Spring 2015

NGOs Creatively Navigating Donor and Governmental Restrictions in the Middle East and North Africa

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Abstract

Local governments' regulations and donor organizations' requirements create political and financial restrictions for Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA). As a result NGOs in countries such as Egypt, Tunisia, and Morocco must become creative in the ways they develop and implement projects. In order to be efficient and successful, NGOs use different techniques including creative means to fund their programs, partnerships with outside organizations, and creative uses of their resources.

Many NGOs will find creative solutions to navigate these restrictions. Some of the solutions will be similar, while others will be completely unique. Yet despite the specific variations in the strategies from NGO to NGO, the fact that each one has its own is noteworthy in that these particular strategies allow NGOs to more effectively serve their communities. As the Middle East and North Africa continue to change, the restrictions placed on NGOs by the government and the types of organizations that develop will change; and ultimately, navigation strategies will also change. Therefore, it is important to study the navigational methods and strategies used by NGOs in this region due to the fluid political scene, as well as an overall lack of research on this topic.

Jessica David
6/2/2015
Senior Honors Thesis

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UNH Anthropology Department Senior Honors Thesis

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Acknowledgment

I would like to acknowledge and thank my advisor Professor Peshkova for lending guidance throughout this process. Without your help this paper would not have been completed. I would also like to thank my second reader Professor Withers, without your guidance my paper would have not been as clearly organized. Finally, I would like to thank my friends and family who helped me proof read.

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Thesis

Local governments' regulations and donor organizations' requirements create political and financial restrictions for Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA). As a result NGOs in countries such as Egypt, Tunisia, and Morocco must become creative in the ways they develop and implement projects. In order to be efficient and successful, NGOs use different techniques including creative means to fund their programs, partnerships with outside organizations, and creative uses of their resources.

Research Design

During my semester studying abroad in Jordan, I explored ways in which Jordanian NGOs continue to function effectively in their targeted communities despite challenges set up by donors' requirements and the government's regulations. In many cases I discovered that NGOs in Jordan were continuing to meet the needs of their targeted communities through the use of community meetings and panels as well as constant participants' feedback. Using this research as a starting point, I then expanded the project geographically to look at how NGOs from three countries in the region—Egypt, Tunisia, and Morocco—creatively navigate their financial, legal, and political environments. I chose these countries due to their recent participation in the Arab Spring, which Economist John Cummings and diplomat Colbert Held describe as a set of popular uprisings that occurred in multiple countries throughout the region starting in 2011, and due to their close proximity to one another in North Africa (Cummings and Held 2014, 573-574). This thesis is based on the archival, library, and online research of secondary sources that address this question. My research design included the following steps:

1. In order to explore my hypothesis that donors' regulations and requirements hinder the work of NGOs, I read articles that cover NGOs work in any country in the world (e.g., Shaw, Allen, 2004; Jad 2007; Johansson, Elgstrom, Kimanzu, Nylund and Persson 2010).

2. Then, I focused more closely on MENA. Originally, I focused on Egypt, Tunisia, and Libya, but as I could not find enough information about Libya, I decided to change my focus to Morocco. I discovered that there were very few sources that focus specifically on these countries' NGOs and their relations with donors (e.g., Newcomer, Baradei, and Garcia 2013). As a result, I had to expand my search and look for information about the regional NGOs.

3. This led me to discover the importance of governmental regulations vis-à-vis local NGOs. For example, Mohamed ElAgati (2010), the executive director of the Arab Forum for Alternatives, discusses the governmental influence on NGOs in MENA. Hence, I continued archival research by compiling names of NGOs and donor organizations that I would have to research further.

4. Once I compiled a list of regional NGOs and donor organizations, I used the online search engine - Google - to gather data about NGOs most prominently featured in the literature I reviewed. In some cases, I could not find a clear website for the organization, and many of the supporting websites were in languages other than English. For example there are a few supporting websites in French that talk about one NGO I decided to focus on - *Association*

Tunisienne des Femmes Democrates (or AFTD)[1] Yet in other cases, such as

with *Enda Inter-Arabe* (or *Enda*), the website had detailed information about

this organization[2] Through such websites, I was able to find the organizations'

histories, partnerships, and projects, as well as how they promote themselves.

In addition to digital documents published by the NGOs, I was also able to

collect, what I call "physical" evidences, such as each organization's website's

set-up, its accessibility, user friendliness, and its attractiveness. These criteria

are usually not considered when assessing effectiveness of an NGO. Yet in the

context of the globalization of technology, digital presence is an important

feature that can hinder or enhance an NGO's creativity and function; an

organizations online presence helps to create first impressions for donors and

possible partners.

5.   Finally, drawing on a combination of my own observations, information gleaned

from websites, as well as a review of some existing scholarship on MENA, I

analyzed several NGOs in each country, focusing specifically on how they

shape their programs in order to creatively navigate restrictions.

Introduction

 In order to receive outside funding for programs and overhead costs, NGOs in MENA

have to creatively navigate local and global social space by negotiating donor expectations and

the political structures of their countries. Donor expectations take many forms and include, but

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[1] See, for example, https://www.facebook.com/femmesdemocrates.
[2] See, for example,
http://www.endarabe.org.tn/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=192&Itemid=209&lang=en

not limited to, the collection of quantitative data to insure accountability to the donor, funding

application requirements, and preset program expectations.

In the past four decades there has been an increased demand from donors for systematic

data on the effectiveness of public and non-profit programs (Newcomer, Baradei, and Garcia

2013, 62). As a result of a growing demand for financial accountability and improved services,

the funding pool for NGOs has become increasingly more competitive. Kathryn Newcomer,

Laila El Baradei, and Sandra Garcia (2013, 62), scholars of public policy, practice, and

administration, explain that,

> Over the last four decades, the demand for systematic data about the effectiveness of
> public and non-profit programs has increased because of the non-coincidental
> convergence of actions by a number of institutions with stakes in service delivery. In
> countries across the world, governments at all levels, foundations, funders of
> international development endeavors such as the World Bank and the US Agency for
> International Development (AID), the United Way of America in the USA, think tanks,
> and academics with interests in improving the delivery of services have all contributed to
> an increasing focus on measurement of programmatic 'results' as part of the exercise of
> accountability for the funds.

The majority of international donors require such systematic data on programs. This demand for

accountability creates more work for already strained NGOs as they must allocate resources to

collect quantitative data (Newcomer, Baradei, and Garcia 2013, 73).

These strains are caused by requirements that can include evidences of an NGO's

program's impact, such as (a) the number of people affected by the program, (b) its success rates,

and (c) whether or not the program is achieving its goal(s), as well as language requirements on

funding applications which are beyond the current employees' skills. This data required by donor

organizations is not always useful to NGOs. Newcomer, Baradei, and Garcia (2013, 72) found

that,

> Despite the multiple uses cited for performance data, several NGOs were not completely satisfied with the overall performance measurement and reporting processes and expressed various concerns. One of these concerns was that international donors may insist on the collection of specific, sometimes not totally relevant data, to satisfy their political agendas, for example, to collect information about levels of political participation and engagement of political parties in projects relating to children. Another concern voiced was the overemphasis on quantitative data, which do not always capture the whole picture.

Many NGOs find that these reports are not only unhelpful, but also often hinder the programs.

The information that donors request cannot be used by NGOs to further improve their programs.

In addition, each donor has a different format for these reports with different language

requirements, and a focus on different results to be measured. This process, both collecting data

and report requirements requires NGOs to reserve time and divert resources form the beneficiary

and instead spend it to make sure these reports are completed. Some NGOs even find it

necessary to employ individuals or contractors to write these reports, which require spending

extra money that NGOs may not be able to spare (ElAgati 2010, 70).

The Regional Director of Civil Society Programs at the organization Middle East and North

Africa for Search for Common Ground, Julia Pitner (2000, 36), , discovered that when applying

for European grants, the

> reporting and accounting requirements are beyond the capacity of most local NGOs. The EC [European Commission], confronting its own corruption scandal, has changed its guidelines further by only making grants over 400,000 ECU [European Currency Unit or $429,696] to NGOs with a bank guarantee for the same amount.

With the requirements of reporting data outside the abilities of many NGOs, and with additional

regulations such as the fund matching required by the EC, local NGOs cannot meet the

requirements to apply for funding. This is causing many donors to have to go directly to NGOs.

With donors approaching NGOs, in some cases, one would think that NGOs would be able to produce the programs they want in a community without too much hassle. Yet, "other funders, particularly US funders, now go directly to NGOs, and suggest that funds will be forthcoming if certain changes are made in projects or if the NGO undertakes the funder's project" (Pitner 2000, 36). This leads to NGOs changing everything from the specific details of their programs to their overall focus in order to receive money and make their programs appeal to donors. An example, an anthropologist Rania Kassab Sweis (2011, 41), who studies the effects of humanitarian aid in Egypt, reports that one of her research participants, Philippe, an Egyptian NGO employee, says,

> The poor African girl brings aid money like no one else. Yes we use this to our advantage but it's the only way we can get funding. We have to use a stereotype to get money. This "clash of civilizations" story, Islam versus Christianity, using pictures of veiled Muslim girls… I hate that stuff, but it brings the money. I know it's exploitation, I know exactly what it is, but we have to play the politics. The funds keep the work going, we have to reach out and get [funds] any way we can. We have to work with these [NGO] politics and this system.

In sum, in order to achieve needed funding levels, NGOs may need to create new programs or expand existing ones to include the donor's target group, or rely on stereotypical cultural constructs to appeal to donors.

This creation and use of stereotypes may seem like a good method for receiving funds that NGOs can use to implement programs. Yet, donors who come to an NGO with program ideas in mind, which can cause further strain on this NGO. Pitner (2000, 35), argues that,

> NGOs are becoming more frustrated with the international funding community, especially Western governmental funding agencies such as the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the European Commission (EC). Local perception-which is also frequently fact-is that they come to the region with agendas rooted in specific foreign policy objectives seeking "partners" to unquestioningly carry out programs that seldom resonate with the political situation on the ground.

These funding agencies and donors, who have preset expectations for a project, create an

environment in which NGOs must compromise their own project ideas. This can result in

projects that do not fit the community's specific needs. In addition, these preset ideas and

subsequent program changes can result in the loss of an NGO's legitimacy among the

community members; the community often feels that the NGOs are settling and promoting

foreign ideologies that do not fit within the community's ideologies. This lack of trust between

donors, NGOs, and communities creates social and financial hardship on NGOs.

These donor-related problems make it very difficult for NGOs to create programs that

help the community and, at the same time, satisfy donors' expectations. In addition to these

hindrances caused by donor restrictions, NGOs are also strained by governmental restrictions. In

addition to each government's unique methods of social control, the governments have their own

way of restricting NGOs through various methods, such as registration requirements and funding

reporting.

While NGOs are not run by the government, that does not exclude them from the

government's influence. In many countries in the region, NGOs must register with the

government. By either not allowing NGOs to register or discrediting an NGO's services that are

incompatible with, or threaten a government's interests, the government regulates and controls

local NGOs. For example, Mary Ayad (2012, 85), a scholar of accounting and corporate

governance, reports that,

> The CIVICUS[3] study found obstacles to the function of CSOs, particularly the Law of
> Association, which served to prohibit "any action against national unity" or "corrupting

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[3] An International Organizarion which works to strengthen citizen action and civil society
(http://civicus.org/index.php/en/what-we-do-126)

the public morals". It was feared this law could be used against NGOs. The emergency
law enacted in 1981 prohibits public demonstrations without government permission. The
emergency law of 1981 is unconstitutional on the grounds that Article 54 provides the
right of citizens to peaceable and unarmed private assembly, without the need for prior
notice, and inter alia, that public meetings, processions and gatherings are allowed within
the limits of the law.

Such laws allow the government to legally disband NGOs and break up its meetings and events.

While many argue that this law is illegal, there is little legal ground on which to combat it. This

puts the staff of NGOs in distress and causes them change programs, in order to align with the

government. Federal rules and regulations vary from country to country, but in many cases they

prevent an NGO from receiving funding, implementing programs, and in some cases, operating.

These techniques, as defined by anthropologists Serena Nanda and Richard Lee Warms (2009,

200) can be spilt into two categories: (a) laws, "in which social control is implemented through

the systematic application of force by a constituted authority in society," and (b) informal social

control, in which the government uses informal techniques, such as the media portrayal of this

NGO and delays of the registration. These restrictions placed on NGOs by donors and the

government create an environment in which NGOs must develop strategies to navigate these

restrictions in order to best serve their communities.

Roadmap

In the following sections of the thesis, I provide a general background of regional NGOs

and explain the types I used in my research. Then I create a country profile, which looks at (a)

history and demographics of each country, (b) the most common donor restrictions faced by

NGOs and country's political environment when it comes to NGOs' actions, (c) give two to three

examples of NGOs from each country to demonstrate how, and in what ways, each one of them

creatively navigates its socio-economic and political environment, and (d) analyze creative

efforts of these individual NGOs. I conclude the thesis by comparing creative methods, strategies, and techniques of these NGOs, I include the following NGOs: (a) *Al-Hilal*, *Misr El Kheir*, and *Magdy Yacoub* in Egypt; (b) ATFD, and *Enda* in Tunisia; and (c) *Al-Amana* and the *Najra Belghazi Center* in Morocco, and discuss how individual NGO's creativity and productivity were shaped by their respective political and bureaucratic environments.

The Term "NGO" Defined

The work of an NGO is important as they receive funding to help support and develop their local communities. These community-oriented organizations hold advantages when doing regional projects. Maha M Abdelrahman (2004, 172), a scholar at the center of developmental studies at the University of Cambridge, writes that NGOs are unique because of, "Their distinctive methods of researching all members of the local community and their ability to initiate and maintain close ties with the recipients of their services, or 'beneficiaries' as they are known in the NGO jargon." These organizations have strong links in the community and are considered "peoples' organizations" with "people centered development" that empower the communities and people they work with (Abdelrahman 2004, 172). These beliefs inform the expectation that NGOs are community-based organizations, which are separate and unhindered by the government. In reality, however, NGOs are not the only organizations that work to serve their communities, and their relationships with local governments are often unclear.

The classification of NGOs includes different types of organizations. Local definitions of NGOs point out that the term "Nongovernmental" in the acronym "NGO" is, in a way, deceptive and certainly limiting. In many cases, local NGOs are affiliated with the government; they are regulated by state laws and, in some cases, are created by the government. For instance, in

Tunisia the "Government displayed considerable creativity when it decided to create its own

NGOs (governmental NGOs or GNGOs), staffed by members of the general intelligence services

(*mukhabarat*), to attend conferences and monitor what was being said about Tunisia" (Pitner

2000, 35). This fact is echoed by a sociologist, Sarah Gilman (2007, 99), who states, "Thanks to

a tight state control exercised through the Tunisian laws of association, most nongovernmental

organizations(NGOs) in Tunisia function as examples of that interesting breed of 'governmental

non-governmental organizations.'" Shelia Carapico (2000, 2), a political scientist, explains that

this creates confusion as NGOs may be influenced or even run by the government, the very

entity from which their name separates them. These organizations are known as Governmental

Nongovernmental Organizations (GNGOs). In other cases, NGOs are not locally created;

instead, they are branches of various international organizations. These, accordingly, are often

referred to as International Nongovernmental organizations (INGOs). Often NGOs, GNGOs, and

INGOs are lumped together and classified as NGOs though they all have different levels of

association with local communities and governments (Carapico 2000, 2).

There are also other organizations that fit the definition of the community centered NGO,

but are not classified as such. These organizations are sometimes called Civil Society

Organizations (CSOs) or Community Based Organizations (CBOs). In other cases they are

religiously affiliated and, in MENA, are often considered Islamic Organizations (Carapico 2000,

2). Keeping the complexity of these organizations in mind, all of them must creatively navigate

their political and socio-economic environments in order to most effectively help the community.

In this thesis, the NGOs I focus on include CSOs, CBOs, and Islamic organizations.

NGOs are highly valued actors in local communities because of their perceived

independence. Abdelrahman (2004, 51) writes that,

> One side argues that NGOs' greatest advantage is their independence from political and financial institutions, for example from national governments and MNC [Multinational Corporations]. Conversely, NGOs are presented as completely dependent on these institutions, with the effect that NGOS become more accountable to them than to their supposed beneficiaries. A more balanced view, however, points out the interdependence between NGOs and the state.

This perception of independence revolves around the notion that NGOs are not influenced by

governments and thus can create programs best suited the local community's needs. Thus, NGOs

are not as independent as they are perceived; they are constrained by rules and regulations from

both governments and funding agencies. While each government's rules are different, they all

strive to control NGOs and protect the interests of the state.

Below I discuss each country individually, supplying a demographic profile and historical

background, a description of country specific governmental regulations, and two to three

examples of NGOs and how they navigate restrictions.

Country Profiles

Egypt

Demographic Profile and Historical Background

Egypt, located in North Africa, has a long history of foreign occupations. The

reunification of the Upper and Lower Nile valley in 3000 BCE resulted in the formation of an

integrated Egypt (Cummings and Held 2014, 572). Since that time, Egypt has been occupied by

the Persians (525 BCE), the Greeks, and the Romans (30 BCE-476 CE), and then by the

Byzantine Empire (476- 640 CE). During the occupation by the Romans and the Byzantine

Empire, some of its population experienced a religious shift from a diverse polytheistic belief system to Christianity currently represented by the Coptic Christian minority in the country (Cummings and Held 2014, 572). The next important transformation affecting Egyptian culture occurred in 642 CE; the Muslim Arab conquest introduced the Arabic language and Islam to its population (Ibid.). At first, Egypt was ruled by several Arab dynasties: Ummayyads (661-750 CE), and the Abbasids in (750 CE), and the Shia Fatimids (909-1171CE) (Stewart 2014, 72, 82). With the Ayyabids (1169-1250 CE), Sunni Islam had taken control of Egypt. Then the Mamlukes (slave soldiers under the Umayyad and Abbasid rule) established control in Egypt in 1250 (Stewart 2014, 88,89). The Ottoman Turks ruled Egypt from 1517 until 1914 (Cummings and Held 2014, 572-573). In the late 19th century, the Ottoman's control was weakened by the British presence in Egypt marking the beginning of the colonial period (Cummings and Held 2014, 573). The first Egyptian revolution occurred in 1919 (Stewart 2014, 114).

Egypt gained independence from Britain in 1922. That same year, the Egyptians elected a parliament, but both the parliament and the monarchy remained heavily influenced by the British (Stewart 2014, 114). In 1952, a bloodless military coup sent the last king of the Alidline regime into exile, opening the way for Gamal Abal Nasser to become Egypt's first President in 1954 (Cummings and Held 2014, 573). Nasser ruled Egypt until 1981, when he suffered a fatal heart attack and was succeeded by Anwar al Sadat. Sadat was assassinated in 1981, and Hosni Mubarak became president. Mubarak extended his presidency until 2011 when the Arab Spring, ended his presidency (Cummings and Held 2014, 573-574).

The Arab Spring in Egypt took the form of a massive uprising to remove President Mubarak in February 2011. The many reasons for the uprising included the regime's corruption,

police brutality and corruption, and economic hardships faced by the population. John Sidel

(2014), a scholar of comparative and international relations at the University of Oxford, explains

that the uprisings led the military to force President Mubarak to step down. Then, the military ran

an interim government until Mohamed Morsi became the first democratically elected President

of Egypt (Sidel 2014, 227). Yet, in 2013, Morsi was removed from office and replaced by Gen.

Abdel Fattah al-Sissi. The military once again held control of the government. In 2014, Gen.

Abdel Fattah al-Sissi was elected as president of Egypt (Daily Mail 2014), while Morsi was

sentenced to death in 2015.

Egypt has a total population of 80.1 million with a population density of 75 people per

km^2 (Stewart 2014, 36). The county's Gross National Income (GNI) is $1800, and the

unemployment rate is 26% (Stewart 2014, 192). According to the Freedom House, Egypt scores

a 6 and 5 in Political Freedoms and Civil Freedoms respectively and has a status of Not Free

(Stewart 2014, 240).

Government Restrictions

In Egypt, the government controls local NGOs through (a) the laws regulating donations

from foreign donors, requiring budget reviews and inspections by governmental agencies, the

government's ability to seize all assets of any NGO, if it deems necessary, and (b) through

informal means such as delays in approvals and constant reapplication requirements.

The laws regulating Egypt's NGOs include Law 84 on Non-Governmental Organizations,

passed in 2002, which states that NGOs may receive funding from foreign donors. According to

ElAgati (2010, 10), this Law overturned the Law 32 on civil and voluntary associations: "Law

No. 84 (on Non-Governmental Organizations or NGOs) (2002), allows NGOs to receive foreign

funds." Yet, "Law No. 84 contains several obstacles and restrictions to foreign funding, at both

the legal and practical level" (ElAgati 2010, 10).

Law 84 makes it mandatory for all NGOs to obtain approval from the Egyptian Ministry

of Social Solidarity to receive funding from foreign entities (ElAgati 2010, 10). Law 84 also

gives the Ministry of Social Solidarity the power to deny a request for foreign funding when it

sees fit. An Egyptian NGO worker's statement exemplifies constrains put in place by this Law,

> We face many problems as a result of the multiple bodies overseeing foreign funding. As
> an organization, our activities are known and specific. I should not need to introduce the
> organization every time I apply for funding to the Ministry of Social Solidarity.
> Moreover, there are multiple steps to the process; every time I am compelled to secure
> new approval from the security department, which takes so much time. A few years ago,
> during our participation in the Coalition of NGOs organized to change the previous NGO
> Law, I began to face many problems from the Ministry of Social Solidarity, which
> rejected a number of applications submitted to get approval for funding (ElAgati 2010,
> 13).

This process is often corrupt, and in many cases, the denial has nothing to do with the NGO's

project for which they need funding. Instead, it might be a consequence of this organization's

past activities, which might have gone against the government or the ministry itself. The

government's ability to hinder the foreign funding of an NGO can cause NGOs to be unable to

start projects and pay the staff. This creates an NGO's financial strains and may lead to the

NGO's closure.

Additionally, the process for requesting foreign funding through the Ministry of Social

Solidarity is very complicated. The application is sent from an administrative authority to the

Directorate of Social Solidarity's financing section, which, in turn, writes a report for the

Ministry. The Ministry then sends the report to the Security Department (National Security

Department - State Security). It is only after the Security Department's approval that an NGO

can receive foreign funding. According to the law, this process should take no longer than 60

days, yet many NGOs report waiting much longer for an approval from the Security Department

(ElAgati 2010, 12). This long process and regular delays are examples of the government's

informal control which results in undue financial burden. ElAgati (2010, 12) writes that, "such

delays not only impact on the implementation of a specific project, but may also threaten the

NGO's existence, where it undermines the NGO's ability to pay wages and fulfill its

obligations." Without the money, NGOs are unable to pay their employees or fulfill obligations

to its constituents, which creates a fundamental problem for NGOs.

In Egypt, the Ministry of Social Solidarity formally controls organizations through the

review of any NGO budget that exceeds 1000EGP (Egyptian pound, roughly $180 USD), has the

power to instantly disband any NGO, and can subject NGOs to long and detailed inspections. For

instance, a member of one Egyptian NGO reported that the organization,

> Launched the campaign of "freedom of association." We used to conduct seminars and
> organize protests in front of the Ministry of Social Solidarity; then afterwards, or even
> during the protests, we received a phone call, informing us of an inspection by the
> Ministry and the Central Auditing Organization (CAO), though the CAO is not
> authorized to do so. Furthermore, there was security interference and threats of
> suspending the activities of the campaign (ElAgati 2010, 13).

This statement clarifies that in many cases, the government agencies' reviews, inspections, and a

treat of disbandment are used to hinder this NGO's activities and programs perceived by the state

to undermine to the state's interests. Such regulations and laws allow the Egyptian government

to control local NGOs the existence of which can be jeopardized at the government's whim.

The Egyptian government controls NGOs directly through laws and regulations, such as

the Law No. 84, and indirection, through informal social sanctions such as delaying responses to

and requiring reapplication of an NGO. These methods hinder and dishearten NGOs who are

perceived as a threat to the Egyptian government.

Navigating Restrictions: Egyptian NGOs

Conversely, NGOs are not helpless against the restrictions placed on them by their

government and donors. NGOs use different strategies in order to create programs and pay their

staff. Egyptian NGOs, such as *Al-Halil* and *Misr El Kheir* and *Magdy Yacoub*, are successful

organizations in spite of the socio-economic and political environment. *Al-Halil* uses data

collection methods often required by donors, yet seen as a hindrance by many NGOs, to further

promote its projects locally. In additions, they also use their designation as an Islamic

organization to attract volunteers and donations from Egypt. *Misr El Kheir*[4] and *Magdy Yacoub*[5]

are both organizations circumnavigating the governmental donation requirements by having

branches of their organization outside Egypt. They also help other local NGOs by providing sub-

grants that are classified as domestic donations, allowing smaller NGOs to receive money

without applying to receive permission for an outside aid.

Sherine Hafez (2011), an anthropologist and a scholar of gender and sexuality, writes

about the Women's Islamic Private Voluntary Organization (PVO), *Al-Halil,* which helps to

empower women in Egypt through religion. One of the main projects of this PVO is to provide

local women from the Mehmeit village with information about basic sanitation habits, set up

classes on religion, and further develop women's work related skill sets (Hafez 2011, 57). This

program also provides money and loans that help participants improve their livelihood. *Al-Halil*

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[4] الخير مصر مؤسسة Or the Egyptian Good Foundation
[5] Named for يعقوب حبيب مجدى an Egyptian cardiothoracic surgeon

has found ways to use donor regulations such as quantitative data collection to promote local

participation in the organization. Additionally, in order to lessen its dependency on foreign

money *Al-Halil* relies on community donations and support to continue operating.

As previously mentioned, many donors require quantitative data for their reports. Many

NGOs consider this data to be superficial because it does not fully recognize the scope and

progress of their work in any one area. It is also difficult to accurately record quantitative data.

Many NGOs are short staffed and the quantity of data required is beyond their means and

abilities. In order to collect data, NGOs in Egypt use a variety of methods including, surveys,

follow up phone calls, focus groups, individual interviews, and evaluation sheets. The

fieldworkers or other NGO staff or locals, organized with the help of community leaders, help to

implement data collection methods. Hafez (2011) demonstrates an example of using community

members to collect data on a project in the Mehmeit village in Egypt. Halima, a girl who lived in

Mehmeit her whole life, works with *Al-Halil* in order to keep track of the women's progress in

the community. In this situation,

> Halima knew everyone by name without the help of a ledger because she had grown up in
> Mehmeit and knew all the village families well. One of her many tasks was to notify
> Amal and Samira when a family fell on hard times and needed help. Another of Hamila's
> duties was to supervise the religious lessons, take attendance, and report back. In return
> for a monthly wage that was considered by village standards a good sum of money,
> Halima and her Father, and two other women from the village conducted the home
> inspections during the week (Hafez 2011, 144).

This woman, like many others, helps this organization by collecting quantitative as well as

qualitative data. As a result, *Al-Halil* is able to assess how many women are participating in the

project and how well health-related routines are being incorporated into these women's lives.

These notes are not only helpful for the assessment of *Al-Halil's* project, but they also help

encourage the participants to continue with the project (Hafez 2011, 132). Through good

attendance and the passing of home inspections, the women are rewarded with clothing as well

as other incentives; this helps to create a contractual relationship between the PVO and the

villagers:

> [This was]basis of the exchange between the Islamic women activists and the village
> women. In return for their commitment to attending religious lessons, literacy classes,
> practicing hygiene, and working on several types of production, the village women were
> rewarded with gifts and monthly wages and were given an opportunity to receive loans
> towards their financial independence (Hafez 2011, 132).

Al-Halil uses quantitative data to create incentives for local women to participate in the project,

and produce an environment that promotes the growth of the Mehmeit village project. By

keeping track of participants' progress, the members of *Al-Halil* are able to motivate women to

continue their hard work and recruit other women to join. With this additional use of quantitative

data collected normally for the donor organizations, NGOs do not to waste resources on

collecting information solely for donor-reports. Instead, the NGO gives back to the program by

creating an environment that will keep women's interest in the project and continue to increase

their participation.

The *Al-Halil* organization also navigates restrictions by accepting funding from sources

other than foreign investors. Egyptian NGOs do not rely solely on donations from foreign

investors in order to support projects. Funds for NGOs in Egypt can come from domestic

donations, membership fees, and revenue from services (Abdelrahman 2004, 178). Each of these

sources of revenue comes with difficulties of their own, yet they help local NGOs find a creative

way to support themselves. For one, *Al-Halil* supports itself through domestic donations from the

local community. The organization started when,

> "Doctor Zeinab found an empty building in this neglected part of the suburb. It was still unfinished. Even the walls were bare, and there were no floors and no windows. We started bit by bit; it was just a huge job, but at the time that did not deter us. Soon with the money coming in from people around this neighborhood, we got one floor ready" (Hafez 2011, 82).

Hence, the members of *Al-Halil* did not need to rely on international funding; instead they were able to develop an organization with the funding received from the local community.

Al-Halil is an Islamic based organization, which also gives the women of this organization the ability to maneuver within the realm of funding more easily. For example, in order to gain services for the constituents such as healthcare, education, governmental, and administrative help for the organization, *Al-Halil* relies on donations from professionals and community members. These professionals volunteer their time and services as a form of alms giving (called Zakat), which community members see as an Islamic requirement.

In other cases, CSOs such as *Misr El Kheir* (MEK) and *Magdy Yacoub Foundation* (MYF) supply sub-grants to smaller CSOs (USAid 2011, 14). This creative funding method allows smaller organizations to continue working without having to apply for permission to receive foreign funding under Egyptian Law No. 84 (2002). Larger NGOs like MEK and MYF also have created a way to insure that they receive foreign funding by creating branch organizations or becoming a branch organization so that the donors in other countries can donate directly to them.

MEK is an Egyptian NGO, which has focused on non-profit development since 2007. It works to train Egyptian individuals in the areas of health, education, scientific research, and social solidarity (*Misr El Kheir* Foundation [MEK] 2014). MEK has branches in both the United States and the United Kingdoms that provide funding for the projects in Egypt. The funding

raised this way is much easier to rely on, because these branches are not subjected to the

Egyptian governmental regulations (MEK Foundation UK 2014, MEK Foundation USA 2014).

Magdy Yacoub Foundation (MYF) delivers free medical care to the poor in Egypt.

Founded in 2008 this organization has created a partnership with the American Friends of *Magdi*

Yacoub Heart Foundation, which has a partnership with the *King Baudouin Foundation* (KBF) in

the United States (see *Magdy Yacoub Foundation*). This allows MYF to advertise its donations

to individuals, by stating that all one has to do is to donate through KBF directly to MYF (*Magdy*

Yacoub Foundation). This allows MYF to supply Americans a way to donate, which is tax

deductible. MYF also has a constant source of foreign funding, so they do not have to apply for

new grants from organizations outside the country.

Through creating constant forms of revenue through partner or branch organizations,

MYF and MEK achieve donation security. Because of a lengthy application process seeking the

government's approval many Egyptian NGOs fear losing their donors. The organizations, such

as MYF and MEK, have created their own outside organizations that can produce a more reliable

source of funding. This also allows such NGOS to support smaller CSOs through sub-grants; this

would not be possible in light of an extended application process for governmental approval.

In Egypt, organizations navigate restriction by relying on funding from partnerships with

outside organizations and the communities they serve, as well as by creatively using data to

promote and expand their programs. On the other hand, in Tunisia, organizations deploy a

different set of strategies, including using micro financing to become self-sufficient, utilizing

techniques to become more attractive to donors, and building partnerships with other

organizations to create and maintain their unique programs. These differences in NGOs'

strategies between Egypt and Tunisia are reliant on the differences in governmental restrictions in each country.

Tunisia

Demographic Profile and Historical Background

Tunisia, located in North Africa, was invaded and ruled by the Roman Empire from the 2nd to the 7th century BCE; the Byzantine Empire succeeded the Romans (Stewart 2014, 72). A series of Muslim rulers followed the Empire. *Amazighs* or *Imazigh* people (term meaning "free people", aka "the Berbers") populated Tunisia at the time. These original inhabitants of North Africa had their own Afro-Asiatic language and their own culture that currently is undergoing revival (Stewart 2014, 51-52). These native people converted to Islam starting in the 7th century. The area remained under the rule of Muslim Empires until 1881, when Tunisia fell under French colonial rule (Stewart 2014, 101).

In 1956, after an armed resistance, Tunisia won its independence from France (Stewart 2014, 102). Since then Tunisia has had two presidents: Habib Bourguiba, who became Tunisia's president and prime minister in 1957 and Zine el Abidine Ben Ali (Egger 2008, 426). Supported by the Democratic Constitutional Rally, Ben Ali ruled Tunisia starting in 1987 until the Arab Spring in 2011 (Stewart 2014, 52).

A Tunisian man's death started the Arab Spring in the region; Muhammed Bouazizi set himself on fire in protest of government harassment in 2010 (Anderson 2014, 50). The popular protests followed. As a result, the long term President, Ben Ali, had to step down and flee to Saudi Arabia. In October of 2011, Tunisia held elections for a 217 member Constitutional

Assembly, who instated an interim president, Monocef Marzouki (Stewart 2014, 158). Tunisia held presidential elections in November of 2014, where Beji Caid Essebsi beat the incumbent Moncef Marzouki, though no party received a majority of the votes (Aljazeera 2014). As a result, a second election took place on December 21st, 2014 in which Tunisia's Beji Caid Essebsi was elected president (BBC, 2014)

Tunisia has a total population of 10.5 million with a population density of 63 people per km^2 (Stewart 2014, 36). The country's GNI is $3480 and an unemployment rate is 27 percent (Stewart 2014, 192). Tunisia is rated a seven in political freedoms, five in civil freedom, and has a status of Not Free according to the Freedom House[6] (Stewart 2014, 240).

Government Restrictions

Unlike Egypt, the Tunisian government places very few restrictions on receiving outside funding. Instead, in Tunisia, the government imposes direct control over NGOs by requiring all NGOs to be affiliated with the state. As a part of the plan to control NGOs, Tunisian government created a large group of governmental NGOs (GNGOs), which look like independent organizations but serve the needs and interests of the government (Pitner 2000, 35). GNGOs promote the government's political agenda and spy on other organizations. GNGOs' participation in international conferences exemplifies the effects of the government's control (Pitner 2000, 35).

The presence of GNGOs at international conferences promotes pro-regime views and agenda by presenting information the government wants the world to know (Pitner 2000, 35).

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[6] An independent organization that monitors freedom around the world. https://freedomhouse.org/about-us#.VWYfxM9Viko

GNGOs hold this power because NGOs are afraid that a GNGO will report them to the

government, which may lead to the arrest of an NGO's members and/or its disbandment. In

many cases, NGOs do not even make it to international conferences. The government exercises

its ability to restrict international travel of NGOs' members by confiscating their passports right

before the trip. In such cases, GNGOs are the only NGOs that attended the conference. Pitner

(2000, 35) exemplifies such power dynamics by reporting that,

> In 1996, two legitimate Tunisian human rights representatives were invited to give presentations at an international human rights conference on torture. A third organization, Jeunes Medecines sans Frontieres (Young Doctors without Borders), was invited later at the request of another NGO, whose members had met their representatives at a conference on torture in South Africa earlier that year. After the invitation was issued, the initial two Tunisian NGO representatives had their passports revoked while the Jeunes Medecines sans Frontieres requested to bring two additional representatives. Medecines sans Frontieres in France then sent the conference organizers a letter of protest about the inclusion of this group, which was "in no way affiliated" with them. After extensive inquiries from reliable sources, the conference organizers established that this "organization" was indeed a GNGO comprised of Tunisian intelligence agents.

As a result of situations like these, it is often only the government's views that are expressed at

international conferences, while independent Tunisian NGOs are excluded from global visibility

and recognition and building global networks (Pitner 2000, 35).

In addition, the Tunisian government indirectly controls NGOs through the media. This

allows the government to blackout NGOs' publications in order to stop the spread of information

about these organizations' program (Gilman 2007, 116). For example, the government blocked

all the media coverage the Centere d'Encounters, created by the *Association Tunisienne des*

Femmes Democrates (ATFD), in an attempt to close the center (Gilman 2007, 114).

Navigating Restrictions: Tunisian NGOs

In order to creatively navigate their socio-political and economic environment, Tunisian NGOs, such as *Enda* and *Association Tunisienne des Femmes Democrates* (ATFD) have spent decades shaping and forming their programs. Reflecting the government's restrictions, there is a lack of information about these organizations and the work they are doing. By using archival and Internet resources, I was able to derive enough information to create a profile for *Enda* and ATFD. What makes these NGOs stand out among others is that *Enda* is an NGO that is no longer reliant on external funding, and ATFD, a women's organization, has struggled through governmental regulations to remain in business and independent.

Enda, a Tunisian international NGO creatively navigates the economic environment by establishing itself as a micro-financing agency. Originally, *Enda* engaged in career training and support, and relied on other organizations' help to sustain its projects. In 1995, *Enda* started a micro financing program, and by 2000, was able to financially sustain itself (*Enda Inter-Arabe*. 2014). This, in turn, allows *Enda* to use money from donors to expand and grow its organization. As a result, this NGO can be selective of its partnerships and new programs, as it is not constantly trying to make money to support its staff.

When *Enda* needs donor support in order to start a new project or open a new branch, it creates a donor-friendly environment through cooperation with consulting companies and through an easy to navigate website (*Enda Inter-Arabe*. 2014). As a result of working with the Consultative Group to Assist the Poor (CGAP), *Enda* has been awarded a five "diamond" rating for financial transparency. This indicates to donors that this NGO is a reliable organization and that money donated to the NGO will be used efficiently and effectively; this makes Edna attractive to donors (*Enda Inter-Arabe*, 2014).

In addition, *Enda's* website contains information not only about the organization, but also their partner-organizations, awards it receives, and projects it has completed. The NGO's website is eye-catching and user-friendly. For example, *Enda* provides a link to its annual program report in a large folder icon that appears on the bottom right-hand side of the screen. By creating an efficient website *Enda* allows potential donors to find information quickly, easily, and helps to assure a potential donor of *Enda's* capabilities as a reliable partner (*Enda Inter-Arabe*. 2014). By using this creative approach, *Enda* has made itself an NGO that does not need to rely on external funding to sustain its organization. Instead, the NGO can focus on creating projects that reflect the needs of the community and producing reports that are easy to access; this leads to expanding *Enda's* projects throughout Tunisia.

The *Association Tunisienne des Femmes Democrates* (ATFD), popularly known as Femmes Democrates, is a women's rights organization founded in 1989 in Tunisia (Gilman 2007, 98). ATFD is the only autonomous women's organization in Tunisia, and the only one to be classified as a protest group (Gilman 2007, 98). ATFD's work focuses on hosting conferences and promoting women's equality in Tunisia. A large part of this includes working with the Tunisian government's associate NGOs. Yet, by working with these NGOs, ATFD risks its status of being an independent organization by being absorbed into the government's control (Gilman 2007, 101). As a result, this NGO has to establish its independence from the government's agenda.

One of the main ways the ATFD has maintained its autonomy is by creating an "identity solidarity transnational link" to keep the organization's work beyond the reach of the Tunisian state (Gilman 2007,109). This "identity solidarity transnational link" is a partnership with

organizations not necessarily recognized in Tunisia, but that is still working within the country's

boarders. For example, ATFD is partnered with the organization named *Collectif*. *Collectif* is a

women's organization that is recognized by the Moroccan government, but not by the Tunisian

government. By working with *Collectif*, ATFD functions as an "off the books" organization.

This status allows ATFD to work with *Collectif,* creating programs and participate in various

events, as a non-monitored organization, avoiding being co-opted by the state, and the state's

heavy-handed control (Gilman 2007, 106-107).

ATFD is also very adaptive and creative when it comes to other obstacles created by the

government. For instance, during an AISHA Network[7] conference hosted by the ATFD, there

was a major backlash against the ATFD from the media. In order to avoid and combat the

negative portrayal, ATFD wrote letters and petitioned against the negative coverage of their

event and did not confront or press charges against the state-controlled media (Gilman 2007,

108). This technique helped the NGO to maintain its face and avoid retribution by the

government.

Another example of being creative and using its networks, is ATFD's creation of

subsidiary organizations, such as the *Centere d'Encounters*,. This center, which helps abused

women, was the first of its kind in Tunisia. The government did not support this center and, in

response, created a media blackout around the center. This blackout included a prohibition of

publication of press releases or any coverage of the center by the ATFD. As a result, this NGO

was unable to promote the *Centere*. Yet, the *Centere's* uniqueness helped ATFD to advertise it

through word of mouth. The members of ATFD used word of mouth through not only their own

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[7] AISHA Network is also known as the Arab Women's Forum

social circles, but also by sharing information about the *Centere* within social circles of other

feminist organizations, both GNGOs and NGOs (Gilman 2007, 114). Through partnerships with

the GNGOs (governmental NGOs), ATFD was able to build a network that would promote a

program, which the government disapproved. Even the organizations sharing the government's

agenda realized the need for such centers in Tunisia. As a result, these organizations and doctors

chose to inform clients of where to get help for abuse. This word of mouth technique makes it

difficult for the government to trace who is promoting the program, thus protecting ATFD's and

GNGO's workers.

ATFD strives to be independent from the government, and, as a result, runs into many

challenges in Tunisia. These challenges force ATFD to be creative by employing various

techniques, such as associating with unofficial international organizations and using well-

established personal and social networks to combat government media backlash and blackouts.

This creativity allows ATFD to remain outside the government's control.

In Tunisia, NGOs such as *Enda* and ATFS use strategies such as micro-financing, multi-

organizational partnerships, and creative utilization of resources such as the Internet and word of

mouth, to navigate restrictions and better server their communities. Alternatively, in Morocco,

because of a different governmental environment, NGOs use strategies such as partnerships with

outside funding organizations and international networks to navigate restrictions**.**

Morocco

Demographic Profile and Historical Background

Morocco is located in North Africa. The Amazighs people, who converted to Islam in in the late 7th century, originally inhabited Morocco. The Abbasid caliphate ruled Morocco from 780 until 985 (Stewart 2014, 88). After the fall of the Abbasid Caliphate, two Amazigh-led Muslim Dynasties ruled Morocco. The first was the Almoravids Dynasty who ruled from 1040-1147 followed by the Almohads (1147-1269) (Stewart 2014, 88). With the end of the Almohads came a series of successor states. The first to rule Morocco (1215 - 1465) among the *Amazigh*s dynasties was the Marinids. The next was the Wattasid dynasty (1420 – 1547). In 1554, the Saadi dynasty restored Arab rule in the country (1554-1659) (Stewart 2014, 88). Morrocco became the Alawite monarchy in 1666. That year, Moulay Rashid took control of Morocco. With Rashid's death in 1672, his brother, Moulay Isma'il, took power and ruled until 1727 (Egger 2008,128).

In 1912 the French took power from the Alawite king, making Morocco a French protectorate (Stewart 2014, 10). In 1956, after an armed resistance, the Moroccans gained their independence from France. In 1961, King Hassan II came to power in Morocco and ruled until his death in 1999. His son, Mohammed VI, succeeded the king. Stewart (2014) argues that Mohammad VI is a much more liberal than his father; he started several reforms in Moroccan society. For example, in 2004 he established the commission on Equality and reconciliation, which addressed human right violations at the time of his father's rule.

Morocco is a constitutional monarchy in which the people elect a bicameral legislature every three years. In 2010 Morocco experienced protests as part of the Arab Spring. Yet King Mohammad VI has remained in power appeasing the public with reforms (Stewart 2014, 156).

Morocco has a total population of 31.9 million people, with a population density of 70 people per km^2. The country's has a Gross National Income (GNI) of $14,330 (Stewart 2014, 36, 192). The unemployment rate is 16 %. According the Freedom House, Morocco has a five for political freedom, a four for civil freedoms, and a status of "Partially Free" (Stewart 2014, 240).

Government Restrictions

In Morocco, the political field in which NGOs operate is constantly changing. El-Glaoui, (1999, 160) explains that in the 1980s and 1990s, the government kept tabs on all NGOs deciding which one of them would have legal status. This restricted the types of NGOs that were created as well as the issues that could be addressed by NGOs (El-Glaoui 1999, 160).

Moroccan NGOs continued pushing their demands. These efforts resulted in a policy change after the Arab Spring protests (USAid 2011, 38). This policy change severely limited the government's ability to control NGOs directly. The new law stated that NGOs still had to register with the state, but that the state is unable to deny the creation of an NGO (USAid 2011, 38). Additionally, NGOs can register as "public interest" organizations, which gives NGOs tax exemptions (USAid 2011, 39). Yet this process is long, and many smaller NGOs cannot afford to register (USAid 2011, 39). In the past, it was this registration that resulted in NGOs receiving funds from the government in a form of government contracts. Now, any non-governmental organization registered with the government is allowed to apply and receive these funds (USAid 2011, 39).

In Tunisia, working with the government creates barriers and limitation on organizations, and in Egypt, the government regulates organizations' abilities to bring in foreign donors.

Morocco, however, does not seem to have these problems. Laurie A. Brand (1998. 66), a scholar

of international relations and Middle Eastern studies, writes,

> On the other hand, direct Moroccan government interference or harassment was not
> mentioned by any of those interviewed, although at times the state has made its
> displeasure clear, and the foreign institutions themselves certainly take into consideration
> the political climate in their decisions to propose or fund projects.

While institutions take into consideration how the government might react to specific programs,

the local organizations do not see the government actually interfering with their programs,

because, "The state appears not to have the resources to put into such projects and is either

indifferent or content to see the initiative taken by an outside agency" (Brand 1998, 66). The

Moroccan government needs these programs to help the country, and thus, interfering with or

prohibiting NGOs' work is not in its best interest. Since the only state regulations for NGOs are

to work only with other licensed organizations and make the information about the events and

projects they are engaged in or sponsor public, NGOs work with outside donors without fear of

the government's backlash (Brand 1998, 66).

NGO's in Morocco have faced a series of different restrictions from the government.

These include a highly selective registration process and the promotion and funding of specific

NGOs. As a result of the Arab Spring, in order to improve the lives of general population and its

approval ratings, the government instituted an open registration policy. Yet, these changes come

hand-in-hand with a new set of restrictions and difficulties for NGOs; these include NGOs'

inability to apply for governmental grants and contracts due to the long application process.

Navigating Restrictions: Moroccan NGOs

Moroccan NGOs, such as *Al-Amana*[8] and the *Najia Belghazi Center*[9], see the Moroccan

government not as a major obstacle, but in many cases, as a beneficial partner for their programs.

Yet even with governmental partnerships, NGOs can find it difficult to secure outside funding.

As a result, these organizations create outside partnerships either through contractual agreements

or through international networking. These outside partners help to secure funding, but in some

cases, they can hinder these NGOs' local legitimacy.

In Morocco, NGOs have creatively navigated government restrictions by becoming a part

of governmental programs. Khrouz (2008, 46), an economist , reports that in 1996, the

government of Morocco realized that the country was in need of aid. This resulted in the

government and international donors contributing thousands of dollars to promote and support

local NGOs (Khrouz). This support became a startup of many NGOs, particularly those in the

field of micro-financing. These NGOs include the *Al-Amana* Micro Financing Institution, which

has helped over 800,000 people as of 2007 (Khrouz 2008, 46). *Al-Amana*, like some other

NGOs, also works with an international non-profit organization called *Grameen-Jameel*

(*Grameen-Jameel*. "*Al Amana* Microfinance").

Grameen-Jameel, an international non-governmental organization jointly owned by the

Grameen Foundation and *Abdul Latif Jameel,* offers loans and grants to their Micro-Financing

Institution's (MFI) partners (Grameen-Jameel. "Who We Are", "What We Do"). The *Grameen*

Foundation is an organization, which helps the poor by providing access to financial services.

Abdul Lative Jameel is an organization founded by the Sheikh Abdul Latif Jameel, a wealthy

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[8] الامان

[9] A center for women going through marital problems or divorce.

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international entrepreneur from Saudi Arabia. The combination of a business run by a wealthy

Saudi philanthropist and the *Grameen Foundation* enables *Grameen-Jameel* to partner with local

organizations and provide them with grants or loans (Grameen-Jameel. "Who We Are").

By signing such partnership agreements, other non-profit organizations, like *Al-Amana*,

acquire an ability to receive a grant or take a business loan, which they can pay back *(*Grameen-

Jameel. "Al Amana Microfinance"*)*. Such partnerships allows NGOs to receive money from a

reliable source, and, at the same time, allows donors to loan out money that will eventually be

repaid to them; this, in turn, creates a constant cycle of money in a closed financing system. Such

a system facilitates local non-profit organizations' growth without constantly worrying about

funding.

Outside funding, however, comes with its own conflicts and competing agendas.

Women's organizations in Morocco exemplify such dynamics,

> In the post 1990 period, when external funding began to flow, women's groups found
> their agendas shaped by the projects for which they could secure funding. While these
> were not projects they did not want to undertake, the funding has often shaped the
> concentration of efforts in ways that do not necessarily reflect Moroccan priorities (Brand
> 1998, 66).

To secure funding, many NGOs shape programs for donors instead of for the community, and

give up their own projects to meet the needs of donors.

This is not always the case. Brand (1998, 66) explains that a famous Moroccan academic,

feminist, and activist, "Fatima Mernissi had approached USIS about funding a center for battered

women. They turned her down on the grounds that this did not really fit within their purview"

(Brand 1998, 66). This show a perfect example in which NGOs are denied funds because it's not

what the donors wanted. Brand notes, though, that " Mernissi subsequently went to the Germans

and obtained the funding she wanted" (Brand 1998, 66). This shows that there are other donors

out there willing to support a cause; finding such donors, however, can be difficult. While

women such as Fatima Mernissi may have the connections to find donors, not all NGOs are able

to do so, and thus, may settle by adjusting their programs to donors' expectations.

The *Najia Belghazi Center* in Fes, is an example of an organization of women who do not

have international connections or easy access to funding. The *Najia Belghazi Center* helps

women report domestic abuse violations by offering free legal advice. Volunteers run this

organization; few of them are professional lawyers. These female volunteers do not have

international connections or the time to meet with donors to find funding. To overcome this, the

Najia Belghazi Center participates in the international conversation on women's rights. This

allows the NGO to create and maintain networks and visit other NGOs in Europe and North

America (Newcomb 2009, 98). Through this international network, the volunteers at the *Najia*

Belghazi Center receive information on grant possibilities, training initiatives, and the newest

data and research on violence against women (Newcomb 2009, 98).

Grant money received from donors is used to create other programs aimed at training

women lacking financial resources to work for themselves (Newcomb 2009, 99). Yet this money

also causes problems. Brand (1998, 67) found that,

> The association of many women's organizations with foreign funding institutions, in
> addition to their largely secularist message and their generally leftist pasts, makes them
> particularly vulnerable to charges of being agents of neoimperialism or of betraying
> indigenous traditions and values.

The *Najia Belghazi Center* found this through personal experiences. Newcomb (2009,

100), an anthropologist, concluded that, "Because of public perceptions, the center faced

difficulties recruiting professionals interested in volunteering their time, which made the task of

solving such a wide range of problems even more overwhelming." With the perception of the

center being skewed in one direction by its donors, NGOs such as *Najia Belghazi Center* have a

hard time finding volunteers. In addition, the center often falls into a professional client

mentality that causes stress to the volunteers, as women come looking for money or a free

lawyer. This stress and combating a perception of the "Western" influence there seems to be a

little reason for volunteers to stay. However, many volunteers stay due to the feeling that their

work is important; without the feeling that their work means something, they would not

volunteer at all (Newcomb 2009, 101).

NGOs in Morocco use partnerships with other organizations to create an environment

where NGOs have access to grants and loans. While for *Al-Amana* these partnerships sustain

their programs with no perceived backlash, the *Nanjia Belghazi Center* finds that this aid, while

extremely useful, has its own negative backlash they have to work against.

Conclusion

 NGOs in Egypt, Tunisia, and Morocco creatively navigate the restrictions placed on

them by their governments and donors. They do this by finding alternative funding options, such

as local donations, foreign branches and micro financing; creating partnerships; and utilizing

resources, such as websites, data collection, and networks.

Finding Alternative Funding: Enda and Al-Halil

In Tunisia and Egypt, NGOs use alternative ways to fund programs. *Enda*, a Tunisian

NGO, uses micro-financing to fund itself and become self-sufficient, while *Al-Halil*, an Egyptian

NGO, uses donations made by local individuals and organizations to run projects. While

donations are not always a reliable source of funding, this method works well for *Al-Halil*. With

Islamic based projects, which have expanded to teach sanitation and job skills, *Al-Halil's*

funding from the community is enough and micro-financing does not fit into this NGO's

organizational scope. On the other hand, *Enda*, which started as a skill-training organization that

expanded into micro-financing, would be unable to rely on the community for the scope and

types of projects they host. The transition to micro-financing was a logical step for *Edna* as it

was able to supply loans to people to help with skill training. In the case of alternative funding

for programs, the NGO's goals and environment impact which methods are most effective.

Partnerships: MEK, MYF and Al-Amana

Many non-governmental organizations use partnerships to navigate funding restrictions.

In Egypt, MEK[10] and MYF[11] use partnerships with outside organizations to create a stream of

international donations, which may bypass Egypt's funding regulations. By becoming a partner

of other organizations, they have set up branches of their own organization internationally; thus,

donations to their international branches can be brought into the state as their own funds and not

that of an international donor. These two organizations then offer domestic grants to smaller

NGOs in the area. In Morocco, *Al-Amana* also partners with an outside organization to create a

reliable source of funding. By partnering with *Jameel Grameen*, *Al-Amana* and other

organizations are supplied with grants and loans instead of constantly looking for other sources

of funding. This method of partnering to receive funding allows organizations to navigate around

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[10] Misr El Kheir Foundation
[11] Magdy Yacoub Foundation

both governmental restrictions and the constant lengthy and burdensome application process for international funding

Egyptian, Tunisian, and Moroccan NGOs all use some form of partnership to navigate restrictions. In Tunisia, organizations such as ATFD[12] partner with other organizations to further promote their cause, as well as balance governmental regulations. ATFD's partnerships with GNGOs and non-recognized NGOs are a balancing act, working between staying in the government's favor and rebelling in order to spread information it finds important. These partnerships have also supplied ATFD with a network of organizations, which will support unique projects such as the *Center d'Ecounters*, even if the government does not approve these projects. On the other hand, Moroccan organization uses international networks to receive up-to-date information on grant opportunities and new scholarly research, which the volunteers would not have been able to access otherwise. While in Tunisia, ATFD is in a balancing act to keep the government happy while sticking to their mission. As a result of such partnerships, some NGOs, such as *Najia Belghazi Center* in Morocco, face backlash from their local communities.

Technology, Online Communication, and Data: Al-Halil and Enda

NGOs in Tunisia and Egypt creatively navigate restrictions by using the unique utilization of available resources. *Enda* uses consulting organizations and their website to attract donors while *Al-Halil* uses data collection, usually required by donors, to find and understand what would incentivize its clients. These two methods are achieving two different goals and navigating different restrictions, and show a difference in the restrictions each NGO faces and navigates.

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[12] Association Tunisienne des Femmes Démocrates

In sum, all NGOs will run into restrictions whether from their government or from donors. These restrictions vary based on the country, the type of NGO, and the communities they operate in. Many NGOs will find creative solutions to navigate these restrictions. Some of the solutions will be similar, while others will be completely unique. Yet despite the specific variations in the strategies from NGO to NGO, the fact that each one has its own is noteworthy in that these particular strategies allow NGOs to more effectively serve their communities. As the Middle East and North Africa continue to change, the restrictions placed on NGOs by the government and the types of organizations that develop will change; and ultimately, navigation strategies will also change. Therefore, it is important to study the navigational methods and strategies used by NGOs in this region due to the fluid political scene, as well as an overall lack of research on this topic.

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6/2/2015
Senior Honors Thesis

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