Why Definitions Matter When Evaluating Civil Society in Jordan

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ABSTRACT

This article focuses on the definitions utilized within civil society, more specifically civil society, nongovernmental organizations and non-state actors, and how the usage of the terms affects any evaluation of the sector. The discussion of these terms tries to differentiate between the realities versus the potential associated with each phrase. Then it applies the definitions of these terms to Jordan looking specifically at an article entitled “Mapping Study of Non-state Actors in Jordan”. This is followed by a discussion of how civil society operates in Jordan and how the definitions of the terms are inadequate for purposes of evaluation. Finally there will be questions for future research.

Keywords: Jordan, Civil Society, NGOs, Non-state Actors.

INTRODUCTION

The terms used to describe the "independent" sector in Jordan include civil society, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and non-state actors (NSAs). The first two are found in the local newspaper and all three in academic journals, and more specifically in an article entitled Mapping Study of Non-State Actors in Jordan. While there have been many attempts to define these terms, there are no definitive agreed upon definitions. Attempts at defining these terms are ambiguous, vague, and do not encompass all the ideals that these terms entail. Without acceptable established definitions it is not possible to evaluate the “independent sector” in Jordan Therefore, this paper will do the following: first, examine the relevant literature for the most basic concept, that of nonprofit organization, to be followed by a discussion of civil society, NGO and NSAs. Within this framework these three will be examined based on what actually exists because much of the literature discusses them from a point of their potential but reality is necessary for evaluation. Second, how the terms are applied in Jordan using the above mentioned article and the Jordanian government law that covers the sector “Societies Law No. 51 of 2008 and 2009 Amendments.” Third, a critique of Mapping Study of Non-State Actors in Jordan will be presented. Lastly, there will be a discussion of the questions that are raised due to the usage of civil society, NSAs and NGOs in the article and in Jordan. Without a better understanding of the terminology, any evaluation of the “independent” sector in Jordan would be imprecise, discussion in academic articles would be inaccurate and more importantly usage in public policy and policy dialogue would be inexact.

The importance of terminology and their definitions cannot be overemphasized. A definition gives one a clear idea of what something represents. In the case of this article, it is useful in defining the parameters of the subject, and then it allows one to evaluate the subject as
well as theorize about the subject and apply it to such things as public policy. Therefore, it sets the parameters as to what is located within civil society, allows one to evaluate civil society and the entities within it, propose theories and then apply it to public policy.

It has been shown that the Jordanian "independent" sector is a multifaceted, multilayered, long standing vibrant community that has evolved despite the ever tumultuous surrounding environment of the Middle East. There are more than 3,000 entities in a country that is less than 6 million people. They provide a vast array of services for the Jordanian citizens ranging from social services, culture, and youth to women, human rights, professional associations, the environment, political parties, as well as a large assortment of international NGOs and NGOs established by decree.

However, the definitions used to define the various concepts are ambiguous at best. This is further complicated by the multiplicity of terms used to describe civil society in Jordan. But also because of the vagueness, weakness and ambiguity of the terms it becomes difficult to categorize the associations, especially NGOs, within the sector.

**Nonprofit Sector, Nonprofit Organization**

The utilization of varying terminology is found worldwide. For instance, in the United States, among others, there is the nonprofit sector, the independent sector, the third sector and the voluntary sector. The nonprofit sector refers to the names of the organizations within the area where nonprofits exist. It is also called the independent sector because it is independent from the government. More specifically, it is based on associations that have incorporated and must be registered with the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) as either a 501(c) (3) or 501(c) (4). These organizations include "educational, scientific, religious and other charitable organizations as well as private foundations, corporate and community organizations, and civic and social welfare organizations." The third sector refers to organizations that are neither public nor private but nonprofit. Lastly, it is also called the voluntary sector based on the fact that people voluntarily join these organizations; believe in their issues as well as volunteer time and money in fulfillment of the entity's goals. However, all of these terms are in general used interchangeably and are called nonprofit organizations.

Additionally, nonprofit, voluntary, and charitable are some of the terms used to specify the type of organization in the U.S. These names are used "interchangeably to refer to a broad spectrum of institutions that are exempt from federal taxation, eligible to receive tax-exempt gifts, engaged in direct service activities aimed at benefiting persons beyond the organization's own members, and formally controlled by a private – normally unpaid – board of directors.

There are many perspectives when looking at what an organization does. One example of looking at an organization is as "a body of individuals who associate for any of three purposes: (1) to perform public tasks that have been delegated to them by the state; (2) to perform public tasks for which there is a demand that neither the state nor the for-profit organizations are willing to fulfill; (3) to influence the direction of policy in the state, the for-profit sector, or other nonprofit organizations. These entities can also be addressed from a political perspective. They "frequently feel that their commitment to their clients requires them not only to provide the specific benefits for which they were founded but also to defend the interests of their clients in terms of public policy." These kinds of groups are "crucially important to the workings of democratic government". It allows groups to try and impact public policy. This nonprofit policy advocacy is an attempt to "influence institutional
elites. The demands will be posed in terms of collective benefits that are claimed to flow toward otherwise unrepresented groups, including the general public, and that are couched in terms of moral appeals directed the public. "Of all the functions of the nonprofit sector, few are more critical than that of advocacy, of representing alternative perspectives and pressing them on public and private decision makers…the advocacy function of nonprofit organizations reflect a belief in the contribution this function is thought to make to the maintenance of democracy."xii

Jordan

Since this paper is about the "independent" sector in Jordan it is now time to look at how Jordanian terminology is used to describe this area of society. And more specifically how the terminology either does or does not reflect the reality of the "independent" sector. In Jordan the terminology to discuss the sector is not the same as in the US. The question is does it refer to entirely different types of entities or are the terms comparable to others discussed in the previous section.

The phrases used to describe the sector are civil society, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), non-state actors, international non-governmental organizations (INGO) which have also been called northern non-governmental organizations (NNGO), non-governmental organizations established by decree which have also been categorized as quasi-governmental organizations (QUANGO), community based organizations, (CBO), civil society organizations (CSO) and private voluntary organization (PVO)xiv. This is not even an exhaustive list. Given that the terminology is quite different from that discussed above it is important to evaluate the major terms to know what they mean.

The next section of the paper will discuss the literature about three of the most important terms – civil society, NGOs and NSAs.

Civil Society

It should be stated from the start that the information on civil society is more about the potential of the concept and the sector because much of what is presented in the majority of articles written on this topic is projected as to the possibility and has not as yet been definitively proven to be reality within the sector.

There seems to be two different streams of thought in discussing the phrase civil society. The first one comes primarily from academics in Public Administration, while the other one is from scholars in Political Science, and more specifically from International Relations. In the first instance civil society is used to describe those entities that make up the "independent sector" and all that this entails. These materials are void of politics because the research is supported by major philanthropic foundations and the like.xv The second stream deals with the connection between the independent sector and the fostering of democracy and comes primarily from developed countries trying to foster democracy in developing ones.xvi

In the first stream, the term civil society is very broad and ambiguous. It is difficult to have one definition which covers one country let alone any kind of comparative comprehensive one. One comparative study conducted by the John Hopkins Comparative Nonprofit Sector has provided the following framework: The Civil Society Sector is made up of entities that are:

"Organizations, i.e., they have some structure and regularity to their operations, whether or not they are formally constituted or legally registered…Private, i.e., they are not part of the apparatus of the state, even though they may receive support from governmental sources…Not profit distributing, i.e., they are not primarily commercial in purpose and do not distribute profits to the set of directors, stockholders, or managers…Self-governing, i.e., they have their own
mechanisms for internal governance, are able to cease operations on their own authority, and are fundamentally in control of their own affairs...Voluntary, i.e., membership or participation in them is not legally required or otherwise compulsory.

Even within Jordan there is a similar discussion of this perspective by the Al Urdun Al Jadid Research Center. It states: "Civil Society organizations are a group of free voluntary organizations that occupy the public sphere connecting the family with the state. These are independent and non-profit organizations that offer services and defend the interests of their voluntary members. Civil society organizations are characterized by tolerance and respect for competing opinions and viewpoints."

These two definitions are reflective of this type of discussion where they set the boundaries of the sector and quantify different aspects of the sector, they discuss this sector from a practical, useful, apolitical perspective. They discuss what types of organizations and services as well as information about their boards, volunteers, funding, etc.

The political usage of the phrase civil society goes all the way back to Aristotle, where the discussion was about the area or space that should exist between the government and the citizens. Later, with Hegel, the discussion revolved around the issues of private interest and how these interests could benefit the public at large. The conflict inherently involved is comprised of individuals who separate themselves into competing associations that vie for scarce resources.

The latest discussion of civil society began in the 1970's and 1980's with the power of the welfare state and the need to find a counterbalance to the state. There are two different perspectives of liberals who want to expand the "independent" sector to balance out the markets and government and the conservatives who see the sector as an arm of the welfare state and want to limit its powers.

No matter whether liberals or conservatives, there seems to be an agreement by many that civil society is related to democracy – whether it helps provide democracy or fosters democracy is unclear. This connection comes from perceiving those organizations within civil society as competing interests. The connection to democracy is due to the fact that "a healthy democracy demands representation in terms of competing group interests and interpretations of the public good, not via the weak recourse of the individual vote for catchall parties..." This will be where the idea comes from that civil society could be a possible substitute for political institutions, such as political parties, and still maintain democracy.

Based on the above discussion of civil society and democracy the following definition should help bring together all of these in one location.

Civil Society is the totality of self-initiating and self-regulating volitional social formations, peacefully pursuing a common interest, advocating a common cause, or expressing a common passion; respecting the right of others to do the same, and maintaining their relative autonomy vis-a-vis the state, the family, the temple and the market.

This definition assumes that there is a relationship between civil society and democracy. Its features include: tolerance; respect for and protection of human rights; transparency; a check on state power; rule of law; accountability; promotion of citizenship; and practices of democracy. The link between civil society and democracy entices western governments and philanthropies to funnel money into places like Jordan in the hopes that funding civil society organizations will improve the move to democracy in a particular country.
Nongovernmental Organizations (NGOs)

As with the previous section, this term will be discussed from a reality perspective. There has been much time spent on the potential of NGOs and while there have been critiques of them, many have been discussed as aside features of the articles. xxv The majority of this section is a critique of NGOs in order to identify and crystallize the facts for the clarification of the concept.

The importance associated with this term cannot be underestimated. To illustrate, the UN Secretary General Kofi Annan called NGOs the 'conscious of humanity'. xxvi The phrase nongovernmental organization was first used was in 1945 in Article 71 of the United Nations Charter. At the time, an NGO was an actor in society that was associated with the United Nations and was an international body. xxvii Since 1945, the NGO focus has passed through three stages. As described by Korten, the first phase focused on aid and welfare activities, which in many cases fostered dependence. Therefore, the second stage was to create more independence with modest local development projects. In the third phase the focus became more political in mobilizing the community and building networks and coalitions to address public policy. xxviii Currently, organizations exist with each of these focuses, depending on when they were created. The diversity questions what role NGOs play in civil society.

There are two streams of thought in relation to NGOs. The first uses the term in the general context of civil society that of a voluntary organization as discussed previously. The second stream comes from those associated with international development funding. xxix In this context an NGO is an intermediate entity that operates between community associations and international development funding sources in developing countries.

From the second stream’s conceptualization, one of the more specific definitions is as follows: it is an organization "that are officially established, run by employed staff (often urban professionals or expatriates), well-supported (by domestic or, as is more often the case, international funding), and that are often relatively large and well-resourced." xxx This definition would include international NGOs as well as associations at the regional or national level. Another definition of a NGO is that they are "neither membership based nor are they fully voluntary. They have part-time or full-time staff, seek funding, and deliver programs and services to people, communities, and/or to voluntary membership organizations themselves." xxxi The NGO would be perceived as different from the community based organization (CBO) which are "smaller, often membership-based organizations, operating without a paid staff but often reliant upon donor or NGO support, which tend to be (but are not always) issue-based and therefore ephemeral." xxxii The problem with these organizational definitions is that there is no agreement among the authors as to the scope of associations that will come under this categorization because the definitions are general in order to allow for diversity that exists both nationally and internationally. Consequently, it will vary from place to place making comparative studies very difficult.

Consistent with the above mentioned definitions, the third sector in developing countries is represented by the community based organizations. Then the question becomes where do NGOs fit? They can be membership based as well as non-membership based, externally created as well as self-actuated, and represent the community as well as help them. xxxiii These three dichotomies show the diversity. However, at the same time it may dilute the concept of a NGO and make it a catchall phrase that allows for other entities which really
should not be included.

One of the largest areas of contention concerning NGOs revolves around foreign influence and funding. Many NGOs in developing countries have been created in direct response to western intervention with development agendas and funding which have fueled the drastic increase in numbers over the last 20 years.\textsuperscript{xxxiv} In the literature, some have gone as far as stating that "quite a few have been established with the primary – or even the sole – purpose of gaining access to the flows of foreign financing that now, after implementation of structural adjustment policies, by-pass Third World governments."\textsuperscript{xxxv} This is not surprising since in countries like the U.S. and Britain, who are primary funders of international development, by-pass governmental entities in favor of nonprofits to provide services even at home.

Influencing the agendas of NGOs by donors is evident with certain types of organizations receiving more foreign funding than others. Foreign donors, in their attempt to foster reform and liberalization of the governmental system emphasize organizations like "think-tanks, human rights organizations, chambers of commerce, environmentalist societies, women's associations and community centers".\textsuperscript{xxxvi} That is not to say that these organizations are not important, or not needed but that someone other than citizens is trying to set the agenda raises the question as to whether associating with those funding sources is worth the cost of legitimacy and credibility.

The acceptance and use of extensive amounts of foreign funding raises questions of accountability and representativeness. While foreign funding is usually reliable and provides NGOs financial resources that might not otherwise be available, it also raises questions as to who the NGO is accountable. Any organization is responsible to its funding sources to account for how the money is spent. However, if the funding source is external and has its own agenda, then questions of legitimacy are raised about whether the organization’s agenda has been set by the organization or whether due to its dependency on the foreign money, the agenda may have been established to obtain funding in order to survive.\textsuperscript{xxxvii} The issue of representativeness is also called into question. The benefits to obtaining foreign funding include political legitimacy, sustainable funding and ideas. At the same time, however, they may be seen as fostering religious, economic and political interests from foreign sources.\textsuperscript{xxxviii} This could raise a question of legitimacy for the organization as well as allow local communities to criticize the fostering of foreign instead of local values, morals and ethics.

Not only is there a question of representativeness from external sources but also whether NGOs are the representatives of the grassroots level within society. One of most positive aspects of NGOs is their connection with the grassroots level and because of that relationship their ability to speak on behalf of those with no voice, to be able to raise issues that might not otherwise be heard and to empower those that have little power.\textsuperscript{xxxix} However, there is a trend in the literature questioning the connection between NGOs and community based organizations at the grassroots level. First of all, many, if not most, NGOs are located in urban areas.\textsuperscript{xli} Secondly, their staff is usually made up of middle class professionals who have few if any links to the grassroots level, and furthermore the NGO may actually lack the contact with the grassroots of which they are supposedly representing.\textsuperscript{xlii} Even if they do have links they are established through local branches rather than community based organizations that are already in existence.\textsuperscript{xliii} Thirdly, and probably the most important from an advocacy position, they exclude community based organizations from participating in the dialogue on
Another dimension within the definition of an NGO is that they are to have paid staff, whether part or full time to seek funding and deliver services. However, NGOs have not always had paid staff, but the push to professionalize organizations has added this category into the definition. The move to professionalize is a two-edged sword. On the one hand, in order to be accountable to funding sources, the organization must be able to show results, which in turn requires paperwork such as audits, reports etc. This might be labeled as a type of bureaucracy; it takes time and resources for administration, process and procedures. This precept comes from the theory of managerialism which contends that it takes professionals to achieve social progress by coordinating "people and things in order that agreed collective goals can be achieved." Meaningful coordination, in turn, needs trained staff. According to many, professionalization is what is required to strengthen the NGOs and without it NGOs will not reach their full potential. At the same time, the strengthening of the NGO by international donors, through funding and professionalization, causes them to take on more service delivery which in turn instigates the need for more funding. This is one of the causes of delinkage from the grassroots. Then the question will be whether by strengthening NGOs in reality weakens civil society.

On the other hand, professionalization can cause less flexibility and more bureaucratization within the organization. An alternative, according to Said, is the idea of amateurism, which contrary to popular belief, might be positive. Amateurs are more likely to see the big picture, not the minutia. But more importantly, this would allow activists with a lot of experience and a strong commitment to issues of the NGO to be included in the mix. "Insights from grassroots experience cannot necessarily be translated into qualifications that read well in a job application or in a CV." Amateurism would be a connection between the NGO and the grassroots CBOs. The hiring of activists from the grassroots would strengthen ties between both.

While the term is nongovernmental organization and means the association is free from government representatives, there is still a close relationship between the two. The government will set in law the political and legal environment in which NGOs exist. There are usually joint programs between the two. In many places in the world, many NGOs receive funding from the government, which will cause some to question the funding and the programs provided as being part of the government agenda. In many countries they receive tax exempt status from the government in the hopes of encouraging contributions to the associations. Governments can be distrustful of NGOs as critics of government programs, rivals in providing services, or as an instrument of international funding sources. In this case the state may restrain the environment of the sector. In Bangladesh the government sometimes decertifies organizations and bans the use of foreign donors. Lastly NGOs may try to influence government’s public policy decision making on behalf of specific groups in society.

Throughout the literature there have been linkages made to connect democracy and civil society. NGOs, as actors within civil society, are considered as a major vehicle in fostering democracy. According to Mercer, they achieve this in three ways. First, “by virtue of their existence as autonomous actors, NGOs are said to pluralize (and therefore to strengthen) the institutional arena.” They allow numerous independent interests to have a voice as well as interact and construct coalitions
to monitor the state and pressure them for change. Secondly, by working with community based associations, they increase the possibilities for participation in the civic arena. They "represent the interests of marginalized groups within the wider public arena, campaign on their behalf and seek to influence public policy". Lastly, and maybe most importantly, they "are said to check state power by challenging its autonomy at both national and local scales, pressing for change and developing an alternative set of perspectives and policies."

The last point to be discussed about NGOs comes back to the role that they play in society and how that might affect the development and growth of CBOs at the grassroots level. NGOs are just one part of civil society and as such seem to play some type of intermediary role between the grassroots, government and donors. Their role as liaison is helpful to government and donors for it narrows the number of points of contact for either group. In addition, while they are able to put a voice to the grassroots level, who says that the grassroots need someone to speak on their behalf – there will be more discussion about this in the analysis later in the paper.

**Non-State Actors**

This section will be more general than the other two previous ones due to the fact that it is only tangentially related to this topic through the article that this paper seeks to critique. Once again this is another concept that is vague, ambiguous and for which there are only general definitions.

The term non-state actor comes from an entirely different body of literature that debates governance, more particularly global governance. Governance refers to how and who is in control of the state. It is a term that emerged in the late 1990s and has been prevalent in public administration, several areas of political science as well as the sciences of management. With reference to governance, it “typically claim that the state has lost power to non-state actors and that political authority is increasingly institutionalized in spheres not controlled by states.”

The premise is that governance procedures, which have changed over time, are no longer in the hands of the state. That the center of politics has moved away from the state in the direction of national and international associations. Because of globalization new entities and areas that have been created outside national arenas affect politics inside a given nation. Given the first two points, political power has been dispersed to groups in civil society and at least in part this is due to governmental failure to address needs, provide services and in general to execute their duties. Thus, based on these changes in location of power, “the old ‘paradigm’ of top-down, state-led, command & control ways of steering do no longer suffice.” There have been questions raised about the legitimacy of this premise. However, for the purposes of this article this is the concept of governance.

These spheres that are out of the control of the state are controlled by non-state actors. There are five categories of non-state actors. They include:

"Intergovernmental Organizations (IGOs), International NGOs (INGOs), Transnational Corporations (TNCs), epistemic communities and remainder category."

Intergovernmental organizations include the United Nations (UN), the World Bank (WB) and the World Trade Organization (WTO). There have been questions raised about this category due to their creation and funding from government members. INGOs are associations that are separate from the government, nonprofit in nature, which try to influence international politics. Examples of INGOs would include Human Rights Watch, Caritas, and Care International.
Transnational Corporations (TNC) are for profit corporations that go beyond the limits of political boundaries usually with offices in multiple countries. This would include Exxon, Burger King, and Mercedes. Epistemic communities are “transnational networks of experts with shared causal beliefs on certain policy issues”\textsuperscript{lxii} The remainder category includes many diverse groups from “liberation movements, guerrilla organizations, the mafia and terrorist networks, but also churches, professional organizations and scouts.”\textsuperscript{lxiii}

**Application of the Terminology in Jordan**

According to the Jordanian Societies Law No. 51 of 2008 and its 2009 Amendments a society "means any legal person comprised of a group of no less than seven persons and shall be registered according to the provisions of this law to provide services or carry out activities on voluntary basis without aiming to gain or divide any profits or achieve any benefit for any of its members or any person specified in particular, or to realize any political aims that fall under the framework and activities of political parties according to the provisions of legislations in force." This law has replaced the Societies and Social Organizations Law of 1966 and it's Amendments and collapses the Cultural Sponsorship Law, the Environment Law, the Tourism Law as well as any previously enacted law. It has been controversial and Civil Society wants to amend it.

According to the *Mapping Study of Non-State Actors in Jordan*\textsuperscript{lxiv}, a pyramid was developed for the sector. From the bottom up the layers are CBOs, NGOs, Umbrella Organizations, and Thematic alliances and coalitions\textsuperscript{lv}. For the purposes of this paper, the focus will be CBOs and NGOs along with NSA, CS and CSO.

The term Non-State Actors "refers to any organization that is not the state itself...includes all forms of civil society".\textsuperscript{lv} This definition found in the “Mapping” article is very ambiguous and almost any type of entity can be placed here. However, according to the relevant literature the term NSA consists of 5 categories (IGOs, INGOs, TNCs, epistemic communities and a remainder category) and the article only discusses INGOs and the remainder category. So, while the article discusses two categories, it does not cover the NSA sector for there is no discussion of the for-profit entities or that the premise of the term NSA is used to discuss a loss of power by the government. Therefore, there is a definition, but it is being used like a third or independent sector and the article clearly states that this is not a commonly used term and that the terminology and classifications used currently in Jordan were questioned by the participants of the study. However, this term only partially reflects what NSAs are and the definition is not what is in the literature.

The terms Civil Society (CS) and Civil Society Organizations (CSO) are also not defined. In the literature, these terms are indistinct and there is no agreement on one definition and yet the terms are not explained. In fact, the one statement about civil society, found on page 46 of the “Mapping” article, states civil society "itself a manifestation of collective action and pursuit of a common cause, has a major role to play in promoting a culture of active citizen participation in democratic processes" which although general and ambiguous, is in line with the literature but it is close to the end of the article. What is stated at the beginning of the article is that "the framework for civil society prohibits them from carrying out 'political' activities which are considered the domain of the political parties…but are encouraged to participate in public policy dialogue."\textsuperscript{lxvii} While this is in line with one stream of the debate within the literature, the general usage of CS in the literature discussing the Middle East reflects the entire sector not just to discuss entities that participate in the evolution and maintenance of
democracy. And if CS is only used for democratic purposes then it cannot and should not be used interchangeably with nonprofit sector, independent sector, and third sector. However, it is currently being used interchangeably and maybe it shouldn't be.

The term CSO in the “Mapping” article is discussed but no real clarity is given. In general the implication (not directly stated) is that CS and CSOs, as the engine of CS, act like interest groups and they do say "citizens chose to act together around issues of common interest." In the article it states that "CSOs are not primarily designed to be instruments of government policy; the vast majority of CSOs exist simply to meet the needs of their constituents." This is exactly the premise for establishing CSOs, not for democracy, if democracy is a byproduct of the formation all the better but the constituents, stakeholders, etc. should be the primary focus. Yet, if CS is used only in reference to elections and democracy then does the same apply to CSOs? In which case, CSO foster democracy and elections which definitely does not encompass the sector and can be interpreted as misleading.

The phrase community based organizations (CBOs) is defined as "They operate locally with limited outreach. They tend to be membership and volunteer based. They mainly deliver welfare services rather than participating in public policy dialogue." As the lowest level of the pyramid in discussing NSAs, they should be considered to be the "worker bees" of the sector, and where one will find democracy at work and yet the emphasis of the article is on NGOs primarily and not CBOs. One question in relation to the definition is that if they only tend to be "membership and volunteer based" what else is there in this category?

The last term discussed is nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). According to the article, "They operate at national or governorate level, usually with paid staff (and some volunteers). They deliver mainly technical services and have broader objectives including policy dialogue." This definition is in line with the literature except that NGOs while they are better funded than CBOs are not necessarily well funded except for the NGOs established by decree. They exist at the national and governorate levels. They either emphasize sustainable development with some offering outreach or are only at the national level and are engaged in specific interests (i.e., women's rights, etc.). NGOs in Jordan are further broken down into the following categories: NGOs established by decree, Membership NGOs, Developmental Professional NGOs, Virtual NGOs and International NGOs (INGOs).

The NGOs established by decree are entirely different from the other categories in that they 1) are not obliged to operate under the Society Law, 2) they do not report back to the registry operated by the Ministry of Social Development, and 3) they are able to apply for, accept and use foreign monies without getting permission from the Council of Ministers. These are mega-NGOs, with the three largest ones hiring over 1,000 staff and hundreds of thousands of beneficiaries. They are well respected in the community with connections to the highest levels within the government.

Membership based NGOs operate mostly at the national level, along with some national NGOs that have branches at the governorate level. While their primary interest is their members, over time they have increased their political character, which may be used as a substitute for political parties, which exist but are prohibited from using party labels for candidates participating in elections.

According to the “Mapping” article Development Professional NGOs are national NGOs that have been created since 2000 with international development
assistance. They are small in number and size. They have funding and expertise from foreign funding sources. They lack a mandate, due to little or no contact with CBOs. Their staffs know how to promote special interests such as the environment and women’s rights, are well versed in public policy as well as research skills. However, "there is a perception that some are motivated more by the opportunity for financial rewards rather than working for the common good."\textsuperscript{lxv} This is one of the negative perceptions discussed in the literature. However, the article is very careful in making this a separate category as if to detach this group, influenced by foreign funding, agendas and donors from other national NGOs.\textsuperscript{lxvi}

Virtual NGOs is an untraditional category. This is a small grouping of blogs that have invited a large amount of traffic from within and out of Jordan. They attract the young and those who are not drawn to other NGOs. They have “stimulated informal alliances of activists and NGOs to address a particular issue of immediate concern.”\textsuperscript{lxvii} They are not limited by bureaucracy and have participated in public policy dialogue.\textsuperscript{lxviii}

The last category of NGOs is the international NGOs (INGOs). This is also a small category in size. They are careful to work closely with Jordanian NGOs and CBOs in order to show respect for the Jordanian government and citizens as well as to insure that funds are used competently and successfully. They work closely with regional and/or national financial supporters.\textsuperscript{lxix}

In summary, NGOs are comprised of five different categories. They exist mainly at the national level but can also be at the governorate level but never at the local level, unless they do outreach which does not appear to be done by all. According to the law, they must be nonprofit in nature, voluntary and apolitical; they do play a political role however. NGOs are to be well staffed and well funded but in Jordan the issue of funding is difficult for all except the NGOs established by decree who are not restricted by the Societies Law. Therefore, once again, to insure the diversity of the sector the definition makes it complicated not only to evaluate, but in some cases difficult to even determine what organizations fall within this category.

CBOs are only at the local level and while they are found in urban areas, given the high percentage of urban poor, they are not proportionately represented within the population. They are limited in outreach, but from appearances so are the NGOs. They are mostly voluntary and membership based; but, according to the law all societies must be voluntary and if at the local level they are not membership based, then what are they based on?

The Relationship between NGOs and CBOs in Jordan

The "independent sector" in Jordan is comprised of is CBOs and NGOs. The rest of the pyramid discussed in the article (umbrella and thematic alliances and coalitions) is comprised of the first two. Therefore, given the nature of make-up of the sector, what kind of relationship exists between the two?

According to the article, NGOs are stronger than CBOs, NGOs are found at the national and regional level and CBOs at the local level, NGOs have staff and volunteers and CBOs have just volunteers, and resources, while limited for both groups, are far more for NGOs than CBOs. According to the literature, the powerful position of NGOs rests on their ability to represent and give a voice to the grassroots. In Jordan the grassroots are represented by the CBOs. The NGOs ability to give CBOs a voice furthers democracy which the West is saying it is trying to promote, and subsequently is one of the main reasons for foreign funding coming into Jordan. So, where is the connection? Do the NGOs act as intermediaries, as discussed in the literature, or are they a barrier to CBOs,
by either preventing the normal development of CBOs or encouraging a dependency on the part of the CBOs.

An intermediary is someone or something that is "acting between two persons" or in this case two entities. Therefore, NGOs would have to have a relationship with both CBOs and the government. According to the article, there are distinctions between the different categories of NGOs concerning contact with CBOs. The NGOs established by decree "have extensive infrastructure and outreach across the whole country"; while membership-based NGOs, there is nothing stated about outreach but in Box 2.3 they state that they are "able to mobilize many supporters at grassroots." Accordingly, there is some connection, but it unclear how much; some Development professional NGOs "lack feedback mechanisms to gain a mandate to speak on behalf of excluded groups"; there is no information concerning the virtual NGOs; and the "majority of INGOs also work in close partnerships with local NGOs and CBOs". Therefore, there is definitely contact between the two, more so with NGOs established by decree and international NGOs, which are small in number within the NGO sphere.

As far as the relationship of NGOs with the government, it also varies from category to category. The NGOs established by decree have the strongest relationship with the government. They are “a contracted partner in the implementation of socio-economic projects in partnership with MoPIC” (Jordanian Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation) and “they are able to influence upwards to the highest decision makers." Membership-based NGOs at the national level “use their collective voice to influence the policies and processes of the state in favour of the interests of their members” and at the governorate level NGOs focused on women issues “are already active partners of state and donors.” The Development professional NGOs “are well connected with diverse interest groups, have access to opinion leaders...” but nothing about their relationship with the government. There is no information on the virtual NGO for this point. Lastly, with regard to INGOs, there is nothing about their relationship with the government.

One of the concerns is that the pyramid developed for the “Mapping” article makes a very clear division between NGOs and CBOs in general, and in Jordan in particular, it seems to peg NGOs and CBOs into certain roles that should be considered more fluid than black and white. It seems to leave no room for growth of the CBOs and the article considers them weak, however at the same time, there is talk about strengthening them. If they were strengthened how would this impact their status and the definition of CBOs?  The “Mapping” article does stress the need for training for both NGOs and CBOs, but here again the emphasis is on the former. Now, the “Mapping” article is written in relation to discussing public policy advocacy, so it is different from the focus of this paper but this even seems to be a trend in the literature with no definitive reason for why except for the implication that NGOs are the entity of choice for delivering sustainable development assistance by the West.

At the international level, NGOs have been utilized since 1945 by the UN, but within each individual country the situation will be different. Accordingly, in Jordan it is not clear when the first NGOs were introduced. One source shows the beginning of introducing social development and culture and development in the mid 1970's. And at the time of their introduction, were they defined as they are today or has the definition changed over time? Within the life cycle of an organization, it must continue to develop as an entity. Most entities begin with little funding and consequently have few staff and rely on volunteers, but...
as they enter subsequent phases resources improve and staff become proficient and develop an expertise for the benefit of the members. So, the question that arises is, if a CBO were able to obtain reliable funding and hire staff, this would not meet the qualifications set out in the definition of a CBO but would bring them closer to an NGO. However, if an NGO is not to operate at the local level, would there be a new type of entity or would the definitions have to be adjusted and then how would the entity be qualified and evaluated within the context of the sector?

The fear is that the NGO, whether in Jordan or anywhere else, will stymie the growth of the CBO in the following ways. First, there is the issue of funding. In Jordan, it comes from both national and international sources and while most NGOs and CBOs are not able to obtain international resources, when they do the money is given to NGOs not CBOs. Getting access to resources can be difficult under the best of circumstances, but when money is going to NGOs, what is left for the CBO? Will the search for funding create competition and friction between the two? Secondly, the lack of funding will make it difficult to hire staff, and while an organization can operate without staff, they are usually necessary in order for an organization to develop to its full potential. At the grassroots level, staff is more likely to be amateurs or activists rather than the professionals for NGOs and required for donors, especially in the West. Third, the hierarchy established by the pyramid shows more of a top down approach when in reality many issues percolate up from the bottom. Fourth, the role of NGOs in providing services, technology, and giving a voice to community concerns can do one of two things. It will both create a dependence of the CBO on the NGO, and will eliminate the CBO’s incentive to provide for their members and/or stymie the CBO’s development as an organization.

According to the article, “most CSOs and their constituency are used to welfare and charity as the means of addressing social problems; hence NGOs will only increase the CBO’s dependence on the system. A subsequent question would be that if sustainable development is one of the main engines for resources, and that welfare and charity are usually found in the first stage of sustainable development strategies, what happened to the impact of the other two strategy stages? Fifth, is related to the lack of CBOs in urban areas. The article suggests that this absence is due to better penetration of services in the urban areas. These same areas are more heterogeneous and subsequently have fewer shared interests. However, many countries have CBOs in the urban centers and usually more than the rural areas; so why it is different in Jordan – one possible reason might be that NGOs, which are located mostly in urban areas, provide services that should be provided by CBOs. Sixth and lastly, is related to the issue of who is to speak on behalf of the CBOs. The system is such that NGOs do most of the speaking. There are several problems associated with this point. 1) It has already been discussed that not all NGOs do outreach or have strong connections to the CBO. Consequently, so how is it that the system allows NGOs to speak for CBOs? 2) The article discusses the risks involved in national NGOs addressing issues at the local level: “[t]here is a risk that these interventions are perceived as undermining local and social values, especially when the initiatives are supported with funding from foreign agencies.” If there are risks of them speaking to CBOs because of value differences in communications then how is it possible that they should speak on the CBOs’ behalf? 3) The article even discusses the point that “in the long term, such groups are more empowered if they are able to act in their own interests…” This statement was made in reference
to organizations dealing with special challenges and that “professionals” usually speak for them. As this is the role that the NGO plays with the CBO, so the same remedy should apply.

There are two overarching issues that are relevant to the entire Civil Society Sector that will finish off the discussion: democracy and foreign funding sources, which tend to be intertwined. Throughout the literature, in the article as well, there seems to be a primacy of democracy in relation to the Civil Society Sector. This is based on, as discussed in the literature, that when a CSO participates in CS it increases the participation in the sector, increasing the diversity, the number of ideas and in turn strengthens the democracy that exists or if democracy does not exist or is weak, CS has the potential of strengthening democracy or creating it where it doesn’t exist.

There are several reasons why the combination of CS and democracy is worrisome. First of all, the primary focus of CS is that it addresses the needs of each CSO’s membership by providing services, addressing issues, and whatever else might be relevant to the membership. CS fills a need that is either not met or not met well in the public and private sectors and usually does it with more flexibility to respond as the environment changes, does it cheaper, with less bureaucracy and fills a need within the community. If the very existence of CS strengthens or aids in the creation of democracy (as a byproduct), so much the better. However, when democracy is discussed in the literature, it is in terms of the potential of the sector to promote democracy, but it has not been definitively proven to do so.

Secondly, it appears, at least in part, that the issue of democracy has increased the interest of scholars who are writing far more about CS than ever before due to the increased interest and funding which has resulted in the increase in the number, the influence and power of NGOs in affected countries. However, too many articles are focused on democracy and not on CS and then when they don’t see any results or the results they seek the academics and the articles then blame CS.

Thirdly, the interest in democracy which in turn has increased foreign monies going to these countries has also appeared to try to impact the agendas for CS in these same countries. Providing resources to countries that need them to assist CS is one thing but as an outsider trying to impact the CS agenda is something else. Besides, while funding comes with strings attached, the agenda of CS should be set by the countries stakeholders. It is this point which has caused conflict in Jordan and for the following two reasons. First, outside money brings change and change is not always easy to accept and when the change does not reflect the values of the community there was a backlash which was at the expense of CS. Secondly, the suspicion of foreign monies is reflected in the new Societies Law where it is very difficult to access this funding.

Finally, the issue of democracy has politicized CS where politics really has no place. CS is to benefit the membership or each individual organization in achieving the goals that were set at the inception of the organization. Ultimately, this is why organizations are successful, flourish or fail.

**Conclusion and Research Questions**

The terminology that is used to describe that area that exists between the public and private sector is vast, inadequate and complex. The usage is not uniform, making it difficult to evaluate the area in one country let alone comparatively. Even those who write about the
area for one given country are not in agreement. The terms are ambiguous so as to take into consideration the diversity that exists but this same ambiguity allows for misconception, misinterpretation, and wrong evaluations. The same problems exist in Jordan with terminology and definitions as is evidenced by the discussion in this article.

This is a problem on two different levels. First, for someone who is not well versed in the subject matter, it does not give one picture but many and even if one educates oneself their education will depend on which stream, which discipline, which country and which authors read. Secondly, the terminology, especially those focused on in this paper; makes it difficult to evaluate the specific entity, the sector, as well as the relationship existing between the different groups within the sector.

Besides, when someone tries to apply the terms in a specific country, in this case Jordan, it will also become country specific to the usage, history and factors within the environment that affect the terms. More specifically there is the creation of a type of entity: the NGO.

The reality in Jordan as well as other countries that have NGOs is not that that these entities exist but how they are evaluated for what they bring to the sector. All entities that exist within civil society need to be held accountable to their constituencies and to the sector. In order to hold them accountable they must be evaluated for their strengths and weaknesses and where it is necessary to be reformed.

Thus, in order to better evaluate civil society in Jordan, the following questions need to be addressed in any further research. First and foremost, what is the actual relationship between CBOs and NGOs? Do they complement each other in bringing something to the sector that the other one does not or does the existence of both prevent each from obtaining its full potential? Secondly, within the category of NGOs do they need better communication, as is elucidated in the article on NSAs, and if this is the case how is this best achieved? Third, can better definitions be designed to better reflect the reality of the sector as well as making it less complex in the evaluation of the sector taking into account the issues of whether organizations should be pegged into specific geographical areas, as well as whether the issues of funding and staffing have any place in the definitions of the entities? Fourth, is the issue of training for the entities, but more specifically for CBOs – while needs assessments have been done, there is no apparent coordination between the different groups that provide training, taking into account what is needed for the organization versus what is necessary for the individuals within the organization (see “Mapping” article). For either CBOs or NGOs to continue to develop this needs to be further explored. Fifth, if, as discussed in the “Mapping” article where it critiqued CS as being very used to charity and welfare, the question will be where are the two other stages of sustainable development and public policy advocacy for development funding, and which of the three stages is stronger and how can the organizations be made more independent?

The civil society that exists in Jordan is strong, diverse and ever expanding. It is the hope that with any further research that it continues to move forward.
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