ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN MUSLIMS IN THE SERVICE OF PEOPLE IN THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES

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Palestinian people living in Israel confront a dual existence. On one hand, they struggle for equal rights and inclusion; on the other, they oppose occupation and violation of human rights in the Occupied Territories. Indeed, this dual existence is particularly complex for Muslim citizens in Israel. In this article, we study Israeli Muslims who volunteer within Occupied Territories and compare them to those who volunteer within the borders of Israel. Based on a survey of 392 Israeli Muslim volunteers, one-third volunteered in Occupied Territories. Contrary to our expectations, Muslim volunteers in Israel encountered more friction with Israeli security forces. Also contrary to our expectations, volunteers in Israel were more engaged in issues of human rights, whereas Occupied Territory volunteers were focused on child welfare and poverty-alleviation services. Thus, we find that military governance of Occupied Territories prevents political volunteering, limiting politically motivated volunteering to citizens of Israel in Israel itself.

Key words: Volunteering, Cross-border, Palestinians, Muslims

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Background

Since the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948 and for almost twenty years (until 1967), Israeli Palestinians[1] were subject to martial law that restricted their movement, means of employment, and residences, which severely restricted opportunity and isolated them from the Jewish majority and regional Arabic countries (Barzilai, 2000; Kimmerling & Migdal, 2009). A year after martial law was lifted, the Six Day War of 1967 took place. By consequence, Israeli Palestinians saw their neighbors and relatives placed under Israeli military Governorate—a military governance system—in the Occupied Territories (Louis & Shlaim, 2012).

Existing research has attended to the various complexities of Israeli Palestinian identity (Mi'ari, 2009). Even something as simple as naming one's identity group is vexed in this context. For example, Palestinians who did not leave Israel were initially identified as *Israeli Arabs*. However, they are currently identified as *Palestinians in Israel* or *Palestinians with Israeli citize*nship. Zoabi (2020) suggested referring to this group as *the left behind,* indicating that they stayed after the war of 1948, and remained loyal to their group-identity despite state efforts to erase their significance. Indeed, for many years, the State of Israel aimed to exclude Israeli Palestinians from public life in Israel, preventing formation of a clear ethnic identity. Thus, naming was limited to terms that suggest an outsider status: Arabs in Israel or Israeli Arabs (Rohna & Khoury, 2015; El-Sakka et al., 2017). State pressure effectively impeded self-definition for this minority community.

Israeli Palestinians comprise 21.1% of Israel's population (Israel Central Bureau of Statistics, 2020). While Israeli Palestinians are religiously heterogeneous, most of them are Sunni Muslims (83.2%) (Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics, 2018), and Muslims represent 17.9% of the population overall. Even with these differences, many scholars presume homogeneity among Israeli Palestinians, as they are most commonly presented in comparison to the Jewish majority. In this paper, we focus on Israeli Palestinians who are Muslim. Notably, antagonistic relationships with neighboring Arab countries impact the ways Israeli Muslims are treated and understood in Israel. Whereas many

[1] The terms "Palestinians in Israel" and "Israeli Palestinians" will be used here to refer to Palestinian or Arab citizens of Israel, excluding the Palestinians of East Jerusalem who have permanent residency status. The term "Palestinians" with no added qualification will be used here to refer to people who live in the Occupied Territories of Judea and Samaria or the Gaza Strip.

Muslims in the West live under Christian majorities, Israeli Muslims are the only ones to live under a Jewish majority.

Jewish Israeli society often perceives Israeli Palestinians both as an unwanted minority and as a potential fifth column. In a region where Israel stands as a small Jewish island among many millions of Arab Muslims, Israeli Palestinians are often treated with distrust and suspicion (Cohen, 2011; Pappé, 2011; Rohana & Huri, 2015). Furthermore, for many Jewish Israelis, Israeli Palestinians pose a demographic threat—the fear that Palestinians will become the dominant demographic group in Israel (Abulof, 2014; Yonah, 2004)—when counted alongside Palestinians in the Occupied Territories. In response, Israeli Palestinians are a minority that is systematically marginalized, isolated, and controlled. For the State of Israel, Palestinian citizens represent a minority in need of surveillance and control (Ali, 2012; Jamal, 2005).

Jewish Israelis and Israeli Palestinians are segregated geographically and socially so that each group lives in its own sphere. For example, while Israeli Jews may intermarry regardless of ethnicity, Jewish-Palestinian marriages are almost nonexistent. Kaplan and Herbst-Debby (2018) studied mixed-ethnicity marriages in Israel and reported "very few couples who crossed the most polarized boundary in the Israeli context – Israeli Jews married to Israeli Palestinians" so much so that they "could not test for their marital dissolution patterns" (p. 305). Furthermore, Hakak (2016) recorded many state-supported policies and organizations that worked against such mixed marriages. Almost as a rule, Jews and Palestinians do not reside in the same local authorities, except for a few historically mixed towns (Monterescu & Rabinowitz, 2007). Jews and Palestinians in Israel rarely interact socially, and a majority of members on both sides agree that their interrelationships are worse than they were following the 1948 war (Hermann, 2017).

Israeli Palestinians live under a Jewish state in a condition Rabinowitz (2001) called a "trapped minority":

> *A trapped minority is a segment of a larger group spread across at least two states. Citizens of a state hegemonized by others, its members are alienated from political power. Unable to influence the definition of public goods or enjoy them, its members are at the same time marginal within their mother nation abroad. (p.64)*

Israeli Palestinians are segregated from the Jewish majority based on history, religion, ethnicity, language, and culture. At the same time, they are not easily accepted or part of the wider Arab world, even by those

living in the Occupied Territories (Cavanaugh, 2019). Palestinians in Israel are also conflicted regarding their position vis-à-vis their compatriots in the Occupied Territories. On the one hand they hope and aim for the occupation to end, but on the other hand they want to maintain their own status and struggle for equality in Israel. As such, while supporting the human rights and quality of life of those in the Occupied Territories, Israeli Palestinians are also engaging in advancing their social and economic status in Israel. This unique existence is further complicated, according to Jabareen (2014), as Palestinians in Israel are "the first and only Arab group in modern history that has become a homeland minority" (p. 189).

From the perspective of national welfare policies, heterogeneous societies—especially those with distinct ethnic minority groups—often provide minority groups with inferior responses to their needs (Banting et al., 2006), forcing them to develop and manage their own services (Weisbrod, 1988, 1998). Since the State of Israel became independent, Israeli Palestinians, most of whom are Muslims, have been a designated ethnic minority that is continuously discriminated against and underserved by the state (Cnaan, 1985; Israeli, 2020; Coursen-Neff, 2003; Haidar, 1994; Herzog, 1999; Yiftachel, 1997). While Israeli Palestinians are covered by all Israeli laws (with the exception of the service in the Israeli Defense Forces) and are equal citizens in theory, but in practice they are second-rate citizens. Indeed, this longstanding implicit discrimination became explicit in 2018, when the Knesset passed the 2018 Israeli Basic Law: Israel as the Nation-State of the Jewish People, which stated unequivocally that Israel is only for Jews (Zoabi, 2020).

Most Israeli Palestinians live in Arab-majority towns and cities, and eight of Israel's ten poorest cities are majority Arab in population (Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics, 2020). Most Palestinian children in Israel attend different schools than Jewish Israelis, and usually with lower educational attainments (Arar, 2012). Only upper-class families send their children to Catholic or elite Jewish schools. Consequently, Palestinian Israelis do not fare well in admission to higher education institutions (Arar, 2012; Al-Haj, 1995; Feniger et al., 2015; Lissitsa, 2015). Palestinian Israeli families compose 15% of total families, yet they represent 38% of poor families in the country (Mayers-JDC-Brookdale, 2018). Even in regard to injury and mortality from road accidents, Israeli Palestinians fare worse than their Jewish compatriots (Magid et al., 2013). Arab political parties are legal and have participated in all Israeli elections. However, there was longstanding national consensus that no leading Jewish party would include an Arab party to

join a government coalition (Zeedan, 2019, Galnoor, 2020). This was broken for the first time in 2021 in an eight-party coalition to topple the Likkud party of Benjamin Netanyahu.

Israeli Palestinians Today

Jamal (2011) noted that Israeli Palestinians have undergone major social and economic change in the past two decades. One notable change is the modernization of this population, evident in adoption of a more Western lifestyle characterized by increasing numbers of women in higher education and employment, increased consumerism and professionalization, and decreased fertility. While slow, the trend is evident (Bank of Israel, 2019). In addition, these changes contributed to the rise of a middle class within the Palestinian community, with the Bank of Israel (2019) reporting that 28% of Palestinian families are now middle class. While still lagging far behind their Jewish counterparts in many respects, Israeli Palestinians made major inroads into mainstream society since 2000. While they persist, education and income gaps are narrowing. In many professional fields like nursing, law, pharmacy, and medicine, Israeli Palestinians are equal to or exceeding numbers of Jewish professionals (Fuchs, 2017).

Changes to gender roles are equally striking. As more Israeli Palestinian women pursue education, more women are joining the labor force. From being almost non-existent in the early 1950s, many married Israeli Palestinian women now contribute to their dual-income families at rates nearing the Jewish population. Furthermore, Israeli Palestinian young women are attending higher education institutions with the intention of being employed upon graduation (Stier, 2013). Simultaneously, the percentage of low-skilled workers among Israeli Palestinians dropped and those holding advanced degrees in professional fields grew (Khattab & Miaari, 2013). However, these occupational advancements should be taken in context. While women's employment doubled since 1970, it is still significantly lower than the rise in employment among Jewish women in Israel (Yashiv & Kaisar, 2013). Indeed, CBS (2019) reports that 40% of adult Israeli Palestinian women are active in the labor force, as compared with 74.2% of Jewish women.

The rise in higher education is also a bittersweet development. The Israel Council of Higher Education (2019) reported an increase in percentage of Israeli Palestinians in higher-education institutions from 10% in 2008 to 18% in 2018. Indeed, this rise is impressive, especially in that it includes participation in STEM disciplines, especially health-related professions. However, alongside this progress, Palestinian

students are increasingly withdrawing from their education, and a growing number are leaving the country to study abroad because they cannot study their disciplines of choice in Israel, especially health-related professions (Kril & Amariye, 2019).

Irrespective of socio-economic improvements, a wide gap in municipal services and state support leaves the Israeli Palestinian community woefully underserved (Lavie, 2018). In response to this neglect, Israeli Palestinians developed their own parallel services through civic engagement (Zidane, 2000; Eseed, 2017). The rise in Palestinian civic engagement is divided into secular and religious nonprofits working in a complementary manner (Zoabi, 2020). Even so, most of these nonprofit organizations are underfunded, under-supported by state authorities, and struggle to be sustainable (Shihadeh & Saabneh, 2015). Jamal (2017) argued that these Palestinian Israeli civic organizations allow the community to coexist with the state while also counteracting Jewish conservative trends and demanding equality in public services. Furthermore, these critical civic organizations allow for social and political discourse that effectively advances the needs and interests of Israeli Palestinians. However, such civic organizations become successful, the state views them as threat (Eseed, 2017).

In this article, we study Israeli Muslim Palestinians who are engaged in cross-border volunteering; they assist Palestinians residing in the Occupied Territories. They help the counterparts who have no Israeli citizenship and with overwhelming unmet needs. We use variations of the phrase *helping Palestinians from or in Occupied Territories*. This use of *from* and/or *in* implies people who help Palestinians currently residing within the Occupied Territories, but also volunteers who intentionally and directly help people *from* Occupied Territories when they come into Israel. These can include people who need legal and courtroom translation, individuals requiring medical assistance in Israeli hospitals, and people from the Occupied Territories who are allowed to work in Israel.

In the next section, we discuss different statuses of Israeli and Occupied Territories Palestinians, and their varied mobility and services access. We also discuss Israeli Palestinians' interest—especially Muslims—in helping Palestinians in Occupied Territories through cross-border volunteering. This section concludes with a set of related hypotheses. After a research methods section, the findings are presented. Finally, we discuss and offer a conclusion regarding religious-political volunteering among Israeli Muslim Palestinians.

Palestinians in the Occupied Territories

The establishment of Israel in 1948 shocked Palestinian society, effectively creating a split between those who stayed behind and became Israeli citizens and those who fled or were forced to leave. Those who fled lived in refugee camps alongside other Palestinians in Jordan (the West Bank) and Egypt (Gaza Strip), or in nearby Arab countries (Abu Saada & Abu Al Nahl, 2016). Largely, this division still exists. According to the Palestinian Bureau of Statistics (2020), there are 5.2 million Palestinians in the Occupied Territories, 3.1 million in the West Bank, and 2.1 million in the Gaza Strip. Consequent to the Oslo Accords, many West Bank Palestinians reside under Israeli military governance, and the rest are restricted and indirectly controlled by the Israeli settlers and the temporary military governance (Mi'ari, 2009; Stern, 2020).

As noted above, between 1948 and 1967, Israeli Palestinians were isolated from their relatives and compatriots. After the 1967 war, Israel captured these Territories and new relationships were formed between the two Palestinian groups with little restrictions. However, in response to the Palestinian uprising (Intifada) in 1987, Israel built a wall separating the Occupied Territories from Israel, preventing Palestinian travel from the Occupied Territories without special permission. Thus, these two Palestinian populations lived separately and developed different organizations, identities, and life expectations (Ghanim, 2015; Mana et al., 2015).

Some families were even separated in 1948. Thus, some families may have different legal statuses, and their communications and interactions may be illegal. Yet, these two groups of Palestinians are actively interacting. Cross-border marriages occur regularly, and wives from the Occupied Territories may come live with their Israeli Palestinian husbands in the State of Israel. Visits between Israeli and Occupied Territories Palestinians are common. However, Israeli Palestinians can travel more freely than Palestinians in Occupied Territories. Palestinians on both sides of the separation wall feel trapped (Menahem, 2010). Pasquetti (2015) noted, "Studies of transnationalism typically frame it in opposition to the entrapping effects of borders. Yet, for many people, transnationalism is negotiated in contexts marked by forced separation and differential mobility" (p. 2738). Similarly, residents of the Occupied Territories are limited in their ability to travel, reunite with relatives from other countries, build new neighborhoods, access quality services, and enjoy health and happiness (Ryan, 2015). Palestinians from the Occupied Territories who want to enter Israel must obtain special permits for work, health services, family gatherings, or similar reasons. Permits are often denied, and even when approved, entry

is subject to long delays at the discretion of soldiers controlling the gates that separate Israel from the Occupied Territories. Israeli citizens, however, can go in and out with few restrictions (Human Rights Watch, 2020).

The relationship between Israeli Palestinians and Occupied Territories Palestinians is rarely studied. One exception is the trend of young Israeli Palestinians who study in the Occupied Territories after these institutions of higher education were recognized by the State of Israel as part of the Oslo Accords (Arar & Haj-Yehia, 2016, 2020).

Cross-Border Volunteering

Life for Palestinians in the Occupied Territories portends high rates of poverty and limited social, educational, and health services. Furthermore, safety and security are highly compromised. In response to these poor conditions, some Israeli Palestinians volunteer to help their counterparts in or from Occupied Territories.

Research on volunteering among Israeli Palestinians is both limited and contradictory. For example, Zidan (2005) reported a meteoric rise in volunteering among Israeli Palestinians from 28% in 1997 to 70% in 2002. By contrast, the CBS (2019) reported only 6% of Israeli Palestinians aged 20 and over volunteered in 2018, even as other signs of civic engagement such as growth in new nonprofit organizations suggest otherwise. Similarly, philanthropic donations are also on the rise among Israeli Palestinians (CBS 2019). As described above, the majority of Israeli Palestinians are Muslim. According to Zidane (2005) there is a direct and strong relationship between religion and generosity. For example, among formal volunteers to nonprofit organizations, religiously affiliated Israeli Palestinians were second in numbers only to those volunteering to nonprofits aiming for civic improvement. Jamal (2017) noted two volunteering and civic-engagement trends among Israeli Muslims: one more progressive cohort, striving for democratization and social inclusion; and another more conservative cohort, focused on education, religion, and basic welfare services. Both trends are applicable to cross-border volunteering.

Volunteering for people in and/or from the Occupied Territories can be seen as a political statement. Israeli Palestinians engaged in such activity likely oppose occupation and wish to demonstrate their resistance to Israeli military governance. However, no previous study has examined the political side of this type of cross-border volunteering.

In summary, in the past few years, a type of volunteering is emerging: Israeli Palestinian volunteers meet Palestinians from the

Occupied Territories and help them, whether by crossing into the Occupied Territories or by supporting Palestinians from Occupied Territories in Israel. This unique cross-border volunteering was never studied before and is the focus of this research. Given that most Palestinians are Muslims, we focus this paper on Israeli Muslims engaged in cross-border volunteering and compare them to Israeli Palestinians who volunteer within the 1967 borders of Israel. We aim to answer the following questions:

1. *Do the socio-demographic characteristics of Israeli Muslims who help Palestinians from Occupied Territories differ from those who volunteer inside Israel only?*
2. *Do Israeli Muslims who help Palestinians from Occupied Territories feel more threatened or harassed by the Israeli State than those who volunteer in Israel only?*
3. *Do Israeli Muslims who help Palestinians from Occupied Territories report higher rates of religiosity than those who volunteer in Israel only?*
4. *Do Israeli Muslims who help Palestinians from Occupied Territories report higher rates of political interest than those who volunteer in Israel only?*

Methodology

Procedures

Data were collected in Israel between February and April 2021. Eligible participants were Muslims who were citizens or residents of Israel who volunteered within the State of Israel and/or the Occupied Territories. We excluded respondents who did not volunteer and non-Israeli citizens/residents. Some volunteers who resided in Jerusalem were not full citizens of Israel but are nonetheless under Israeli State authority as residents of Jerusalem. Thus, we included them in the sample. About 715 individuals started the questionnaire, but many of them did not volunteer, were not Muslims, or did not complete the questionnaire. Based on our criteria, we ended with a sample size of 392 respondents.

We advertised the study in Arabic social media and shared it with many volunteer organizations. We also asked respondents to share it with other volunteers. As such, this is not a representative sample, but one that includes a large number of respondents (N = 392) who reside in communities across Israel.

We did not include any identifying variables in the survey instrument. However, some potential respondents feared government control and elected not to participate for this reason. The survey instrument was loaded on the online survey platform, Qualtrics, and a web link was shared with potential respondents. The survey included 78 items and took 15–25 minutes to complete. Respondents did not receive any form of payment for participation, and the study was approved by the first author's university IRB.

Questionnaire

The questionnaire was composed after a lengthy discussion between the authors and a group of experts, with most parts initially written in English. The text was then translated into Arabic. The three sub-scales of Islamic orientation and a few other elements were originally composed in Arabic and translated to English. Later the questionnaire was re-translated from Arabic to English with very few inconsistencies. Following procedures described by Brislin (1980), both versions were compared and adjusted by the authors to ensure that the English version matched the Arabic version.

The questionnaire began with a small set of socio-demographic variables followed by the respondent's volunteer experience and a question about volunteering location. Then, we introduced 24 questions regarding motivation to volunteer. This section was based on previous scales, as well as additional items focusing on Islamic commitment and political orientation. The questionnaire concluded with three sub-scales of Islamic orientation.

Variables

Our dependent variable was location of the volunteer work. We distinguished between two sub-groups: those who volunteered only within the borders of Israel (as established prior to 1967) and those who volunteered only or also in Occupied Territories (the Gaza strip and/or West Bank).

We included a set of control variables that related to respondent socio-demographic background (gender, age, education, and marital status), as well volunteer experience (how long they volunteered, number of monthly volunteer hours, and field of volunteering). Gender was a binary variable of male or female. Originally, we had five age categories. However, only five respondents were older than 60 years; as such, we combined this group with the nearest category (45–60) to make the group

age 45 and older. Education was a three-category variable, comprised of high school or below, undergraduate degree, and master's degree or higher. Regarding marital status, we found a very small number of widowed or separated respondents. We included them with singles and compared them to those who were married. Months of volunteering and average hours of volunteering per month were recorded numerically by respondents. Regarding fields of volunteering, respondents reported six areas such as child welfare, medical care, and human rights.

To test religion and political interest as factors of cross-border volunteering, we used a 24-item motivation-to-volunteer scale based on previous studies (Cnaan & Goldberg-Glen, Clary, 1991). Some motives were added for this sample that were either Islamic oriented or politically oriented. Political statements centered on meeting people in the Occupied Territories, supporting the Palestinian cause, and empowering Israeli Palestinians. We aimed to find factor structures within these 24 items, but almost all variables were loaded best on the first factor. As such, we treated them individually.

Regarding Islamic orientation, we used three sub-scales from the Psychological Measure of Islamic Religiousness (Amer, 2021; Abu-Raiya et al., 2008). We selected these three sub-scales after consultation with the developer of the scale, and it was provided for us in Arabic. The three subscales were Islamic Ethical Principles & Universality subscale (with items such as being humble, honoring the parents, treating people equitably, helping relatives and neighbors); Islamic Principles and Universality subscale (with items such as viewing every Muslim in the world as a brother or sister, identifying with every Muslim's suffering); and Islamic religious Duty, Obligation & Exclusivism subscale (with items such as "Islam is Allah's complete, unfailing guide to happiness and salvation, which must be totally followed"). The Cronbach Alpha reliabilities of these scales ranged from .830 to .964.

Analyses

To answer questions of difference between those who volunteer only in Israel and those who volunteer to help people in the Occupied Territories, we first conducted a set of bivariate analyses. We tested the socio-demographic variables and the volunteering experience, the various motivations to volunteer, and the three sub-scales of Islamic orientation. We applied T-test for differences in means and Pearson Chi Square tests for nominal variables to determine differences in the dependent variable.

To study the full effect of all the studied variables, we ran a binary logistic regression. We used dummy variables for education and marital status, keeping those with education levels of high school or below and human rights as volunteer field as references.

Findings

Sample

Our sample consisted of 392 Muslim citizens of Israel who volunteered in the past year. As visible in Table 1, a majority of respondents were younger women with an above-average level of education. Only about a third of them (34.7%) volunteered in Occupied Territories.

See Table 1

Table 1 shows that the two studied groups were not statistically different in three of four socio-demographic variables. The only exception was age. Younger participants (i.e., the two groups under 30 years of age) were significantly less likely to volunteer in the Occupied Territories ($X2 = 10.74$, $df = 3$, $p < .05$).

Regarding level of religiosity, all three studied subscales showed no significant differences between the two groups. As we will discuss later, this finding suggests that helping people in the Occupied Territories is not religiously motivated.

We did find some significant differences regarding volunteer experience. Hours of volunteering per month did not yield any significant difference. However, lengths of involvement in volunteering (measured in months), showed a significant difference between the groups. Those volunteering in Israel only reported an average of 25.7 months (a little over two years) as compared with 43.3 months (about three and a half years) for those volunteering in the Occupied Territories ($t = 3.63$, $p < .001$). Thus, it seems that experienced volunteers are more likely to assume the difficult task of cross-border volunteering.

In addition, the field of volunteering was also statistically significant ($X^2 = 49.71$, $df = 5$, $p < .001$). As visible on the bottom of Table 1, it is clear that those who volunteer only within Israel focus more on education, elderly services, and human rights. The latter finding was a bit surprising, as Palestinians in the Occupied Territories experienced more violations of their human rights. The two groups almost evenly participated in providing medical services (22.4% of those volunteering in Israel and 21.2% of those volunteering in the Occupied territories).

Finally, those volunteering in the Occupied Territories were more active in fields of child welfare and poverty.

Regarding the items that measure motivation to volunteer, only five indicated a significant difference between the groups, and three others were almost significant (at a level of below .10). Considering the eight motives that demonstrated a significant difference between the two groups, the emerging picture is that political recognition and identity were more distinct than other motivations to volunteer. Six out of these motives were political such as "supporting the Palestinian plight" and "acting against the government of Israel." In all but one motive, the mean score was higher for those volunteering in the Occupied Territories. The exception was "getting recognition," which was higher for volunteers in Israel only.

See Table 2

We grouped the four items measuring political motivation for volunteering into one subscale. This subscale Cronbach alpha was .75. The two studied groups were significantly different with means of 3.71 and 4.09 respectively ($t = 5.13$, $p < .001$).

Our final analysis included all the studied variables into one regression model. Given that the dependent variable was binary, we applied binary logistic regression. We conducted the analysis in four stages. First, we included the socio-demographic variables. Then, we added the three religious scales. This was followed by the inclusion of the volunteering variables. Finally, we added the political motivation scale and the recognition variables found to be significant motives differentiating the two groups.

As can be seen in Table 3, age was significant in the first two models but turned insignificant when volunteering variables were included. The volunteering and motivation variables were the most significant variables in explaining differences between groups. Those volunteering longer were more likely to volunteer in the Occupied Territories. Field of volunteering was also significant, where volunteers in the Occupied Territories tended to focus on child welfare and poverty. Volunteering to gain recognition was significant and higher among those volunteering in Israel only. In the regression model, the political motivation scale was insignificant.

See Table 3

Conclusions

In this article, we noted the conflicted reality of Palestinians in Israel. On the one hand, they are progressing economically even as they are marginalized within Israeli society. On the other hand, their counterparts in the Occupied Territories are struggling for human rights and live in poverty. This conflict calls Palestinians in Israel to struggle for their own civil rights and integration, while simultaneously *struggling to* end occupation or at least assist their compatriots in Occupied Territories. This conflict is especially compelling among Muslims in Israel—the only country in the world wherein Muslims are the minority and Jews are the majority. For these reasons, motives to volunteer can include establishing a strong Palestinian/Muslim community in Israel, challenging the authority of the Israeli government, helping those in the Occupied Territories, expressing Muslim values, and more. In this article, we focused on Muslim volunteers engaged in cross-border volunteering. That is, we wanted to know more about Muslim Volunteers in Israel who help people from and/or in Occupied Territories.

We conducted a survey among several Muslim volunteers (N = 392) throughout Israel. They were mostly young (under 45 years of age) women who were well educated. Surprisingly, there were no statistical differences regarding most of the socio-demographic variables between Muslim volunteers in Israel versus those volunteering in the Occupied Territories. The only exception was age that shows that older volunteers are more common among those volunteering in the Occupied Territories. However, this difference turned insignificant in the final logistic regression models. The three subscales of Islamic religiosity (Islamic Ethical Principles, Islamic Universality, and Islamic Duty) were also insignificant in differentiating the two studied groups. This finding surprised us, as we expected higher levels of adherence to the faith to motivate people to help those in the Occupied Territories. Religiosity may be a strong motivator to volunteer in general as both studied groups reported high levels of religiosity, but it was not a significant motive to help those in the Occupied Territories.

Also somewhat surprising, we found no statistically significant differences between the two groups regarding altercations or harassment from the Israeli army or other security forces. In fact, although not statistically significant, more Muslim volunteers in Israel felt at risk due to their volunteering than those volunteering in the Occupied Territories. Similarly, and almost statistically significant ($p = .056$), those volunteering in Israel felt they were viewed more suspiciously by various security forces. Informally, some respondents told us that although they had such experiences, they preferred not to answer this question—

fearing misuse of the data. We have no way of assessing how many felt that way, and if there were more among the volunteers in the Occupied Territories or not.

Our focus was not on volunteering per-se. We wanted to distinguish between those volunteering only in Israel vs. those volunteering to help people from the Occupied Territories. Between these two groups of volunteers, level of religiosity was insignificant. The most significant differences between groups involved years of volunteering and fields of volunteering. We found more-seasoned volunteers significantly more likely to volunteer in the Occupied Territories than newer volunteers. We suggest that willingness to engage in this type of cross-border volunteer requires a mature commitment. People who start volunteering are happy to help others but are not ready to tackle the barriers that come with crossing over to the Occupied Territories or accompanying people from these areas while in Israel. Such volunteering carries risk of being viewed as hostile to the state of Israel and may mean placement on an invisible blacklist. For instance, one well-known Muslim activist who led different volunteering projects assisting hospitalized children from the Occupied Territories was arrested amid claims she was involved in suspicious terror activity (Itial, 2020).

After a few years of volunteering, some people feel more secure in their role and their position in society and are willing to expand their volunteering to help those in Occupied Territories (Itial 2020). This may also explain why age was significant in the bivariate analysis but not in the regression analysis. If only after a few years of volunteering one feels ready to volunteer for people from the Occupied Territories it means that on average age will be higher. However, it is the experience rather than the age that makes the difference.

The most notable difference between the two studied groups was the field of volunteering. Those who volunteered in Occupied Territories were more commonly engaged in areas of child welfare and poverty. Those volunteering within the borders of Israel were more commonly engaged in areas like medical care and human rights. We expected those volunteering in the Occupied Territories to be more engaged in human rights, as the rights of Palestinians in the Occupied Territories are often violated. For example, late-night raids of West Bank homes had been common for decades. The practice was stopped in 2021, after the army found it ineffective and the Israeli Supreme Court ruled it illegal. Such human rights violations are numerous, yet many Muslim citizens in Israel do not feel safe enough to engage in combatting them and limit their involvement to providing basic social services. Being

marginal in the State of Israel, they dare only to provide basic services for their compatriots in the Occupied Territories, but do not engage in a struggle for human rights or ending the occupation.

It can be argued that fields of volunteering is not an independent variable, but rather an outcome of where people volunteer. It may not be the choice of the volunteers, but a reflection of the local people needs and activities. This indicates a significant difference between volunteering in Israel and in Occupied Territories. While in Israel, legally as citizens, Muslims are free to be politically active and in a limited manner even defy the state authorities, with their involvement in the Occupied Territories, their involvement is restricted and requires caution. Any deviation from mere social care in the Occupied Territories can lead to an interrogation, detention, and even an arrest. This may also explain why the political motivation scale was insignificant in the final regression model. Those who are politically motivated, do their work within the borders of Israel where the law protects their freedom of speech and political assembling.

Given the reality of Palestinian life as a suspected and marginalized minority in Israel, all volunteering may be viewed as political. Helping in-country Palestinian networks of alternative education, health, and welfare services to strengthen the community can be viewed as political acts—even more profoundly so when volunteering is under the auspices of the Islamic Movement or other organizations that oppose the Zionist state. This may explain why the political motivation scale was insignificant in the final regression model. Muslim citizens of Israel can express their political opposition to the policies of the State both by helping those in the Occupied Territories and by creating an independent Muslim society within Israel (Eseed, 2017). Although not significant, those volunteering within Israel reported higher levels of suspicious treatment or feeling at risk by the Israeli security forces. This may be attributed to increased fear in the Occupied Territories. It may also explain why seeking recognition as a motivation to volunteer is higher among those volunteering in Israel. These volunteers are engaged in visibly pro-Palestinian activities and received public appreciation within their communities.

Cross-border volunteering in Israel is quite complicated. While physically crisscrossing may be an easy process, different sets of laws and rules apply in the Occupied Territories, and the Israeli army has rights and privileges that are not applied to Israel as a nation. As such, Muslim citizens of Israel are putting themselves at risk when volunteering in Occupied Territories. The risk may not be immediate. Yet, it is an implicitly understood reality. This may explain why Muslim

citizens of Israel tend to volunteer by providing human services, while reserving more political volunteering to Israel. Put differently, even fields of volunteering are impacted by an occupation that overpowers decisions about the types of human support that are and are not allowed.

Table 1. Sample Characteristics and Comparisons Between Groups

Variable	Categories	Overall	Volunteer in Israel	Volunteer in Occupied Territories
Gender	Male	33.2%	33.2%	30.1%
	Female	67.3%	66.8%	69.9%
Age	-18	6.9%	8.8%	3.8%
	19-30	40.8%	42.8%	36.8%
	31-45	38.8%	35.2%	44.4%
	45+	13.5%	13.2%	15.0%
Marital status	Married	45.7%	45.2%	45.9%
	Single	54.3%	59.9%	54.1%
Education	High school and below	16.8%	17.6%	16.5%
	Undergraduate degree	48%	46.8%	50.4%
	Graduate master's degree and above	35.2%	35.6%	33.1%
Islamic religiousness	Islamic Ethical Principles	4.27%	4.35%	4.12%
	Islamic Universality	4.12%	4.13%	4.06%
	Islamic Duty	3.62%	3.60%	3.58%
Average Total months of volunteering		**31.5**	**25.7**	**43.3** ***
Average Total hours a month		19.9	19.5	20.21
Area of volunteering	Education	28%	**36.5%**	12.9% ***
	Elder Services	4.2%	**5.4%**	2.3%
	Human Rights	13.5%	**14.1%**	10.6%
	Medical Services	22.2%	22.4%	21.2%
	Child Welfare	13.2%	6.6%	**25.8%**
	Poverty	19%	14.9%	**27.3%**
Encounters	Encountered Israeli security forces	21.6%	20.0%	25.6%
	Suspected by security forces	7.6%	11.3%	5.6% #
	Felt at risk	9.7%	11.6%	6.0%

Note. # p <0.10 * p<0.05 ** p<0.01 *** p<0.001

Table 2. Motivation to Volunteer and Comparisons Between Groups

Variable	Overall	Volunteer in Israel	Volunteer in Occupied Territories
Family tradition	3.51	3.43	3.63
Minimize boredom	3.42	3.48	3.17 #
True Muslim	3.78	3.83	3.73
Supporting the Palestinian plight	**4.36**	**4.24**	**4.59 *** (t = 3.22, p < .001)**
Act against the government of Israel	**3.29**	**3.17**	**3.51 *** (t = 2.18, p < .05)**
Family and friends volunteer	2.13	2.14	2.12
Set an example	4.36	4.40	4.30
Gain respect	3.53	3.56	3.46
Meeting people from the Occupied Territories	**3.74**	**3.56**	**4.07 *** (t = 6.13, p < .001)**
Makes me a better human being	4.66	4.66	4.67
Getting respect from employer	3.79	3.89	3.64
Will get me to the Garden of Eden	3.70	3.64	3.84
I have relatives in the Occupied Territories	1.83	1.84	1.82
Volunteering is a Quran edict	3.47	3.38	3.65
Giving power to Israeli Palestinians	3.89	3.99	3.73 #
Too few people volunteer	3.27	3.34	3.15
Volunteering reflects positively on Islam	3.61	3.61	3.61
My volunteering help diminish the occupation	3.19	3.08	3.40 #
I just love to volunteer	4.16	4.16	4.16
Respect other volunteers	4.30	4.27	4.37
Volunteering relates to my Palestinian identity	**3.97**	**3.87**	**4.17 * (t = 2,17, p < .05)**
Reality of my life	4.46	4.42	4.49
Add value to my life	4.59	4.65	4.52
Gain recognition	**3.45**	**3.59**	**3.22 * (t = 2.34, p < .05)**

(Means on a 5-category Likert Scale)

Note. # p <0.10 * p<0.05 ** p<0.01 *** p<0.001

Table 3. Binary Logistic Regressions of Volunteering Location

Variables (reference group)	I	II	III	IV
Gender (Male)	0.192	0.149	0.184	0.016
	(0.24)	(0.27)	(0.37)	(0.36)
Marital status (Married)	0.197	0.255	0.382	0.369
	(0.25)	(0.29)	(0.36)	(0.39)
Age	**0.408 ***	**0.475 ****	0.186	0.175
	(0.16)	**(0.18)**	(0.22)	(0.24)
Education ^	1.679	0.159	0.006	0.036
	(0.16)	(0.19)	(0.23)	(0.25)
Islamic ethical principles		0.410	0.539	0.378
		(0.23)	(0.29)	(0.30)
Islamic universality		0.149	0.146	0.157
		(0.22)	(0.25)	(0.27)
Islamic duty		0.318	0.287	0.118
		(0.25)	(0.33)	(0.31)
Length of volunteering (months)			**0.011 ****	**(0.014) ****
			(0.01)	**(0.35)**
Area of volunteering education (poverty)			**1.727 ****	**0.179 *****
			(0.01)	**(0.47)**
Area of volunteering elder care (poverty)			1.711	**2.070 ***
			(0.45)	**(0.1.03)**
Area of volunteering human rights (poverty)			0.739	**1.073 ***
			(0.49)	**(0.51)**
Area of volunteering health care (poverty)			**1.087 ***	**1.304 ***
			(0.44)	**(0.46)**
Area of volunteering childcare (poverty)			**-1.304 ***	**1.203 ***
			(0.52)	**(0.56)**
Gain recognition				**0.234 ***
				(0.12)
Political motivation scale				0.324
				(0.18)
Pseudo R^2	0.026	0.038	0.214	0.243

Note. * p<0.05 ** p<0.01 *** p<0.001

^An ordered logistic regression was used for education.

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