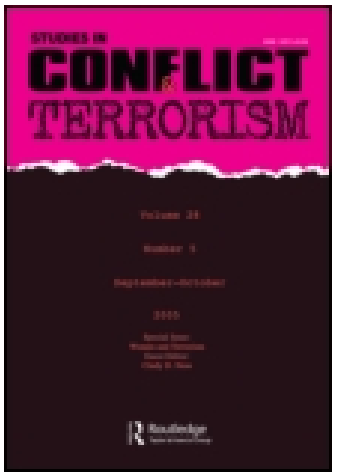

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Doing Well by Doing Good: Understanding Hamas's Social Services as Political Advertising

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Doing Well by Doing Good: Understanding Hamas's Social Services as Political Advertising

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Like many nonstate military actors, Hamas has long provided social services to its constituents, but the mechanism by which charity leads to increased public support is poorly understood. This article argues that providing charity benefits nonstate actors not because it isolates recipients or acts as a bribe but because it allows organizations like Hamas to overcome the legacies of their own military activities and extremist ideologies. Service provision allows them to demonstrate that they are not merely soldiers or ideologues, but capable bureaucrats and managers as well.

Hamas's victory in the 2006 Palestinian elections came as a surprise to many observers, both inside and outside the Palestinian political context. In seeking to understand Hamas's unanticipated ascent to political power, many explanations were offered by scholars, policymakers, rival Palestinian parties, and by Hamas itself. One factor frequently referenced is Hamas's provision of social services in the West Bank and especially in Gaza. And Hamas is not unique in this regard. In the last decade, a great deal of research has been done on the provision of charitable and social services by violent nonstate military actors. Such services clearly help shape these organizations' relationships with the public. Indeed, at this stage, the more interesting question is not *whether* social services stand to improve the reputations of the nonstate actors who provide them, but *how* they do so. What is the causal mechanism linking the provision of services with an increase in popular support?

Common explanations are that services create stronger bonds with civilians because they render recipients dependent on the movement providing them, or that they serve as a tool for recruiting fighters, or because they simply render the public more accepting of the movement as a whole. This article argues, however, that service provision matters not because it serves as a bribe, but because it serves as advertising for the kind of state the militant group will build if it takes power.

In seeking to broaden their appeal beyond a core constituency and make the case that they are qualified to govern, nonstate military actors like Hamas face a very specific challenge: the need to shift away from those strategies of self-promotion that may have

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worked to recruit true believers as fighters, but are less effective in attracting a broader base of support. They have to convince the public that despite being a military organization, they can do more than fight, and that despite being having advocated a particular ideological or communal agenda in the past, they will also serve the needs of the broader public. Social service provision can accomplish both of these tasks. It allows the movement to demonstrate its competence at the very prosaic (and non-military) business of building and administering institutions. In other words, social services help nonstate actors credibly demonstrate that they are qualified and able to govern, not just to make speeches and set off bombs.

Existing Explanations

Perhaps the most common characterization of the function fulfilled by social services for the groups that provide them is as tools for recruiting new adherents, or at least sympathizers.[1] Flanigan provides a nuanced version of this argument, suggesting that these services can help move constituents along a "continuum of acceptance" of the movement.[2] Berman offers a starker explanation, arguing that terrorist groups use social services to trap potential recruits by providing them with an education that leaves them unfit for other employment, leaving them dependent on the movement's other services (and thereby preventing defection).[3] In fact, this characterization is not entirely realistic; Hamas's recruits, including its suicide bombers, tend to be well educated young people whose families may or may not use or need Hamas's services. This is echoed in Clark's findings, which suggest that rather than fostering vertical ties between members of different social classes within a single community, these institutions tend to instead foster horizontal ties across the urban middle class. These services tend to be used by those who are already within the organization's orbit (and are often major donors), and actually function as a way of keeping them engaged with the organization's social and political goals.[4]

But statistically, popular support for nonstate actors often vastly outstrips the percentage of the population making use of the services it provides,[5] meaning that whatever is going on here, it is hardly a clear exchange of services for political support. Polling data indicate that among Palestinians, support for Hamas has often been far higher than the proportion of Palestinians using their services.[6] Moreover, the same data indicate that the obvious answer, that people who do not use Hamas's services support them because of their ideology, does not hold. This therefore suggests that though service provision matters in generating popular support, the mechanism linking the two is not a direct trade of charity for votes.

The Argument

The argument being made here begins with the assumption that an individual need not use the services provided by a given organization to admire it for providing them, or to admire the competence with which they are provided (just as someone who has never eaten at a Salvation Army soup kitchen may be aware of and admire the organization's work). Well-run social services can help expand a movement's reputation for competence even among those who do not use these services themselves. Social services matter not because they are used to buy votes, reward supporters, or isolate constituents, but because they function as a form of advertising for the movement's competence to govern. A social service network serves as a kind of architect's scale model of the state that the movement promises to build when it takes power. Such a network can be instrumental in allowing

organizations like Hamas to overcoming the two challenges specific to highly ideological militant organizations: the need to demonstrate competence at governing in peacetime and the need to appeal to those outside of a narrow ideological constituency.

Two Challenges

Fundamentally, the decision to engage in politics presents two reputational challenges for the nonstate military actor choosing to do so.[7] Any militant organization waging a long-term asymmetric military campaign must develop strategies to attract and retain both fighters and political partisans. But strategies that are effective in this context, such as a focus on military prowess and/or the advocacy of a narrow, exclusionary political ideology, may not be useful for developing the kind of broader political base necessary to compete in elections.

The first of these strategies—a focus on military performance—can be extremely useful in attracting recruits to the organization's military wing, and can also generate admiration in the wider public. But this admiration does not necessarily translate into durable political support. Just as a general who decides to run for president must demonstrate during the campaign that he understands domestic policy issues, armed movements also face the need to demonstrate that they are competent bureaucrats as well as soldiers if they want a wider role in the political life of the nation. In a political marketplace in which military strength is no longer the only or even the most important criteria for success, militant groups must find new ways of ensuring their continued influence.

The second reputational challenge is ideological. While narrow or radical ideological and ethno-communal narratives can prove useful for motivating recruits during wartime,[8] they are not necessarily effective for garnering broad political support after the shooting has stopped, or for helping the organization assume a larger and more important political role even while fighting is ongoing. This is partly because such ideologies can prevent the formation of alliances with other parties; one school of thought on the persistence of authoritarianism in the Arab world suggests that it was made possible in large part by the deep divisions in the opposition between the Islamic parties and the progressives, the latter being so alarmed by the prospect of an Islamic government that they preferred to endure the existing authoritarian, yet secular, regime.[9] Overcoming this "suspicion-hurdle" requires that the progressives believe that the Islamists represent a better alternative than the current regime. The administration of a network of services, particularly if they are available to those outside the nonstate actor's immediate constituency, can help to soften its image (even among those who do not make use of those services) by demonstrating its commitment to state-building, and help recast its members as trustworthy administrators, rather than merely dangerous ideologues.

Explaining Popular Support for Hamas

In 2006, to the surprise of most observers and probably of Hamas's own leadership, Hamas won a slim majority in the Palestinian parliamentary elections. At least some of the credit for this outcome, and for Hamas's popular support more broadly, has been assigned to the movement's network of social services in the West Bank and Gaza, which it has operated since the mid-1980s.[10] But while on the surface this explanation makes a certain amount of intuitive sense, closer examination raises a number of questions. The percentage of Palestinians *using* Hamas's social services, by some estimates less than 10 percent, was far lower than the proportion of the public who voted for them in the 2006

elections;[11] if the dynamic was one of a straight exchange of support for votes, Hamas should have received far fewer votes than they did. But in fact, while Hamas's social service network was certainly key in producing its victory in the 2006 election (and in maintaining support for the organization afterward), the reason that it mattered was not because social services were used to buy votes or isolate Hamas's members by keeping them dependent on its services, but because Hamas's successful provision of these services allowed them to make the argument that they were not merely an ideologically narrow militant organization, but also a competent, honest, political alternative to Fatah.

Background

Hamas's roots lie in the Palestinian branch of the Muslim Brotherhood, whose presence in Palestine dates to the late 1920s. Though its influence was much diminished by the political upheaval and ensuing refugee crisis that followed the establishment of Israel and the first Arab–Israeli war,[12] by the 1970s it had begun to mobilize again, largely in response to the challenge to its influence posed by Nasser's pan-Arabism and secular Palestinian nationalist movements such as Fatah.[13] In 1973, a paraplegic preacher and high school teacher named Ahmed Yassin founded an Islamic community center in Gaza known as the Mujamma, which offered sports, youth activities, and other services.[14] The Mujamma formed the center around which the movement that would become Hamas would coalesce, demonstrating the important role played, even early on, by the provision of social services.

As early as the mid-1980s, the movement began preparing to mobilize militarily, buying weapons in the early 1980 and setting up a security force called the Majd ("glory" in Arabic) in 1985.[15] The crucial moment, however, came with the eruption of the First Intifada (which means "uprising") in Jabalia refugee camp in Gaza in December 1987. The Muslim Brotherhood leadership, as well as Yassin himself, recognized that this represented a chance to challenge the established Palestinian leadership (the Palestine Liberation Organization [PLO], then in exile in Tunisia). They also realized that the Brotherhood needed to create a vehicle for armed resistance or lose its younger members to its more militant competitors, like Islamic Jihad. And so they responded by creating, from within the existing framework of the Mujamma and Majd, a new organization called Hamas.[16] The name, an acronym for *Harekat al Muqawama al Islamiyeh*, or the Islamic Resistance Movement, was formally adopted in February of 1988, and its charter released in August.[17]

Despite Yassin's arrest in 1989 and its leadership's relocation first to Amman and then Damascus, [18] Hamas retained a great deal of influence within the Palestinian territories. Its position was weakened for a time by the initiation of the peace process in the early 1990s, which empowered the PLO (and more specifically, Fatah, its most powerful faction) at Hamas's expense. Hamas was excluded from the negotiations and the PLO essentially took over the institutions of the new Palestinian Authority. PLO chairman Yassir Arafat won the 1996 election, which Hamas boycotted, with 88 percent of the vote.[19] But with the onset of the Second Intifada in 2000 and the collapse of the Oslo process, Fatah's image was tarnished and Hamas's position improved. Hamas had long warned that the sacrifices that Oslo demanded of the Palestinians would reap too little reward in return,[20] a position many now viewed by many as correct (see Figure 1). Sensing the direction the political wind was blowing, the organization began to shift from formal rejection of the Palestinian Authority and its institution to an attempt to gain greater influence by engaging with them.

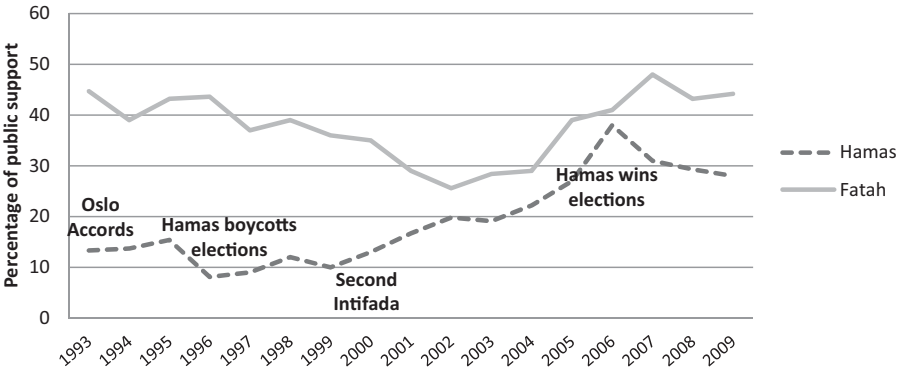

Figure 1. Change in support for Hamas over time.

Polling of Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza since 1993 conducted by the Palestine Center for Policy and Survey Research (PCPSR) demonstrates the changes in Palestinian public opinion outlined elsewhere in this article.[21]

PCPSR's polling indicates that support for Hamas ranged between 10 percent and 15 percent from 1993 to 2000. "Unaffiliated" Palestinians hovered around 35 percent during those years, meaning that Hamas commanded a solid percentage of the support of those who supported a political party at all. Moreover, Hamas consistently received the second highest level of support, after Fatah, beating out Islamic Jihad, which does no better than 5 percent, and the PFLP, which hovers around 3 percent.[22] By fall 2001, with the Second Intifada approaching its first anniversary and Palestinian casualties mounting, popular support for Hamas had begun to rise. By 2005, when Israel unilaterally withdrew from Gaza (although it maintained control over its borders), the gap between support for Hamas and Fatah had narrowed considerably.

This steady upward trajectory culminated in Hamas's victory in the Palestine Legislative Council (or PLC, the Palestinian parliament) elections of 2006. Running its candidates on the Change and Reform list, it won 74 of 132 seats to Fatah's 45, representing 44.5 percent of the vote. While the election results themselves were at least partly an artifact of the Palestinian electoral system and partly the result of vote splitting among Fatah adherents, Hamas was able to attract the support of a sizeable percentage of Palestinian voters.

Where, then, does popular support for Hamas come from? There are three answers to this question: Its record of violent resistance against Israel; its Islamist ideology; and its provision of social services.[23] Certainly, all three of these factors can help to explain why Hamas was able to attract support for its activities as a militant movement, but the first two are less helpful in explaining why Hamas was able to convince people to vote for them. At the very least, its military reputation and ideology were insufficient to woo constituents, based on those factors that Palestinian polling respondents claimed were most important to them, and may even have been a liability for some voters. Hamas's use of social services enabled it to overcome these reputational gaps and win the support of voters who might otherwise have been uncomfortable supporting Hamas.

I am not, of course, suggesting that there is a perfect separation between the military, political, and social service functions performed by Hamas. There is a degree of administrative separation between them. As early as the late 1980s, the Mujamma and other associated Islamic social service institutions functioned somewhat separately from both the

Majd and later from Hamas's military wing, the Izzedine al Qassem brigades. The leadership based in Jordan in the early 1990s established a more formal organizational structure under which four separate committees were created to handle security, proselytizing, politics and coordination. But it would be difficult to argue that there is no connection or overlap between them in the minds of the Palestinian public. Rather, what I am arguing is that the Palestinian public values the security, political, and social service functions of Hamas differently at different times, and that the characteristics of the organization highlighted by it successful administration of charitable institutions may appeal to voters who find the characteristics revealed by its military and political wings unappealing. This is reflected both in public opinion data and in interviews with politicians from the Islamic movement.

Secondly, as noted previously, I am not arguing that Hamas's social services were created as a means of currying political favor; quite the opposite. The services provided by the Islamic movement predate Hamas, and the degree of connection between Hamas and the various Islamic social service institutions in the West Bank and Gaza varies widely.[24] This effect has therefore been unintentional, but powerful nonetheless.

Hamas as a Military Movement

Hamas's record as a military movement has in some ways bolstered its domestic political position. But in other ways it has proved problematic, and more importantly does little to help Hamas demonstrate its qualifications to govern. Hamas itself was founded as a militant movement (with roots in a political organization, the Muslim Brotherhood, and a social service institution, the Mujamma) during the First Intifada. By the mid-1990s, it had expanded to a substantial fighting force, with approximately 10,000 men under arms.[25] As with many nonstate military actors, Hamas's choice of targets and tactics has varied somewhat over the years, although it has for the most part chosen to rely on asymmetric tactics rather than direct military confrontation with the far stronger Israeli Defense Forces (IDF). Its special military wing, the Izzedine al Qassem Brigades, established after Yassin's arrest in 1989, began by targeting real or suspected collaborators with Israel in Gaza, but by 1992 was launching attacks against Israeli civilians, primarily through car bombs. Hamas executed 52 operations against Israeli targets (civilian and military) between 1992 and 2000, the vast majority in 1993 and 1994 (in an attempt to disrupt the Oslo process). A second wave of attacks, primarily suicide bombings, accompanied the outbreak of the Second Intifada in 2000.[26] After 2004, the use of suicide bombing declined precipitously,[27] and Hamas shifted instead to an approach focused on rockets attacks on southern Israel from Gaza. These attacks (which peaked in 2008 with 3,500) employed either mortars or, more commonly, homemade Qassem rockets.[28] While the latter are severely limited in both range and accuracy, they still allowed Hamas to maintain pressure on Israel, and, perhaps more importantly in terms of their reputation, maintain their status as an armed resistance movement.

In some ways Hamas's military record has been politically beneficial. This is partly as a form of political narrative construction. References to armed resistance in the Hamas charter situate the movement as part of a long chain of Arab and Islamic resistance against various forms of imperialism dating back to the crusades and the defeat of the Tatars at the battle of 'Ayn Jalut.[29] It has also arguably been its most important means of distinguishing itself the PLO. Israel's crackdown on Hamas in 1989 and 1990 lent credence to its attempts to position itself as a more radical and home-grown alternative to the traditional PLO leadership, which was drawn largely (though not exclusively) from

the refugee communities abroad, and whose leadership had been based in Tunis since its expulsion from Beirut in 1982.[30] This narrative was strengthened in 1992 when 415 senior Hamas members were deported by Israel to south Lebanon. They settled near the border and set up an encampment where they received visitors, offers of training, and began building what would become a warm relationship with Hizbullah.[31]

Hamas also makes ample use of the narrative of martyrdom. The Qassem Brigades's website has a section dedicated to memorials for fallen fighters, including pictures and videos,[32] and YouTube holds no shortage of videos celebrating Hamas's operations.[33] As a means of distinguishing itself from the PLO, particularly during the intifada, Hamas's military record no doubt proved a useful marketing tool.

But it has also proved something of a reputational double-edged sword in terms the organization's transition to a political party. Unsurprisingly, Hamas's political rivals are critical of its tactics. Fatah officials interviewed spoke disparagingly of the motivations of Hamas fighters (one referred to suicide bombing with the hope of a reward in the afterlife as "a selfish choice")[34] and even members of factions who had in the past also launched attacks on civilians expressed distaste for Hamas's tactics.[35] This hostility is exacerbated by the fact that Hamas has also turned its coercive force on other Palestinian factions (although its rivals have done the same).

More importantly, Hamas's military role has also complicated its relations with at least some civilians. Sometimes this has happened directly: during the First Intifada Hamas fighters executed hundreds of suspected collaborators, souring many on the movement.[36] At other times, the consequences have been indirect: Hamas's relationships with Syria and Iran, while necessary from a military point of view in that they were its principal sources of funding, training, and weaponry,[37] were not always beneficial domestically given Palestinian ambivalence about Iran.[38] (Hamas has since severed its alliance with the Asad regime in response to the civil war in Syria).

But perhaps most tellingly, polling over the years reflects a degree of ambivalence on the part of the Palestinian public regarding Hamas's military operations. As early as 1993, nearly half of those polled (a plurality of respondents) favored an end to the intifada if it meant the success of Oslo. More tellingly, 80 percent of those polled wanted opposition to Oslo expressed through "democratic dialogue" rather than violence.[39] And in 1995, at the height of Hamas's campaign of suicide attacks against Israeli targets, while 70 percent of those polled expressed support for attacks on military targets and settlers, only 19 percent supported attacks on civilians.[40] (Whether there is an overlap in those categories for some or all respondents is unclear). In 1999, at a point when implementation of the Oslo process was beginning to flag, 52 percent of respondents still opposed armed attacks against Israelis.[41]

True, support for Hamas's attacks against Israeli targets was far higher in 2004, when the intifada had been ongoing for four years but Israel had yet to withdraw from Gaza. In polling that September, 77 percent of respondents expressed support for a major recent attack on the Israeli city of Beersheba, and 64 percent felt that armed attacks had improved the Palestinian chances of "achieving their national rights." But even at that stage, 83 percent stated that they wished to see a cessation of violence on both sides of the conflict, and less than half (48 percent) saw violence as effective in halting settlement expansion in the West Bank.[42] In other words, even when Hamas's use of violence was seen positively because of the immediate status of the conflict, it was not seen as desirable in the long term or as a solution for all facets of the conflict.

Finally, and perhaps most obviously, the use of violence is hardly unique to Hamas. Many of the major Palestinian political parties (Fatah, the PFLP, and so on) have histories

as militant groups, and retain armed wings. Nor is Hamas the only group which currently uses armed force; Islamic Jihad continues to do so, for instance, but it has never developed into a significant political challenger to Hamas, even among committed Islamist voters.

In sum, Hamas's use of violence against Israel has certainly been beneficial at times, but primarily during periods of conflict. In general, though, in the lead-up to the 2006 election, Hamas's military record alone was insufficient to convince the Palestinian public that Hamas deserved its support. To compete politically, Hamas needed to do more than simply launch rockets or set off bombs; it needed to demonstrate that it was also qualified to govern Palestine.

Hamas as Ideologues

The second challenge Hamas had to overcome in order to win broader support among the Palestinian public was that its core ideology simply was not the most appealing of the available options for mainstream Palestinian voters. Hamas markets itself as a religious and nationalist political movement, using media ranging from websites to its satellite station (Al Aqsa Television) to banners and even graffiti. Politicians interviewed also cited person-to-person contact as being important.[43]

When asked why they believed their party was supported by Palestinians, all of the Change and Reform members of the PLC interviewed cited the movement's Islamic character as being of major importance. Most also contended that the majority of Palestinians are religious, and that Hamas's popularity was therefore a natural extension of the Palestinian national character.[44] (Interestingly, however, some of those interviewed also expressed revivalist sentiments that seemed at odds with their contention that Palestinian society was *already* inherently oriented towards an Islamic value system).[45] Several also argued that for Palestinians, religion and politics are intimately linked, a theme echoed in the stories interview subjects told about how they themselves came to join the Islamic movement.[46]

But this narrative has not been entirely successful. That Hamas's ideology is criticized by its more secular political rivals is unsurprising, although it is worth noting that the hostility between Hamas and Fatah, for instance, has in recent years been far greater than that between the Fatah and the leftist factions like the PFLP. But surprising or not, this hostility has come at a cost in that it has proved a barrier to coordination with other Palestinian factions. Fatah's half-hearted attempts in the 1990s at convincing Hamas to join the PLO were fruitless. Hamas's terms for joining were 40 percent of the seats in the PLO's legislative body (the Palestine National Council), control over important posts, and an end to the peace process. As Hamas had known they would be, these were impossible for Arafat to accept.[47] More recent attempts at national unity have been similarly hampered by the deep-seeded antipathy between the parties, and the limited rapprochement that has been achieved since 2011 has been mostly a result of public pressure to end the schism between Gaza and the West Bank and a desire to improve the Palestinian bargaining position with Israel rather than a meeting of the minds between the two parties.

More importantly, not all of Hamas's positions have been popular with the Palestinian public. One consistent challenge has been persistently high Palestinian support for the peace process, which has been generally opposed by Hamas.[48] In the mid-1990s, when optimism regarding Oslo was high, this cost them some of the support they had managed to build up during the First Intifada. In addition, secular and Christian Palestinians may well find Hamas's characterization of Palestine as a Muslim society rather

exclusionary, and object to measures Hamas favors like banning alcohol from being served in restaurants.

True, Hamas has certainly tried to reassure these sectors of Palestinian society that its message should not be seen as threatening. Change and Reform politicians were quick to state that the movement has no ambitions to force Islam on anyone. Several pointed out that the party has a Christian representative in Gaza,[49] and that when it comes to Christian Palestinians, it is willing to separate its religious and political programs.[50]

But convincing the public that Hamas's ideology is non-threatening is not necessarily the same thing as making that ideology a selling point. While Hamas's core Islamic fundamentalist values are in some ways appealing to many voters, they do not reflect the issues of critical importance to most Palestinians. Polling on Palestinian voter preferences suggests that while Islamic values do matter, they are not the sole or even most important factor in determining political preferences. Polling on this issue in 2001 (at the height of the Second Intifada and at a point when Hamas's popularity was on the rise) placed "Islamic values" at a distant third, behind the continuation of armed resistance against Israel, and the fight against corruption in the Palestinian government.[51] Similarly, in polling immediately prior to the 2005 municipal elections, respondents cited the religiosity of candidates as of comparable importance to their level of education, and rated it not nearly as important as "integrity and incorruptibility of the candidate," by far the most important consideration for most.[52] In other words, as with Hamas's military record, its ideological orientation seems to be at best insufficient to attract broad-based support, and at worst a strike against it in the eyes of some voters.

Hamas as the "Honest Alternative"

If Hamas's performance in the 2006 elections is not a result of either its military record or its ideological project, then what explains it? In fact Hamas support appears to be based on a narrative that Hamas has ended up exploiting almost by accident: that of Hamas as the honest, competent alternative to Fatah. By the mid-2000s, Hamas's reputation for honesty and incorruptibility had clearly begun to improve its political chances. Polling indicates that Fatah was viewed as better able to improve the economy, pursue the peace process, protect national unity and refugee rights, and enforce law and order.[53] These are issues on which Hamas has struggled to make headway with voters, in part because of its history as a militant movement. Where Hamas did have an advantage was on the question of ethics: voters viewed Hamas as the "most able to fight corruption." This would prove to be a serious problem for Fatah. In polling after the 2006 elections, when asked why they thought Fatah had lost the elections, 52 percent of respondents said it was because voters wanted to punish it for the "spread of corruption in the PA," and two thirds believed that corruption would now decrease.[54]

It is of course conceivable that Hamas's ideological position was actually the reason why voters viewed them as more honest than Fatah. But it seems unlikely that "honesty" is serving as a proxy for "piety" for the simple reason that Islamic Jihad, an even more fundamentalist organization, has far lower levels of support than does Hamas. Hamas's reputation for competence and honesty was clearly an advantage in its own right, quite separate from its ideological platform, which was actually a liability for some voters. In other words, Hamas clearly had a set of core issues readily available around which to build a campaign, issues that were important to voters and moreover issues on which it had an advantage of over Fatah. And what allowed it to campaign on these issues was its social service network.

Service Provision, Reputation, and Credibility

Service provision matters because it can help nonstate actors overcome the public relations challenges that are the legacies of their earlier, more radical years and fill in gaps in support left by less effective approaches. Service provision is therefore not a matter of "buying support" or of isolating constituents but rather a matter of demonstrating that the organization can be trusted to govern, and represents a credible, mainstream alternative to other more established and centrist parties. It is a way of showing that a movement possesses the kind of managerial expertise that can appeal to a wide range of constituents.

As Hamas expanded in the 1990s, to attract wider popular support and establish itself as a serious competitor to the PLO and not merely a fringe movement like Islamic Jihad, Hamas's leadership needed to demonstrate that they could function bureaucratically as well as militarily, and that they had something to offer to Palestinian society at large. This was particularly important after its violent opposition to the Oslo process put it at odds with the vast majority of the Palestinian public. Hamas's social service institutions have proved a means of doing just that.

Hamas's Social Service Network. Hamas's provision of social services in Palestine has a long history, beginning with the Mujamma's work in Gaza in the 1970s. It expanded during the 1990s as Hamas members and sympathizers began to assume increasing control of the *zakat* committees in both the West Bank and Gaza (despite boycotting elections and refusing to participate in other Palestinian Authority institutions). During the Second Intifada, as the PA struggled to provide public services in the face of rising chaos, Hamas's charitable services filled the gap for many Palestinians.[55] While some of the recipients of those services were fighters and their families, most were not.[56] By 2006, Hamas was providing educational services like kindergartens and childcare, as well as a range of social clubs, summer camps, and youth activities. It also maintains a strong connection to the Islamic University of Gaza. The organization offered medical care through a network of heath care centers and clinics (although in the West Bank, many of these have since been shut down). It also provided food aid, some of which was produced by Hamas-affiliated non-profits, including a dairy in Nablus and a bakery in Ramallah, although these have come under pressure from both the PA and Israeli authorities since 2007.[57] In total, Hamas's charitable organizations before 2006 amounted to the majority of their $70 million annual budget (although this figure probably does not take clandestine weapons shipments into account).[58]

The funding for Hamas's social services comes at least in part from civilian donors, both inside and especially outside the Palestinian Territories. Indeed, one major role played by Hamas is as a conduit for charitable donations connecting those who wish to give with the needy in the West Bank and Gaza.[59] This includes both wealthy individual donors, particularly in Saudi Arabia and the other Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states, and organizations and parties sympathetic to Hamas in other countries. Zaki Bani Rsheid, former secretary general of the Islamic Action Front in Jordan, for instance (the political arm of Jordan's Muslim Brotherhood) noted that his organization collects charitable donations (clothing, food, toys, etc.) for needy Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank and cooperates with Hamas in distributing them.[60] All told, foreign charitable giving has at times amounted to $50 million, mostly in donations to Hamas's Islamic charities.[61]

Social Services and Public Opinion. It is worth noting that compared with the services provided by United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) and the Palestinian

Authority, Hamas's social service network is much smaller. Certainly, it is not substantial enough to explain support for Hamas as being a result of widespread dependence on the services it provides or isolation of its members within a social network dominated entirely by Hamas. Statistics compiled by United Nations Development Program (UNDP) suggest that Hamas's charities represented only a small share of the total social service sector before its victory in the elections in 2006; in 2004 and 2005, the total share of all assistance received by Palestinians originating from "Islamic charities" (including Hamas's) hovered between 3 percent and 6 percent. This number is perhaps skewed by the ability of larger agencies like UNRWA and the PA to provide large scale assistance such as employment programs and UNRWA's administration of the public school system, but Islamic charities still accounted for only 13 percent of food aid being provided in July of 2005.[62]

True, Hamas's services often targeted those most in need. A 2003 International Crisis Group report similarly noted that Hamas's services tended to serve a particularly destitute sector of the broader population.[63] But in a sense, Hamas was at an advantage in that its services functioned as "value added" on top of those services being provided by both the Palestinian Authority and UNRWA, who continued to provide the bulk of educational, health and infrastructure services within the Palestinian territories.[64]

Overall, though, whoever the recipients, it is clear that those receiving Hamas's services represent a far smaller percentage of the population than the share of the vote the party received in 2006. Change and Reform member of the PLC and former PLC Chair Mahmoud Ramahi himself stated bluntly that beneficiaries of Hamas charities do not amount to more than 20 percent of the population. However, the movement received a far larger share of the vote, close to 45 percent. This implies, then, that the dynamic is not one of an exchange of "goods for votes." And indeed, the Change and Reform members of parliament interviewed were adamant that Hamas does not make access to services conditional on membership.[65] Mariam Saleh, a PLC member and member of the Islamic movement, stated explicitly with regard to Hamas's social services, "We don't want to recruit people and we don't register their names to become members in the Islamic movement, this is not what we're doing." This is not to suggest that Hamas's social services do not matter; rather, it suggests that they matter a great deal, but for somewhat different reasons than the conventional wisdom would suggest.

Social Services as Advertising. Hamas's social service network was crucial in helping it win the election of 2006, not because it was a form of bribery, but because it was a form of advertising. Specifically, it allowed the organization to promote three interwoven narratives: Hamas's politicians as being honest, forthright, and non-corrupt; Hamas members as competent managers of high quality services; and Fatah as being neither of those things. This narrative has served to balance against the challenges posed by Hamas's earlier framing of itself.

Honesty and incorruptibility are attributes that Hamas has long sought to emphasize.[66] Ahmad Ali Ahmad, a PLC member and member of the Islamic movement, attributed the Change and Reform list's electoral performance in general and his own in specific, to the personal reputations of its candidates. Despite being in prison during the election, he received the highest number of votes of any candidate in Nablus. When asked why he thought this was, he said "Because people trust me—they know that when I talk to them, I am defending my ideology and my principles. I don't say one thing and do another." Hamas politicians clearly realize that the fight against corruption is a message that resonates. In the run-up to the elections in 2006, Hamas explicitly marketed itself to the

young, a major "undecided" electoral demographic, based on the theme that Hamas represented "change and reform."[67] Several of the Change and Reform politicians interviewed stated that people support them in part because they believed Islamic movement members to be "decent and honest people" who participate in the life of the community.[68] The provision of services allows Hamas to showcase these attributes, and to demonstrate how practically beneficial its honesty and incorruptibility can be to its constituents. And indeed, Hamas's services do tend to be of a high quality. As early as 2000, Roy observes:

> First, management and staff are typically well educated, highly trained and professional (many individuals hold advanced degrees from Western universities). Second, the services provided by Islamic NGOs are generally of high quality and are perceived as such by the population.[69]

Tellingly, the Change and Reform policymakers interviewed clearly realize that this is a selling point. One Change and Reform MP argued that people who use Hamas's services see that they are "clean, decent, transparent and organized."[70] And, seeing these traits in action is somewhat different than listening to a candidate list them in a speech; these are, after all, practical services which mirror those offered by UNRWA and the PA, and which citizens might otherwise expect of the state. That Hamas is able to competently provide charitable services demonstrates that it is able to do more than just fight or preach.

Both of these narratives—Hamas's integrity and its competence—were also important in their ability to help Hamas distinguish themselves from Fatah. In interviews, Change and Reform politicians explicitly pointed to Hamas's social services as evidence that Hamas is not only both competent and honest in general, but that it is *more* competent and *less* corrupt than Fatah in specific. Ramahi suggested delicately that other factions spent donor money in ways that "didn't serve the people," whereas Hamas's spending was more transparent,[71] a difference that became particularly obvious when one looked at the fate of Hamas institutions in the West Bank once they came under PA management following Fatah's takeover there. He reported that charities which were successful for 18 years failed in one year under Palestinian Authority management; Hamas's eleven West Bank medical centers came under the management of the Ministry of Health, and within a year, nine had closed. Ramahi contended that this was because "donors of the money didn't trust the people who managing these societies."[72] Another example was given by Hamid Bitawi (a judge and Change and Reform member of the PLC) and Ahmad Ali Ahmad, who recounted an orphanage in Hebron which was closed by the PA. Ahmad believed these closures would ultimately benefit Hamas more than the PA:

> It's our trademark, that we provide good service, while other factions don't provide anything, they have nothing at all. And we saw the reactions of the people after they close these organizations, because people know that the state or the Authority can't provide anything, and now they close organizations that can.[73]

In sum, Hamas has been able to attract support not because people were looking for an Islamic state, a civil war, or a free lunch, but because Hamas appeared to be competent administrators who did not have their hands in the proverbial cookie jar. While some Palestinians may have held this belief about Hamas explicitly because they are an Islamic party, an actual demonstration of these traits through the administration of their social service network has also clearly been significant, as acknowledged by ranking members of

Hamas's political wing. After all, if trust in Hamas was based solely on their status as an Islamic party or their use of violence against Israeli targets, we should expect to see far higher levels of support for Islamic Jihad and other Islamic parties. Rather, they have chosen to emphasize their far more prosaic skills as administrators and bureaucrats.

The 2006 Elections

It is this approach that explains Hamas's surprisingly strong performance in the 2006 legislative elections. Hamas won with 75 seats and 44.5 percent of the vote, demonstrating substantial levels of popular support. But a closer look at the election results *also* indicates that this support may have been less about commitment to Hamas's political project or its military record, and more a matter of admiration for individual Hamas candidates and the desire for an alternative to Fatah, all factors to which Hamas's social services likely contributed.

The key is in the way Hamas's winning candidates were chosen. Palestinian legislators are elected through a parallel voting system. Half of the PLC's 132 seats are chosen based on a closed list proportional representation system similar to Israel's (i.e., voters vote for the party), and half are directly elected through multi-member constituency bloc voting (i.e., voters vote for the candidate directly). Although Hamas beat Fatah by a wide margin in those seats where voters voted directly for the candidate, taking 45 to Fatah's 17, it did less well in the PR seats taking 29 to Fatah's 28. In other words, when Palestinians were voting directly for the candidate, they preferred those running on Hamas's Change and Reform list over Fatah's candidates, but when they were voting for the party, they were far more ambivalent. This suggests that while Palestinians may well be fed up with the corruption of individual Fatah politicians, and impressed with the behavior and credentials of Hamas candidates, they are far less enthusiastic about Hamas's political platform.[74]

Conclusion

Since the elections, Hamas has struggled to make good on its promises of good governance and competent administration, although much of this is due to factors well beyond its control. Hamas itself was likely caught somewhat by surprise by its success at the polls, and was forced to transition rapidly, without sufficient preparation, from administering an nongovernmental organization–like social service network to a full-fledged welfare state responsible for 5 million people. Soon afterward, clashes in 2007 between Fatah and Hamas led to what were in effect two Palestinian governments: Hamas in Gaza, and Fatah in the West Bank. The situation was further complicated by the Israeli blockade of Gaza (in which Egypt participated) and the rapid decrease in donor funding when the European Union and United States cut off their funding to the Gaza government.[75]

This put Hamas in a nearly impossible position; not only was it unprepared for the realities of governing, but it was forced to do so in the absence of the major resources its predecessors had relied on. Services that had functioned as powerful public relations before the election, when they existed as value added to the much more extensive foreign-funded PA services, proved inadequate on their own to remedy the desperate situation created by the blockade of Gaza. Given that much of Hamas's support was based on their perceived ability to manage the state, this has resulted in a significant drop in their

polling numbers; four years after they took power, support for Hamas was higher in the West Bank, where they remain political outsiders, than in Gaza.[76]

Quite aside from developments in the West Bank and Gaza, the argument made here has important implications for a number of other contexts. It can help us to better understand the relationship between Hizbullah's "state within a state" in parts of Lebanon and its enormous popularity even among wealthy Shi'ites who do not use those services, as well as its successful transition to a political party after the end of the civil war in 1990. It can likewise shed some light on the role of social services in political competition between different Shi'ite factions in Iraq. Indeed, this may be of particular importance in post-conflict environments (which may eventually include Iraq, Syria, or Libya) for organizations with few credentials as state-builders struggling to establish themselves in a new environment where military prowess is no longer the only determinant of success and the narrow ideology that was useful for recruiting fighters has become a political liability.

Indeed, that social services draw voters and constituents because of what they imply about a movement's administrative competence probably suggests that public opinion in Palestine is not terribly different from public opinion anywhere else in the world. In times of crisis, military action or radical ideology can be very appealing, but ultimately, what most people seek in their elected officials is evidence of competence, honesty, and reliability.

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Notes

1. Janine Clark, *Islam, Charity and Activism: Middle Class Networks and Social Welfare in Egypt, Jordan and Yemen* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004); Alexus Grynkewich, "Welfare as Warfare: How Violent Non-State Groups Use Social Services to Attack the State," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 31 (2008): 350–370.

2. Shawn Teresa Flanigan, *For the Love of God: NGOs and Religious Identity in a Violent World* (West Hartford, CT: Kumarian Press, 2009).

3. Eli Berman, *Religious, Radical and Violent: The New Economics of Terrorism* (Boston, MA: MIT Press, 2009), pp. 139–140.

4. Clark, *Islam, Charity and Activism*.

5. One important exception is Sara Roy, *Hamas and Civil Society in Gaza: Engaging the Islamist Social Sector* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2011). Roy argues that Hamas's social services are an extension of its roots in the Islamic social service sector, rather than cynical bid for political support or new recruits.

6. In this sense, Hamas is a particularly useful test case because Palestinians represent an unusually heavily polled population. This includes, but is not limited to, the excellent polling by the Palestine Center for Policy and Survey Research, whose publicly available data is used here.

7. For discussion of the transition from political parties to terrorist groups, as well as from terrorism to party politics, see Leonard Weinberg et al., *Political Parties and Terrorist Groups, 2nd Ed.* (New York: Routledge, 2008). For a more specific discussion of the transition of Islamist militant organizations in particular to political parties, see Omar Ashour, *The De-Radicalization of Jihadists: Transforming Armed Islamic Movements* (New York: Routledge, 2009) and Jillian Schwedler, "Democratization, Inclusion and the Moderation of Islamist Parties," *Development* 50 (2007), pp. 56–61.

8. Jeremy Weinstein, *Inside Rebellion: The Politics of Insurgent Violence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

9. Ellen Lust-Okar, "Divided They Rule: The Management and Manipulation of Political Opposition," *Comparative Politics* 36(2) (2004), p. 159; Mark Tessler, "Do Islamic Orientations Influence Attitudes Toward Democracy in the Arab World? Evidence from Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, and Algeria," *International Journal of Comparative Sociology* 43(3) (2002), p. 229; Ghassan Salamé, *Democracy without Democrats?: The Renewal of Politics in the Muslim World* (London: I.B. Tauris & Co Ltd, 1994).

10. Grynkewich, "Welfare as Warfare."

11. Ricardo Bocco et al., "Palestinian Public Perceptions Report 9," April 2006. Available at http://www.undp.ps/en/newsroom/publications/pdf/other/PPPreportIX.pdf (accessed 20 January 2014).

12. Shaul Mishal and Avraham Sela, *The Palestinian Hamas: Vision, Violence, and Coexistence* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), pp. 14–15.

13. Azzam Tamimi, *Hamas: A History from Within* (Northampton, MA: Olive Branch Press, 2007), pp. 31–33.

14. Ironically, unlike its Arab nationalist rivals, Yassin's organization was initially welcomed by the Israeli government, which gave it official recognition in 1978 in the hope that as a religious organization, it might provide a less radical counterbalance to the PLO. Mishal and Sela, *The Palestinian Hamas*, pp. 20–21.

15. Tamimi, *Hamas*, p. 48.

16. Mishal and Sela, *The Palestinian Hamas*, p. 35; Beverley Milton-Edwards and Stephen Farrell, *Hamas: The Islamic Resistance Movement* (Cambridge, UK: Polity, 2010), p. 53.

17. Tamimi sets founding of the movement to 14 December, with the release of a communiqué by Rantisi announcing Islamic resistance in the context of the intifada.

18. Mishal and Sela, *The Palestinian Hamas: Vision, Violence, and Coexistence*, p. 62. This led to the creation of a new structure, under which Hamas was divided into five administrative regions and four policy committees dealing with security, *da'wa* (proselytizing), political activity, and coordination, respectively.

19. Milton-Edwards and Farrell, *Hamas: The Islamic Resistance Movement*, p. 75.

20. Ibid., p. 71.

21. Based on data from the Palestine Center for Policy and Survey Research: "Public Opinion Poll #1 The Palestinian-Israeli Agreement: 'Gaza-Jericho First,'" 1993. Available at http://www.pcpsr.org/survey/cprspolls/94/poll1.html (accessed 20 January 2014); "CPRS—Survey Research Unit: Public Opinion Poll # 2" (Palestinian Public Opinion Poll, 9 July 2001). Available at http://www.pcpsr.org/survey/polls/2001/p2a.html (accessed 20 January 2014); "CPRS Public Opinion Poll #5 Palestinian Political Attitudes Towards Elections and Other Issues of Concern," 16 January 1994. Available at http://www.pcpsr.org/survey/cprspolls/94/poll5a.html (accessed 20 January 2014); "CPRS Public Opinion Poll #9 The Palestinian-Israeli Agreement, the Palestinian National Authority, and Elections," 31 May 1994; "CPRS Opinion Poll #11: Elections and Palestinian-Jordanian Relations," 1994, p. 11; "CPRS—Survey Research Unit: Poll No. 31— Press Release" (Palestinian Public Opinion Poll, 7 March 2009), p. 13. Available at http://www.pcpsr.org/survey/polls/2009/p31epressrelease.html (accessed 20 January 2014); "CPRS Public Opinion Poll #17 Elections, Negotiations, Strike, Refugee Camps, Criticism of the PNA," 20 May 1995. Available at http://www.pcpsr.org/survey/cprspolls/95/poll17a.html (accessed 20 January 2014); "CPRS Public Opinion Poll #19: Armed Attacks, Palestinian-Jordanian Relations, Negotiations, Elections and Other Issues of Concern," August 1995. Available at http://www.pcpsr.org/survey/cprspolls/95/poll19a.html (accessed 20 January 2014); "CPRS Public Opinion Poll #21 Elections, Redeployment, Peace Process after Assassination of Rabin," 10 December 1995. Available at http://www.pcpsr.org/survey/cprspolls/95/poll21a.html; "CPRS Public Opinion Poll #24: The Peace Process, Performance of the PNA, Performance of the PLC," 1996. Available at http://www.pcpsr.org/survey/cprspolls/96/poll24a.html (accessed 20 January 2014); "CPRS Public Opinion Poll #25 Armed Attacks, PNA Performance, The Palestinian Legislative Council, Corruption," December 1996. Available at http://www.pcpsr.org/survey/cprspolls/96/poll25a.html (accessed 20 January 2014); "CPRS Public Opinion Poll #29 Performance of the PNA, the Peace Process, the Status of Democracy in Palestine, and Corruption," 1997. Available at http://www.pcpsr.org/survey/cprspolls/97/poll29a.html (accessed 20 January 2014); "CPRS Public Opinion Poll #33 Evaluation of the Performance of PLC and PNA, Corruption, Attitudes Regarding New Legislative Elections, Local Elections, and Oslo Peace Agreement," 6 June 1998. Available at http://www.pcpsr.org/survey/cprspolls/98/poll33a.html (accessed 20 January 2014); "CPRS Public Opinion Poll #35: The Peace Process, Domestic

Situation, Economic Situation, Ability to Confront Threats, Presidential Elections and Political Affiliation," 1 July 1998. Available at http://www.pcpsr.org/survey/cprspolls/98/poll35a.html (accessed 20 January 2014); "CPRS Public Opinion Poll #44 The Peace Process, PA Performance, Status of Democracy and Human Rights, Corruption, Reform, Elections for the Presidency and Vice-Presidency, and Political Affiliation," 16 October 1999. Available at http://www.pcpsr.org/survey/cprspolls/99/poll44a.html (accessed 20 January 2014).

22. In 2004, while Fatah and Hamas did comparably in the West Bank (where more people tend to support independent parties), in Gaza, 18% supported Fatah versus a sizeable 30% who supported Hamas ("CPRS—Survey Research Unit: Poll # 31—Press Release," 7 March 2009). The gap eventually closed, however. Nine months before Operation Cast Lead, in March of 2008, Hamas' profile in terms of public support was described in a summary of polling results by PSR as follows: "Hamas is more popular in the Gaza Strip reaching 40% compared to 31% in the West Bank. Fateh's popularity is slightly greater in the Gaza Strip, reaching 43% compared to 41% in the West Bank. Hamas is also popular among women (37%) compared to men (33%), in refugee camps (43%) and cities (36%) compared to towns and villages (30%), among the religious (42%) compared to the 'somewhat religious' (29%), among those opposed to the peace process (72%) compared to those supportive of the peace process (25%), among ... the most traditional, (55%) compared to ... the most untraditional, (12%), and among those between the ages of 38 and 47 years (42%) compared to the young, 18–27 years of age, (31%)" ("CPRS—Survey Research Unit: Poll #31—Press Release," 7 March 2009 (Palestinian Public Opinion Poll, 7 March 2009)). Available at http://www.pcpsr.org/survey/polls/2009/p31epressrelease.html (accessed 20 January 2014).

23. These were the answers given by the Change and Reform list politicians interviewed. Throughout this article I have referred to my interview subjects using the titles that they themselves requested.

24. Roy, *Hamas and Civil Society in Gaza*.

25. Although the group tends to "deliberately understate their numbers."See Milton-Edwards and Farrell, *Hamas*, pp. 112–118; The Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs estimated the Al Qassem brigades total strength at 10,000 in 2007, and 15,000 if internal Gazan security forces are included in the total, although there is some overlap between them and the Qassem brigades. See Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "The Hamas Terror Organization—2007," (Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs Update, 5 June 2008).

26. Out of 303 attacks launched against Israeli targets between 2000 and 2006, 83 were launched by Hamas, and the organization carried out 35 of 98 suicide attacks. The next two most prolific organizations were the Fatah-affiliated Al Aqsa Martyrs Brigade and Islamic Jihad, each with approximately 50 attacks, about half of which were suicide attacks. Statistics taken from START, "Global Terrorism Database" (University of Maryland, 2012). Available at http://www.start.umd.edu/gtd/search/?back=1&search=islamic%20jihad&count=100 (accessed 20 January 2014). Partly because of the deterrent effect of the separation wall around the West Bank Milton-Edwards and Farrell, *Hamas: The Islamic Resistance Movement*, partly because of the decline in the intensity of the intifada, and partly due to Hamas's changing role in Gaza after the 2006 election.

27. Partly because of the deterrent effect of the separation wall around the West Bank (see Milton-Edwards and Farrell, *Hamas*, p. 131), partly because of the decline in the intensity of the intifada, and partly due to Hamas's changing role in Gaza after the 2006 election.

28. Statistics taken from IDF, "2010 Statistics: Rocket and Mortar Fire from the Gaza Strip as of October 7th, 7 Oct 2010" (Israel Defense Forces, October 7, 2010). Available at http://idfspokesperson.com/2010/10/07/2010-statistics-rocket-and-mortar-fire-from-the-gaza-strip-as-of-october-7th-7-oct-2010/ (accessed 20 January 2014). It would be a mistake to assume that all rocket fire at all times was the result of Hamas operations, but it is safe to say that it was responsible for most of the fire, most of the time.

29. Muhammad Maqdisi, "Charter of the Islamic Resistance Movement (HAMAS) of Palestine," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 4(22) (1993), pp. 122–134.

30. Tamimi, *Hamas*, p. 61.

31. Ibid., pp. 64–70, and interviews with Hamid Bitawi and Ahmad Ali Ahmad, both of whom were among the deportees, and Abu Al Abed, a member of the organization in Lebanon, who cited this episode as being part of what attracted him to Hamas in the first place.

32. For an example produced by Hamas's information office, see: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sRkpcXWI1JM (available as of January 2014). The families of martyrs are, by all

accounts, well taken care of financially; both Iraq (prior to 2003) and Saudi Arabia donated sizeable sums to Hamas for this purpose, although Iraq's donations (although smaller) were earmarked specifically for the families of suicide bombers, while Saudi Arabia's went to Hamas more broadly. In 2002, the Iraqis were purportedly offering $25,000 for a successful suicide attack. Milton-Edwards and Farrell, *Hamas*; Zaki Chehab, *Inside Hamas: The Untold Story of the Militant Islamic Movement* (New York: Nations Books, 2007).

33. For example, Chehab, *Inside Hamas*.

34. Interview, Edward Kattoura, Fatah official, Beirut.

35. Including a former PFLP member who in the same conversation had described an attack by his organization on an El Al passenger jet.

36. Milton-Edwards and Farrell, *Hamas*.

37. Marie Colvin, "Hamas Wages Iran's Proxy War on Israel," *The Times*, 9 March 2008.

38. In the aftermath of the Gaza war, Iran was viewed as having behaved favorably by 41 percent of respondents, ahead of both Syria and Fatah, which were viewed favorably by only 34 percent of respondents. PCPSR, *Poll Number 32* (Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research, 21 May 2009). Available at http://www.pcpsr.org/sites/default/files/p32e.pdf (accessed 11 November 2014). On the other hand, in late 2010 polling found that Iran was viewed as "the country most supportive of the Palestinians" by only 7 percent of respondents, tied for last place with Saudi Arabia, behind Turkey, Egypt (which closed its borders to Palestinians during the conflict), and Syria PCPSR, *Palestinian Public Opinion Poll No (37)*, Text (Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research, 30 October 2010). Available at http://www.pcpsr.org/en/node/216 (accessed 11 November 2014). Regionally, a vast majority (74 percent) of respondents believed that in Iraq, Iran supports the Shi'ites over the Sunnis (which Palestinians are as well) PCPSR, *Palestinian Public Opinion Poll No. (23)*, Text (Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research, 22 March 2007). Available at http://www.pcpsr.org/en/node/232 (accessed 11 November 2014).

39. "Public Opinion Poll #1 The Palestinian-Israeli Agreement: 'Gaza-Jericho First.'"

40. "CPRS Public Opinion Poll #19."

41. "CPRS Public Opinion Poll #44 The Peace Process, PA Performance, Status of Democracy and Human Rights, Corruption, Reform, Elections for the Presidency and Vice-Presidency, and Political Affiliation."

42. Palestine Center for Policy and Survey Research, *Survey Research Unit: Public Opinion Poll #13* (Palestine Center for Policy and Survey Research, 23 September2004). Available at http://pcpsr.org/survey/polls/2004/p13a.html (accessed 20 January 2014).

43. Interviews with Mariam Saleh and Ahmad Ali Ahmad

44. Interviews with former PLC chair Mahmoud Ramahi, Mariam Saleh, Ahmad Ali Ahmad, and one unnamed Change and Reform member of the PLC.

45. Interview with Ahmad Ali Ahmad.

46. Interviews with Mariam Saleh and one unnamed Change and Reform member of the PLC.

47. Mishal and Sela, *The Palestinian Hamas*, pp. 87–91; Milton-Edwards and Farrell, *Hamas*, p. 63.

48. See for instance, "Public Opinion Poll #1 The Palestinian-Israeli Agreement; "CPRS Public Opinion Poll #17 Elections, Negotiations, Strike, Refugee Camps, Criticism of the PNA"; "PSR Palestinian Public Opinion Poll #42" (Survey Research Unit, 17 December 2011).

49. Interviews with one unnamed Change and Reform MP and with Mahmoud Ramahi.

50. Interview, unnamed Change and Reform MP.

51. "CPRS—Survey Research Unit: Public Opinion Poll # 2."

52. "CPRS—Survey Research Unit: Public Opinion Poll # 16" (Palestinian Public Opinion Poll, 22 June 2005). Available at http://www.pcpsr.org/survey/polls/2005/p16a.html (accessed 20 January 2014).

53. "CPRS Public Opinion Poll #17 Elections, Negotiations, Strike, Refugee Camps, Criticism of the PNA."

54. "CPRS Public Opinion Poll #19: Armed Attacks, Palestinian-Jordanian Relations, Negotiations, Elections and Other Issues of Concern."

55. Roy, *Hamas and Civil Society in Gaza*.

56. *Islamic Social Welfare Activism in the Occupied Palestinian Territories: A Legitimate Target?*, ICG Middle East (Amman and Brussels: International Crisis Group, 2003).

57. Sara Roy, "The Transformation of Islamic NGOs in Palestine," *Middle East Report* 214 (2000), pp. 24–26. Interviews with Ahmad Ali Ahmad, and other Change and Reform politicians.

58. Arnon Regular, an Israeli analyst and journalist, cited a much higher figure, but $70 million is the commonly held figure for Hamas's annual budget. See for instance, Gene Robinson, "Hamas as a Social Movement," p. 16.

59. Interview, Mahmoud Ramahi. Ramahi framed this dynamic within the context of the Muslim obligation to give zakat, or charity.

60. Interview, Zaki Bani Rsheid, former Secretary General, Islamic Action Front, Jordan.

61. "HAMAS Funding" (GlobalSecurity.org, 21 June 2007). Available at http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/para/hamas-funds.htm (accessed 20 January 2014)

62. UNRWA, because of its mandate, directed nearly all of its aid to registered refugees. Statistics taken from Bocco et al., "Palestinian Public Perceptions Report 9."

63. *Islamic Social Welfare Activism in the Occupied Palestinian Territories: A Legitimate Target?*

64. This was acknowledged by at least one Change and Reform legislator who suggested that Hamas's services acted as a complement to UNRWA's, not as a replacement, serving those (especially in Gaza) who were either not registered with the agency as refugees, or lived in areas where UNRWA could not operate.

65. Interviews with Hamid Bitawi and one unnamed Change and Reform MP.

66. Roy, "The Transformation of Islamic NGOs in Palestine."

67. Chehab, *Inside Hamas*, 5–6.

68. Interviews with Ahmad Ali Ahmad and Mariam Saleh.

69. Roy, "The Transformation of Islamic NGOs in Palestine." This matches my own experience of how these services are perceived and described.

70. Interview, unnamed Change and Reform member of the PLC.

71. Whether this is true or not is probably less important in terms of how Palestinians respond to Hamas than the perception that it is true.

72. Interview, Mahmoud Ramahi.

73. Interview, Ahmad Ali Ahmad.

74. This dynamic was pointed out to me by Edward Kattoura, and is supported by the numbers.

75. This was not an insignificant amount of funding; American aid to Palestine in 2004 amounted to 84,786,000. See Clyde Mark, "United States Aid to the Palestinians," Congressional Research Service, 5 March 2005. Between 2000 and 2005, the EU contributed on average €250 million. European Commission, EuropeAid, "Occupied Palestinian Territory."

76. "PSR Palestinian Public Opinion Poll #42."