Hamas: The New Establishment?

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Abstract

This paper addresses the evolving role of the Islamic Resistance Movement – Hamas – following its integration into "the establishment" in the aftermath of the 2006 Palestinian Legislative Council elections. By becoming the establishment in Gaza, Hamas and its leadership moved beyond earlier ideologically based concerns over legitimizing Israel's existence. This move followed the evolutionary framework outlined by Jon Anderson. This paper contends that Anderson's framework, which addresses the stages through which new media moves – from pioneer, to activist, to official (Islamic) discourse – can be applied to social movements to better understand their evolutionary processes. Within the limits of this paper, I will aply this framework to Hamas and its evolution and then trace this transition by analyzing both the secondary and primary literature. The nominal turning points that mark these three phases include the emergence of Hamas (1988), the claiming of an activist mantle (the mid-to-late 1990s), and its becoming the official discourse (i.e., the establishment) by winning the 2006 Palestinian Legislative Council elections.

Introduction

This paper addresses Hamas' evolving role following its integration into "the establishment" in the aftermath of the 2006 Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC) elections. By becoming the establishment in Gaza, Hamas and its leadership moved beyond their earlier ideologically based concerns over legit-

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imizing Israel's existence. This move followed the evolutionary framework outlined by Jon Anderson in his 1999 co-edited *New Media in the Muslim World*.[1] While its election signified a turning point, Hamas' background and previous actions are key to contextualizing this shift and to understanding what it means for the movement. My application of Anderson's theory treats Hamas first and foremost as a social movement.[2]

While this paper will present an overview of the movement and its evolution through Anderson's framework – pioneer, activist, and official – the bulk of the argument (and evidence presented) will focus on the evolution of Hamas' political wing, which is unique in its consultative governing approach. Hamas is well known for its efforts to consult all of its major constituencies – Gaza and the West Bank (Internal), the Palestinian Diaspora (External), and the Palestinian population in Israeli prisons – before undertaking any substantive decision that will change its future character.[3] As such, each constituency has developed a leadership base. In more recent years – especially in the lead-up to the decision to participate in the 2006 elections and in subsequent decisions regarding how to govern Gaza and how much to compromise – a notable (and oft-commented on) rift has developed between the internal leadership (embodied in Ismail Haniyyah and his government in Gaza) and the external leadership (Khalid Meshaal and his group recently displaced from Damascus).[4] This rift has played a key role in various decisions and statements that have solidified Hamas as Gaza's establishment.

Theoretical Underpinnings

This paper contends that Anderson's framework can be applied to social movements to provide a better understanding of their evolutionary processes. Within the limits of this paper, I will apply his framework to Hamas' evolution on its way to becoming the establishment in Gaza. I will trace its history through these three phases by addressing both the secondary and primary literature, as well as the nominal turning points that mark these phases: the emergence of Hamas (1988), the claiming of an activist mantle (the mid-to-late 1990s), and its becoming the official discourse (i.e., the establishment) by winning the 2006 PLC elections. Each dated turning point requires substantial historical contextualization. While a date can be identified, it is necessary to first look at what events led up to them, as these transition points are situated in the movement's own evolution.

Anderson first presented this framework to address the stages through which new media usage evolves.[5] In particular, he was addressing the Internet and its role in online Islamic discourse, especially in spreading new interpre-

tations of Islam. In conjunction with Dale Eickleman's argument that mass education demonopolizes access to religious texts and the right to interpret them,[6] Anderson posits that the Internet allows the wider circulation of contradictory and non-mainstream views, thereby challenging the established balance of religious authority. In his original piece, he discusses groups and people who use new media, particularly the Internet, to further disseminate their interpretation of Islam while challenging the established religious rhetoric.[7] He traces the evolution of this phenomenon to further these religious interpretations, from the pioneering to the activist to the official discourse.[8]

This paper applies Anderson's framework to the study of how social movements evolve. Many Islamic social movements have flourished during the age of new media.[9] While not all movements have progressed through his ascribed evolutionary framework, Hamas is a prime example of an Islamic social movement that has. Although it does not and has not specifically relied on new media to increase its reach or challenge the balance of authority, both of these elements have been key to its becoming the establishment.

Due to strong leadership within the movements, there has been an emphasis on reframing the role of Islam and Islamic authority in the daily lives of movement members. This insistence on furthering the role of Islam in the Palestinians' daily lives, as well as reframing the conflict with Israel as a religious duty, is central to applying Anderson's framework. Anderson's work utilizes this framework to discuss the Internet's role in expanding the circulation of views and challenging the balance of authority within the arena of Islamic religious discourse.[10] I similarly use these two building blocks, the wider circulation of views (Hamas' consultative process) and challenging the balance of authority through a religious discourse, to apply this evolutionary framework to an Islamic social movement. Through this link, I contend that this particular framework, which has successfully been applied to new media, is also applicable to social movements. This work applies Anderson's framework only to Hamas, with a view to addressing other movements (such as Hizbollah) at a later date.

Hamas was chosen because of its history, credentials as a social movement, and evolution from a primarily social movement to a political actor that gained political power through elections. While many Islamic movements in the Middle East and North Africa are widely considered to also act as social movements, several of them have never progressed beyond the first or second stage of Anderson's framework. Others do not follow this particular evolutionary pattern, starting rather as activist movements and remaining at this stage.

However, Hamas exemplifies Anderson's evolutionary framework. Possible future works will contend that Hizbollah also follows this evolutionary

framework, thereby opening the door to the possibility that the historical context leading up to the 1980s laid the stage for a new wave of Islamic movements that, given the right conditions, could evolve into the "official discourse" (the establishment). I apply this argument to Hamas as a case study, with the intent of furthering it to additional Islamic social movements.

Hamas the Pioneer (1988)

Hamas, as a unified movement, emerged in early 1988 during the first Intifada[11] as the "brainchild" of Sheikh Ahmed Yasin, a Palestinian refugee raised in Gaza who had played a key role in Gaza's Muslim Brotherhood.[12] To understand its conception and emergence as a social movement that would become Gaza's establishment, the Brotherhood's historical context there, the shifting politics of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO), and the charisma of Sheikh Yasin must first be addressed. As mentioned above, 1988 is the nominal turning point when Hamas, the movement, came into existence. However, the Palestinian Muslim Brotherhood's unique history, and in particular the Gaza-based wing of the Egyptian-oriented Brotherhood, is of great importance in understanding the emergence of Hamas.

An Abbreviated History of the Brotherhood in the Territories

The genesis of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt in 1928 was to become a pivotal moment in what became the fight for Palestinian lands.[13] From the beginning, the Egyptian-based Brotherhood participated in the Palestinian struggle, including prominently in the 1936 Palestinian revolt.[14] This participation and show of solidarity quickly led to the emergence of a Palestinian wing in the 1930s. During the 1948 Arab-Israeli war, which resulted in the creation of Israel, the Palestinian territories were divided into the Jordanian-administered West Bank and the Egyptian-administered Gaza Strip.[15]

This 1948 split in administration also marked a splitting of the Palestinian branch of the Brotherhood from its parent organization and began to set the stage for Hamas' emergence forty years later. From 1948 to 1967, the Brotherhood in Gaza was absorbed into the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood. Under Egyptian administration, Brotherhood members in Gaza were subject to the same harsh treatment and political censorship under which the movement's members in Egypt suffered.[16] Treatment worsened following the 1952 Egyptian revolution, when the movement was banned. This experience played a significant role in the formation of the Brotherhood's leadership in Gaza. Members' treatment stands in stark contrast to the treatment of members in

the Jordan-affiliated West Bank Muslim Brotherhood, which experienced the same freedoms and opportunities afforded to the Jordanian Muslim Brotherhood, an ally of the Jordanian monarch.[17]

Following the 1967 Six-Day war, the West Bank and Gaza became the Israeli-administered Occupied Territories.[18] This shift saw a transformation in Brotherhood affiliations. The Gaza-based branch quickly severed ties with Egypt, following a period of instability and reorganization, and affiliated itself with the Jordanian branch. Throughout this time, Sheikh Yasin continued to play a significant role within the Brotherhood, co-founding in 1973 the Islamic Center in Gaza.[19] He and his role in Hamas as a pioneer movement will be discussed in greater detail later in this section.

This shift in affiliation led to a concerted growing effort on behalf of the Brotherhood in Palestine. Most of this growth took place by spreading its message – *da'wah* – which primarily took place at the mosque.[20] Between 1967 and 1987, the number of mosques in Gaza tripled,[21] allowing for greater coverage in spreading the message. As more Palestinians gravitated toward this Islamic message, support for Fatah and the PLO declined. The decline in support for the latter was not based on the organization's relationship to the Brotherhood, but was linked to the internal and external issues facing it.

An Abbreviated History of the PLO

Founded in the 1950s by Yasir Arafat, the Palestinian political movement Fatah gradually became a counterpoint to the Brotherhood.[22] As a counterpoint to Fatah, the Arab nations (led by Nasser) funded the PLO in 1964.[23] The Arab leaders of the time sought to use it to control the Palestinian issue. However, Arafat and Fatah contested the notion that the PLO represented Palestinians, a mantle endowed upon the PLO by Arab leaders. Instead, they undertook political and military action in a bid to win Palestinian support.[24] These tactics worked, and in February 1969 Arafat was elected PLO chairman, a title he retained until his death in 2004.

With this joining, the PLO maintained Fatah's ideology that Palestine would encompass "all the land, not just the West Bank and Gaza," and that "Fatah sought to destroy Israel, not negotiate peace with it."[25] This manifesto was key to the PLO's early emphasis on armed struggle as the only method for liberation. However, it also made life difficult for the PLO and caused its leaders expulsion from Jordan between 1970-71 and from Beirut in 1982-83.[26] In 1982 Arafat was asked to participate in an American-led peace initiative that would exchange land (for the Palestinians) for Arab recognition of Israel.[27] Arafat rejected this proposal, seeing it as an abandonment of principles and

the Palestinian population, but subsequently came under significant pressure from other Arab states to reconsider it.[28] Another result of the 1982-83 Israeli invasion of Lebanon and Arafat's decision to snub the invitation to join peace talks was the PLO's split into three distinct groups.[29]

The difficulties encountered by the PLO throughout the 1970s and especially the 1980s weighed heavily on the minds of the Palestinian public. The organization's expulsions from Jordan and Lebanon and its final headquartering in Tunisia, hundreds of miles from its primary constituency, greatly weakened the general Palestinian view of the PLO. Allegations of corruption among the leadership and institutional inefficiency were of further concern to them.[30] However, most worrisome to them were the frequent changes in political opinion espoused by the PLO.[31] Moves to compromise on what lands would constitute a final Palestinian state were seized upon by burgeoning Islamic groups in the territories to color perceptions of the organization. These unreciprocated compromises were the ultimate nail in its coffin and were pivotal in the emergence of Hamas.

Sheikh Ahmad Yasin

Sheikh Ahmed Yasin, an astute and key figure in the movement's emergence, was aware of the religious and political evolution that laid the groundwork for Hamas' split from the Brotherhood into an environment where it could succeed. Born north of what became the Gaza Strip, he and his family were forced to flee there after the 1948 war.[32] In Gaza's more conservative and traditionally religious climate, he drifted toward the Brotherhood chapter at his local mosque. Breaking his back in a 1952 accident accelerated his turn to religion[33] just as the policy changes brought about by the Egyptian Revolution of 1952 led to a clampdown on the Brotherhood's activities in Gaza; Yasin was eventually arrested in 1966.[34] On the eve of war in 1967, the Egyptians released many of the arrested Brotherhood members, including Yasin. Working without a specific agenda, he resumed his activities to spread Islamic awareness.[35]

These efforts were of little interest to the new Israeli occupiers, who were more focused on getting rid of the secular PLO resistance movement. As such, Yasin worked to expand and consolidate his group of followers in Gaza.[36] This effort took place during the Brotherhood's weakest years in the territories: from 1967 into the early 1970s. However, this consolidation was matched by a religious resurgence throughout the region in the late 1970s, culminating in the 1979 Iranian revolution.[37] At the same time, the PLO was experiencing upheaval and difficulties: its expulsion from Jordan, the Lebanese civil war, and the group's subsequent expulsion from Beirut. As public support for the PLO

waned in the territories, the only other options were the Islamic movements. In Gaza, his branch of the Brotherhood proved to be particularly popular, a popularity aided by Yasin's founding of the Islamic Center in 1973.[38] The center received an official operating licence from the Israeli authorities in 1979, and by the mid-1980s was one of Gaza's most powerful institutions.[39]

Yasin's religious authority and influence expanded throughout the 1980s, making him and his wing of the Brotherhood the movers and shakers in the territory.[40] This influence culminated in late 1987-88 with calls for the Intifada and the creation of Hamas.[41] Hamas, the Islamic Resistance Movement, was a religious movement in its conception, but even so Yasin "argued that Hamas was basically a political movement with its primary goal being to secure the legitimate and natural rights of the Palestinian people."[42] Hamas also provided the Brotherhood with a way to support the Intifada without being directly involved, as direct involvement could expose the Brotherhood and its institutions to Israeli retaliation.[43] Hamas was, in Yasin's original conception, to become the Brotherhood's resistance wing – a pioneering role that had not previously been conceived.

Hamas emerged from the embers of the Intifada in 1988. However, it was the historical context in Gaza, occupied Palestine, and the region since the 1930s that set the stage for its birth. The evolution of the Brotherhood, particularly in Gaza, to become the Palestinians' leading representative, the waning of the PLO's popularity, and Yasin's charismatic leadership and pioneering vision were all pivotal in the new movement's emergence. All three of these factors also contributed to its pioneering nature: Hamas was the first attempt since 1948 to create an armed resistance wing affiliated with the Brotherhood's branch in Palestine. Borrowing from the PLO's early success and popularity as an armed resistance movement, Hamas also brought the required Islamic flavor that an armed wing affiliated with the Brotherhood required. Yet, unlike Islamic Jihad – another Islamic resistance movement – Hamas embodied and abided by the Brotherhood's Islamic ideology, a key factor in building and maintaining its popularity and "uniqueness."[44]

Hamas the Activist ("counter-establishment"): 1994-2000

The 1990s were Hamas' formative years, during which the movement constructed and refined its activist credentials as the counter-establishment. Throughout the 1990s and the early 2000s, it presented itself as the alternative to the PLO and Fatah. The movement's Islamic ideology, coupled with a pragmatic activist agenda, allowed Hamas to quickly surpass the Brotherhood in popularity. Several events during the 1990s played significant roles in formu-

lating Hamas' approach to being the counter-establishment, among them the 1993 Oslo Peace Accords and Hamas' non-participation in the 1996 PLC elections. Its opposition to Oslo was a turning point, for this decision allowed the movement to cement itself as the counter-establishment and solidify its activist agenda.

The Oslo Accords

The basis of Hamas' opposition was partly due to the PLO's support for it, and primarily because of the inherent contradictions to Hamas' charter articulated in the accords: recognition of the state of Israel. Hamas' charter explicitly states that it does not recognize the state of Israel.[45] Yet, the Accords recognized Israel, as well as the PLO, as legitimate partners for peace.

The Oslo Accords were internationally – and regionally – approved and endorsed. Hamas joined the more fringe movements, such as Islamic Jihad, when it opposed them.[46] This opposition also marked what many assumed would be the movement's downfall. The early and mid-1990s were a hopeful time in relation to the Middle East peace process. By opposing the Oslo Accords, Hamas, which was accumulating some considerable influence, surprised many who had assumed that it would fall into line.

However, by not supporting the Accords, which ultimately failed, Hamas greatly increased its credibility and support among the general population.[47] This gamble, which likely could have made Hamas irrelevant within the domestic political context, paid off handsomely, as Hamas was able to point to its track record of standing by its charter and maintaining its agenda of active resistance.[48] This loyalty to its charter, its promises and principles, and its constituency stood in stark contrast to the perception that the PLO and Fatah had abandoned their constituency by signing on to so many compromises.[49] By firmly placing itself as the counter-establishment and maintaining its agenda of active resistance, Hamas strongly grasped and brandished its mantle as an activist movement.

The 1996 PLC Elections

The second major event during the 1990s that secured Hamas' image was the movement's decision to boycott the 1996 PLC elections. This decision, which was paramount to continuing Hamas' history of consultative decision-making,[50] also served to solidify the internal, external, and prison-based leadership groups. Again citing its charter as the reason for the boycott, Hamas further solidified its loyalty to its principles and constituency.[51] The primary reason given was a legitimacy issue. The elections were rooted in the 1993 Oslo Accords and the added self-governing rights afforded to the Palestinians under them.

However, as articulated above, Hamas had very vocally declared its non-compliance with and non-interest in the Oslo Accords. As such, the movement viewed the subsequent electoral process as illegitimate.[52] The elections had widely been viewed as an opportunity to integrate Hamas into "the system." Although there was disagreement within the movement over participation.[53] However, Hamas' supporters largely accepted the boycott and saw it as yet another adherence to its principles and as showcasing the movement's loyalty to its constituency.[54] Hamas seized the opportunity to honor its principles and firmly entrench itself as the activist counter-establishment, rather than kow-towing to the wishes of the international community and Israel, which is how many perceived Fatah's active participation.

This boycott was one of principles, but also one made by the movement at large. As mentioned earlier, Hamas utilizes a sophisticated consultative system to best represent the general membership's perspectives. This process is largely exhaustive, drawing on Hamas' major constituencies: the domestic (or internal) Gaza and West Bank populace, the external populace, and the prison populace.[55] The leadership of these three constituencies then formulates a comprehensive decision reflecting the wishes of the movement's overall constituency. This system makes Hamas directly responsible to its constituency, but also adds a large time constraint as it takes a substantial amount of time to consult these different groups and then consolidate all of the information.[56] This system has also led to the rise of powerhouses within the system – in particular Khalid Mashaal in the external leadership and Ismail Haniyya in the internal leadership.[57] During the activist years these opposing leaderships did not present too many difficulties, particularly as Yasin was still recognized as the movement's leader. Following his targeted assassination in 2004, this rift between the internal and external leadership became a more prominent issue for the movement.

There was some internal disagreement among the leadership over participation in the elections, with some domestic – particularly West Bank members – calling for participation.[58] After consulting with Yasin, a separate, short-lived political party was created to allow these members to participate.[59] This party was only ever nominally associated with Hamas. However, it did provide some interesting insight and experience that left the internal leadership better prepared to participate in the 2006 PLC elections.[60]

Hamas the Establishment: 2006

This paper contends that Hamas as the establishment is situated, as a time point, in the 2006 elections; however, as before, it is necessary to contextualize

this time stamp. Since leaving Hamas the activist in the previous section, Hamas and the Palestinian population weathered the second Intifada, the death of Arafat, and the targeted assassination of Yasin. These events had a profound impact on Hamas and the ongoing leadership struggle in the wake of Yasin's death. This internal struggle played out through the 2006 PLC elections, the takeover of Gaza in 2007, and the most recent conflict between Hamas and Israel in November 2012. The transformation of Hamas following the second Intifada and the death of Yasin played a large role in shaping its approach to, acceptance of, and participation in the 2006 elections.

2006 Elections

The 2006 PLC elections were truly a pivotal moment in the Palestinian experience. Prior to the elections, Hamas once again undertook its internal consultative process, with the result that its constituencies overwhelming supported the movement's participation.[61] The changes leading up to these elections, domestically, regionally, and internationally, left the impression on many Palestinians that the time was ripe for Hamas' greater involvement in the overall Palestinian political scene.[62] In a way, its participation is counter-intuitive. The movement viewed participation in elections as a tacit recognition of the right to and actual existence of Israel and the de facto acceptance of all previous peace accords and negotiations.[63] However, the overwhelming popular support for the movement's participation swayed the senior echelons. Hamas prides itself on its consultation of and ties with the community.[64] As such, the resulting decisions become a binding agreement between the movement and its constituents that Hamas will work to best represent their interests – even if this requires considerable ideological flexibility to become part of the establishment in order to carry out such responsibilities on behalf of their constituency.

For Hamas, its supporters and their needs are most important, and responding to these changes in public opinion are key. At the time, the Palestinians were suffering from the overexertion of armed resistance. Instead, the time was right for Hamas, as sanctioned by its supporters, to hang up the activist mantle and enter mainstream politics, taking the first step to integrating itself into the establishment.[65] This emphasis on meeting the needs of its constituents is key to the movement's ingrained flexibility and pragmatism.[66] Such flexibility and pragmatism has been a hallmark of the movement since its emergence and is another marker of its pioneering spirit, as well as its separation from the Brotherhood, which for so long has been mired in its ideology and restricted by some of those ideological tenets.[67]

Hamas' flexibility at this point was only intended to be the first step in the movement's integration into the establishment. Rather the first step skyrocketed the movement into becoming not just part of the establishment, but the establishment itself.[68] Hamas' success was unanticipated by all involved and the lead-up to the elections.[69] The reason for its success has been debated in a variety of publications and fields. The crux, however, is that Hamas completely succeeded in its election bid, far beyond its leadership's own anticipated success. The leadership then seized upon this popular support as a necessary mandate to lead.[70] However, the manner in which the leaders would lead was still to be debated and determined through the movement's patented consultative process.

The 2007 Takeover: Internal Dynamics

These consultations were unlike any previous consultations, and thus took time – time that Hamas did not have, as Fatah and the international community (led by the United States and Israel) rallied to have the election results nullified. This hesitation for consultations, while necessary for Hamas' continued popularity with its constituency, was key in setting-up the intra-factional conflict during the summer of 2007. The outcome of this conflict – Hamas taking control of Gaza by force – was also a key moment in solidifying it as the Strip's establishment. This was a new role for Hamas, one that required greater flexibility and pragmatism than the movement had previously applied. The takeover involved using force against other Palestinians and was not universally popular among the Hamas leadership, particularly the internal, domestic leadership.[71] Foremost among the dissenters was Ghazi Hamad, the former Hamas spokesman in the Territories. He concluded that the ensuing intra-Palestinian violence caused a loss of public support and showed that Hamas needed to redress and update its approach.[72] Hamad believed that the movement was not willing to do this, and gave this as a reason for leaving his position.[73]

Following the takeover, an evolution of Hamas' policy was pushed into the background. Rather, Hamas and its leadership emphasized that the movement would assume its mantle of elected leadership and begin governing. Hamas sought to consolidate its power and control over Gaza, not looking for compromise with any other parties.[74] A distinct rift between the internal, Gaza-based leadership and the external, at the time Damascus-based leadership, soon arose. Damascus-based leader Khaled Meshaal had already begun a regional tour seeking to gain support for Hamas' goal of governing the Palestinian territories.[75] His goals expanded the movement's scope while clinging

to its traditional ideology. Ismail Haniyya, the Gaza-based leader, was grappling with the trials and tribulations associated with the reality of governing. While Meshaal was afforded the luxury of travel, soliciting donations and support, and still able to articulate a hard-line ideology, Haniyya was not afforded such luxuries. The realities of governing without any real transitionary period required extending Hamas' traditional predilection for pragmatism and flexibility to the furthest extremes.[76] Such compromise proved to be a new experience for Hamas' internal leadership, one that opened the doors to internal contestation for many who viewed the increased compromises as abandoning its principles.[77] This increase in Gaza-based opposition to the Hamas authorities is another marker of the movement's assumption of the responsibilities of the establishment.[78]

November 2012 Conflict

The final marker of Hamas' evolution into the establishment, following its assumption of government-like duties (monopoly of force) and the birth of internal opposition, are the beginnings of international legitimacy conferred during the most recent November 2012 conflict. This conflict once again thrust Hamas into the international limelight. Unlike its previous conflicts with Israel, such as Operation Cast Lead in 2008-09, there was a tremendous change in how the conflict was perceived throughout the Middle East. During Operation Cast Lead there was much talk by Arab leaders against the Israeli-waged conflict in Gaza, but little further action was taken in real terms.[79] During the subsequent conflict, members of the establishment in Egypt,[80] Tunisia,[81] and the Arab League[82] all visited Gaza to express their government's solidarity with its people. None of the visiting delegations explicitly recognized Hamas as the establishment; however, these first-ever visits undertaken by members of other Arab governments to Hamas-controlled Gaza signaled a potential change in regional government's approaches to Hamas as the establishment. Some of the delegations' dialogue fits regional concerns and constructs regarding the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Another key element in this change is undoubtedly related to the rise of Islamist governments in the wake of the Arab Spring.

The negotiations facilitated by the new Egyptian government finally resulted in a ceasefire between the Hamas authorities and the Israeli government.[83] This ceasefire builds on previous truces that, in and of themselves, convey the notion that the Israeli government views the Hamas authorities in Gaza as the ruling authority there, as those who can exert state-like control over other parties operating in the territory. While this recognition does not

speak to its perception of Hamas' legitimacy to rule, it does recognize these authorities as the Israeli government's counterpart. This recognition of Hamas as the authority in Gaza, as well as the growing recognition of a variety of neighboring countries, adds to the compelling case of recognizing Hamas as the establishment in Gaza. This view is based on the movement's assumption of government-like duties, the monopoly of force and provision of services and, following Hamas' election, the birth of internal opposition movements, as well as the growing international recognition of its leadership and the only party with the capacity to control this new domestic opposition.

Conclusion

The evidence presented throughout this paper shows that Anderson's framework addressing the evolution of new media can successfully be applied to the stages through which social movements evolve, in particular when applied to Hamas. The arguments above detail its evolution as an Islamic social movement through its pioneering, activist, and establishment stages. This evolution, particularly the evolution of the political leadership, was addressed in the contextualization of each of the evolutionary stages. Particular emphasis was given during each stage to the leadership's consultative approaches.

By examining Hamas' emergence through contextualizing the history of the Brotherhood in the Palestinian territories, the history of the PLO, and the background and role of Sheikh Ahmad Yasin in its emergence, one can assess its pioneering credentials. The Oslo Accords marked the beginning of a significant period for Hamas, as the movement entered its activist years. By boycotting them and abstaining from the 1996 PLC elections, Hamas cemented itself as the Palestinian activist-opposition that sought to further its agenda through armed resistance. All of these previous steps set the stage for the movement's most recent evolution into the establishment, which has forced Hamas to progress beyond its earlier, ideologically based concerns over legitimizing the existence of Israel. Instead, the movement became the establishment by focusing on, providing for, and governing its constituency, with a side focus on armed resistance and reigning in other groups that sought to use violence to undermine its legitimacy and authority.

This specific evolutionary progression, coupled with the necessary pragmatism that permitted ideological compromise, allowed Hamas to become the establishment in Gaza. This marks Hamas as distinctive among Islamic social movements. There is the potential to apply this evolutionary model to other movements. For example, Hizbullah would provide an interesting case study to further assess the hypothesis laid out in this paper.

Endnotes

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