The Contribution of Islamic-Based CSOs to Poverty Reduction in Egypt: The Mechanisms, the Politics and the Lessons

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I declare that no portion of the work referred to in the dissertation has been submitted in support of an application for another degree or qualification of this or any other university or other institution of learning;

M. Y. Khalil
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## ABBREVIATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CDAs</td>
<td>Community Development Associations</td>
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<tr>
<td>CSOs</td>
<td>Civil Society Organisations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FBOs</td>
<td>Faith-Based Organisations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FIS</td>
<td>Islamic Salvation Front, in Algeria</td>
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<tr>
<td>FJP</td>
<td>Freedom and Justice Party</td>
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<tr>
<td>GMT</td>
<td>IBCSO Case Study 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GS</td>
<td>El-Gameya El-Shar‘eya, Case Study 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GTZ</td>
<td>German Development Agency</td>
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<tr>
<td>HDI</td>
<td>Human Development Index</td>
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<tr>
<td>IBCSOs</td>
<td>Islamic-based Civil Society Organisations</td>
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<tr>
<td>IMF</td>
<td>International Monetary Fund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MCDA</td>
<td>CSO Case Study 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MFA</td>
<td>IBCSO Case Study 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MoE</td>
<td>Ministry of Endowments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MoSS</td>
<td>Ministry of Social Solidarity</td>
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<tr>
<td>NFBO</td>
<td>non faith-based organisation</td>
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<tr>
<td>NGOs</td>
<td>Non-Governmental Organisations</td>
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<tr>
<td>SCAF</td>
<td>Supreme Council of the Armed Forces</td>
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<tr>
<td>SSI</td>
<td>State Security Investigations</td>
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<td>UNDP</td>
<td>United Nations Development Program</td>
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### Currencies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Currency</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EGP</td>
<td>Egyptian Pounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GBP</td>
<td>Great Britain Pound</td>
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<td>USD</td>
<td>United States Dollars</td>
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At the time of submission:

1 GBP = 11.12 EGP  
1 USD = 6.89 EGP
CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

1.1. Research Background

This thesis provides a critical analysis of how Islamic-based Civil Society Organisations (IBCSOs) contribute to poverty reduction in Egypt, through a qualitative study of four Civil Society Organisations (CSOs). The thesis closely examines case study IBCSOs’ organisational structures, their activities and the values that shape their conceptualisation of poverty. It reveals the similarities between IBCSOs’ poverty reduction work and official social protection, and discusses how their approaches to poverty reduction can be understood in terms of the various discourses justifying social protection (risks, rights and needs). The thesis also uses these case studies to examine the validity of Faith-Based Organisations (FBOs) as vehicles for poverty reduction and social protection. Finally, it discusses the relationship between these organisations’ poverty reduction activities and political mobilisation through an examination of the role they played in the recent political rise of the Islamist movement in Egypt, as well as the impact of recent political developments on their operations. A key purpose of this critical investigation of IBCSOs’ approaches to poverty reduction is to explore more broadly their wider implications for development theory and practice by assessing whether they can contribute to existing knowledge on the means of civil society’s contribution to poverty reduction and development.

On the 25th of January 2011, tens of thousands of Egyptians took to the streets throughout the Arab World’s most populated country. The unexpected spectacle soon evolved to become the revolution that put an end to three decades of President Husni Mubarak’s rule.\(^1\) One of the very first slogans that dominated the

\(^1\) There is a legitimate debate on whether to call the events of January 2011 a "revolution" or an "uprising." This thesis will consider them a revolution because this was how the events became to be universally known amongst most Egyptians including both of those who were directly involved in the events on the street and those who chose not to participate.
chants and banners of protesters was their call for "Bread, Freedom and Social Justice" (Fieldnotes, Tahrir Square, 25/1/2011). The slogan simply reflected how poverty, social injustice and the absence of freedoms have all worked together to drive the country that experienced relative political stability for the past forty years to the tipping point (Selvik and Stenslie 2011). During the last few years of Mubarak's era, poverty persisted as a major challenge despite improving annual economic growth rates. World Bank Data (2013) shows that in 2011, 25.2% of Egyptians lived in absolute poverty with income under two USD per day. This figure has risen from 21.6% in 2009, 19.6% in 2006 and 16.7% in 2000. When adding those who are very close to that poverty line, one of every two Egyptians would be living in poverty. Poverty in Egypt extends beyond income to other dimensions. The number of Egyptians suffering from food shortages has risen from 14% in 2009 to 17% in 2011 (UN News Centre 2013). According to the latest Global Competitiveness Report, unemployment has risen by almost 50% between 2010 and 2012 with youth unemployment (aged 15 to 29) mounting to 77% of total unemployment (Schwab 2013).

The problem of poverty in Egypt has continued to worsen since the late 1980s for several reasons. A main cause has been the socio-economic implications of structural adjustment policies that led to the dismantling of Egyptian State Capitalism, which used to provide employment and subsidised goods and services for millions of Egyptians (Nagi 2001). These policies have also left millions of people excluded from enjoying the fruits of growth, which were monopolised by the powerful ruling class and its capitalist allies (Dixon 2011). Another reason has been the decline in international oil prices that ended the oil boom in the neighbouring oil-rich Arab countries and sent millions of Egyptians who migrated to work there in the 1970s and 1980s back to unemployment in their own struggling country (Amin 2011). Facing this poverty problem, thousands of Egyptian Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) have been implementing activities and projects ranging from social assistance provision to job training and microfinance (El-Daly 2007). These efforts of Egyptian civil society have been studied in great detail (e.g. Kandil 1998, 2005; Ibrahim 1997, 1998 and Andelrahman 2004). However, this literature has largely ignored the contribution to poverty reduction of Islamic-based Civil Society Organisations. This
thesis tackles this unexplored area of civil society and poverty reduction by studying the contribution of IBCSOs to the ongoing broader debates on civil society’s role in poverty reduction. This objective is accomplished through a detailed case study of three organisations that participate with many other similar Islamic-based CSOs in Egypt in providing social assistance to millions of Egyptians. A fourth case study of a non-Faith-Based Organisation (NFBO) is added to the study for comparative purposes.

The findings of this thesis are expected to widen our understanding of the role civil society and FBOs play in development in a number of key areas. First, the thesis reveals a model of poverty reduction practice at case study IBCSOs that constitutes an obligations-based attempt by these organisations to provide their recipients with social protection. This model of practice is driven from a theoretical hybrid containing elements of the risks, rights and needs discourses for justifying social protection (Munro 2008). Second, the thesis evaluates this model using the criteria offered by Narayan et al (2000) for the qualities of CSOs’ poverty reduction activities and readdresses several arguments highlighted in the literature on FBOs (For example, by Clarke 2006, 2007 and 2008 or Herbert 2003) for and against FBO’s involvement in poverty reduction and development. Third, the thesis examines a number of key assumptions about the roles of Islamic civil society’s poverty reduction activities in political mobilisation for the Islamic movement in Egypt, a topic that has become especially relevant in the aftermath of the 2011 Egyptian revolution (Bush 2012 and Korany and El-Mahdy 2012).

1.2. Research Justification

This thesis claims to presents original research which addresses a major gap in civil society and poverty literature. The secularisation of science after the enlightenment era in Europe has increasingly reduced the presence of faith in social science (Stark and Finke 2000). However, by the end of the 20th century, faith was globally revived as a major player in world affairs (Micklethwait and Wooldridge 2009). The world’s major development institutions such as the World Bank and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) now show more interest in faith by
increasingly engaging FBOs in their work and by opening dialogues with religious institutions and leaders on development strategies and activities. However, this involvement is still accompanied by considerable scepticism as many voices within the World Bank and other leading development institutions in the world still doubt the validity of FBOs as vehicles for development in general and poverty reduction in particular, which places limitations on how far engaging them in such institutions’ work can go (Marshall 2010).

On the other hand, the growing interest in the role of FBOs in poverty reduction has yet to be extended to include Islamic-based theory or practice (Clarke 2008). The scarce research that has attempted to investigate Islamic-based poverty reduction practices has taken more interest in their alleged links to the funding of terrorism following the events of 9/11 (Kroessin and Mohamed 2008). In the early stages of preparing this thesis, I searched the two key words "Islamic" and "Charity" on the Business Source Premier database. Eleven out of the top fifteen search results were articles that examined alleged Islamic charities' connection to terrorism. On the other hand, when the same exercise was conducted using the keywords "Christian" and “Charity”, the first fifteen articles were almost equally divided between various subjects including donating patterns, impact assessment, corruption allegations and the linkages between charity and missionary activities. This narrow view of Islamic poverty-reduction practice has diverted attention from the deeper contribution of Islamic civil society to social and economic development (Edwards 2009, Kroessin and Mohamed 2008). Another example showing the undervaluing of Islamic civil society’s role in development is the World Bank’s failure to include any Muslim leaders in the dialogue it started on the relationship between religion and development at the turn of the century (Clarke and Jennings 2008).

At the theoretical level, this thesis is important for a variety reasons. By shedding the light on the work of IBCSOs in Egypt, it considers an alternative model

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2 I used the term "charity" to have a valid base for comparison. The terms "aid" or "civil society" for example are not frequently associated with Islamic development-oriented organizations. Likewise, searching for the term "poverty" resulted in articles about other matters such as poverty suffered amongst particular Islamic communities.

3 According to the World Bank website (2011), the last time the World Bank engaged with faith-based organisations in a collective dialogue or any other form of partnership aiming at integrating the views of FBOs in its development practice was in 2007 during a conference of the World Council of Churches that was held in Geneva, Switzerland.
by which civil society might overcome the failures of the state in becoming the main engine for development in the neoliberal age (Lewis and Kanji 2009). The uniqueness of IBCSOs, due to their significant financial independence from foreign donors, and the strong ties they have with their communities due to their faith background (as will be shown later in this thesis), makes it worthwhile to compare these organisations with the heavily aid-dependent post-cold war civil society (Molyneux and Lazar 2003). However, a key contribution of this thesis to development theory comes from its study of the role religion plays in development. The debate continues between those who are sceptical about the validity of FBOs’ contribution to development such as De Kadt (2008) or Taylor (2011), and those who see something promising in it such as Clark (2008) and Edwards (2009). This thesis provides evidence and analysis that shall significantly contribute to this debate.

Researching Islamic-based CSOs is not only important for studying the theories of development and poverty reduction. It is equally important to widen our knowledge of the extent to which Islamic civil society has contributed to the rise of the Islamic movement as a major player in politics and society in the Middle East. The failure of the Arab Nationalism project, which was completed by the defeat suffered by several Arab countries at the hands of Israel in June 1967, paved the way for the emergence of the Islamic alternative (Murphy 2008). The Islamic movement continued to flourish in the Arab World, especially during the 1990s and the first decade of the 21st century and became the most significant opposition force in almost every Arab country (Rubin 2010). Many theories attempted to explain the popularity of the Islamist movement4 in the Arab World (Naguib 2009). On one hand, post-modernist interpretations have seen the Islamist phenomena as a response to the failure of modernity in the Arab World, which promoted a reaction calling for a return to the roots of the Islamic civilisation that once enjoyed a glorious past. Others have suggested that the rise of Islamists was an attempt by failed Arab populations to escape their dim social and economic realities into the dream of a Utopian world retrieved from a proud history. For Islamists, the Utopian community

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4 The term “Islamist” is used instead of the term “Islamic” to refer to the Islamic movement within an exclusively political context. Further details on this choice of terminology follow at section 3.3 of this thesis.
founded by the early Muslims during Prophet Mohammed’s prophetship (611-633 AD) and the few decades that followed his death in the Seventh Century has played the same function of the Athenian republic in the development of modern Western thought in the 19th century (Zubaida 1998). Yet, despite the rise in their popularity, Islamists still needed to bring their Utopian model closer to the general public in operational terms. Through associational civil society, they have become the biggest non-government provider of social assistance to the poor in Egypt in addition to their efforts in offering community services especially in the fields of health care and education (El-Daly 2007).

The size of these activities mean that there is growing need to understand the work of IBCSOs and their contribution to the rise of the Islamist Movement. The latest political developments following the revolutions and uprisings that swept across many of the Arab World’s key countries (known as the Arab Spring) have further reiterated and enhanced this need. The early success of Islamists in gaining ground in Tunisia, Egypt and Libya as well as their significant political presence in Yemen and Syria is expected to bring more attention to Islamic-based civil society. This will raise legitimate questions about what role it played in these developments as well as the role it might be prepared to play in the creation of new political, economic and social changes that will continue to unfold as a result of the Arab Spring.

Egypt is one of the most suitable Arab countries for the study of Islamic-based organisations. It is the biggest and most populated Arab country. It possesses many international, regional and local characteristics that make it a favourite choice for such research. At the international level, Egypt has been globally considered as the epicentre of the Arab World. The worldwide attention and the international intellectual reaction to the 2011 revolution in Egypt have demonstrated the importance of the country on the international front. The fact that the Tahrir Square model was replicated worldwide by the Occupy Movement, which spread from Wall Street in the USA to many places worldwide (Kompridis 2011) showed that what

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5 This thesis was in the final editing stages during events of summer 2013 that led to the fall of the Muslim Brotherhood’s rule in Egypt. The various references in this thesis to the rise of Political Islam in Egypt refer to their earlier political success in the aftermath of the 2011 revolution.
occurs in Egypt influences not only what happens in the rest of the Arab World, but can extend to the global level. At the regional level, the religious value and the social and cultural influence of Egypt on its fellow Arab and Islamic states could not be underestimated. Al-Azhar institution in Cairo continued since its foundation in 920 AD to be the most significant and influential scholarly institution in the world of Sunni Islam, despite its incorporation into the Egyptian state during Mubarak’s era (Brunner 2004).

Also, Egypt has been the birthplace of most variations of the modern Islamic movement. This included the pioneer revival movement led by Gamal El-Din Al-Afghnai and his student Mohammed Abdu in the late 19th and early 20th century; and the founding of the “Muslim Brotherhood” by Hasan El-Banna in 1928 (Murphy 2008). The theories and models that resulted from these movements have spread out to cover other Arab countries where the examples provided by Egyptian Islamists have been copied (Rubin 2010). The model provided by the Muslim Brotherhood has inspired organisations in other Arab countries to adopt the same ideology and operate with the same mechanisms and even carry the same name. This occurred in countries like Syria, Jordan, and Libya and even beyond Arab countries as far as Europe and the Americas (Rubin 2010b). Other organisations like the Justice and Development Movement in Morocco (Wagner 2007) and Renaissance movement in Tunisia have chosen different names and structures, but followed similar organisational models (Allani 2009). Therefore, many of the findings presented in studies of Islamic-based CSOs, such as this thesis, would be arguably valid in similar organisations in other Arab countries. These results might also be a starting point for further research on other organisations across Islamic communities beyond the borders of the Arab World.

Finally, the choice of Egypt for this research is an essential exploitation of the comparative advantage that I hold there as a researcher. Egypt is my birthplace. It is the place where I have lived, studied and worked for many years prior to pursuing post-graduate studies. Therefore, I have the knowledge, language capabilities, experience and the connections that assisted significantly in conducting this research as will be shown later in Chapter Four.
1.3. Research Questions

CSOs with an Islamic affiliation are present in almost every local community in Egypt. Many of these organisations (especially the ones based in mosques) are engaged in activities that target poor members of the population. These activities carry a considerable amount of ambiguity with very little known about their size, funding, distribution methods and impact. There is also little known about the theoretical foundations of these activities and how they relate to what is already known about the contribution of civil society in general and FBOs in particular to poverty reduction. This thesis examines case studies of these IBCSOs to explore the breadth and depth of their poverty reduction activities in their areas of operation in Egypt. The main research question of this study is therefore: **In what ways do Islamic-based CSOs contribute to poverty reduction in Egypt?**

Addressing this main research question will not be possible without relating the work of Islamic-based CSOs in Egypt to the wider political, economic and social contexts of the Islamic movement at large. This has become even more important in light of the recent developments that have been unfolding since January 2011, which had produced considerable changes in the environment and surroundings in which these organisations have been operating. Keeping this in mind, the thesis sub-questions are outlined as follows:

Research Question 1: How do beliefs, values and organisational characteristics shape Islamic-based poverty reduction activities in Egypt?

According to some authors, the work of Islamic-based CSOs on poverty reduction has been shaped by a distinctively Islamic view of poverty (Deneulin and Bano 2009). The first step to answer the above research question will be therefore to identify and explore the distinct characteristics and the nature of Islamic-based CSOs' poverty reduction practice in Egypt. For that purpose, the following sub-questions must be answered:
1.1 Who are the main actors (implementers, donors and recipients) involved in the poverty reduction practice of Islamic-based CSOs?

1.2 What processes, power relations and mechanisms shape these practices and what are their size, range of beneficiaries and focus areas?

1.3 How do the ideology and values of these organisations affect both their understanding of poverty and their approach to its reduction?

1.4 How do poverty reduction activities of IBCSOs in Egypt relate to what is already known about the approaches of civil society to poverty reduction and development?

Research Question 2: Do Islamic-based CSOs in Egypt have a comparative advantage over NFBOs in delivering poverty reduction?

The past decade has seen a rising interest in the role that could be played by FBOs in delivering development in general and poverty reduction in particular. For example, the works of Gerard Clarke (2006, 2007 and 2008) and others have outlined various advantages for FBOs’ involvement in development and poverty reduction that arguably give them the edge over NFBOs. These advantages include their closeness to the poor, their better ability to network and their independence from donor money and agendas. Others, such as Martin et al (2007) have examined FBOs with considerable scepticism highlighting concerns such as the conflict of interest between these organisations’ developmental and their religious agendas. This thesis uses the example of Islamic-based CSOs in Egypt to investigate the validity of arguments presented by both sides of that debate in order to determine whether FBOs could be taken seriously in the future as reliable and effective deliverers of poverty reduction.

Research Question 3: What role do poverty reduction activities of IBCSOs play in political mobilisation for the Islamist movement in Egypt? And how did the ongoing political developments in post revolutionary Egypt affect this role?
Many of those who studied civil society in Egypt (such as Saad Eldin Ibrahim) as well as those who studied the Islamic movement in particular (such as John Esposito) have highlighted the extensive use of economic tools (including poverty reduction activities by the Islamic movement in Egypt) in order to reach political goals. Social services such as education, health care and social assistance (Sulivan and Abed-Kotob 1999), as well as investment tools such as building factories and establishing businesses to absorb unemployment (Al-Awadi 2004) have been all used to gain sympathy, mobilise support and earn votes (when votes did matter). The thesis explores how far the Islamic-based CSOs’ poverty reduction activities are utilised in mobilising political support for the Islamic movement in Egypt; especially in light of the recent changes that took place in the country’s political scene during the past two years in the aftermath of the 2011 Egyptian Revolution. The thesis also evaluates the impact of these developments on the poverty reduction work of IBCSOs in Egypt.

1.4. Thesis Overview

This thesis is composed of nine chapters. Chapter Two outlines the conceptual framework for the thesis. It starts by discussing the competing meanings of civil society. The chapter uses De Tocqueville’s model to define civil society by locating it as a third sector that is separate from both the state and the market. It emphasises the associational nature of civil society and highlights its essential function to act for the common good by addressing the common interests and widening participation. The chapter then examines the meeting point between civil society and Islamic thought in order to prove that Islamic FBOs considered by this thesis can be studied within the theoretical framework of the concepts of civil society. This part shows how civil society has historically existed in Islamic communities for long time and how it appeared in literature on Islamic social life despite the use of other terminology to describe it. The chapter then moves to derive the thesis’ adopted definition of poverty, which is based on a multidimensional understanding of poverty that takes into account both absolute and relative understandings of the concept. The chapter then moves to list the main
schemes of poverty reduction intervention relevant to this thesis starting with the meaning of social protection and the risks, rights and needs discourses used to justify it. The next step is to survey the approaches with which civil society has been dealing with the poverty question starting with the basic needs approach, and the capabilities and livelihoods approach, before arriving at the rights-based approach, which shall receive specific attention due to its significance to the following analysis in this thesis. This leads the chapter to a specific look at the role of CSOs in political mobilisation during the period that witnessed the rapid rise of the Islamists to power in Egypt after the 2011 Revolution, which is important to answer Research Question Three. The final part of the chapter specifically looks at the models of FBOs’ poverty reduction practice. It defines FBOs and discusses the relation between faith and development before listing both advantages and disadvantages of FBOs’ development and poverty reduction practice. This section and the chapter conclude by a discussion of the conceptualisation of poverty in Islamic thought and the ‘Islamic’ approach to poverty reduction as outlined in the literature.

Chapter Three examines poverty and civil society in Egypt. The first part of the chapter maps out the poverty problem in Egypt by outlining the main characteristics of poverty and those who live in it, as well as the depth of the problem, and its social and geographic distribution. It shows how poverty in Egypt has been a result of numerous historic social, political and economic causes. The chapter also considers specific issues that need to be taken into account when studying poverty in Egypt, such as how it is measured, and how it is viewed in specific cultural and social contexts. These issues all had methodological implications for the fieldwork of this thesis. The second part of the chapter looks at the past and the present of civil society in Egypt going over its history and offering a snapshot of how it stood on the eve of the 2011 revolution and how it was initially affected by the revolution. This section reveals the various structural weaknesses suffered by Egyptian civil society. It also shows the important position occupied by IBCSOS within Egyptian civil society. Finally, the chapter closely examines the development of the Islamic movement in Egypt in modern times, and the various types of organisations and groups that have existed under its umbrella, such as the Muslim Brotherhood.
and the Salafis. This is important in order to contextualise and justify the choice of the case study organisations.

Chapter Four sets out and critically discusses the methodological approach employed here, namely the qualitative case study method. The chapter explores the results of the thesis’ preliminary field work and identifies the criteria adopted to select the four case study organisations. After that, the chapter discusses data collection methods, particularly participant observation and interviews, and also indicates the steps taken to enhance the validity of the research, including triangulation and the use of Rapid Comparative Assessment. The following part of the chapter considers the data analysis methods employed as well as the ethical concerns involved in this research, and how they were approached. Finally, the research plan, including timetable for implementing the fieldwork, is presented including a discussion of the impact of the events that accompanied the revolution in Egypt on the research plan.

Chapter Five provides a detailed description of the four case study organisations. It begins by describing the geographic locations of the organisations and the socioeconomic environments within which they operate reflecting similarities that justify comparisons between them. After looking at the legal status of the organisations, the chapter examines the structures of the organisations, exploring the main actors who shape the activities of each of them including board members, donors, recipients and other key members of the community. The chapter then outlines the activities of the organisations showing the means they use in their efforts to reduce poverty. It shows how basic needs provision tends to dominate their activities. This section shows the similarities between the work of case study IBCSOs and official social protection represented in cash transfers. The last section of the chapter examines the relationship between the organisations and the government, which plays a role in determining the behaviour of the organisations due to the central role played by the government in overseeing civil society in Egypt.

The following three chapters analyse data gathered from the thesis’ research fieldwork in order to reach the main conclusions of the thesis. Chapter Six discusses the approaches used by case study IBCSOs for poverty reduction and their implications on the theory and practice of poverty reduction in particular and
development in general. The chapter is divided into two main parts. The first part identifies the theoretical characteristics of case study IBCSOs’ poverty reduction activities. It reveals an approach to poverty reduction that is a hybrid including elements of the risks, rights and needs discourses that justify social protection. The chapter shows how case study IBCSOs share with the risks discourse its monetary-based understanding of poverty and its risk-driven interpretation of the causes of poverty. It also shows how case study IBCSOs recognise rights of the poor to the assistance they provide although this realization is driven by an obligation-based understanding of the role these organisations play in poverty reduction. Finally, the chapter shows that case study IBCSOs have in common with the needs discourse its instrumental element that believes in the importance of satisfying the needs of the poor in order to avoid harms that may be inflicted on society should such needs not be satisfied. The second part of the chapter explains three main factors that led to the hybrid approach to poverty reduction explained above. The first is case study IBCSOs’ need to maintain their influential positions within their communities and within civil society at large. The second is the understanding dictated to these organisations, by their faith, of their roles and their purpose and finally, cultural and social characteristics of the surroundings of these organisations that determine several elements in the design and delivery of their activities.

Chapter Seven uses the framework of Narayan et al (2000) to analyse characteristics of the work that case study IBCSOs do for poverty reduction. The analysis covers three sets of characteristics. The first of these examines the quality of relationships between case study IBCSOs, their communities, and their recipients. These characteristics include: trust, participation, accountability and unity. The second set of characteristics is concerned with the valued behaviour of the organisations. This set includes: respect, honesty and fairness as well as listening, caring and compassion and finally, hardworking. The third and last set of characteristics is concerned with institutional effectiveness. This includes the ability of the organisations to provide timely, responsive and caring support as well as their accessibility and closeness to the poor. The chapter compares case study IBCSOs in many of these characteristics with the case study NFBO and uses the results to
determine what may be the points of strength or weakness that can best describe the quality of FBOs’ poverty reduction activities.

Chapter Eight analyses the role played by case study Islamic-based CSOs in the process of political mobilisation that took place in the immediate aftermath of the 2011 revolution, with particular focus on the run-up for the 2011 parliamentary elections. The chapter examines how the political changes that were brought with the revolution had affected case-study organisations showing the greater window for opportunity that has opened for them. The chapter opens by surveying some of the main arguments that claim a role for poverty reduction activities practiced by IBCSOs in supporting the political advance of the Islamist movement in Egypt. It then moves to a detailed analysis of the contribution of case study CSOs to political mobilisation before the 2011 revolution, finally arriving to an analysis of the impact of the revolution on that role with particular focus on the organisations’ behaviour during the 2011 general elections in Egypt.

The concluding chapter of the thesis begins by summarising its main findings. It then moves to present the theoretical implications of these findings at two levels of discourse. The first of these is the discourse on poverty reduction with a particular focus on the debate between IBCSOs’ position from the rights-based approach to poverty reduction and their specific understanding of their obligations to provide social protection and poverty reduction activities. The second level is the discourse on civil society and the focus here will be on the position of IBCSOs within the Islamic movement in particular and Egyptian civil society at large. The chapter then reveals some of the main misperceptions related to the study of civil society and the Islamic movement in Egypt that are exposed by this thesis, such as the inaccuracy of the claim attributing the recent political success of Islamists in Egypt to IBCSOs attracting votes of the poor with poverty reduction activities. The chapter outlines a number of areas, which require further exploration to build on the findings of the thesis, before concluding the chapter and the thesis with an outline of a number of policy implications that arise from the findings of this research.
CHAPTER TWO
THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter presents the conceptual framework for this thesis. As seen in the previous chapter, this thesis has three main research objectives. In the first, it investigates the approaches of Islamic-based Civil Society Organisations (IBCSOs) to poverty reduction by linking them to the contemporary discourse on civil society and poverty. In the second, the thesis examines the distinctive characteristics of IBCSOs’ work on poverty reduction in relation to existing knowledge on Faith-based Organisations’ (FBOs’) role in development. Finally, in the third research objective, the thesis explores the role of IBCSOs in political mobilisation for the Islamist political movement in the aftermath of the 2011 Egyptian revolution. Therefore, to serve these research objectives, the conceptual framework for this thesis outlines in this chapter explains what it means by both “civil society” and “poverty.” It then moves to understand the relationship between both concepts through a review of the approaches adopted by civil society organisations to poverty reduction and the role of civil society in political mobilisation. The “faith” element is incorporated into this framework by explaining what “faith” means, as well as by examining how faith-based organisations (FBOs) may be different from other Civil Society Organisations (CSOs). Islam is finally added to the framework by showing how civil society and poverty are understood in Islamic thought, and by examining how Islamic literature has viewed poverty and poverty reduction, which draws various similarities to social protection and the discourses that justify it.

2.1. The Meaning of Civil Society

Civil Society can be used as a concept to distinguish a particular set of social organisations and institutions, but the concept may also function as an “analytical term” (Lewis 2002). In this thesis, civil society is used in both ways. Case study organisations are defined in terms of them being Civil Society Organisations (CSOs)
and their poverty reduction activities are analysed in terms of civil society’s contribution to poverty reduction. This section defines civil society before moving on to locate it under the umbrella of Islamic thought, in order to justify what is presented here as the relevance of civil society as a framework to study Islamic FBOs in Egypt.

2.1.1. Defining Civil Society

Reaching "agreed" boundaries for civil society is difficult because it depends on one’s understanding of other related concepts such as State, Market and Family as well as other social institutions and realms (Munkkonen 2009). The return of the concept of civil society as a key concept in political and development theory came in the 1970s to explain the organized movements that appeared in Eastern Europe in protest against the ruling communist regimes. The Solidarity movement in Poland was the pioneer example for that civil society (Hall 1995). Since then, the concept of civil society has developed to become a largely inclusive concept acting as an umbrella for a wide variety of institutions and actors.

Before that, Howell and Pearce (2001) surveyed the development of the concept of “civil society” in western thought from the 12th century. Back then, the rise of individual social and economic freedoms, such as the ability to sell, own and make personal choices, led to the first recognition of an “individual subject freed from bonds of kinship and family” (Howell and Pearce 2001, p. 18). The rise of mercantilism in Europe in the 17th and 18th centuries created a need for “civility” as an environment within which trading societies can find regulation and security. This was later developed by the classical republicans into political virtue, where individuals and groups can share together a collective identity that enables them to come together in order to pursue their collective interests. With the modern state beginning to dominate European political systems in the 19th century, political virtue developed into a public sphere where members of society can actively discuss how the state is run and work collectively to influence policy making and governance in their favour. These developments in thinking about civil society in European philosophic tradition lead to it being defined according to four schools of thought. Hyden (1998) looked at these schools based on (1) how they see the nature of civil
society as either a sociological or an economic phenomenon and (2) the relationship between civil society and the state. In the first of these schools of thought, Locke viewed the state as a product of society that is required to preserve rights and freedoms through a social contract, which is the constitution, that defines the terms of the relationship between the state and civil society. In Locke’s view, the state maintains sovereignty over civil society, but only as far as the social contract agreed upon between both sides would allow.

Paine was sceptical about the impact of state intervention on civil society. He believed that even when the state is limited by a social contract, it might still grow to threaten the individuals’ rights and freedoms it is supposed to protect. To guarantee that the state would remain contained, the market becomes the alternate venue for the growth of civil society. For Paine, commercial activities are the way by which individuals are the most likely to achieve their natural desires, which are the purpose for civil society.

Hegel (1991) believed that civil society is made of associations, corporations and estates that are located within the state. Such organizational elements are developed as a result of historic processes. This contradicted Paine’s views by believing that the more civil society is integrated into the market and the more it becomes reliant on commercial activities, the more it becomes subject to division and conflict.

Finally, De Tocqueville also viewed civil society as a collection of associations that exist to promote the interests of individuals who belong to them. However, he did not see civil society as part of the state. Instead, he believed that civil society as a self governing group of associations that work to distribute power, broaden participation and limit the abilities of the state to dominate power in ways that can lead to revolution.

From the above views of civil society, this thesis is looking at organisations that are the closest to the Tocquevillian view that sees civil society as a sphere that shares three main characteristics. (1) It is located as a separate entity that is not a part of neither the state nor the market. (2) It is formed out of a body of associations and organizations rather than a loose domain of active individuals. And, (3) It functions as an active promoter of the interests of individuals that belong to its associations in ways that would facilitate the positive goals of power distribution and enhancing participations rather than being used to consolidate power or to exclude others. The following lines highlight each of the above three characteristics of civil society in this thesis in more detail.
First, civil society is a sphere that exists outside the state and the market. The organisations covered in this thesis are established and managed by independent individuals or religious movements that are not part of the state or its formal institutions. These organisations are not seeking any economic profits making them not part of the market. Relevant to this thesis, De Tocqueville included religious organisations in his views of civil society. He believed that the values found in and endorsed by religion are essential for the building of democracy (Graebner 1976). This inclusion was met with its own critiques from those who shared De Tocqueville’s views on the location and associational nature of civil society. For example, Diamond (1994), who defined civil society as "an intermediary entity, standing between the private sphere and the state, excluded individual and family life, inward-looking group activity (e.g., for recreation, entertainment or spirituality) [...] and the political efforts to take control of the state" from civil society (Diamond 1994, p. 5). However, this critique can be dismissed for this thesis because such a description of religious organisations as "inward looking" ignores spiritual organisations, such as mosques and Christian charities that perform outward-aiming activities, which have been widely recognised, especially in Africa (Azarya 1994).

The second aspect of this thesis’s definition of civil society is its associational nature, which is a common character in all organisations studied in this thesis as shall be seen later. Alexis de Tocqueville spoke about the associational nature of civil society in his two volumes titled Democracy in America (1938). That was later pushed forward as a result of the vast advancement in the scope and size of the work of registered community organisations, as well as the developments in regulations that lead to many definitions of civil society being narrowed down to concentrate only on the associational element of the concept (Davies and Hossain 1997). In addition to its applicability to the studied organisations in this thesis, an associational view of civil society is important here because it enables the understanding of civil society’s role in political participation, and it shows how civil society can represent the interests of the wider groups that stand behind its organisations (Hyden 1997). Such a view of civil society also makes it easier to separate out organisations such as political parties that state their target as reaching power, and therefore taking control of the state (Parekh 2004). The thesis
distinguishes between political parties, and politically-focused civil society organisations that act in the public sphere to influence, and perhaps change, political practice without aiming directly for power (Edwards 2009). Finally, an associational understanding of civil society also allows the elimination of organisations that are formed and controlled by the government in order to act as agents for state-planned development (Azarya 1994). Examples for such organisations, such as Community Development Associations (CDA) are common in Egypt as will be discussed later.

Still on the associational aspect of civil society, at least three out of four case study organisations in this thesis can be described as community-based organisations. The thesis bases its definition of such organisations on the work of Frances Kunreuther (2011) on grassroots organisations where he distinguished them by three main characteristics. First, they are mostly composed of volunteers as opposed to paid staff. Second, they are locally focused in terms of tackling issues within their local communities. Finally, they are less hierarchal with a limited number of levels within their organisational charts.

The third and final aspect of civil society’s definition in this thesis is its aim for promoting the interests of individuals by widening their participation, achieving a balanced distribution of power in society and curbing what might be the hegemonic tendencies of the state and the negative consequences of uncontrolled free market competition. All the organisations studied in this thesis work for poverty reduction. They do that by associating together as individuals through their organisations to correct what is an apparent failure of the state and market in tackling the problem of poverty, which all match the De Tocquevillian view of civil society. Moreover, civil society acts for a common interest that is essentially good. This is important to highlight because although civil society is a "sphere [...] in which people associate voluntary to advance common interest" (Ambeir 2004, p. 22), this common interest is not always "good" as Gramsci (1971) argues.

Instead, it might involve political, ideological or financial interests of civil society organisations or the groups these organisations might be representing (Bratton 1996). This view that refuses to idealise civil society is rejected by those who do not recognise violence or evil that could be committed by civil society. For example, Fine (1997) argues for the exclusion of those who engage in such acts from
civil society’s definition. In response, this thesis argues that there remains a ceiling to the degree of violence that may stem from civil society. Criminal activity and physical violence that go against the principles of society, and are performed by associations like the Mafia or terrorist organisations are not considered part of civil society (Edwards 2009). However, civil society can still commit violence of lesser severity. Beyond that, the role of civil society has been debated between liberal views that view it as a form of "system maintenance" working to protect the values and the institutions of democratic societies (Howell and Pearce 2001), and others who have chosen to focus on the role that civil society plays in development. This will be closely looked at later in this chapter.

On the choice of terminology, it is important to mention that this thesis chose to refer to the organisations it is studying as "Civil Society Organisations". Lewis and Kanji (2009) listed more than 50 acronyms for the term CSOs (from which CSOs is not one), which makes it quite difficult to justify why not any other one of those 50 options would be eligible to replace the term "CSOs" in this thesis, except that the term CSOs is arguably more comprehensive, and less exclusive, than the others. For instance, the term "NGOs" is often used with organisations working strictly in "service delivery" without accounting for other roles and agencies that might be taken by those organisations (Van Rooy 1998).

2.1.2. Civil Society and Islam

This section examines whether or not the concept of civil society as defined above provides a relevant framework for the study of Islamic-based organisations such as the ones considered in this thesis. The historic trajectory of civil society in western thinking was held responsible for civil society being viewed as a modernist concept and a product of western historic development (Lewis and Kanji 2009). That is despite many CSOs across the globe being strongly involved in social, intellectual and political activities that may be well be categorised as non-modernist (Howell and Pearce 2001). This link between civil society and modernity has inspired arguments by orientalist thinkers who suggested that civil society is not applicable to Islamic societies that do not share the values of western modern societies.
For example, Ernest Gellner argued that civil society is by necessity a concept that tends to be secular whilst resistance to secularism is embedded in Islam, which is a religion heavily involved in political, economic and public social domains (Gellner 1981 in Sunar 1997). Such views dismissing the relevance of civil society to Islam were supported by pointing at the absence of any reference to the concept of civil society in Islamic literature in favour of abundant mention of the "Islamic Nation" (also known as the Ummah). The Ummah comes across as a reflection of an "Islamic dream" of a social equilibrium achieved by a just charismatic ruler who is there to implement the undisputed rule of God, as opposed to the western dream that advocates the rule of law under an umbrella of social liberties. Sajoo (2002) who presented orientalist arguments responded to them by pointing out how the practice of civil society activities has been deeply rooted within Islamic societies throughout History in spite of the absence of civil society as a concept in Islamic literature. Arroun (2002), Edwards (2009), Sabra (2000) and Serif (2000) all support this observation by referring to trade guilds, endowments and mosque-based charities among many other civil society manifestations that existed and operated independently from the state throughout the Islamic World and since the medieval ages.

In addition to these observations, Sajoo (2002) directed attention to other shortcomings of the orientalist arguments. First, they ignored the fact that the majority of Muslims in the world live in places where the main source of their intellectual and cultural tradition is not Islam, but rather other non-religious local traditions. Examples include the Muslim population in South Asia or sub-Saharan Africa. Moreover, much of the western perspective on the position of civil society in Islamic societies was concluded from the conditions in the Middle East, particularly Arab countries, and it was on the basis of insights from these particular socio-economic contexts that generalisations were made across the rest of the Muslim World. Also, some orientalists have let themselves be guided by their own biases that looked down upon Muslim societies as the inferior other, which would not be worthy of adopting civil society and other liberal ideas (Halliday 1999).

The alleged contradiction between Islam and civil society or other liberal notions may be also attributed to practice and not theory. Classical Muslim
philosophers, such as El-Farabi and Ibn Roshd argued for liberal ideas, such as individual autonomy and the precedence of human reason over religious teachings. The works of those philosophers appeared in the medieval period before western enlightenment. However, such advanced thinking did not lead to the emergence of liberalism in the Muslim world long before the west because Islamic politics have been historically dominated by more traditional powers that were often supported by orthodox theology, which was powerful enough to marginalise such ideas for a long time (Mayer 1999).

There were other views that accepted the relevance of civil society to Islamic thought. However, they still treated Islamic-based civil society within the independent framework of what they called "Islamic Civil Society," which they distinguished from a universal version of "civil society" (Zubaida 2001). This may be explained by the profound "fear" of Islamic organisations resulting from a number of cases where what began, or appeared, as Islamic civil society organisations and movements have resulted in attempts, violently in many cases, to take over the state and suppress society rather than attempting to change or to instigate reform. Examples include Jihadist militant groups that branched off the Muslim Brotherhood, and the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) in Algeria (Young 1994).

This thesis argues that civil society can be a framework for the study of Islamic-based organisations because they can meet the Tocquevillian criteria used above to define civil society in this thesis. IBSCOs in this thesis (and many cases elsewhere) are located as a third sector separate from state and market, they are associational in nature and aim for the common good and interests of their members. However, the thesis recognises that IBSCOs have their distinct agenda, values and views that may be inspired by Islam (Edwards 2009). Such elements may be distinct for any CSO worldwide, and not just at IBSCOs. Militant groups such as the FIS in Algeria do not represent a challenge here because they are separated out from the definition of civil society in the first place on the same basis upon which violent and criminal organisations, such as the Mafia, were separated out earlier.

Studying Islamic-based organisation with civil society frameworks will be supported even by those who believe in the "ethnocentrism" of civil society's political values such as Harbeson (1994) who would still not see that as an obstacle.
preventing civil society from operating within "culturally specific systems". To further support this on the operational level, we refer to a study of the work of Saudi NGOs in Somalia, which has concluded that Islamic civil society is not fundamentally different from western versions in its practice of development (Kroessin and Mohamed 2008). The study showed that both Islamic and western organisations working in Somalia used the same development practices\(^6\) despite their ideological differences.

Following the discussion of the meaning of civil society for this research, I now move to the second central concept of the thesis by examining the meaning of “poverty”, before moving on to explore its meeting point with civil society by exploring the role civil society plays in poverty reduction.

2.2. Civil Society's Contribution to Poverty Reduction: A Critical Review

2.2.1. The Meaning of Poverty

Poverty is a highly "contested" concept (Alcock 1997) that is hard to contain within the boundaries of a tight definition. This is demonstrated by the numerous approaches to defining poverty. These approaches reflect different views of what constitutes the "good world" or the "good life" (Laderchi et al 2003). Different cultural, economic and political backgrounds and influences have a direct impact on individuals' definitions of poverty, especially as most of those who write about it from a theoretical perspective have never experienced it themselves (Lister 2004). This section examines the main debates shaping contemporary poverty literature before arriving at a multidimensional definition of poverty, which will be taken forward by this thesis.

In the early 20\(^{th}\) century, poverty was simply seen as the lack of income (Booth 1889 in Holman 1978). This view was the product of a cash-based economy, where money was the tool that provided goods and services required for human wellbeing. This approach was criticised firstly for being "too narrow" on the basis that the lack of money was not what causes deprivation, but rather the lack of goods

\(^6\) By that I mean the design of activities and strategies used to implement them.
and services provided by money (Whelan 1995); and secondly for ignoring the non-economic aspects of deprivation (Townsend 1979). Rowntree (1937 and 1951) widened the scope of this single-dimensional approach to poverty by defining the concept in terms of the physical needs of individuals including nutrition, shelter and clothing and excluding non-physical needs, such as security or leisure. This debate continued through the course of the twentieth century until the introduction of a definition of poverty in terms of deprivation of basic needs (Whelan 1995). These needs were not limited to physical goods such as adequate housing, sufficient nutrition and access to health care (Dowler et al 2001). Instead, they also were extended to include social needs such as education, neighbourhood, security, protection against loss of assets and safe air and water (Dean 2010 and Spicker 1993). Other single-dimensional views of poverty considered it as a lack of assets or resources needed to secure human needs. Needs here were recognised only as a result of poverty rather than being a description for it (Spicker 2007).

Sen (1983, 1985 and 1999) introduced the capability approach, which marked a paradigm shift in the understanding of poverty (Lister 2004). In his approach, Sen argued that deprivation of basic needs and shortages in income, although important, are not what constitute poverty. Instead, poverty is the inability to live in dignity, and enjoy self-respect and social inclusion. The lack of these "functionings" results from the disadvantages the poor experience in their capabilities, which are the degree of freedoms they have to make choices that would lead them to enjoy the functionings they desire. Income here is important, but only as it assists with the acquisition of "commodities," which are goods and services such as proper education, health care, housing and utilities. Those commodities are the inputs that each individual can convert into functionings using their capabilities. The capabilities of each individual to make this conversion depends on factors such as their age, sex and level of disability. In summary, poverty for Sen is a deprivation in functionings that results from a lack of capabilities.

Sen's theory challenged income and consumption as single dimensions for understanding the meaning of poverty. It opened the way for considering poverty from a multidimensional angle that assesses it from three separately analysed, but interrelated dimensions. These dimensions are viewed from a “quality of life” point
of view including economic well-being, capabilities and social inclusion. Udaya (2008) explained those dimensions as follows:

The economic well-being dimension, for example, captures the physical resources determining the material quality of life. [...] The capability dimension captures the ability, strength, or resourcefulness to produce the inner quality of life, enabling one to enjoy the freedom needed to achieve valuable functionings. [...] The social inclusion dimension, moreover, embodies the resources needed to determine the social and relational quality of life with significant bearings on securing economic well-being and freedom (Udaya 2008, p. 60).

This thesis adopts the above multidimensional definition of poverty. In addition to its ability to capture poverty from different angles, which reflects the complex nature of the concept, the multidimensional approach is also useful in analysing the various approaches of CSOs to poverty reduction (to be discussed later in this chapter). According to Udaya, an individual or a household is defined as experiencing poverty when they are considered poor in light of one or more of the above three dimensions.

The other important debate for this thesis is that between the relative and absolute definitions of poverty. The absolute understanding of poverty was advanced by orthodox economists who based their views of poverty around the notions of "survival" and "subsistence" (Lister 2004). They believed that basic needs are any goods or services that the majority of individuals would identify as necessities for their well-being (Doyal and Gough 1991). Rist (1980) agreed, but argued that subsistence levels would vary between different groups depending on their cultural, geographic, historic or social backgrounds. By contrast, the relative view of poverty appeared in the 1960s as a response to the welfare state concept that swept over the western world after World War II (Beresford and Croft 1995). Peter Townsend explained relative poverty as follows:

People are relatively deprived if they cannot obtain, at all or sufficiently, the conditions of life – that is, the diets, amenities, standards and services – which allow them to play the roles, participate in the relationships and follow the customary behavior which is expected
of them by virtue of their membership of society. If they lack or are denied resources to obtain access to these conditions of life and so fulfill membership of society they may be said to be in poverty (Townsend 1993, p. 36).

Lister (2004) "unpacks" this view of poverty by showing that its "relative" notion revolves around two interrelated categories of meaning. The first is how it understands human needs between being either "objective and universal" or "socially constructed." The latter, with which Townsend agrees, believes that needs vary from one group to another. For example, the amount of food consumed by an individual and the components of such amounts differ from one culture or society to another. Needs are also not restricted to physical ones. Lister adds the human need for a certain degree of accessories or luxuries, such as entertainment or holidaying. The second category of meanings embedded in Townsend’s relative definition of poverty includes how human needs would be compared once they are determined. This comparison could be based on either historic basis between current and former experiences, cross-society basis between one society and another, or inter-society comparisons between various economic and social classes within a single society. To put this debate in the context of the multidimensional understanding of poverty adopted in this thesis, an absolute understanding of poverty becomes significant in determining the qualities of life that define each of the three dimensions of poverty, which are physical needs, capabilities and social inclusion. However, understanding poverty itself would still occur in relative terms (Udaya 2008).

At this stage, we have defined both civil society and poverty as viewed by this thesis. The following section will bring the two concepts together and explore the contribution of civil society to poverty reduction in particular and development theory in general.

2.2.2. Civil Society's Contribution to Poverty Reduction and Development

By undertaking close examination of the contribution of civil society to poverty reduction, this section aims to establish a point of reference for the upcoming analysis by outlining the major debates that this thesis responds to. The
section starts with an overview of three approaches of civil society to poverty reduction, with particular focus on the rights-based approach, which is a key element for the upcoming analysis in this thesis. This section then discusses the role of civil society in political mobilisation and explains its relevance to this research. Finally, this section presents a critical evaluation of CSOs' role in development that explores where they have succeeded, and where they have failed.

2.2.2.1. The Approaches of Civil Society to Poverty Reduction:

After World War II, development activities were carried out by governments and international inter-government organisations (Hossain 2001). The work of CSOs until the 1960s was limited to some small philanthropic and faith-based Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) that provided assistance and advocacy for those who were left without professional assistance (Mitlin et al 2007). In the beginning of the 1970s, trickle down theories of development were proving doubtful and the efforts of delivering development were proving to be beyond the capacity of governments in developing countries (Mander 2005). In response, the basic needs approach to development appeared as the International Labour Office (ILO) questioned the validity of tackling poverty only by monetary means. Instead, it highlighted the necessity to satisfy a list of basic needs for the poor that included both material and non-material ones (Ghai 1981). The role of CSOs began to appear more important in delivering those needs. Their small size, high flexibility, the better access they had to local expertise and resources (Michael 2004) and their lower operational costs (Riddell et al 1995) have all granted them a comparative advantage appeal in relation to state-run organisations. Although the basic needs approach, which was influenced by charitable traditions of civil society, has provided CSOs with better knowledge of needs of the poor (Ibrahim and Hulme 2011), it left the poor on the passive end of the process without a voice in what assistance they receive or how they receive it (Korten 1990). Most importantly, it left the poor little to look forward to in terms of emerging out of poverty as it tackled the symptoms rather than the causes of poverty.

This criticism of the basic needs approach led to the asset building and livelihoods approach, which was based on Amartya Sen’s capabilities theory
discussed above. Sen’s work that defined poverty as a lack of capabilities influenced the introduction of multi-sectoral community-based programmes to provide long-term development aiming at reducing poverty by tackling its root causes (Bhattacharya 1995). CSOs began to work directly with the poor by organising and helping them to have a say in the policies that affect them (Riddell et al 1995). The emphasis was on strengthening communities in a way that they could serve as assets for the poor (Korten 1990). This was then taken forward to building financial assets for the poor. In Bangladesh, the implementation of programmes aiming at the mobilisation of "socially homogeneous functional groups" was a major element in the strategy of the Grameen Bank founded in 1977 (Bhattacharya 1995). This paved the way further for credit provision, which became a dominant feature of CSOs poverty reduction work in the following two decades (Riddell et al 1995) together with capacity building activities (Edwards and Hulme 2000).

The rights-based approach emerged in the 1990s from the human rights agenda that was adopted during the UN global summits that took place during this period (Molyneux and Lazar 2003). The approach departs from its suggestion of an alternative definition to poverty, one that sees it as:

"a denial of human rights and human dignity. It means not having a good primary school or health centre to go to and not having access to safe drinking water or adequate sanitation. It means insecurity, powerlessness, exposure to violence and discrimination and exclusion from the mainstream of society. It also means not having a voice in decision-making, living at the margin of society and being stigmatized" (Van Rensburg 2007, p. 165).

Poverty reduction by the rights-based approach is therefore not restricted to taking the poor over a threshold or a poverty line. Instead, it is about fulfilling their lacking economic and social rights. This lack of economic and social rights is a result of the lack of political and civil rights, which means that poverty reduction requires work that takes into account the realisation of the latter rights as a prerequisite to obtain the former (Harris-Curtis 2003). The rights-based approach aimed at widening stakeholders’ participation beyond taking part in specifying their concerns and
setting their priorities into being part of the actual decision making on how to meet their needs (Nayamu-Musembi and Cornwall 2004). That is why according to Van Rensburg (2007), UNICEF stated that the rights-based approach to poverty reduction:

“means that the situation of the poor is viewed not only in terms of welfare outcomes, but also in terms of the obligation to prevent and respond to violations. For example, any action that excludes a specific group of children from school or discriminates against girls constitutes such a violation. The human-rights approach aims to empower families and communities to secure assistance and advocates a fair and just distribution of income and assets” (Van Rensburg 2007, p. 166).

Reading the work of Doyal and Gough (1991) shows how the rights-based approach can be unpacked into a number of elements. First, there are needs. Meeting them entails the fulfillment of the relevant rights. The understanding of needs can vary from one ideological background to another. For example, orthodox economists see needs as preferences. Marxists see them as products of historic developments, and critiques of cultural imperialism see them as group specific characteristics. Because rights are driven from needs, the understanding of rights might also differ according to background and ideology. Then, when needs are known, comes the obligations to meet them, which Doyal and Gough have placed upon society at large. However, most of the major development programs that have been implemented on the basis of the rights-based approach, such as the IGVGD programme in Bangladesh, have been mostly implemented by governments (Matin 2003).

Civil society’s implementation of the rights-based approach was not always apparent. When the approach first appeared, many NGOs had been already using elements of it in their poverty reduction work, such as empowerment and participation (Vene Klasen et al. 2004). However, the rights-based approach was aiming for more. It was aiming to achieve self realisation and self respect for the poor through making them aware of their political, economic and social rights as well as equipping them with the skills they need to participate in society in order to make
them realise these rights (Molyneux and Lazar 2003). On the ground, CSOs used the approach by linking poverty to issues such as accountability, law and citizenship (Lewis and Kanji 2009). It is important though to note that the rights-based approach does not disregard service delivery, which still makes a major component of rights-based CSOs' work either through providing basic needs or asset building. However, service delivery at these organisations acts only as a mean rather than an end (Mander 2005). That being said, many CSOs worldwide still adopt rights-based approaches only as far as their rhetoric is concerned while they continue to prioritise service delivery in their work, which leaves the rights-based approach in such cases as nothing more than some “meaningless slogans” (Uvin 2007).

The reasons for that were discussed by the critique of the rights-based approach. Harris-Curtis (2003) noted that applying the rights-based approach is not easy because it is difficult to explain to the poor, and it does not always attract funding as much as charitable, or basic needs-oriented, poverty reduction activities. The rights-based approach may also be resisted by ruling regimes and power centres within societies that are not interested in seeing the realisation of its main objective, the empowerment of individuals, so that they would come together and collectively take free decisions for their lives (Lister 2004). However, while Pogge (2008) and Sen (2009) believe that it is possible to arrive at a universal understanding of human rights, the main criticism for the rights-based approach has come from its unsuitability for all cultures and societies. For example, Reham Wilson (2013) of the American University in Cairo has examined The Applications of Human Rights Approaches to Development by Egyptian NGOs. In recent still unpublished research, she reported several cases where the rights-based approach has been in conflict with many of the existing political, social and cultural norms in Egyptian society. In her words, she has concluded that:

“In the Egyptian context, the process of constructing a meaning from an abstract human right by the stimulus of foreign donor and through NGOs is unsuccessful and incompatible with Egyptian realities. This top-down process overlooks the authoritarian political environment and the existing cultural, social, and economic patterns. It also disregards types of relationships between different sectors—government, business, and civil. The application of the
approach failed to create both cultural and political legitimacy of human rights. [...] These limitations are constituted by the state-led economics and centralized politics, and are supported by the religiously and culturally molded role of Egyptian NGOs as service providers and charities [...] All of this results in broken relationships between NGOs and citizens, as well as the inability of Egyptians to construct meaning of their needs in terms of rights. Furthermore, Egyptian NGOs are politically dis-empowered. They lack the ability to practice or to call for rights-based actions in relation to the state. The relationship between NGOs and the state [remains] a client-agent type of relationship.”

2.2.2.2. Civil Society and Political Mobilisation:

Poverty reduction entails a political element whether it is the rights-based approach to development (Nayamu-Musembi and Cornwall 2004) or needs-based social protection (Munro 2008). Therefore considering the role of civil society in political mobilisation is relevant to the study of its role in development and poverty reduction. That becomes even more relevant at times of change, such as what Egypt has been passing through since the revolution of January 2011.

In this thesis, I am using the term “political mobilisation” rather than the terms “democracy” or “democratisation”, which tends to dominate in the literature discussing the political role of civil society. Huntington (1993) believes that civil society is a key for understanding the transformation to democracy. In this thesis, I argue that it can also be a key to understand political change in general whether it was to democracy, or any other forms of government. As Rudolph (2000) argues, the relationship between civil society and democracy can be either positive or negative. Therefore, it is not necessary that civil society leads to democracy. Religious organisations in particular have played contradicting political roles. In many cases in history, they have worked through their advocacy and community service activities to legitimise various existing political and social merits. On the other hand, there were cases when they have challenged these merits and managed to change them.

These contradicting functions as Hart and Dekker (2005) point out are a reflection of the functions often played by religion itself which can both “comfort and challenge”, its followers as seen in the Weber’s reference to the Priest and the Prophet that exist in religion. Using the terms “democracy” or “democratisation” in
examining the political function of IBCSOs’ case studies would assume that the outcome of their political role is reaching a democracy, as understood in the West. However, the type of political development that might be aimed at or achieved by the Islamist movement in Egypt by using IBCSOs is not necessary considered democratic from a Western or even a universal point of view. I therefore use the term political mobilisation to specifically describe what this thesis studies, which is the contribution of case study IBCSOs to the rapid rise of Islamists to political power in the aftermath of the recent Egyptian revolution with specific attention given to the 2011 General Elections campaign.

De Tocqueville (1938) and Putman (1993) provided two of the leading theories on the agency of civil society to democratisation. De Tocqueville (1938) highlighted the impact of “social mores, political culture and habits of collective action” on political change. For him, CSOs provided venues for representation, developing political culture and collective action. This role was as important as the role played by estates of the realm in establishing democracy in Europe. He theorised that associations transfer individuals from the level of narrow primary associations (family clans or neighbourhoods) to bigger groups. This occurs as they develop their civic culture by realising the need to be dependent on others as they move towards fulfilling their interests by teaching themselves that they are parts of that work for collective interests. De Tocqueville was referring to CSOs as “schools of democracy” (Warren 2001) that teach community members how to act politically for their interests.

Putman (1993) followed on that as he was concerned with the social context in which institutions have operated (Howell and Pearce 2001). He specified how dependency within associations resulting from social and economic inequalities makes it harder to achieve the establishment of the democratic civic culture. He noted that democratisation (political mobilisation here) could not be founded within vertical ties. He explained that the failure of CSOs in Southern Italy to achieve political change was due to the chains of dependency and vertical relations that resulted from the social structures that prevailed there. This is in contrast to North Italy, where ties within CSOs tend to be horizontal rather than vertical allowing
association members there greater freedom of movement and therefore greater chances of being mobilized.

Beyond the specific approaches to poverty reduction and political mobilisation, civil society have seen mixed results from its poverty reduction efforts. The following section examines these in detail.

2.2.2.3. Evaluating The Contribution of Civil Society to Development and Poverty Reduction

On the theoretical side, CSOs have offered the only serious alternative to government-led development despite failing to turn this into a serious challenge as was hoped for in the early 1990s (Lewis and Kanji 2009). CSOs contributed to development by lobbying and advocating for reform in numerous development-related fields, such as global governance and global terms of trade (Edwards 2008). Civil society has also introduced innovative ideas that had a significant impact on the understanding of poverty and development over the past two decades. Those include participatory, gender, right-based and environmental approaches to development, which were all mainly advocated by CSOs (Lewis and Kanji 2009). The value of this contribution could not be undermined despite the criticism received by some of these approaches (Hickey and Mohan 2004).

In practice, CSOs' provision of basic services, such as health care, education and social assistance, remain of crucial importance to millions of people around the world who depend on civil society as a useful, and in many cases their only safe network against poverty (Racelis 2008). CSOs have also been playing a vital role in replacing government efforts in the delivery of humanitarian aid and relief in conflicts and natural disasters (Lewis and Kanji 2009). Moreover, civil society has been responsible for the introduction of legislations that tackled poverty, land rights and political participation, for example the People Empowerment Ordinance in the Philippines (Racelis 2008). Finally, in addition to the above mentioned efforts by conventional CSOs, informal self-help groups and schemes, especially in Africa, have assisted millions of people to survive poverty avoiding the pressure of foreign aid and its implications (Lewis 2002).
Against these limited successes, there have been several failures. By their considerable dependence on foreign funding, CSOs have been criticised for increasing the dependency of developing countries on major donor organisations. Moreover, foreign donors have been accused of using civil society to undermine the state in developing countries in favour of the private sector, which has further weakened the states in these countries (Lewis and Kanji 2009). This has allegedly helped donors to push forward elements of structural adjustment programs, such as privatisation, either by forcing CSOs to source their own activities to private sector firms, or by employing their development work to reduce the negative consequences of economic liberalisation on poor people (Tvedt 1998). Even on the internal organisational level, CSOs have easily surrendered to donor-imposed "culture of reporting," which left them mainly on the receiving end of policy decisions with little influence on the procedures, theories and frameworks that were imposed on them (Hickey and Mohan 2004).

The relationship with donors is not the only source for civil society’s misfortunes with development. The failure of CSOs to have a decisive impact on the development front was also seen as a result of issues related to CSOs themselves. Tvedt (1998) pointed out that many CSOs were clearly operating with the aim of fulfilling the wishes of donors to gain organisational growth, while others such as faith-based organisations, had their own agendas on which development was not necessary a priority. Evidence has also shown that CSOs often fail to reach the poor either because they are urban-biased (Riddell et al 1995), or because they lack legitimacy due to their external funding (Molyneux and Lazar 2003). Other studies highlighted the failure of CSOs to coordinate efforts with each other, which meant that much of their work was not cost-effective (Goodhand and Chamberlain 2000). Finally, CSOs have been accused of undermining the role of local governance by increasing dependency on their services (Collier 2000).

With this picture of the contribution of civil society to poverty reduction and development theory, the thesis now moves into the more specific area of faith-based organisations, which are the main focus of this thesis.
2.3 The Role of Faith-Based Organisations in Development and Poverty Reduction

2.3.1. The Meaning of FBOs

In the late 20th century, FBOs emerged as a significant contributor to development and poverty reduction work worldwide (Clarke 2007). Despite that, FBOs remained under-researched (Edwards 2009) and the literature on them remained confined to specific topics, which included little on poverty reduction. Examples include the works of Scheitle (2010) on Christian organisations, Kilmer (2010) on emergency relief, Flanigan (2010) on conflict resolution, and Chapman (2012) on religious movements. Berger (2003), explained the absence of poverty in FBOs literature to the absence of an agreed upon definition of FBOs. Finding such a definition then collides with the problematic areas around the concept of “faith” itself. The first of these is the overlap between faith, spirituality and religion. Miller (2011) separates religion and spirituality. He says that “religion is an institution that evolves over time and involves specific beliefs, rituals and organisational forms, whereas spirituality refers to the ways in which individuals experience a transcendent dimension in their lives-what they refer to as God, a divine presence or an alignment with a sacred path and a way of life.” (Miller 2011, p. 259). Bano and Nair (2007) agree that faith is more of an “amorphous category” extending beyond the existing religion, which explains why faith is used instead of religion widely across FBOs literature. Faith is a more comprehensive concept, which is more capable of accommodating and explaining a wider set of activities and attributes by FBOs.

A second problematic area faced when defining FBOs is the often ambiguous link between faith and CSOs. There are many organisations, such as Edhi Foundation, the biggest humanitarian welfare organisation in Pakistan, where its leaders and staff would state when interviewed that their main motive is their faith. However, they would not consider their organisations to be faith-based organisations (Bano and Nair 2007). This shows the vague boundary between faith as a personal motive for working with civil society and faith as basis for particular development practice that sees FBOs as a separate category of CSOs. Some have claimed that the main difference between FBOs and non-FBOs is that the former are more dependent on
volunteerism in their human resources, although the structures and activities of both
types of organisations working on poverty reduction have been to a large extent
similar (Ebaugh et al 2003). Berger (2003) argues that there is no fully secular or
religious organisation. Instead, there is a degree to which religion is involved in every
organisation. For him the whole idea splitting CSOs into FBOs and secular
organisations is irrelevant when compared to the role of religion in development or
what he calls the “pervasiveness” of religion.

The use of the word “based” in the definition of FBOs is therefore not taken
for granted. For instance, Smith and Sosin (2001) used the term “faith-related”
instead of “faith-based” because the latter excludes many organisations that have
their resources and activities related somehow to elements of faith, but not totally
based on or affiliated with it. They further argue that the term Faith-Related
Organisations is also more inclusive in the way that it includes faith driven, or
motivated, organisations that are based in a secular environment. It also explains
how many organisations have strong ties with faith even if all their actions cannot be
explained in the light of faith.

While all the above points of view on the meaning of FBOs can claim
legitimacy, this thesis will therefore resolve the conflict between them by resorting
to the definition of FBOs adopted by Religion and Development programme at
Birmingham University, which appears to be the largest and most comprehensive
work on the role of FBOs in development. The programme defined FBOs as
“organisations engaged in development or humanitarian activities that explicitly
claim a religious motivation” (Mahajan and Jodhka 2009). These organisations
usually share some or all of the following characteristics:

“1. [They] often self-identify as religious organisations
and display this identity in various ways, including choice of
name and mission statement. 2. Participants (i.e., paid staff,
volunteers, funders, clients) […] tend to be religiously
committed individuals, either because of organisational
requirements or because the culture of the organisation
appeals to those who share religious ideals. 3. Material
resources, such as money, in-kind donations, and buildings,
are provided […] primarily by religious people or
organisations. 4. Organisational goals, products, and services
provided [...] are usually of a religious nature, and are performed on the basis of religious values or with "spiritual technologies," [which means] the use of worship, prayer, scripture, or spiritual values [that are] expressed in its rituals and routines, such as prayer and devotions with the staff. 5. Organisations rely on religious values, beliefs, activities, or experiences in information processing and decision making. 6. The development, distribution, and use of power within [...] derive from religious sources and are frequently expressed by the requirement that leadership be invested in a member of the clergy, that a theological education be required of the leadership, and that leaders be active in the life of some congregation. 7. Organisations tend to interact predominantly with other religious organisations, including denominations, congregations, ecumenical forums, and special interest groups with religious goals.” (Ebaugh et al 2003, p. 413)

With these characteristics, FBOs are still far from being a specifically narrow subject. There have been many attempts to form a typology of FBOs, most of them are different from one another, which shows the extent of diversity within FBOs (Mahajan and Jodhka 2009). To mention only one of them as an example, Clarke (2006) divided FBOs into five categories, which is the typology that appears in many of the Religion and Development Programme working papers. Those are: first, representative organisations that aim to bring together members of a certain religion as a group within a community; second, development FBOs that have activities aimed at achievement of development-related goals such as health care, education or job creation; third, faith-based sociopolitical organisations, that conduct activities such as advocacy with a sociopolitical agenda; fourth, missionary organisations that aim to spread the belief in a religion or faith; and finally, fifth, radical terrorist or illegal organisations. In reality, as will be seen from the selection of case study organisations in this thesis, there is usually a degree of overlap between the categories. So, one associational FBO can still have a missionary role with a strong developmental component. However, the further break down of FBOs into such categories is not significant because Clarke has noticed that with the exception of the last category, all other four perform some degree of poverty
reduction activities, which does not stand out as highly distinctive. The following lines will closely examine this role.

2.3.2. FBOs’ role in Poverty Reduction

This section begins by presenting the historic development of FBOs’ involvement in poverty reduction and its study. It then explores the significance of that role and its potential advantages and/or disadvantages. Finally, this section relates the approaches of FBOs to poverty reduction to the earlier discussion of CSOs’ contribution to poverty reduction.

The role of FBOs in poverty reduction dates back to the heritage of Christian organisations and Muslim endowments that have provided social assistance for centuries (Lunn 2009). More recently, international donors have been funding FBOs conducting poverty reduction activities for decades, especially organisations affiliated with churches in Africa (Clarke 2006). However, the role of faith and religion has been sidelined in the theoretical debates on development. Religion has been viewed to be in contradiction with modernity and positivist thinking. Both of these concepts are by definition the opposite of the spiritual, traditional and the supernatural that religion is (Lunn 2009). Clarke (2006) traces the return of FBOs to development literature back to Ronald Regan’s rise to power in the USA in 1981. The 40th American President was both a devoted evangelical and a neoliberal conservative. Regan used evangelical organisations to promote his economic policies of a reduced state involvement in development. He gave them the space to play a bigger role in American public life, particularly by assigning them a greater role in the provision of social services, such as education and health care. In return, evangelical organisations became a strong ally of the neoliberal agenda.

This was taken beyond the U.S. border to the international development arena by Regan’s policy of opposing the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, which found support from another set of FBOs. Those were Muslim organisations based in, and mostly funded by, Saudi Arabia who firmly stood behind the Afghan fighters in parallel to the Cold War interests of the USA. The latter years of the 1980s and the early years of the 1990s witnessed a further growth of FBOs with the rise of identity politics and immigration worldwide. This provided FBOs with a stronger social
platform to operate under the umbrella of supportive faith groups that were willing and able to provide financial and moral support. By the end of the 20th century, FBOs were manifesting a return of religion to play a major role in public life, including politics and development after being restricted for very long time in the private and spiritual areas of people’s lives. This phenomenon was described by Jose Casanova as the de-privatisation of religion (Clarke 2007).

Consequently, The World Bank’s Voices of the Poor study was the first sign of real attention towards FBOs by major donor organisations. It recognised the significance of faith in the lives of the poor by highlighting that spirituality was a key factor in determining the individuals, and institutions, that they trusted and resorted to for help when needed (Clarke 2007). However, to what extent was that link between faith and poverty reduction explored in the development literature?

The link between development and faith is arguably obvious because development itself “is a normative idea and a moral cause” as is faith (Clarke and Jennings 2008). Martin et al (2007, p. 70) argue that the relationship between “religion and poverty alleviation is not just an incidental relationship or a need of the present time. [...] For Muslim, Christian and Hindu traditions, helping the poor is a goal that is deeply ingrained in their ethical systems.” This might explain why at the start of the new millennium, the World Bank estimated that about 50% of all education and health care services worldwide were provided by FBOs (Wolfensohn 2004 in Clarke 2006). Most of the western world’s leading development CSOs have Christian roots (Dinham 2009). FBOs also had a leading role in various cases of poverty reduction. For example, the first credit union in Africa was established in Ghana in 1955 by Christian missionaries (Kwarteng and Acquayeh 2010). However, the field where FBOs appear to be playing the largest role at is the humanitarian front. In some cases, cooperation and partnership between humanitarian FBOs from different religions even took place as Clarke (2010) notes. He follows this with statistics estimating that FBOs are responsible for most of the estimated 29 billion USD channeled by NGOs worldwide for humanitarian and emergency aid each year.

With this size of FBOs’ contribution to development, quality of their deliverables still mattered. Jim Wallis (2006) stated in his book God’s Politics that the best social movements are the ones based on spiritual foundations. The literature
lists numerous advantages for involving FBOs in poverty reduction. To begin with, faith is a major contributor to the legitimacy of FBOs amongst their societies as people tend to have stronger emotional attachments with individuals and institutions connected with their faith (Green et al 2010 and Jaffrelat 2008). FBOs staff and members are arguably more committed and motivated than those of secular NGOs because of the religious motive that stands behind their work (Martin et al 2007). Also, the religious discourse delivered through FBOs makes the organisations closer to the poor who establish a spiritual link with this discourse (Narayan et al 2000). FBOs can therefore claim to be more representative of the poor’s voices and more capable of channeling their demands. As most of FBOs’ recipients come from their congregations, FBOs tend to have better access to deeper knowledge of the nature of their needs (Dicklitch and Rice 2004).

Odumosu et al (2009) outline many other advantages of FBOs’ poverty reduction activities. First, FBOs can integrate their messages into wider belief systems, which makes them more effective when communicating with the poor, and keeps them away from delivering messages that come across to the poor as superficial or irrelevant. Second, religion is also a very effective framework to address particular topics, where developmental issues are related to social behavior and awareness. For example, FBOs in Islamic countries have enjoyed several success stories with combating HIV where religion was used in Morocco for instance as a platform to spread sexual awareness. Finally, third religious institutions have a devoted regular audience that do not need extra incentive to come to these organisations. They already come for prayer, and for fulfilling other social and spiritual needs, and they would therefore be ready and willing to listen to the organisations. This means that FBOs have a significant advantage in advocacy amongst communities that trend to be more religious.

On the operational level, FBOs have strong associational ties and usually act within wide networks on national and international levels. This is more efficient on the organisational level as it becomes easier for them to detect, spread and learn from the best practices (Martin et al 2007). Moreover, one of the most important advantages of FBOs is that they mostly depend on membership fees and donations from their congregations. This gives them enough independence in order not just to
potentially compete with the role of the state in development, but also to act outside the pressure of international donors and their agendas, which do not always attend to local interests (Odumosu et al 2009). However, sometimes, this might be a disadvantage when it comes to areas such as gender and human rights, where many FBOs tend to have a conservative and more traditional agenda.

On the other hand, many works remain sceptical about the role of religion in development and the involvement of FBOs in poverty reduction. De Kadt (2009) recognises the significance of religion for development, but he highlights that it remains a problematic area for two reasons. First, it limits the scope of development to certain meanings that are governed by the specific doctrine of each religion. The second concern is that religion is naturally a traditional concept, which tends to be less flexible in accepting change and innovation. This makes it less responsive to developments in development practice, approaches, and techniques. The concept of acceptance “because God said so” adopted by FBOs to explain many of their values and practices do not leave ample room for change, which is a central pillar of development. Also, many religions may have elements that are considered in direct conflict with fundamental human rights, particularly related to gender issues. On the same track, religion can make a basis for discrimination by FBOs against people of other religious groups living in the same communities, which can increase community divisions if people belonging to different groups in the same communities receive different benefits based on their religions (Martin et al 2007).

On the practice side, Clarke (2007) points out that major donor organisations such as DFID have two main concerns about FBOs. The first is that they do not usually act as “agents of transformation.” Instead, their approaches usually revolve around basic needs provision and humanitarian aid rather than focusing on development as a means to move people out of poverty and into a better quality of life. The second concern is that FBOs tend to avoid utilising the significant spiritual capital they posses amongst their beneficiaries and congregations to demand and advocate for more accountability and transparency from governments. Taylor (2011) believes this happens because FBOs are more concerned about retaining their power and the different ties that link them with states and other power groups. It should be remembered that FBOs are before everything representatives of the interest of their
own faith and faith groups (Taylor 2011). This means that in many cases, FBOs are not concerned with development as much as they might be concerned with missionary work for their faith (Lunn 2009).

Moreover, FBOs' effectiveness for poverty reduction is questionable despite the size of their operations. According to Bano and Nair (2007), FBOs can indeed be strong on their vision on development, but they are weak on practice as they lack the knowledge of and exposure to the latest technical developments in development practice. This leaves them confined to their role in limiting the impact of poverty rather than alleviating it. In addition, FBOs are mostly local organisations with little human resources and experience to carry out development on a wider scale beyond their geographic locations (Lunn 2009) and religious communities do not usually find in themselves the feeling of responsibility towards contributing to creating national strategies to deal with poverty (Bano and Nair 2007).

It is important to note that the works referred to here are all based on case studies of individual countries. This means they do not claim the universality of these advantages or disadvantages of FBOs. However, they do provide a reference point that case study FBOs in this thesis may be compared with in order to test the relevance of their practice to poverty reduction in the Egyptian case.

FBOs' approaches to poverty reduction activities are not entirely driven by their faith although faith tends to have an influence on them. Smith and Sosin (2001) show that FBOs operate in a market where they compete with other organisations for funding and have a client base that they need to satisfy. This makes them governed by both the demands of their sources of funding and their client needs; not all of them would come in parallel with their faith agendas. Overall, the approaches to poverty reduction used by both FBOs and secular organisations can be similar, except that the latter use secular discourse to explain their values and goals, while the former achieve the explanation within their religious contexts (Davis et al 2011). However, most of FBOs’ poverty reduction activities tend to focus on responding to the more urgent needs because these organisations prioritise the immediate benefits of their clients rather than the long-term development objectives adopted by secular organisations such as democratisation, and accountability. This explains why FBOs are usually strong on humanitarian aid and in some cases self-help groups
There are also significant differences in the approaches of different FBOs to areas of development practice such as fundraising and sustainability. For example, Benedetti (2006) notes that Christian FBOs have been polarised between some that have been using consumer targeting techniques to increase their donation revenues and others that resorted to directly adopting calls for help with their missionary work. On the other hand, he shows that Islamic FBOs have an easier task because their faith entails a well established element of charitable giving (almsgiving), which means they are in no need to seek other means to legitimise their activities or fundraising efforts.

Moreover, FBOs around the world have different fields of interest. In Asia for example, Muslim organisations are mainly involved in education but have a weak tradition of healthcare. However, Buddhist FBOs have a tradition of health care that dates back to the seventh and eighth centuries when Buddhist monasteries were arguably the birthplace of Indian medicine. On the other hand, Hindu and Christian organisations have a comprehensive agenda that covers many fields from education to health care to environment protection (Bano and Nair 2007).

From the survey of the literature on FBOs and their contribution to poverty reduction and development conducted here, it is possible to arrive at the following analytical conclusions that are relevant for this thesis. First, FBOs can be located as a component of civil society. They mainly satisfy the criteria of identifying CSOs with regards to their position between state and market, their associational nature and their objectives. However, they are far more diverse to be studied as a unit. Second, FBOs poverty reduction activities in general adopt a basic needs approach to poverty reduction, which is inspired by religious teachings of various faiths that command the faithful to care for the poor and reduce their suffering. This means that FBOs in general would not view poverty as a multidimensional concept. Third, FBOs are conservative when it comes to addressing the root causes of poverty. This is mainly the result of the spiritual links between themselves and their beneficiaries. Such links make FBOs in many ways more efficient and more compassionate in their service delivery quality. However, they also raise the barrier of expectations on the side of beneficiaries meaning they expect more immediate response to their poverty, rather
than long term processes of tackling the causes of poverty. Fourth, faith can be a
double-edged weapon for development. It has a positive impact on the capabilities
of FBOs. It makes them more capable of securing volunteers and funding. However,
in many cases it might hinder their impact on development, especially on the long
term. This happens either because faith can divert FBOs’ attention towards its own
agendas, or because its teachings can contradict some of the values and practices of
conventional development practice. At this stage, the thesis can move to narrow its
focus further as it tackles the special case of Islamic Civil Society.

2.4. The Case of Islamic Civil Society

2.4.1 The Meaning of Poverty in Islamic thought

The understanding of poverty in Islam revolves around three themes. First, poverty is defined in terms of deprivation from basic needs. Second, the poor have "rights," to alms, and to respectable treatment that maintains their "dignity" and refrains from discriminating against them. Third, poverty is attributed to a variety of causes that could act either single-handedly, or collectively, to send people into it. However, overcoming these reasons and escaping poverty is not impossible. The following section will provide the evidence for each of those three themes.

First, we check the definition of poverty in Islam by examining how it is mentioned in the Qur'an, Islam's holy book and the supreme source of Islamic thought and legislation. The Qur'an used two words to describe those who suffer from poverty. The first is the term Al-Fuqara', which is the Arabic word for "the poor" (Ali 2001). The other term is Al-masakeen, which is translated as "the needy" (Ali 2001). Al-Razi (1973) explained that the "needy" are those who are poor to the extent that they cannot afford the fulfillment of their basic needs. On the other hand, he defined the "poor" as those who "own the minimum limit of subsistence," but cannot afford other life needs. The majority of Islamic scholars who tackled this topic, such as Al-Qaradawy (1977) and Al-Sadr (1981), have adopted this linguistic-based definition of poverty, which reflects a basic-needs understanding of the concept.
Both the poor and the needy were mentioned in the Qur’an amongst the eight recipients of alms (Abbasi 1960). Almsgiving was in turn described not just as a religious "duty", but as a "right," when the Qur’an described the share of money payable to the poor as a "due right" (70:24), which takes almsgiving out of pure charitable context and puts to doubt the clear separation between “charity” and “rights” in the western thought. The Qur’an also granted the poor the right of dignity and respect. For example, when discussing marriage, the Qur’an reads, "[you ought to] marry the single from amongst you as well as those of your male and female slaves who are fit [for marriage]. If they [whom you intend to marry] are poor [let this not deter you;] God will grant them sufficiency out of His bounty - for God is infinite [in His mercy], all-knowing." (22:36). Another example is the strict warning against insulting the poor by reminding them of the alms or the charity they have received or by practicing philanthropic giving in public for the reason of showing off or insulting recipients. For example, the Qur’an reads, "O you who have attained to faith! Do not deprive your charitable deeds of all worth by stressing your own benevolence and hurting [the feelings of the needy], as does he who spends his wealth only to be seen and praised by men, and believes not in God and the Last Day: for his parable is that of a smooth rock with [a little] earth upon it - and then a rainstorm smites it and leaves it hard and bare. Such as these shall have no gain whatever from all their [good] works: for God does not guide people who refuse to acknowledge the truth" (2:164).

On explaining poverty, Islamic thought offers three main explanations. The first is the individual explanation where poverty is attributed to incompetence or laziness of the poor. This is similar to William Ryan’s concept of “blaming the poor” (Ryan 1972). Advocates of this explanation cite numerous religious texts. The most frequently used one is Prophet Mohammed’s response to a beggar who approached him asking for money. The Prophet collected some money from his companions who were present at the scene, bought an axe and told the beggar: "take this, go and get some timber, sell it and earn your living" (Abu Dauod 1982).

The second explanation is similar to what Poppers (1991) calls “persistent poverty” or what Spicker (1993) calls "diswafer," where poverty is seen as part of the natural order of societies. It is where the normal mechanisms of economic
activities will always leave some people at the bottom of the scale as much as it would raise others to the top. We can see this quite fatalistic view reflected in Islamic literature by the use of the Arabic term Rezq to describe income. This Qur'anic term refers to the goods granted by God (Al-Razi 1973), which reflects the belief that how much a person earns is determined not only by how much that person is efficient, but also by how much God would grant or facilitate.

Finally, the third explanation comes from a continuous emphasis on the greed of human beings who keep mounting money while depriving the poor and the needy. The abolishment of usury (Al-Qaradawi 1977) and the repetitive despicable descriptions in the Quran of those who offer it and profit from it, strongly indicates the extent to which such practices, common within the pre-Islamic Arabian society, are seen as a main reason for poverty spreading in a society. Poverty here comes as a natural result of the lack of God's blessings on transactions that do not follow the religious ethical and moral code (Hussein 1968). Therefore, responsibility for poverty is shared by the whole society (Qutb 2000). The poor are responsible to keep trying to emerge out of their dependency for as long as they can. The wealthy are responsible for staying away from greed and unethical economic activities, such as the practice of usury and trade monopolies, which allegedly leave other people disadvantaged and vulnerable to poverty. Wealthy members of society are also responsible for paying their alms. However, poverty is inevitable and it will continue to exist, which means that dealing with it happens by attempting to reduce it rather than to eradicate it.

In summary, Islam defines poverty from a single-dimension basic needs perspective. However, Islam’s explanation of poverty shows a realisation of the complexity of the concept. This explanation has three levels beginning with internal individual causes, then moving to external structural ones, and finally arriving at a divine-instated order of the universe. These views of the meaning, and causes of poverty, are based upon the way poverty was mentioned in the Qu’ran. However, Islam recognises that the poor are entitled to a divine-given right to a certain share in the wealth of better-off members of society. The satisfaction of this right is what
leads to the state of social justice in Islam. The following section documents how Islam has approached the delivery of this right of the poor to subsistence.

2.4.2. Islam’s Approach to Poverty Reduction

In practice, approaching poverty reduction in Islamic thought has taken a philanthropic form by providing the poor with assistance towards satisfying their basic needs (Deneulin and Bano 2009). However, what distinguishes approaches to poverty in Islamic thought is the emphasis on the "duty" and "obligation" standing behind them. Mawlana Sayyid Maudoudi who established Jama'at Islami in Pakistan and Bangladesh believed that Muslims have two duties, one towards God represented in the worship and practice of religion, and another towards their community. In the latter duty, Muslims are obliged to achieve social justice (Nasr 1994). The reference here is usually drawn to a saying by Prophet Mohammed where he declares that members of a community would be all held responsible in front of God if one of them has spent a night in hunger while the rest knew about it (Qutb 2000).

The responsibility to achieve social justice by satisfying basic needs of the poor does not only fall on society as a whole. The state is responsible to make sure that society is able to carry out its responsibility by its supervision for the collection and payment of alms, Zakat. The state is also responsible to compensate for any failures of the Zakat system to achieve its target of satisfying the basic needs of all poor people in society. The state would then be obliged to impose more taxes on the rich to meet the needs of the poor (Mohammed 2006). This obligation to assist the poor where the responsibility of poverty is shared by the whole society has been referred to as "social justice" by most Islamic scholars (Deneulin and Bano 2009). We find this reference to "social justice" in the literature and practice of many of the major Islamic movements and groups, such as the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt (Qutb 2000), Hezbollah in Lebanon (Piscatori 1988) and Da'awa Party in Iraq (Al-Sadr 1981). Zakat has been the primary practical tool suggested by Islam to achieve social justice. Zakat is the Arabic word for almsgiving. In Islam, it refers to a compulsory
religious tax imposed on all Muslims who own its minimum requirements (Deneulin and Bano 2009).  

By assigning the right of the poor to satisfy their basic needs and appointing the state and society to be responsible for the delivery of this right, Islam may have still fallen short of reaching the level of empowering rights provided by the contemporary rights-based approach to poverty reduction presented above. However, Islam still went one step beyond the conventional charitable approaches applied by FBOs at large. Hickey and Mitlin (2009) suggested that the rights-based approaches could be used as basis to establish social justice. Islam’s approach to poverty reduction suggests a similar model except that it’s understanding of what are the rights of the poor is different. The further study in this thesis of the work of IBCSOs in Egypt reveals the extent to which that understanding of the poor’s rights is different between Islam and the western rights-based approaches. It also shows how this understanding leads to a practice of poverty reduction at IBCSOs that will be similar to social protection. The final section of this chapter therefore introduces the concept of social protection and elements of it that are revisited later on in this thesis.

2.4.3. The Meaning of Social Protection and Discourses for its Justification:

Social protection is defined as “public actions taken in response to levels of vulnerability, risk and deprivation which are deemed socially unacceptable within a given polity or society” (Conway et al. 2000, p. 5). The categories of social protection surveyed by Barrientos and Hulme (2008) indicate that social protection is often a form of social assistance funded by taxpayers, or a form of social insurance based on payments from its beneficiaries similar to the contributions made for pensions.

According to Munro (2008), there are three discourses used to justify the adoption of welfare and social protection provision. The first is the risks discourse, which justifies the social protection by the inability of markets, particularly insurance 

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7 The minimum requirement for Zakat on monetary wealth is possessing savings that are equivalent in value to a certain weight of gold. This amount must be saved for a minimum of one year to distinguish it from the exempted money used for household consumption or investment. In today’s prices, the minimum is about 500 GBP. Zakat is also payable on many other forms of wealth including livestock, trade inventory and jewelry. For details on the regulations of Zakat (its conditions, amounts and beneficiaries) see Al-Qaradawy (1977).
markets, to cover blanket protection that would include all of those who may be vulnerable to the threats of poverty. The second discourse is based on theories of human rights which depart from the legal obligation of the state (in most cases, but not all) to provide the poor which rights granted to them by frameworks such as the International Declaration of Human Rights. Finally, the needs discourse departs from the moral consideration for the importance of providing each human being with what is required to prevent harming the “moral agent” that is the human being. Who is capable to freely make choices, especially between what is good and what is not. Munro also makes the point that there are several points where the three discourses overlap. The three discourses are presented in greater details in Chapter Six.

2.5. Summary and Conclusion

This chapter has mapped out the conceptual framework for this thesis, which introduces the main debates addressed through subsequent analysis. First, the chapter defined civil society as a zone between the market and the state mainly composed of associational actors and is aimed at meeting common good interests. The chapter then legitimised the use of civil society as a framework for analysis in a thesis concerned with Islamic-based organisations. The orientalists’ arguments against the compatibility of civil society with Islamic societies and values were responded to as the chapter showed how civil society has existed in various forms in Islamic societies throughout history, and how the orientalist arguments had ignored several realities, such as the fact that civil society is not weak in all Islamic countries as it is in Muslim Arab countries.

The chapter then moved on to the definition of poverty. It tackled two main debates. First, the chapter arrived at Udaya’s multidimensional definition of poverty that views it as a lack of physical resources, capabilities and social inclusion. Second, the chapter presented both sides of the debate between the relative and the absolute definitions of poverty. This is important in the upcoming discussion on IBCSOs’ conceptualisation of poverty.

The following part of the chapter examined civil society’s approaches to poverty reduction starting with the basic needs approach, before moving to the
capabilities approach, and finally arriving at the rights-based approach, which was explored in greater detail. It was highlighted how rights are based on human needs, and how the obligation of meeting those needs has usually been assumed by states, and not civil society that has been slow in absorbing the approach due to several reasons. Such reasons include concerns on funding and the difficulty to convince beneficiaries with the approach. However, the main reason for the struggle of civil society with absorbing the rights-based approach was the cultural critique of the approach, which suggested that it is modernist western-generated idea that does not always feel compatible with the particular characteristics of all societies. The chapter also reviewed the role of civil society in political mobilisation and the various theories that explain CSOs’ ability to bring about political change within their communities.

The following section of the chapter closely examined FBOs. It highlighted several debates related to these organisations. First it was shown how faith is a major component shaping the values and practices of these organisations. However, it is not the only one. Second, the advantages and disadvantages of involving FBOs in developments were surveyed, and it was shown how FBOs can be more efficient and closer to the poor, although their faith could still distract them from performing their development functions. This occurs when faith distracts FBOs into serving other objectives of their faith doctrines whether those were social, economic or political. The third and last debate on FBOs focused on their approaches to poverty reduction. It was shown how FBOs closeness to the poor, and the realities of financing can drive them to restrict their activities to basic needs provision and charitable activities.

Finally, the thesis highlighted the specific case of Islamic civil society. The chapter surveyed the main components of conceptualising poverty and poverty reduction in Islamic thought. It showed how Islamic thought has been viewing poverty from a basic needs single-dimensions angle, and how poverty was attributed by the Qur’an to multiple explanations ranging from God’s will to individual laziness, or social structure imperfections. It was then shown that Islam placed a religious obligation on society at large to ensure that the poor are provided with minimum protection, and that alms payers and the state were the main agents appointed by Islam to carry out this obligation. It was also highlighted how this obligation was
considered in Islamic literature as a right of the poor, and as means for achieving social justice. This view of poverty reduction showed similarities with social protection and the discourses justifying it, which were presented at the end of this chapter.

By taking these debates back to the research objectives in this thesis, it is important to highlight a number of points. There is a key debate between the western notion of rights, where the focus is on empowering the poor, and an obligations-based theory suggested by Islamic literature where state and society maintain the power, as long as the poor are protected from falling below the level of subsistence. The first research objective of this thesis that investigates the approaches of IBCSOs to poverty reduction locates the position of IBCSOs within this debate.

A second key debate that emerges from this chapter is that on the validity of FBOs as agents for poverty reduction and development. The second research objective in this thesis uses the example of IBCSOs in Egypt to verify the credibility of arguments on both sides of this debate. It shall establish what type of contribution IBCSOs can make to poverty reduction. Finally, exploring the role that FBOs play in political mobilisation in Egypt will test if FBOs, such as case study IBCSOs, can be using the cause of poverty reduction to achieve other goals related to the agendas of faith groups that sponsor them as suggested by critiques of FBOs. However, before case study IBCSOs are introduced, it is essential to view the scene where the study will take place. The following chapter documents the past and present of poverty, civil society, and the Islamic movement in Egypt.
CHAPTER THREE
POVERTY, CIVIL SOCIETY AND THE ISLAMIC MOVEMENT IN EGYPT

After outlining the conceptual framework for this thesis, this chapter moves on to describe the past and present situation for poverty, civil society, and the Islamic movement in Egypt. The chapter opens by outlining the scale of the poverty phenomena in the country, including its historic development and main causes. It also discusses and briefly evaluates the main interventions that have been adopted in an effort to reduce it. The second part of the chapter is concerned with a detailed description of Egyptian civil society, including its history and general characteristics up until the eve of January 2011 revolution. The final section of this chapter presents history and present of the Islamic movement in modern Egypt, including the main features of their thought and ideology.

3.1. Poverty in Egypt

3.1.1. Description of Poverty in Egypt:

It is difficult to find reliable descriptive data on poverty in Egypt. This is due to lack of reliable and accurate household surveys that can be used to extract useful statistics on poverty (Roushdy and Asaad 2007). There is also significant scarcity in the data discussing multidimensional poverty in Egypt in favour of concentration on income poverty. However, according to recent Egypt UNDP Human Development Reports, around 40% of Egyptians live in relative poverty with half of them living in absolute poverty (with incomes under two USD a day). The poverty mapping efforts conducted over the recent years have shown that poverty in Egypt tends to be more concentrated in certain pockets especially in Upper Egypt⁸; and is significantly higher in rural areas (Roushdy and Asaad 2007). However, there are theories suggesting that urban poverty in Egypt is much higher than estimated. For example, Sabry (2010) explains that the populations of slums in Egypt are not counted properly as

⁸ Particularly the governorates of Qina, Suhag, Assiut, Beni Suef and Fayoum.
population censuses tend not to fully cover these areas. Also, migration into these areas is not well-accounted for. In addition, borders of administrative districts are greatly misleading regarding which parts to consider rural, and which to consider urban. For instance, the population of the city of Cairo in official statistics does not cover the entire population of what is known as Greater Cairo. It excludes parts of the city that are administratively under the governorates of Giza and Qalyoubeya, which are considered rural. The parts of Cairo within those two governorates (Shoubra and Boulaq for example) contain some of Cairo’s biggest slums (Sabry 2010).

In terms of gender, poverty when calculated by income, occurs in higher rates among males in relation to females by a 4:3 ratio. However, more females are poor than males by the same ratio, when poverty is calculated by expenditure (SED-MENA 2002). Nagi (2001) explains this by indicating that women in Egypt heavily engage in deficit spending, where they spend money they do not actually possess on food and other household needs. In terms of age, the larger the number of young members within a household, the more likely the household will fall under the poverty line; this is due to the high dependency rate of youth on their parents (UNDP 2010).

Studying the relationship between poverty and employment in Egypt is a rather complicated issue because of the common phenomena of masked employment and underemployment. Many individuals are theoretically considered employed because they do work and receive wages. However, they are poorly paid with wages not proportional to their work, and continue to live under the poverty line (SED MENA 2002). Another disturbing common phenomenon is of people who are forced to take inappropriate (on social, moral or economic grounds) jobs because of the lack of suitable opportunities in the job markets. Examples of this witnessed in cases of women who might have a decent job with a decent salary, but are forced to work night shifts and dress in uniforms that might be considered socially inappropriate within their communities (Amin 2011).

Examining multidimensional poverty provides a clearer picture of poverty in Egypt. Extreme income poverty in Egypt has been in decline since the early 1990s. Sayed et al (2010) show that extreme poverty in Egypt with income under one USD a day is as low as 2% of the population. However, it becomes higher when national
poverty lines are taken into consideration. Despite the decline in extreme income poverty, the poor in Egypt have been getting worse-off as a result of neoliberal reforms imposed by international financial institutions during the past decade which led to increases in inflation and reductions in food subsidies by more than 50% over the past two decades, at times when world food prices have been on the rise (Maher 2011).

On the capabilities dimension, inadequate health care represents a significant contributor to poverty as poor environment, sanitation and quality of health care services in areas where the poor live, as well as inadequate medical insurance, all join forces to increase the frequency and severity of the poor’s illnesses, and therefore increase their health care bills (Sabry 2010). In addition, although public basic education is available free of charge, the indirect costs linked to it such as private lessons, books and some service charges imposed by schools are all costs the poor still have to endure in addition to public education’s poor quality (Loveluck 2012 and Tadros 2006). Labour markets in Egypt also fail to provide enough decent and productive jobs and they remain infected with severe violations to workers’ rights in the absence of legal and legislative protection to workers (Maher 2011). All of this in addition to the absence of formal means of finance for the poor (Sayed et al 2010) mean that many of them remain deprived of the capabilities they need to emerge out of poverty.

Finally, the concentration of poverty in certain geographic areas and the low levels of political participation before the revolution left the poor with little channels to address their interests and voice their demands, and in fact enhanced their social exclusion. However, it can be argued that the poor have not been only excluded from having a political voice, but the more relevant exclusion they experienced has been their exclusion from enjoying the fruits of growth, which remained monopolised by those who have access to capital and markets (Bush 2012).

Numerically, the multidimensional poverty index in 2009 indicated that the number of those who can be considered multidimensionally poor in Egypt stood at one third of those who are poor according to the two USD per day poverty line (Oxford 2010). The reason is that many of the poor in Egypt (as shown in data from case studies in this thesis to be presented in Chapter Five) have adequate housing
due to the old tenancy laws that are still in place, which improves their situation on the living standards indicators. In addition, free public schooling (irrespective of the quality) means that enrollment rates are high which leads to a higher reading on the education factor. A clearer picture of multidimensional poverty in Egypt appears from the closer look taken at communities of case study organisations, which follows later in this thesis.

3.1.2. History and Causes of Poverty in Egypt:

To understand root causes of the poverty problem in Egypt, it is essential to consider the history of poverty in Egypt. Galal Amin (2011) in his book *Egypt in the Era of Hosni Mubarak* wrote a chapter about poverty that provides an interesting summary of the history of poverty in the country.

Before the 1952 revolution, which overthrew the monarchy, Egypt’s economy was based on agricultural production with land ownership concentrated in the hands of a wealthy minority in what is similar to a feudal system. Poverty was concentrated amongst peasants in rural areas. At these times, poverty was characterised by the simple lack of income that makes it difficult for the poor to secure food and adequate shelter, as well as other basic survival needs. In the 1950s and 1960s, industrialisation and urbanisation led to migration from rural areas to the cities seeking employment in factories and other public sector institutions. At that time, high employment and controlled inflation worked to contain the spread of poverty. However, Egypt’s defeat in the 1967 war brought a significant change to the scene as the state became less capable of providing the necessary investments needed to maintain high employment. The state also became less capable of maintaining the infrastructure in urban areas. Slowly, poverty combined with deterioration in the quality of living began to take place in the urban settlements to which migrants from the rural areas had moved, and slums began to appear in the cities, and continued to expand with the inability of the state to control them.

By the mid 1970s, the situation began to explode out of control due to the Open-Door economic policy that removed the socialist era restrictions on imports; and introduced to the Egyptian society goods and lifestyles that redefined living standards in Egypt. According to Amin, this was a major development as it redefined
the acceptable quality of life and consequently the aspirations of the poor. While migration to the city was the dream of the 1950s and 1960s, migration to the oil rich Arab Gulf countries became the dream of the late 1970s and 1980s in order to earn the wages required to meet the demands of the new living standards in Egypt. With the oil boom in these countries, Egyptian workers invaded the labour markets there sending back billions of dollars in remittances to their families, and returning home with many of the gadgets and electric machinery that met the aspirations of their families. Meanwhile, dismantling the public sector and opening the import market lead to the spread of Nuevo Riche behavior by those who could afford it, which made the poor feel poorer, and the definition of being poor in Egypt getting wider beyond the inability to secure the basic needs of life. It changed to the inability to afford the cost of private lessons to the children, or costs of providing high quality health care in the newly emerging private health sector.

The government’s reaction to the debt crisis by the unquestionable adoption of the IMF’s privatisation agenda, as well as the decline of the oil prices in the Gulf countries in the late 1980s, sent many Egyptians back to unemployment and poverty. The continuation of inflation, deteriorating public services quality and decline in development investment exacerbated the situation of poverty in Egypt over the 1990s and the first decade of the new millennium to unprecedented levels. The gap between the poor and the rich widened and the poor became more provoked by lavish lifestyle and exaggerated luxuries seen in the media, especially the television. The discontent resulting from this wide inequality in the standards of living led to an overall status of outrage against neoliberal reforms and the groups benefiting from it, leading up to the revolution that broke out in 2011 (Bush 2012 and Dixon 2011).

3.1.3. Government Responses to Poverty in Egypt

To combat poverty, the government in Egypt has been primarily dependant on a huge subsidies program that affected mainly the prices of energy and some basic food items. This program has failed to achieve its target due to fundamental problems in its design and implementation, which meant that much of the benefits it offers are wasted on those who do not need subsidies (SED-MENA 2002). Despite
that, there was reluctance to reform these subsidies due to their political sensitivity. For example, the last attempt by the government to remove subsidies on bread in January 1977 led to massive riots that swept Egypt and required the deployment of the army before the government had to decline and restore the subsidies (Seddon 1990). In addition, the state provides free basic education and health care although their inferior quality and hidden additional costs such books, stationary, private lessons, prescriptions, x-ray fees etc. (Tadros 2006). However, what the government provides specifically for the poor are a number of social protection schemes (Hassanin 1999) that can be summarized as follows:

1) The Social Fund for Development: The Social Fund, as it is popularly named, was founded in 1990 as a result of cooperation with the World Bank, the UNDP, the European Union and three Arab Funds. The fund, which depends on donations and soft loans, attempted to contribute to poverty reduction by job creation through financing small enterprises as well as by donating to community development and infrastructure projects carried out by civil society. While the social fund has managed to create thousands of small businesses and millions of working opportunities over the years, the lack of formal financing available to the enterprises it funded and insufficient resources had minimised its impact (Sayed et al 2010).

2) The Ministry of Social Solidarity (MoSS): The MoSS runs pension scheme that target various clusters of the poor population, such as widows of pension-less workers, and handicapped individuals who lost their jobs. The Ministry also manages the Nasser Social Bank, which audits and monitors the Zakat committees based in mosques that do not have Civil Society Organisatuions (CSOs) attached to them. The revenues of Zakat collected by such committees are spent by each mosque locally. However, the revenues must be kept at monitored accounts in the bank.10

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9 The ones mentioned in this list are those that were found active during the fieldwork for this thesis.
10 Mosques that have Zakat committees are not different than IBCSOs studied in this thesis except that the legal status of such mosques does not allow them the flexibility in decision making that CSOs enjoy. They are restricted by law to monetary redistributive activities.
The Productive Families Project: This project was inherited from the socialist era of the 1960s as it was started in 1964. The project targets poor families by supporting them with logistic assistance and training to start home-based environmentally friendly industries such as textile work or food production.

Mubarak Social Solidarity Programme\textsuperscript{11}: This was a pensions program founded to alleviate the social costs of the economic liberalisation policies in the early 1990s. It targets families with low incomes (with priority given to the disabled), the chronically ill, and unemployed young people.

Nasser Social Bank: In addition to its role in managing the local mosque Zakat committees mentioned above, the bank lends money to poor and disabled individuals who run income-generating projects. In addition, it offers “social loans,” which are interest-free loans granted in order to meet social obligations such as marriage, the costs of medical treatment, and in response to natural disasters.

All of these programs are inadequate. Their coverage remains minimal and the amounts they provide are of little significance. They fail to provide the required safety net to protect those who are vulnerable from poverty (Nagi 2004). Many of the interviewed recipients at case study organisations in this thesis were benefiting or had benefited from one or more of these schemes. However, the amounts they received were usually minimal and barely effective. For example, respondents who said they received the Social Solidarity Pension reported receiving 80-120 EGP\textsuperscript{12} a month per household with this constituting their only formal source of income. This amount of money is considerably below the poverty line set by the Salafi case study organisation (Interview B3); this defined the poverty line of Egypt at an income of 240 EGP a month per individual. It is also under the 1.25 USD per day poverty line under which only 2% of the population lived in 2009 (Oxford 2010).

\textsuperscript{11} The name of Mubarak has been most probably dropped after the revolution.

\textsuperscript{12} In September 2011, 1 USD = approximately 6.50 EGP, which means that this pension amount equals 12-18 USD.
3.2. Civil Society in Egypt

3.2.1. History of Civil Society in Egypt

This section starts with a brief review of the history of Egyptian civil society as presented by the research of Aziza Hussein (2003), who is one of the pioneer practitioners within modern Egyptian civil society. According to Hussein (2003), Egypt has a very long history of active civil society dating back to the seventh and eighth century where the earliest known forms of CSOs in Egypt were evidenced. Those were the Sufi orders that brought together members of society to conduct joint religious ceremonies and collective worship. However, the earliest sign of CSOs’ involvement in social service (providing health care, education and poverty reduction activities) appeared in the 15th and 16th century. Primitive organisations funded by endowments, which were legalised by the state in 1517 under the name of the *Waaf* (endowment in Arabic). Both Muslim and Christian endowments flourished for centuries as they benefited from secure and rather sustainable funding. They established hospitals, mosques and schools. They also ran many economic projects that employed thousands of people and generated profits that further expanded their charitable and services activities.

The first modern Egyptian CSO appeared in 1869 and it was called *El Maaref*. The CSO was dedicated to printing, publishing and marketing educational and cultural materials. It was followed by the Egyptian Geographical Society in 1875. However, the first modern Islamic-Based CSO was the Islamic Benevolent Society, *el gam’eya el khayreya el islameya*, which was founded in 1875. It was followed by a similarly named Christian version in 1891. Another IBCSO was established by prominent leading national figures including Qasim Amin, Saad Zaghloul and Mohammed Abdu in 1892. All these Fait-based Organisations (FBOs) were primarily dedicated to education and caring for the poor.

In the first half of the twentieth century, Egypt experienced a period of liberal thinking which witnessed a flourishing civil society and the establishment of many CSOs. Egyptian CSOs at that time were providing services of considerable high standards of that time. Examples included *El Muwasah* and the Red Crescent hospitals, which had been providing free and low cost medical care for thousands of...
people. In the 1930s and 1940s, however, the government carried out a crackdown on CSOs that had any political connections. Nevertheless, some big CSOs on the national level were still founded at that time, such as the Christian Summer Camps and Muslim Young-men Association.

After the 1952 revolution, the number of CSOs continued to rise as the legal framework for establishing CSOs was upgraded for the first time since it was first introduced in 1935. However, CSOs after 1952 were mostly under strict state supervision and control. In fact, the state almost ran and managed many of them, such as the Family Planning Association, which was even headed by the Minister of Social Solidarity.

3.2.2. Civil Society in Egypt before the 2011 Revolution

In recent years, there has been no reliable source for the precise number of CSOs in Egypt and their typologies. Wide variations exist in the estimates given by various accounts. The 2008 Egypt Human Development Report stated that Egypt has a few more than 15,000 NGOs, half of which are located in the poorer and less developed Upper Egypt, 23% in Lower Egypt and about 19% in Cairo. The source of this data is a survey that was carried out by the Egyptian Federation of Associations through local offices of Social Solidarity authorities. However, the official figures of the Ministry of Social Solidarity (MoSS) show that the number of CSOs exceeds 21,000 CSOs. The geographic distribution here tends to indicate higher presence in major urban centers of Alexandria, Cairo, Port Said and Suez, which have the highest rankings amongst all governorates in terms of Human Development Index (HDI). Overall, 70% of the CSOs here are located in urban communities (UNDP 2008). The significantly higher number, and larger sizes, of CSOs in urban areas reflect the relatively elitist nature of the involvement in civil society activities. CSOss were usually founded and managed by educated, wealthy individuals who are more available in larger cities and in the capital. For the purpose of this research, it is important to note that those figures do not include mosques. Overall, the literature on Egypt’s civil society usually does not tend to consider mosques as CSOs or NGOs.

13 This section is mainly based upon UNDP 2008 and 2010, El-Daly 2007 and Kandil 2005.
unless they are registered as such with the Ministry of Social Solidarity (MoSS). So, Islamic-based Civil Society Organisations (IBCSOs) that are formally registered and operate through mosques such as case study IBCSOs in the thesis, are considered CSOs.

To help understand the characteristics of civil society in Egypt during the era of former President Husny Mubarak (1981-2011), it is important first to consider the surrounding political environment. On the eve of the 25th of January 2011 revolution, Egypt was ruled for more than thirty years by a nominal democratic police state headed by President Mubarak. As Mubarak himself was a military officer, the military had a major share of the country’s ruling class. It reigned over a vast economic empire and monopolised all means of hard power although it never attempted (or perhaps needed) to use it throughout Mubarak’s time (Lynch 2012). At the same time, the country enjoyed a relatively independent judicial system that managed to challenge the regime on various occasions, forcing it by legal power to retrieve or revise several actions and decisions (Selvik and Stenslie 2011).

However, that was not always enough to prevent the regime from oppressing the opposition and preventing it from forming any serious challenge to its power. The Egyptian Ministry of Interior with its secret police called the State Security Investigations (SSI) and a 1.25 million man-strong paramilitary force worked hard to repress any form of political activism that they saw as a threat, or a potential threat, to the regime (Zahid 2010). The only exception to this seemed to be the Muslim Brotherhood group, which was established in 1928 with the aim of reviving the lost glory of the Islamic nation. The group, which was firstly registered as a CSO, has been legally banned on many occasions after a troubled history with all regimes that ruled Egypt since its birth. However, the legal ban was never fully implemented and the group was allowed to exist through its service provision activities, especially in the fields of health care and education (Pargeter 2010). The group was also allowed to run for various elections by fielding its candidates as independents. Despite claims of widespread rigging, the Muslim Brotherhood has managed, or perhaps was allowed, to win seats in the parliament as well as in unions and syndicates. This was described as an attempt by the regime to expose their conservative agenda as a straw man to gain popular approval for themselves as the only possible alternative to a religious
state led by the Muslim Brotherhood in the absence of any significant secular opposition to Mubarak’s rule (Selvik and Stenslie 2011).

In this environment, civil society was left to exist as long as it stayed mostly clear of political activism (Langohr 2005). It was kept contained by the government in order to prevent it from growing too much to provide any serious threat to the regime. Those who studied civil society in Egypt before the revolution appeared to agree on describing it as a rather "weak, fragmented and contained" body. Egyptian civil society suffered various problems that included lack of skills and capabilities, weak management, elitism, red tape and bureaucracy (UNDP 2010). It also suffered lack of funding and strong financial dependency on the government as subsidising CSOs using public funds had been widely practiced (Becker 1997). The relationship with the government was influenced by the emergency law (in effect throughout the entire reign of President Mubarak from 1981 to 2011), and by the strong involvement of the State Security Investigations. The latter had strong presence and influence inside the Ministry of Social Solidarity (MoSS), which was the government’s arm in dealing with CSOs (Tadros 2007). Being sidelined by the State, civil society was left out of any serious involvement in policy making; leaving it to perform only service provision and economic development functions (Ozlem and Icduygu 2012). The outset regime's persistent policy of unleashing non-religious development organisations and containing advocacy and political CSOs has severely restricted the ability of civil society to achieve any significant change on the national level, and resulted in a situation which Langohr (2005, p. 193) had called "too much civil society and too little politics".

The majority of CSOs in Egypt are mainstream organisations working in sustainable development or advocacy, in addition to Community Development Associations (CDAs). CDAs are local associations established and sponsored by the government in the 1960s to carry out community development activities, especially in rural communities, following a trend for community development that was introduced by the World Bank (Hulme and Turner 1990). However, most CDAs have lately become "dysfunctional" (UNDP 2008) as most of the conditions that accompanied their establishment no longer exist. One third of CDAs can be considered Faith-Based Organisations as they practice development activities and
claim religious affiliation. Those include Islamic and some Christian CDAs. In general, FBOs (CDAs or not) are abundant in numbers, but most importantly abundant in resources and activities (UNDP 2008).

The leadership of Egyptian civil society is almost exclusively confined to older men from more affluent socio-economic backgrounds. Women, rural populations and the poor are usually found on the receiving end of the work of Egyptian civil society (Ozlem and Icluygu 2012). Financially, most CSOs fund themselves through local donations, although sometimes foreign funding makes a little contribution, with almost total absence of membership fee funding. All financial accounts of CSOs are under direct supervision and monitoring of the Ministry of Social Solidarity (MoSS). Such supervision continued despite many calls from civil society activists for placing CSOs accounts under the quasi-independent Central Department for Accounting that monitors public sector organisations in Egypt (UNDP 2008).

Funding shortages expose Egyptian civil society to restrictions imposed by the authorities on its operation, human resources and partnerships. The total annual income of CSOs in Egypt in 2008 has been estimated to be two billion EGP (about 220 million GBP). Only about 15% of the funds come from foreign donors and are received only by few organisations. The MoSS subsidises about 30% of CSOs and pays salaries for about 15% of the work force in the sector, while almost half of CSO workers are unpaid volunteers (UNDP 2008). Financial difficulties faced by civil society in Egypt are often attributed to a long heritage of dependency on either rent income or government subsidies. This heritage has impaired the creation of any serious fund raising skills or culture (Becker 1997). An exception, however, is shown by the Islamic-based organisations that demonstrated noticeable efficacy in fund raising.

FBOs make the biggest portion of CSOs in Egypt as mentioned above. However, it is difficult to give a precise figure of their share because official registers do not record the extent of the religion affiliation of the organisations. Yet, examining organisation names as they appear in the register of CSOs (issued by MoSS in Egypt), and their activities that might contain elements typically associated with FBOs (such as funeral services and organizing pilgrimage trips to Saudi Arabia), show that they exist in abundance. In this thesis, the definition of FBOs is restricted
to what this thesis had adopted in Chapter Two, when it specified FBOs as CSOs explicitly claiming a religious identity that perform development or humanitarian activities. However, experience on the field in the two districts that were studied still revealed that FBOs outnumber NFOBs even when religiously-affiliated CSOs that do not practice development are eliminated. FBOs in Egypt also tend to share with NFBOs all the characteristics explained above with regards to the environment in which civil society operates; except that FBOs do not suffer much from financial difficulties, and enjoy the benefits of generous donations, regular contribution and even funding from Egyptian expats living abroad (El-Daly 2007).

During the pilot research conducted for this thesis in the summer of 2009 and in January 2010, there were three districts in Cairo that were examined as potential sites for the thesis fieldwork. In this examination, I examined CSOs that operated in these areas (using official local MoSS records in one case, and information from knowledgeable locals in other cases). The scenes in the three districts (and in a forth one that included the NFBO case study in this thesis which was added later) appeared consistent. Based on this research, IBCSOS found in this field in urban Cairo can be divided into three main categories:

(1) Organisations that directly or indirectly belong to, or work under, the umbrella of nationwide religious organisations, such as the Muslim Brotherhood and Al-Gam’eya El-Shar’eya. The parent organisation manages or supervises a nation-wide network of mosques, CSOs and health institutions that provide social assistance, education, health care and social services. It is difficult to ignore the existence of political or religious agendas for such networks that have been traditionally applying their services to win loyalty and support of the local population for their causes (Sulivan and Abed-Kotob 1999).

(2) A number of CSOs and CDAs that claim an Islamic affiliation, but their activities seem to be quite similar in nature and target to other NFBOs. This gives the impression that those organisations are using their Islamic labeling to gain credibility

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14 Although this pilot fieldwork only covered areas in urban Cairo and can not therefore generalise to cover rural Egypt or other urban centres in the country, recent research on Egyptian civil society and FBOs such as El-Daly 2007 and UNDP 2008 did not suggest any different categorisation or point to any specific category of FBOs that are not mentioned here.
within communities they serve, rather than to reflect any deep Islamic influence on their doctrine or practice. Some of these establishments have founded their own mosques to provide religious services to their communities.

(3) Local mosques that used to provide informal social assistance at the personal responsibility of mosque leaders; but decided to change the framework of their activities to establish formal CSOs. This occurred as a response to the introduction of the latest version of the NGOs law in 2004. According to data from the case study organisations that will follow in this thesis, mosques have decided to establish CSOs in order to remain legal because the law allows collecting money from the public only by authorised bodies such as CSOs. Operating through a legal framework also appeals to donors who prefer to get printed stamped receipts for their donations, and to know that CSOs receiving their donations are financially monitored by the government (as will be shown in data from case study IBCSOs later in this thesis). Another reason for the move towards CSOs is the desire to move from being under the supervision of one strict governmental department (the Ministry of Endowments and Islamic Affairs), to another more flexible and easier to deal with (the Ministry of Social Solidarity).

The following table summarises the characteristics of FBOs found in the field that were explained above:
Table 3.1.: The three categories of Islamic-based CSOs in Egypt.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organisation Character</th>
<th>Major Networks</th>
<th>Islamic non-mosque based CSOs</th>
<th>Mosque-based CSOs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Size</td>
<td>Major nation-wide organisation with branches on several levels (governorate and local community).</td>
<td>Medium and small working either on city level in major urban centers or on local community level.</td>
<td>Mostly community-based with a few big mosques in the capital and major cities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Registration</td>
<td>All registered as CSOs except the Muslim Brotherhood, which remained officially &quot;banned&quot; until the 2011 revolution and was still not registered afterwards.</td>
<td>CSOs with the Ministry of Social Solidarity.</td>
<td>Mosques registered with the Ministry of Endowments and Islamic Affairs, while their affiliated CSOs are registered with the Ministry of Social Solidarity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main Development Activity</td>
<td>-Zakat collection and distribution -Operating hospitals and medical centers -Running schools with religious orientation -Social services (orphanages, women training centers and pension homes).</td>
<td>-Small medical units -Poverty support includes but is not exclusive to microcredit and capacity building -Education, environmental and awareness activities when foreign funding is available -In some cases managing mosques for worship.</td>
<td>-Zakat and donations collection and distribution through direct social assistance -Social support services -Medical help -Informal religious mosque based education.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funding</td>
<td>Ambiguous, but claimed to be mostly local, significant donations from sympathisers with political Islam, inside and outside Egypt.</td>
<td>Local donations, but many have learnt the ways of applying for and acquiring foreign funding.</td>
<td>Community-based including donations from expatriates who once lived in CSOs’ communities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Target Group</td>
<td>Nationwide with possible links to the wider Islamic movement.</td>
<td>Local communities.</td>
<td>Local communities.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.3. The Islamic Movement in Egypt:

This section explores the modern Islamic movement in Egypt. It starts by defining the movement and explaining the main foundations of its thought; it then reviews the historic developments of the Islamic movement in Egypt and finally, it presents the two main wings of the current Islamic movement in Egypt, which are the Muslim Brotherhood and the Salafis. This introduction to the Islamic movement in Egypt is important for this thesis as it provides the reader with the ideological and historical backgrounds of two out of the three case study IBCSOs considered in this thesis.

3.3.1. The Origins of the Islamic Movement in Egypt

Abdelwahab El-Afendi defined Islamic movements as “those movements that believe in the comprehensiveness of Islam in all aspects of life and position themselves as the leadership for what they regard as the necessary effort to re-emphasize the totality of Islam against the laxity of society and the shortcomings of its leadership, negative influences and the intrigue of its enemies. By doing this, they claim for themselves the moral leadership of society, thereby challenging both the traditional, political and religious leaderships” (El-Afendi 2003, p. 41). He then points to the terminological difference between the term “Islamic” and the term “Islamist” which are often used to refer to the movement. The reason for the variation, according to El-Afendi, is that political groups that call themselves “Islamic” are often criticised for their claim to represent the values of Islam. Critiques reject this claim on the basis of it being an attempt to monopolise belonging to Islam for the purpose of seeking political gains. Consequently, critiques who reject the movement’s monopoly of representing Islam choose to call the movement “Islamist” in a reference to Islam as an ideology in order to deny the movement the default association with Islam as a religion.
According to Sulivan and Abed-Kotob (1999), the roots of the modern Islamic movement in Egypt can be traced back to the second half of the 19th century when Egypt had recently fallen to the British colonial rule; and Egyptian intellectuals began to look for a solution to what was then a crisis of a nation occupied by a foreign power while suffering from drastic economic and social decline. At that time, Gamal el Din El-Afghani was a religious scholar who moved to Egypt from Afghanistan to pursue further studies at the Azhar University. El-Afghani came with a new message to the intellectual scene in Egypt. He theorised that Islam is a religion of reason and science that could trigger dynamic and progressive change within society. This view of the role of Islam as a mean of change was then emerging as a new concept. Before that in Islam, religion and religious sciences were restricted to the study of spirituality and the individual practices and rituals that form the Islamic Shari’a. El-Afghani’s student Mohammed Abdu followed on his teacher’s philosophy by bringing up the idea that Muslims must accept the new ways of the modern world and that they must try to find a compromise in which the knowledge of the modern world can be understood within the logic of Islam. Religion for Abdu must be “friendly with science”. Abdu, whose thought was the foundation of the modernisation of the Azhar University, encouraged the establishment of a progressive and ideal Muslim society based on the restoration of Islamic morals. He pointed out that the role of Islam does not just come as a religion, but as political, legislative, scientific, spiritual and educational sets of principles.

On the other hand, also according to Sulivan and Abed-Kotob (1999), the group of intellectuals led by Rashid Reda (another of El-Afghany’s student) who were inspired by the teaching of radical medieval scholar Ibn Taymeya adopted what was known as the Salafi model. The main idea they theorised was that Islam is a lost value and retaining it could be achieved only with the return to teachings and lifestyles of early Muslims exactly as they appear in old religious literature known as Kutob El-Torath (books of heritage). All major Islamic social movements and organisations established during the 20th century in Egypt originate from one of the above mentioned two schools of thought of the modern Islamic movement.

On the organisational level, the establishment of major Islamic organisation networks such as El-Gameya El-Shareya (GS) in 1912, and the Muslim Brotherhood in
1928, as well as the Young Muslims Association, and other similar networks that appeared in the first half of the 20\textsuperscript{th} century, meant that the Islamic movement was on the rise with rapid expansion of its capacities and membership bases (Hussein 2003). That rapid rise of the movement can be explained as a response to various crises that the Arab and Islamic Worlds were, and mostly still are, suffering from. Dekmejian (1985) outlined these crises as follows:

First, there was an identity crisis, where nationalism and pan-Arabism had failed to answer the identity question properly as religion does for many people. Second, a crisis of legitimacy, where the vast majority of the ruling political regimes have been either installed and sponsored by foreign powers that are in many cases seen as enemies; or were oppressive tools of certain classes, sects or ethnic groups that monopolised the fortunes of the nations. Thirdly, a crisis of state failure, where regimes that claim modernity and secularism have continuously failed to adopt a development model that is capable of delivering to the people their aspirations for development and progress. There was also a cultural crises resulting from contradictions that existed across Arab and Muslim societies between tradition and modernity, the West and the East, the local and the foreign and more. Many Muslims and Arabs found in Islam a product of a supernatural power that is legitimate, capable and universal as God. Only such a power could have solved the complications of all such crises for them. This environment and the absence of religious sociology in the Arab World made religion come across to be stronger than ideology (El-Afendi 2003). Unlike any other ideology, religion was set to be above logic-based criticism, reason and scientific thinking, which other ideologies are subjected to.

The main development in the history of the Islamic movement in the first half of the 20\textsuperscript{th} century, however, remains the establishment of the Muslim Brotherhood. The following section will outline the movement, its principles and history.
3.3.2. The Muslim Brotherhood

The Society of the Muslim Brotherhood was founded in 1928 in the Suez Canal town of Ismailia in Egypt by Hasan El-Bannah, a young teacher who was deeply moved by the collapse of the Ottoman Empire as a result of World War I, and the abolishing of the caliphate Institution in 1923 (Rubin 2010). According to Sagiv (1995) the founding principles of the Muslim Brotherhood were as follows. First, the exclusiveness of Islam as illustrated by El-Bannah’s phrase: “Islam is a religion, a state, a prayer, a jihad, an obedience, a rule book and a sword.” Second, Islam must be restored to its first teachings. Third, there is a Pan-Islamic nation that includes all Islamic societies in the world, and this nation has a common purpose and a common identity. Fourth, the ultimate goal of the Islamic nation must be to restore the caliphate institution as it has been previously conceived. Fifth, the way to reach the goal of reviving the caliphate is through the application of Islamic governance.

Although El-Bannah had claimed on several occasions that the Muslim Brotherhood is not a political party, it has been engaged in politics since its early days. In fact, the brotherhood has grown in the following decades to become the umbrella movement from which almost all modern Islamic fundamentalist movements and groups in the Arab world have emerged (Dekmejian 1985).

During the 1930s and 1940s, the Muslim Brotherhood expanded on its community services and advocacy work gaining more popularity and recruiting more members (Rubin 2010). However, things took a dramatic turn with the formation of the El-Tanzeem El-Khas (translated from Arabic: The Special Organisation), which was a secretive armed wing that branched from the main brotherhood organisation. In the 1940s, El-Tanzeem El-Khas was involved in a series of assassinations and bombings, including the assassination of Egyptian Prime Ministers Mahmoud Al Nokrashi. This eventually provoked King Farouk to order the Political Police to assassinate Hasan El Bannah in February 1949. The assassination of El-Bannah and the simultaneous banning of the brotherhood by the government led the group to work underground for the first time. Later, despite a short lived honeymoon with the Free Officers who overthrew the monarchy in the 1952 revolution, the brotherhood

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15 The historic information in this section is based on Dekmejian (1985), Paregter (2010) and Rubin (2010).
fell out with the regime and was hit by executions and arrests eliminating most of its leaders, and sending thousands of its members to prisons or to exile in the 1950s and 1960s.

In prison, Sayyid Qutb emerged as the second spiritual leader of the Muslim Brotherhood. He could be considered as the true founder of the brotherhood’s thought as El-Banna was mainly a leader and an organiser. Qutb was a scholar and a writer. His books In The Shades of the Qur’an (1954) and Milestones (1964) shaped a more radical Muslim Brotherhood line of thinking that mainly believe in the infidelity of the ruler who does not apply Islamic governance and the society that does not live in accordance to Islamic principles. Qutb was executed in 1966; but the radical thinking he founded was later adopted by a faction that broke out from the brotherhood and established the violent Al-Jama’a Al-Islameya Jihadist group in the 1970s. At the same time, President Sadat released Muslim Brotherhood members from prisons after decades of conflict with the government hoping that they would support him against what was then a strong leftist opposition. The mainstream movement of the brotherhood exploited the opportunity given by Sadat and started to adopt a moderate approach in dealing with the government, which avoided confrontation and resorted to politics and advocacy rather than violence and terror. Despite the worsening of the relation with the regime during the last days of Sadat rule and throughout the time of Mubarak regime, the brotherhood continued to compromise with the regime and managed to survive as the most organised and powerful opposition group until the end of Mubarak’s era in 2011.

When studying the Muslim Brotherhood, it is important to note that the movement as it stands today is very different from how it was in the days of El-Banna and Sayyid Qutb. According to El Mahdi and Marfleet (2009), this is a fact usually ignored by many of those who have studied the movement. The movement has changed not only due to its turbulent history and continuous clashes with the ruling regimes in Egypt, but also due to the wide social, political, and economic changes that swept through the Egyptian society in the 20th century. These changes had numerous implications over the characters of the brotherhood as an organised movement, and as a school of thought. Over the years, the brotherhood was also divided into many groups with various degrees of radicalism, which makes it difficult
to distinguish what the Muslim Brotherhood ideology actually is anymore. The focus thus becomes on what the brotherhood can represent as an organisation and a structure.

3.3.3. The Salafis in Egypt

Salafism is the second of the two main organised wings of the Islamic movement in Egypt. Two of the main three books dedicated to the study of the Salafi movement appeared in the past two years, and the third dates back to 2009. However, the movement is far from being new. The term Salafi is originally referring to the Salaf, an Arabic term that means “those who have passed.” In Islamic theology, this refers to the first three generations of Muslims, the companions of Prophet Mohammed and the two generations that followed. The main principle that defines Salafism is the “advancing of text over logic” (Hasan 2012). The word “text” here refers to religious texts, which are made of two components: the Islamic holy book the Qur’an, and the sayings of Prophet Mohammed known as “Hadeeth”. The Salafis believe that whatever was mentioned in these religious texts, and their direct interpretation appearing in the books of heritage, should be literally adhered to even if it contradicts what may appear to be human reason logic. Salafis, therefore, believe that the beliefs, lifestyles and practices of the early generations of Muslims mentioned above make the only acceptable form of practicing Islam. Most of Salafis believe that those who do not belief in the supremacy of those teachings are “infidels” or non-believers in Islam. At the very least, they would be considered deviants from the right path. However, the various groups within the Salafi movement tend to disagree on the severity of measures that should be taken to deal with those infidels or deviants.

The theology of Salafism dates back to the ninth century. Its foundations were established by Imam Ahmed Ibn Hanbal (one of the four pioneer scholars who are considered the fathers of Sunni Islamic religious science) and his student Ibn Taymeya. Officially, the Hanbali school of Sunni Islam is adopted only in the Arabian

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16 This section is based on Hasan (2012), Mejier (2009) and Zahran et al (2012)

17 It is possible to add the Sufis as a third wing of the Islamic movement in Egypt. However, they are insignificant for this thesis as they do not typically have CSOs and do not conduct poverty reduction activities.
Peninsula with Saudi Arabia coming across as the heartland of Salafi Islam. However, the teachings of Ibn Hanbal and Ibn Taymeya are widely spread across the Islamic world. If one walks into any of the historic Medarasas (religious school) in Cairo’s Islamic District, one would find that there are four bays in each mosque around the centre of the building. Guides would agree that the four bays were actually used as four lecture halls where each of them is teaching one of the four schools of Sunni Islam. Therefore, the Hanbali school and consequently Salafism has always existed in Egypt. However, it first began to take a formal organisational shape (as did the rest of the Islamic movement) in the first half of the 20th century. It then flourished and developed into its various subgroups recognised in the 1970s and in the present day. This resulted from the return of hundreds of thousands of Egyptian workers to their home country from the Arabian Peninsula as a result of the decline of the oil boom in these countries. Many of these Egyptian had already lost faith in much of their value system due to economic decline and lack of confidence following the 1967 War defeat. For them, Salafism, as practiced in the Gulf (mostly Saudi Arabia) was an alternative thinking they found worth bringing back to be tried at home.

While references to Salafism in the literature on the Islamic movement in Egypt are minimal as seen before, those that exist hardly ever distinguish between the various subgroups that form the Salafism in Egypt as known today. This thesis considers only one subgroup, Al-Gam’eya El-Share’ya (GS). The following section outlines the position of the GS within the Salafi movement in Egypt by comparing it to the main Salafi subgroups in Egypt listed below:

1) The Association of Ansar El-Sunna: established in 1926 as a network organisation aiming to restore the original, and in its view true, doctrine of Islam by purifying the practiced faith from what has been added to it over the centuries of what they and other Salafis have called Al-Beda’a.\(^\text{18}\)

The association controls a network of mosques throughout Egypt. However, it is different from the GS because its mosques are primary

\(^{18}\) This is an Arabic word, which is the plural for the term Beda’ah, which refers to a social phenomena or a practice that has been newly invented and introduced into Muslims’ practice or behavior. In the Salafi doctrine, it refers to many things from the practice of visiting Sufi saint tombs, to pray and ask for relief, to simple things such as wearing trousers, which some Salafis do believe is a Western invention that is inappropriate from a religious point of view.
used for advocacy and worship rather than service provision. The group also adopts a line of thought that believes in the duty to establish Islamic governance and it believes in the infidelity of any ruler who does not carry out the “rule of God” in the land. However, Ansar El-Sunnah never applied that to any political practice.

2) Al-Gam’eya El-Share’ya (GS): established in 1912 by a prominent Azhar scholar called Mahmoud Khattab El-Sobky. While it shares a similar thought to Ansar El-Sunnah, it believes in the importance of “social solidarity” as a principle means to help spreading the true version of religion through enhancing the role of mosques as centres for advocacy and service provision. The GS therefore controls the biggest network of mosques in Egypt with over 350 branches nationwide and sponsors more than 600,000 orphans in the country (Interview B34).

3) Al-Da’wa Al-Salafeya (also known as the Salafis of Alexandria): the group launched in the 1970s by some Islamist university students who had split from the Muslim Brotherhood for allegedly being too passive. They also opposed the Jihadists and adopted preaching and organised activism to reach their goal of reviving the Salafi practice of Islam. They only started to practice politics after the 2011 revolution and they are the wing responsible for the establishment of El Nour Party, the biggest Salafi party in Egypt at the time of writing. Most of the famous faces of the Salafi preachers, particularly the TV star preachers such as Mohammed Hassan, Abu Is’haq Al-Huwainy and Abdel-Mon’em El-Shahhat belong to this group.

4) Motional Salafism (In Arabic: Al-Salafeya Al-Harakeya, otherwise known as the Salafis of Cairo): a school of thinking rather than an organised group and they can be considered the radical version of the Salafis of Alexandria. This Salafi school is mainly comprised of preachers who primarily influence mosques in the middle class area of North Cairo’s

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19 This figure is according to Hasan (2012). Arguably, this is an underestimation of the real number. I spotted ten GS branches at one district in Cairo where the fieldwork was carried out as will be shown later.
heavily populated district of Shoubra. The Cairo Salafis have been heavily targeted by the State Security Investigations over the past decade after being accused of preaching in support of the 9/11 attacks.

5) Independent Salafis: the oldest of all the groups with roots of thought dating back to the medieval ages in Egypt. This group is composed of a number of preachers, who each have their own followers, and they do not follow a single school of thought, or belong to a particular organisation. They neither preach on politics nor care about it. They believe that the ills of society are the results of its own people’s sins. Accordingly, they focus on advocacy for the reform of the individual as a mean of reforming society. This means changing individuals’ personal behaviour, such as the code of dress, or avoiding watching the media entertainment and so on.

6) Al-Salafeya Al-Madkhaleya: originated in Saudi Arabia in 1991 as a Salafi school of thought that accepted the actions of the Saudi government to seek the assistance of non-Muslim foreign powers to fight off the Iraqi threat that appeared after Iraq’s invasion of Kuwait in August 1990. Those Salafis believe in the absolute must of “obeying the Muslim ruler” and never rebelling against him or even advising him in public no matter what he does. They accept bank interests, peace treaties with Israel and the modern state as an alternative to the traditional model of the Islamic nation, the Ummah. They are also considered fierce critiques of the Muslim Brotherhood, as well as any individual or group who opposes Muslim ruling regimes.

Despite the wide variations between Salafi subgroups, the relationship between them remains mostly respectful and friendly despite the disagreements amongst them on the best means for change. They do recognise their differences, but they tend to show solidarity with one another when needed. This can be seen in how they praise one another in media interviews or when responding to followers’ questions during religious lessons that take place in mosques and videos of which can be widely found on the internet.
3.4. Conclusion:

This chapter established the contextual framework for the thesis. First, the chapter explored the poverty problem in Egypt. It showed that around 40% of the Egyptians live in or very close to poverty. Studying poverty in Egypt from a multidimensional perspective is complicated because tenancy laws, food subsidies, deficiencies of the employment markets and free public education lead to what are often unrealistic indicators of life qualities, and capabilities that are not as severe as the image might be in reality. Many factors contributed to the poverty problem in Egypt. However, the most significant of them are economic liberalization policies that increased inflation, reduced subsidies and dismantled much of the public sector. Poverty has been also caused by a number of social and demographic factors such as the return of many Egyptian workers from the Arab Gulf countries in the late 1980s following the end of the oil boom there.

The government made attempts to reduce poverty via subsidies programs, various social protection schemes, and by providing financial help to selected categories of people and small enterprises. These measures had little impact on the scale of the poverty problem in the country either due to inadequate design of the schemes, or to insufficient funding allocated to them, and the inability of the government to budget them in a sustainable way.

This chapter has also explored an Egyptian civil society that is abundant in the number of CSOs, dominated by FBOs, and restrained by several internal and external obstacles such as lack of skills, weak management, elitism, bureaucracy, and lack of funding. Islamic-based civil society organisations in Egypt either belong to nationwide religious organisation, or they are community-based, affiliated to local mosques. Egyptian civil society has been prevented by the SSI during Mubarak’s era, as well as by red-tape and other legal barriers, from having a significant impact on politics in Egypt. Instead, most of its worked remained in the services sector.

Finally, the chapter examined the past and present of the Islamic movement in Egypt. The most popular major Islamic organisation is the Muslim Brotherhood founded in 1928. Although it does not have a clear ideology, it has been mostly
considered a moderate movement that tends to take compromising approaches. The other major wing of the Islamic movement in Egypt is the Salafi movement, which flourished in the 1970s and 1980s, but has remained understudied until its recent rise in the Egyptian political scene following the 2011 revolution. The Salafis in Egypt are divided into several sub-groups that differ on the means of achieving the Salafi agenda. However, they mostly agree on their strict and mostly uncompromising understanding of Islam.

This chapter has set the scene in which the case studies of this thesis shall be researched. The thesis is now ready to move on to present its primary data, but first, the following chapter shall discuss the research methodology chosen to carry out the fieldwork for this thesis.
CHAPTER FOUR
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter explores the methodology employed in generating the data and the subsequent analysis for this research. This thesis includes four in-depth comparative case studies; three of these are Islamic-based Civil Society Organisations (IBCSOs), and one is a Non-Faith Based Organisation (NFBO)\(^2\). A range of qualitative research methods was used to gather data including, participant observation, semi-structured interviews and group interviews. Rapid Comparative Assessment was used with the IBCSO cases to examine whether these case studies were typical of similar organisations in their communities. Data analysis methods also utilised a range of qualitative methods, such as pattern matching and explanation building.

This chapter starts by defining the in-depth comparative case study approach, highlighting potential strengths and weaknesses. It then explains in detail the process of selecting case study organisations for this thesis before moving on to a detailed examination of data gathering and data analysis methods. The chapter also considers the ethical concerns that have been taken into account for this research, as well as the potential advantages and limitations of the methodology used for this thesis. Furthermore, it discusses measures that have been taken to utilize the advantages, and minimise the impact, of the potential limitations. Finally, the chapter maps out the implementation timetable of the fieldwork for this thesis.

4.1. The In-Depth Comparative Case Study Approach

The In-Depth comparative case study approach is a research strategy that involves a close and in-depth detailed investigation of certain units, situations or phenomena over a period of time (Hartley 2004). The extended period of time the researcher spends investigating each case study is a key advantage of this approach.

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\(^2\) I use the term NFBO to refer to the fourth case study as opposed to the term “secular organisation” because, as will be shown later in this thesis, the organisation is not secular in the way that it does not recognise or use religion. Instead, its activities and practices are not based on religion.
(Yin 1994) because it allows the establishment of trust, and the formation of connections and relationships that allow a deeper understanding of the research objects. This compensates the researcher for the absence of a representative sample of the studied population. This thesis includes four case studies, three of which are for different types of IBCSOs working on poverty reduction in Egypt. For analytical reasons, a fourth case study of a non-faith-based organisation (NFBO) applying the rights-based approach to poverty reduction was included in order to help further establish the distinguishing features of IBCSOs.

I spent an average of two months investigating each case study with the exception of the Muslim Brotherhood-affiliated mosque where only three weeks were spent there, for reasons explored later in this thesis. All case studies were visited on at least one occasion after the initial case study period for complementary data gathering (details in section 4.7. in the research plan). During the time spent with case study organisations, I observed day-to-day activities and closely interacted with various actors within each case. Furthermore, I examined each organisation as they reacted to different situations such as dealing with different cases of poverty, responding to communications by different actors inside and outside the local community, and approaching different donors. The in-depth case study approach allowed me to explore many aspects of the organisations which although may not have been apparent or directly visible, proved very important in understanding how these organisations operate. In particular this approach offered vital insights around research questions two and three concerning assessment of the quality of Civil Society Oragnisations’ (CSOs) poverty reduction work and their role in political mobilisation. These aspects include for instance power relations between donors and board members, or governmental officials and the organisation, and the influence of Islamic thought on the organisations' practices.

The in-depth comparative case study approach was chosen in preference to a wider selection of cases or a survey method that would have covered many more organisations as this would have failed to produce the detailed data essential for answering the research questions of this thesis. Surveys, if adopted as a main research strategy for a thesis with this research agenda would fail to explore observations and concerns that may have emerged during the research process and
were not expected/known when surveys could have been designed (Aldridge and Levin 2001). In particular, with a previously under-researched topic like the one considered in this thesis, the potential to miss out from these essential observations and concerns would be substantial. In addition, surveys entail a heavy logistical burden that includes high costs, extra human resources required and difficulties in securing accessibility to all targeted mosques. Surveys also produce an abundant amount of data, which means that some data may not get analysed in depth (Chambers 1983). For this particular thesis, surveying mosques would have faced an additional problem, which is the remarkable bureaucratic requirement to get necessary permits from the Egyptian authorities in order to conduct such research. Finally, there was the difficulty of obtaining reliable data because mosque leaders would tend to maintain discretion on many valuable details of their work due to real or imaginary political or security hazards that hovered around Islamic-based civil society in Egypt before the 2011 revolution. This reinforces the choice to pursue an in-depth case study approach.

Nevertheless, the drawbacks of case studies in comparison to other research approaches must be considered. Disadvantages include accusations of biases that result from personal preferences, emotions or encounters of the researcher (Hammersley 2008) since they are left freely to interpret observations and findings they obtain (on multiple levels and over a long period of time). Researchers' subjective views may influence the selection of the studied cases and also the recording and analysis of the observed findings. However, it is important to highlight that while surveys amongst other quantitative methods (Dale 1998) may seem more scientific, they still involve their own share of biases such as the choice of benchmarks, analysis methods and the interpretation of different numeric patterns within the results. This leaves them in no advantage position in comparison to case studies as far as subjectivity is concerned.

A further criticism for the case study research approach comes from its inability to provide a base for the establishment of scientific generalization. Yin (1994) who mentioned this drawback of case studies, responded to it by raising the question of whether generalization was indeed required in case studies research. Case studies for Yin do not only aim at providing theoretical examples to explain
broader categories. In addition, they aim at a deeper understanding of the particular cases studied. This view is particularly applicable to this thesis since it does not search for any new theory of Islamic contribution to poverty reduction. Instead, the focus is on studying the means by which organisations such as the ones studied here, are contributing to poverty reduction practice by CSOs and what can be learnt from these particular organisations.

4.2. Selection of Case Studies:

This thesis includes case studies of four CSOs operating in the field of poverty reduction in Egypt. Three of which are IBCSOs, each belonging to a major category of IBCSOs in Egypt. This choice was based on the typology of IBCSOs outlined in the previous chapter. This typology included three main categories of IBCSOs:

1) Community-based mosque organisations;
2) Non-mosque based organisations with Islamic titles;
3) Networked mosque organisations.

This typology was further developed for two reasons. First, as explained in the previous chapter, the second category of organisations was comprised of IBCSOs that are indistinctive from NFBOs except for their Islamic titles. So, the second category was removed from the initial research plan which was designed to include three case study organisations only. When choosing the networked mosque, the Salafi network of El-Gam’eya El-Shar’eya (GS) was chosen to study as opposed to the Muslim Brotherhood because the latter’s political agenda was initially seen as an undesirable distraction to the research concerned with the qualities of poverty reduction activities. In addition to a community-based and a networked organisation, a case study of a NFBO that adopts a rights-based approach for poverty reduction was also included in order to use it for comparison with the case study IBCSOs where relevant. However, the new context that emerged after the 2011 revolution which toppled the regime of President Husny Mubarak led to a review of the research questions and the research plan. A research question on the role of IBCSOs in political mobilisation was added. Therefore, the need emerged to add an additional case study of an IBCSO with alleged political links, with the obvious
choice being an IBCSO affiliated with the Moslem Brotherhood, the biggest Islamist political group in Egypt.

The diversity of case studies was essential in order to capture as many aspects of Islamic-based CSOs' work as possible. It was also helpful to capture the influences of the different settings of these organisations on their operations. The available time and resources have not allowed for more case studies otherwise the quality of each case study would have been significantly reduced. It is important to stress again that using multiple case studies was not to "validate" the findings in each of them (Jupp 2006). It was expected that findings will be different as we move from one case and one context to the other. These variations were both expected and desired. The main purpose for multiple case studies was to widen the scope of data and to cover as many areas as possible of the work of the different types of CSOs as well as to compare between the various types of CSOs that exist in the field.

The following criteria were established in order to ensure that case study IBCSOS chosen would be comparable and of similar size and type.

1) The IBCSOS must be affiliated to mosques.

2) The mosques must be of medium size where Friday prayers are held, but not located on a main street or considered to be the main mosque of the neighborhood. This condition was set to capture the community aspect of the organisations, and to keep them within a size that is possible to study within the specified time for each case.

3) They must explicitly or implicitly recognise that they are working towards poverty reduction within their local communities.

4) They must have regular year-around activities aimed at poverty reduction.

5) The activities must be dependent on the mosque in their location, funding, management, and other logistics.

6) The mosque administrators must be willing to grant the researcher access to data sources including permission to attend meetings, accepting to be present during activities and facilitating access to donors and recipients for interviews.
For the fourth case study of the NFBO, it was essential to find one that it was comparable in size to the three case study IBCSOs. The NFBO also had to be adopting the rights-based approach for poverty reduction as a reference point to the development of civil society’s approaches to poverty reduction outlined in section 2.2. earlier in this thesis. This makes the comparison between the NFBO and the three case study IBCSOs more capable of addressing conceptual questions related to the latest relevant debates on poverty reduction and civil society.

These were difficult and demanding requirements, but my knowledge and experience of Egyptian society and my contacts there, and the pilot field work, have made it possible to find the four organisations that match the criteria, and were also willing to grant me the required permission to conduct the research.

The following lines briefly introduce the four case study organisations for this thesis. They shall be presented in greater detail in Chapter Five:

1) **The community-based organisation**: The first IBCSO selected (referred-to further on in this thesis as GMT) is affiliated to a community-based mosque that does not represent any particular ideological or political beliefs. The organisation is located at the former informal settlement of Dair El-Malak, (part of the Greater Wayly East Cairo district) which was granted formal status by the government and provided with utilities and services, yet it is still home to a sizable low income population, many of whom benefit from the mosque’s assistance.

2) **The Salafi IBCSO**: The second IBCSO is affiliated to a mosque that is part of a nationwide network of Salafi mosque-based organisations called El-Gameya El-Shareya (GS) which was introduced in section 3.3. The GS branch studied here is located at a busy market less than a mile away from the first organisation with both serving neighborhoods and populations that are similar in their demographic and socio-economic characteristics (more on that will follow in the next chapter).

3) **The Muslim Brotherhood-affiliated organisation**: The third case study (referred-to further on in this thesis as MFA) is affiliated to a mosque closely connected to the Muslim Brotherhood. The mosque is located in Hadayeq El-Quba district, which is a middle-class neighborhood within the
**Greater Wayly** district to which the first two case studies belong. While the mosque is located in an economically more affluent neighborhood, it serves people from other less affluent areas of the same district that are located within short walking distance from the MFA mosque. This meant that the characteristics of recipients of the three case studies were mostly similar. There was no other Muslim Brotherhood-affiliated mosque within the less affluent areas of the district that could be located.

4) **The non-faith based organisation**: The fourth case study belongs to an NFBO that operates poverty reduction activities in the southern Cairo suburb of Helwan using the rights-based approach. The organisation (referred-to further on in this thesis as MCDA) is located about 25 kilometers to the south of the district where the other three case studies are present. The organisation was chosen from the only two organisations that apply the rights-based approach to poverty reduction in Greater Cairo that could have been located after six weeks of searching. The choice between the two organisations was determined by selecting the one that is comparable to the first three case studies in this thesis. MCDA is located in an informal settlement called Mansheyet Gamal Abdel-Nasser, which is part of Helwan district. This area is mostly inhabited by families of current and former workers at the nearby huge weaving and steel factories that were built during the 1950s and 1960s by the socialist regime of late President Gamal Abdel Nasser. Most of those workers have migrated to work in these factories from rural towns and villages throughout Egypt especially from Upper Egypt.

The Map on the next page shows the locations of the four case study organisations:

After explaining the criteria for selecting the case studies, the chapter shall move to outline the various data gathering methods that were used during the field work for this thesis. The next section shall also describe the methods that were used to record the collected data.
Figure 4.1. Map of the City of Cairo showing locations of case study organisations

4.3. Data Gathering Methods

4.3.1. Participant Observation

Participant observation was used to collect data from the daily activities of case study CSOs. Those activities include the daily interaction (in formal meetings or in everyday activities) between CSO leaders and field staff on one hand, and donors, recipients and other community actors on the other. Participant observation is a research method where the researcher is involved in social interaction with the "informants" within the "milieu" of the latter (Taylor and Bogdan 1998). The method is based on the first-hand experience that researchers could get from living themselves within the context of their research objects. This increases the reliability of the research findings because it becomes difficult to deceive the researcher in contrast to what might be done with a total outsider (Burns 2000). Participant
observation does not necessarily require researchers to participate in the activities they are observing. Instead, researchers are allowed to choose their level of participation anywhere between being "complete participants" and "complete observers" (Burgess 1984). In this thesis, the choice was of the latter. This was to avoid the main drawbacks of participant observation. The method is criticized for its potential to suck-in researchers into deep involvement with objects of their research to the extent that it may form human relations and emotions that could affect the objectivity of data analysis (Holy 1995). Choosing to a complete observer also allowed me to focus more on analyzing what I see rather than directing my attention to the issues related to participation in studied CSOs’ activities. In addition, active participant observation could involves an ethical hazard if researchers are faced with observations believed to be illegitimate or illegal (Akeroyd 1995). Maintaining a low profile within the organisation and observing things from a distance reduced the probability of getting directly involved in such ethical dilemmas.

Participant observation has been criticized for other alleged weaknesses. Brewer (2001) emphasized how it tends to generate "unsystematic" data that is difficult to analyze. Also, there was the concern about the possibility of the observed to act in "atypical" ways either to please the observer or to conceal what they may see as embarrassing or too private (Waddington 2004). Nevertheless, rigorous data recording and continuously keeping research objectives in mind have been able to off-set these drawbacks of participant observation and use it to produce useful data about working strategies of case study CSOs, and their relations with other organisations and individuals. This data when critically analysed was both appropriate and helpful in answering the research questions, especially the first one concerning poverty reduction approaches of IBCSOs. It is important here to note that the permission to attend CSOs’ meeting and to be present during the preparation and execution of their activities was already secured from case study organisations before the actual field work had started. This meant that gaining access to data sources had not consumed any time from the period dedicated to each case study.
4.3.2. Semi-structured and informal Interviews

In addition to observing meetings and activities, semi-structured and informal interviews were used to gather data from the organisations' staff, donors and recipients as well as other key informants. In many cases, informal interviews were used within contexts other than the case study CSOs' headquarters such as local café or informants’ shops or even houses, where informants could find friendly surroundings. Informal interviews facilitated gaining trust of informants, who did not feel the pressure of a "questioning session". Interviews were utilized as an effective tool to gather data that might explain valuable observations recorded from the field by trying to understand motives and justifications of these observations. Interviews that supplement a participant observation method preferably use open-ended questions and do not extend for long sessions (Stake 1995). This was convenient for the characteristics of the research area where most of the respondents were not available for interviews taking long time.

Interviewed informants in all case studies are listed in details in the thesis Annex I. However, the following list summarizes the main categories of informants interviewed for this thesis in all cases studies:

1) CSO Board members.
2) Donors.
3) Recipients.
4) Mosque Imams at IBCSOs.
5) CSOs' paid staff.
6) CSOs’ members.
7) Committee chairmen and members at MCDA.
8) Other key informants.

The following table shows the number of interviews conducted in all case studies:
Table 4.1: Number of Interviews per Case Study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case Study Category</th>
<th>1 GMT</th>
<th>2 GS</th>
<th>3 MFA</th>
<th>4 CDA</th>
<th>Other Informants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Board Members</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donors</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2(^{22})</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recipients</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mosque Imams</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSO Staff</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSO Members</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rights Committee members</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key Informants</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-total</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

** Total number of interviews: 161

Individual interviews were the main form used. However, group interviews were used on a few occasions for logistical reasons such as shortage of time (in the third case study of the Muslim Brotherhood-affiliated mosque), or when it was difficult to pick up some recipients who would show up at CSOs only on pay-days. Group interviews can produce more reliable data in terms of epistemology (Steyaert and Bouwen 2004). They solve the problem of different concepts being defined differently amongst different people. They encourage respondents to present their

\(^{21}\) The categories of interviewees at this case study are sometimes overlapping. For example, one of the workers at the organisation (the office boy) is a member at one of the rights committees, a community member (who may be a beneficiary form the organisation) may also be a member of the organisation’s general assembly. In such cases, I defined the category for each interviewee according to the way they introduced themselves to me or according to the primary reason they were selected to be interviewed.

\(^{22}\) The GS mainly depended for funding on regular monthly payments made by community members and mosque attendants who are called “orphan sponsors.” There were donors who made bigger but less frequent payments. The GS was quite reluctant to grant access to such donors on the basis that they would prefer to keep their identities concealed. It was possible to interview two of them only when they happened to come to the organisation themselves when I was present. I approached them directly asking for the interviews. Other such donors usually send their donations without appearing themselves.
personal experiences and views which are usually diverse by nature within a coherent conceptual framework making detecting diversities easier. Moreover, within the particular social context of this research, group interviews were useful as they gave people a collective feeling of security when they came together to contribute to the research without one of them bearing alone the responsibility of "giving away information". However, group interviews were not extensively used in order to keep the previously mentioned strategy of maintaining a low profile of the researcher. That is not to mention other problems of group interviews, particularly the way with which the response of one informant might affect the response of others.

The critique of King (2004) against interviews was taken into account. The fact that they require long time is irrelevant here because they were practiced within the wider framework of a case study, which allowed several weeks on the field. On the other hand, the point that interviews tend to produce large amounts of data that might not be all needed for analysis, and could make analysis more difficult, and time-consuming is responded to by clarifying that interviews were used to tackle, and further clarify, certain issues and concerns that have been raised by observations made on the field.

A detailed list of all interview questions is available in Annex II.

4.3.3. Triangulation

This thesis used two of the various types of data collection triangulation outlined by Flick (1992) and Jupp (2006). The first is triangulation of data sources, where data on the activities of case study organisations was collected from many (all if possible) members of the committees that manage mosques and CSOs and did not depend on only one or two persons. In addition, multiple donors and recipients were targeted as sources for data about the patterns of making donations to the organisations and receiving benefits from them. This was essential to strengthen the validity of analytical conclusions derived from collected data, and to protect thesis findings from the accusation of being based on specific cases or data gathered from particular individuals.
The second form of triangulation used was methodological triangulation within the case study approach between participant observation and interviews, as those actors who were observed were also interviewed to further validate their observe behaviour. In some cases, where possible, document analysis was used to validate data collected from interviews. That was particularly true with regards to information about recipient selection and fundraising. Document analysis of the organisations’ financial records, recipient social case study forms and recipients registers were used in all case studies except the GS which did not allow access to the organisation’s documents.

4.3.4. Rapid Comparative Assessment

Rapid Comparative Assessment is a practice derived from Robert Chambers’ (1983) Rapid Rural Appraisal, whereby the researcher makes a number of quick research visits to different research objects within the same population. The aim of the activity is to verify that the samples taken for detailed case studies are typical representative of other supposedly similar objects in the population. Rapid Comparative Assessment was therefore used to validate the applicability of the gathered data from chosen case study organisations to other organisations belonging to the same categories in the same community of the case studies. This was only applied for the Greater Wayly area, which has a total of 83 mosques including the three case study IBCSOs. The exercise was conducted with the help of the local Ministry of Endowments (MoE) officer who provided me with information about the size and types of poverty reduction activities, organisational structure and affiliation of all mosques.

The idea of interviewing management or staff within a sample of these mosques was ruled out due to the concern about the validity of any gathered data from such an exercise since it is difficult to establish the required level of trust that would make such interviews produce valid useful data in such a short time. The local MoE officer offered the author access to the records that show the sizes, approaches

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23 Social case studies are evaluation reports produced by case study CSOs to evaluate the eligibility of potential recipients to receive assistance from these CSOs. Details of recipient selection comes in the following chapter of the thesis.
and numbers of recipients of all organisations under his supervision, which showed that chosen case study organisations were mostly representative of other similar organisations within the same community except that the second case study of the Salafi GS was considerably bigger than other GS branches in the area. Also, the MFA was rather unique because of its affiliation with the Muslim Brotherhood. Only two other mosques in the area had similar affiliation before the revolution. Finally, there were a small number of mosques established by CSOs rather than being mosques that have established CSOs. There were no apparent reasons to think that this could have made their activities approaches significantly different from those of case study IBCSOs. This exercise was conducted towards the end of the fieldwork process at a time when the author had a clear idea of the main components of the poverty reduction activities at case study CSOs. Rapid Comparative Assessment was not conducted to verify the data gathered from the NFBO covered in the fourth case study because that organisation was one of only two of its kind operating in the whole area of Greater Cairo.

4.3.5. Data Recoding

Data for this thesis was divided into two parts. The first part is data gathered from interviews, which was recorded in hand-written notes and computerized mostly within 24 hours after their gathering. Interview transcripts were then categorized into five groups (one for each case study and the fifth for some key informants). This data is referred to in the following chapters by codes such as A2 or C25, where the letter in the code refers to the interview group and the number refers to the interviewee. Tables detailing the names and positions of interviewed informants as well as the time and place of each interview are found in the thesis Annex I.

The second part of data is made from the notes gathered from the field observation as well as from informal interviews or discussions with informants that took place throughout the fieldwork. This data will be referred to in this thesis by using the date of the recording. They were also collected manually and computerized soon after their gathering. Computers and voice recording technology have not been used in the field because they could have induced the feeling of unease on
informants and could have exposed the researcher to unnecessary suspicions especially before the revolution when the obvious fears from voicing opinions in an undemocratic environment did exist.

4.4. Data Analysis Methods

Data analysis for this thesis began with coding the data. The decision that had to be taken after that was choosing between the manual and the computerized method to analyze the data. Although using data analysis software offered a more attractive and perhaps easier solution, there was a problem in finding the time required to get sufficient training on the use of data analysis software. This was a direct result of the unexpected extensions that the fieldwork for this thesis had to go through as a result of the changes in the research plan following the revolution. Therefore, the decision was taken to conduct data analysis without the use of software. The size of the data still imposed a challenge, but it was met with a thorough coding procedure. The main data analysis methods used for this thesis were the ones outlined by Yin (1994). In addition, guidance on the actual models and steps used to apply these methods in analyzing and coding data arising from discourse, argumentation, conversation and rhetoric was sought from four articles by Gill, Leach, Liakopoulos and Myers, which are all part of Bauer and Gaskell’s (2000) edited volume on qualitative research. Accordingly, the following is a summary of the main data analysis methods used in this thesis:

1) Pattern Matching: In this method, empirically based patterns are compared to predicted ones determined before the beginning of data gathering. For this thesis, pattern matching was used for a different purpose, which was to measure the extent to which the studied CSOs' approach to poverty coincided with one or more of the three civil society approaches to poverty that were outlined earlier in section 2.2 of this thesis. Yin (1994) states that this method is useful to establish the "internal validity" of research by showing the coincidence between the predicted patterns and those evident from the data gathering. The target here was not to validate any hypothesized pattern, but to determine the position of the studied
cases from the already existing patterns. The data that was analysed using this method was mostly the data that describe the organisations' activities.

2) Explanation Building: This method aims at establishing an explanation of observations and findings that match a theoretical framework. While the method is mainly used in explanatory research, it was useful for this thesis in determining the extent to which the practice of the studied CSOs represents a unique Islamic theory and practice of poverty reduction. Analysis with this method required an earlier specification of a theoretical framework from which a number of propositions were drawn. In the analysis stage, the gathered data was compared with the details of those propositions and then the same practice was done with several cases to validate the theory by examining its applicability to various cases. The Islamic understanding of poverty from a theoretical perspective has been already outlined earlier in this thesis. This method was also used with the field notes, especially those gathered from the case study organisations on their roles in political mobilisation.

3) Logic Models: Logic models are based upon the establishment of hypothetical causality relations between various events; and then examining if the actual events captured with the data has matched the hypothetical model or not. This method was mainly useful in analyzing data for Chapter Seven where the characteristics of case study IBCSOs were examined in order to determine their effectiveness as agents for development and poverty reduction. Logic models were used to examine the influence of actors including staff, donors and mosque Imams on the actual performance of each organisation or the influence of events and actions, such as Friday sermons or other fundraising activities on the operation of the organisation. The method was also used to analyze the relationships between case study CSOs and other community actors such as umbrella Islamic organisations, political movements or government departments with influence on the local community. Exact models of analysis were constructed according to the particular actors involved in each case.

Apart from the above analysis methods, a direct interpretation analysis strategy was chosen in favor of an aggregation strategy. Stake (1995) explains the difference between the two options. In the former, analysis is done through the interpretation of each individual event or action on its own. In the latter, events of
similar nature or origin are grouped together and analysed as a unit. The direct interpretation option was adapted because (1) it coincides with the purpose of case study research, which is to understand the particular cases studied rather than to use them as a sample that represents a wider whole for the purpose of theory generating. (2) We have recognised earlier that the use of multiple cases in this research has been aiming at creating a variety of data that allows capturing a diversity of patterns and observations. The significance of this diversity would have not been adequately captured by aggregation strategy. Furthermore, (3) aggregation requires extra time and effort to establish criteria for data grouping prior to the actual recording of data in groups, which would have not been efficient.

As all data gathering and analysis methods are now outlined, it is important consider a number of ethical concerns that were taken into account throughout this research. The following section outlines a number of these concerns and explains how I addressed them.

4.5. Ethical Concerns

There were three main ethical concerns involved in this research, which were taken into account during the fieldwork:

1) In the few group interviews that took place, it was important to make sure that the privacy of informants was protected through refraining from asking questions about personal details, such as their exact income. It was also important not to ask questions that could have led informants to give answers that might compromise their security; for example questions with potential answers involving criticism of the authorities or leaders of the organisations providing them with assistance. Such limitations provided justification as to why group interviews were not widely used in this research. Finally, I would have diverted the discussion away if issues were raised during group interviews that could have led to real-life tension between the interviewees. This all came in recognition of my obligation to anticipate the possibility of harm for the informants (Laws 2003).
2) Confidentiality of data is protected by keeping it securely stored online and accessible through password-protected files, while written notes have been destroyed as soon as data was securely stored.

3) Anonymity of informants is maintained by referring to them in data recording with pseudonyms. This is done although most informants have given their consent as suggested by Homan (1991) to mention their real names. However, it was seen during the data analysis stage that some informants might not be pleased with certain conclusions reached about themselves or their organisations as a result of the data analysis. They may therefore regret giving their consent to use their real names if they read how the data they have given was analysed. So, in order to comply with my obligation to anticipate possible harm for the informants (Laws 2003), the decision was taken to use either pseudonyms or to refer only to their positions. The names of the case study organisations are also concealed by using abbreviations in order to make it difficult, or at least uncertain, to specifically determine them.

In addition to the above main ethical concerns, I made sure to present myself in my true identity (Maxwell 2005). I presented myself at the case study organisations as well as to all informants as a PhD student at the University of Manchester. There was no fear that this identity could have caused any safety hazards. On the contrary, it might have been helpful in getting sympathy and support of people on the field who appreciated me as their fellow countryman studying abroad, which was a quite positive image to have within the targeted communities.

My personal security was maintained throughout the whole duration of the fieldwork by choosing safe neighbourhoods to work at. Safety levels throughout Cairo were acceptable before the revolution. During the revolution, however, the Cairo police forces have collapsed at the hands of the protesters who burned down most of police stations in the city and pushed police forces to withdraw from the streets. Security has deteriorated in many districts. The research fieldwork was interrupted during that period. When resumed, I, as a local, was able to take the right route in the right time to reach safely the case study areas. My personal security was never at risk.
Copies of the final thesis will be made available to the case study CSOs and to any of the research informants on the field who might express interest in having access to the final research product. I will present my findings verbally to them in case they do not have an access to somebody who might provide them with useful translation.

4.6. Advantages and Limitations of the Research Methodology:

This section discusses the points of strength of the research methods deployed for this thesis, as well as the main concerns that could have impacted on the methodology if not resolved. First, considering strengths, this research will not suffer from any of the problems that Shaffir (1991) has warned against when the researcher belongs to a different ethnic group, nationality or religion other than those of the studied communities. I am an Egyptian Middle Eastern Muslim with ten years of living experience in the country including five years of working experience in the development sector. This has given me a significant comparative advantage regarding accessibility to the data in the field. On one hand, my background meant that I was not seen by community members as a stranger. In fact, they were most willing to help him as their "fellow countryman studying for a degree abroad". In addition, my cultural background helped me in understanding the customs and the habits of the locals, which meant I had the ability to understand gestures and meanings that would have been quite difficult for a stranger with a foreign background to grasp.

On the other hand, there have been some obstacles. The most prominent obstacle felt during the pilot fieldwork was the initial suspicion of the CSOs toward me and my motives. This may be attributed to the strong grip of the Egyptian government over any mosque-based activities before the revolution, which was due to the profound fear by the former ruling regime of the potential use of mosques by Islamic opposition to politically mobilize people for anti-government activity. Therefore, it was not surprising for IBCSOs to deal with any stranger coming in to gather "information" as a suspected government agent. Even with gate keepers who were relatively close to these organisations, it still took considerable effort to gain
access, even if only briefly, to check the feasibility of conducting fieldwork at a certain organisation. When case studies were chosen, I was required by host organisations to obtain written permits from both the State Security Investigations and the Ministry of Endowments and Islamic Affairs. Later, personal negotiations succeeded to drop the security permit at least.

Tackling this suspicion in an early stage during the fieldwork was a priority. Petterman (1991) points to the significant amount of patience required before an outsider can gain trust of studied communities, which is done in his opinion by "learning the ropes" of the people and the place. It was important to find the best manner and the best time to approach people of different backgrounds and characteristics. For example, there was the witty person who could be won with a joke or a personal story, and the natural leader who wanted to feel ample respect and appreciation. Without an ethnic or language barrier, such a task became easier at the expense of investing little more time in some occasions. It was also important to highlight the academic assignment nature of the research, which capitalized on an expected appreciation of education and students amongst informants. Talking more about the University of Manchester and telling stories about living in the UK and various pervious experiences of the researcher, as well as engaging mosque leaders in conceptual discussions on the meaning of concepts related to the research, such as poverty, Islam, Charity and civil society (and participating in political debates and discussions after the revolution when politics became the top interest of most people) have all significantly helped to break the ice. The CSOs' consent to grant me access to meetings, donors and recipients was already negotiated and obtained for the selected case studies before actual fieldwork began. Therefore, what remained of this problem was limited to the effort required to break the ice on the field in order to gather more details in the interviews, as well as to get access to organisations' documents and records, which was successfully obtained in all cases except the GS. It is important to note that these problems were not encountered at all with the secular organisation where the staff have been quite welcoming and easy going from day one and the long time taken to find the case study was partly compensated by the little effort required to break the ice with the informants there.
The main impact of the mistrust problem in this thesis has come during the stage of case study selection, where selection had to come from certain mosques to which reliable gate keepers were able to arrange access. It might have been a more systematic practice to choose case studies through a mapping of the relevant communities. However, I still believe that this shortcoming did not affect the choice of appropriate case studies as access was not by any means the only criteria considered for the selection.

4.7. The Research Plan

This section outlines the main stages that have been followed in order to arrive at the thesis findings:

(1) The literature review: The work in this thesis began with a thorough literature review that covered several areas related to the research questions. These areas included:

A. The conceptual framework, which entailed exploration of works on the concepts of poverty and civil society, as well as the literature on FBOs and poverty reduction approaches practiced by civil society organisations.

B. The approaches of FBOs to poverty. This came in recognition of the specific nature of FBOs, which makes them stand as a distinct category within the greater circle of civil society literature.

C. The concepts of poverty and civil society in Islamic thought and their relationship to the conceptual framework on poverty and civil society mentioned above. This was important to provide an understanding of the theoretical framework that could have been shaping the work of Islamic-based CSOs in Egypt.

D. The history and the present status of civil society and CSOs in Egypt with particular focus on Islamic-based CSOs, Islamist umbrella organisations and the Islamic movement at large. That included an in-depth look at the historical development of the Islamic movement in Egypt, with particular focus on their social service and poverty reduction activities.

(2) Preparation of fieldwork: Based upon the results of the last area of the literature review, a two-month pilot study was conducted in the summer of 2009.
Several IBCSOs presenting various types and sizes of organisations were visited in Egypt in order to set the most reasonable criteria for selecting case studies; and to determine the most suitable methodology to study them.

(3) Fieldwork: In May 2010, after choosing the comparative in-depth case study approach and obtaining the necessary approvals from local authorities in Egypt, fieldwork for this thesis began with the first and second case studies. The third and final case study was underway when the revolution broke out in January 2011. The fieldwork was interrupted and a major revision of the research plan was carried out. A decision was taken to revise the already completed two case studies, resume the third case study and add a fourth one. The fieldwork was therefore completed in March 2012; after a six-month extension.

What is important to note here is that during the entire duration of the work conducted for this thesis, the focus of the research remained on the ways with which Islamic-based CSOs contribute to poverty reduction in Egypt. However, the events triggered by the outbreak the revolution have provoked the inclusion of greater attention to the political implications of these organisations’ poverty reduction activities; particularly their role in political mobilisation. This was due to the necessity to capture what is seen as a historic and exceptional moment of political change which might affect the characteristics of poverty reduction work by CSOs in Egypt for a long time to come. The modified research also might provide a solid ground for future research that could aim to explore the potential effects of the anticipated further political changes in these organisations. These changes might possibly leave the organisations in a position and a shape that is quite different from the one they were at when research for this thesis started two years before the revolution. While recognizing the significance of these potential political implications, it was important to make sure that they do not divert the research from its main concern of poverty reduction. In fact, up to the time of writing this thesis, there were still very little changes that actually have taken place in the structure, approaches, resources and affiliations of Islamic-based CSOs in Egypt.

I spent a minimum of eight weeks with each case study (except the third case study of the Muslim Brotherhood-affiliated mosque which was covered over a period of three weeks only as the main purpose of having that case study was to capture
the organisation’s behaviour during the elections campaign). During that time, I was stationed at my relatively near-by home. The case study organisations were visited on almost daily basis throughout the time designated to each case study. On some days, more than one visit would take place (except for the fourth NFBO case study, which was located at a long distance from my home and was never visited more than once a day). During visits to case study organisations, I used to witness the committee meetings, Friday prayers, occasions when the recipients collect their benefits and when the donors contribute their donations. The timing of these activities varied from one case to another depending on the schedules of the mosque leaders. For example, at the GMT case study, most of the organisation’s board members were civil servants with full-time jobs. They all used to attend the mosque right before the Maghreb (dusk) prayers and stay there managing the work of their mosque and its CSO for about two or three hours until after the Isha (early night) prayer. The organisation’s treasurer might sometimes stay for two hours after the noon prayer (about the mid-day) to conduct some work for the organisation. Therefore, I used to spend the evening every day at this organisation and utilize the day hours to collect data outside the organisation walls from donors and recipients and other key informants in the community.

The first week of work on each case study was reserved as an introduction to the organisation and its key figures without scheduling any interview sessions. This was done to ensure I would have sufficient background to plan the level of the interviews details that would generate more viable data. This time was also used to break the ice with the local community and to enhance the level of trust between myself and the informants. This was quite successful in most cases to the extent that I was considered as a part of the organisations’ setup. Board members began to share with me stories about the background of their work and the people they deal with as well as opinions about various issues related to the organisation or to the public domain. As the participant observation process commenced, it moved with its focus through three different stages as suggested by Whyte (1997). In the first stage, the focus was on the structures identifying the key actors and the centers of power and influence within the organisation and the local community. After that, the focus moved to identifying the contexts through taking a closer look at the CSOs' activities.
During that stage, which used to last for about two weeks, interviews with board members, organisation’s staff and mosque Imams (where applicable) were conducted and if possible, the records of the organisation were examined. In the second month of each case study, the focus moved to the sequences and processes that shaped the context, which takes us deeper into examining the influences of the Islamic understanding of poverty on the CSOs’ approach to poverty reduction. During that stage, interviews with donors and recipients took place. This plan was adjusted to the realities of accessibility enforcing the beginning with board members in some cases. The number of interviews conducted for each case study was shared in table 4.1 earlier in this chapter.

After the initial period of field work, case study organisations were revisited a few times whenever I was in Egypt. The purpose of the visits was to check on any new developments especially after the revolution and to gain further information, if available. It was also to engage the board members and some key informants in discussions over the findings of the thesis and to get feedback from them. These discussions were often useful to deepen the understanding of the fieldwork findings.

The basic fieldwork was paused during the Muslim holy month of Ramadan in the summer of 2010 in order to avoid the possible impact of the traditional intensive seasonal charity activities on the data gathering process. Instead, I had planned to visit each of the case study organisations for a few days during that month with the aim of capturing their unique activities during the Muslim festive period. However, delays in approving the selection of the case studies made it possible only to do this with the first case study. Instead, data was later gathered through interviews on how the activities of the organisations change during the month of Ramadan.

4.8. Conclusion:

This chapter has explained the research methodology chosen for this thesis. It presented the qualitative in-depth comparative case study approach, which guided the research methods utilized for this thesis. The chapter has also reviewed the results of the primary field work and the criteria that were adopted to select the four case study organisations. After that, the chapter outlined data gathering methods
with emphasis on participant observation and interviews as the most significant. It also outlined data analysis methods, a number of ethical concerns as well as the advantages and limitations of the adopted research methodology, and the research plan for the thesis.

The main point to highlight from this chapter is the significance of qualitative research methods in providing data for in-depth understanding of the various phenomena that are represented by the case studies. Another key point to highlight is the local background of the researcher, which has given this thesis a significant advantage by improving the chances of choosing methods that would work for the particular Egyptian environment in which I have had both academic and operational experience in the past. The following chapter begins to present the thesis findings by providing a detailed description of all four case study organisations and the poverty reduction activities they perform.
CHAPTER FIVE

THE CASE STUDY ORGANISATIONS: SURROUNDINGS, STRUCTURES AND ACTIVITIES

This chapter describes the four case study organisations in this thesis by presenting the main features of the data collected from them during the fieldwork conducted between May 2010 and February 2012. This description is for two purposes. The first is to fully acquaint the reader with the four case study organisations in order to better establish the differences between them before moving on to the analytical part of this thesis. The second purpose of this chapter is to show the links between case study organisations, their communities, and the various elements of the conceptual framework outlined earlier in Chapter Two.

This chapter begins by outlining the location and surroundings of the organisations. This part of the chapter familiarises the reader with the multidimensional poverty problem that case study organisations are supposed to tackle and different conditions the organisations have to work under. The chapter then moves to describe case study organisations’ history and legal status, which reflects the associational nature of the organisations in coherence with the definition of CSOs adopted earlier in Section 2.1. After that, the chapter examines the structure of the organisations. This enables the thesis to view these organisations against the characteristics of Faith-based Organisations (FBOs) discussed in Section 2.3. by showing the decision making process within these organisations and whether or not they can be truly independent from the agendas that may be imposed upon them by their faith-based doctrines. The chapter then paves the way for the later analysis in this thesis with a close description of case study organisations’ poverty reduction activities and approaches. Finally, the chapter considers the links between case study organisations from one side and both civil society and the state from the other, which will be useful in understanding their role in political mobilisation (analysis of which follows in Chapter Eight).
5.1. Locations and Surroundings of Case Study Organisations

The GMT is a community mosque-based Civil Society Organisation (CSO) located in a lower middle class area called Deir El-Malak in East Cairo. This area has emerged in the early second half of the 20th century over what have been agrarian lands owned by small land owners and foreigners who lived in the near-by lavish district of Hadayeq El-Quba (Interview A1). According to accounts of a few old interviewees, the souring land prices in the 1970s promoted many land owners in the area to sell their agricultural plots to investors who built apartment blocks that attracted lower middle class tenants and buyers. Meanwhile, next door to Deir El-Malak, unused wastelands originally owned by nationalized factories and the railroads authority have attracted land squatters who turned it to another impoverished informal settlement in Cairo. In the decades that followed, the government has accepted the realities imposed on the ground by linking the settlements around Deir El-Malak to the national electricity, water and sewage networks. However, little has been done to link them with economic prosperity. While there could not be any official statistics found on levels of poverty in the settlements on their own, the recipient lists at GMT can reveal a lot. Although the mosque is located inside Deir El-Malak, most of the recipients live in the surrounding settlements, called the Ezab24.

Although the economic conditions inside Deir El-Malak itself is apparently better than that in the Ezab with the former having nicer houses, relatively wider paved streets, more shops and more cars, in addition to fewer registered recipient addresses at mosques, there are still many poor households located there. Some recipients, such as Fatma (Interview A26), managed to enter into this lower middle class district due to what is known as "old tenancy contracts" law. The law allowed the tenants to pass the tenancy contracts to their next generations for indefinite period without the consent of the property owner, and without any adjustment of the monthly rent to take into account inflation rates. This meant that some people are currently paying the 1950s and 1960s rates which remained fixed ever since. A

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24 In Arabic, plural for Ezba, which is synonym for the word (village), mostly used to refer to urban unplanned settlement with high population density.
three bedroom house in the area could cost a family of six as low as 10 EGP a month; which is around half of what an unskilled worker gets paid on average for a day of labour. In 1996, the Egyptian government modified tenancy laws abolishing the possibility of passing on such old contracts beyond one generation (Egypt Law number 4 for the year 1996). However, this new law will not have wide effect until members of the second generation (mostly now in their 40s or 50s) vanish to pave the way for the descendents of the original property owners to regain and re-let their ancestors' properties. For the time being, the situation remained that many middle class households who had dropped into poverty were able to maintain their homes and continued to share the same neighborhoods with more affluent households. It was not uncommon incident to have donors and recipients living in the same block of flats and sometimes on the same floor.

The Salafi GS is a branch of the greater GS network. The mosque is located inside a market area in the district of Wayly, which immediately borders the Hadayeq el Quba district where the GMT is located. Both areas are under the same Ministry of Endowments (MoE) local branch and both mosques report to the same local administration heads. The district has ten other GS branches. However, this GS is the largest in the district and is considered to be the wealthiest of them too: for example, there have been several cases where recipients from other GS branches were referred to this mosque because the other branches could not afford taking care of them. The location of the mosque in the market allowed the establishment of several partnerships with some merchants. Many of them were regular contributors to the mosques donation pool. Some of them have also been contributing by offering their in-kind support. A butcher contributed to each registered recipient at the mosque by one kilogram of meat every month. A baker allowed each registered household a generous allowance of bread every month. The socio-economic nature of the area was quite similar to that of the area around the GMT. However, the Ezab surrounding the market has enjoyed a relatively better off living standards than the Ezab around the GMT. There are no published indicators that show the situation at the Ezab. This is a judgment based on observations of the living standards on the street and inside recipient homes that were visited there.
Table 5.1. displays the main socioeconomic development indicators in all three areas where the case studies had taken place. This data was obtained from the Planning Institute in Cairo, a higher education college managed by the Egyptian Ministry of Planning. It is important to note that the three IBCSOs were all part of the same Endowments administrative area and the same Social Solidarity Administrative area, although they seem to be falling in two different districts in the Cairo Governorate 2008 Human Development Report from which these statistics were gathered.25

Table 5.1.: Socio Economic Indicators of the communities were the case studies have been conducted.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>District</th>
<th>Wayly for GS</th>
<th>Hadayeq Al-Qubbah For GMT and MFA</th>
<th>Helwan For MCDA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HDI</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.754</td>
<td>0.760</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life Expectancy</td>
<td></td>
<td>71.3</td>
<td>71.6</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literacy Rate</td>
<td></td>
<td>88.7%</td>
<td>83.3%</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education Enrolment</td>
<td></td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>80.7%</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GDP per capita EGP</td>
<td></td>
<td>11,374</td>
<td>11,876</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work Force Ratio</td>
<td></td>
<td>32.8%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population (1000)</td>
<td></td>
<td>151.6</td>
<td>283.4</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployment Ratio</td>
<td></td>
<td>14.7%</td>
<td>11.5%</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poverty Ratio</td>
<td></td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qualification Ratio</td>
<td></td>
<td>65.5</td>
<td>50.5</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average School Class Size</td>
<td></td>
<td>39.6</td>
<td>40.3</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woman HDI</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.699</td>
<td>0.706</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woman Literacy</td>
<td></td>
<td>76.9</td>
<td>60.3</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woman GDP per Capita LE</td>
<td></td>
<td>5549.8</td>
<td>4834.8</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woman ratio in work force</td>
<td></td>
<td>35.8</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Planning Institute Cairo

The third case study IBCSO, with links to the Muslim Brotherhood, is called MFA. It is located at Hadayeq El Quba, which is a middle class area within the same district of the other two mosques. It is adjacent to Deir El-Malak neighbourhood making it less than one kilometre away from GMT, and less than two kilometres from the GS. This means that all the three case study IBCSOs are technically speaking in the same geographic area. Many of the recipients at MFA also originate from the

25 When the district-level human development report was prepared in 2008, Helwan has been recently separated from Cairo and became an independent governorate. The decision was reversed immediately after the revolution in 2011. During that brief era, there were no human development reports issued for Helwan neither as a governorate on its own nor as a district from Cairo. Unfortunately, it was not possible to find any reliable data on Helwan’s socio-economic indicators.
including the ones where the GMT recipients originated from. However, I have not encountered any recipient that I could have recognised at both organisations. According to the local MoE officer, the MFA mosque was one of three mosques under his supervision that had affiliation with the Muslim Brotherhood.

Finally, the rights-based MCDA is a CSO that is located in an informal settlement called Mansheyet Gamal Abdel Nasser at the Cairo southern suburb of Helwan. The Mansheya, as it is called locally, was founded in the early 1960s by immigrants from Upper Egypt who settled there in order to work at the near-by cement, weaving and steel factories that were built by the socialist regime of the late President Gamal Abdel Nasser (Interviews D1 and D13). While it was not possible to obtain official socio-economic indicators of the district, it was possible to make three general observations on the main differences between it and the areas of the other three case studies. First, the literacy rate is higher at the Mansheya seemed higher perhaps since many of the factories offered their workers literacy courses, and sometimes preconditioned them to read and write in order to qualify for certain jobs (that is a reason why literacy classes will be a major activity at MCDA as will be seen later). Second, there seemed to be a stronger sense of community in Helwan, which was a reflection of the Upper Egyptian village traditions brought by the immigrant workers. For example, the settlement had a number of elderly natural leaders who owned big houses with their ground floor called Manader were functioning as local town halls to discuss and solve community problems and settle disputes amongst its members. The third difference is the presence of a distinctive socialist orientation amongst many of the people I met in Helwan. They showed significant appreciation to the socialist agenda of the Nasserist regime that granted them much of what they are possessing now, including their jobs and the land they have built their houses on. Unlike people in the neighbourhoods of the three IBCSOs, many people in Helwan (especially the middle aged) had the knowledge of concepts of collective action such as industrial action and other forms of organised protest.

More details on the description of poverty amongst case study organisations’ recipients shall follow later in this chapter when describing the activities of each organisation. However, taking into account the multidimensional definition of Udaya (2008) adopted earlier in Section 2.2. of this thesis, the communities where case
study organisations are located experience poverty that deprives the poor there from three things. First, they were deprived from income that is sufficient to provide them with a decent quality of life. Except for housing, which does not constitute a problem for many of them due to the old tenancy laws, their low incomes mean they cannot afford adequate health care, food and education without assistance. Subsidies offered by the government are insufficient, as they are elsewhere in Egypt, Second, except for basic education that demonstrates high enrollment rates and vocational training commonly available in labour-concentrated Helwan, poor members of case study organisations’ communities do not own capabilities that can bring them out of poverty. Third, like most poor Egyptians before the revolution, these communities were socially excluded and marginalised with almost a total absence of organised community structures, or organisations that can channel their interests and demands.

5.2. History and Legal Status of Case Study Organisations

The mosque where GMT is based has existed for a long time. Nobody knows exactly when it was built, but interviewed senior community members believed it was built in the 1950s (Interviews A1, A6, A17 and A25). The clearer part of the mosque’s history, however, dates back to 1998 (Interviews A1 and A17). In that year, the mosque was managed by an elderly community leader who used to collect and redistribute donations received through the mosque. On the same year, he went with a number of the regular attendants from the mosque to Saudi Arabia to perform pilgrimage. He met and befriended Hag Fahmy, who has been praying in this mosque for more than 30 years, but has never intervened in its management or running. Soon after their return back home, the mosque leader decided to move out of the neighbourhood and asked Fahmy to replace him in taking care of the mosque and its small informal charity fund. In 2002, a Mo’azen (prayer caller) with alleged connections with the State Security Investigations (SSI) was appointed at the mosque by the MoE that had the right to appoint mosque preachers and caretakers. The new arrival began to intervene in the charity work Fahmy was overseeing. It was widely believed by community members that the Mo’azen was actively stealing donations
but they feared to confront him because of his ties with the SSI (Interviews A1, A2 and A6-A9). In response, Fahmy decided to move out of the mosque to conduct his own charity work supported by a few community members who were not happy with the situation inside the mosque. They established what they called "an association" in a small premises donated by one of them (Interviews A1, A6-A9 and A25). It is worth mentioning that although the association was an informal structure that did not have any legal status, Fahmy has kept records of all its activities (donations and distributions) conducted during that period. Few years later, the mosque received a new Imam who encouraged community members to revolt against the Mo'azen. With the new Imam’s guidance, they managed to file a case against him with the MoE. The complaint received positive reaction and the Mo'azen was finally expelled. Then, to make things legal, the new Imam suggested the establishment of a CSO to replace the so-called association (Interviews A1 and A2) and this took place. The CSO was established in 2007 to provide a legal framework for the same activities that have been conducted for years on informal basis.

The GS mosque was established in the same place in 1955 and has been part of the GS national mosque network ever since. Its current board has been in office for almost ten years. When I met the board member who was the main manager of the organisation, I knew that he has been only playing that role for the previous four months due to a sudden illness of his predecessor. However, data extracted from him could still be quite reliable because he seemed to be knowledgeable and well known by everybody around, which reflects that he has been heavily involved with the organisation even before he took charge of most of its work. The legal status of the mosque is officially not different from many community-based mosques in Egypt. The mosque controls its own finances, assets and liabilities. The mosque as a place of worship is monitored by MoE and the CSO that performs its community service activities is monitored by the Ministry of Social Solidarity (MoSS). However, the organisation is part of the nationwide General GS network. The relationship between the GS branch and the General GS is similar to that of the franchise business in Western retail culture. The General GS designs the activities in the fields of religious advocacy and community service, including the design and methods of implementation for poverty reduction activities. The branch takes the trade mark (in
In this case the GS title) and pays in return the required membership fees to become part of the General GS network. At the same time, the branch remains independent in its decision making as long as it maintains the general framework of the GS practice. For example, the General GS sends to each of its branches a preacher who delivers the Friday sermon twice every month instead of the MoE appointed Imam. The branch pays for the preacher, but does not have a say in the content of the sermon.

The MFA mosque was constructed around the year 1945 (Interview A3). It was established as a charity by a local wealthy person whom the organisation carries his name. The administration of this mosque was then passed on to his sons, and grandsons, until the 1970s when other regular prayers began to join the mosque’s board. Two of the founder’s grandsons are still in the mosque’s board today. The mosque has been overseeing charity activities for long time. However, most of this was carried out on informal and irregular basis. In 2004, the MoE appointed a keen member of the Muslim Brotherhood as a new Imam for this mosque. After a while, the Imam noticed the charitable activities in the mosque. He warned the mosque associates about the illegality of collecting and distributing money without official permissions (Interview C1). He advised them to establish a mosque-based CSO to provide the required legal cover to their activities. They were reluctant to carry out his suggestion due to their fear of the legal liabilities and complications that may be involved. The Imam responded by offering to take care of all the procedures of establishing the CSO on their behalf. In return, they went as far as offering him to chair the newly founded organisation. However, he refused to play any official part in that and decided to help them in operating its activities without being a member officially. The CSO was finally established in 2007 and its board included several regular and prominent prayers. The Imam, however, continued to play the major role in running the organisation. During my time there, I frequently witnessed board members delaying decision only in order to wait for the Imam’s opinion. Examples included decisions on accepting new recipients, and on coordinating efforts with a close-by CSO that distributes used clothes to poor recipients.

In legal terms, the organisation is an independent CSO monitored by the local MoSS authority; while this mosque, like all others, is monitored by the local MoE
authority. However, its affiliation with the Muslim Brotherhood stems from the major role played by the Imam. Talking to the locals, the idea that the mosque is dominated by the Muslim Brotherhood has enjoyed significant support. However, when asked which of the people running the mosque are thought to be Muslim Brotherhood members, the Imam was the only constant response. Two or three people suggested that the mosque founder and his family were Muslim Brotherhood members; but one of his interviewed grandsons denied it (Interview C5), and there was no solid evidence to prove either sides of the story. Interviews with board members, CSO members and donors have shown more sympathy with the Muslim Brotherhood compared with that found in other case study CSOs despite not producing more than one direct admission of belonging to it (Interviews C5-C9, C18 and C20-C21). Later on, the work carried through and inside the mosque during the 2011 election campaign (to be described in details in Chapter Eight) presented more evidence of the brotherhood’s existence in the mosque. All of this might first seem insufficient to prove the links between the mosque and the Muslim Brotherhood. However, there is awareness from those who live in Egypt that Muslim Brotherhood members tend not to openly admit belonging to it (perhaps part of the legacy of secret work for decades since the organisation was banned).

MCDA has emerged as a result of a defection of some members of a charitable non Faith-based Organisation (NFBO) in the town of Helwan. The organisation’s main activities were to collect monetary and in-kind donations, such as second hand clothes, and redistribute them to local recipients. One of the board members was Mrs. Fawzeya, a middle-aged mother with interest in community development. In 2006, the lady managed to take part in a development training course, offered by the German Development Agency (GTZ), on the rights-based approach for poverty reduction. The training inspired her to the extent that she had decided to try to apply the learned approach in her own organisation. However, she faced resistance from the majority of the board members who believed that the idea was too radical. It was thought it might lead to friction with the State Security Investigations due to its association with the human rights agenda which was not a very popular concept with the government of the former regime. Mrs. Fawzeya, with two other rebel board members whom she managed to convince, decided to quit
their original organisation. They established their own CSO in their home neighbourhood of Mansheya in order to apply the rights-based approach to improve the lives of the mostly impoverished population of that neighbourhood.

After using her personal and family connections, Mrs. Fawzeya managed to establish ties with the Manader to convince the locals to take part in a Participatory Needs Assessment. The outcome was identifying the main problem that faced the community, which was a drainage canal that has been dug through the neighbourhood dividing it into two separate parts. The canal was used to drain waste water full of toxic chemicals coming from the nearby factories. The only way to cross the canal (to avoid a three kilometre trip to the main road bridge) was to walk dangerously on a narrow metal pipe by using it as a bridge. This practice has claimed about eight lives in recent years. Many children had to cross the dangerous pipe bridge every day because the only primary school in the neighbourhood was on one side of the canal, and most of the houses were on the other side. The dangerous trip to the school has also deterred many parents from sending their children there, especially those who could not afford the cost of the ride via the main road bridge. In addition, the canal imposed major health and environmental hazards because its toxic surface became a point of attraction to insects and garbage dumping. Therefore, the decision was taken as a result of the Participatory Needs Assessment to use the rights-based approach in order to find a solution to the problem by pressing the local authority to cover the canal, and that became the first mission of the then newly born organisation.

As MCDA understood the rights-based approach, the target was supposed to be achieved by a petition to the local authorities of Helwan. At first, many locals feared to sign the petition and doors were shut in the faces of the organisation members who tried to convince people to sign. In spite of very little initial support, the organisation worked very hard for a year and half filing petitions and visiting offices of local officials until the local authorities finally issued a decision to cover the canal. The canal was about two kilometres in length. With the execution of the covering process, the locals trust grew gradually until it reached a peak when about 800 meters of the canal were covered. People began to deal with the organisation and its leadership with trust and respect as they saw the ability of the CSO to deliver
tangible results. Many local people had joined its various committees that were formed to repeat the canal covering success story by trying to solve other community problems, as will be shown later in this chapter.

The above data highlight that all case study organisations gained their legal legitimacy by being registered with the government. They all started as community-based initiatives that pursued formality for the purpose of gaining legitimacy and a legal cover. Moreover, all case study organisations have demonstrated the associational and community-based nature of CSOs discussed earlier in Section 2.1. although there have been always a handful of individuals who assumed most of the responsibility and did most of the work to the approval of the community at large. Organisations which are part of a network like the GS, or affiliated to one like MFA, seem to have gained their position in relation to the respective networks, by the consent of members of their associations. Such CSOs were not implanted in their communities by the umbrella organisations.

5.3. Organisational Structure of Case Study Organisations

The community-based GMT is managed by a board of seven members. Two of these were added only to satisfy the requirements of Egyptian NGOs law. One of these two members never attended the organisation, and does not even pray regularly in the mosque. The remaining five could be divided into two groups. The first group consists of three board members who attend regularly. They are aware of what is happening with regards to the CSO’s finances, activities and most dealings with other individuals or institutions. They try to recruit members and donors (each within his own capacity), and they would help when they are requested to. The second group consists of the remaining two: the chairman and the treasurer. They are two sides of the triangle that makes the heart of the organisation. The third side of the triangle is the NGO volunteer secretary who is not a board member, and he is the mosque Imam. The treasurer is the de-facto leader of the organisation. He was not designated as a chairman because the law states that in newly founded organisations, the chairman must be the oldest board members until election is held.
after four years, and a chairman is properly elected by members of the CSO’s general assembly.

The treasurer, Hag Fahmy, is a 79-years old retired civil servant. He is the focal point of the organisation and commands high-levels of trust by all those related to GMT who were interviewed here. He makes decisions about who would receive help and by how much. He receives the donations, sorts them, counts the proceeds of the mosque’s donations box, and informs the chairman who just signs the books to confirm the figures. The days when he did not attend due to family obligations, or when he went home early to watch a football game, were rather uneventful days. The only paid staff member of the organisation is an MoSS employee, a part-time accountant responsible for professionally adjusting the organisation’s books to meet the requirements of MoSS.

The donors are mainly community members who pray in the mosque. Although donations are also obtained from other people who know the organisation through the community members. For example, Fahmy's son and son-in-law who work in Saudi Arabia and Qatar respectively, donate regularly even though they do not live in the area anymore. One of the board members, a staff member at Ain Shams University, obtains donations from his colleagues and from professors there (Interview A7). Most of the donations come in the form of monthly “subscriptions” of 10 EGP. However, donors frequently make additional contributions especially around the Islamic festive seasons and in special cases, such as those of meeting Nozour.26 There are donation boxes in the mosque that their usually nominal proceeds are used for mosque maintenance.

All recipients are living in the local community or in the surrounding Ezab. Their exact number is unknown. Officially, the organisation's record had 41 registered recipients in June 2010. These are the people who receive regular assistance from the money officially donated to the organisation (where the donor receives a formal receipt for his donation). However, many donations go to Fahmy

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26 Arabic word, plural for Nazr, which is a religious promise that a Muslim can make to God in which a good deed is committed in case something that God is asked for actually happens. For example, a woman can make a Nazr of paying 100 EGP for charity if her son passes a particular examination. Many of the bigger mosques in Egypt, especially those that house mausoleums of Sufi saints or Prophet Mohammed family members and companions have boxes dedicated to collect such payments.
on personal basis without expecting a receipt. These are used to support cases that are not on the official records of the NGO. The latter type of assistance is irregular and it mostly flourishes around the festive season (Interview A4).

In other case study IBCSOs, the situation is mostly similar. At the Salafi GS, there are nine board members. However, their involvement is at a much lower level than those at the GMT. Apart from Hag Anwar, the de-facto leader, and to a lesser extent Mr. Mahboub the treasurer, I have never seen any of the board members conducting any of the daily activities of the organisation. When I arrived to begin my research in October 2010, the chairman of the organisation was ill and had to stay in bed. Another board member, Hag Anwar, was in charge. According to him, the organisation’s vice chairman was a key figure in the management of the organisation. I have listened to many calls between Hag Anwar and the vice-chairman where the former was updating the latter about several developments such as the audit of the General GS and the arrival of big donations. However, the vice chairman was never seen inside the organisation, or at the mosque except on Friday prayers. When I requested to interview him, I was asked to go and meet him at a nearby shop that he owns and manages (Interview B5). The treasurer used to appear often but his work was to open the safe and get out the money that Hag Anwar asks for, or put back what he does not need for the moment. He was kept updated about the organisation’s news, but he never objected to anything or suggested that anything should be done in a different way. Two other board members used to attend, but not frequently and were interviewed. The others never appeared and were hardly ever mentioned. The CSO held only one board meeting during the two-month period of the initial case study. Hag Anwar firmly refused my request to attend it for what he called the “sensitivity of the topics to be discussed!” (Fieldnotes, GS, 19/10/2010). The organisation’s accountant was a MoSS employee just like the case of the GMT, and she was the woman working with the organisation.

Another key difference between the GS and the GMT is the role of the Imam. The mosque Imam at GMT was a key figure in the organisation while his role at the GS was only to conduct the daily prayer, and I never saw him enter the organisation’s office. In fact, he used to alternate with a GS-appointed Imam at giving the Friday sermon every other week. This difference shows somehow how the
GS as a network of more ideology-centered organisations is keen to subdue the role of preachers and Imams (as producers of thought in favour of the ready-made Salafi thinking the General GS is delivering to the branch organisations).

The donors of the GS are composed of two categories. First, orphan sponsors who pay 10 EGP each every month. This money was directed immediately to the Orphans Sponsorship Programs to be discussed shortly. The second category was comprised of irregular donors who made substantially more payments. On many occasions, a donor would bring a large amount of money and ask Hag Anwar to recommend a number of recipients based upon a certain preference (for example, mothers of younger children or unemployed women). Hag Anwar would then ask the donor to come to the organisation’s office and meet the recipients himself to pass the payments to them. In other cases, the money would come in closed envelopes to be distributed by Hag Anwar to whom he sees more deserving, or the money could just be deposited to the general pool of the organisation. The magnitude of commitment, and the generosity of most, donors at the GS was certainly greater than of their corresponding donors at other case study IBCSoS.27 I almost never witnessed Hag Anwar urging people for late payments as was reported at GMT; or complaining about financial shortages which happened a few times at MFA. Most of the donors would approach him willingly at the beginning of every month to make their payments. The characteristics of the recipients were similar with those of the GMT. Although the GS was open to accepting non-Muslims (Interview B2), there were none on the registry; unlike GMT where there was one Christian recipient.

At Muslim-Brotherhood affiliated MFA, the situation was quite similar to GMT. The board is comprised of seven members but only two of them are active: the Chairman and a female treasurer (the only female member in all boards of the three case study IBCSoS). The Imam is the key figure at the organisation as explained earlier, and both the treasurer and chairman would not make any major decision without receiving his opinion and approval. Donors have also included orphan

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27 It was not possible to find exact figures for how much donors used to give, but for example, only in the GS was where I witnessed a donor coming in with several thousand pounds and distributing them to recipients in small envelopes. Such an event happened at least five times during the time I spent studying the GS. While the only similar donation that happened in the GMT during the same period was before I began my study of the organization and was such a memorable (obviously unique) event that it was mentioned several times after that.
sponsors and charity givers. Most of the funding had previously been obtained from the latter category which is mainly composed of regular mosque prayers. There were about 40 recipients in November 2011 and they originated from similar backgrounds much like other case study IBCSOs. The MFA is very much a community-based organisation except for its affiliation with the Muslim Brotherhood inspired by the mosque Imam.

MCDA, was unique by the fact that the head of the organisation and its main actor was a woman. She was one of the only two female figures out of all the case study organisations’ boards. The other five board members were male, some of them appeared older than her, and at least one of them was a prominent workers union leader, and another was a journalist. The chairman was working full time as a volunteer at the organisation. Another board member appeared only once in the organisation during the time I spent there (Fieldnotes, MCDA, 20/1/2012). All the interviewed board members showed strong acquaintance with the history of the organisation and its activities. Most of them were aware of the rights-based approach (Interviews D5, D7 and D16), although some were quite critical of it, as discussed in the following chapter. All donors at MCDA were foreign aid agencies; most of them were European including the German Aid (GTZ), the EU, and Amnesty International. According to Mrs. Fawzeya, all attempts to approach local foundations and individuals for funding had failed because the targeted donors were afraid to associate themselves with an organisation that is adopting a rights-based approach to development. That was considered a politically sensitive agenda before the revolution, which local donors would rather keep away from.

On the other hand, there were no individual recipients at MCDA except in activities such as literacy classes, job training and the modest micro credit program the organisation manages. However, all community members can be considered as beneficiaries of the activities of the organisation as has been explained in this chapter and will be explored in more detail later in this thesis.
5.4. Activities of Case Study Organisations

Overall, poverty reduction activities of case study IBCSOs can be described as top-down basic needs oriented forms of social assistance. MCDA claims to be applying a rights-based approach to development and poverty reduction. However, as detailed in this section, this was not entirely true.

At community-based GMT, each of the 100 recipients registered with the organization at the time of writing receives a monthly payment of 20 EGP. Sometimes, they get extra money when special donations become available or when in-kind donations are made. The amount of the extras varied depending on the flow of donations with a significant increase witnessed around the Islamic festive seasons, especially during the month of Ramadan. For example, when a donor sent in 1,000 EGP demanding that it should be distributed amongst the most vulnerable recipients, Hag Fahmy divided the money into 20 payments of 50 EGP each and increased the monthly payment of 20 recipients to become 70 EGP for one month (Fieldnotes, GMT, 6/8/2010). In most cases, the extras that included cloths, blankets or boxes of basic food supplies were not entered into the IBCSO’s official records. Therefore, recipients were not asked to sign for them.

During Ramadan, recipients received a food package made of essential cooking supplies, such as rice, macaroni, flower and cooking oil as well as tea, sugar and raisons (used for preparations of Ramadan traditional sweets). The contents of these packages came to the organization either as an in-kind donation or they were bought by the CSO using donations received for that specific purpose.

In addition to officially registered recipients, there are many unregistered recipients who receive irregular help through the organization. According to Hag Fahmy, the ultimate goal was to add all of them (they were about 50 according to his estimate in 2013) to the registered recipients list. That was not possible though because adding them would morally oblige the organization to pay them regularly every month and that could not happen without increasing the number of officially registered members who donate regularly to make sure there will be enough

\[28\] The number of recipients increased from 50 in May 2010 when the thesis fieldwork started at GMT to 100 in April 2013 when the organization was lasted visited.
resources to cover the regular expense of adding such recipients. Whenever the organization added regularly paying members, it added a corresponding amount of registered regular recipients from a waiting list maintained by Hag Fahmy with the more vulnerable recipients in his opinion placed on top of it. However, recipients on the waiting list still received irregular help whenever there were extra resources available (Interview A4).

The recipients' quality of life varied. After visiting many of them in their homes, some were living in shocking conditions. In one particular case, four orphan sisters were living in a donjon under a house which was very humid, cramped and smelly. We (myself and Fahmy who accompanied me) were not even able to enter, and had to conduct the interview standing at the door. The vast majority of the interviewed recipients are living under the poverty line; but at least they have proper old-tenancy housing. All recipients are either single women or female-headed households where husbands are either dead or severely crippled. Many of them receive nominal pensions from the government. The stories of their transition into poverty vary. However, the story I began to find familiar as I progressed with recipient interviews revolves around a husband who used to provide for the family and then died in an accident or by severe illness and left nothing to a housewife who never worked before (Interviews A19-A24, A26-A28 and A30-A36).

In addition to poverty reduction, the CSO has two special informal funds. Although there are records, they do not appear on the CSO accounts because these activities were not mentioned in the papers presented to get the government approval to legalise the CSO. The first is a fund allocated to buy a funeral car to transport the deceased to places where they are to be buried, which is similar to the commonly observed burial societies groups in Africa (Ferreira 1983). The fund managed to collect about 25,000 EGP in two years, which is almost equal to the total donations received for poverty reduction activities over the same period. The car will cost no less than 80,000 EGP (Interviews A2 and A5). The second fund is to buy Kafan(s) (the cloth used to wrap dead bodies in Muslim funeral procedures) for those who cannot afford it. In June 2010, the stock at the CSO was about 25; and each one costs about 200 EGP (Interview A5). GMT managed a small day-care nursery associated with the mosque, but it did not organise any religious or advocacy
activities, apart from Qur’an memorisation lessons for small children organised through the mosque, which are common to almost all mosques in Egypt.

At the Salafi GS, recipients were divided into three categories according to the type of basic needs they are assumed to have by the GS. The first was made of orphans, and that meant those who had lost their fathers and were living with either their single mothers, or other family members. The assistance forwarded to orphans falls under a General GS scheme called the Orphans Sponsorship Program, which probably is the most significant area of the GS work. The General GS claims that the number of orphans the GS supports across Egypt under that scheme mounts to over 600,000 orphans (Interview B34). Each orphan receives from the GS a monthly cash payment of between 20 and 50 EGP depending on the income of the orphan’s provider. Similar to GMT, extra payments resulting from exceptional and seasonal donations were made. In addition, each orphan is entitled to a package of other benefits including free prescriptions, a free monthly allowance of meat and bread supplied by local butchers and bakery, in addition to school supplies and stationery. Moreover, orphans receive seasonal support such as extra food allowances in Ramadan and other Islamic feasts, new clothing at the beginning of the schools season, and even an occasional trip to a coastal destination in the summer for a holiday. The second category of recipients is that of poor people, whose income is less than 240 EGP per month per member of the household, according to the GS definition of the poverty line (Interview B3). Each of those poor recipients receives only the cash allowance and not the other package of benefits. Finally, the student category that includes all students enrolled in full time education, and these receive only the benefit package described above and not the cash payments. According to Hag Anwar, benefiting from the GS does not require the recipient’s income to be under a certain threshold except for the poor category. Instead, he stated that any orphan or student, even if they are more affluent could come to the mosque and claim their benefit. He said that “the mosque is there to serve the whole community and not only part of it.” (Interview B3). The importance of knowing the income for the orphans is only to determine the amount of cash payments they receive and also their entitlement to other benefits, irrespective of the official ones included in their category’s package.
The recipients are distributed amongst several GS mosques in accordance to their addresses. Each mosque of the GS is permitted to include only recipients living within certain boundaries to avoid duplications. There were several occasions when I witnessed a recipient asking to be transferred from one GS mosque to another. The request is usually accepted if it is accompanied by a written approval from the original GS where the recipient is supposed to be registered.

The number of registered recipients at the case study GS remained a mystery as Hag Hamed insisted on not telling me the exact number for unknown reasons. However, I attended the monthly pay days at the GS twice in October and November 2010. That was when recipients came to the organization to pick up their monthly payments (between the 6th and 9th of each month). From this experience, I could roughly estimate the number of registered recipient households to be between 200 and 250. Many of the recipients were mothers who collected payments on behalf of more than one orphan child or student. So, the true number of recipients is quite difficult to estimate. Counting mother coming in is not enough. There were not any waiting lists of unregistered recipients at the GS. The GS was accepting new recipient applications throughout the time I spent there.

In addition to these services, there is the project of “facilitating marriage”. This is achieved by giving a pre-wedding gift to girls from poor families in the form of certain household goods such as appliances and electric machinery. The would-be-bride defines some items of her needs and the mosque GS acquires them for her. Needless to say all the equipment bought are from cheap Egyptian-manufactured brands. Although there is no specific minimum or maximum for this, my observations have shown that the cost of the gift ranges between 600 and 800 EGP.

Like most similar institutions, the GS mosque also runs a burial service and holds several religion and Qur’an classes for men, women and children. All recipients were asked to attend religious lessons in the mosque. Although both GS board members and recipients insisted these were optional, the way with which Hag Anwar had expressed his anger about those who failed to attend some lessons indicates otherwise (Fieldnotes, GS, 30/10/2010).

At Muslim-Brotherhood affiliated MFA, the activities are very similar to GMT but without the advanced practice of recipient categorisation of the GS. Here, there
was only one category of recipients with one type of assistance package provided to all. The recipients receive between 20 and 30 EGP monthly allowances. There were 40 recipients registered at the organization in December 2011. In addition, they receive seasonal help in Ramadan and in the other Islamic feasts. That help mainly consists of food supplies packages known in Egypt as Shonat El-Tamween,\(^{29}\) same as described above containing food products such as cooking oil, rice, tea, nuts and macaroni. The mosque also organises religious lessons which were optional and where attendance was not monitored.

Finally, after the success of MCDA’s first project to cover the drainage canal, the organisation expanded through the formation of committees to tackle other community problems. In addition to the drainage canal committee, the organisation currently has several committees that deal with various problems. There is an education committee responsible for improving the standards of the local school and for building a new one to accommodate the growing numbers of students. There is also a health care committee responsible for working with the health authority to improve the efficiency of the local medical units. A working child committee was established to coordinate between children and their employers, to preserve the working children’s rights, and try to get them the maximum possible education. The house workers committee was formed to be responsible for preserving the rights of many of the local women who work as domestic maids. Also, a pensions committee was established to deal with issues related to the local population claims of benefit from the factories employing them. Other committees include the environment committee, and the road paving and lighting committee, which address the standards of the local roads and paths. The organisation also runs literacy and computer classes, as well as an employment service in co-ordination with some of the nearby factories to recruit workers for them when needed. There is also a small microfinance scheme managed by the organisation, although it does not tend to occupy any prominence there. In fact, I did not realise it even existed until several weeks after the case study had started, which indicated that it was perhaps introduced to meet the requirements of one of the donor organisations.

\(^{29}\) Translated to “supply bags"
These previously mentioned committees change frequently as some of them finish their tasks and new ones are formed. The level of activity varies significantly from one committee to another. For example, the committee for lighting and paving local roads has been quite successful as it managed to light up and pave almost all the streets of the district. On the other hand, the pensions committee has not been as active, with very few members attending the meetings, and its work has faced several obstacles. Most committees achieve their targets by drafting petitions and brainstorming for ideas. This is usually done by the chairman of each committee with possibly a few more members involved. The other members are then required to collect signatures in support of the petitions. The petitions and development ideas are then taken to local authorities for lengthy negotiations and bargaining until the targets are met. Each committee is officially formed of around 20 members with some individuals being members of more than one committee.

5.5. Case Study Organisations’ Relationship with the State

The relationship between case study organisation and the state in Egypt revolves around two main components. These are the role of the state as a source of authority, and its role as a source of legitimacy.

The source of authority is evident (as shown in Chapter Three) by imposing various restraints on the work of all CSOs in Egypt by the former regime. The main purpose for these restrictions was to ensure that a barrier is placed between these organisations, and any direct or indirect intervention in the political domain. All the three organisations visited before the revolution (All case study CSOs except Muslim-Brotherhood MFA) abided by the boundaries and did not attempt at all to upset the authorities. Permissions were always obtained before conducting activities. Notes by government auditors were prioritised and adhered to. At the same time, the authorities did not leave much opportunity for these organisations to break the rules. This was seen on both levels of discourse and in their activities.

On the discourse level, the mosque caretaker at community-based GMT was believed by the organisation board to be a spy for the State Security Investigations (SSI) (Fieldnotes, GMT, 11/7/2011). According to the mosque Imam, he was
suspected to be informing the SSI about any breaches of the instructions given to the mosque by the local MoE authority on the topic of the Friday sermon. The topics used to be delivered weekly to mosque Imams all over Egypt (Interview A2). However, the Imam did not always fully abide by the instructions. According to him, violations were acceptable as long as they did not cross any of the red lines that could cause any discontent, or anti regime feeling amongst the public (Fieldnotes, GMT, 16/7/2010).

On the surface, the Salafis appeared to have enjoyed more flexibility, although there were some signs to suspect that the authorities did not mind that. As a part of an arrangement with the government, the Salafi mosques all over the country enjoyed a flexible relationship that even allowed them to have their own preacher to replace the MoE appointed Imam twice every month (Interview B3). While the GS claimed its preachers still abides by MoE instructions, the kind of topics GS preachers included in their sermons I attended, such as attacking Christian doctrines, could have not been approved and circulated in any official memos (Fieldnotes, GS, 8/10/2010). However, lack of objection by the authorities showed they at least would have not minded as long as politics were left out. In the words of a local teacher who is closely related to the GS board, “the authorities were tolerant as long as the sermons did not cross the virtual common sense, mostly political, red lines” (Interview B48).

On the activities level, both GMT and GS avoided confrontation with the state through elimination of activities that could have entailed any serious form of demand for rights or empowerment of the community. MCDA, being the non-FBO organisation, was no exception. Total obedience to the authorities is ensured. Those members of the organisation, who had some revolutionary tendencies, especially during the build up for the revolution, practiced their mobilisation efforts outside the boundaries of the organisation. They were even never heard talking about politics in their offices before the revolution. In this aspect, the only difference between the Islamist and non-Islamist CSOs was that the latter displayed some flexibility in dealing with the red-tape. For example, obtaining MCDA’s approval to conduct this research on their premises was as easy as making a phone call. It only required a discussion with the organisation’s head over a cup of tea explaining to her the
purpose of the research. This is unlike what happened in case study IBCSOs where approvals had to be obtained first by a lengthy complicated procedure from the local authorities, in addition to waiting for the verdict of a consultation process amongst the CSOs’ board members.

The second aspect of the relationship between Islamic-based CSOs and the State is that the latter is a source of legitimacy. Officials from MoSS and MoE (in the case of mosques) frequently inspect the organisations to audit their records, and issue reports declaring their integrity. The staff of the organisations always cooperated with the audits. They were very keen to show me that they were happy to have the audits and were proud that they never had any financial or legal violations recorded against them. I was allowed to attend the audits in two of the three IBCSOs when it occurred during the periods I spent with them. The GS was the only organisation where I was not permitted to attend the audit; but I was allowed to interview the auditor afterwards who confirmed the organisation’s integrity (Interview B19).

By placing these, and other organisations, under strict surveillance and strict regulations, the government established itself as a crucial and a main source of legitimacy. These organisations realise that their existence and their ability to deal with the public in confidence whether these are recipients or donors or other community members is a result of good relations with the government. The organisations can remain on the ground enjoying the legitimacy to operate, raise funds and distribute them. Numerous interviewed donors stated that they do not need to monitor the destination of their donations because of their knowledge of the monitoring practiced by the government. If the government withdraws its legitimacy from the organisations, they might be forced to turn underground with many adverse implications. Pleasing the government to retain its favorable opinions of the CSOs therefore becomes a crucial objective. What appeared to be even more important was pleasing the officers who are appointed by the government to monitor the organisations. In the cases of GMT and GS, it was not accidental that the MoSS officers appointed to financially monitor the organisations were both hired part-time by the same organisations to supervise their book keeping. Hag Fahmy of GMT justified the need to hire these consultancy service of the monitoring officer by
saying “to avoid trouble of all sorts” (Fieldnotes, GMT, 1/7/2010). In fact, the actual work done by these officers was trivial and restricted most of the times to approving work already done by the organisations’ accountants or book keepers.

In the case of MCDA, the government not only provided legitimacy but also actively participated in the implantation of its projects. Local municipality officials provided the main active force that converted the demands and requests of the organisation’s committees into real-life actions. They were responsible for receiving, studying and responding to the petitions and correspondents submitted to the government by the organisation. The more MCDA was able to convert these petitions into meaningful responses on the ground, the more legitimacy it obtained in the eyes of the local community. The government possesses not only the authority to carry out requests but also the needed budget and the facilities. For example, the new school promised to the local community by the government in response to a campaign led by the organisation was built on government-owned land with government funding obtained after the local authority willingly allowed MCDA access to the local education budget and accepted their suggestions on how to distribute it (Interview D1).

This section has discussed three of the case study organisations before the revolution. The development of the relationship between case study organisations and the state will be revisited when the thesis comes to discuss the role of case study CSOs in political mobilisation following the revolution. This will include the most significant part on the case study of the Muslim-Brotherhood affiliated MFA in Chapter Eight.
Table 5.2. Characteristics of Case Study Organisations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organisation</th>
<th>Case Study 1</th>
<th>Case Study 2</th>
<th>Case Study 3</th>
<th>Case Study 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Characteristic</td>
<td>Community-based GMT</td>
<td>Salafi GS</td>
<td>Muslim-Brotherhood MFA</td>
<td>Non Faith-based MCDA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geographic Location</td>
<td>Hadayeq Al-Qubbah</td>
<td>Wayly</td>
<td>Hadayeq Al-Qubbah</td>
<td>Helwan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neighborhood Class</td>
<td>Formalized settlement</td>
<td>Lower middle class market place</td>
<td>Middle class</td>
<td>Formalized settlement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Description of Poverty</td>
<td>Low pension or income-less unemployed, mostly women-led households, inadequate but free health care, education and employment conditions/opportunities, social and political exclusion and benefiting from food and some energy subsides, some public services and old tenancy housing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal Status</td>
<td>Recently established CSO</td>
<td>Old branch of the GS</td>
<td>Recently established CSO</td>
<td>Recently established CSO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSO nature</td>
<td>Independent membership-based association</td>
<td>Membership-based association following General GS</td>
<td>Independent membership-based association</td>
<td>Independent membership-based association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td>Elected board with few active members</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Resources</td>
<td>All volunteers</td>
<td>All volunteers</td>
<td>All volunteers</td>
<td>Mostly volunteers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funding</td>
<td>Local donors (regular monthly donations and irregular bigger donations)</td>
<td>Mostly local donors (regular monthly donations and irregular bigger donations)</td>
<td>Local donors (regular monthly donations and irregular bigger donations)</td>
<td>Foreign donor institutions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approach to Poverty Reduction</td>
<td>Mostly regular small cash transfers</td>
<td>Mostly regular small cash transfers supplemented by other benefit packages</td>
<td>Mostly regular small cash transfers</td>
<td>Helping the community with approaching local authorities to solve community problem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role of Faith in Poverty Reduction on</td>
<td>Social legitimacy and operation venue</td>
<td>Theoretical foundation, Social legitimacy and</td>
<td>Social legitimacy and operation venue</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

30 Except accountants.
This chapter has presented a detailed description of case study organisations that can be summarized in Table 5.2. This description shows that the three IBCSOs have been primarily engaged in the practice of a basic-needs oriented poverty reduction approach that lacks the elements of empowerment or mobilisation of the recipients. The GS had been distinct in two ways from MFA and GMT. First, the GS had more advanced organisation of its activities. For example, it divided the recipients into several categories providing each of the categories with a specifically designed different package of benefits. Second, the GS had been stressing a more central role of the mosque by requiring recipients to attend religious lessons or to come in person to the mosque to receive their payments. On the other hand, the NFBO that claims to be applying a rights-based approach to development has been using a compromising persuasive strategy that attempts to get things done by the authorities through negotiation rather than confrontation and through representing the poor rather than empowering them to represent themselves. With the exception of the introduction of minor political awareness enhancement activities at MCDA, all case study organisations had not witnessed a significant change between their conduct before and after the revolution.

Apart from those main observations, the chapter has shown that case study organisations are located in mostly similar socioeconomic environments, which makes establishing a comparison between them more valid. Their legal structures are also similar and they have all been coerced into an obedient relationship with the government. Despite the differences in their affiliation to networks or to

31 That does not include the individual faith-based motives that individuals working for the CSO might have.
doctrine of faith, they are all associational civil society organisations, and they are all community-based organisations who depend on their communities for recruitment of volunteers. With the exception of MCDA that depends on foreign funding, they all depend on their communities for funding.

With these findings in mind, this thesis will now move to its most important part in which the following three chapters will explore deeper into the four case studies to answer the three major research questions.
CHAPTER SIX

THE APPROACHES OF CASE STUDY IBCSOs TO POVERTY REDUCTION: RISKS, RIGHTS, NEEDS AND OBLIGATIONS

In the preceding chapter, the thesis described poverty reduction activities practiced by the four case study organisations. We have seen how the three Islamic-based Civil Society Organisations (IBCSOs) provided top-down, basic needs-oriented social assistance that is mainly composed of regular monthly small cash payments to the registered recipients. Case study IBCSOs allowed recipients to claim such payments upon satisfying a particular criteria. However, recipients were not allowed them a say in what type of assistance they receive and no efforts was exerted to empower the recipients in ways that would either enhance their capabilities or support them in claiming wider rights from state, society or other public institutions. It has also been discussed how the Non Faith Based Organisation (NFBO) practiced a partial version of the rights-based approach to poverty reduction, which relies on persuasive campaigning to acquire the attention of local government officials in order to solve immediate problems of the local community despite the organisation’s declared aim of practicing a more empowering version of the rights-based approach. In this chapter, the thesis undertakes an empirical analysis of poverty reduction activities of the case study organisations. The aim of this analysis is to explain the theoretical underpinnings behind these activities and to discuss its implications on the discourse of civil society’s role in poverty reduction.

This chapter begins by outlining the similarities between poverty reduction work at case study IBCSOs and cash transfers that constitute a pillar in the practice of official social protection. This shall justify the use of social protection literature, particularly Munro (2008), in the following analysis of case study IBCSOs’ poverty reduction activities. The chapter then moves to answer its two key questions. The first of them is: where do IBCSOs’ poverty reduction efforts stand in the debate between the different discourses justifying social protection? The chapter will show how IBCSOs’ approach to poverty reduction represents a hybrid between the risks, needs and rights discourses identified by Munro (2008) to justify social protection.
This is shown by outlining the elements within each of the three discourses that are present in the theoretical context within which case study IBCSOs are acting.

The second question is: what are the factors that have contributed to shaping case study IBCSOs’ approach to poverty reduction? In particular, the chapter investigates how did organisational survival needs, the Islamic faith background as well as social and economic surroundings of case study organisations all come together to shape their theorisation and practice of poverty reduction.

6.1. IBCSOs as Providers of Social Protection

Hanlon et al (2010) in their book *Just Give money to the Poor* provide one of the most comprehensive descriptions and analyses of Cash Transfer Programs. They highlight how cash transfers typically target the disadvantaged such as the young, the disabled, the elderly and women. Cash transfers also work on improving the income of the working poor and they provide them with safety nets against risks and emergencies. Similar to that, poverty reduction activities of case study IBCSOs (as seen in the Chapter Five) prioritizes women, single-female-headed households, orphans, disabled and old people who are unable to work. They also provide poor households with a considerable form of safety nets. Mr. Wafiq, board member at the Salafi GS, says: “The poor here seem to be walking on a rope, any slip and they are doomed. We might not be able to get them out of poverty, but we certainly protect them against the betrayal of days” (Interview B13). In practice, all the three case study IBCSOs helped their recipients with their medical prescription costs. They provided extra help by raising the financial payments during seasons, such as the start of schools in September when the needs of recipients increase. The marriage assistance program of the GS described in the previous chapter is also a unique example of a safety net. The only objective of cash transfers mentioned by Hanlon et al and not met by the IBCSOs was improvement of the income for the working poor. This objective is applicable only to working women recipients and those were not many. Their male counterparts were not covered as seen before.

In addition, Hanlon et al showed how cash transfer payments can be as small as 3 USD per month, similar to the payments provided by case study IBCSOs. As seen
in Chapter Five, recipients approach several IBCSOs at the same time and receive a small payment from each of them in order to improve their income in a more effective way. Payments advanced by case study IBCSOs also fulfill many of the advantages of cash transfers mentioned by Hanlon et al. such as the empowerment of women. Almost all case study IBCSOs payment recipients were women and in many cases they were not widows, which gave them the say over the running of their household income. Horeya, who receives help from GS said: “I manage the budget of the house because I go to the market every day and buy the things we need. I know how to manage my expenditure so that we can survive. My husband would not be able to lead us through that” (Interview B22). Hag Abdel Fattah, Chairman of community-based GMT says, “If we give money to men, they would waste it on smoking and going out to the café with their friends. We insist on giving women in order to manage the house budget and they usually do that better than men” (Interview A6). Moreover, regular assistance provided by case study IBCSOs to their recipients resembles cash transfers in their sustainability. Cash transfers guarantee regular and ongoing assistance to the poor when implemented as government policy rather than on project bases (Lawson and Hulme 2008b).

Finally cash transfers enable the poor to perform the function of saving, which fulfills certain needs of lifestyle such as paying dowry or going on holidays (Rutherford 2009). One of the recipients at GMT says, “Yes I save. The other day I managed with some help of the lady I work for to save enough money to take the kids to Agamy (a beach suburb of Alexandria) for a few days. It was a bit tough on me, but they had to be like their friends in school. Everybody goes to the coast in the summer” (Interview A28). Others have mentioned saving to help their sons and daughters through marriage costs, education or buying new clothes (Interviews A32, B15, C16).

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32 The size of the sample does not allow arriving at significant quantitative findings, but taking a random sample of the few recipients who gave details about their income and the exact amounts they receive from other organisations, we find that Soraya (Interview A32) earns every month a pension of 225 EGP and receives 20 EGP from GMT, 25 EGP from a GS branch nearby, 50 EGP from a bigger mosque outside the district where she lives and 10 EGP from a charitable Islamic CSO. This means that she can raise her monthly income by around 50% only by the basic regular payments she gets from IBCSOs.
All of the above similarities illustrate how IBCSOs can be considered as providers of social protection; and therefore their poverty reduction work can be discussed as part of the social protection framework. With that now established, this chapter can move on to compare the theoretical context of case study IBCSOs to the discourses of risks, rights and needs.

6.2. IBCSOs’ Approaches to Poverty Reduction and Risks:

According to Munro (2008), the risks discourse for justifying social protection, popular with neoclassical economists, is based on the possibilities of insurance markets failing to protect the poor against different forms of risk. At case study IBCSOs, there was an apparent concern about the need to protect the poor against the risks they face. There was also a trend of defining poverty in monetary terms, which is also a main characteristic of the risks discourse (Munro 2008). However, unlike Barr (1998) and Stiglitiz (2000) who suggested economic explanations for risks based on market failures, case study IBCSOs had other potential sources of risk driven from concepts and meanings found in their Islamic doctrine. The following section identifies two links between the practice, and theoretical context, of poverty reduction at case study IBCSOs, and the risks discourse for justifying social protection. The first link is the monetary definition of poverty, and the second is the risk-based understanding of its causes. In exploring both links, attention will be drawn to the Islamic-based understanding of poverty highlighted earlier in section 2.4, which defines poverty in absolute terms and attributes it to either fatalistic explanation preventing poor people from earning their living, laziness of the poor, structural reasons due to the natural order of the economy or lack of divine blessings in response to human greed.

The first link between case study IBCSOs approaches to poverty reduction and the risks discourse is their monetary definition of poverty, which according to Munro (2008) is a defining element of the risks literature. When asked to define

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When I speak of organisation’s view of a particular concept, I mean the view that was found to be dominant during the fieldwork amongst those whom their views would be shaping the direction and policy of each organisation. Those could be board members, principle donors or leaders of the General GS.
poverty, board members and donors at case study IBCSOs have generally responded in definitions that tend to explain poverty in absolute terms. Those who were not religiously educated have mostly defined poverty as the lack of sufficient income to provide the basic needs of the poor households. For instance, the treasurer of the GS said “the poor are those who do not earn enough income to provide a minimal standard of living” (Interview B5). Hag Anwar of the GS said “poor people are those who are disadvantaged by old age, illness or other disabilities that prevent them from making their living” (Interview B3). Likewise, in their definitions of poverty, some religiously educated informants, such as mosque Imams and the top leadership of the General GS, followed the same track; but they expressed it by using the term Had El-Kefaya (limit of subsistence) (Interviews A2, B12, B33, B34 and C2). This term is the Islamic version of the poverty line concept which appears in many faith-based text books that defined poverty (Abbasi 1960, Al-Awadi 2004 and Al-Qaradawy 1977).

This monetary definition of poverty found in data from interviews was reflected on the observed methods used by case study IBCSOs to measure poverty and identify their recipients. The limit of subsistence was set by the GS at an income level of 240 EGP a month per person (not per household) (Interview B1). At the MFA, the limit of subsistence varies amongst individuals. It is based on a ratio of income to expenditure that takes into account house rent, school fees and other major expenses of the household (Interview C1). It remains a numeric figure though.

In compliance with the MoSS regulations, the three case study IBCSOs have been conducting “social case studies” on the potential recipients. This included visiting their homes to check their ownership of assets such as kitchen appliances, relatively expensive furniture or accessories such as air conditioning or gaming gadgets for the children. However, the findings of these visits were only used to fulfill the requirements of MoSS (Interviews A2, B2 and C1). The decision on the eligibility of a household for receiving assistance was usually taken as soon as the documents showing the household income to be under the poverty line are believed to be authentic (Fieldnotes, GMT, 6/6/2010, GS, 13/10/2010 and MFA, 30/11/2011 ). The GS treasurer seemed to disagree with the procedure of the “social case studies” as he explained that “some poor people might own luxuries, such as TV sets or
electric fans, but that does not mean they are not poor because even with these luxuries the lack of sufficient income means they would still be incapable of satisfying many of their needs. Owning such items does not mean that they had bought it with their income” (Interview B5).

The second link between case study IBCSOs and the risks discourse is related to the types of risks the poor need to be protected from. Case study IBCSOs have attributed poverty to various causes, all of which figure in the Islamic literature on poverty reviewed earlier in this thesis. On top of these causes comes the fatalistic explanation of poverty. Mr. Wesam, the GMT board member said, “You cannot underestimate the role God plays in determining who is poor and who is not. For example, I drive a taxi in the evening to improve my income. Sometimes, my revenue from doing long shifts in spots known for having lucrative customers like five-star hotels is less than what I get on another day from picking up random passengers on the street on an odd two-hour drive. You cannot explain this except by the fact that it is God’s will” (Interview A9). Mr. El-Rawi, Chairman of the MFA explained the same point by reading a Qur’anic verse “In the heavens is your Rizq and whatever God has promised you.” He added: “It is like rain. It is all out there. You never know when, where or on whom it shall fall. Only God knows” (Interview C3).

Presence of the fatalistic explanation of poverty was stronger in MFA and GMT than at the GS where the lack of work was directly accounted to poverty and the able poor were assumed responsible to find work and save themselves from poverty. Hag Anwar says “We don’t give money to men because we don’t believe men should be poor if they are healthy. A man will find work, any work. Women are sometimes poor because their husbands or whoever is responsible for them might have passed away or lost the ability to work due to an accident or a disease” (Interview A2). I asked him about men who want to work but could not find jobs. The answer was: “there is work everywhere as long as the person is not being fussy especially about if the job is respectable in the eyes of other people. If the individual gives no attention to that, there would be always a job that one can do.” This view is not shared by MFA and GMT. They believe that government failure may have lead

34 An Arabic word that refers to the goods or income earned by a person as them being a grant from God.
for unemployment to deny capable men the chance to find work (Interviews A2 and C1). However, the two IBCSOs still do not provide assistance to men believing that women are more vulnerable and deserve priority (Interviews A4 and C1).

The closest reference to a structural explanation of poverty, otherwise known as diswelfare (Spicker 1993), at case-study IBCSOs was when they referred to the lack of social justice, resulting from greed and corruption (Interviews A8, B12, C20 and others). Mr. Mohammed Fawzi, a donor at MFA, used the Egyptian proverb “the bad guys have left nothing for the good guys.” I asked him whom does he mean by the bad guys. He said: “the greedy ones. He might be a wealthy merchant or somebody who unjustly acquired his brother’s or sister’s share in their parents’ inheritance. We all have witnessed how activities by those individuals send people to poverty” (Interview C20). It is worth noting that when greed and corruption are mentioned, they are usually associated with morals and religion. “People nowadays have lost their beliefs in religion and that makes them greedy. They refuse to pay their Zakat. That deprives the economy from blessings and creates poverty and many other problems” said Hag Fat’hy, a donor at GMT (Interview A13). Mr. Wafiq adds the element of a collective responsibility for poverty to that by saying “our lack of religion has killed our consciousness as a society because if we had possessed any, people would have not fallen into poverty” (Interview B12).

The way in which elites view the causes of poverty is a major factor in determining how they move to respond to it (Greig et al 2007). The above examples and others throughout the top tiers in the three case study IBCSOs reflect how donors and board members of the three organisations seem to agree on adopting the three Islamic explanations of poverty presented in Chapter Two of this thesis. They show how these organisations considered poverty as an “unavoidable” phenomena that could not be prevented, except by a major reform of society’s religious values and moral consciousness, which would fall beyond the capacities of the three case study IBCSOs. The poor were therefore subjected to the risks of falling on the unfortunate side of fate, being the helpless victim of greed, losing the breadwinner of the household or losing the ability to work and earn money. All these were risks that case study IBCSOs thought the poor would have not been able to survive without help the CSOs would provide for them.
6.3 IBCSOs’ Approaches to Poverty Reduction and Rights:

Munro (2008) states that the rights discourse for justifying social protection can be based on one of three traditions. The first is natural law which might have what he calls a “quasi-theological character.” The rights discourse can also be based on constitutional or international law or on a theory of human needs that defines meeting such needs as human rights. Fulfilling these rights cannot happen without “binding legal obligations” that fall upon an agent expected or required to meet these rights. According to Munro (2008), most of the works on rights suggest that this agent is the state. However, there are cases when the obligation to fulfill some citizens’ rights would fall upon other citizens. He gives the example of a girl’s right to education which is an obligation on her parents to fulfill and not just an obligation on the state to facilitate.

The three case study IBCSOs did recognise the poor had a right to receive assistance to protect them against the risks mentioned above. Their view of that right is closer to natural law than to any of the other two traditions of the rights discourse. This is manifested the most in their frequent reference to Zakat as the principle response for poverty reduction, although IBCSOs do not strictly depend on Zakat as a source of funding, nor do they mention collecting it as one of their main objectives. “It is a detailed system that achieves social justice by taking a certain proportion of the wealth of those who can be offered to pay it and transfer it to those who could not. It has a refined set of rules and regulations that cover all situations and conditions” said Hag Hamed, a donor to the GMT (Interview A3). The characteristic of Zakat as a monetary tax-like redistributive system has been also reflected on the case study IBCSOs’ understanding of the response to poverty. Mr. Ali Nader, board member at MFA said, “if the government manages to collect Zakat from all the eligible donors in a transparent and efficient way, there will be enough funds to solve the poverty problem.” (Interview C5). The treasurer of the GS said, “with Zakat money, we can build factories that would provide training and work for millions of people and that will end poverty in our society. This looks like a dream to me!” (Interview B5). However, while this agreement on the poor’s right in receiving
the benefits of this obligatory tax levied on the rich by God, case study IBCSOs did not go all the way with meeting Munro’s principle of no right without an associated legal binding obligation.

Instead, case study IBCSOs split over a fine line in their understanding of the nature of the role they perform in meeting the rights of the poor. On one side of the line, the connection between rights and obligation were not clear at GMT and MFA. Both CSOs viewed themselves as associations of volunteers driven by religious motives to play a role in relieving their communities from the sufferings of poverty. Mrs. Mona, the general secretary of MFA said, “What we do is a charitable project. We try to give people a hand of help. I hope God would recognise our efforts and bless us for them” (Interview C4). Mr. Mohammed Salem, a member of GMT board in charge of fundraising said, “I never approach donors because charity is optional and I have to respect that. I try instead to find and create income generating projects that would return a regular revenue in order to fund our activities” (Interview A8).

On the other side of the dividing line is the Salafi GS, where the social assistance it offers is not just considered as a generous act of voluntary philanthropic giving; but described as a “right” for the recipients as well as a religious duty or obligation on society as a whole, where the GS is an intermediary that meets this obligation on behalf of society. Sheikh Moustafa Ismail, the vice chairman of the General GS said “What we do is fulfilling a religious and a moral obligation towards the poor. We are providing them with a right that they were deprived of” (Interview B34). Along the same lines, Hag Anwar of the GS said: “The mosque is the house of God. It belongs to the worshipers of God and not to the people who run it. That is why when a Muslim feels the need for help, the first place to resort to should be their mosque; and it is important that they would find there what they are looking for” (Interview B3). In describing their work, GS board members and leaders have used the religious term *Fard El-Kefaya*, (literally translated to: Sufficiency Obligation) (Interviews B3, B5, B12, B32 and B34). The term refers to the type of religious obligation imposed by God on the whole of the Muslim society; but the sin for not fulfilling the obligation is dropped off the whole society if the obligation is carried out by any of its members. This is opposed to *Fard El-Ayn*, such as regular praying or fasting the month of Ramadan, where religious obligations are levied on individuals.
and the sin of not meeting them falls on each responsible individual (Al-Dardeer 1972). In other words, the act of fulfilling the obligation in *Fard El-Kefaya* is optional for individuals but compulsory for societies and nations. Examples include burying the dead or building enough mosques. As long as there is somebody (an agent) who is willing to volunteer to carry out this obligation, the rest of society is relieved from its burden. The GS here sees in itself the agent that fulfills the religious duty of society towards the poor.

These religious beliefs may manifest also in the manner the recipients are treated by the organisations’ officials. I have witnessed an incident when a woman was weeping during submitting an application to receive help from the CSO and said that she felt sorry because life had forced her to knock the doors of the mosque for help. Hag Anwar firmly responded: “This is your right. You are entitled to claim it whenever you need it” (Fieldnotes, GS, 23/10/2010). This sympathetic individual attitude that recognises the poor’s rights, however, had not greatly affected the procedures of the poverty reduction practice of the GS. The recipients never had a say in the type of assistance they are receiving, as might be expected within a more fully expressed version of rights-based development whereby recipients are recast as active claimants (Harris-Curtis 2010).

The numerous conditions imposed on recipients such as intimidating them to attend religious lessons (as shown in the previous chapter) meant that GS treatment of recipients was not much different from that of the other two case study IBCSOs who recognised themselves as charity providers. This is a behaviour which might appear as a contradiction between discourse and practice at the GS. However, it does not when considering its roots in Islamic thought where charity has been actually described as a right. Al-Qaradawy (1977), for instance, associates charity with rights by referring to the Quranic story of the garden owners. The story is about three partners who harvested a garden rich of fruit trees and refused to give any to the beggars who approached them. The result of their act of greed was that God wiped out the whole harvest overnight leaving them with nothing but ruins because of their “refusal to pay the right of the poor.” The story does not only discourage turning away the poor who ask for charity, but it also endorses the obligation to pay them part of one’s earnings. The GS clearly accepts that combination between rights
and charity. Sheikh Moustafa Ismail, Vice Chairman of the General GS said “What we do is a charity, but it is also a right”. He added “the difference between us and the so-called civil society is that they do charity out of pity and we do it out of obligation, which makes us more sustainable, more reliable and more preserving of the poor’s dignity” (Interview B34). Mrs. Shadya, a donor to GS, said that the poor have a “right to be helped” and “we should not wait for them to claim their right because many of them might shy away from doing that and stay at home unheard of. It is their right to have and our obligation to find them” (Interview B30).

6.4 IBCSOs’ Approaches to Poverty Reduction and Needs

According to Munro (2008), the needs discourse is the least theoretically developed of the three discourses. Streeten et al (1981) present three arguments in support of the needs discourse. The first is a moral one based on the necessity to relieve human beings from the pain and suffering they face when their basic needs are not satisfied. The second argument is an instrumental one where expenditure on the provision of basic needs is seen as an investment that improves economic performance. For example, expenditure on basic education improves the quality of human resources available in the labour market. Finally, the political argument is where the provision of basic needs is important not only for the sake of the poor but also for the sake of others who equally benefit when needs are met. For example, expenditure on health care can prevent the spread of major epidemics that would hit all groups in society irrespective of their wealth.

As seen in Chapter Five, poverty reduction practice of case study IBCSOs has followed a basic needs provision approach. There were two direct reasons that could be identified behind that. The first reason is simply the lack of knowledge at case study IBCSOs with the latest developments in the field of civil society’s work on poverty reduction. Interviews with the heads of the studied organisations have indicated that leaders of the three IBCSOs have never been introduced to either the rights-based, nor the capabilities approach, to poverty reduction as distinct applicable means (Interviews A4, B3 and C1). Although they have practiced some elements of both approaches, this was in manners that are closer to improvising
rather than as a systematic practice. For example, both GMT and GS have attempted to encourage some recipients to generate income by passing on larger amounts of cash to them for the purpose of using the money to buy goods that could be resold for profit. Both CSOs failed in that attempt as the recipients who received these amounts of money ended up spending them on other immediate needs they had and not on the target they were designated for (Interviews A2, A4 and C2). The disappointing results of that failure have discouraged both organisations to search for alternatives to the basic needs approach (Interview A2, A4 and B3). MCDA was the only case study organisation that broke the trend of the basic needs approach to poverty reduction because it possessed the required knowledge for doing things in a different way, which is their knowledge and experience with the rights-based approach that they have acquired from trainings provided by foreign donors as seen in Chapter Five.

The second reason is the second argument offered by Streeten et al (1981) for the needs discourse on justifying social protection, which is the instrumental argument. According to leaders of the three case study IBCSOs (Interviews, A3, B2, B33, B34, C2 and C3), a key benefit of poverty reduction activities provided by their organisation was to protect society from the harms of crime, to which recipients would allegedly turn if they were left to poverty with their basic needs remaining unsatisfied. Although most of the recipients were older women who would probably fail to become dangerous criminals even if they tried, their sons and daughters were younger and more vulnerable to “deviation” as crime was usually referred to by informants making that point. Apart from that, there were not any strong direct references found to the other two arguments for the needs discourse, either the moral or the political.

So, until this point we arrive at a picture of case study IBCSOs poverty reduction activities that integrate elements of the risks, rights and needs discourses justifying the provision of social protection. The organisations saw the necessity to prevent the poor from several risks outlined by the organisations’ faith doctrine including fatalistic and structural risks. This necessity is why religious teachings have justified the divine assigned right of the poor to a portion of society’s wealth. The
delivery of this right is a religious, not a legal, obligation that some of the more theoretically developed IBCSOs like the GS would be able to understand in a more comprehensive way, including elements such as the poor’s right to claim their benefits. Other less theoretically developed IBCSOs simplifies this obligation by strictly looking at the religious side of it, which ends up overlapping this delivery of the poor’s rights with philanthropic giving. However, whether IBCSOs view their obligations in terms of fulfilling the religious “sufficiency obligation” on behalf of society at large or simply in terms of a philanthropic religious duty, the way IBCSOs translate their obligations to practice is the same. Their practices would all strictly fall under the basic needs approach to poverty reduction by civil society, which was presented with other approaches earlier in section 2.2. The final section of this chapter will take the analysis further and explain what has led to the formation of this hybrid between the discourses of risks, rights and needs discourses that has been detected in case study organisations. The section highlights that the way with which case study IBCSOs theorises poverty and poverty reduction activities is not what entirely determines the organisations’ choices on their poverty reduction practice approaches.

6.5. Explaining the Approach of Case Study IBCSOs to Poverty Reduction

The main feature of the context within which case study IBCSOs have been designing and implementing their poverty reduction activities is the existence of a paradox between their recognition of important elements of the rights discourse, especially at the case study of the Salafi GS, and the top-down basic needs practice that continues to patronise recipients by denying them choices and empowerment. This paradox is what mainly shapes case study IBCSOs’ hybrid approach to poverty reduction as outlined above. This section explains this paradox by comparing poverty reduction practice at the GS with practices suggested by the rights-based approach for poverty reduction, as seen in mainstream literature on civil society and, to some extent, in the practice of MCDA. This section reveals why case study IBCSOs understood their poverty reduction role in the way they did, and how that understanding lead to the hybrid approach to poverty reduction explained earlier in
this chapter. The GS in particular is chosen for this comparison since it is the only case study IBCSO that had based its practice on an identifiable theoretical base driven from Islamic doctrine and values, which makes its poverty reduction approach more amenable to a theoretical discussion than the other two cases.

The following lines reveal three factors that combine to shape the nature of case study IBCSOs’ approaches to poverty reduction. The first is the structural factor, where IBCSOs establish two classes of dependents, a class of patrons that needs an intermediary to deliver to the poor a share of the wealth it feels religiously and morally obliged to deliver to them and a class of clients who need that share of the patrons’ wealth delivered to them in order to satisfy their life needs. Maintaining these two dependency relations is crucial to the survival of IBCSOs as influential actors in their communities. The second factor determining the approach of IBCSOs to poverty reduction is the impact of the prevailing religious doctrine at the organisations on their understanding of poverty reduction in general, and their understanding of the rights-based approach in particular. The third and final factor is the cultural relevance of case study organisations approaches to the surroundings in which they operate.

The first factor determining case study IBCSOs’ approaches to poverty reduction is the structural element of civil society, which includes the needs of CSOs to survive, and to maintain both a stable flow of funds from motivated and dedicated donors, and an ample supply of recipients that give the organisations a purpose to exist and a base of loyal clients whom the organisations can influence. For example, in the case of the GS, the organisation declares its desire to reform the poor religiously through social assistance as a main purpose for conducting these activities (Interview B33). As seen previously in Section 2.2., the rights-based approach to development requires empowering the poor and the marginalised in ways that would enable them to claim the rights that would protect them against poverty and deprivation (Nayamu-Musembi and Cornwall 2004). Therefore, the approach views poverty as a result of political power imbalances that require adjustment before any fruitful process of economic or social development, or poverty reduction can actually take place (Molyneux and Lazar 2003). That is why according to Harris-Curtis (2003), the rights-based approach to development is typically associated with the move to
realise political and civil rights of targeted communities by empowering these communities and supporting them to become more independent. When that happens, they eventually become less dependent on CSOs.

At case study IBCSOs, the close personal ties the organisations maintained with their recipients were major motives for donors to choose case study IBCSOs to receive their Zakat and other donations (Interviews A12, A34, B7-B9, C18 and others). As recipients depended on the organisations for social assistance, donors depended on them also to channel their Zakat payments and other donations through a trustworthy intermediary as well as to satisfy the obligation that wealthy members of society felt towards the poor. This have granted IBCSOs a unique position within civil society and made their role essential. Maintaining such a role would be hardly possible without maintaining the dependency relations that lead to it. Kindornay et al (2012) show how the rights-based approach can change the rhetoric of CSOs, but it cannot change the fundamental structures in which they exist and operate, which is similar to the situation at the GS case study. On one occasion, a young boy approached Hag Anwar at the GS asking if he could sign-in for his mother and receive her due monthly payment. Hag Anwar told the boy that this was not possible and the mother had to come herself to the mosque. “If she is ill, she can wait until she feels better to come”. After the disappointed boy left, Hag Anwar told me that he does this to make it very clear to everybody that the “mosque’s role is essential in the lives of these people. They have to come to the mosque themselves to know that this is where their payments (he probably meant livelihoods) are coming from” (Fieldnotes, GS, 13/11/2010).

The second factor is the degree to which the concepts rights can be relevant to the faith doctrines that are dominant within case study organisations. Many Faith-based Organisations (FBOs) do not apply rights-based approaches to development because they have their own understandings and conceptualisations of rights, which are based on their own faith backgrounds. This is demonstrated for example by the overlap between rights and charity in Islam, which was highlighted earlier in this chapter. In the literature, similar cases can be found from other faiths. For example, Harris-Curtis (2010) suggests two reasons for why numerous Christian NGOs do not adopt a rights-based approach for development. First, they do not reject the rights
discourse, but they view rights as part of their own FBOs’ already existing value system that they do not see a need to update or modify. They also cannot see any contradiction between rights as they appear in development literature and religious obligations they believe in. From their point of view, obeying the latter actually achieves the former, and the former is only a reminder to keep standards and sustainability of the latter. This overlap between both concepts of rights and religious obligations within FBOs was most apparent at the GS. The poor were granted the right to claim assistance from the mosque at any time. In practice, however, the GS had placed that right under various restrictions in order to preserve the importance of the religious values that are represented by the mosque through linking benefiting from the GS to conditions, such as coming in person to receive help from the mosque or attending a religious lesson. The poor’s right to social assistance here is not exclusive. It is instead part of a greater package that involves paying allegiance to the mosque as an institution and to the doctrine that the mosque represents.

The third factor that shapes the approaches of case study IBCSOs to poverty reduction is the relevance of rights to the cultural settings in which they operate. In response to points of view such as that of Pogge (20008) and Sen (2009) who believe in the universality of the human rights, the “cultural critique” of the rights-based approach argues that the concept of human rights itself is compatible only with certain cultures, namely the culture of the European welfare States. This means that rights can in many cases be in conflict with other non-western cultures (Harris-Curtis 2010). More specifically, several critiques claim that Arabic and Islamic thought would not support an agenda of rights. Browers (2006) argues that Arabic and Islamic political thought place the state and the individual on the same level in relation to their moral purpose, which is the achievement of the full obedience to God. Accordingly, Islam is commonly accused of not recognising individual rights at the expense of focusing on the collective interest of the Greater Muslim Society (otherwise known as the Islamic Nation, the Ummah).

Other local traditions, cultural and upbringings support this claim too. For example, when I have asked some members of committees formed by MCDA in order to deal with various community problems about the rights-based approach,
most of them did not demonstrate much knowledge about it (Interviews D8, D11 and D22-D27). That was further reflected in their practice that lacked mobilisation, empowerment and other elements of the rights-based approach associated with building serious claims against the state or society. This occurred although the organisation’s board members insisted that all committee members have gone through training on the rights-based approach to development before beginning to work with their respective committees. The members did not deny having this training; but they maintained that it was not related to the rights-based approach. Because the training had taken place about two years before the interviews, it was difficult to verify its content. However, it is not difficult to see the feedback that followed the training. Mr. Talaat, board member of MCDA said critically that “this is not the rights-based approach. Much of what we do now is petition writing!” (Interview D5). It seems that the idea of formation of local committees that mainly achieve their targets by petitions writing and paying allegiances to the local authorities hoping they would be kind enough to respond to their problems was delivered to members and incorrectly labeled in the training as rights-based approach. It appears that the trainees were taught these "negotiation skills" without actually being told about the rights-based approach. Because the training took place before the revolution, it might be argued that omitting a direct mention of the rights-based approach was done in order to avoid confrontation with the SSI. However, the fact that the organisation’s practice continued on similar patterns after the revolution requires another explanation.

According to the cultural critique of the rights-based approach, this could be attributed to rejection of the rights discourse by community members on cultural or religious grounds. A number of MCDA’s key figures themselves actually attacked the rights discourse. Mrs. Maha, a board member and chairman of the local working child committee, said that she was not happy when she was told in a training session provided by a foreign donor that the rights-based approach would mean that "women rights include the right to love and marry based on self-choice alone." She added that this would mean her daughter could simply one day marry a man whom the family is not happy with." She described this as "outrageous" adding that "the rights-based approach is a Western concept that does not suit us. It has taught me
many interesting things but we should not just copy it all because much of it is against our religion" (Interview D14).

Another example of the conflict between the rights discourse and local culture is evidenced by some board members of MCDA. They complained about lack of funds because they only receive funding from foreign development donor agencies; but they themselves said that they pay all their Zakat and donations to mosques or to other FBOs (Interviews D9 and D14). Dr. Kamal, a board member in MCDA and labor union leader, said that MCDA originally started as a “help organisation that provided assistance to the poor. However, we adopted the rights-based approach later when we received funding from the German aid agency GTZ that required us to use the approach” (Interview D7).

This situation where leading figures of the rights-based CSO do not demonstrate strong connection with their own organisation’s approach is not necessarily unique to MCDA. It brings back the research of Reham Wilson (2013) highlighted in Section 2.2. of this thesis, where she examined several CSOs in Egypt claiming to apply the rights-based approach to development. She found the approach in these organisations coming in conflict with many of the existing political, social and cultural norms in Egyptian society, which shows that the contradiction between discourse and practice seen at the GS and at MCDA is a bigger phenomena that extends beyond the specific case of IBCSOs in Egypt.

In summary, the hybrid approach of case study IBCSOs to poverty reduction which integrates elements of the three discourses of risks, rights and needs and results in a mostly top-down basic-needs oriented poverty reduction practice, was chosen by these organisations for three principle reasons. First, it sustains the institutional strength and legitimacy of the organisations through the creation of two classes of dependents who depend on IBCSOs as the only capable and reliable intermediary between them. Second, the hybrid approach is more relevant to the faith doctrine of case study IBCSOs as it recognises the moral side of rights, at the same time when it recognises the religious obligation that organisations believe they are required to satisfy, by primarily meeting the basic needs of the poor recipients in their communities. Finally, and most significantly, case study IBCSOs’ approach to
poverty reduction avoids conflict with social and cultural norms within Egyptian society that would form an obstacle facing the application of a more conventional rights-based approach to poverty reduction.

6.6. Conclusion

This chapter has analysed the poverty reduction approaches of case study IBCSOs. The purpose of this chapter was to answer the two key questions of where do these approaches stand in terms of the three social protection justifying discourses of risks, rights and needs? And what are the reasons that led to that particular stand? The chapter began by outlining the similarities between the poverty reduction work of case study IBCSOs and official social protection in order to validate the further discussion of these activities in relation to social protection justifying discourses.

The chapter then moved to answer its two key questions. First, it discussed how the approaches of case study IBCSOs to poverty reduction have integrated elements of the three discourses of risks, rights and needs that Munro (2008) outlined as justifications for social protection. It was shown how case study IBCSOs were motivated to practice poverty reduction in order to protect the poor against risks caused by ill-fate or unfortunate destiny, illness or disability that might prevent able poor from earning their own living, or other risks caused by the greed of those who would deny the poor opportunities and/or justice.

Case study IBCSOs saw protecting the poor against such risks as a right granted to the poor by religion. However, unlike the conventional rights discourse that views rights as legal binding obligations on the state or on other citizens, case study IBCSOs believe the obligations falls on society as a whole and see themselves as agents acting to meet such obligations on behalf of society. At some cases such as those of community-based IBCSOs, this happened by civil society volunteering for charitable motives to fulfill the obligations. In other cases such as the GS, the action to provide the poor with social protection came as recognition of civil society as a capable agent that can provide such protection on mass level and is therefore obliged to do so. Despite that apparent recognition of the poor’s right to social
protection and the parallel recognition of civil society’s obligation to deliver it, when it comes to the actual delivery of social protection, case study IBCSOs would focus on fulfilling the basic needs of recipients rather than empowering them or enhancing their capacities to acquire their own rights, which are the elements of practice typically associated with contemporary rights-based approaches to development.

This paradox between discourse and practice at case study IBCSOs, which unfolded from the above analysis is justified by a combination of factors that influenced the strategies of these organisations. The first factor is related to the survival needs of IBCSOs as an influential element within civil society. This has led these organisations to create a base of dependency relations where the IBCSOs are needed as an intermediary between donors and recipients. The second factor is related to teachings dictated by the faith doctrines of such organisations in which philanthropic giving overlaps with human rights in ways that end up distorting the rights-based practice of FBOs. Finally, the inability of these organisations, or indeed any other ones, to advance the conventional rights-based approach in a specific social and cultural environment such as the one that surrounds Egyptian civil society has left case study organisations with little choice with regards to how far they can take any poverty reduction practice that would depart from a rights-based discourse.

At the end of this chapter, it is suggested that case study IBCSOs deliver a form of social protection with an approach that takes into account the faith-related values and culture of their society. However, there is a need to test whether the quality of this case study IBCSOs’ delivery of social protection is comparable to that of other civil society organisations. Performing this test is the focus of the following chapter.
CHAPTER SEVEN

IBCSOs AS DELIVERERS OF POVERTY REDUCTION: A REVIEW OF ORGANISATIONAS’ CHARACTERISTICS

The thesis has so far clarified the approaches of case study Islamic-based Civil Society Organisations (IBCSOs) to poverty reduction and explained the factors that shape these approaches. It emphasized their relevance to the Islamic doctrine, and highlighted the impact of these organisations’ understanding of risks, rights, needs and obligations on them and on their work. It also pointed out the operational relevance of these organisations’ work to the delivery of social protection. This chapter moves on to address the second research question of this thesis: Do IBCSOs in Egypt have a comparative advantage over Non Faith-based Organisations (NFBOs) in practicing poverty reduction?

This chapter seeks to put findings from the case study organisations into perspective in relation to the literature on FBOs surveyed earlier which suggested a number of advantages and disadvantages for the involvement of FBOs in poverty reduction practice in particular and development in general. By analyzing the data from this thesis against this literature, the chapter assesses whether the Egyptian case study IBCSOs in this thesis\(^ {35}\) can provide evidence to support either sides of the argument: for or against the involvement of FBOs in poverty reduction and development. This is achieved by evaluating the extent to which case study IBCSOs satisfy the criteria suggested by Narayan et al (2000) in their *Voices of the Poor* study for the qualities that need to be fulfilled by institutions working on poverty reduction. This criterion is divided into three sets of organisational characteristics. The first examines at the quality of relationships between these organisations, their communities, and recipients. These qualities include: trust, participation, accountability and unity. The second set of characteristics is concerned with the valued behaviour of the organisations. This set includes: respect, honesty and fairness as well as listening, caring and compassion and finally, hardworking. The third set of characteristics is concerned with institutional effectiveness. This includes

\(^ {35}\) which are believed to be typical representatives of IBCSOs in Egypt at large as seen in Chapter Four.
the ability of the organisations to provide timely, responsive and caring support, as well as their accessibility and closeness to the poor. The following sections address each of these characteristics separately. For each of the examined concepts of organisations’ characteristics, the chapter firstly clarifies the definition of the concept as outlined by Narayan et al (2000) and highlight major references from the FBOs literature on the topic. It then examines the relevant evidence from the case study IBCSOs and compares this to the fourth case study of the secular rights-based organisation wherever a comparison is relevant.

7.1. Quality of Relationships

7.1.1. Trust

In their outline of organisations’ qualities, Narayan et al (2000) defined “trust” as confidence, reliability and dependability the poor feel towards the organisations’ ability to respond to their needs and to provide them with the support they anticipate. Those who recognised the advantages of FBOs in development and poverty reduction work such as Green et al (2010) tend to give FBOs a high rating on the trust factor attributing this to trust that people already have in faith doctrines these organisations represent. This trickles down to trust being placed in these organisations. This is evident in case study IBCSOs explored in this thesis, where recipients have shown that they place trust in intentions and capabilities of these organisations to help them. Although monthly payments advanced to those recipients have ranged in case study IBCSOs between very small amounts of 20 and 50 EGP (and even as little as 10 EGP in other non-case study IBCSOs learnt about during the fieldwork),36 the recipients have expressed in their interviews a sense of “acceptance” of the little amounts. Recipients may accept what they are given because this is all that is offered. However, their responses and actions have also shown how they believed that case study organisations were doing their utmost to help them. Also, it was noticeable that questions about the sufficiency of the help provided by the organisations were usually answered by gratitude remarks to the

36 The poverty line set by the GS was at 240 EGP per month per person. So, for a household of four members, 20-50 EGP would be under 5% of household’s poverty line income.
individuals who play the leading role in running them. For example, recipients at community-based GMT usually responded to the question on whether the help they received was sufficient by saying that “Hag Fahmy knows how poor we are and he is doing his best to help.” (Interview A23, A26 and A27). Recipients at the Salafi GS and the Muslim Brotherhood-affiliated MFA expressed similar views.

The fact that trust was granted to the individual and not to the organisation was not exclusive to case study IBCSOs. In the NFBO of MCDA, Mrs. Fawzeya being the key figure received similar levels of trust. However, unlike her counterparts at IBCSOs, the trust she received appeared to take much longer time to accrue. The trust of recipients in the three IBCSOs was granted almost instantly and was sustained. It was similarly expressed by those who joined recipient registers within the past 12-24 months, as well as recipients who joined years before. The case was very different at the NFBO, where MCDA has worked very hard over many years to establish the trust it now receives from the community. As shown in Chapter Five, most community members were even afraid to put their signatures on a petition adopted by the organisation for their first project to cover the drainage canal. Some refused even to open their doors to the Civil Society Organisation’s (CSO’s) members seeking to discuss how they could help them. The NFBO earned trust with the deeds it performed within the local community over a long period of time. On the other hand, those in charge of managing mosques gained trust for themselves, and their organisations, merely by the special positions they occupy within faith-based organisations.

7.1.2. Participation

Participation is the ability to have a say in the way the organisation acts (Narayan et al. 2010). The lack of it in the activities of FBOs is considered a major drawback by critics of FBOs’ contribution to development and poverty reduction (Taylor 2011). The top-down approaches and failure to involve local communities in various development processes is often referred to by donor agencies as a reason to view FBOs with considerable skepticism (Clarke 2007). The findings outlined in Chapter Five support the view that the lack of participation at case study IBCSOs is a valid concern about their role in poverty reduction. The data has shown that IBCSOs
are managed by top-down approaches where decisions on the methods and amounts of assistance provided to recipients are taken behind closed doors of the board meetings at GMT and MFA. In the case of the GS, even the organisation’s board members themselves did not have a voice in determining the broad lines of the design of their activities. Instead, they were required to adhere to the frameworks dictated to them by the General GS (Interview B4). However, this total lack of participation on the side of the recipients was associated with alternative participation by other community members. Therefore, there is the potential to alter the above mentioned definition of the concept of participation to include involvement of more members of the community in the “implementation” of the activities rather than just their “design” or the “determination” of their type. All case-study IBCSOs are almost entirely dependent on volunteers. This includes the top leadership layer of the General GS (Interviews B33 and B34). The donor registers of case study IBCSOs included hundreds of community members who provided most of the contributions to these organisations’ budgets with their regularly monthly Kafala (orphan sponsorship) payments. In the case of the GS, local business owners such as bakers and butchers were included in the poverty reduction process by providing their products to the recipients (Interviews B44 and B45).

The manner of participation at case study IBCSOs may have not achieved its main objective of granting stakeholders a voice in the running of the organisations according to the definition of participation by Narayan et al. (2000) However, it did make an achievement crucial for any development organisation, which is to grant it independence from international donors by mainly depending on local resources. However, this sort of participation has resulted in a one-sided process in which the more affluent members of the community who were able, and willing, to contribute to the activities of case study IBCSOs have participated in helping the poor in return for spiritual satisfaction or personal pride or any other motivations. On the other hand, allowing participation only to those who can actually afford contributions has simply meant that the poor continued to be on the receiving end and were excluded from active participation – they were simply passive recipients of grants. It should also be highlighted that although the more affluent members of the community actually controlled the funds that provide these organisations with the means of
survival, they almost never used the power they have to impose any particular policy on the funded organisation. In very few cases, some donors made requests which determined the use of their donations, for example asking for it to be directed to orphans or old women. However, I have not encountered a single case in all the three case study IBCSOs where a donor had expressed any interest in changing the policy of the organisations or the design of their poverty reduction activities. This lack of willingness, or “unconditional participation”, is arguably due to the “obligation” feeling of the donors towards the organisations reflecting the role faith is playing in shaping and motivating the involvement of donors with IBCSOs. The notion of “unconditional participation” leads to a discussion of another close concept, which is accountability.

7.1.3. Accountability and Ownership

According to Narayan et al (2000), “accountability” refers to organisations being held accountable to their recipients, and to their communities, as determined by the extent of transparency and integrity they are maintaining. This criteria was difficult to assess in case study IBCSOs because they are subjected by law to certain bureaucratic government regulations that apply to all CSOs in Egypt, and do not necessarily take into consideration the nature of these organisations as FBOs. The associational nature of the organisations and the close government monitoring left them accountable to their general assemblies and to several governmental authorities, such as the Ministry of Social Solidarity (MoSS), the Ministry of Endowments (MoE) and State Security Investigations (SSI). For the government, accountability was evident in practice as financial and activities monitoring took place regularly in all case study organisations. However, case study CSOs’ general assemblies did not practice their rights in holding CSOs’ board members accountable for their decisions and practices. The trust element discussed earlier usually outweighed accountability.

However, if measuring accountability at case study organisations is difficult, Dicklitch and Rice (2004) in their study of FBOs suggest an alternative which they argue is more applicable to FBOs: “ownership.” Case study IBCSOs are all affiliated to mosques; and a mosque is essentially a place of worship. It is the “House of God” as
frequently mentioned by informants. This means that unlike secular CSOs, mosques have a congregation made of people who regularly and frequently visit mosques to pray. The congregation does not pay any subscription fees or regular dues in return for their use of the mosque. They also do not have to satisfy any membership application requirements or pass any filtering process.

Subsequently, anybody who appears on a regular basis and becomes a familiar face to the other regular visitors at the mosque is treated as a member of the congregation. This was evident at the three case study mosques when mosque leaders used to inquire whenever they noticed that a particular face they know had not appeared. They would try to investigate the reason for their absence, whether it was travel, illness or may be worse. Unsurprisingly, most members of the congregation were linked to their particular mosque through the geographic proximity of their current (or in a few cases former) homes to the mosque. Membership in the congregation therefore could be considered as an automatic “right” acquired by living closely and praying frequently in the mosque. This informal associational relationship has created a sense of ownership from mosques for their congregations. The congregation membership entails the right to get benefit from the mosque if needs arise. Even for those who are not members of the congregation, there are still reasons to feel entitled to help provided by the mosque. Because a mosque, any mosque, is frequently described as the “House of God,” it was therefore God who belongs to all the faithful whom they were actually addressing when seeking help. The few recipients who admitted actively seeking help from several mosques have almost all shared something in common, they never asked for help from secular organisations (Interviews A24, A27, B16, B21, C14 and others).

This sense of ownership felt towards case study IBCSOs was also evident in the high tone of confidence that recipients have shown in approaching case study mosques when asking for help. A familiar scene witnessed by the researcher in many occasions at the various mosques studied in this thesis is for a person in need of assistance, almost always a lady, entering the office and directly addressing whoever is responsible to ask for help. The address would usually directly start by telling the story that led the person to ask for assistance. That usually start with “My husband died,” or “I have five kids” or “I get a little insufficient pension” rather than starting
the address with a question such as “Would you give?” or “Would you provide?” The recipients believe that the mosque is some sort of an emergency fund that they can resort to when they need help and expect to find sympathy and assistance. They believe that they would not find similar listening ears at the secular organisations, and that might explain why they do not look for their assistance as often as they do with the mosques and other FBOs.

7.1.4. Unity

Unity is another concept suggested by Narayan et al (2000) that does not absolutely fit the situation of case study CSOs or Egyptian CSOs in general, or at least in urban parts of Egypt as explored in this thesis. They define it as the ability of organisations to resolve conflicts that divide communities because of racial, tribal or religious differences, which is a known aspect of many African societies. The communities studied in this research are not good examples for divided communities that Narayan et al (2000) may have been referring to. However, case study IBCSOs have nevertheless been mobilising people towards two other forms of unity that should not be ignored. The first was described by Ghannam (1998) as a feeling of “collectiveness and equality.” In her study of the role mosques play in social life in urban Cairo, Farah Ghannam noted that mosques are melting pots where people mingle together relatively freed from most social barriers they encounter elsewhere in their lives. Mosques remove these barriers and bring people together under the umbrella of a newly created form of collective identity, which is that of their “Muslim” faith. This identity can replace parts of the socio-economic class apparatus within local communities.

For example, Ghannam (1998) noticed in her research that this particular characteristic of mosques may explain why women tend to prefer being part of mosque-based communities where they find friends and acquaintances, and in case of need they also find support. That finding was affirmed by case study IBCSOs in this thesis. As seen above, there was no prerequisite for joining the mosque congregation at any case. There were also no boundaries on joining the recipients list. In fact, one of the registered recipients at the GMT was Christian (Interview A5). The MFA and the GS both claimed they would not mind taking Christian recipients on
their registers, but both indicated they never got any applications from non-Muslims (Interviews B4 and C2). The recipients came together at the mosques with many of them forming informal networks amongst each other. Recipient interviews have various references for “my friend from the mosque” who either has recommended another mosque to seek help from (Interviews A27 and B16), or has helped when there was a need (Interview C15). In many occasions, the IBCSOs’ leaders have used some recipients to convey messages to others, which is an example of the social ties that tend to link them together through the mosque.

The second form of unity brought by FBOs is the spiritual one. Clarke and Jennings (2008b) argue that faith at FBOs is not just an “add-on” that has a supplementary role in development. They insist that it is a need fulfilled by FBOs because those who suffer from poverty, do not only have material needs, but they also have spiritual ones, common to many human beings, and also due to the feeling of insecurity induced by their poverty. The FBOs with their spiritual nature are therefore expected to be more capable of addressing such needs. The GS stood out amongst the case studies by playing the biggest role in the spiritual lives of its members. As shown before in Chapter Five, recipients there were asked to attend religious lessons at the organisation. Their feedback about these lessons were mostly favourable. “The lady who teaches us gave me very important advice on things related to how my daughters should be properly dressed. I didn’t know these details before and I am happy to have known them now,” said Madiha, one of the recipients (Interview B23). Those who attended these lessons at the GS mostly said they did not try to attend religious lessons elsewhere; and while some of them were keen followers of TV celebrity preachers they still deeply honoured the religious message they received at the FBOs’ mosques. At MFA, recipients have only received lessons for reading and understanding the Qur’an, which did not include any lessons on religious conduct or behaviour. The teachers there still received a lot of praise (Interviews C10 and C13-15). At GMT, women were not offered any lessons. However, the mosque did conduct afternoon Qur’an classes for children. Meanwhile, the mosque’s Imam acted as a reference figure giving religion-based advice whenever he was approached by community members including recipients.
On the other hand, the secular organisation MCDA also achieved a collective identity similar to what case study IBCSOs have created around religion. MCDA has exploited the emotional feeling of belonging to the same area to create a sense of friendships and personal ties amongst various community members who never knew each other before joining the organisation (Interviews D8, D9, D14, D23 and others). As seen in Chapter Five, MCDA also provided a unique example for mobilising the local community towards one issue, despite the approach it used in the mobilisation process or in tackling that issue. In that domain, MCDA could live up to the standard of case study IBCSOs, and surpass them by its ability to turn collective identity into collective action. However, MCDA did not have any influence over the spiritual needs of people. This is clearly evident by learning that many of its key figures were still paying their donations to mosques (Interview D9, D12 and D14), and advancing their religious beliefs over the rights discourse. (Interview D14) However, there is still a considerable spiritual element that cannot be ignored in the work of MCDA. “I love this place because it has taught us that we can make a change and improve our lives; and seeing this change grow in front of me makes me happy and proud,” said Hag Fadel (Interview D11). MCDA might have not given people an alternative to their faith, but it has injected their spiritual lives with other forms of satisfaction, and/or pride.

In summary, with regards to quality of relationships, case study IBCSOs have shown advantage on the sense of ownership if compared with NFBOs. They managed to give recipients the feeling that they own the organisations and have some level of rights to the assistance they receive from the organisations even if the case study IBCSOs still failed to transfer that to a higher level where recipients would begin to recognise their rights to a certain standard of living or a quality of life and actively seek that right. However, case study IBCSOs had not enjoyed advantages over the NFBOs such as MCDA in the quality of other components of the relationship they had with their communities especially with the recipients. The latter had managed a different course, but it was equally effective. All case study organisations had the trust of their communities, but IBCSOs built trust with a relative ease and without the need to prove competence first by scoring recognised achievements. All case
study organisations have involved elements of participation, but participation at IBCSOs was more quantity-oriented by targeting the involvement of a bigger number of people in the implementation of activities but not in the process of setting targets or choosing activities. Finally, all case study organisations contributed to the creation of forms of unity. In the three case study IBCSOs, unity was created around social networks and a joint spiritual identity while at the case of MCDA, unity was created around the mutual interest in belonging to a single community and sharing the various challenges that face it.

7.2. Valued Behaviours

7.2.1. Respect

Preserving the dignity of the poor is something sought after in organisations that provide them with help (Narayan et al 2000). The concept has not figured to a great extent in the literature discussing the relevance of FBOs for development and poverty reduction practice. In fact, most of the concepts under the valued behaviour topic were largely absent from the literature. However, the concept has been considered in the design of the GS poverty reduction activities according to the GS leadership. The vice chairman of the General GS stated that the main advantage of the GS’s poverty reduction approach is that it preserves the “dignity of the poor by not waiting until they ask for help. We have to satisfy their basic and crucial needs first before moving on towards any attempts to find a long lasting solution for poverty. [...] We [also] have to keep in mind that the poor people might feel embarrassed or ashamed to ask for help and that is the importance of the concept of Fard El-Kefaya (sufficiency obligation) where we are the ones who have to find their needs and fulfil them.” (Interview B34). As seen in Chapter Six, the procedures for receiving help at the GS require the recipients to go to the mosque and there are various preconditions necessary, many of which could be considered as intimidating. However, the assistance provided by the GS still saved recipients the humiliation of begging, which was considered as an essential objective, particularly amongst the donors at all three case study IBCSOs (Interviews A12, A30, B30, B32, C18 and others). Why prevention of begging was so important to them is not only because it
is religiously prohibited (Interview B33), but begging also makes it difficult to pick up
the real poor people from those who take begging as a “profession” (Interview A2).
Stories about professional beggars who managed to accumulate enormous fortunes
were frequently heard from board member and donor informants. From the donors’
points of view, IBCSOs helped them to avoid the disappointment and perhaps the
humiliation of being fooled by beggars, and also protected the more vulnerable and
dignified recipients who would be losing out to the professional beggars.

The GMT and MFA considered that prevention of begging is the main
objective in the dignity and respect issue. Keeping the poor from “extending their
hands” (an Egyptian expression referring to begging) was seen as a major purpose
for the existence of the organisations (Interviews A2, A6, C1, C3 and others). We can
therefore see that case study FBOs have defined respect to the recipients’ dignity in
their own terms. They may have succeeded to achieve part of that respect by
reducing street begging; but approaching mosques to ask for help, which may be
considered as a form of begging has continued though as seen before. However,
much of what was said in case study IBCSOs, especially the GS about preserving the
dignity of the poor by delivering help to them rather than waiting until they ask for it
was not a reflection of reality.

7.2.2. Honesty and fairness

Honesty here refers to the lack of corruption, while fairness is the impartial
treatment of the organisation’s clients (Narayan et al 2000). In their Voices of the
Poor study, Narayan et al (2000), have recorded the poor’s view of government
institutions and officials as ones that lack these qualities. Informants of all categories
in all the four case studies shared negative views toward those in the positions of
authority. However, with IBCSOs, the views were quite different, which matches the
findings of Marti et al (2007), who suggests that FBOs are more trusted and believed
to be honest organisations in comparison to their secular counterparts. The three
case study IBCSOs were labelled as honest and impartial, especially amongst the
donors whom all (with one exception) have said they trust the organisation, and
think it is unnecessary to practice any serious monitoring mechanisms on what they
do with donations. Some donors said that the organisation usually honoured their
requests with regards to where their money should go, such as specifying a certain group of beneficiaries (widows, the poorest, those with children in school etc). They explained that they are comfortable about how these requests are honoured and do not need to verify that. On their part, case study IBCSOs have also been quite keen to maintain their image as being honest and clean of corruption. In some cases when donors provide large amount of money to be distributed to many recipients, the usual practice recorded several times in all the three IBCSOs was that the donor would be asked to attend and witness the procedure of its distribution, and even may be asked to give the payments to the recipients himself. At the GS in particular, that practice was considered almost as a requirement to the extent that I have heard a long telephone argument between Hag Anwar and one of the donors, where the former was insisting that the latter must be present while payments are made, and apparently responding to remarks of reassurance of trust from the donor by insisting that this was essential to keep all sides comfortable (Fieldnotes, GS, 3/11/2010).

Similar to the trust of the recipients toward these organisations, the donors’ appreciation of the organisation’s integrity is attributed to their personal trust of the individuals who run it. On the recipients’ side, none voiced any complaints about the level of honesty of the case study organisations. However, a few recipients who did not get what they asked for in particular incidents have complained about the organisation’s fairness standards. In one incident, a lady had complained to Hag Fahmy at the GMT because she was not included in a 12-recipient expansion of the CSOs’ recipients’ list although he had included her neighbour who applied later than her. The lady voiced her complaint when she came to check whether she was added or not. Fahmy responded in anger, which was unusual for his subtle character: “Listen woman, we do not favour anybody at the expense of anybody else. Her documents showed that her income was lower than yours and we take people in according to the level of their need determined by their incomes.” However, the response did not satisfy the lady who responded by saying that he had promised her last month that she would be included. At that point, Fahmy simply stopped the conversation and another present board member reminded her that they were just trying to help with their limited resources.” (Fieldnotes, GMT, 5/8/2010). Arguably, a
similar exchange is unlikely to take place at the GS due to Hag Anwar’s strong personality that was noticeably much more feared than that of Hag Fahmy.

Overall, the three men who were responsible for running the case study IBCSOs have gained their reputation for honesty and fairness thanks to managing their mosques for several years, in addition to their positions as heads of faith-based institutions. Hag Fat’hy, GMT donor said: “They have always done a good job with the mosque and we know that they know God well and will not betray trust” (Interview A13). In a similar way, again highlighting the credibility of the individuals running the mosque, the owner of a fruit stand in the market where the GS is located said: “They are good people. They help the poor and they try to cover the needs of everybody and they don’t get any personal credit or reward for what they do.” (Interview B49). The role of faith in building this confidence in the honesty of the FBOs is evident in the reasons given by donors for selecting these particular organisations to donate to. They usually state that with the exception of large-scale national level organisations like El-Orman Association\(^\text{37}\) or The Children Cancer Hospital\(^\text{38}\), FBOs were the only small CSOs they have found to be honest enough to receive their donations (Interviews A10, A12, A30 and B30).

7.2.3 Listening, Caring, Love and Compassion

According to Narayan et al. (2000), FBOs get high ratings when being evaluated by the poor because their services are more compassionate and caring towards them even in the cases where these organisations are not capable of actually helping them with their needs. The possession of these qualities by Egyptian FBOs has been noticed in the literature for years since Sulivan and Abed-Kotob (1999) referred to it in their study of the public’s perception of Islamic organisations in Egypt. They noticed that Islamic organisations tend to combine the advantages of the images of both the private and the public sector. In their examination of Muslim Brotherhood-affiliated health care centres, they highlighted that these FBOs were recognised for having the efficiency and the reliability of the private sector in

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37 A huge local organisation specialized in poverty reduction and orphanage management.
38 A hospital with high standards that treats children from cancer that was built and is managed and maintained by donations from the general public.
comparison to the rundown poor quality service provided by the government’s health care system. At the same time, the Muslim Brotherhood health care services were caring, modestly priced and inclusive as the public sector was supposed to be. As a result, these health care institutions were treated as a private service provider, which was appreciated for its efficiency; and at the same time as public service provider that entitles citizens the right to receive its services. The case study CSOs have shown the same combination of perceptions.

The three case study IBCSOs offered a personal flavour of service. When a recipient was involved in a tough verbal exchange with a leader of one of the organisations as seen above, the leader was still, despite his anger of the accusations thrown at him, willing and keen to defend himself and to try his best to explain why he took a certain decision. Adding to that, all the three heads of the case study IBCSOs had been keeping with them an official pool of informal donations (as shown in details in Chapter Five). These sums of money may be used to help recipients who might need a financial boost beyond the formal monthly payments when they face exceptional financial difficulties, such as in the cases of giving birth or the illness of a member of the household. Moreover, the additional seasonal help provided to recipients in the month of Ramadan and during the two Islamic feasts (Eids) was additional and not counted in the official packages promised by these organisations to their registered recipients. The provision of such personal care and patronage was carried out without affecting the case study IBCSOs commitment to provide timely and regular assistance to the recipients that enables them to plan their lives around it. This is explored in more detail in the next section of this chapter.

7.2.4. Hardworking:

Effective organisations are those that are run by hardworking people who do their best to achieve their targets (Narayan et al 2000). In this thesis, there were different motivations which could explain the hardworking characteristics of the case study IBCSOs. While the religious beliefs play an important role in motivating those in charge of case study IBCSOs to continue their volunteered hard work as shown in Chapter Five, the non-religious motives of somebody like Mrs. Fawzeya and her board members in MCDA (Interviews D1 and D5-D7) was no less capable of
producing a hard working group of people. They managed to deliver remarkable results in their short history in spite of facing numerous obstacles and challenges such as the lack of local funding, the unfavourable working environment in the CSO’s early stages, and an oppressive and suspicious authority before the revolution. Variations were also witnessed amongst the three case study IBCSOs themselves.

All the three organisations were led by dedicated figures who gave most of their time to their organisations. This has been widely recognised by all the people concerned. For example, the GS treasurer says: “The main reason behind the success of the organisation is the great work done by Hag Anwar and the more he keeps that going, the more people come to donate to us out of their appreciation of our work” (Interview B5). However, the individual board members behind the three leaders have shown different degrees of commitment and dedication. This ranged from the case of the strong support provided by Mrs. Mona, the general secretary of MFA who spends most of her day in office working for the organisation, to the case of Mr. Mohammed Allam, GMT board member who hardly contributes to the organisation and appears only for social purposes at the CSO office. In conclusion, the degree to which case study organisations may be considered as hardworking organisations has been entirely dependent on the personal characteristics of people in charge of the organisations rather than the structure or type of the organisations.

In summary, the assessment of the activities of case study IBCSOs have revealed mixed findings in relation to valued behaviours. The practice of respect was overshadowed by case study IBCSOs’ definition of the concept that limits it to the elimination of the need for begging. Honesty and fairness were evident from the points of view of donors and recipients. Both the long experience of the individuals running the case study IBCSOs, and their positions as managers of faith-based institutions, have both contributed to that image. Hardworking varied according to the personal characteristics of individuals in each case study organisation and the motive for each individual to work harder for their organisation was not always related to religion. Finally, care, love and compassion were felt at case study IBCSOs more than at the secular MCDA, and that was evident by the several supplements that were attached to the services provided by case-study IBCSOs; this was in
addition to quite personal relationships that had in many cases linked the individuals running the organisations with the recipients.

7.3. Institutional Effectiveness:

The effectiveness of an organisation is determined by its ability to achieve its goals within the targeted time span according to Narayan et al. (2000). According to them, this is achieved when two qualities are present in the work of any organisation. The first is the organisation’s ability to deliver timely and responsive support to the recipients tackling their concerns as they arise. The second quality is the degree to which the organisation is accessible by recipients, close to them and easy to contact.

7.3.1. Delivering Responsive and Timely Support:

Maloney and Robteutscher (2005) argued that FBOs could not be effective organisations because they tend to focus on quantity rather than quality of their development work. FBOs, they argue, want more people to be listed in their registers in order to affect their lives by either driving them towards a certain religious belief or simply by maintaining their loyalty to the religious doctrines of their organisations. In case study IBCSOs, recipients depended considerably on these organisations and appreciated the significance of the assistance they provided. Even if that assistance was too little or insufficient to entirely solve their problems or raise them above the poverty line as shown earlier, they still found it crucially important to their lives as it represented significant portions of their official incomes (10%, 20% and more in some cases), and in many cases their only official income. Recipients’ appreciation of the importance of this assistance is reflected by their obedience to the requirement levied upon them by the mosques. Almost all recipients in the two case study IBCSOs that did not require their attendance to religious lessons (GMT and MFA) have said that they would be willing to attend ones if they were asked to by the organisation that helps them. While that was usually verbally attributed by them to their own will to learn and know more about their religion, it can be argued that their dependency on the services and assistance provided by the mosques was
the main drive of that behaviour. This view is further supported when we know that
the majority of recipients who attend religious education lessons at the GS mosques
had not attended lessons elsewhere, although most mosques in Egypt do offer such
lessons for free.

In addition, many recipients have found the service provided by case study
IBCSOs “responsive” to their immediate needs and concerns. Although family and
neighbours were mentioned by the many interviewed recipient as the first resort to
seek help from when faced with difficulties, observation showed that they approach
case study IBCSOs very often for help in difficult conditions, for example paying
school fees for their children, or paying for emergency medical treatment costs. That
was seen the most in the case of the GS, which enjoyed the best financial capabilities
amongst all case study CSOs, and was usually more capable than other case study
IBCSOs to respond to such emergencies. For example, the GS had a policy of
immediately paying for all recipients’ medical prescriptions by dispensing them via a
local pharmacist partner. Similarly, GMT partnered with another pharmacist (Dr.
Sobhy, Interview A10) who offers substantial discount to all those referred to him by
GMT, and in many cases gives them free prescriptions. In the district of Helwan, the
community depended on the rights-based organisation MCDA to solve some
collective community problems such as the case when the local cooking gas cylinder
distribution outlet ran out of cylinders (Fieldnotes, MCDA, 26/12/2011), or when the
local authorities were slow in their response to the community’s request to drain
flooding water in some areas after two days of heavy rain (Fieldnotes, MCDA,
15/1/2011). However, the organisation was rarely approached by those facing
financial difficulties, and almost never mentioned by the interviewed community
members as a place to resort to when faced with individual or household life
difficulties.

7.3.2. Access, Closeness and Contact.

Martin et al (2007) argue that FBOs have better access to vulnerable groups
within local communities because of the knowledge that FBO leaders tend to have of
their communities. The leaders are also constantly kept updated by their community
members about their lives, needs and concerns; thanks to the trust granted to these
leaders. Odumosu et al (2009) argue that another distinguishing feature of FBOs is their ability to communicate freely with the poor by using concepts and a language that they understand due to its conjunction with their faith. In case study organisations, both MCDA and the three IBCSOs enjoyed similar good accessibility. In fact, MCDA had longer working hours because it employs a full time staff member who was available throughout the day; while IBCSOs used to be available for about five hours per day divided into two sessions: one following the noon prayer and the other one in the evening. However, the three IBCSOs have demonstrated closer ties and better knowledge with the recipients. This is attributed to the fact that unlike the rights-based organisation that only responds to matters of collective interest, IBCSOs responds to personal matters and needs. This allowed leaders of IBCSOs not only to know the names and faces of all their recipients (which was not the case with MCDA), but also to know many other personal details like the number of their children or their addresses. In many occasions, Hag Anwar of the GS used to retrieve instantly without reference to his records the amount of pension each recipient would be receiving every month. The same happened at MFA and GMT.

Case study IBCSOs also get easy and instant access to recipients because their mosques are used as sites for social gathering in their respective neighbourhoods. As many recipients used to come to pray several times every day, it was not difficult to find a neighbour or a friend to summon, or to deliver a message to, a recipient who has not shown up. At MCDA, there was a frequently noticeable communication problem because many of the community members did not have telephone lines installed in their homes and had to be called on neighbours’ numbers instead. On the language used for communication, case study IBCSOs have also enjoyed the advantage over MCDA by their religious discourse delivered through the religious lessons and by direct personal communication with recipients as seen above. MCDA’s awareness campaigns and its attempts to convince community members to come together and collectively act to solve their problems have experienced long resistance and suspicion as seen in Chapter Five; before they were finally able to win the trust of the community. However, it is important to note that the message each type of CSOs is trying to deliver was different, which meant that comparing the language of communication on its own might be misleading. At case study IBCSOs,
the message was the one that offered assistance by the “House of God” and tried to deal with those who suffered the pains of poverty conciliation by resorting to the spiritual relief offered by religious institution and religious discourse. At MCDA, the message was one calling upon people to take collective action to obtain benefits that they could not get via other means. At MCDA, the message was demanding. At the IBCSOs, the message was relieving.

In summary, case study IBCSOs have shown more effectiveness than MCDA in delivering a service that is responsive and timely on one hand, and accessible and close to those in need on the other. However, it will not be accurate to conclude from the above data that case study IBCSOs are more effective in poverty reduction work than the secular organisation. This is because the MCDA’s rights-based approach to poverty reduction is designed to produce long term results through indirect impact which is harder to measure than the immediate impact created by the basic needs approaches used by case study IBCSOs.

7.4. Conclusion:

The findings outlined in this chapter have shown numerous specific characteristics of case study IBCSOs that have mainly revolved around the personalised, responsive and caring nature of the relations between these organisations and their beneficiaries, as well as the ability of these organisations to come close to the immediate satisfaction of many of the needs of their recipients. However, case study IBCSOs have failed to respond to the traditional critique of FBOs that highlight their failure to empower their recipients to escape from poverty or to achieve social change and transformation. Case study IBCSOs’ view their recipients with the pity of a loving mother caring for her vulnerable children. These organisations protect their recipients from the need to seek immoral or unlawful help such as begging or for them or their dependants to turn to crime and violence; but they do little to change the balance of social and economic powers that prevail in the scene.
However, this particular role played by these organisations in poverty reduction might not be as negative as depicted in the literature. Madiha, a GMT recipient, said that she prefers receiving money than being helped to find work or to tackle the causes responsible for her poverty (Interview A28). Immediate help was what she and many other recipients preferred. The question is whether we have to choose between the two different approaches (that of the FBOs or that of NFBOs) for poverty reduction activities? This thesis argues at the end of this chapter that FBOs have a lot to teach us about poverty reduction. However, there is still a lot that they need to learn too. Immediate needs have to be satisfied and the poor people need to be provided with help to survive. They also need somebody who knows more about them and can provide them with a service that takes into account communication and quality of delivery. FBOs seem to be effective at delivering that.

At the same time, the poor need resources to emerge out of poverty. They need approaches that can give them hope they would not be living in poverty for the rest of their lives. They have spiritual needs that must be satisfied, but they also have legal needs and rights that their faith might not be enough to reclaim. FBOs can therefore contribute to poverty reduction in their own ways and capacities, which are essential even if we accept that they are not enough.

In terms of linking these findings to the findings of the previous chapter, we again come to the role of case study organisations in social protection, and we arrive at the risks discourse for justifying social protection, which was highlighted by Munro (2008). Case study IBCSOs showed effectiveness with their compassionate and personalised service to protect their recipients from risks in ways that are respondent even to the specific nature of each particular risk. The GS had a program for assisting girls in marriage. They provided special assistance for students and extra payments during the first month schooling. All organisations helped recipients with medical prescriptions and they have occasionally collected special donations to assist in crises, such as a situation when the GMT Imam asked the prayers on one Friday to donate for a family that had their house burnt down (Fieldnotes, GMT, 15/6/2010). The notion of collective obligation discussed in the previous chapter, by which the whole society is considered responsible for the poverty problem, can be linked to this quality of personal service. If case study organisations had not been acting out of
this feeling of obligation to meet the needs of the poor on behalf of society at large, they could have taken similar actions to those of MCDA, which is to help the community negotiate their rights with the state, but then leave it vulnerable to the various risks that it can be subjected to.

As this chapter has examined the characteristics that case study IBCSOs demonstrate in terms of them being vehicles for development and poverty reduction. The next chapter examines what role that they play in political mobilisation in Egypt and what is the impact of the ongoing political developments there on their activities and on their strategies.
CHAPTER EIGHT

THE ROLE OF CASE STUDY IBCSOs IN POLITICAL MOBILISATION IN EGYPT

In the previous chapter, the thesis utilised its case studies to examine the agency of Islamic-based Civil Society Organisations (IBCSOs) in development. In this chapter, the thesis moves on to examine the role played by case study IBCSOs in political mobilisation for the Islamic movement in Egypt. The chapter also considers the impact of the latest political events in Egypt on IBCSOs and their activities. This topic is important in a thesis about the role of IBCSOs in poverty reduction; because IBCSOs operating in poverty reduction have been accused of being used by the Islamist political movement in Egypt to gain public support by buying people’s political loyalty in return for providing charity and other community and social welfare services. Al-Sayyid (1995) believed that Islamic civil society has been systematically working to tighten its grip over political power in Egypt by being the main provider of charity and services launched through mosques. Al-Sayyid added that mosques have become significant bases for political activities due to the amount of economic resources controlled by them. Saad Eldin Ibrahim (1995) agreed with this. He attributed the Islamists’ political popularity in Egypt to their welfare provision programs targeting the poor.

Others who studied Islamist political groups themselves rather than Islamic civil society, such as Esposito and Voll (1996) and Sulivan and Abed-Kotob (1999) agreed with the previous arguments highlighting the political use of poverty reduction activities to reach political goals. Social services, such as education, health care and social assistance (Sulivan and Abed-Kotob 1999) as well as investment tools such as building factories, and establishing businesses to absorb unemployment (Al-Awadi 2004), have allegedly all been used for the same objective. Others have made indirect links between IBCSOs and the political Islamic movement. Ngub (2009) suggested that the Islamists’ success on the social front (from which poverty reduction is only an element) has paved the road for giving Islamists an image of an organised and a well-structured group. It has also armed them with several organisational skills and means of knowledge and experience, which they have capitalised on to rise politically. Finally, Pioppi (2007) claimed that the traditional
view of charitable Islamic CSOs is that they remain in a hostile relation with the state, in which services provided by Islamists to the poor contribute to the delegitimisation of the State in favour of the vision represented by the Islamist political movement. This chapter analyses the three case study IBCSOs in order to reveal evidence that would support or reject the claims listed above. The 2011 revolution erupted in the middle of the fieldwork stage of this research offering a great opportunity to evaluate these claims. It freed the hands of the Islamist movement to use their affiliate and other Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) in advancing their political agenda in a manner, which was not possible when they were restrained by the State Security Investigations (SSI).

This chapter fulfils its objective by examining the political agency of the three case study IBCSOs before, during, and after the revolution. It uses findings from this examination to explain the factors that have contributed to determine the merits of that agency. A closer look is taken at the behaviour of the Muslim Brotherhood-affiliated organisation (MFA) during the general elections campaign at the end of 2011. To make its analysis more relevant in terms of the wider context of the Islamic movement in Egypt, the chapter also considers political behaviour of the Salafis and the Muslim Brotherhood in general in the aftermath of the 2011 revolution. Finally, the chapter relates its findings to the literature on civil society and political mobilisation in order to outline their theoretical implications.

8.1. Case Study IBCSOs and Politics during Mubarak’s Era

In this section, the thesis examines case study IBCSOs separately to assess the role they have played in political mobilisation before the revolution. At the community-based GMT, the organisation was largely politically neutral. However, signs could have been seen amongst its members signalling discontent with the economic and political situation in Egypt, particularly corruption. Board members for example have highlighted corruption and state failure to achieve “justice” and “equality” when asked about who should be responsible to tackle the poverty problem (Interviews A2, A4, A7 and A9). Later, when they felt that it was safe to talk to me, they expressed more of their feelings towards the regime. Sometimes the
language used was quite aggressive. Mr. Mohammed Salem, a board member told me once: “There is no blessing in this country. That is because there are so many thieves around. They steal the food off the tables of the poor and then they wonder why all what we do couldn’t help!” (Fieldnotes, GMT, 25/6/2010)

This unhappiness with the state was accompanied by a feeling of uncertainty on what can be the alternative. “The solution is to collect and redistribute Zakat,” said Hag Abdel Fattah, GMT Chairman (Interview A6). I asked him about the suggestion of the state forms a central public institution that might be responsible for collecting and redistributing Zakat money (El-Daly 2007). He was not impressed by the idea explaining that while this might be the right thing theoretically, “corruption would make it ineffective because the money would be stolen.” Responding to this assumption by asking the board members, other CSO members and donors about what actions could be taken to stop corruption was often met by silence, or by a general reference of the whole case to God. There was little belief in the organisation’s ability to change the regime, or at the very least to force it to combat corruption. There was a feeling that the regime was lacking values such as justice, honesty and integrity rather than policies that could be suggested or campaigned for. The GMT people did not see in themselves the capability to change that.

On the organisational level, the IBCSO never attempted to take any action to promote any political ideas. Sheikh Rateb, the organisation’s mosque Imam, did attempt to squeeze criticism of the regime into his sermons on some occasions. Often, that was done implicitly and in ways that could bear various interpretations. The most explicit of these occasions I witnessed was when he described the biblical story of Prophet Moses and hinted on the corruption and arrogance of Egypt’s Pharaoh as being a reason for bringing the rage of God down upon him. He said while describing that: “In our days, we see a lot of this, don’t we?” (Fieldnotes, GMT, 24/6/2010). Later on the same afternoon, he admitted in a conversation with me that the reference was deliberate to point to the current political regime. However, talking to others, it seemed I was the only one who noticed the reference. Others thought it was a general remark on forms of tyranny. Moreover, recipient interviews that had unanimously denied the existence of any attempts by the organisation to
influence their political behaviour neither towards voting for a particular group, nor towards supporting or joining any form of dissent against the government. In general, political interest seemed to be lacking amongst recipients since only one of them had ever voted in the past (Interview A26).

The Salafi GS, as an organised ultra-conservative group could be expected to be more likely to possess a specific political agenda in comparison to community-based organisations like GMT. However, the GS did not show any sign of adopting a political agenda before the revolution. Its board members never criticized the then ruling regime during my presence at least. The Friday sermons delivered in their mosque avoided the remotest of political references and focused on delivering religious messages ranging from theological disputes with Shi’i Islam and Christianity to graphic description of after-death torture for those who do not pray regularly (Fieldnotes, GS, September-November 2010). Moreover, GS board members were very conservative when criticising the regime or blaming the government for social injustice or corruption. Like their counterparts at GMT, they highlighted the state’s responsibility to tackle these issues in efforts to solve the poverty problem. However, there is a significant difference between the GMT and GS members in explaining the causes of social injustice that leads to poverty. At the GMT, as seen before, social injustice was considered a part of an incompetent or corrupt government’s policy or misconduct. For the Salafis, social justice was viewed as a social phenomena and tackling it was not only the responsibility of the government, but also of society at large (Interviews B2, B33 and B34).

During the period I spent there, the Salafis at the GS never blamed the government for poverty or spoke publically (or even privately) about its corruption or misconduct. Political neutrality of the GS can be also further evidenced by the fact that none of the organisation’s recipients reported any attempt by the GS to influence their voting before the revolution in the same way they were asked to attend religious lessons. This finding is consistent with other reports which suggested that the Salafis were actually allies of Mubarak’s regime via an unwritten deal to exchange their political neutrality for allowing their CSOs to act legitimately and freely, without the pressures that Muslim Brotherhood-affiliated organisations were subjected to (Selvik and Stenslie 2011). Zahran et al (2012) supported this conclusion.
in their detailed description of the Salafis in Egypt by highlighting that the GS in particular (as a faction of the wider Salafi movement) has been historically not interested in changing the ruler as a mean of changing society. In fact, it has been a group that adopts changing society through the reform of the Muslim individual, which is explained in more details in Chapter Five.

By contrast, the Muslim Brotherhood was the group that has tried to take politics into mosques (Rubin 2010). The brotherhood-affiliated organisation MFA was not studied in this thesis before the revolution, which makes it difficult to compare with the other two case studies. However, the Muslim Brotherhood was well covered by the literature before the revolution, and this data will be used instead to describe the political activities of the brotherhood within CSOs in general, and mosques in particular. The Muslim Brotherhood enjoyed a rich political experience resulting from a long history that dates back to 1928 during which it has opposed all the regimes that ruled Egypt since the monarchy until Mubarak’s (Murphy 2008). Since the mid-1970s, the Muslim Brotherhood adopted a firm policy of avoiding direct confrontation with the regime (Tadros 2008) after a three-decade long conflict between the Brotherhood and the state has resulted in eliminating most of the group’s leaders over that period by either assassination, exile or long imprisonment (Esposito and Voll 1996).

In response, the regime allowed the Muslim Brotherhood to practice politics and eventually become the biggest and most organised opposition group (Ajami 1983). In the 2005 parliamentary elections, the brotherhood managed to win 88 seats (out of 444 seats), which were just enough to have a strong voice in the People’s Assembly without actually having the ability to influence the decision making process. or to affect the majority enjoyed by Mubarak’s ruling National Democratic Party (NDP). Pargeter (2010) shows how the Muslim Brotherhood had all the characteristics of a political party except for being registered as one. The organisation had an elected board in the form of the Maktab El-Ershad (the Guidance Office). It had a general secretary known as Al-Morshed (The Guide). It had headquarters across the country and a well-organised membership base that

39 Because the Muslim Brotherhood was not included as a case study in this thesis before the revolution, this part will depend on secondary resources.
provided enough social capital to run for elections of all types, particularly university student unions, and professional syndicates, where the Muslim Brotherhood enjoyed significant success during the three decades of Mubarak’s rule. In fact, the Brotherhood had tried to register a political party on few occasions since the early 1980s with the latest attempt was in 2007, but it was declined a permission by the NDP-dominated Parties Committee (Rubin 2010).

On the micro level, the Muslim Brotherhood have practiced politics by infiltrating syndicates, student unions and other types of civil society organisations (Rubin 2010). The brotherhood developed their technique over many years beginning with the targeting of university student unions in the 1970s. The capacities and experience they have built doing that were taken further to the professional syndicates’ level in the 1980s and later to their attempts to challenge Mubarak’s ruling NDP in the parliament elections (Pargeter 2010). This has given the Muslim Brotherhood valuable experience in infiltrating organisations, such as MFA. To do that, the brotherhood adopted a number of well-planned strategies including recruiting popular and capable figures in the targeted organisation to nominate them in elections or support them for appointment. An example of is seen in what they did with Sheikh Hamed, the Imam at MFA. The Muslim Brotherhood would then support its candidate or agent with generous funding of their campaign (Sage 2010) and/or by using their extended network of members to secure votes on individual bases. I was told by the chairman of MCDA, who used to observe elections before and after the revolution that a systematic practice of the Muslim Brotherhood during elections is to ask their members to vote in groups (Interview D4). Using telephone campaigning and sending their candidates to knock doors were all techniques exclusively used by the brotherhood before the revolution; and they did that with significant success (Sage 2010).

8.2. The Revolution and Removal of the State Security Investigations Obstacle:

The main factor that made the revolution a major turning point for studies concerned with Egyptian civil society (including this thesis) is the sudden disappearance of the State Security Investigations’s influence in the Ministry of
Social Solidarity (MoSS) and the Ministry of Endowments (MoE). Sheikh Rateb, Imam of GMT mosque said, “They just vanished. Their agents stopped coming to the mosques on Friday to monitor the sermon. The caretaker, who I knew was an agent, said he would be away for a few days and never showed up again” (Fieldnotes, GMT, 15/7/2011). Sheikh Hamed, Imam of the MFA mosque, said he stopped receiving instructions on the content of Friday sermons from the SSI immediately after the revolution (Interview C2). Instructions from MoE continued to come in some occasions to both mosques, but they were never followed up upon (Interview A42).

A few weeks after the revolution, the collapse of the State Security as an element of oppression against civil society in Egypt was confirmed on the 5th of March 2011.\(^{40}\) Massive crowds of demonstrators stormed its headquarters in East Cairo and confiscated whatever was left of its archive after most of it was already destroyed earlier by the SSI officers in order to eliminate evidence of their record of misconduct and abuse (Al-Ahram 6/3/2011). Some foreign-based and foreign-funded CSOs operating specifically in the fields of democratisation and political freedom continued to face troubles with the military ruling regime that took over control of the country during the interim period that followed the revolution. In September 2011, several of these organisations’ offices were raided and many of its staff members were arrested. They were later charged for receiving illegal foreign funding and 43 of them were handed tough jail sentences (Reuters 4/6/2013). Despite that, local organisations of the calibre of the case study organisations were hardly threatened and they were left free to perform any role in the process of political mobilisation if they desired to. The reaction of the case study IBCSOs varied from one to another.

At the GMT community-based mosque, the mosque board did not find in the events any incentive to seek political influence. Sheikh Rateb, the mosque’s Imam used the opportunity to become more direct in discussing topics such as corruption in his Friday sermons. I have attended a few of Friday sermons there. In one of them, he was very critical of the corrupt elements of Mubarak’s regime (Fieldnotes, GMT, 40 Later in 2013 after the fall of the Muslim Brotherhood rule in Egypt, reports of a return of strong state interventions in mosques and CSOs were emerging. However, the thesis at that time was in the late stages of writing and these developments could have not been considered here.
7/7/2011); and on another occasion he was critical of the Islamist parties that claim association with religion. This occurred at a time when they were holding both the president’s office and a parliament majority (Fieldnotes, GMT, 28/12/2012). Apart from that, the GMT seemed to have no interest in using its poverty reduction activities to play any role in political transformation. Recipients’ interviews have confirmed this finding as will be seen later.

This reaction can be explained by a number of reasons. First, the mosque and its board members did not have any political agenda before the revolution. Perhaps, like many other people they were dissatisfied with much of what was happening in Egypt; but they did not possess, or believe in, any specific alternative that they could advocate to their congregation. Second, they do not have the capacity to form a politically motivated well organised body. They are acting as a combination of individual efforts capable of staging some poverty reduction efforts; but these somewhat limited efforts are not sufficient to create a base for conducting political activities such as campaigning or mobilisation. These require organisational skills and capabilities of a much higher level.

Finally, the apolitical nature of the mosque to which the CSO is affiliated meant that the board members (like many community groups) had their own political differences. Following the revolution, I had the chance to attend a number of fierce political debates between those who sympathised with the revolutionary youth, and those who sided with the ruling Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF) during the time of the conflicts that occurred between the two sides. The diversity of political views and lack of ideology was reflected in how they voted during the various rounds of elections that followed the revolution. Board members in the GMT were the most open about discussing their voting patterns when I chatted with them during a number of follow-up visits after the initial data collection stage. In the referendum on constitutional amendments that took place five weeks after the revolution, the GMT's board majority sided with SCAF and Muslim Brotherhood supporters on the Yes vote. In the parliamentary elections of 2011, they mostly voted for the Muslim Brotherhood, but in the presidential elections in 2012, they mostly voted for Hamdin Sabahy, the socialist candidate who was on the opposite side of their previous votes.
In all cases, there were rebels amongst them who voted in the opposite direction; and those changed every time. The GMT was an example of a CSO that totally lacks political ideology. This is in contrast to MCDA, where the organisation board and key members were consistent in voting for the liberal revolutionary groups and even campaigning for them. This phenomenon was discovered some time ago by Rabo (1996). He noticed that civil society in Arab countries is divided into two categories. The first is a secular and independent, which is led by those who see civil society as a voluntary representation of individual freedoms and rights. The second category is the one that sees civil society as a representative of social ties and relationships. This second category as Rabo continues to argue is mainly composed of those who are influenced by Islamic concepts of social solidarity and justice. These do not necessarily adopt a strict Islamist political point of view, although sometimes they do. What matters for many of them are the values and not the identity that some would find in religion, which explains why CSOs with Islamic ties would not necessarily act on behalf of the Islamist political movement.

The situation was different with the Salafis to whom the GS belongs. The first sign of the Salafi desire to venture into politics began to appear when they organised a rally through the streets of Giza only one week after Mubarak's departure in order to demand the implementation of Islamic Shariaa Law in Egypt (Al-Ahram 15/2/2011). The event, which shocked many of those who were still under the secular and youthful spell of the revolution was soon followed by a series of arson attacks in which Salafi youth groups torched and vandalised the shrines of Sufi Awleyaa (saints), which according to the Salafis are pagan idols that contradict the pure practice of Islam (Reuters 22/3/2011, 2/4/2011 and 6/4/2011). Meanwhile, the scholars of the central council of El Daawa el Salafeya\textsuperscript{41} seemed to have picked up the signals and decided to satisfy their followers cry for political participation by forming El-Nour Party in June 2011. The party has integrated the unleashed Salafi elements into the legitimate political process. The links between the party and the GS were not obvious. Board members of the studied GS mosque totally denied any links with the party (Fieldnotes, GS, 21/7/2011). These links were also

\textsuperscript{41} One of the major factions of the Salafi movement in Egypt, see section 3.3.
comprehensively denied in interviews with board members of the General GS (Interviews B33 and B34).

Recipient interviews at the GS that were held after the revolution supported these claims as recipients denied receiving any instructions or persuasion by their mosque to support the Salafi party or any other party. In fact, when they were asked who they voted for, their answers were diverse enough to cover all parts of the political spectrum\(^{42}\) (Interviews B35-B44). This is also supported when remembering the difference mentioned earlier in Chapter Three between the GS and other Salafi groups in their understanding of the best way to achieve their targets of reform and change. The GS has traditionally believed in achieving change through reforming the individual on social and spiritual levels rather than by seeking political power.

Unlike other case study organisation, the GS board members refused to reveal their political views or to tell me who they voted for. Therefore, it was difficult to ascertain the extent of their support to El-Nour Party although their belonging to the Salafi movement was never denied (Interviews B3, B5, B12, B13 and others). By the beginning of 2013, El-Nour Party was not the sole representative of the Salafi’s anymore. An inner power conflict within the party led to a series of resignations and divisions that weakened the party (Al-Ahram 26/12/2012). This went on with alliances between various Salafi groups continuing to change rapidly. In spite of these organisational divisions, loyalty to the Salafi ideas remained mostly stable. For example, the Salafis stood firmly united against assigning a quota for women in the elections law which was under discussion in January 2013, at the peak of their division crisis (Al-Ahram 18/1/2013). Based on the above, it can be shown that (1) there is no evidence to suggest that the GS has been involved as an organisation in the active support of any of the Salafi political parties and (2) The Salafi movement, while united in major principles of their religious doctrines, are divided politically into various groups that sometimes even compete against each other, as shown earlier in section 3.3. In summary, it is hard to conceive that poverty reduction

\(^{42}\) With only ten post-revolution recipient interviews at the GS, the number of interviews is not enough to show to whom loyalty leans amongst the recipients, but they were enough to show a wide diversity in opinions and voting patterns.
efforts practiced by the GS play a direct role in supporting the Islamist political movement in Egypt.

The Muslim Brotherhood was the only actively politically oriented movement involved in the studied organisations. Consequently, it should be the one most likely to benefit politically from the disappearance of the SSI. Before coming down to the case of MFA, we need to pause and see what happened with the parent Muslim Brotherhood. The brotherhood quickly seized the opportunities offered by the revolution. Within a few weeks after the fall of Mubarak and as soon as the restrictions on forming political parties were lifted, they established their Freedom and Justice Party (FJP). Moreover, the Brotherhood has expanded in infiltrating mosques and mosque-affiliated organisations in a similar manner they successfully used in the past with other organisations, such as syndicate and student organisations (Tadros 2008). According to a local MoE officer interviewed (Interview A42), the Muslim Brotherhood used elections to control the boards of at least three big mosques in the Wayly area, where the three case study IBCSOs are located, in the eight months that immediately followed the revolution, and they were on course to add more. The MFA mosque studied in this thesis was exceptional in the way that it was infiltrated before the revolution as seen in Chapter Five. Its Muslim Brotherhood-supporting Imam already had an unchallengeable leading role in running the organisation although he was not even a member of the board. Although, the organisation had other leaders, there were many incidents when they delayed taking decisions (such as appointing a new religion teacher or accepting new beneficiary) only because Sheikh Hamed was not present (Fieldnotes, MFA, 23/11/2011 and 2/1/2012).

The MFA was not included in the thesis until almost ten months after the revolution. However, it can be seen that the freedom enjoyed by the Imam to advocate the political discourse of the Muslim Brotherhood (which was crucial in the course of the parliamentary elections campaign as will be shown later), would have hardly existed before the revolution. In this latter era, there were many incidences when the Imam was in trouble with the authorities over his sermons (Interviews C1 and C4). In fact, during the elections season in 2010 (a few months before the
revolution) he was even banned by MoE on instruction by SSI from delivering sermons for a few weeks (Interview C1).

In summary, the disappearance of the influence of the State Security Investigations on the case study IBCSOs in Egypt has divided them into three groups. First, community-based organisations that enjoyed less red-tape, and more freedom for the Imam in his sermons, and for its members to express their opinions; however, they still did not possess a particular ideology or even the will or the ability to adopt and advocate one. Second, Salafi organisations that did not show any radical reaction to the post-revolution early implications, although they now had more than one political apparatus that represented their various views and beliefs. Finally, third, a growing number of Muslim Brotherhood affiliated organisations that were used to mobile support for the political agenda of the brotherhood and its newly formed party.

The following section examines some of the events of the 2011 Parliamentary elections campaign to identify what role was taken by case-study IBCSOs in their new post-revolution specifications. I analyse data collected from case study organisations during, and shortly after, the campaign of the first free General Elections in post-revolution Egypt. The analysis challenges the claims that poverty reduction activities of CSOs like case-study IBCSOs have been a major contributor to the growth of the political agenda of the Islamist movement, as demonstrated by their remarkable win of the first free election in Egypt after the January 2011 revolution.

8.3. Case Study IBCSOs during the 2011 Elections

8.3.1 The Community-Based Mosque, GMT

The GMT took a neutral position in the elections in consistency with their political attitude adopted after the revolution. Short conversations with mosque attendants, and more focused ones conducted with recipients after the elections did not reflect any dominant political views or directions. There were some who supported the Muslim Brotherhood’s candidates, and some who did not. It is worth-noting that most of the support to the Brotherhood was due to reasons such as “to
give them a chance”, or “see if they would be any better”, or simply because “one can’t find a better option” (Fieldnotes, GMT, December 2011). Many recipients (including many of those who were interviewed before the elections and said then that they have never voted before), showed more willingness to participate after the revolution. When asked about the means of knowing about the candidates, the answers ranged between sons, neighbours and relatives. The mosque or its Imam, or indeed any other mosque or Imam or religious scholar was never mentioned (Interviews A43-A51).

8.3.2. The Salafis and the GS

It has already been documented here that the GS recipients have denied to be subjected to any pressure by the CSO to affect their voting. This section now turns to examine what the GS itself has been doing during this time.

In the early days following the formation of the El-Nour Salafi party, opinion polls were not favourable for the party (Al-Ahram 26/9/2011). That was soon proven wrong when the party managed to secure about 22.5% of the seats in the general elections of 2011 finishing runners-up to the Muslim Brotherhood’s FJP that topped the polls. The result came as a surprise after a party that was mainly composed of inexperienced, and mostly unknown, politicians managed to control about 35% of the Islamist representation in the parliament (Topol 2012). The Salafi party designed a campaign based upon a religious discourse stressing the values and culture of the ultra-conservative Salafis. That, and not the Salafi’s poverty reduction activities, was thought to be the reason for their political success because the campaign gained the sympathy of many people who felt that this discourse matched their personal beliefs (Tadros 2012). The Salafi party based their campaign on pure religious bases without any particular political message. Its lists of candidates composed of almost entirely politically unknown candidates who were drawn out of Salafi mosque Imams and Salafi CSOs’ active community members (Tadros 2012).

The Salafis campaign was centred on the party’s promise to apply the "rule of God" without a clear outline of what that actually means. It relied on the backing of popular Salafi TV-preachers, such as Mohammed Hassan, Yaser Borhamy and Abu las’haq El-Huwainy. The use of the images of bearded fathers taking their daughters
to schools, and refraining from putting the images of women candidates in their publicity posters, and TV adverts all reflected the uncompromising conservative nature of the campaign, which had appealed to the conservative audience it targeted. The campaign, unlike the Muslim Brotherhood’s, did not show signs of any serious attempt to target the non-religious public by pretending any levels of moderation or compromise. One of the most shared images on social media during the campaign was a poster showing a list of El-Nour party candidates where the image of the female candidate (each list had to have a minimum of one female according to the law), was replaced by a picture of flower. There were other similar posters where the image and the name of the female candidate were replaced by a photo of her husband and his name preceded by the “Mrs.” As seen in Figure 8.1. The GS did not take direct part in this campaign as shown above, but its work had played an indirect role in the background. The GS has been a venue for pro-Salafi political mobilisation efforts, although in the interviews most of recipients did not comprehend the meaning of the term Salafi nor they exhibited any knowledge about the principles of the Salafi doctrine (Interviews B14-18 and B20-29).

Figure 8.1. Elections Campaign Posters of El-Nour Salafi Party that Hide the Images of Female Candidates. The poster on the left shows a flower replacing the photo of the female candidate and the one on the right highlights her husband’s name under his photo instead.

In the interviews that took place after the elections, I was told by one recipient at the GS mosque (Interview B41) that “some face-veiled women used to pray with us in the mosque and then they campaign for El-Nour party and sometimes for the Muslim Brotherhood. They ask us to vote for El-Nour party in order to please
God and his Prophet.” Apart from that, there was barely any impact found for the GS on the voting patterns of its interviewed recipients as mentioned earlier. Similar to the GMT, those interviewed at the GS mosque who said they voted for El-Nour Party did not mention the mosque, its Imam or even the highly trusted and valued Hag Anwar as a source of information on elections. Instead, references were scattered between family and friends. Another finding, supporting the same conclusion, was that amongst the recipients of the GS, there were two out of the ten interviewed after the elections who said they voted for Hamdin Sabahy (the socialist candidate) in the Presidential elections because he resembled the iconic leader “Gamal Abdel-Nasser” according to them (Interviews B37 and B40). We can therefore conclude that the GS has not targeted the recipients who received help from it. Instead, it has been advancing its ideology or views of the world through enhancing the central role the mosque as a centre for both community service, and for moral guidance, and leaving the impact from that to influence the general public at its own pace.

8.3.3 The Muslim Brotherhood through MFA

The Brotherhood’s FJP topped the 2011 general elections to become the biggest party in the parliament with over 42% of the seats. Some believed that this success was the outcome of the Muslim Brotherhood’s long-accumulated experience in community service and charity work which secured the loyalty and consequently the votes of people (Ali 2011). However, that might not be an entirely accurate conclusion. Voting statistics from both the parliamentary and presidential elections showed the percentage of votes received by the Muslim Brotherhood in absentee votes coming from Egyptians living in the GCC countries were higher than the percentage of votes the Brotherhood received in Egypt. For example, in the first round of the Presidential elections, the Brotherhood’s candidate Mohammed Morsy received 25% of the votes in Egypt. In Qatar, Kuwait, Bahrain and Oman, he received between 30% and 33% in each of them and in Saudi Arabia he emerged with 47% of the votes. Egyptians working in the Gulf are relatively better off financially. They are all employed and are not dependent on the Muslim Brotherhood support services.

43 Gulf Cooperation Council countries, which are Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates and Oman.
Yet they still voted for FJP in higher rates than home voters. This might be an indicator that the Brotherhood’s social and charitable work it performs through CSOs may have not been the most influential factor on the elections result. Instead, it was the group’s ability to benefit from its rich political organisation skills and capabilities.

As Tadros (2012) noted in his study of the 2011 elections results, the Brotherhood had an advanced multi-level organisational structure that extended to everywhere in Egypt where voters can be mobilised. The Brotherhood’s followers who were raised on supporting and belonging to the Brotherhood politically and ideologically seemed to be the driving force putting actual votes for the Brotherhood in the ballot boxes. One of them was Sheikh Hamed, the MFA Imam, who like many religious men was a great “social capitalist” (Hart and Dekker 2005), and he managed to employ this in serving the agenda of the Muslim Brotherhood. He used the MFA mosque intensively for campaigning. During three Friday sermons over the period of the general elections' two rounds (Fieldnotes, MFA, 18/11/2011, 25/11/2011 and 2/12/2012), the Imam aggressively attacked the political opponents of FJP deconstructing their arguments and warning against voting for them. In the last sermon before people headed to the polls, he began by explaining that the mosque should not be used to campaign for any particular political group. Instead, it is the mosque’s duty to enlighten people on “how to choose” the most useful candidate for themselves and their community. He then offered to perform that task himself when he began by eliminating one group after the other. He first denounced anybody with obvious ties to the former regime dismissing them as “corrupt and proven incompetent.” After that, he said that each one should be voting for those who represent their “principles and ideals.” He then gave a carefully chosen example by asking the question: “For example, do you think that we should be a secular state and throw religion away and get it out of our lives?” He answered promptly: “If the answer is yes, then vote for those who say that, but if you think that we are Muslims and we should stick to this religion and to its rule, then of course you are ought to vote for those who represent what you believed in.” However, that was not all. There was still one group that needed elimination. He said that when people vote for those who represent their religion, they must also be careful about those “who are taking it too far with Islam” in a clear reference to the more conservative Salafis.
Finally, he did not forget to make sure that the best candidate would always be the “Muslim who is capable to serve Islam and is both knowledgeable and experienced to do that. Those are the ones who stood in opposition for many years and are not young and inexperienced as those who are with all their good intentions might still not be up to the various serious challenges we are facing in such a critical time.” (Fieldnotes, MFA, 25/11/2011).

Later on after the prayer, the Imam offered to take the data of those interested in voting (their names, national ID card numbers and phone numbers). The purpose of the exercise was to text them later with the addresses of the polling station where each one was supposed to vote. The data collection that continued in the mosque for three days and was advertised after every prayer was carried out by a number of young assistants who all belonged to the Muslim Brotherhood youth groups. Some of them, according to other informants, (Interviews C3 and C4) were not regulars in the mosque, which shows that they were dispatched by the Muslim Brotherhood from elsewhere to help the Imam. The practice of moving Brotherhood members to assist others in campaigning elsewhere seemed to be a routine behaviour because the Imam of MFA mosque himself was later asked to move out from his mosque for five days to help at another mosque in the poor northern Cairo suburb of Bahtim (Fieldnotes, MFA, 30/12/2011), where elections took place on a different day (elections took place over three stages because there were not enough judges to cover the whole country on one day after new rules enforced a judge-for-each-polling station system). Although there were claims by one of the CSO board members (Interview C4) that the public’s data collected was used by the brotherhood to contact voters and direct them to vote for the brotherhood’s candidates, I could not find any one who submitted their data and claimed they were directly targeted by brotherhood’s campaigners. The particular board member who made that claim had very strong opinions opposing the Brotherhood, which places some doubts on her credibility especially that she is the only one who made that claim. However, there is also no evidence that the data was not used in other manners.

On the recipients’ side, there was also no evidence to support that they were particularly targeted. The patterns of voting observed at GMT and the GS continued,
according to the interviewed MFA recipients (Interviews C9-C16) who had shown a diverse set of political opinions. Some voted for the Salafis and others for the Brotherhood with only one who had voted for a former member of the NDP. The reasons mentioned for choosing their candidate in voting varied; but most of them (all were women) mentioned receiving advice from their sons or brothers. They all denied to be contacted by the association or any of its members, or even by any of the individual Muslim Brotherhood campaigners at their homes.

General observations outside the MFA mosque throughout the elections campaign reflected similar conclusions. Organised politically-oriented mobilisation, and not social service provision was evident on the field during the election campaign. During the polling days, I encountered in several places in Cairo the phenomena of buses provided by the Muslim Brotherhood to transfer members of certain syndicates or neighbourhoods to the polling stations. The Muslim Brotherhood youths also worked on providing help for voters seeking to find their polling station and their registration information by mounting stalls equipped with laptops that carried electronic copies of the electoral registers. This information provision service was particularly useful in elections where most people were voting for the first time ever. Observations in front of the polling stations showed that Muslim Brotherhood volunteers have worked hard to keep the logos of the Brotherhood and the photos of their candidates to be the most visible. They kept campaigning until the last moment to persuade many undecided voters. They also used the media to appeal for all types of voters including the non-Muslims. They tried to reflect a moderate image through putting forward many of its moderate members such as Mohammed El-Beltagy and Rafiq Habib. The Muslim Brotherhood simply dominated the political scene at grassroots level in a way that was not matched by any other group. It gave the election’s observers the impression that they were almost the only group competing in it.

In short, there is not any significant evidence that the MFA organisation’s poverty reduction activities have been significantly involved in the political campaign of the Muslim Brotherhood during the 2011 general elections. The brotherhood looked at MFA as a “point of distribution” (Singerman 1995) that provides goods and
services. This factor of distribution has given it the edge of having a large faction of people that benefit from or interact with the organisation.

8.4. Conclusion:

This chapter has triangulated data from interviews, observations from case study organisations and an analysis of the election campaigns of both the Muslim Brotherhood and El-Nour Party that have been taking place during the fieldwork for this thesis. This has all failed to produce any evidence that any of the three case study IBCSOs have used their poverty reduction activities to specifically target the poor for voting in favour of any of the parties that represented the Islamic movement in the 2011 elections. This answers claims listed at the beginning of this chapter and supports what some like Herbert (2003) have mentioned, when he said that the belief that the Islamic movement in Egypt is aimed at the poor and that it thrives from supporting them is false.

The chapter has shown an independent community-based GMT lacking ideology, and not affiliated to a greater umbrella organisation or order that chose to stay away from political transformation. The organisation saw itself as a part of civil society that has a social-oriented function rather than a political one. The GS sympathised with the Salafi doctrine, but what prevailed was its vision that achieving the Salafi agenda would happen with the establishment of social solidarity, and by improving the religious conduct of the individuals. The Muslim Brotherhood on the other hand saw that change is only achievable through political power and it tried to seek that, but the Muslim Brotherhood’s biggest aim was to win the votes of the middle class that attended mosques rather than votes of the poor that benefited from them.

The MFA’s case is the most significant one to this chapter, as for it belongs to a CSO affiliated with the political party that actually won elections and enjoyed the most popularity in Egypt in the aftermath of the revolution. The organisation’s poverty reduction activities have been only part of work by the Muslim Brotherhood to establish control over the social functions of the organisations. The Imam, who was the Muslim Brotherhood’s main representative at the organisation, established
social ties with community members and mosque attendants that have enabled him to recruit votes and volunteers serving the brotherhood’s campaigns. The mosque was one of the easiest ways to get to the people who would be considered potential sympathizers with the Muslim Brotherhood. Targeting those was safer and easier than asking poor recipients to vote for the Muslim Brotherhood in return of assistance as doing that would have not produced guaranteed results. Many would have possibly agreed to vote one way or another in return for help, but when the day comes at the polling station, it would have been difficult to know who would have complied and who would have not. Finding voters who had the potential to get convinced with a certain discourse, and convincing them, was easier and guaranteed to produce more reliable results.

In his study of informal civil society institutions of urban Cairo, Singerman (1995) noticed that the poor depended on these institutions for knowledge about how to vote and what political opinions to adopt rather than depending on formal organisations and mosques. Singerman (1995) captured the phenomena of informal institutions created by the poor in urban Cairo for the purpose of economic survival, such as Informal Borrowing Groups and social networks between neighbours and friends. Interviewed recipients in this thesis showed a trend of trusting political advice coming from these networks rather than seeking political advice in mosques or other formal CSOs they dealt with. It seems that the Salafis and the Muslim Brotherhood had realised that. Therefore, instead of depending on CSOs such as the GS or MFA for targeting the recipients, they worked on invading urban informal networks through agents (such as the veiled women they sent to attend the religious lessons in mosques and talk to other women), or through the religious or political discourse they advocated through the mosque and other media outlets. They have not exploited the IBCSOs’ poverty reduction activities. This choice of strategy appeared to have worked considering the elections results.

In addition to Singerman’s theory, it could also be possible to consider the inability of CSOs such as case study IBCSOs to play a significant role in political change in the light of the theories of De Tocqueville (1938) and Putnam (1993). De Tocqueville’s associations were membership based organisations formed around a mutual interest for their members. The work they produced to address these mutual
interests produced practices that were relevant to democratic behaviour. The three case study IBCSOs were membership-based associations also. However, the faith orientation they were based upon made them primarily act towards fulfilling the needs of the values of that faith and not the interest of their association members. The result was the top-down poverty reduction practices that were shown in Chapters Five and Six. At the same time, the organisations themselves acted in top-down faith-based structures where there were few trusted figures that organisation members willingly allowed to determine the fate of everything in the organisation instead of collectively considering and taking decisions. Therefore, the patronising top-down approaches used for poverty reduction and management have delivered the type of political culture to both organisations members and recipients that was unable to break the strong ties that continued to connect the recipients to primary institutions, such as family and neighbourhood. This shows why Singerman’s observation was valid in 1995 and is still valid now. Case study IBCSOs did make their recipients dependent on the CSOs for survival; but they were not integrated into these institutions as parts of “groups” or “associations” that may be joined by a collective interest.

The top-down vertical ties mentioned by Putman (1993) in his study of Southern Italy’s civil society were very similar to the vertical ties and dependency chains found in case study IBCSOs as highlighted in this thesis. The inability of case study IBCSOs to build an independent and capable citizen have made it impossible to politically change that citizen even if such change was to ideas that were not necessarily democratic. The more recipients grew dependent on case study IBCSOs the less there was any potential that these organisations could affect the political culture of recipients.

Following the completion of the main part of data analysis for this thesis, which has been conducted over chapters Six, Seven and Eight, the next chapter brings this thesis to conclusion by summarising its findings, outlining its theoretical and operations implications, and opening the doors for possible future research that is needed to build on what it has found.
CHAPTER NINE

CONCLUSION

This chapter outlines the conclusions reached by the thesis in relation to its central question on the role played by Islamic-based Civil Society Organisations (IBCSOs) in poverty reduction in Egypt, and its implication on our understanding of civil society's contribution to development. The chapter begins by summarising the findings of the thesis. After that, it highlights the contribution these findings make to debates on the theory and practice of poverty reduction by civil society. Finally, the chapter concludes with suggestions for further research and a number of policy implications this thesis may have.

9.1. Summary of Thesis Findings

In summary, this thesis has analysed examples of IBCSOs in Egypt that apply what is primarily a top-down basic needs approach to poverty reduction that provides their recipients with social assistance that has many similarities with official social protection. This approach to poverty reduction integrates several elements of the risks, rights and needs discourses for justifying social protection (Munro 2008). This came as a result of several theoretical and operational factors. On the theoretical level, the organisations' conceptualisation of poverty and poverty reduction is driven from values and meanings found in their Islamic doctrine and religious culture. On the operational level, case study IBCSOs' need to sustain their influential position within society and maintain their legitimacy and sources of funding prevented them from practicing poverty reduction in ways that can be empowering for the poor despite recognition of their rights. Case study IBCSOs see in themselves an agent that is obliged to practice poverty reduction on behalf of society at large. On the operational level, case study IBCSOs demonstrated considerable efficiency and positive qualities in delivering social protection to the poor with regards to meeting many of their basic needs. However, when considering poverty from a multidimensional perspective, case study IBCSOs did not achieve much on the fronts
of empowering the poor, enhancing their capabilities or improving levels of their social inclusion. This can then explain the minimal impact that such organisations have had on political mobilisation in Egypt, especially after the revolution, which has granted Egyptian civil society unprecedented space and freedoms.

It is important to note that the findings of this thesis are based on the analysis of case study organisations only. These findings do not intend to make general sweeping conclusions that apply to all IBCSOs in Egypt. Nevertheless, these organisations have been selected as typical examples of many similar Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) elsewhere in urban Egypt as seen in Chapter Four. Therefore, the findings that emerge from their study could be applicable to many other organisations. The following two sub-sections outline the thesis findings in details.

9.1.1. Summary of the Empirical Findings:

This thesis explored examples of three categories of IBCSOs. (1) Apolitical organisations that represent religious movements, such as the Salafi GS that represents a major wing of the Salafi movement, (2) Organisations with political involvement, such as the Muslim Brotherhood that controls CSOs like MFA for the purpose of supporting their quest for political power, and (3) Community-based organisations that primarily act as mosque-based charities with neither a political, nor a religious agenda. The thesis explained that the organisation which demonstrated the most distinct approach, and the most comprehensive set of poverty reduction activities was the Salafi GS, which was the most doctrine-based organisation studied. The GS was the only case study organisation that based its poverty reduction practice on a clearly identified theoretical framework that has been driven from Islamic literature and holy texts.

Motives and objectives differed between case study IBCSOs. The community-based organisation GMT was mainly driven by charitable motives, and the size of its activities was dependent on the amount of available funding. The Salafi GS focused on establishing and enhancing the central role of the mosque in the local community in order to refine the religious practices of people, and gain their sympathy to the Salafi views and lifestyle. Finally, the Muslim Brotherhood-affiliated mosque was driven by its brotherhood-member Imam to establish a central social role for the
mosque that could be further used as a platform for promoting the Brotherhood’s political message to the public and for creating social relation networks that are activated at times of need to serve the brotherhood goals, such during election campaigns.

All case study organisations in this thesis shared a conceptualisation of poverty and poverty reduction driven from an Islamic background that led to an absolute definition of poverty. They measured poverty and dealt with it from the Islamic “limit of subsistence” point of view that sets a monetary poverty line supposed to be sufficient to provide the basic needs of each individual. Anybody with income falling under this limit of subsistence was considered by IBCSOs to be poor, who would therefore qualify for the right to receive assistance. Obviously, this view of poverty was reflected in the adoption a seemingly charitable basic needs practice of poverty reduction in all case study IBCSOs that is typical of Faith-based Organisations (FBOs), especially smaller ones (Clarke 2007, Lunn 2009 and Taylor 2011). The recognition of the organisations’ obligations towards the poor was apparent in all case study organisations. However, their understanding of the nature of these obligations varied. The donors and board members in GMT and MFA speak about an individual voluntary charitable motive that could rise at best to the level of the fulfillment of an obligation to obey a religious order imposed by God. On the other hand, the Salafi GS was unique in manifesting the notion of a collective obligation of society to meet the needs of the poor, which is similar to how Doyal and Gough (1991) had explained that rights are all driven from the obligations to fulfill human needs. This recognition of the collective obligation of society has been reflected in the GS aim to provide nationwide coverage of its services. It grants their potential recipients the right to apply for help at any local GS branch and receive that help as soon as they meet certain criteria. This type of poverty reduction practices is similar to cash transfers, which are a main pillar of official social protection (Hanlon et al 2010).

Case study IBCSOs mainly rely on funding from committed Egyptian individual donors who either made regular monthly payments to the IBCOs under the name of subscriptions or orphan sponsorship fees, or they make regular or irregular lump sum donations. A number of those donors deduct their donations to case study
IBCSOs from their obligatory *Zakat* dues; but many others do make voluntary payments above their due *Zakat* allocations. Donors are mostly community members recruited through the mosques where case study IBCSOs are based. However, there were occasions at all case study IBCSOs where donors were recruited from outside the organisations’ communities, thanks to the trust they had in the individuals running the organisations or in the community members who recruited them. Neither state contribution nor foreign funding figured at any of the case study IBCSOs.

The recipients across all case study organisations were almost entirely single-woman-heading households who lived within boundaries of IBCSOs’ local communities\(^{44}\). They mostly met the typical description of the urban poor in Egypt who suffer several aspects of multidimensional poverty (Ibrahim 2011). Many of these people had little income through pensions, or from petty work such as trading small amounts of groceries, cleaning houses or home-based sewing; however, they still considered themselves as being poor, and were identified as such by their supporting organisations, mainly for their shortage of physical resources and income. They demonstrated a lack of various capabilities including, lack of education, access to markets and capital, appropriate health care, and more. Finally, they experienced social exclusion by being denied venues of self expression, demanding rights and even having a voice in what type of assistance they would prefer to receive from IBCSOs.

The thesis examined numerous characteristics of case study IBCSOs’ involvement in poverty reduction and it has shown how they have mainly revolved around the personal, trustworthy, responsive, compassionate and caring nature of the relations between these organisations and their recipients. These are qualities already recognised as main advantages of FBOs involvement in development (Dicklitch and Rice 2004, Green et al 2010 and Odumosu et al 2009). However, case study IBCSOs have confirmed the widespread critique of FBOs, namely their failure to achieve social change and transformation, and to empower their recipients to depart from poverty (Martin et al 2007). In other words, they targeted symptoms

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\(^{44}\) Only two out of 61 interviewed recipients across all three case study IBCSOs did not match this description.
rather than the causes of poverty. Case study IBCSOs kept their recipients socially protected from risks such as the loss of dignity that may come when they seek help elsewhere beyond the FBOs. However, these organisations did little to target social, economic or political foundations of the causes of their recipients’ disadvantage.

On the role of case study IBCSOs in political mobilisation for the Islamist movement in Egypt, this thesis has shown how the different types of IBCSOs affiliated to a similar set of values and cultures have had different responses to the opened window of political participation after the 2011 revolution. It has also shown that this difference in response is primarily due to structural differences between organisations. This meant they had different interests, dominant beliefs and organisational affiliations. However, what was clear in all case study IBCSOs is that none had used their poverty reduction activities to buy the political loyalties of their poor recipients. Instead, the only role played by a mosque operating in poverty reduction in active political mobilisation was in the case of the Muslim Brotherhood-affiliated mosque when the mosque was used as a platform for addressing its congregation with the political discourse of the Muslim Brotherhood and a base for campaigning activities during the elections campaign season. The organisation and its activities were not used as a market to buy votes in return for poverty reduction assistance. Evidence gathered from observing the political campaign during the 2011 general elections further supported that finding by showing that the Muslim Brotherhood’s success in these elections was the result of the group’s political experience, their organisational abilities and what was then an appealing faith-based message that they presented to sympathetic general public and not the use of the mosque or its poverty reduction activities.

9.1.2. Outlining the Main Conclusions of the Thesis

The analysis of the above empirical findings produced the main findings of this thesis which are outlined as followed:

1. IBCSOs can be effective deliverers of social assistance because they possess several qualities. These include: their values, embeddedness, legitimacy and others which make them more appealing to, and knowledgeable of, their communities at large, and their recipients in particular. In addition, IBCSOs
invest such qualities in securing sustainable and locally generated sources of funding which make them financially independent, and durable enough to qualify as possible conduits of cash transfers.

2. Despite the dominance of basic needs charitable approaches practiced by IBCSOs, which are typical to FBOs, IBCSOs, especially doctrine-based ones such as the Salafi GS, have demonstrated the possibility of departing from that towards an approach to poverty reduction that recognises rights of the poor to receive adequate protection from several risks that they are vulnerable to. Providing this protection is seen by IBCSOs as an obligation that falls on society at large. In this line of thought, civil society acts as an agent that meets this obligation on behalf of society by providing some of the poor’s basic needs. However, this recognition of the poor’s rights does not rise to include the full package of the conventional rights-based approach with its political and civil rights components.

3. The approach of IBCSOs to poverty reduction, which integrates elements of the risks, rights and needs discourses that justify social protection, can prove to be more compatible with local conditions of the poverty reduction operation theatre in Egypt, and other Islamic societies. This is because CSOs in Egypt, both FBOs and non-FBOs alike, have struggled to adopt the rights-based approach as it is understood in mainstream development literature, which was found in this research not to be as universal as previously argued (Sen 2009 and Pogge 2008).

4. IBCSOs in Egypt have not directly used their poverty reduction activities to serve the political objectives of the Islamic movement. Moreover, they have not used the opportunities that were made available to them after the revolution with the loosening of the state’s grip on them to play a bigger role in political mobilisation. This comes in line with their overall avoidance of tackling the causes of poverty and the organisations’ prioritisation of maintainence of their influential presence within their communities. This has created a population dependent on them as intermediaries that provide essential help for recipients, and a reliable channel for donor’s donations.
Taking into account these findings, the following section attempts to put them in further perspective by linking them with the relevant contemporary debates on poverty reduction, FBOs and civil society, which were outlined earlier in the thesis. This comes in order to measure the impact of this research on our understanding of civil society’s contribution to poverty reduction, which is a key purpose of this research.

9.2. The Theoretical Implications of this Thesis:

9.2.1. On Debates within the Poverty Reduction Discourse:

A central purpose of this thesis was to use the case study organisations to explore the ways with which IBCSOs’ poverty reductions activities in Egypt can add to our understanding of the role CSOs play in poverty reduction. This thesis has contributed to the debates on poverty and poverty reduction through two main routes. The first is through the discussion of the conceptualisation of poverty and its role in determining the choice of poverty reduction approaches of FBOs. The second is through the interaction between risks, rights, needs and obligations as key concepts to justify and understand the practice of poverty reduction and social protection. In the following section, this chapter closely examines the main conclusions related to these two main areas of debate.

First, with regards to the conceptualisation of poverty, the thesis has expectedly revealed the impact of Islamic thought on how IBCSOs understood the meaning of poverty. Islamic literature, as seen in Chapter Two, considered poverty in single-dimension monetary terms. It defined the poor as those who do not own the limit of subsistence - the monetary amount needed to meet a person’s basic needs. It explained poverty by a combination of fatalistic reasons related to the will of God, structural reasons related to the nature of the economy that would always leave some poor people behind; and individual reasons that include the laziness of the poor or their inability to find or perform work (see Section 2.4.).

The data gathered in this thesis has shown that case study IBCSOs had a conceptualisation of poverty that can be summarised as follow. First, they defined
poverty in absolute financial terms; where a poverty line was set based on the Islamic notion of “subsistence”. An individual who achieves “subsistence” is expected to be able to afford their basic needs. The concept of subsistence was directly derived from the literature on Zakat that identifies recipients entitled to Zakat on purely financial terms (Abbasi 1960, Al-Qaradawy 1977 and others). This faith-based understanding of absolute poverty has therefore determined the choice of poverty reduction approach in all case study IBCSOs that revolved around a basic-needs and top-down approach. Case study IBCSOs did not consider poverty to be the result of neither social exclusion, nor lack of capabilities. Their inability to recognise other dimensions of poverty in terms of definition and understanding meant they would not recognise these other dimensions when considering how to tackle poverty reduction.

This conceptualisation of poverty and its implication are typical of many FBOs worldwide (Clarke 2007, Lunn 2009 and Taylor 2011). However, the work explored in case study IBCSOs (particularly in the Salafi GS case) in this thesis could be differentiated from what is applied by non-Islamic faith based charities elsewhere by its dependence on the concept of fard el kefaya (Sufficiency Obligation). This turns this act of meeting the basic needs of the poor from the charitable framework that dominates western understanding of FBOs to an obligations-based framework that crossroads with the rights-based approaches to development, but with two major differences. The obligations assumed by IBCSOs are religious obligations which fulfill a religious duty that falls on society at large, where conventional rights-based approaches to development speak of legal obligations where the state, and in some cases particular individuals, are to be held legally responsible if they do not meet these obligations (Van Rensburg 2007).

The importance of this understanding of poverty reduction at IBCSOs is that it opens the door for enhancing the significance of civil society in poverty reduction through a situation where civil society organisations can be willingly stepping forward. They do this not to empower or encourage the poor to demand their rights from the state, and not by volunteering to help a selected portion or group of those whom the state could not help, but rather to replace the state as the destination for directed claims for the provision of social protection. The GS accepted claims by
anybody who met their criteria for defining poverty to be included on their recipient registries, and it was evident that other case study IBCSOs would have done the same had they possessed enough financial capabilities to support all the claims they received.

The other main theoretical implication of this thesis is the comparison it offers between the obligation based approach offered by the GS to meet what it believes as the rights of the poor, with the conventional secular model of the rights based approach as outlined in the literature (Doyal and Gough 1991, Harris-Curtis 2003, Van Rensburg 2007 and others), and in the field as seen in the discourse of MCDA, the non-FBO case study organisation. The GS recognised the poor’s “right” to social protection from the various risks that could threaten to send them into poverty. Therefore, it allowed the poor who met specific criteria to present themselves to their local GS branches and claim their benefits. However, the GS applied a needs approach to social protection. It allowed itself to determine what the needs of the poor were, and how to satisfy them, without giving the recipients any say in the process. That is not to mention the conditions the GS imposed on its recipients such as attending religious lessons or collecting their payments in person from the mosque. Consequently, the recognition of the poor’s rights to social protection still resulted in a top-down approach that was not dissimilar from the charitable work performed by the two case study IBCSOs that did not mention rights when explaining their practice. However, the practice and rhetoric of the GS has offered a potential for the GS, and perhaps other IBCSOs, to act as a nationwide deliverers of cash transfers for social protection. This has left the GS version of social protection standing in a grey area between risks, rights and needs discourses to justify social protection (Munro 2008).

This creation of this hybrid between risks, rights and needs opened the door to question the decline of IBCSOs to take their recognition of the poor’s rights into a broader application of the rights-based practices. The explanation for this differed across case study organisations. The thesis argues there were three main explanations for this which may have acted individually or collectively in different ways with different cases. These explanations are as follows:
First, lack of knowledge: The community-based mosque did not practice the full-scale conventional rights-based approach simply because of lack of knowledge. A highlight during the fieldwork arose when the Imam and board members of the community-based mosque were confronted with this after asking me about my main findings from studying their CSO. In my answer to that question, I had to explain the rights-based approach to development and to poverty reduction. Instead of the expected resistance to a new idea that could contradict a tradition of adopting techniques that have been practiced for as long as the organisation existed, the reaction was one of interest, and willingness to explore the new horizons offered by the rights-based approach.

Second, belief in the sufficiency of currently practiced methods. In the case of the GS, a similar confrontation received a different response. The basic needs obligation-driven practice was defended because the GS believes that recipients are entitled to the delivery of their basic needs, as long as they are incapacitated by one of what they believed to be the "valid reasons" for poverty, such as the loss of the providing husband or being subjected to physical disabilities. This means, that rights of the poor were viewed to be conditional as long as the poor’s poverty is the result of one of the risks that the GS is willing to recognise based upon their Islamic culture and values as seen earlier. The GS saw that the poor are disadvantaged members of society, incapable of being empowered, and would therefore always remain in need for someone to act on their behalf, and provide them with their basic needs. This provides the purpose and the legitimacy of the agency role that the GS chose to play in meeting the needs of the poor from their own point of view, while at the same time claiming that it is actually applying an approach that takes rights into account.

Third, the cultural critique of rights-based approaches. Egypt has a long legacy of a service delivery distributive welfare state (Tadros 2006). Civil society was therefore trapped in the expectations that it would support the state’s role in its provisions of social protection and welfare. This meant civil society could have not easily taken the longer and more demanding route of mobilisation and empowerment of the disadvantaged; which is what the rights-based approach would need. As Egyptians across the socio-economic class ladder have been benefitting for decades from free education, subsidised energy and food, and a public sector that
employs millions of people, they chose (or were forced to choose) in return to surrender many of their political and civic rights. This culture is not likely to function as a friendly breeding environment to a poverty reduction approach based on individual empowerment and self-reliance. This was proven by the case study of the non faith-based organisations (NFBOs) that adopted a Western understanding of the rights-based approach for community development, but ended up (before and after the revolution; with and without the State Security Investigations pressure) adopting a mild rights-based practice where petition writing and persuasion were used rather than empowerment and mobilization. This indicates that applying a rights-based approach in Egypt by CSOs (both FBOs and NFBOs alike) for poverty reduction is possible, but only if it coexists with many social and economic realities as seen in details in Section 6.5).

Finally, the need for institutional survival. The positive reputation of case study IBCSOs within their societies, and the high levels of trust they enjoyed (see Section 7.1.) were the result of their poverty reduction work. The assistance they provided to the poor meant they would receive ample, and regular, funding from donations. The continuation of this required IBCSOs to keep dependence on it from society. This occurred on two levels. IBCSOs had to keep the poor dependent on them for social assistance, and at the same time had to keep donors dependent on IBCSOs as the most reliable and trustworthy intermediary that could deliver donations to deserving and genuine recipients. There would then be an obvious lack of interest from IBCSOs in creating a politicised and independent population that would not then need IBCSOs or their poverty reduction work. That was more apparent in the case of the Salafi GS where according to its own mission statement, the organisation’s top priority was to reform the religious lives of society through protecting the poor from deviating from the “right path” into crime, violence, drug addiction and other harms arguably caused by poverty. The GS needed to remain influential in the lives of its recipients so that it could continue to affect their spiritual lives, keeping them closely attached to the “right path,” which was obviously Salafi Islam from their point of view. That was why the GS has been forcing its recipients to attend religious lessons that were intended (as seen in Chapter Five), to maintain their closeness to the Salafi doctrine and lifestyle.
The rights-based approach is the latest of the three civil society’s approaches to poverty reduction presented earlier in this thesis (after the basic needs and the capabilities approaches). However, this thesis has shown that reaching it will not be the ultimate destiny of IBCSOs as it might seem to be the case with CSOs in the main stream literature. At the same time, IBCSOs do not entirely reject the rights-based approach. In fact, these organisations include elements of it in their work, but only as far as it serves two aspects. The first is IBCSOs’ own agendas as CSOs seeking influence and organisational survival within their society. The second aspect is their position as FBOs that are based upon a particular doctrine which entails understandings of concepts such as risks, rights, needs and obligations that are different from how the same concepts are understood within conventional literature on the rights-based approach and how they are practiced by NFBOs.

9.2.2. On Debates within the Civil Society Discourse

The findings of this thesis trigger a discussion about the position of Islamic-based CSOs in the overall debate on civil society in Egypt. This debate is only expected to intensify with the political and social developments following the 2011 revolution. Before the revolution, it was thought that the pressure applied by the previous regime’s State Security Investigations on Islamic-based CSOs prevented them from stepping forward to play a more significant role in advocacy and mobilisation of the poor masses that have moral reasons to sympathise with the religious Islamic discourse (Al-Sayyid 1995, Esposito 1996 and others). The opportunities created by the revolution encouraged the introduction of a part of this thesis to analyse IBCSOs’ role in political transformation in order to examine if this could have had changed after January 2011. However, fieldwork conducted after the revolution showed that very little change had taken place in terms of poverty reduction activities, or communications with the recipients. Except for the Muslim Brotherhood’s MFA, case study IBCSOs have not tried to directly use the influence they might have had via their poverty reduction activities to inflect any significant change on society. However, poverty reduction activities as well as other social services provided by brotherhood-related CSOs and IBCSOs in general, may have
played an indirect role that supported the Islamists’ rise to power in the year following the revolution. This leads to the following analytical conclusions:

First, the importance of image: Islamic-based CSOs (in particular the Salafis) are mainly driven in their poverty reduction work by a religious rather than a political agenda. The aim of these organisations is to maintain the centrality of the mosque in the lives of community members. This is done by maintaining the mosque’s position as an essential intermediary between recipients and donors who remain dependent on IBCSOs as seen above. A positive “image” of the institution is very important here because it means that donors, even those who are not necessarily motivated by religious beliefs, would find no other reliable outlet capable of delivering their donations to those who deserve them without being suspected of corruption. The maintenance and enhancement of this image is a key factor in shaping the position of Islamic-based CSOs within the greater circle of civil society in Egypt; especially in light of the continuous negative connotation of non-religious civil society, which has been systematically presented as a Western-manipulate aiming at infiltrating Egyptian society to represent the agendas of foreign western powers. This has reached its peak during the unfolding of the civil society foreign funding crisis that erupted during the fieldwork time of this thesis. Several NGOs working in the fields of human rights and democratisation were raided by the military police and had their offices shut down as well many of their workers arrested after allegation of illegally receiving foreign funding. The religious nature of Islamic-based CSOs protected them from such suspicion on that occasion, despite the circulating rumors about their financial links to some Arab Gulf countries. Moreover, the confidence that the general public seemed to have had in IBCSOs may have been converted to many votes for the Islamists in the ballot box.

Second, the impact of politics on civil society: as this thesis has discussed, the role of IBCSOs in political mobilisation, an interesting debate that began to open up as the thesis approached the final stages of its writing, relates to the contrasting impact of political change on IBCSOs. The rise, and rapid fall, of the political power of the Islamic movement in Egypt after the revolution is expected to have implications on the future of Islamic-based CSOs. Their image as perceived by the public could be affected by the political performance of the Islamists. Before the revolution, these
organisations were mostly politically neutral. They were bridging a poverty gap that was seen by many people as a result of the corrupt state. The revolution brought a new political scene with Islamists winning the majority of the parliament seats before moving on to win the presidential elections in June 2012 to control the executive branch of the state after they controlled the legislative. As events unfolded quickly leading to the collapse of Islamists’ rule in Egypt as this thesis was about to be submitted, there will remain questions on the impact of the Islamists’ failure to live up to the aspirations of the people following the overthrowing of Mubarak’s rule on their popularity and reputation, on their discourse and on the institutional strength of their civil society organisations.

9.3. The Misperceptions Exposed by this Thesis:

In addition to the above theoretical implications, this thesis makes a further contribution by discrediting several misperceptions that have overshadowed the literature on FBOs. Firstly, the single categorisation of these organisations. Secondly, the overplaying of the role of these organisations' poverty reduction activities in political mobilisation. Thirdly, the underestimation of the significance of these organisations’ exclusive dependence on local financing, as opposed to foreign aid, or government financing. The following section explores each of these three misperceptions in turn:

First and foremost is the trap that caught many of those who have examined the work of Islamic-based CSOs in the past (El-Daly 2007, Al-Sayyid 1995 and others), and was about to catch this thesis at the stages of planning. The trap is the assumption that IBCSOs could be viably researched as a single category which falls under the greater umbrella of a single Islamic civil society, or faith-based organisations. During the process of planning this study, it was decided to select case study organisations based on their geographic locations in urban, rural Lower Egypt and rural Upper Egypt in order to account for their socio-economic diversity. This idea was informed by the literature in similar research. Soon after work has begun in the field, it was discovered as seen earlier in this thesis that IBCSOs in Egypt are best
understood as community-based organisations, or organisations that are affiliated with larger religious or political movements such as the Salafi movement or the Muslim Brotherhood. As seen in Chapter Five, the case study organisations from these categories are varied in many aspects including goals, type of assistance provided, and the role played in political mobilisation. In fact, as shown in Chapters Three and Eight, even categories of the Islamic movement, such as the Salafis have proven to be widely divided, at least in terms of methods and approaches they use to achieve their targets, even if they share the same values and ideologies.

The greatest effect of this misperception in the literature was that very little attention was given to the work conducted by the Salafi organisations in favor of diverting most of the attention to the Muslim Brotherhood. Most probably, this has been driven by the political significance of the Muslim Brotherhood. While this conclusion might still require further quantitative evidence to safely generalise it over Egypt as a whole, the thesis has found that the size and depth of poverty reduction activities conducted by the Salafi case study organisation was significantly more advanced and organised than the other covered organisations. In addition to their advancement on the operational level compared to other IBCSOs, the Salafis showed a distinctive understanding of poverty and poverty reduction that reflects a deeper theoretical framework than what is found at IBCSOs elsewhere. The organisation’s leaders offered a clear discourse on the purpose of their work and the philosophy that stands behind it, and they were able to relate it to wider social and economic contexts, and to see how it can fit into teachings of their religious doctrine. This was not the case neither at other case study IBCSOs, nor at MCDA.

The second misperception revealed by this thesis is the one resulting from the over promotion of Islamic-based CSOs’ poverty reduction activities’ role in political mobilisation for the Islamic Movement in Egypt - a topic which was covered in great detail in the previous chapter of the thesis. The Muslim Brotherhood’s position as the most prominent opposition group during the Mubarak era was often mentioned in the literature immediately followed by a reference to mosque-based charity and community service work they use to buy loyalty of the poor masses that felt abandoned by the government, as shown earlier. However, the MFA case study, which was the biggest Muslim Brotherhood-affiliated mosque in a district that was
won by the Muslim Brotherhood in the 2011 general elections, has left many doubts looming over such claims in the literature. Of course, the single case study is not enough to generalise the findings, but it is enough to raise many question marks over what was previously thought of IBCSOs’ role in the brotherhood’s political success. The Muslim Brotherhood may have indeed been the biggest and most active political group on the run-up to the revolution. This was (at least as far as the MFA case study was concerned) the result of having a wide base membership as well as the ability to use mosques and other community organisations and institutions as bases for advocacy and political campaigning. It was not the result of buying loyalties through the use of poverty reduction and other community service activities. To be more specific, this thesis has discovered that:

(1) Except for the MFA Muslim Brotherhood-affiliated organisation, case study IBCSOs and other Islamic-based organisations encountered in their communities have been politically passive, particularly before the revolution. The tight surveillance by State Security Investigations which the IBCSOs (as part of all civil society at large) have been operating under before the revolution left no room for any significant type of political mobilisation to take place in these organisations. Case study CSOs were left to conduct charitable top-down approach activities. However, any attempt to link these activities to some sort of political mobilisation was never tolerated.

(2) The level of political participation of the recipients of case study organisations has been nonexistent, or at most very limited, before the revolution. The recipients who received help from case study IBCSOs did not have any significant participation in the political process before the revolution. Although the recipient interviews were qualitative, they still covered a significant percentage of the recipients in the three case study IBCSOs (more than 30% at GMT, around 10% at the GS and 20% at MFA). Of all recipients interviewed before the revolution, only three recipients out of a total of 61 interviewed recipients across all case study IBCSOs mentioned they had ever voted before the revolution. The claim therefore that Islamists politically depended on votes of the poor in the past requires serious reconsideration.
Finally, the third uncovered misperception found in the literature about Islamic-based CSOs is the underestimation of the importance of their dependence on local financing. As shown in Chapter Three, the literature has often reported that Islamic-based CSOs in Egypt do receive generous funding from the more conservative Islamic and oil-rich Arab Gulf countries (El-Daly 2007). In particular, the Muslim Brotherhood and the Salafis have been accused of receiving millions of dollars from the Gulf, especially in the 1990s (Zahran et al 2012). This research in this thesis is not extensive enough to deny this allegation, but case study IBCSOs have shown a significant ability to generate regular and sustainable funding to their poverty reduction activities depending entirely on local donations. These organisations did not show the symptoms of the financial shortages suffered by Egyptian civil society as shown in Chapter Three. The donor interviews revealed one of the most interesting findings here, which is that the regular flow of donations to case study IBCSOs have been in many cases not the result of the organisations’ religious nature alone, but rather because of the level of trust acquired by the individuals who run these organisations (see Section 7.1). This means that donors did not just choose any mosque or organisation with an Islamic label to donate to, but they chose the individuals they trusted irrespective of where they are located.

On the other hand, the regular donation (orphan sponsorship or subscription fee) fundraising technique used by case study IBCSOs has enabled them to expand by forming huge databases of regular members who make small monthly donations. This has provided these organisations with the benefit of having a regular and steady flow of locally raised funds. On the other hand, the IBCSOs in Egypt unlike non-religious organisations, were free from one of the major sources of pressure that applies to civil society across developing countries worldwide, which is its chronic dependence on foreign funding (Lewis and Kanji 2009). If this finding can be generalised by a quantitative study, it will add a major factor to the analysis of FBOs’ poverty reduction and development work in Egypt. This means that Islamic-based CSOs are actually home grown CSOs that are capable of securing self-funding, and therefore are capable of determining their own strategies and lines of activity, perhaps even going as far as shaping their own indigenous model of development.
The remaining parts of this final chapter are dedicated to looking at the future by presenting various suggestions for future research and possible policy implications of the thesis. The following section explores these in detail beginning with recommendations for further research, especially those that might develop the thesis’ contribution to the debates on the conceptualization of poverty and poverty reduction.

9.4. Recommendation for Further Research

This thesis has paved the way for further research that is needed to build on its findings, and to push further the debates it has triggered, especially about the lack of literature on the poverty reduction practice of FBOs in Egypt. This section outlines some of these areas where further research is believed to be essentially needed.

First, this thesis has revealed an obligations-based approach for delivering rights to the poor, which is based on a faith-based conceptualisation of poverty and poverty reduction. This shall lead to new dimensions in the study of IBCSOs’ role in development where these organisations can be seen as ones with a distinctive character worthy of further specific study. This thesis showed IBCSOs that can be distinctive from other CSOs, as vehicles for poverty reduction by their efficiency (in many ways that reflect the several advantages of FBOs seen in the literature), sustainability (in terms of their ability to secure regular local funding and remain independent from foreign development aid) and coherence with the local culture in non-Western societies (which is usually is not friendly to the secular concepts of rights that are seen as alien Western imports). This is important to rectify the ideas that Islamic charities should be only considered in development studies as far as their role goes in acting as a political tool in the hands of the Islamist movement, or even as a fundraiser for terrorist groups, as shown in this thesis’s introduction. This thesis has provided a serious attempt to take IBCSOs out of the stereotypes they have been trapped inside in the past, and it will be important for further research to take that attempt further by discovering other elements of these organisations’ contribution to poverty reduction and development.
Second, there is a need to consider the rural equivalent of the case study urban organisations. The Salafi General GS for example has informed me that they conduct a set of poverty reduction programs in rural areas that are considerably different from the ones they have in urban areas. Those include activities such as animal breeding, where they give poor families cows or goats to breed for income generation. More knowledge is needed about these activities that so far have not been subjected to any significant research. There is a need to evaluate IBCSOs’ contribution to the different, and perhaps more severe, problems of rural poverty in Egypt.

Third, More needs to be known about non-mosque based IBCSOs that have some association with foreign donors. How does foreign funding they receive influence their practice and how does this interact with their Islamic background? Also, it will be interesting to assess how the relations they have with recipients and communities are different than the ones that mosque-based organisations have. Lately I have encountered in conferences some work that focused on some of the bigger IBCSOs in Egypt such as Resala (Sparre 2008). However, more research needs to be done about smaller community-based organisations and endowments.

Fourth, the relationship between IBCSOs and social protection needs to be explored further. Although most successful cash transfer schemes worldwide have been implemented by governments (Devereux and Sabates-Wheeler 2004), this thesis has shown similarities between cash transfers and the assistance provided by IBCSOs. With the failure of poverty reduction intervention designed by the Egyptian government (see Section 3.1.), it may be suggested that these similarities may be useful as grounds to consider upon the possibility of IBCSOs repacking or at least assisting governments as implementers of cash transfers in particular, and social protection in general, utilizing the various advantage they have for development practice, which were shown in Chapter Seven.

Fifth, Coptic Christian FBOs have played a major role in the history of civil society in Egypt, and Christian endowments have been no less significant than Muslim ones in the development of Egyptian FBOs (Hussein 2003). In addition, there

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45 Takaful Conference on Arab Philanthropy and Civil Engagement held at the American University in Cairo in June 2012, organized by the John Gerhard Centre for Philanthropy and Civil Engagement
are many locally-based Christian FBOs that operate in several places all over Egypt. Therefore, no research of FBOs in Egypt would be complete without considering the work of Christian-based CSOs, and if including one of these CSOs in this research was not possible for limitations on time and space, further research on these organisations is an area that deserves attention.

Sixth, the current political developments in Egypt following the quick rise of the Muslim Brotherhood to the top of the power pyramid, and their subsequent fall, will most probably have wide implications on civil society, as suggested above. Capturing the reactions of civil society and IBCSOs in particular remains an area that needs further research. It is also an area that draws lots of interest and attention from the academic community, as I have personally experienced in conferences that I have attended in the past two years, both in Egypt and in Europe. The role of Islamic civil society in democratisation and political mobilisation, and how this might all be related to poverty reduction, is a widely open area for more research. This is supposed to capture the impact of what have happened in Egypt since January 2011; and also it needs to capture many of the anticipated developments as they happen. This should be even more interesting, and would provide rich and highly significant materials for documenting the current decisive times in the history of Egypt.

9.5. Towards Better Policy:

The findings of this thesis have implications and can provide new insights into potential ways of improving poverty reduction policies and practices in Egypt. This is especially important at a time when the Egyptian people (including millions of them who live in poverty) are looking forward for a solution to the poverty problem which was an important goal of their revolution. These implications can be outlined as follows:

First, this thesis has revealed a well organised and sustainable machine of service and assistance provision as demonstrated by case study IBCSOs; and may well be present in most FBOs in Egypt. This machine demonstrated signs of good, organised and efficient administration (as seen with the GS case study). It has also shown considerable capabilities in reaching those who are in need, and who are not
being covered by government social protection, or who are covered by it inadequately. IBCSOs have also shown effectiveness in avoiding much of the free riding that characterises the generous subsidy programs that the government wants to reform, but is still unable to take the entailed necessary political risks to do so. However, the most important asset of IBCSOs is the legitimacy and public confidence in their abilities, and in their honesty that they enjoy within their communities. These organisations reached this position by providing the personal, caring and compassionate service presented earlier, which earned them the trust and approval of the poor in particular and of society at large.

Learning from this example, there can be two policy routs that the government in Egypt can follow to utilise the above mentioned merits in order to achieve a better national strategy for combating the problem of poverty. First, the government can consider establishing partnerships with FBOs to constitute a reliable database of those who might be mostly in need for subsidies. Those should be targeted by most of the subsidies instead of directing the huge budget that amounts to more than 197 billion EGP a year\(^{46}\), which makes around 34% of the total government expenditure in Egypt\(^{47}\) to services that do not directly benefit the poor, such as energy subsidies to the private sector. The government may invest part of the saved funds in that case to strengthen the capabilities of FBOs and other CSOs in order to provide better services, and more generous and outreaching support, to the poor.

The second policy rout resulting from realising points of strength of IBCSOs is that the government can use the trust that IBCSOs enjoy to deliver more advocacy activities to the poor, and to local communities at large. FBOs can be utilised to spread awareness about the problem of poverty, and its relation to the lack of capabilities, and even rights. When Sheikh Rateb, the Imam of GMT asked me about my findings during a visit to the organisation occurred after the fieldwork period (the incident mentioned earlier in this chapter), I briefed him with the conclusion about the lack of the rights-based practice at FBOs. He acknowledged my findings and responded by saying, “I feel sorry that they did not teach us these things in the

\(^{46}\) About 19 billion GBP.
\(^{47}\) According to data published by the Egyptian Ministry of Finance for the fiscal year 2012/2013
Preachers Institution”. I think it is important to teach Imams not just how to conduct religious rituals, but also how to convey to the people the values of social justice and rights. These suggestions would be unthinkable to be considered before the revolution for obvious reasons, but the future might see opportunities arise in the future as a result.

The second policy-significant implication of this thesis is related to this last point that the main point of weakness found in case study IBCSOs was their lack of knowledge. This lack of information does not only cover the poverty reduction, social justice and rights discourses, but also the latest practices and techniques used for poverty reduction by CSOs. Unlike MCDA, where board members have undertaken training provided by foreign donors, case study IBCSOs have not been taking any individual capacity building activities, and have been entirely depending on transferred knowledge and experience from older to newer generations within the organisations. Sometimes, they even depended on trial and error, as seen with GMT’s experience of conducting poverty reduction activities informally before the establishment of the CSO. This thesis recognises that Egyptian IBCSOs might have ideological reasons to understand poverty and their poverty reduction work in ways that are unique to them by stressing on notions of subsistence provision and obligation, rather than rights, capabilities and empowerment. However, that still does not mean these organisations would not benefit from learning more about other techniques for poverty reduction activities. For example, the failure of the GS and GMT to establish micro-credit schemes could have been reversed if they had proper training and capacity building focusing on how to conduct these activities. My own previous experience as working for the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and other NGOs in Egypt showed that foreign donors in Egypt rarely engage mosque-based organisations in capacity building activities. This thesis suggests that now is probably the right time to begin considering to change that.

The final policy implication for this thesis is related to the failures of the rights-based approach for poverty reduction in its conventional western version to make a major impact either in FBOs or in the studied NFBO. Foreign donors who mainly finance organisations applying this approach in Egypt need to reconsider the means of packaging the rights-based approach when they try to deliver it to Egyptian
CSOs. There is a need to engage in serious efforts to establish a modified version of the approach to be acceptable to local norms. The modification should not let a board member in a rights-based organisation think that the rights-based approach is a Western anti-Muslim idea because of some gender related issues that were delivered by a foreign donor in a training session. That does not mean that the main universal values of justice and equality need to be compromised when these trainings are designed. But certainly something like the “right to love” which was delivered in a training session to one of MCDA’s board members, and made her uncomfortable about its implications on her teenage child (Interview D14), could be omitted or at least explained in a different way. As seen in Chapter Six, this incident has caused one of the organisation’s board members to lose her faith in the rights-based approach.

9.6. A final Word

Although the ancient Egyptian civilisation has been established around a faith-based society where religious values and beliefs have inspired some of this civilisation’s greatest achievements, religion has not been kind to modern Egypt in recent years. Political groups based on religion have brought instability and uncertainty to the country and in some cases violence and terrorism. Factional tensions have been on the rise and religious minorities have seen better times in the past. However, for millions of poor Egyptians, Faith-based Organisations have been there for them at times when the state has failed them. Maybe the monetary value of the help received by the poor from FBOs does not always mount to a significant amount compared to the poor’s income. However, FBOs, as seen in this thesis, provide the poor with a safety net that keeps them protected against some of the unexpected risks that life may surprise them with. For that, at the end of this thesis, it is important to give due credit to IBCSOs. Despite their failure to provide the poor with a real hope in emerging out of poverty by enhancing either their capabilities or levels of social inclusion, it is hard to imagine how the lives of many people could have looked like without these organisations.
The study of civil society’s contribution to poverty reduction will continue and civil society’s approaches to poverty reduction will probably continue to be developed with new concepts and practices being added to it. This thesis and other research on FBOs should remind those who work on civil society’s contribution to poverty reduction that development may have been the product of the modern age. However, there will always be something that development can learn from traditional values and concepts found in religion, or culture.

Finally, as I write the last words in this thesis, I remember that I began working on it a few weeks after the 6th of April 2008 workers riots in Mahallah at a time when there was much anxiety and little optimism about where Egypt was heading after almost three decades of Mubarak’s rule. Anxiety may still be felt in the air as Egypt’s fate remains uncertain. However, the past three years in which many dramatic events took place should at least bring some hope that change is possible, and that nothing stays the same forever. What is important is to make sure that change can be directed to something positive. The best thing that can emerge out of this thesis would be any useful knowledge that could help whoever would try to do that.
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## Case Study One: GMT

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**Case Study Two: GS**

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<td>Local Café</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D34</td>
<td>Mr. Nageh</td>
<td>Local Clinic staff</td>
<td>18/2/2012</td>
<td>Local Café</td>
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<tr>
<td>D35</td>
<td>Hisham</td>
<td>Café Attendant</td>
<td>18/2/2012</td>
<td>Local Café</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**ANNEX II**

**DEFAULT SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS**

These questions were used in semi-structured interviews throughout the fieldwork for the thesis. The questions were asked in Arabic. A standard translation was prepared for the questions before the interviews and it was used in the interviews rather than translating the question from the English questionnaire on the spot, which could have lead to different translations on various occasions. As those are questions for semi-structured interviews, sometimes questions were skipped or added depending on each particular interview and answers of previous questions. Questions at MCDA were slightly modified to capture the non faith-based nature of the organization. When a question was not understood, it was repeated or clarified in ways that I have tried to keep as standard as possible. Finally, these are the questions as they stood at the end of the fieldwork. There were changes applied to them twice during the fieldwork in order to avoid downsides that were noticed as I built up my experience with the fieldwork.

Questions for Organisations Board Members:

1) What is your role in the organization?
2) How did you join?
3) What is the goal of the organization?
4) How do the organization's activities contribute to that goal?
5) In what way did you help your CSOs' beneficiaries with income generating or empowering assistance (job training, credit, etc.)?
6) Why do you work in this mosque-based organization?
7) Would you work with a secular organization? Why?
8) How would you respond if asked to work with a secular organization? Did it happen before?
9) What other organizations help you?
10) What other people help you?
11) How do you describe your relation with the government? Explain.
12) How do you fund activities?
13) Does the finding change with seasons or according to economic situation? In what way?
14) Do donors have a say in the way you conduct your activities?
15) Were you ever offered assistance by any of the major Islamic networks in Egypt? How did you respond?
16) Do you get any donations from abroad? How often? How much?
17) Who monitors your activities and how does it work?
18) Why did you become a formal CSO?
19) What difference did this change bring to the work you used to practice before that?
20) What would you suggest to change in the regulations under which your CSO operates?
21) Did you notice any other mosques with poverty reduction activities operating with a political agenda? What did you see?
22) What is the role Islam plays in the way you respond to poverty?
23) Who is the poor?
24) How do you measure poverty?
25) Why are people poor?
26) What is the best way to treat poverty?
27) How do you choose the beneficiaries?
28) How do you decide on the amount of benefit they receive?
29) How do you deliver the benefit?

Questions for Mosque Imams:

1) What is the role you play with the mosque CSO?
2) Do you call people to donate particularly to the mosque?
3) What is the response?
4) Do people give you any donations to deliver to the CSO?
5) What is the role you think the mosque could play in tackling poverty problems?
6) Do you work as a link between donors and beneficiaries in any other way beyond the mosque CSO?
7) Do you particularly stress in your Friday sermons on Zakat or philanthropy in particular times? How do you find the response?
8) As an Imam, how do you see Islam's response to poverty?
9) Do you think that other mosques with poverty activities could be operating with a political agenda? What would that be? What do you think of it?
10) How do you define: poverty, social justice, civil society?

Questions for Donors and Orphan Sponsors:

1) Why do you donate to this particular CSO?
2) To what extent does it matter that the CSO is associated with a mosque?
3) Were you donating to the mosque before the establishment of the CSO?
4) How do you see the change to the CSO? In what way did it affect your donating patterns?
5) How often do you make donations?
6) How much on average is each donation?
7) Do you have any condition on how your money should be used?
8) What do you know about the activities of the CSO?
9) Do you make any donations elsewhere inside or outside the local community?
10) Are your donations part of your Zakat dues or is it a Sadaqa?
11) Do you think that making such donation is obligatory or optional? Explain.
12) Why do you donate?
13) Do you think Islam had a certain approach for poverty reduction? What is it? How do you see your role within it?
14) Do you fear that your donations could be used for political mobilisation?
Questions to recipients:

1) What kind of help do you receive?
2) How does the help they give you affect your living standards?
3) Do you only come to this organization?
4) How did the organization know about you or you know about it?
5) Do they help you on regular bases?
6) Do they ask you for anything? (sending your kids to the mosque or so on?)
7) Do you prefer the kind of help where they directly assist you or would you prefer some sort of help where they provide you with a job or a small loan? Explain.
8) Have you heard of microfinance?
9) Would you approach the mosque for a loan if they offer one?
10) What do you think are the "rights" of the poor people?
11) Why do you think you are poor?
12) Do you find any explanation for your poverty in religion?
13) Do you think there is a possibility that one day you might emerge out of poverty? When would that happen?

Questions related to observations or incidents from the field were added where necessary and informants were usually asked to explain short answers they give mostly with a simple: Why?