006 [interview]).

6.4.2 Democratic

The introduction of institutions based on electoral legitimacy, inaugurated in 1996 and refreshed in 2005 and 2006, has contributed to change the basis of political legitimacy in the Palestinian context, the sense of what makes political leadership accepted. The revolutionary legitimacy that dominated the era of the liberation movement PLO, has faced democratic legitimacy based on the popular will of the occupied Palestinian population expressed through elections (Hilal 1998:122). A quota system of representation for armed political groups, stress on unity and top level consensus for the struggle, characterized the revolutionary legitimacy of the PLO. Arafat never stopped utilizing this source of legitimacy, also after he was elected president of the PA. Still chairman of a defunct PLO, keen on keeping all options open, he mixed the legitimacy of his popular vote and revolutionary status as liberation leader to the last. The nature of the attempted state-building before liberation made this possible, and to a certain extent a deed of necessity.

The calls for reform, since the inception of the PA, may be seen as an effort to promote democratic legitimacy under the PA. The death of Arafat pushed forward processes of promoting democratic legitimacy. As democratic legitimacy has risen to prominence, a race has formed, in which virtually all political forces present themselves as the champions of democracy. In the words of Giacaman: "There is a

contest now going on. Hamas describes itself as democratic movement, and is raising the flag of democracy. The competition is to take hold of democracy" (Giacaman 2006 [interview]).

This seems to have decreased the space in which a third force could promote itself as the democratic alternative. Al-Mubadara clearly emphasises a wish to promote democratic legitimacy as the sole source of legitimacy for the PA, and also as basis for the national struggle. The argument for democratic reform as *the* way of strengthening the national struggle was a central part of the al-Mubadara message as it was announced in the "opening for reform" in 2002. On the level of governance the idea is that building strong governmental institutions is necessary as a way of insisting that these institutions are to become the building blocks of a state, not only the indefinite administers of self-rule, and to secure the trust of the people in this project. On the other hand, democratic participation in the form of elections is seen as a way of holding the leadership accountable, as a measure to strengthen the leadership against giving concessions against Israel. In addition, however, for al-Mubadara, emphasis is put on the spread of democratic values as a necessary tool to strengthen the function of society in general to sustain the pressure of the occupation.

First al-Mubadara, as all callers for reform of the PA, calls for democracy to be implemented in the form of general elections, separation of powers and the rule of law. Where al-Mubadara puts an added emphasis, is on what they call the need to promote "a new value system". This argument is repeated in interviews with most upper cadre, but they are not that visible in external communication, as in statements and material. The idea can be traced back to the mass based organizations that promoted participation and *sumud muqawim* in the early 1980s (Craissati 2005), but even more notably since to be highly influenced by the impact of the civil society paradigm advocated by the liberal donor agendas of the 1990s as discussed above. The civic values that al-Mubadara wants to promote, are the values of participation, deliberation and the electoral mechanism, and voluntary political contribution as opposed to political activism as a stake in systems of patronage. In convergence with

the NGOs such as the HDIP in their focus on human capacity building and raising awareness on these values, the aim is to infuse society with a new "democratic consciousness".

But there are also other interpretations of the meaning attached when presenting oneself as democratic. If the use of the term "democratic" would distinguish the third current from Hamas, then according to Giacaman it would be as an expression of the term "secular" rather than of rule of law, clean governance and regular elections:

> One has to be careful in the Palestinian context with such terms. Sometimes they are used to cover up or in place of other terms. When they say that on the left they are democratic, everybody knows that it is not democratic, in the sense that internally these parties are not democratic. I think what they mean is something else, a word they don't want to use because the Islamists have made it a dirty word, *secular*. Formally of course they are for a democratic system. So as a project for the future the description, the word, would be accurate. Elections and rule of law. But at present I think secular is what they mean by it. (Giacaman 2006 [interview])

Giacaman points to a fact that may contribute to devaluate the credibility of the framing effort of presenting al-Mubadara and a third current as democratic, a lack of empirical consistency, and thereby the resonance of this message. In addition he introduces a new meaning of democracy which is seldom explicitly mentioned by third current and al-Mubadara activists. While Hamas may have been successful in focusing clearly on clean governance and rule of law when presenting themselves as the democratic alternative, for the others there may have been to many messages around.

6.4.3 Social

With the departure from ideology, any Marxist legacy in particular, al-Mubadara has left a social program based on a class based analysis. Especially the representatives of business in the al-Mubadara led electoral coalition in 2006 have been keen to assert

that welfare statism is not part of the program.[31] Notions of social struggle for public redistribution are left to be replaced by "a strong social agenda" for protection of marginalized groups, with only vague references as to what kind of mechanisms could be implemented. Notably references to class are absent in the electoral agendas of all the factions, including the traditionally leftist oriented ones (Musa 2007).

On this area there may be confusion as a result of the role of the service delivering NGOs, such as health NGOs like the UPMRC. Belonging originally to the left these organisations built an impressive capacity of health services in the absence of a state. Since the PA these have been promoted as the bearers of civil society and proponents of democracy, in contradiction with a typical left position of promoting a strong public sector providing basic health services. This contradiction has been furthered by the neo liberal donor agendas, and it remains an unsolved dilemma for the left and their NGOs in a phase of state-building.

The idea that al-Mubadara is promoting of building a broader non-ideological movement implies having disagreement over social issues or collision between social identities inside the movement. As was seen with regards to the attempt to include a grassroots workers initiative in Gaza for an electoral coalition (previous chapter), the pragmatic idea of joining persons symbolizing the traditional bourgeois with organized labour may backfire, if there is not a strong common political identity based on other issues or common understanding on a social agenda.

6.5 Fighting for the lead position of the a third current

> Many people came in the last elections, presenting themselves as us. Like The Third Way for example. But we all know that the best description is that they are Fateh light. You cannot be an independent third way and at the same time be totally loyal to one of the two groups (Barghouti 2006 [interview])

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[31] Observation made in the last days of electoral campaigning for the PLC election, January 2006, in meetings with al-Mubadara representatives.

The run up to the PLC elections show how the third current has become a concept that political figures see as a valuable. One electoral list even got the official name "The Third Way", a list headed by independent figure Hanan Ashrawi, and former Fateh member and Finance Minister Salam Fayyad. The electoral list comprised of DFLP, FIDA and PPP was called al-Badeel (the Alternative) and came with the same expressed ambition of promoting a third alternative to Fateh and Hamas, while the electoral coalition set up by al-Mubadara, given the name "Independent Palestine", was announced firmly as "Independent Palestine – the Third Way", in press conferences and material. PFLP on its side focused more on representing itself as the third largest party in Palestinian politics.

The fact that in front of the PLC elections there was not only one, but several platforms claiming to represent a third trend, indicates the belief in this notion as a platform and political identity. It may also be revealing though, in leading us to see the lack of a clearly articulated political base that would be capable of bridging personal and factional differences. The destructive impact of rivalry, personal ambition and opportunism has not yet been met by a strong political platform and identity that would create new common stakes. The interviews with actors involved in negotiations over having a joint electoral platform for all secular forces outside Fateh and Hamas, indicate not only that the personal and factional issues became the main obstacle for success in this regard, but the negotiations over the political agenda for such a coalition seems to indicate that the lack of a strong and distinguishing political agenda may have contributed to let the personal and factional matters come to the fore.

6.6 Framing processes, resonance and material context

The scope of this chapter and the investigation for this thesis have not allowed for a comprehensive inquiry into the framing processes of al-Mubadara, nor the credibility and/or salience of their frames of constructed meaning for action and political mobilization. Nevertheless I believe it is legitimate to point out some reasons why the

framing efforts of al-Mubadara may not have met the resonance that was hoped for. According to referred criteria for credibility and salience (6.1), the findings would indicate with regards to resistance, that the lack of a successful organizational base for civil resistance creates a lack of empirical credibility for such a frame for action. The same could go for the claim to be democratic if the general feeling among people is that the actual behaviour does not support this claim, while previous experience with persons involved may make it difficult to establish a position as an independent alternative. On the other hand, there might be reason to question whether the ambition of al-Mubadara to present a new democratic "consciousness", to the degree that this is communicated externally, corresponds with the rather harsh material realities facing ordinary Palestinians, thus contributing to a lack of salience and resonance.

The contest over the framing of a third current has not contributed to establish a consistent set of frames for a third political force. The framing processes of al-Mubadara also seem marked by the uneasy aim of acting both as a national and social movement, and as a political party within an electoral system. With the entrance into electoral competition, in a political national discourse where sectoral interests are not highly developed due to the unsolved national questions, the aim of forming electoral policies with a broad and general appeal *and* gathering a coalition of organized social forces has put an already weak political identity to the test, and most likely contributed to a perceived lack of consistency. It might just be that the following comment by a responding scholar is to the point in describing how Mustafa Barghouti has been trying to create frames that can gather different sectors, thus blurring his political outlook: "(…) he just tried to please everyone, and ended up pleasing no one" (2006 [interview]).

7. Findings and concluding remarks

In chapter two I stated that the explanatory ambition for the questions posed in this thesis was there, yet limited. To shed light over the fortunes of al-Mubadara as a movement that has sought to mobilize the occupied population for a third political force through the late stages of the second intifada, I have presented approaches of social movement theory. From different angles, *opportunity structures*, *structures of mobilization*, and *framing processes*, I have traced the undertakings of al-Mubadara. The explanatory approaches are meant to be complementary, as proposed by McAdam et al. (1996), yet they overlap and may at some points be based on assumptions from different traditions of social research. They have been introduced here to support the explanatory factors proposed in chapter one. I argue here that this approach has shown that these elements of social movements theory may be useful in the context of political mobilization under the Palestinian national movement, also after the establishment of the PA and emergence of electoral politics. Though it has not been part of this research to review their theoretical relevance, test them as theory, or furthering a debate on consequences of the empirical case for them as theories, this argument still serves as a basis for these concluding remarks.

I set out this study by outlining a limited yet present explanatory ambition. The aim was to provide some insights into understanding what has impacted on the role of al-Mubadara in political mobilization in the second intifada, but not to present findings on the pretence of ready made answers as outputs from a strict causal model. With this in mind, based on the hypothesises set out in chapter one, the outline of my explanatory ambition for these in chapter two, and the analytical framework supported by social movement theory, my main findings are summarized in the following.

7.1 Main findings

The analysis of the changing *opportunity structures* during the second intifada introduced both opportunities and constraints for the emergence of a forceful third democratic force in Palestinian politics during the second intifada. The PA as a result of the Oslo Accords framework served to demobilize the Palestinian national movement and strengthened the crisis of the political parties. The result of the second intifada was a renegotiation of these terms internally, and the opening up of the internal political system. This is seen as an opening for the emergence of third current forces. The emergence of al-Mubadara as such an initiative is traced thus, as one of many outcomes of the "reform wave" of 2002. Yet the militarized intifada, and the conditions creating a fierce bi-polarization between Fateh and Hamas are seen as important obstacles for a third force to emerge strongly. The lack of a joint effort of mobilization under the electoral opening links these developments to the nature of the *structures of mobilization* for al-Mubadara and a third current.

It is argued that the factional legacy of the existing party structures of the Palestinian left, the NGOs in the developmental paradigm, and the following lack of an organizational base to promote the diverging ambitions of establishing both a new democratic movement and a political party, for al-Mubadara has contributed to a weak organizational basis for mobilization. The professionalization of the NGO sector has been part of a larger transformation of the structures of this sector that has been detrimental to mobilization for a third current and al-Mubadara. The importance of the problems related to the continuing fragmentation of a possible third force in Palestinian politics should not be understated. With the lack of unity for such a third current there is little reason to expect people who desperately search for a force that could promote change to join such ranks. It has been indicated that al-Mubadara is not freed from existing mechanisms furthering political clientelism in Palestinian society. In dire socio-economic circumstances, their proximity to the NGO sector lead people form a deprived middle class to see also political engagement as a way of securing material benefits such as employment. In addition to this effect of socio-

economic conditions, inherent tension between different social groups within the movement al-Mubadara has tried to form (the PLC electoral coalition in particular), points to the difficulties in such an enterprise.

Finally, the analysis of the *framing processes* and their resulting frames for collective action and political support, in addition to confirming that the fight over who represents a third current has been damaging, indicates that the content of meaning of such a third current is less than crystal clear. Al-Mubadara has not been able to produce a strong and distinguished political agenda to define and lead a third force in Palestinian politics, an agenda that would resonate with the occupied population and mobilize them for action. The efforts to promote democratic values and to be represented as the true independent and democratic opposition have had to struggle with issues of credibility and relevance.

One returning matter underlying both the development of structures of mobilization and in particular relevant for the framing processes, is the continued confusion over how to handle the reality of a de-powered self-rule Palestinian Authority. Towards the confusion between issues related to governance and state-building, and resistance and liberation, there are few credible propositions for practical programs that could mean a difference in people's daily lives and include people in political activity. Combining mobilization for civil resistance and popular participation with electoral mobilization has been difficult for al-Mubadara. The forces aiming to establish a third force in particular, al-Mubadara in this case, seem unable to produce a fruitful strategy on how to combine being liberation movements and political parties in the limbo of self-rule under occupation. Slogans of statehood and liberation ring far, while the basis for sustained and politicised civil resistance is poor and the meaning of democracy, and the relation between democratic reform and practical programs are abstract and remain largely on paper.

7.2 Role in democratization

In chapter three I outlined aspects of Palestinian democratization. Mobilization of new and previously unrepresented groups for political action and representation, and democratic reform of the national institutions of the PA on the one hand. And on the other hand the increase in sovereignty of these political institutions – in other words the establishment of an independent and sovereign state – a central part of Palestinian liberation.

The first intifada can bee seen as a process of democratization, then in the form of mass mobilizing movements, politicization and popular participation, putting pressure on as well the occupier, the international community and the national leadership to establish Palestinian national institutions.

In the second intifada, after years of demobilization since the Oslo Accords, instead of forwarding a process of increased sovereignty, the democratization taking form of electoral processes has been coupled with the increasing de-powering of the PA self-rule institutions, reaching its height with the isolation of the Palestinian self-rule cabinet that was formed after the 2006 PLC elections.

It is difficult to see, how until the point of the PLC election in 2006, al-Mubadara or any other party to a third current has contributed substantially to democratization. The so called "silent majority", or what is at least a sizeable portion of the population in the occupied territories who has not until present found a political representative and are not mobilized onto an arena for political action by the existing factions and movements, does not seem to have found such in al-Mubadara and the efforts until now to establish a third force. Al-Mubadara has been one of many callers for democratic reform of self-rule institutions, but has not been able to organize a significant popular movement for civil resistance and/or political pressure to effectively promote increased Palestinian sovereignty.

7.3 What has been found, what is it good for, and proposition for further inquiry

In this type of qualitative research the main difficulty will often lie not in finding evidence for a certain proposition, but in checking rivalling explanations out of the story, and the set up of an analytical framework can be seen as the main tool for dealing with such questions. Possibly there may be objections to the approach of this study with regards to relying on social movement theory for the analytical framework. The presented analytical framework focuses three distinct yet overlapping approaches, and these support the proposed explanatory factors. The study does find evidence in the analyzed material that the hypothesized factors do have an explanatory impact, in addition to elaborate a broader picture of factors that have impacted within the approaches of *opportunity structures*, *structures of mobilization*, and *framing processes.* As such, it could represent a stage of research, building for future analysis of third current politics in Palestine, based on more specified models of explanation or other approaches. A more comprehensive debate on the applicability of social movements theory based approaches should also be welcomed.

There is in the investigated material leads to suggest that the role of leadership might be another approach that could provide answers to the questions asked. This is also developed as an approach within social movements research (see for example Barker et al. (2001)). The personality Mustafa Barghouti is most certainly a very important component in al-Mubadara, to the extent that some attribute his charismatic leadership as a decisive asset for success, while others question the sustainability of a strong perceived overlap between his person and al-Mubadara. There is also evidence to suggest that personal factors are of crucial importance in understanding the continued fragmentation of the third current in Palestinian politics. According to Brown (2007:16): "There has never been a non-Islamist political leader better poised to make the leap from civil society activist to political party leader than Mustafa al-Barghouti. But al-Barghouti could not make the transition on short notice, perhaps in

part because his effort was every bit as centred on him personally as Fateh was in Arafat's days".

Another prospect for further research would be to do a comparative analysis of the mobilizational structures and/or framing processes of the aspiring secular third current and the Islamic current exemplified by Hamas. Such a comparative approach could promote insights reached with regards to one movement, and provide a more stringent and comprehensive understanding of the processes and mechanism at play in contemporary Palestinian society.

7.4 The current state of al-Mubadara

The time frame for this analysis has been the period up until the January 2006 PLC elections. Those elections showed the fragmentation of the third current, the lack of mobilizational base for al-Mubadara, and placed al-Mubadara as one out of many political groups with a limited base but with ambitions to lead a secular democratic force. The elections produced a new governing power though, as Hamas gained so much on their mobilizational base and protest against Fateh under their slogan "Change and Reform" that they secured a majority of the seats in the PLC.

As the main findings of this study are negative towards the impact and growth of al-Mubadara as a leading force for the promotion of a third current in Palestinian politics, there is one crucial factor that should be taken into account, and that is the time frame. I agree with Brown (2007:16) in his conclusion that "success will only come by a long term effort by Palestinian actors (…) to build mass based organizations", and there is reason to emphasise the "short term" of al-Mubadara until the present, and that what lies ahead may still provide opportunities for the future. As Brown concludes (Ibid.): "Fateh and Hamas took decades to accomplish this task, and there is no reason to expect that others will be able to move more quickly."

Yet even if political opportunities for the future may provide amplified openings for such efforts, current realities give reason for cautious doubt. Since February 2007 al-Mubadara has joined a new government of national unity, with Mustafa Barghouti holding the post of Minister of Information. Al-Mubadara is represented as one of many junior partners in government. Caught up in the halls of governance of an ever more de-powered PA, it will be for the future to see if they will be able to build organizational structures for a third current that could promote mass mobilization and political participation with a clear and relevant agenda that would resonate with the occupied Palestinian people.

List of respondents

Abu Jesh, Monjed – 26.12.06, Ramallah
>Director, Lobby and Advocacy Department PARC

Anonymous – 22.12.06, West Bank village
>Local al-Mubadara activist

Anonymous – 22.12.06, West Bank village
>Former local al-Mubadara activist

Barghouti, Mustafa – 27.12.06, Ramallah
>General Secretary, PLC member – al-Mubadara

Dahman, Mohammed – 18.04.07, Oslo
>Former leader, Independent Workers Committees Gaza / former director, Democracy and Workers Rights Centre Gaza

Deek, Nassif – 17.12.06, Ramallah
>Activist al-Mubadara, member of al-Mubadara regional committee Ramallah

Giacaman, George – 29.12.06, Ramallah
>Director, Muwatin Palestinian Institute for the study of Democracy

Hammami, Reema – 18.12.06, Ramallah
>Professor, Birzeit University

Hilal, Jamil – 18.12.06, Ramallah
>Independent researcher and political analyst, scholar affiliated to Muwatin

Jarrar, Allam – 16.12.06 and 27.12.06, Ramallah - PLC candidate (al-Mubadara) "Independent Palestine" / working in UPMRC / steering committee member PNGO

Jarrar, Khaleda – 25.12.06, Ramallah
>PLC member PFLP

Jumaa, Jamal – 29.12.06, Ramallah
>Coordinator, Palestinian Grassroots Anti-Apartheid Wall campaign

Khreishe, Amal – 28.12.06, Ramallah
>Director, Palestinian Working Women Society for Development / PLC candidate "Independent Palestine"

Milhem, Abbas – 20.12.06, Ramallah
>Assistance committee member al-Mubadara / working in HDIP civil society program

Nasser, Majed – 19.12.06 and 28.12.06, Ramallah
Deputy Director, Health Work Committees

Salhi, Bassam – 29.12.06, Ramallah
PLC member PPP

Saife, Khaled – 25.12.06, Ramallah
Head of organization – al-Mubadara

Shiha, Khalil – 26.12.06, Ramallah
General Director, PARC

Shuabi, Azmi – 26.12.06, Ramallah
Former PLC member, FIDA

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