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“Faith-based approach to nation-building in Palestine”

An analysis of the work of the Norwegian Church Aid in the Middle East (2011-2015) with the aim of contributing to nation-building through faith communities.

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Abstract

The object of this thesis was to see if and how faith-based organizations could contribute to Palestinian nation-building. For this study, I have made an in-depth analysis on the work of the Norwegian Church Aid (NCA) and its partner-organizations in Israel and Palestine, with the following research question as a guide: *How can strengthening Palestinian churches and faith-based organisations and their institutions contribute towards Palestinian nation-building?*

By exploring the work of the NCA the study finds that rights-based approach[1] to development is an integrated part of the NCA's strategies and programs. The theories on nation-building support the NCA's nation-building-strategies. The study reveals that faith-based organizations can have implications for nation-building in the Palestinian society. The study indicates that the NCA's support to the civil society and institutions in Palestine is the best way for faith-based organizations to influence Palestinian nation-building.

The study explores how faith-based organizations can be part of peacebuilding in Palestine. And it reveals that faith-based organizations only have implications on the civil society in peacebuilding, and faith-based organizations' approach to peacebuilding involves advocacy and protection of human rights. Additionally, the study indicates that the NCA's contribution to nation-building are relevant for peacebuilding; a stable Palestinian state is important for successful peacebuilding.

[1] Rights-based approach is covered in chapter 2.5.

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Abbreviations

ACT – Action by Churches Together

AIDA – Association of International Development Agencies

EA – Ecumenical Accompaniers

EAPPI – The Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel

ELCJHL – Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land

FBO – Faith-based organization

MFA – The Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs

NCA – Norwegian Church Aid

NGO – Non-Governmental Organization

NORAD – The Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation

OPT – the Occupied Palestinian Territory

PA – Palestinian Authority

PLO – Palestine Liberation Organization

RBA – Rights Based Approach

RHR – Rabbis for Human Rights

UN – United Nations

WCC – World Council of Churches

When I look back on the process of history, I see this written over every page: that nations are renewed from the bottom, not from the top.

- Woodrow Wilson

1.0 Introduction

The conflict between Israel and Palestine has been going on since the State of Israel was constituted in 1948 (Harms and Ferry 2010, p. 94). It has led to numerous deaths of civilians and soldiers. Recent outbursts of violence between Israelis and Palestinians, contribute to the fact that this area in the Middle East is tender, and that it lacks almost any sort of constructive dispute between the two sides. The object of this thesis is not to develop theories that might solve the conflict itself, but to analyze the NCA's approach to nation-building.

Historical insights on the conflict tell us that the conflict roots deep in the past. But as much as it is important to know the historic background of the subject, the outlining of the history of this conflict will not go beyond the beginning of the 20th century. At that time, what today is known as Israel and Palestine was governed by Great Britain (Butenschøn 2008, p. 213). This changed in 1948, when Britain gave their rule of Palestine to the UN (Butenschøn 2008, p. 232). This was the beginning of the Israeli state, and the first conflict between Israel and its Arab neighbors (Nye 2011, p. 210). This first conflict led to 750 000 Palestinian refugees (Norwegian Church Aid 2010, p. 4). In 1967 the Six-Day War erupted with Israel occupying the Gaza Strip, East Jerusalem and the West Bank, which led to another stream of Palestinian refugees (Norwegian Church Aid 2010, p. 4). The First Intifada was the next significant conflict, which erupted in 1987 (Harms and Ferry 2012, p. 141). This conflict led to the Oslo peace-accords in 1993, which gave parts of the West Bank to the Palestinians. The Second Intifada erupted in 2000-2003 (Harms and Ferry 2010, p. 168). Ever since the Second Intifada, there have been outbursts of violence and conflict between Israel and factions of the Palestinian society (Harms and Ferry 2010, pp. 186-188). The situation between Palestine and Israel today is tense, and as this study identify, there is need for a political solution in order to achieve peace.

East Jerusalem, the West Bank and Gaza are areas that belong to Palestine. The UN and several other nations acknowledge Palestine as a sovereign state (snl.no 5.11.15), and in 2005 Israel withdrew their troops and presence from the Gaza Strip. However, Israel and Israeli settlers are still occupying the West Bank and Gaza Strip (snl.no 5.11.15). This occupation, Israeli restrictions on Palestinian daily-life and the conflict between Israel and Palestine have made it difficult for Palestine to become a sovereign state and nation. Additionally, Palestinian nation-building suffers in part from a lack of congregated Palestinian society,

poorly managed institutions and infrastructure. Prime Minister Salam Fayyad and President Mahmoud Abbas lead the Palestinian authority on the West Bank, the Gaza Strip led by Prime Minister Ismail Hanyie and Hamas (Norwegian Church Aid 2010, p. 4).

Using the term Palestine to describe the areas in and around Israel. There is no global agreement on whether to use Palestine, or the Occupied Palestinian Territories when describing Palestine. However, the Norwegian government have not too long ago decided to acknowledge the Palestinian land not only as the Occupied Palestinian Territories, but to be known as Palestine (regjeringen.no: 2.9.2015). I will use the term Palestine in the following chapters.

I will use nation-building theories to analyze if faith-based organizations and the NCA contribute to nation-building. Additionally, I will see if human rights-based approach to development is an adequate strategy in giving the Palestinian people their rights, and if rights-based approach can be adequately combined with the theories on nation-building and peacebuilding. Finally, I will explore if the processes of peacebuilding and nation-building affect each other.

1.1 Research question

The object of the thesis is to see if Norwegian Church Aid (NCA) as a faith-based organization can contribute to nation-building in Palestine. I will also look into the NCA and their engagement in Palestine and Israel, and see if their rights-based approach to development is adequate.

According to the Country Plan published by the Norwegian Church Aid, their work in Palestine is a contribution to the peace process and two-state solution (NCA Country Plan, 2010). Nation-building involves different aspects, but those relevant to this thesis embrace the NCA's focus on faith-based organizations. Different inputs to the conflict give various and sometimes even contradictory answers. The NCA proclaims in their Country Plan that they want to "*contribute towards Palestinian nation-building by strengthening Palestinian churches and faith-based organizations and their institutions*" (NCA Country Plan, 2010). So what I want to look into is whether the NCA with their faith-based identity, contributes to what they describe as nation-building. Therefore the question at the center of this research is:

- How can strengthening Palestinian churches and faith-based organizations and their institutions contribute towards Palestinian nation-building?

In addition to this the following questions need to be looked into in order to provide a greater insight and understanding of the main research question.

- What sort of advantages or disadvantages is related to faith-based organizations, Norwegian Church Aid in particular, in the process of nation-building?
- How does the work of the Norwegian Church Aid contribute towards peacebuilding?
- In what way can the rights-based approach formulated by the Norwegian Church Aid work as a means for nation-building?

1.2 Background and motivation

When I first started working with a draft proposition for the thesis, the first thing that came to mind was the Israeli/Palestinian-conflict. The Israel/Palestine-conflict has been a part of, and at times dominated the news coverage for many decades. It seems as if it is a conflict with little hope of peace, and attempts of settling the situation has failed numerous times. My motivation for writing this thesis was to see how the Norwegian Church Aid works in Israel and Palestine, and to see if the work they do has any effect on nation-building.

Aid, both in the terms of humanitarian and development aid, has been the subject for many of my academic papers. However, my academic curiosity is directed towards how a faith-based organization might contribute to the ongoing nation-building in Palestine. With this paper I would like to make a contribution to the academic field of faith-based organizations and nation-building.

1.3 Methods

My main focus will be on the qualitative method, and the use of the different approaches known to qualitative method, which appear in the sections below. I will primarily focus on interview as a method, but to a certain level also use analysis of the NCA's Country Plan, in order to get a glimpse of their approach to nation-building in Palestine.

1.3.1 Interviews

This thesis will try to give an understanding and an analysis of the development aid work done by the NCA. A certain amount of interviews of key figures in this organization needs to be done to comprehend how and if their work can be reflected in the still ongoing peace process. The data generated from the interviews has been analyzed. Alongside interviewing employees at the NCA, there will be interviews with three of their partner-organizations all of which are situated in Israel and Palestine. As the thesis is a qualitative one, the interviews will be done within the terms of the same theoretical framework. In this context, this implies semi-structured interviewing, with a balance between predetermined and follow-up questions during the interviews. This combination is a prerequisite for fulfilling any blank-spots that may occur. The NCA office situated in East Jerusalem set up the interviewees, which seemingly allows quicker response in the search for interview objects. Having a door opener such as the NCA reduces the amount of time spent searching for interviewees. It can also give an opportunity to meet with the different administrational employees from the different organizations.

1.3.2 Document analysis

The NCA has published different documents on their development progress. In addition to reports on their progress within development aid, there are also documents that describe their goals prior to their development aid-work. This is commonly known as Country Plans. Both types of reports will be subject for some of the following paragraphs. This section will be a part of a content analysis.

1.4 Material

This thesis draws on a variety of different theories: One of the main books that will be used is written by Aud Tønnessen (Tønnessen 2007) on the Norwegian Church Aid (NCA). In addition to theory on the NCA, theories on conflict and conflict resolution have to be a part of the thesis, if only just a small part of it. Johan Galtung (Galtung 2013) has made contributions to theories on peacebuilding, and will be used in the thesis. Gerard Clarke (Clarke 2008) is prominent in the literature on faith-based organizations. Alongside Clarke is Jeffrey Haynes (Haynes 2007), and I will also use Séverine Deneulin and Masooda Bano (Deneulin and Bano 2009), which discuss religion and FBOs. Hence, the books that involve faith-based organizations will be acknowledged in the following chapter. Nation-building is part of the NCA's strategies, according to their Country Plan. The theory involving nation-building

draws upon literature written by Jochen Hippler (Hippler 2005), Helmut van Edig (van Edig 2005) and Bernard Ntahoturi (Ntahoturi 2001). Hippler's written work gives a comprehensive understanding of nation-building.

Methods are important when working with the thesis. The main literature used when discussing methods and the thesis structure is written by Alan Bryman (Bryman 2012), David Silverman (Silverman 2006 and Silverman 2010), Steinar Kvale and Svend Brinkmann (Kvale 2009). Finally, rights-based approach is important for the NCA's work, and thereby relevant for this thesis. The theories on rights-based approach will draw on Dan Banik (Banik 2006) and Amartya Sen (Sen 1999). It is important to keep in mind that these sources are thought as main components to the thesis. Several other sources will be used for accompaniment during the discussions and the text as a whole.

1.5 Outline of the thesis

In order to give a comprehensive answer to the research question, the thesis needs the information explored in the following chapters: Whereas chapter 1 is the introduction to the thesis, chapter 2 gives an overview of the different theories and literature given on the subject. This involves an introduction to FBOs, the Norwegian Church Aid as an organization, rights-based approach and nation-building. The short and explicit introduction to methods in one of the earlier paragraphs does not cover the process of methodological and empirical work. A thorough introduction to the applied methods is part of chapter 3. This chapter gives an understanding to how and why the different methods are being used. Chapter 4 will be a presentation of the NCA and its partner-organizations. Chapter 5 is a summary of the main topics from the transcripts. Chapter 6 includes an analysis of the different findings and theories. Chapter 7 draws the bigger lines and tentatively comprehends concluding remarks.

2.0 Theory

2.1 The impact made by faith-based organizations

There has been resurgence both in religion and the impact of faith-based organizations lately, this will not color these paragraphs that much. These paragraphs will rather shed light on the basics of faith-based organizations and their advantages and limitations in a development project. Additionally, the theories on faith-based organizations will shed light on the main research question: How can strengthening Palestinian churches and faith-based organizations and their institutions contribute towards Palestinian nation-building? The theories will comment on advantages and disadvantages with being faith-based, ascribed to the subsequent sub-question: what sorts of advantages or disadvantages are related to faith-based organizations, the NCA in particular, in the process of nation-building?

2.1.1 Definition of faith-based organizations

Before going into any further explanation on faith-based organizations, a definition of faith-based organization is needed. Clarke has created a definition on faith-based organizations, and this is the definition that I will apply when dealing with faith-based organizations in the following chapters:

> We use the term faith-based organization in reference to any organization that derives inspiration and guidance for its activities from the teachings and principles of the faith or from a particular interpretation or school within the faith (Clarke 2008, p. 6).

The essence of this definition is that any organization that gets inspiration and guidance from a faith or religion, is faith-based. According to the NCA's country plan, they are owned by different churches of different denominations (Norwegian Church Aid 2010, p. 7), and in light of the definition thereby faith-based.

According to the work of Torry, faith-based organizations are placed in-between religious organizations and secular organizations. This spectrum of organizations gives an understanding of the differences between organizations. Being an organization based on faith, could mean that it relies on either a specific faith, or that a particular faithfulness is understood as one of its values (Torry 2005, p. 17). This understanding of faith-based organizations may in some ways be a bit vague. However, what characterizes faith-based organizations, is that they are voluntary (Torry 2005, p. 38), not necessarily in the sense that

the whole organization is built upon voluntary work, but that different spheres within the organization are voluntary. Understood this way, an organization built on voluntary contribution depends on dedication from its volunteers. Otherwise, the organization would suffer from a lack of progression in their projects and activities. Consequently, it is important for an organization to have employees (Clarke 2008, pp. 260). Besides this, a faith-based organization is related to social action and welfare provision (Torry 2005, p. 39). This description, however, applies to NGOs as well.

Torry depicts especially one concern related to FBOs as a donor – the concept of isomorphism is taken into consideration when describing FBOs, and that could be quite delicate. The isomorphism-theory claims that there is an ongoing development within FBOs that are part of an umbrella organization. One result of this development is that the FBO will become equal to the organizations that fund them (Torry 2005, p. 31). According to isomorphism-theory, this could turn out negative for the identity of the NCA, with the utmost consequence being universalism and fragmentation of NCA's faith-based identity. If isomorphism-theory did occur, this could hinder the NCA's work in Palestine, because it is their distinctive features that have given the organization advantage in the conflicting areas in Palestine (Norwegian Church Aid 2010, p. 7). Isomorphism is particularly relevant in the cases where faith-based organizations get their funding from an organization under governmental control; the governmental organization Norad funds the NCA (norad.no 11.17.2014). However, working with government organizations could have the advantage of a better funding, stability within the organization and a higher pressure towards the recipients. This could lead to a higher set of realization of the NCA's strategies. Besides, in an incendiary topic such as the situation in the Middle East, with great disparities between the different blocks, it is important not to underestimate the advantage of being independent of private donators within the community in the Norwegian Church.

2.1.2 FBOs, holism and paternalism

According to Torry, faith-based organizations struggle to survive in a secular society. But this doesn't have to be the case, because being a part of a secular society could lead to impartiality. Hence, faith-based organizations could rather have an advantage from being part of a secular society. However, even when being part of a secular society, faith-based organizations are part of and influenced by a belief-system, which in turn emphasizes that a faith-based organization is religiously based (Torry 2005, p. 36).

Paternalism is an issue for FBOs. It involves not taking the local organizations and society into consideration, but rather having a top-down approach as a donor organization (Taylor 1995, p. 78). Dealing with paternalism, the organization should empower the local FBOs and make sure that they are able to get independent from funds in the future. Additionally, Taylor writes that holism is typical for most FBOs, which can be an issue in certain contexts. Holism in its simplest shape includes missionary and development (Taylor 1995, p. 25). Holism and paternalism can be both an advantage and disadvantage for faith-based organizations, it depends on the context (Taylor 1995, p. 25). The NCA have implemented a holistic approach in their strategies (Norwegian Church Aid 2011, p. 46), which is supposed to cover several aspects of human life, such as spiritual, human, cultural and material dimensions.

Secularization theory depicted by Durkheim makes an effort to downplay the role of religion in development. The theory was once an influential doctrine in understanding the role of religion in the society. The basic assumption was that religion had lost its standing in the public domain, and that the shift had drawn religion into the private-sphere (Deneulin and Bano 2009, p. 15). If this were the case in Palestine, then the contributions from faith-based organizations would be insignificant. However, as recent theories on religion and sociology indicate, religion has renewed its standing in the society (Deneulin and Bano 2009, p. 15).

2.1.3 Motivation for joining FBOs

The typology of most FBOs is characterized as normative. It was Etzioni that distinguished this typology for FBOs. According to the normative characterization, participation in FBOs is based on shared values and a common goal (Furseth 2003, p. 175). To a certain degree, this characterization is applicable for the NCA and its partner-organizations. Although the motivation for most employees at the NCA is normative, the motivation for taking part in FBOs can also be utilitaristic, which would apply for actors that take part in a FBO on the basis of personal economic profit (Furuseth 2003, p. 175). These two concepts have undefined limits, because the motivation for an employee can be both normative and utilitaristic.

2.1.4 Faith-based organization and civil society

Being a faith-based organization involves being part of a larger community. However, this community is religiously based and understands itself trough those terms. It becomes clear after reading Clarke, that there is no evident consistency between the two terms ‘religion’ and

'faith' when describing what a faith-based organization is. Rather, faith-based organization strives to be a collective term for religion. According to Clarke, there are five different types of faith-based organizations: representative organizations or apex bodies, charitable or development organizations, socio-political organizations, missionary organizations, radical illegal or terrorist organizations (Clarke 2008, p. 25). But the NCA is mostly relevant to one of them, and that is the faith-based charitable or development organizations, which support the poor and mobilize against poverty and social exclusion. Being a faith-based organization and belonging to the category of charity and development includes some standards and formalities. This includes programs made by the NCA that are set to help the poor and socially excluded. However, a faith-based organization meets other organizations and people through their programs and related work. And being a faith-based organization, means that faith is intertwined with the social and political engagement (Clarke 2008, p. 25). Faith combined with social and political engagement is also part of the NCA's strategy to a certain degree. Their document of principles states that Christianity influences their work and that their partners in Israel and Palestine are all faith-based (Norwegian Church Aid 2010, p. 8).

An understanding of faith within a faith-based organization can be seen trough both a passive and an active lens. This distinction gives an understanding of how the faith-based organization is motivated for action. Whether faith is subordinate to humanitarian doctrines, which is equivalent to a passive understanding, or faith is the main motivation for action, and also functions as identifying the organization and influencing the working climate with partners, which in that case would be the active approach (Clarke 2008, p. 32). These two approaches are set to being neither persuasive nor trying to convert recipients in their work. It can also be argued that the donor cannot foresee the possible impact it has towards the recipients, and thereby influence them religiously even though that never was the intention. Being passive and active in this sense can be an advantage when collaborating with religious recipients. This is due to factors such as equivalence in identity between recipients and donors, which may become a set piece for a longitudinal relation. Reaching out to other religious societies, and building inter-faith dialogue, relies on an approach that is active rather than persuasive (Clarke 2008, pp. 32-34). This will make it easier to create a constructive dialogue, which can ensure sustainable programs and local attachment, which is important for nation-building. Creating a constructive dialogue with a persuasive approach is challenging to comprehend for the donor organization. Hence, the Norwegian Church Aid and other contributors should keep this in mind. From time to time, it might be difficult to clear-cut the

differences between the active and the persuasive approach. However, it could be argued that a faith-based organization's main purpose is not religious prosperity, and that an association to religion as a main purpose, lies somewhere closer to religious organizations (Torry 2005, pp. 117). Hence, it would not be classified as a faith-based organization, but rather a religious organization if the organization had a persuasive approach towards recipients. Therefore, the NCA and its manifest, leans towards a faith-based understanding, since they are not missionaries.

According to Haynes, faith-based organizations have common values that can help them cooperate as a means of development. They can play an important role in providing education and non-violent resolutions to conflict (Haynes 2007, p. 48). They are both part of the NCA's strategy in Palestine and Israel. The NCA states in their country plan that part of their strategy is to strengthen the civil society[2] in Palestine. Haynes theory on FBOs provides clear evidence that FBOs can achieve increased tolerance, social cohesion and understanding in the society (Haynes 2007, p. 48). However, as he also mentions, not everyone agrees with the implementation of religion in development – Haynes writes that some believe that "religious issues are divisive, leading to complications and strife" (Haynes 2007, p. 48). Haynes acknowledge that FBOs face challenges when working with the civil society, but to sum up he believes that FBOs can play an important part of civil societies. Deneulin and Bano, who also acknowledge the role of FBOs in civil societies, support this notion. FBOs are generators of social capital[3] and build networks between people, and fosters trust between the members of the society (Deneulin and Bano 2009, p. 47).

2.1.5 Types of faith-based organizations

Whilst Clarke denominates five different ways of intertwining faith into developmental contributions, another way to define faith-based organizations is given by Torry. The categorization generates five main types of faith-based organizations. Faith-permeated, -centred, -affiliated, -background, -secular partnership (Torry 2005, p. 117). This way of organizing does not necessarily provide any insight into whether or not the faith-based organization has an active or persuasive approach towards the recipients. However, it could

[2] Civil society is generally seen as the network of voluntary associations through which people are mobilized in order to shape the social order (Deneulin and Bano 2009, p. 47).

[3] Social capital is defined as: networks together with shared norms, values and understandings that facilitate co-operation within or among groups (Keeley 2007, p. 103).

make it easier to give meaning to what the different organizations are. These descriptions depict the variety within the faith-based community. Nevertheless, it is just as important to take a closer look into the relationship between faith-based organizations and the outside, namely the civil society. It is by doing things together that trust is built in the civil society, and that is an important role for voluntary organizations such as faith-based organizations. According to Torry, however, trust in a society is not efficient enough when the state is the only provider. Therefore, he points to voluntary organizations in general, but faith-based organizations in specific in forming and creating social trust in both the society and economy. When the role of faith-based organizations is given that much credibility, one might assume that lack of social trust in the society is due to inefficient organizational work, or just lack of voluntary organizations in a particular community. That, however, would be an unfair conclusion, because faith-based organizations most certainly are not the only sector that can provide social trust. With the situation in Israel and Palestine, it is interesting to see that the work done by voluntary organizations is given credibility, because it could provide a better basis for the NCA's work. And that is also evident with the NCA's ecumenical approach, which can provide a better basis for an understanding between different religious traditions (Torry 2005, p. 157).

Even though religious traditions, and being part of a religious tradition can make way for social capital to flourish (Torry 2005, p. 159), it is important to be aware of the fact that social capital and partaking in democratic form of government, can also come from secularized movements and communities. In other words – secularization does not have to be an enemy to social capital (Torry 2005, p. 159).

Belshaw (Belshaw 2005) writes about the advantages of being faith-based in development. According to Belshaw there are five possible advantages of faith-based organizations: (1) long-term committed, they are likely to stay in the Israeli/Palestinian context for a long time, (2) FBOs help the marginalized in the society, (3) they are often part of large networks with capability of providing expertise to the society, (4) 'the golden rule' is often a guide to social relations, which encourages equality in relationships, (5) spiritual experiences can raise the confidence of the previously excluded, helping them to gain from new opportunities (Belshaw 2005, p. 4).

2.1.6 NCA as a faith-based organization

Faith-based organizations have the benefit of being religiously based organization, especially if the conflicting parties depict a religious point of view, which might make it easier to open up for dialogue with conflicting parties. This advantage may in some settings even go beyond other secular organizations. However, according to secularization theory (Bangstad 2009, p. 88), faith-based organizations still need to keep track with modernity, and comply with the fact that their religious statement does not always correspond with the context they find themselves in (Hovland 2008, pp. 176-178). The situation in Norwegian politics has been critical of faith-based organizations, in that there is a fear of these organizations providing more evangelization than developmental work (Tønnesen 2012, p. 100, Hovland 2008, pp. 174-175). Possible consequences with evangelization rather than development work is a decrease in Norad's grants to faith-based organizations, which happened with NMS in 2003-2004 (Hovland 2008, p. 172-173). As far as the NCA is concerned, their identity is faith-based, but far from as charismatic and evangelizing that it could lead to cutbacks of grants.

2.1.7 FBOs and peace building

Neglecting the fact that religion can be part of organizational work, and thereby FBOs, destroys the possibility for multiplicity in developmental and peace building work. Haynes writes about the advantages of being faith-based in peace building. He sees that FBOs and religious individuals can be part of both peace building and conflict escalation (Haynes 2007, p. 75). Additionally, peace between Israel and Palestine is possible, according to Haynes: it involves collaboration between different religious and secular organizations from outside the region, alongside EU and USA, so that they can form a new model for peace (Haynes 2007, p. 78).

2.1.8 Conclusion

Organizations are identified as faith-based when their guidance and inspiration comes from faith (Clarke 2008, p. 6). FBOs are given the opportunity to strengthen the civil society and institutions such as schools, in the contexts they are working. Additionally, FBOs are able to reach relatively wide due to FBOs tendency of being part of large networks. The faith-basis can make it easier to approach faith-communities, and have longitudinal development-projects in the field. Taylor identifies a possible disadvantage of being faith-based: paternalism (Taylor 1995, p. 78).

2.2 Norwegian Church Aid

The country plan provided by the Norwegian Church Aid (NCA) for the occupied Palestinian territories gives insight to their different intervention strategies. This country plan is an important tool in the analysis of the work of the NCA. But to get a better understanding of the country plan, it is important to also recognize how the NCA in general is structured and how they contribute to the different fields they work in. Hence, the following paragraphs will provide insight to the structure of the NCA.

2.2.1 Foundation and NCA as a faith-based organization

The NCA was founded in 1947, as an answer to the call for help for the victims of World War 2. Both the Norwegian Church and church communities outside of the Norwegian Church constituted the organization. It is an ecumenical, diaconal and humanitarian organization working for eradication of poverty and seeking a just world (Norwegian Church Aid 2011, p. 12).

Clarke's definition of faith-based organizations clarifies FBOs as organizations with religious guidance and inspiration for their work (Clarke 2008, p. 6). According to the NCA's statement of principles, they want to manifest God's love in the world (Norwegian Church Aid 2008), thereby making the organization faith-based. The NCA's manifestation as a FBO is repeated in their Global Report:

> Norwegian Church Aid is an ecumenical, diaconal and humanitarian organization mandated by churches and Christian organizations in Norway to work for a just world, by both empowering the poor and challenging the wealthy and powerful. In pursuit of this vision, we are guided by five values that are rooted in Christian faith and embraced by people of all faiths: Integrity of Creation, human dignity, global justice, inclusive communities and compassion (Norwegian Church Aid 2011, p. 12).

The NCA has worked with reconciliation in a number of their projects, the first one related to their work in Germany after World War 2 (Tønnessen 2007, p. 36). Hence, the NCA was given a strong mandate for reconciliation already in their first projects. During the years of its existence, the number of recipients and cooperators has expanded. However, with this expansion challenges occurred, especially due to their prior mandate, which entitled the NCA to focus on Lutherans abroad. With the NCA's partnership with Europahjelpen, the NCA obliged their actions to include other religious communities as well. The NCA's formal

guidelines of 1953 emphasized a non-discriminatory approach, which entails fighting all sorts of discrimination and includes working with communities regardless of religious basis (Norwegian Church Aid 2008, p. 9). This approach is evident in the Israeli/Palestinian context today, where the NCA work with local Israeli and Palestinian organizations (Norwegian Church Aid 2010, p. 6-7). In addition to the non-discriminatory approach, the NCA has historically been consistent in advocating for democratization in the countries they have been working (Tønnessen 2007, p. 40). The enthusiasm for democracy and freedom is still evident in their projects today, which their commitment to Palestine indicates. The NCA's commitments to Palestine go back to 1952, when NCA engaged with Palestinians for the first time. But despite this ongoing partnership, the NCA did not focus primarily on the Middle East until the start of this millennium (Tønnessen 2007, p. 56). It's also important to recognize that back in 1960, the Norwegian Church Aid proclaimed that a development project was supposed to be handed over to the local authorities or recipients, after a maximum of ten years of partnership. However, it is difficult to predict the result of a ten yearlong project, or the length of any development project for that matter. And providing recipients with funding and technological resources was not adequate, because of variables such as lack of democracy, corruption, mistrust and turbulence in the society.

2.2.2 Further identification of NCA

Historically, the NCA has been working in situations where disaster aid was needed (Tønnessen 2007, p. 87), but also development aid and humanitarian aid. The NCA takes hold of a holistic approach in interaction with their recipients (Tønnessen 2007, p. 118). This approach goes beyond a simple focus on one variable, but rather focuses on the different parts of the human mentality and limitations and thereby on increasing the development within economy, morality and spirituality (Tønnessen 2007, p. 118). Another identification of the NCA's strategy is their focus on cooperation with local organizations. Including the local capacities and knowledge is one of the NCA's approaches for successful programs and strategies. Strengthening the local organizations is also a way of sustaining the reciprocal relations between the donor and the recipient. The local organizations were supposed to keep the operations running, which they did. This emphasis on the local leadership is beneficial for the progress for development, because it secures project sustainability and strengthens the civil society, which is the key to nation-building (Norwegian Church Aid 2011, p. 24).

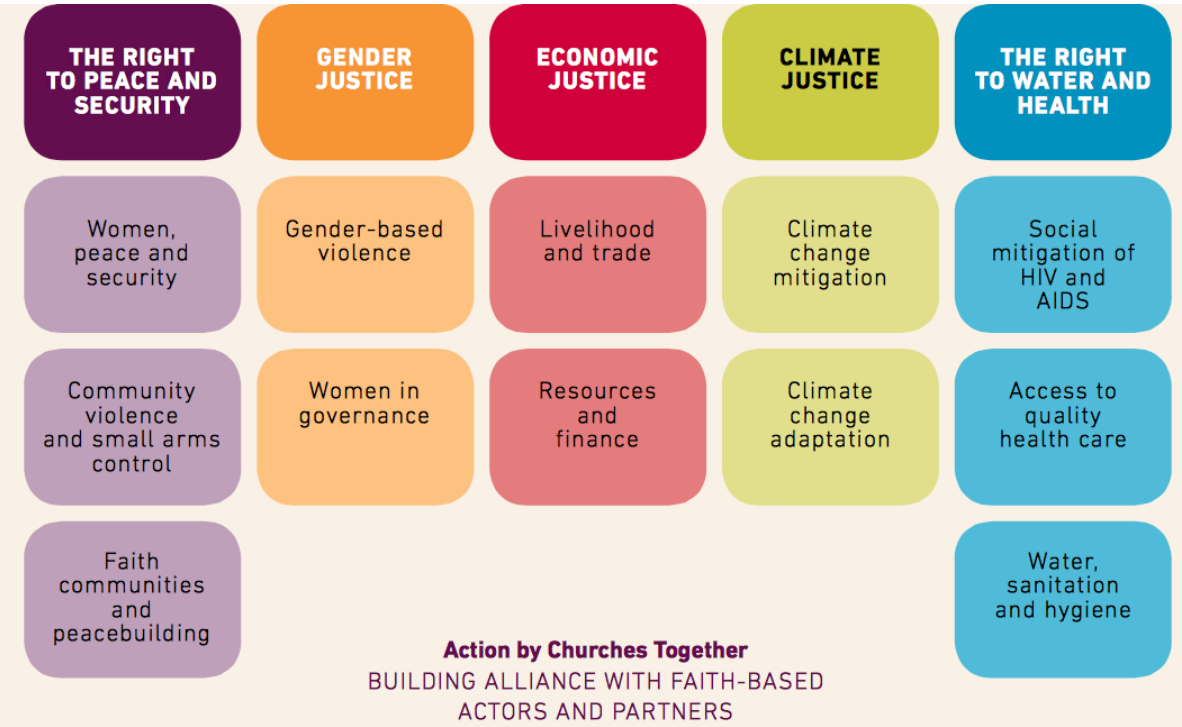
2.2.3 NCA, peace and reconciliation

Reconciliation has become relevant for different humanitarian organizations including the NCA (Quinn 2009, p. 5). Their knowledge of the local capacities and challenges to peace building and reconciliation can turn out to become an advantage. Besides, being present in a conflict zone gives credibility in the coming reconciliation process (Tønnessen 2007, p. 173). However, bias can object to a process of peace building and reconciliation, all because it can reinforce differences between the conflicting parties. The NCA gives priority to reconciliation and non-violent action instead of conflict resolution in a conflict or post-conflict society (Norwegian Church Aid 2011, p. 45), which is typical of faith-based organizations. This focus on reconciliation in favor of conflict resolution is a term called faith-based diplomacy (Tønnessen 2007, p. 177), and emphasizes the advantages of the faith-based organizations, such as its spiritual assets and resources, e.g. forgiveness and trust (Johnston 1994, p. 3-4) Faith-based diplomacy can be beneficial to the NCA in their approach in the ongoing conflict between Israel and Palestine. Additionally, faith-based diplomacy can be part of Palestinian nation-building due to its stabilizing capability.

2.2.4 Funding and cooperation strategy

Although Tønnesen's book on the NCA is written explicitly on the cooperation between the church and state, it still gives insight into how the organization understands questions related to development. The NCA is an organization constituted by different denominations in Norway, which gives the organization broad support in their developmental work (Norwegian Church Aid 2011, p. 12). In addition to Norwegian denominations the NCA is financially supported by the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation – Norad, with 287 946 000 NOK in 2014 (Norwegian Church Aid 2014b, p. 3). The NCA is the largest recipient of government funds in comparison with other humanitarian organizations (kirkensnodhjelp.no 5.4.2015). In addition to funds from Norad, they were granted 246 568 000 NOK by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) in 2014 (Norwegian Church Aid 2014b, p. 3). In addition to public funds, the NCA receives donations from private donors. Particularly interesting is the NCA's growing focus on cooperations with local churches and religious groups in the recipients' countries, and their focus on country plans and strategy plans as tools for creating an efficient developmental structure (Tønnessen 2007, p. 18), because the NCA's cooperation with local churches has been successful in other NCA projects, and can thereby also be successful in Palestine. Empowering local institutions secures sustainability and attachment to programs, which are an important part of nation-building.

The NCA have five strategic priorities and twelve program areas for 2011-2015 (Norwegian Church Aid 2011, p. 44). Their strategic priorities are: Right to Peace and Security, Gender Justice, Economic Justice, Climate Justice and The Right to Water and Health. All these strategic priorities work towards poverty eradication and a more just world (Norwegian Church Aid 2011, p. 45). The NCA are at the moment active in 31 countries (kirkensnodhjelp 5.7.2015), and all of these engagements have their own Country Plan. The Country Plan is supposed to focus on up to three strategic priorities for the area they are involved in. In addition to the strategic priorities, the NCA's head office in Oslo has formulated twelve different program areas, of which the Country Plan's selects no more than five:



In order to illustrate the different programs, this matrix[4] identifies the relationship between the strategies and programs. The Country Plan for Israel and Palestine has selected two strategic priorities: Right to Peace and Security, and Economic Justice. Out of the twelve programs, four have been selected: Women, Peace and Security, Faith-Communities and Peace Building, Livelihood and Trade, Access to Quality Health Care (Norwegian Church Aid 2010, p. 9).

2.2.5 Palestine, inconsistency and rights-based approach

[4] Cutting from NCA Global Report 2011-2015 (Norwegian Church Aid 2011, p. 44)

Being a compound organization that includes several Christian denominations in Norway, they ought to meet difficulties in the interaction. This happened in 2005, when the Pentecostal community criticized the NCA for their support of the Occupied Palestinian Territories, and the political support for tearing down the wall that separated Israel from the Occupied Palestinian Territories (Tønnessen 2007, p. 236). However, their appeal outwards covers all religious groups according to the NCA's own regulations (Tønnessen 2007, p. 252). These regulations first and foremost put emphasize on human dignity and thereupon focus on their faith. But there are more hallmarks of the NCA's contributions, some of which are important for their understanding of causality when looking at the situation of the recipients. The NCA's latest approach to development is rights-based. This approach suggests that the reason for poverty and need is due to lack of human rights (Banik 2006, p. 314). Historically, rights-based approach has not always been rightfully implemented, whereas some of the NCA's partners contradict this approach and even carry out a rule of play that excludes certain groups or individuals (Tønnessen 2007, p. 258). Nevertheless, the NCA have implemented rights-based approach as part of their approach to development. And they use three rights-based working methods: (1) long-term development aid, (2) advocacy and (3) emergency preparedness and response (Norwegian Church Aid 2011, p. 12). From what I found in the NCA's Global Report, rights-based approach is an integrated part of all their development engagements, and they involve the local rights-holders[5] in identifying key issues for change (Norwegian Church Aid 2011, p. 13). This makes significant impact on the local attachment, which is important for sustainable development. In the matter of the NCA in Israel and Palestine, the NCA's partner-organizations have been chosen partly on the basis of their rights-basis.

2.2.6 Action by Churches Together Alliance

ACT Alliance is a global and ecumenical church society that is one of the primary partners of the NCA (Tønnessen 2007, p. 261). Although the partners of the NCA are an amalgamation of people with different religious backgrounds, the vast majority is still part of the Christian denominations. This is emphasized through their partnership with the ACT Alliance. This alliance is constituted of 140 different churches and affiliated organizations, and their main objectives are similar to the NCA's, with advocacy, development and humanitarian aid as the ACT Alliance's main targets (actalliance.org 12.5.2014). ACT Alliance gets its income from

[5] See chapter 2.5

membership, income-based and international coordination fees and voluntary contributions (ACT Alliance 2013, p. 28). ACT Alliance and ACT sister organizations funded the NCA Head Office with 39 471 000 NOK in 2014 (Norwegian Church Aid 2014b, p. 3), which makes the ACT Alliance a serious contributor to the NCA's work. The contributions to Palestine by the ACT Alliance, is important for the Palestinians, but also for the NCA. Large organizations working together will often have a greater chance of carrying out their intervention strategies.

2.2.7 Conclusion

The NCA is a faith-based organization constituted by Norwegian church denominations. Their work is influenced by rights-based approach, and they employ three different methods in their work: (1) long-term development aid, (2) advocacy and (3) emergency preparedness and response (Norwegian Church Aid 2011, p. 12). Advocacy is a great part of their method in the field, and the NCA work with non-violent means for peacebuilding. The NCA is also involved in Palestinian nation-building with focus on empowering the Palestinian civil society, and they are part of important networks such as ACT Alliance and WCC.

2.3 Nation-building

There are many ways of building a nation. This chapter will focus on the procedures that are relevant for FBOs in general, and the NCA in particular. So the reader should be aware that the theory on nation-building in this thesis considers the Palestinian context. The main research question is: How can strengthening Palestinian churches and faith-based organizations and their institutions contribute towards Palestinian nation-building? – that is the main focus of the thesis, and key to this chapter.

2.3.1 Clarification of the term

A nation exists by the consent of its people and by acknowledging a common heritage illustrated by different social practices (Taylor and Kent 2006, 342). The term nation-building is occasionally mistaken for being alike the term state building. Although there are similarities between the two, the reader should mind that *nation-building* and *state building* are two different concepts, and from now on the concept nation-building ought to be understood as an independent concept.

Another note that should be made is that there are different understandings of how important a sovereign state is. And whether or not there are other actors in the society just as influential as the state. This discussion is credited to realists and liberalists (Nye 2011, p. 34), and is insignificant for this thesis understanding of nation-building in Palestine. What should be mentioned is that a liberal point of view acknowledges that NGOs and FBOs such as the NCA are capable of doing things that have real consequences in international politics (Nye 2011, p. 38). So acknowledging that FBOs and churches can have an influence in the Israeli/Palestinian context comes from a liberal point of view. Intervention by FBOs is also acknowledged within the school of constructivism (Nye 2011, p. 57), but the thesis will not attach significance to this matter. One final note – this thesis only look into theories on nation-building that are relevant for FBOs. There are other comprehensive theories on nation-building, but they are not useful for the analysis of the relation between FBOs and nation-building. Some of the nation-building theories stress a top-down approach, which involves letting the government control the nation-building. The basic argument against a top-down approach is that it only allows a small group of decision makers to decide what is best for all citizens (Taylor and Kent 2006, p. 352). Nation-building on FBOs' premise stress a bottom-up approach to nation-building, which allows the citizens to take part in the nation-building process.

2.3.2 Importance of institutions

The basic characteristics of a state are territoriality and sovereignty. Territoriality means that the state governs a portion of land, and sovereignty is the absolute right to govern it (Nye 2011, p. 34). This proves to be complicated in the Israeli/Palestinian context, where parts of the West Bank are occupied by Israel. Palestine has recently been accommodated to the UN as a non-member observer state (un.org 10.8.2014). This is one of many steps that need to be taken, in the pursuit of Palestine becoming a self-governed state. But there is more to it than becoming a non-member observer state. Institutions such as schools, hospitals and universities are also an indisputable part of any given nation. These institutions have to be sustained and developed further so that the nation-building becomes more reliable (Hippler 2005, p. 178). Institutionalization is part of the strategy formulated in the NCA's country plan, and the NCA consider institutions as one of the cornerstones in the coming Palestinian society (Norwegian Church Aid 2010, p. 8). One of the key concepts for nation-building is stability, which could be preserved through strengthening institutions and maintaining the support to faith-based organizations in the area.

Taylor and Kent recognize institutions as an important part of nation-building. In their view, it is the political institutions that mediate infrastructure such as schools in the society (Taylor and Kent 2006, p. 342). The nation-building engagement is depicted in several different ways; it all depends on the area of commitment. Arguing that there is merely one solution to nation-building that undermines the fact that the theories are constructed for different contexts to which they are engaged. And as the following paragraphs will present there are some key factors that all theories on nation-building elevate. Some of these factors have to be established for nation-building to arise.

Nevertheless, given that the conflict between Israel and Palestine one day might come to an end, there are some key transitions that ought to be involved in a peace process in general and nation-building in particular. To be able to build a nation after decades of conflict, there has to be a focus on longitudinal projects. It is also stated in the Country Plan conducted by the NCA that part of their focus will be on Palestinian nation-building (Norwegian Church Aid 2010, p. 8).

2.3.3 Issues that have to be solved

A long-lasting conflict changes the society in such a manner, that it may be too challenging to go back to where the society had been before the conflict erupted (Ntahoturi 2001, pp. 73). The challenge for organizations and governments working with nation-building is to integrate the infrastructure and institutions with present development work. This is surely a challenge for the NCA. Particularly since it is hard to announce development and nation-building without getting the grips of the past (Ntahoturi 2001, pp. 73). In other situations and post-conflict areas, a truth- and reconciliation commission has provided the society with a clearer view of both the future and the past. But it is not given that this particular commission is the way to go with the complex situation in Palestine. Besides, reconciliation is merely looked upon as an asset for a post-conflict context. The situation in Israel and Palestine is not suitable for such transition at this point in time. There is a vast group of challenges for Palestinian nation-building in the forthcoming. Palestine is at Israel's mercy in many of their development challenges. However, a fragile Palestinian government might just as well overthrow its own development:

> Fragile, inequitable economies and weak governance structures often play a significant role in creating the conditions for conflict to arise in the first place. (…) Economic development alone is not sufficient to build a cohesive society. Integrated human development, which includes the economic, social, political, cultural, psychological, intellectual, physical, and spiritual dimensions, must be introduced to help people find an alternative to violent conflict (Ntahoturi 2001, p. 74).

These issues most probably have to be treated in order to achieve and maintain nation-building. Let alone, Israel is responsible for much of the unrest in Palestine, and is thereby also somewhat responsible for securing a Palestinian nation-building.

2.3.4 Relevance for peacebuilding

Even though some scholars think of modern nation-building as a combination of civil and military capacities (Dobbins 2007, p. 6), the work of the NCA is revolved around peaceful organizations (Norwegian Church Aid 2010, p. 9), and not on military capacities. So the theories on nation-building will be better off with theories that involve military forces. Dobbins stresses another thing that is relevant to nation-building: no international organization can achieve nation-building alone (Dobbins 2007, p. 10), rather, the organizations depend on a congregation of national authorities and international organizations to promote nation-building. Dobbins is of the idea that international organizations like the NCA have distinct nation-building-capabilities, but the capabilities of the organizations have to be coordinated in order for nation-building to be effective (Dobbins 2007, p. 10-11).

According to Dobbins, the core of nation-building is not to make poor countries prosper, but rather troubled countries peaceful (Dobbins 2007, p. 13). Palestine and Israel have been in a series of conflicts through the last decades – Palestinian nation-building can, according to Dobbins (Dobbins 2007, p. 13), be related to a peaceful transmission between Israel and Palestine. Hippler is another scholar that recognizes nation-building as a peacebuilding promoter (Hippler 2005, p.178). This is because nation-building promotes stability, which is the key to peacebuilding.

2.3.5 Process of socio-political development

Nation-building as a theory and concept was recognized at first in 1960 and -70. It was then trying to describe the development that was seen in West European countries. The use of the

term nation-building was at that point in time considered as an asset for modernization, in order for Third World countries to become modernized (Hippler 2005, p. 4). That was then. Today, the term is still inconsistently used, but the term is nonetheless orientated into two overlapping groups. Firstly, there is an understanding of the concept as a *"process of socio-political development"* (Hippler 2005, p. 6). Communities that are loosely attached within the society will congregate into a common society. Economical, political and cultural factors are combined with strategic decisions from key political actors. Secondly, another wide understanding of the concept nation-building talks about a *"political objective as well as a strategy"* (Hippler 2005, p. 6). This way, nation-building becomes a strategy for reaching political goals. Internal and external actors works towards strengthening the political and social system, with the goal of making a nation-state better than it was. Understood this way, nation-building can be a strategy for development or imperial strategies for the internal and the external actors, depending on what the actors wants. This opens up for organization such as the NCA in the quest for nation-building.

2.3.6 National identity

Working with nation-building is in many ways demanding and a test of patience. Certain core elements have to be fulfilled in order to achieve successful nation-building. These elements emphasize different aspects of nation-building, and have to be taken into account when measuring the level of stability within the nation-building. The first factor to consider is the amount of integrative ideology. The focus is on integrative ideology as a unifying force. In the contexts where it is necessary, integrative ideology includes restructuring of politics. Integrative ideology is defined as reaching a common goal, and allowing social mobilization to be part of it (Hippler 2005, p. 7). National identity is another key aspect to integrative ideology. For any reason, when there is a lack of national identity, the nation-state faces an uncertain future. The important point to make is that nation-building relies on a unified society. Whether this is religiously based, secular or political is subordinate, as long as it unifies the people (Hippler 2005, p. 8). Taylor and Kent also recognize national identity as the key to nation-building. They see that national identity creates a loyalty to the nation, and they argue that national identity supersedes local and ethnic identities (Taylor and Kent 2006, p. 343). This will in turn unify the nation, and is thereby a prerequisite for nation-building (Taylor and Kent 2006, p. 343). The second factor to consider is another unifying aspect: integration of society. Integration of minorities into the greater society is important for nation-building to happen. The context of which the NCA is involved touches upon these elements to

a certain degree.[6] Developing a national infrastructure, national economy and mass media to create a political discourse are all key factors to integration of society (Hippler 2005, p. 9). Another aspect is the creation of a state apparatus, which is crucial for successful nation-building. This implies a society that is politically formed, a fiscal system that at the very least is under construction, organizing and developing the police system, and in order to be successful in the future the state has to have a monopoly of force in all of its areas of government (Hippler 2005, p. 9). Another aspect discussed by another theorist, is economical integration as an important part of nation-building. Economical integration seeks to integrate the entire population to the state system (van Edig 2005, p. 159). These aspects of nation-building have to be accomplished in order to achieve nation-building. Some of them can be established with help from people from outside of the nation. However, outsiders such as organizations can never create or form nation-building on their own. When coming from the outside trying to establish nation-building, internal factors such as politics, culture, authorities, and commotion have to be recognized in the process. Otherwise nation-building will be difficult to comprehend (Hippler 2005, p. 9).

2.3.7 Empowerment as nation-building

As chapter 1.0 demonstrates, Palestine is a complex land with restricted governmental ruling and domestic conflict between the Palestinian parties (Tuastad 2014, pp. 47-49). Nation-building can provide stability and development within the country. It can also unify different factions, and thereby make the nation more stable. However, nation-building should still be considered a quick fix for peacebuilding and stability. Because even though it can work as a catalyst for peace, nation-building is a concept that occurs differently in different contexts (Hippler 2005, p. 13). But one thing that stays the same is the emphasis on the public involvement. Success with nation-building means that the people of the state are welcomed to partake in politics (Hippler 2005, p. 11). This is in accordance with a bottom-up approach, which puts focus on commitment from the people of the state. However, this doesn't necessarily lead to democratization. The processes of nation-building can trigger democratization, but it doesn't lead directly to it (Hippler 2005, p. 11). Likewise, redistribution of power in the continuation of nation-building can create an atmosphere of democracy and a stable form of government. But it can also be a trigger point for a violent fight for power. Drawing lines between religious, cultural and ethnical groups can also

[6] Minorities in the Palestinian society suffer from lack of recognition and dividedness (Tuastad 2014:132).

potentially trigger conflict. The key aspect here is thereby unity; unity between different groups in a context where two pieces of land is separated from one another.

Empowering the Palestinians is an important part of nation-building (Villa-Vicencio 1992, p. 42). According to Villa-Vicencio, genuine democratic cultures, which respect every human being and allow political participation, are all relevant for a stable nation. Additionally, Villa-Vicencio is concerned with the impact churches can have on nation-building – he sees that the church empowers those who are marginalized (Villa-Vicencio 1992, p. 42-43). Empowering the marginalized in the society can unify the nation, because it can be a source for integration of the communities in the society.

Banik is another scholar that emphasized the importance of having a strong civil society in developing nations. He sees that it is organizations that make the civil society (Banik 2006, p. 264). Taken from other experiences in unsteady countries, civil society organizations are important watchdogs against authority and government abuse, they press for democratic reforms that are important for nation-building, and civil society organizations advocate for the minorities in the society (Banik 2006, p. 263). According to Banik, these are all important means, because the major obstacle for development is undemocratic government that only cares for the elite in the society (Banik 2006, p. 263).

2.3.8 Religion in nation-building

Religion itself can be part of nation-building. Religious rituals are important for social integration, which holds the society together and is thereby relevant for nation-building (Aldridge 2013, p. 148). Religious rituals and symbols can be part of the sacred symbols of the Palestinian society, and thereby unify different communities in the society. Christian Palestinians can for example keep the Church of the Nativity and Sunday service as rituals and symbols that unify them. In this regard, supporting Palestinian churches is part of Palestinian nation-building. Another scholar on religion in development, is concerned with the deepest values shared by people within the culture, and that these fundamental values and beliefs hold the culture together (Hiebert 1985, p. 42). Hence, shared religious values and beliefs from religion can play an essential part in holding the cultures together, which is a significant aspect of nation-building (Hippler 2005, p. 6).

2.3.9 Conclusion

According to Dobbins no international organization has all the capabilities to accomplish effective nation-building (Dobbins 2007, p. 10). Nation-building can only be achieved when different actors such as the nations authorities, international organizations and institutions come together in an effort to promote nation-building. Nation-building is a means for making turbulent societies peaceful (Dobbins 2007, p. 11). When nation-building is understood this way, it can actually be a means for peacebuilding. Shared values in a community are a necessary part of a nation, because it holds the national culture together (Hippler 1985, p. 42). Focus on strengthening institutions and the civil society are important ways of contributing to nation-building.

2.4 Peacebuilding and conflict

The sub-question on peacebuilding asks: How does the Norwegian Church Aid contribute towards peacebuilding? To describe the work that the NCA is doing, it is important to take notes on peacebuilding as an explanatory part in the thesis. There are various materials to draw on, peacebuilding stands out as the obvious choice due to the NCA's own Country Plan for Palestine (Norwegian Church Aid 2010, p. 9). The landscape of peacebuilding is hard to take hold of, especially because of the various variables in different conflicts (Haugerudbraaten 1998).

2.4.1 Peacebuilding as a term

The aim of peacebuilding is to make peace (Haugerudbraaten 1998), and in this dissertation, the aim is to make peace between Israel and Palestine. Peacebuilding happens after a conflict, an in addition to create peace, its purpose is to normalize civilian life and strengthen the capacities in the society that promotes peace (SIPRI-UNESCO 1998, p. 39). The term peacebuilding was first recognized through the works of Johan Galtung, and his contribution to peacebuilding has made an impact on scholars to a large degree. According to the works of Maiese, there are two ways to understand peacebuilding (beyondintractability.org, 12.17.2014). The first way this term is understood is through the concepts of the UN. Their understanding of the concepts involves capacity building, reconciliation and societal building. These are all relevant concepts to peacebuilding. It gives the UN ways to measure and acknowledge their own work, when certain concepts within peacebuilding have to be fulfilled. Understood this way, peacebuilding becomes a concept of interest only after violent conflict has declined or been stopped, and thereby can be time-consuming (beyondintractability.org,

12.17.2014). The second however, gives an understanding of peacebuilding that is applicable to NGOs and FBOs. This way of understanding peacebuilding focuses on both peacemaking and peacekeeping.

2.4.2 Local empowerment and contributions

The good intentions of the donor community cannot substitute the willingness of local actors to renounce violence and to devote domestic resources to reconstruction (Forman 2000, p. 31). In other words for nation- and peacebuilding to take place, the local actors have to be involved on a high level. The current literature on peace building abounds with subjects on donor presence in the surroundings of the recipients (Forman 2000, p. 31). Knowledge to the local environment and contact with the recipients is fundamental when working for peace.
It can be argued that to create an environment for peace and nation-building, the assistance given by the donors must be effective, coordinated and equivalent to the local needs (Forman 2000, p. 31). However, this can be difficult particularly in Gaza and the West Bank and its high level of politicized conflict.

Conflicts are often characterized by hostility, fear and stereotyping of the opponent (Lederach 1997, p. 23). Part of what peacebuilding involves, is to break down the hostility and stereotyping, and turn fear into trust. Only then can conflict be distinguished. Lederach says that reconciliation can be part of peacebuilding, because it has the ability to restore broken relationships between the conflicting parties (Lederach 1997, p. 24). Lederach sees that there are three different levels of leadership in peacebuilding. On the bottom are the grassroots, then the middle-range approaches, and finally the top-level approaches (Lederach 1997, p. 39).

2.4.3 Egalitarian approach to peacebuilding

Peace building is such a huge task, that one single FBO hardly can accomplish it by itself. It would make the process of building peace easier with an international cooperation. However, differences in the plan of action can make way for a situation without a constructive environment. Critique of international financial institutions tells a story about lack of peacebuilding, and rather a focus on heavy economic medicine (Patrick 2000, pp. 35). This matter is a bit different in Palestine, whereas the international financial institutions contribute in a more constructive manner.

The egalitarian perceptions of peacebuilding acknowledge the efforts of NGOs and FBOs, and see that they can be complimentary to other intergovernmental organizations (IGOs) when striving for peacebuilding. Different peacebuilding-efforts by different organization can create a positive synergy, and increase the peacebuilding-efficiency (Haugerudbraaten 1998). Haugerudbraaten says that the identity of FBOs is relevant for peacebuilding, and claim that FBOs and their cooperation with churches is essential, because they can bring the finances, skills, understanding and political experience to the international community's peacebuilding-approach (Haugerudbraaten 1998). The counter-argument for FBOs involvement in peacebuilding recognizes centralization of peacebuilding-control to be essential for success. This approach sees that the UN should be the main actor in peacebuilding, and that the interference by NGOs and FBOs only complicate the situation (Haugerudbraaten 1998).

2.4.4 Concepts of peacebuilding

The approach to peacebuilding differs, and the most efficient Haugerudbraaten have created a table[7] that depicts the two different concepts to peacebuilding:

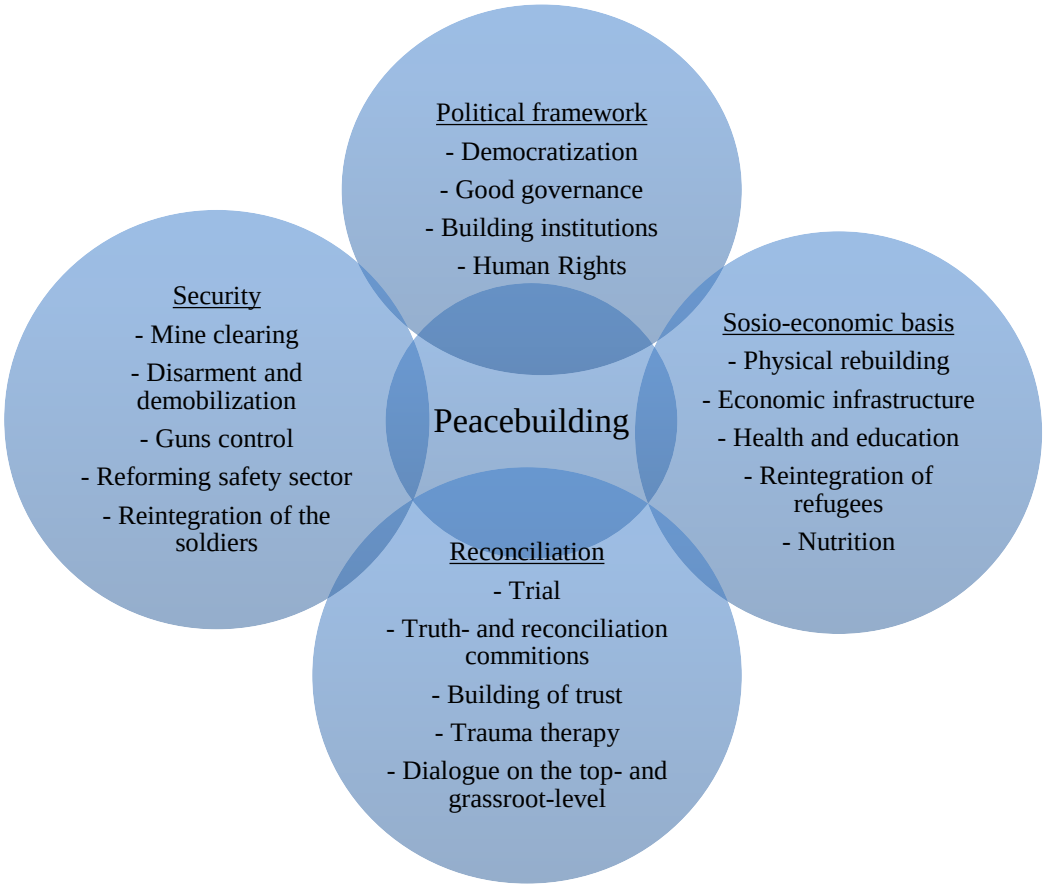
[7] Cutting from Peacebuilding: Six dimensions and two concepts (Haugerudbraaten 1998).

Dimension	Tendency 1	Tendency 2
Aim of peacebuilding	Promote good governance and dispute settlement mechanisms	Address root causes of conflict
Means of peacebuilding	Primarily political intervention	Broad intervention in political, economic, security and humanitarian spheres
Temporal aspect of peacebuilding	Short-term	Long-term
Main actors of peacebuilding	International community	Indigenous actors
Process/action dimension	Peacebuilding equated to the actions undertaken	Peacebuilding seen as the result, as the aggregate process
Organisation of peacebuilding	Peacebuilding is centralised under the auspices of the UN, more stress on co-ordination than on diversity	Peacebuilding is facilitated by a multitude of actors, more stress on diversity than on co-ordination

Norwegian Church Aid's approach to peacebuilding is likely to adopt the second tendency, because they support the civil society in Palestine, are engaged in humanitarian spheres, but also because NCA's commitment to development in Palestine is long-termed (Norwegian Church Aid 2011, p. 9). According to Haugerudbraaten, external participation in peacebuilding, such as the NCA, can hinder the indigenous actors from participating in peacebuilding. The external actors have to co-operate with the local organizations and actors for the peacebuilding to be successful (Haugerudbraaten 1998).

Haugerudbraaten sees that the purpose of peacebuilding is to avoid increase in violence and a relapse into conflict (Haugerudbraaten 1998). According to SIPRI, nation-building efforts can in fact avoid a return to conflict (SIPRI 1998, p. 39), and also lead to economic growth and prosperity in the society, which is important for peace (SIPRI 1998, p. 167).

Kalnes and Austvik mention the pallet of peacebuilding in their peacebuilding-approach (Kalnes, Austvik and Sørlie Røhr 2011, p. 198). According to Kalnes and Austvik this pallet[8] have to be introduced and implemented in the society for peace to sustain:



2.4.5 Conclusion

Peacebuilding as a concept was first conceptualized by Galtung, and has become an implemented approach in the UN since. Peacebuilding means to create peace in the society, and are relevant after a conflict. Supporting the civil society organizations are an important way of contributing to peacebuilding, because a strong civil society has the ability to influence the authorities in Palestine. The egalitarian perception distinctively says that FBOs has the ability, the finances and the networks to strengthen the local civil society, and create peace. Finally, SIPRI stress that since the purpose of peacebuilding is to avoid a return to conflict, and because a stable nation can prevent increase in violent actions, nation-building can be a means for peacebuilding (SIPRI-Unesco 1999, p. 39).

[8] The matrix was originally depicted in (Kalnes, Austvik and Sørlie Røhr 2011, p. 198)

2.5 Rights-based approach

The sub-question on rights-based approach is: In what way does the rights-based approach formulated by the NCA work as a means for nation-building? The theory on development work has gone through a change in the last few decades. In 1986, UN declared that all human beings have the right to development (Bergem and Ekeløve-Slydal 2009, p. 77). Ever since then, the focus has shifted consequently to a rights-based approach. This approach looks to strengthen the role of human rights within the area in which the FBO is committed. The basic understanding of the concept of rights-based approach draws a line between the duty bearers and the rights holders. The aim is getting the duty bearers to understand their responsibility towards the rights holders, and that the duty bearers act in accordance to the Human Rights (Norwegian Church Aid 2010, p. 10). The human rights-based approach is assessed on the level of human rights provided to the rights holders.

2.5.1 Universal Human Rights and NCA's understanding of RBA

The Human Rights Declaration was adopted in 1948 by the UN, and is applicable for all human beings (Bergem and Ekeløve-Slydal 2009, p. 14). The declaration contains rights and obligations universal for all human beings, and is founded on the principle of non-discrimination. Additionally all states are obliged to respect, protect and fulfill human rights by virtue of being members of the UN (Bergem and Ekeløve-Slydal 2009, pp. 21-22). The states are the main duty-bearers. The NCA has implemented rights-based approach as an important part of the entire organization (Norwegian Church Aid 2011, p. 12). Their rights-based approach is explicitly associated with the universal human rights, and encourages effective, accountable governance, and active citizens. This involves challenging the duty-bearers in Israel, Palestine and international actors, as much as empowering the rights-holders in Palestine (Norwegian Church Aid 2010, p. 10).

2.5.2 Faith-based organizations and rights-based approach

From a human rights-based perspective, poverty does not only come from a lack of resources, but mostly as a consequence of poor leadership and discrimination by the government (Schmitz 2012, p. 525). It becomes clear that the duty-bearers are the ones that are in control of the society. In this context this could mean both the Israeli and the Palestinian governments, as the following chapters will outline. Faith-based organizations can help

governments facilitate the rights-based approach in societies were there is a lack of human rights-focus. Additionally, FBOs – through the means of human rights-based approach – are expected to facilitate economic growth and recipient independence for the rights holders. It is often the case that NGOs and FBOs admitting right-based approach only have so much knowledge of the different aspects of rights-based approach (Hickey 2009, p. 8). One of the arguments against rights-based approach is that it focuses too much on the government as a duty-bearer, and not on corporate entities and individuals in the private sector (Haas 2014, p. 514). However, the duty bearer in the Palestinian context is doubtlessly the Israeli and Palestinian government (Norwegian Church Aid 2010, p 10).

2.5.3 Rights-based approach and nation-building

Rights-based approach is understood in the following way, according to Banik: it is a set of normative principles that guides the way in which development projects should be carried out, it is a set of indicators and instruments that can judge the development efforts. Rights-based approach is also a component that is integrated into programs of organizations such as the NCA. Finally rights-based approach justifies interventions aimed at strengthening institutions (Banik 2006, p. 314). Some organizations implement a couple of these dimensions, but according to Banik all of these dimensions should be taken into account in order to increase effectiveness in nation-building-projects (Banik 2006, p. 315). Another essential principle for organizations implementing rights-based approach is the 'do no harm'-principle. For organizations such as NCA, this entails that their programs and projects are carried out in the Palestinian community without committing human rights-violations (Banik 2006, p 315). Additionally, the programs and strategies of a rights-based approach organization are supposed to have human rights as the overall goal and reason for development. Rights-based approach to development seeks to make the Palestinian people active subjects of development through empowering them (Banik 2006, p. 316).

Especially relevant for Palestine is RBAs empowerment that seeks to secure the assets and property of the inhabitants by the rule of law in the national society (Banik 2006, p. 317). One of the major obstacles to implementing RBA as part of development strategy, is the restriction from political institutions. Haas is one of the scholars that stresses the importance of having political institutions that support the rights-based approach (Haas 2014, p. 515). He sees that there are some problems concerning implementation of rights-based approach. One of them is the state sovereignty, which can hinder rights to be fulfilled in a society (Haas 2014, p. 515).

Banik, on the other side, promotes rights-based approach's ability to securing accountability of the state to uphold human rights, and empowerment of the people so that they can claim their rights (Banik 2006, p. 318). RBA ensures effective participation, which means that the people are able to influence the government.

Implementing universal human rights in global societies are by some seen as Western imperialism (Bergem and Ekeløve-Slydal 2009, pp. 194-195). The critique comes from an understanding of norms and values differing in different cultures and universal human rights not considering local morals. According to the cultural relativists, universal human rights are not applicable in all societies, and should thereby consider local norms and values (Bergem and Ekeløve-Slydal 2009, pp. 194-195). Another accusation against the implementation of human rights is that universal human rights are undemocratic. The argument is that human rights are implemented in the society with little governmental influence (Bergem and Ekeløve-Slydal 2009, pp. 196-197). The universal human rights do not always represent the majority in how the government should treat individuals in the society, instead, human rights protect the minority whenever they are threatened by human rights-violations (Bergem and Ekeløve-Slydal 2009, p. 197).

2.5.4 Freedom and development

Amartya Sen is another influential scholar on development. Sen's view is that freedom that comes from rights-based approach is essential for development (Sen 1999, p. 4), hence also nation-building. He sees that freedom is important for development for two reasons: The first is the evaluative reason, where progress is measured on if the freedoms have increased. The second way that freedom is important for development, is due to the effectiveness reason – development is depending on the free agency of people (Sen 1999, p. 4). In conclusion, development depends on freedom. And by freedom people can achieve economic empowerment, political liberties and harvest the goods of health and educational institutions (Sen 1999, p. 5).

2.5.5 Conclusion

Rights-based approach is a way of implementing universal human rights into development programmes. RBA identifies rights-holders and duty-bearers, with the aim of strengthening the rights-holders, and challenging the duty-bearers. Rights-based approach seeks to strengthen the civil society and the institutions in the society, such as hospitals and schools.

Its critics can see the approach as cultural relativism, and undemocratic. However, as Amartya Sen recognise – human rights-freedom are essential for development.

3.0 Method

Method is an important part of the thesis. It clarifies which approach will be used when collecting data for the thesis. This chapter has been divided into the following paragraphs: the first sub-chapter will give a brief introduction to qualitative research. Then semi-structured interviewing will be discussed, before introducing the interviewees. The fourth sub-chapter will be helpful to understand how the NCA's basic document – country plan – will be used, before taking on the following chapter, which describes the contact between the researcher and the NCA. The final sub-chapter will discuss common limitations and obstacles when doing a qualitative research.

3.1 Qualitative research

The different types of methods are separated into two different kinds of main parts – the qualitative and the quantitative approach. And in many ways, these two headliner-methods are separated due to distinct differences. Qualitative research strategy focus on the inductive – that the scientific work may lead to creation of theory (Bryman 2012, p. 8), and that the theory is consistent and verifiable. Another issue that is very important for this thesis, is that a qualitative research makes us open interview-questions and that the interviewees are only a small group of people (Silverman 2010, p. 123). Interviewing only a small group of people is important for this thesis, because it should give in-depth insight into how they work. And it is important to get insight into how they work, in order to analyze if they contribute to nation-building. Another strength about qualitative research is that it gives insight and data from contexts that are unavailable with quantitative research (Silverman 2006, p. 43). Finally, qualitative research involves interpretivism, which means that the researcher understands the context through the actors' own understanding of the context (Bryman 2012, p. 380). This is important to recognize for my interviewing in Israel and Palestine, because it implies that much of the analysis should be dedicated to the interviewees.

3.2 Semi-structured interview

The different interviews conducted in Israel and Palestine is of a qualitative structure and has an interview build-up that is semi-structured. In a semi-structured interview, there are certain guidelines that the interviewer needs to fulfill. The approach to this type of interviewing, involves transforming the research question into an interview guide. So that the questions asked by the time of the interview shed light on the different key aspects of this particular

thesis. It will also open up for follow-up questions during the interviews. Allowing the researcher to pick up on new aspects that may occur during the interviews. Asking spontaneous questions one needs to be aware of a greater risk of falling into typical traps such as asking tendentious and leading questions (Bryman 2012, p. 474-475). As for the interview guide, this was developed thoroughly prior to the journey to the Middle East, due to the variety of organizations that were to be investigated. Asking relevant questions to each organization and interviewee depends on a thoroughly background check. And since there was only a limited amount of time to carry out the background check, it had to be done in a semi-structured manner prior to the interview process. This made it easier to look at other parts concerning each of the organizations, in a way that responded to the theories of which this thesis are depending on.

3.2.1 Sampling

Getting in touch with interview objects in a foreign country can bring about difficulties. However, the local office of the NCA in Jerusalem has been of great help. They have communicated my intentions to the interviewees, and even helped me set up interviews with the NCA's partner-organizations. Although this has been of great help, there was a risk of being provided with interviewees by the organization of which this thesis is all about. And that could lead to the thesis drawing on falsified conclusions and commentaries from the interviewees. Consequently, I did distinguish certain guidelines to provide me with a small amount of representative sample. Such sample was conducted through a purposive sampling. This purposive sampling assured that the ones that where sampled, also could answer questions relating to the research question (Bryman 2012, p. 418). The sampling was conducted in a way that gave a variation among the cases. The variation in cases comes from differences between partner-organizations connected to the NCA. Consequently, to measure the differences and getting insights into the partner-organizations, the cases had to be from both the Israeli and the Palestinian side. Although the selection of both organizations and interviewees is of purposive sort, there are still nuances within the purposive sampling. So in the choice of cases, the best way of getting results related to the research question is generated through the typical case sampling (Bryman 2012, p. 419).

All of the interviews were conducted with a tape recorder. The tape recorder was used in order to notice every little detail throughout the interview, besides it also made it easier to pick up on new topics during the process of interviewing. A total of eight interviews were

conducted, and of those eight, seven of them have been transcribed. The reason for not transcribing the last of the eight interviews was due to a mismatch between the interview topics and the knowledge base of the interviewee. In retrospect, this could have been avoided had the organization in which the interviewee was working, been told what spheres of theory and knowledge the research was looking into. The transcription is consistent with the aim of following different tips to transcription (Bryman 2012, p. 483-486). The organization in focus throughout this thesis is undoubtedly NCA. This is also accentuated in terms of the interviews. Three interviews were conducted with the NCA, two with EAPPI, one with LFW's schools in Bethlehem and one with Rabbis for Human Rights. They all lasted from twenty-five minutes to one hour and fifteen minutes, whereas the most thorough ones were with the NCA. The interviewees all had fairly good knowledge of the mandate related to their respective organization. This made it easier not to conduct more interviews than needed. Besides, the number of interviewees turned out to be adequate in the collection of data. Most of the interviewees answered in a way that opened up for follow-up questions. This flexibility is a key to pick up on subjects important to the interviewee (Kvale 2009, pp. 151).

3.3 The Interviewees

As mentioned earlier, there are four organizations partaking in the interviews, and the introduction to each organization is given in the following chapter. But it is in my understanding important to also distinguish the different interviewees as well. During my time in Israel and Palestine a total of seven interviews were recorded: three of them from the NCA, two from EAPPI, one from RHR and one from ELCJHL. Out of these seven interviewees, only the one from the EAPPI wanted to be anonymous. This chapter will also speak of the interviewees by their names. Accordingly, for the sake of understanding, I will give a brief introduction to the six others. The chronology given here is according to the chronology of the interviews, and should be understood likewise.

Interviewee number one is Rula Daghash from the NCA local office in Jerusalem. She is a Palestinian Muslim from Jerusalem that has been working as a program coordinator in the NCA since 2009. Her work is within livelihood and trade, faith-community center and peacebuilding.

Interview number two was with Ihab Barakat from the NCA local office in Jerusalem. He is also a Palestinian Muslim from East-Jerusalem. He has been working with emergency and development for about 15 years, and the last five with the NCA. He is a program coordinator at the NCA specializing in health and education.

The third interviewee was with the NCA Area Representative to the Middle East, Arne Næss-Holm. He is a Norwegian working with the NCA since 2008, and in Jerusalem since 2013.

The fourth interview was with a representative from the EAPPI. His name is Nader Hanna, and works as an advocacy officer at their office in Jerusalem. Nader is a Palestinian American Christian and has worked with EAPPI for five and a half years.

The fifth interview was with a woman working for the EAPPI. She is a Christian Palestinian. This particular interviewee wanted to remain anonymous.

The sixth interview was with Georgette Hasmoun from ELCJHL School in Bethlehem. She is a local Palestinian working as educational supervisor and development officer in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land.

The seventh interview was with Rabi Arik Ascherman of the RHR. He is the President of this particular organization. Born in America, but immigrated to Israel some 20 years ago.

3.4 Using the NCA Country Plan

Analyzing the NCA's strategies and programs in various parts of the world can hardly be done without a great focus on the organization's strategies and plans. Hence, to get a better understanding of how a faith-based organization in general, and NCA in particular can contribute to Palestinian nation-building, I want to use the Country Plan provided by NCA as a guideline. This will provide insight to what they as an organization see as their limits, but also more specifically how they can contribute to the Palestinian nation-building. Assessing the quality of the documents is important for the final outcome of the thesis. In this connection, Bryman has conducted four criteria that need to be fulfilled, in order to be classified as a document of a certain standard. Firstly, there is the question of authenticity. This evaluates whether or not the evidence in the text is genuine and of indisputable origin.

Secondly, there is the focus on credibility. The document at hand has to be flawless. If not, the degree of credibility will shrink. As a third criterion there is the focus on representativeness, which wants to see whether or not the documents is typical for its kind. Fourth and last – meaning. This last criterion looks into the document's comprehensibility (Bryman 2012, p. 544). All these criteria are relevant in the work with the NCA's documents.

3.5 Encountering the Norwegian Church Aid

Getting in touch with the NCA has been a time consuming project. The first meeting with one of the organization's employees was scheduled October 17th. The main reason for having the meeting was for me to get some more data, which the NCA had not published on their online web page. The response came on October 30th, through mail correspondence, which provided me with papers on their administrational work relating to both the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and to their work in Palestine. These papers will provide me with the necessary insight in to their way of argumentation, but nonetheless these papers could give insight as to how the NCA conducts its work, and what they see as main issues involving Palestine. After this first meeting, I was given the e-mail address of the NCA's area representative of the Middle East. This contact also worked as a gatekeeper when reaching out to the partner organizations of the NCA in Israel and Palestine. Encountering the NCA in Jerusalem made such arrangements possible. The first correspondence with the partner-organizations was done through e-mail, which made it easier to describe the intentions of the interviews, the length of the interviews and the number of participants acquired from each organization. The NCA local office composed the details concerning getting to the different partner organizations.

3.6 Methodological awareness

There are some limitations and challenges to qualitative research. And when dealing with both interviews and content analysis, different challenges arise. These challenges and limitations can suppress the results that are conducted, and thereby also lead to falsification of the data.

3.6.1 Data and trustworthiness

When working with a qualitative approach to social studies, it is important to consider the cornerstones for research measurement, with validity being one of them. Validity is focused

on the truth in the data (Silverman 2010, p. 275). Accordingly, validity seeks coherence between the research question and the data derived from the interviews. And additionally, if the research is measuring what it actually claim that it does (Repstad 2007, p. 134).

Reliability is about assessing how reliable the research is. Insofar as this measurement is relevant for the quality of the data – achieving reliability is to not ask leading questions during the interviews. In my view, the chance of asking leading questions was avoided by thoroughly reviewing the questions prior to the interviews. And I also believe that insofar as follow-up questions whenever they were asked, were unbiased.

They key to both of these quality measurements is to fulfill them. And to the extent that this is possible and important within qualitative research – I believe that the interview-data in this thesis is both true and reliable.

3.6.2 Cultural recognition

The fact that all of the interviews were conducted in a cultural setting unknown to the researcher, could lead to a poorer understanding of different codes and body language during the sampling. In addition there is a chance of misunderstanding when it comes to asking undeviating questions, but also having undeviating answers from the interviewee (Kvale 2009, p. 156). To avoid this from happening, certain criteria were developed to evaluate the quality of the qualitative research: the questions have to be direct and understandable for the interviewee. Only on two occasions did this not happen, and as a result the interviewee had to read from the interview guide to understand the question.

3.6.3 Unbiased atmosphere

Doing interviews creates an atmosphere were the interviewer and the interviewee seemingly speaks more openly about the different topics at hand. However, there is always a risk of the interviewee not speaking directly of experience, but rather giving a representation of the events. Besides, the interviews do not necessarily provide the interviewer with direct access to the facts (Silverman 2006, p. 117). Neglecting facts can undermine the findings and conclusions. Notwithstanding, this can – to some degree – be averted through being prepared and asking follow-up questions when interviewing.

Interviewing within qualitative frames does not uphold two-sided stories. There is a common understanding that qualitative interviews are partial (Kvale 2009, p. 179), and that the interviews thereby give an unreasonably big amount of focus on the data from the ones that are conducted – this is especially evident in a context such as the Israeli/Palestinian one. So to prevent this imprecision from happening, the interviews are collected from both sides of the conflict.

Doing interviews that are impartial from the interviewee's point of view are challenging. And there is still a risk of the interviewer not picking up on important details during the interviews. Either way, the combination of collecting data from interviews and looking at basic documents should give a fair amount of unbiased information.

3.6.4 Reviewing content analysis

Using basic documents from the NCA can provide great insight and information to the field of which one is doing a scientific study. If the analysis is verifiable, the research might bring new insights to the specific field. However, passive obedience to the content that is being analyzed does not necessarily lead towards a greater understanding of the subject. It is in fact so that the document issued as part of the analysis may be short on information and poorly revised, which might lead to shortcoming in the content analysis (Bryman 2012). Another thing that became clear in the wake of the interviews was NCA's understanding of their own Country Plan. Clearly, they use it as a guideline for their intervention and actions, but it has more of a normative standard. Consequently, it is by my understanding necessary to supplement the Country Plan with interviews to give a satisfactory answer to the research question.

3.7 Ethical considerations

Bryman use four different ethical principles that I have to consider when conducting the interviews. (1) Whether there is harm to participants, (2) whether there is a lack of informed consent, (3) whether there is invasion of privacy and (4) whether deception is involved (Bryman 2012, p. 135). Not doing harm to participants has been considered in every step of the way, from conducting the interviews to handling the transcripts; after I will be done with the transcripts, they will be deleted. Informed consent is important to protect the interviewees. To make sure that all the interviews were conducted with informed consent I gave the

interviewees a form prior to the interview. This form gave a brief introduction to how I was going to use the data, and whether or not the interviewees wanted to be anonymous. All of the interviews were conducted at the workplace of the interviewees. This made sure that I did not invade their privacy. Finally, deception was not involved in the interviews, because the way I presented the thesis then, is similar to what the thesis investigates now.

4.0 Exploring the work of the NCA and its partner-organizations in Palestine

4.1 Norwegian Church Aid

As mentioned previously, the NCA have been working with humanitarian aid since their very beginning in 1947. It started out as cooperation between different Christian denominations in Norway. Since then, the NCA has become a member of the ACT Alliance, which is a global church and organizational alliance. This membership makes it possible to increase the efficiency and determination, which can ensure eradication of poverty and injustice. The further outlining of the NCA's work will supplement the paragraphs in a previous chapter that also spoke of the NCA's organizational history and structure. That is why the following will concentrate on their work in Israel and Palestine.

According to the NCA's own report from 2013, the NCA is an ecumenical and diaconal organization working for global justice (Norwegian Church Aid 2013, p. 9). Their work is also related to eradication of poverty and injustice through cooperation with partner-organizations. The NCA should be understood as an organization without missionary statements – there is no intention of influencing people's religious affiliations (Norwegian Church Aid 2013, p. 9). They seek to address the root causes of poverty, and their work is consistent in its advocacy for just decisions by public authorities, private enterprises and religious leaders (Norwegian Church Aid 2013, p. 9). The NCA works for long-term development and gives humanitarian assistance to local communities. The organization is committed as a faith-based organization, and is using Biblical scripture to emphasize their faith-based approach:

> We are inspired by the parable of the Good Samaritan (in Luke 10), and perform our service together with people and organisations that share our values. (Norwegian Church Aid 2008, p. 7).

There is an understanding within the NCA, that religion can be used to subdue people, however, they also state that religion can aspire justification and commitment to humanitarian values. The NCA's work is understood as a commitment to the latter (Norwegian Church Aid 2008, p. 7).

4.1.1 Norwegian Church Aid's Middle East Approach

The understanding of NCA's work in Israel and Palestine derives from a contextualization of their Country Plan, and data collected from interviews with employees in the NCA Middle East office. Hence, the understandings of the organizational work in Palestine and Israel should be adequate and satisfactory.

The NCA Country Plan for the Occupied Palestinian Territory with Israel and faith-based organizations in the Middle East gives an introduction to their work in the Middle East. Their engagement in the region started in 1954 with providing help to Palestinian refugees on the Mount of Olives (Norwegian Church Aid, 2010). There are at the time being two administrative staff and two program staff in addition to the expatriate resident representative working at the NCA Jerusalem office (Norwegian Church Aid, 2010), all of which have different areas of commitment.

The NCA's work in Palestine and Israel is primarily focused on cooperation with their partner-organizations. They are not operational, which means that their work is highly depending on that their partnership is satisfactory. It is their partner-organizations that deliver services to the people. Accordingly, the relationship between the NCA and their partner-organizations has to be a relationship of trust. The thesis will speak more on the role that their partner-organizations has. But what can be said is that their partner-organizations vary from churches, faith-based organizations and civil society organizations in Israel and Palestine (Norwegian Church Aid, 2010).

According to the NCA's own Country Plan for the Occupied Palestinian Territory (oPt) with Israel and FBOs in the Middle East, there are different strategies that they engage in. There is a list of five different intervention strategies, of which the Middle East office has chosen two. These two main intervention strategies are Right to Peace and Security, and Economic Justice (Norwegian Church Aid 2010, p. 9). And to achieve economic justice and right to peace and security, the NCA have developed four subcategories known as program areas that give an in-depth understanding of the NCA's work. Rights to Peace and Security's two program areas are Women, Peace and Security, and Faith Communities and Peace Building. The Economic Justice programs are concerned with Livelihood and Trade, and Access to Quality Health Care. The functions of these programs are to correspond to the intervention strategies.

The NCA gets its funding from different actors, with the main funding source being the Norwegian government 76% (Norwegian Church Aid 2010, p. 13). The NCA Country Plan for Israel and Palestine emphasize that they also get funding from Norad 14%, some support from the ACT Alliance 6% and from the NCA's own fundraising 4%. This means that the NCA have solid support from the Norwegian government, which is highly relevant, because the development objectives of the Norwegian state and the NCA are quite similar – where the Norwegian government sees its role as to contribute towards Palestinian state building, the NCA defines its role to contribute towards Palestinian nation-building by strengthening Palestinian church and faith-based organizations and their institutions (Norwegian Church Aid 2010, p. 8). The NCA strongly believe that these institutions can make a solid foundation wall in the new Palestinian state to come. They emphasize the schools run by the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Jordan and the Holy Land as one of these pillars, which are also mentioned previously and in the following of the thesis.

The NCA carries a rights-based approach on its way to strengthening the Palestinian civil society. This rights-based approach is an important characteristic of the NCA, and it is also evident that they look at partner-organizations with the same idealistic approach. Another subject affiliated with rights-based approach is advocacy, which is a respected strategy for influencing decision-makers. Emergency preparedness and response, advocacy and long-term development through rights-based approach are highly regarded in the NCA (Norwegian Church Aid 2011, p. 12), and it is therefore also natural that the NCA looks for partner-organizations with the same ideals.

The NCA has identified four different kinds of partnerships: (1) Core partners; with the ability to work in the local context, legitimacy in the local context and part of local networks in Palestine and Israel. The ELCJHL and the RHR are typical core partners (2) Program support, the support of local sectors and themes, (3) Resource organizations, which are specialized professional institutions and organizations. The NCA's cooperation with Radiumhospitalet and Betanien Nursing School to strengthen the capacities at the Augusta Victoria Hospital, are typical partnership of resource organizations. (4) Strategic alliances; this refers to the partnership with ACT Alliance, WCC and WWC's programme EAPPI (Norwegian Church Aid 2011, p. 25).

4.2 Rabbis for Human Rights

Rabbis for Human Rights (RHR) also acknowledge the ideals recently mentioned. This is a Jewish organization that pursues human rights for the Palestinian and Israeli people. The organization was founded in 1988 during the first intifada, and it is the only rabbinic organization explicitly dedicated to human rights (Ascherman, 2015, interview). Their areas of commitment are those where Israel has taken responsibility, which would imply both East Jerusalem and the West Bank (Wang 2011, p. 100). Some 100 Israeli rabbis and rabbinical students from Conservative, Orthodox and Reform Judaism fulfill RHR's commitments to human rights (rhr.org.il, 3.26.2015).

RHR is acknowledged by the NCA as one of their most important partners working with human rights. Their method of reaching the Palestinian population is fairly proactive, and involves different projects. Among the projects is the Olive Tree Campaign, which secures Palestinian agricultural access. There is also a great deal of emphasis on advocacy for Palestinian victims of harassment and house demolition.

> Our ongoing presence in the field and immediate response to violations continues to be the most effective way to address the challenges on the ground (Rabbis for Human Rights 2013, p. 7).

Besides RHR's presence in the field, they also have a legal department with a focus of:

> Preventing or reversing the takeover of Palestinian lands and ensuring that Palestinian farmers can safely access those lands. (Rabbis for Human Rights 2013, p. 13)

Their socioeconomic justice department helps unemployed and under-employed to demand their socioeconomic rights. And then there is the education department, which teaches the connection between Judaism and human rights to young people (Rabbis for Human Rights 2013, p. 27). RHR is also involved in public housing, which provides homes for Israelis. It is their help to the Palestinian community that is of particular interest for the NCA. The NCA sees RHR as one of their most important partners in the NCA's peace building program (Næss-Holm, 2015, interviewee). Hence, there is reason to think of RHR's work as promoting peace.

RHR's testifies their mission clearly on their webpage, which this extract display:

> Our mission is to inform the Israeli public about human rights violations, and to pressure the State institutions to redress these injustices. In a time in which a nationalist and isolationist understanding of Jewish tradition is heard frequently and loudly, Rabbis for Human Rights give expression to the traditional Jewish responsibility for the safety and welfare of the stranger, the different and the weak, the convert, the widow and the orphan. (rhr.org.il, 3.26.2015).

This extract indicates that RHR combines Judaism and human rights-work in a way that is concurrent with a faith-based approach.

4.3 Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel

Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel (EAPPI) is a program founded by the World Council of Churches (WCC) in the wake of the Second Intifada back in 2000 (eappi.org, 3.27.2015). EAPPI's mission is to witness life under occupation, strive for just peace for Palestinians on the West Bank, publish reports that establish awareness of the situation Palestinians are living in, and finally to get the international community to react to the injustice happening in Palestine (eappi.org, 3.27.2015). EAPPI's vision is to end the Israeli occupation of the West Bank, and to create an environment where both Israelis and Palestinians experience just peace and respect for international law (eappi.org, 3.27.2015). Nader Hanna, one of the interviewees, spoke about the daily work of the Ecumenical Accompaniers (EAs):

> Essentially on any given day, we have roughly between 25-35 international volunteers called ecumenical accompaniers (EA). And we break them in down to teams of 4-6 individuals, and these teams are located in 7 locations around the West Bank. We call these locations placements, because they're not just covering the location on which they're based, but each placement has a periphery of about 30 villages that they're covering. (Nader Hanna, interviewee).

Evidentially, EAs is a group of volunteers from all over the world. It is they who report on incidents on the West Bank. These volunteers are people from all denominations with an urge of establishing human rights for Palestinians. They are put in teams for about 3 months, before returning home to speak of their experience. The EAs knowledge and experience is considered a way of increasing international knowledge of the occupation, and as an asset for a peaceful and just resolution to the Israeli/Palestinian conflict (eappi.org 3.27.2015).

Clearly, EAPPI is highly depended on its volunteers. It is primarily the volunteers that are in the field, albeit EAPPI officers coordinating the proceedings. The EAs are dealing with issues such as Palestinian access to the Seam Zone[9], monitoring the checkpoints[10] around the West Bank to see how the Palestinians are treated and if there are any limitations in terms of restricted access. The EAs are also monitoring children's access to education from within the

[9] The Seam Zone being the are of land that is East of the 1949 armistice line, but West of the barrier (http://www.cjpmo.org/DisplayDocument.aspx?DocumentID=69 3.30.2015)
[10] Israeli authorities control the checkpoints.

Seam Zone to the West Bank and vice versa. Their job also includes monitoring anything that goes from vandalism to harassment and settler violence (Nader Hanna, interviewee). Besides this, EAs and EAPPI's mandate in the West Bank is protective presence and protective advocacy. Protective presence is basically to monitor abuse and harassment, and protective advocacy involves raising a profile of cases of demolitions, confiscation and evictions for the international community to experience what is happening in the West Bank, with the goal of having these cases delayed or not implemented (Nader Hanna, interviewee).

The NCA and EAPPI have close relations. They are both emphasizing advocacy as a key to transform the present context into conflict resolution. Besides, the NCA is acknowledged for facilitating recruitment of volunteers:

> NCA is also involved in recruitment, which is the most important, to be able to recruit people who are professional and capable of doing the task and what entails to be an ecumenical accompanier. So they (NCA), they're advertised – they do interviews, they receive applications, they do tests, and they also test them before they come here. And when they go back home, NCA is also coordinating their advocacy efforts back home (Nader Hanna, interviewee).

Nader Hanna also spoke about the relevance of EAPPI's relationship and cooperation with the NCA in general:

> It's very important. Because all of our partners, Norway I believe, are actually the largest participator, we have different national coordinators in every country. We have about 25 countries participating right now, but by far, the largest participating country is first and foremost Norway. NCA is funding, and facilitates so that candidates are able to come and participate in this program (Nader Hanna, interviewee).

There are evidently connections between the NCA and EAPPI, of which Arne Næss-Holm emphasizes in the interview when talking about which organization he sees as most relevant in NCA's peacebuilding work:

> Yes, it is definitely EAPPI – for me it is the EAPPI alongside RHR that is most relevant for us in our (NCA) peace-programme (Næss-Holm, interviewee).

The narrative report from 2013 on EAPPI's accomplishments in Israel and Palestine talks about the importance of ecumenical cooperation and ecumenical diakonia (World Council of

Churches, 2013) – this is in line with NCA's organizational theory that also emphasizes diakonia[11] as an asset for their work.

4.4 The Schools of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land (ELCJHL) has four different schools on the West Bank. Although the interview data was gathered at Dar-Al Kalima School in Bethlehem, the interviewee was working with educational supervision and development at all four schools, additionally the NCA funds all four. Accordingly, the paragraph on ELCHJL should cover the four schools in general terms.

The schools of Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land are based in Bethlehem, Beit Sahour, Ramallah and Beit Jala. There are the Dar al-Kalima Evangelical Lutheran School, the Evangelical Lutheran School in Beit Sahour, the Evangelical Lutheran School of Hope in Ramallah and finally the Talitha Kumi Evangelical Lutheran School. These schools give education to children regardless of gender, race, religion or ability to pay (elcjhl.org 4.1.2015). The educational institution is crucial for the children, and also as an institution, education is important for nation-building. Giving children the right to education, strengthens the rights-based approach, which the NCA regards as a one of their main priorities.

The schools are based on Christian values. However, the schools educate children regardless of religious background:

> Some locations we have Christians more than Muslims, other locations like in Ramallah we have more Muslims than Christians – around 70 percent Muslims and 30 percent Christians. In Beit Sahour we have 80 percent Christians, 20 percent Muslims. Here (Dar al-Kalima), it's nearly 60/40 with the majority being Christians. The same as Talitha Kumi. (Georgette Rabadi, interviewee)

This extract is on the same level as ELCHJL's philosophy, which emphasizes non-discrimination. In addition to non-discrimination, the schools are focused on a holistic

[11] The diakonal mission of Norwegian Church aid is anchored in the Church's faith in the Holy Trinity (Norwegian Church Aid, 2008)

approach, which is concerned with mental, physical, psychological, spiritual and social aspects of human life (daralkalima.com 4.1.2015).

ELCHJL's mission statement implies that they have something in common with the mission statement of the NCA – they both want to participate in diakonia and to serve the poor and weak (elcjhl.org 4.1.2015). Additionally, ELCHJL want to take part in peace education – which they do in their schools (Georgette Rabadi, interviewee). According to ELCHJL's web page, they want to be a catalyst for peace, create a paradigm of Christian-Muslim relations, they seek to live in coexistence with Jews, engage in interfaith dialogue and encourage peace in the Middle East, and finally they see themselves as the salt in the society (elcjhl.org 4.1.2015). Hence, the ELCHJL seeks to become bridge builders between religious groups on the West Bank.

5.0 Findings

A total of seven interviewees from four different organizations were interviewed during my time in Israel and Palestine. As mentioned before, the main capacity is the NCA supplemented by three of its partner-organizations. The NCA is also partners with other organizations, but these three are the most relevant for the NCA's peacebuilding, nation-building and rights-based approach in my view. The interviews tries to shed light on each of the organizations own focus on nation-building, their standing as a faith-based organization, rights-based approach as a method for helping the rights holders, their relation to the NCA and lastly if they understand themselves as a organization working for peacebuilding. All of these aspects were an overt part of the questions throughout the process of interviewing. This made it easier to categorize different key aspects, as well as making it easier for the interviewees to give supplementary answers. It is with these categories in mind the following paragraphs are formulated.

5.1 Being faith-based in Palestine and Israel

Norwegian Church Aid and its partner-organizations are all faith-based. Their faith-basis is subject to one of the sub-questions in the introduction, and accordingly this faith-basis was also subject for the interviews: what sort of advantages and disadvantages are related to faith-based organizations, Norwegian Church Aid in particular, in the process of nation-building? The interview data gave me several answers.

5.1.1 Added values of FBOs

The NCA's faith-based identity is something that the organization highly valuate:

> Being faith-based comes from our constituency, which are the Norwegian churches. This faith-basis is also stated in our strategy and principle documents. So we want to support the organizations that are alike us (Næss-Holm, interviewee).

Næss-Holm gives this reason for why they are working with other faith-based organizations in Israel and Palestine:

> We support other faith-based organizations because they are important actors for change in this context – more so than in the European context. Additionally, we have much of the same

> interests for the situation and for change, which makes it easy to cooperate (Næss-Holm, interviewee).

Part of Norwegian Church Aid's reasoning is that being faith-based is an advantage for their work in Palestine and Israel. The following extract shows the importance of religion in the Israeli/Palestinian context:

> You know, because they (FBOs) have more access than other organizations to reach more people. It is very important since we are in the Holy Land with three religions in the same area, and the conflict itself is turning a bit towards religious conflict, besides being a conflict between two people on one land (Barakat, interviewee).

What's more, Barakat spoke of the relevance of being faith-based in the Israeli/Palestinian context:

> I think that faith-based organizations, they are the ones that direct the dialogue between the three religions, and have better outreach than others because they know how to get into dialogue in a way that is more acceptable for religious people and how they can tackle issues. Besides, FBOs have a good reputation in their communities, and thereby have larger outreach and they are trusted (Barakat, interviewee).

So it seems that knowledge and understanding of the religious factors involved could be key to setting up dialogue between religious actors. But there are issues where FBOs outreach is not adequate:

> We have both FBO-partners and secular partners. Because we know that there are needs that might not be covered by faith-based organizations (Daghash, interviewee).

5.1.2 Some FBOs struggles

The findings suggest that it sometimes can be difficult to operate as FBO:

> It's challenging because we have different denominations. We don't have one unity. And especially the Muslim FBOs experience problems, and so they started to hide their identity, because they where targeted by Israel and Fatah. We did a study that said that Muslim FBOs

> operated, but hid their identity, due to fear of accusations. But the Christian FBOs do not experience these kinds of issues (Daghash, interviewee).

It became clear the Muslim FBOs are targeted:

> They have to defend themselves, and say that we are Muslims, not Hamas. If one is accused of being part of Hamas, you might end up in jail (Daghash, interviewee).

The NCA is a Christian organization. Consequently, I wondered how explicit this identity was in meeting other organizations:

> Most of the organizations that we work with are Christians. But we also have some non-religious organizations. The Christian organizations have played a role in teaching how people with different religious background can live together (Barakat, interviewee).

Another of the interviewees from the NCA confirmed that the Christian identity isn't a problem:

> We don't have this discriminatory problem between Christians and Muslims here. So it is not a problem acting as a Christian organization (Daghash, interviewee).

5.1.3 Coordinating partner-organizations

The main research question asks if strengthening Palestinian FBOs and churches can contribute towards nation-building. Part of what I looked into in the interviews, was the degree of influence the NCA has on its partner-organizations:

> There are two different levels here. There is the level of values, and since we are working with FBOs, they have most of the same values as the NCA. It's very important with transfer of knowledge and capacity building for those (partner) organizations and how they should work. We have different values that we transfer – management issues, human resources, efficiency and documentation. Accountability is the main goal – and we come with a systematic approach that we implement. So we try to assist our partners so that they get even better (Barakat, interviewee).

This assistance to partner-organizations is highly valuated in the NCA:

> We have this capacity building-programme where we share our gaps, and we say "ok, maybe you need this kind of capacity building." We are like companions where we support our partners in certain issues, and we also facilitate meetings and visitations. But we don't influence our values. We see who's close to NCA's values, and then choose our partners (Daghash, interviewee).

Barakat says that this influence is legitimate:

> I think it is legitimate, because every time we meet you can see they are eager to get this values added from NCA. We did a seminar a while ago, and what happened was that our partner-organizations wanted to learn accountability from the NCA (Barakat, interviewee).

Næss-Holm also speaks about the NCA's influence. He says that it is legitimate, but acknowledges that there can be issues with the NCA funding its partner-organizations:

> When all is said and done, we are the ones giving out funds. And this can of course affect our partners (Næss-Holm).

5.1.4 Advantage of being faith-based

Norwegian Church Aid has a faith-based identity. This identity is recognized as the NCA's added value. When asked about the advantages of being faith-based, interviewee Daghash addressed the NCAs added value for different reasons:

> The advantages? This is about the added value in NCA as a faith-based organization in the country. Another advantage is that we are church-based, but also cover everybody, and that we provide services for everybody, so we have this trust among the community. And we are welcomed by anyone (Daggash, interviewee).

Daghash also addressed the fact that the NCA is a rather small organization in the Israeli/Palestinian context:

> NCA is a small institution here in the country with high competitors around. We have like more than 250 international organizations in the country, including most of the influential, like the USA Aid and the European Union (Daghash, interviewee).

Even though the NCA is a rather small organization in the broader picture, Daghash emphasize the NCA's added value as key to become an influential organization:

> But what we consider as an added value for the NCA, even with the limited funds we have, with the small size we have, is that we get access to churches, which is very hard to get and very hard to deal with. They (the churches) do not easily trust or work with others.

The access to church-communities was emphasized by Næss-Holm as well:

> Being an FBO makes it easier to get in touch with other FBOs here in this context. There is also the global ACT Alliance, which gives us the advantage of being stronger together. Additionally, the faith-based identity gives us the opportunity of having a clear voice in the society, and it gives us the opportunity of entering and cooperating with other FBOs (Næss-Holm, interviewee).

The findings suggest that global church networks is important for faith-based organizations:

> The networks that we are working with globally that unite the churches together and they have common work together. So this is an added value, because we then have like louder voices (Daghash, interviewee).

The findings also suggest that there is another added value related to the NCA:

> Being Norwegian is very good – it is an advantage. When people (Palestinians) hear that this is a Norwegian organization, they say "they're friends with Palestinians, we can trust them and work with them." And this is very good, because most of the countries are perceived by the Palestinians as not supporting their cause (Daghash, interviewee).

EAPPI is a program of World Council of Churches, and thereby part of a big faith-based network. Hanna from EAPPI said the following, when asked about the advantages of being faith-based:

> We're tolerated I believe at large because of our church background. Shared values with other FBOs are also an advantage (Hanna, interviewee).

5.1.5 Faith-based in Israel

Rabbis for Human Rights are located in Israel and works for human rights on the West Bank. Rabi Ascherman spoke of the advantage of being faith-based:

> There are advantages and there are disadvantages, here for two very important reasons. First of all, there are, you know, there are parts of the world where, if you are a religious leader you are automatically sometimes even put on a pedestal and given credit (Ascherman, interviewee).

This next extract explains the importance of religion in Israel and Palestine:

> In this country, on the one hand in our region of the world, religion is an incredible powerful force. It is the thing, it's not just a matter of going to synagogue, or a church or a mosque or temple once a week. But it really is a thing that drives people and guide what they do from the moment they get up in the morning, to the time they go to sleep at night. So religion is very important (Ascherman, interviewee).

The findings also suggest that faith-based organizations are in a position where they can be an influential force on religious spheres and groups:

> Those religious Jews who feel differently, kind of feel isolated, sometimes just looked to us as a home or something, or a symbol. And many people including secular Jews want to feel, even if they are secular that there is roots in our Jewish tradition, and that there is things that they believe in (Ascherman, interviewee).

Being faith-based can be an advantage for several reasons:

> I think also the fact that we are rabbis gives us an in, in much of the Jewish community abroad, which is also important. Where I think sometimes we have more of an ability to get our foot in the door and be heard in places where some of our fellow Israeli activists wouldn't be invited in this kind of thing (Ascherman, interviewee).

But being faith-based and working for human rights in Israel and Palestine has its disadvantages:

> I think even people that support human rights, people that are on the left politically, many of them had this negative view of human rights organizations. It seems that many of them think

> that we are arrogant, that we think we have all the truth. One of the most effective things we can do to get a second hearing, is to be more human – that maybe we don't have all the answers, and that we also make mistakes (Ascherman, interviewee).

The public opinion of RHR and its faith-basis is stated in this next extract:

> So I would say that the way we are seen by our fellow Israelis is somewhat mixed. Some people, you have a full range from people being very positive, to very, very negative (Ascherman, interviewee).

5.1.6 Faith-based organization in Gaza

Gaza is suffering from the Israeli embargo. The area that constitutes Gaza is under severe pressure from Israel, with houses that are bombed out, infrastructure and public services being unable to support the public. Consequently, Gaza is in need of help from outside. And the NCA is one organization trying to provide assistance to the people of Gaza. However, just as the next extract emphasizes, there are certain challenges to working within this territory:

> The fact that Norwegian organizations can have dialogue where most organizations boycott Hamas is important. Of course, if you want to operate in Gaza, you need to have this communication with the government. And Hamas is the government now, they are the de facto government in Gaza. And if you want to operate, if you want to benefit the people that are in dire need, you have to do this kind of dialogue. Even if it is on a minimal level, which is introducing yourself and saying what we're doing and with whom we're working (Daghash, interviewee).

Rula Daghash speaks further about the challenges the NCA encounter in Gaza. And now on the issues with being a faith-based organization working in a political context:

> There are little things that can be done without being accused of anything. Your only mission as faith-based organization is to serve the people who need you – not to think about the political effect of your actions, which then will leave Gaza people alone (Daghash, interviewee).

The fear of being accused of supporting Hamas has led to withdrawing of funds from Gaza:

> And many donors withdrew their funds from Gaza, this is because Hamas is the government and they are worried that they'll be accused of supporting Hamas.

Despite this, the NCA is still operating in Gaza:

> This is not what we did. We still operate in Gaza, and we have one partner that is highly depended on the NCA to operate in Gaza, because everybody pulls out funds.

5.1.7 Relationship with the NCA

My research question tries to solve if and how strengthening faith-based organizations could be part of nation-building. And besides, the main research question is focused on the relationship between the NCA and its partner-organizations. Consequently, the interviews was concerned with the relationship between the NCA and its partner-organizations. One thing that I found especially interesting, was whether the partner-organization could continue its activities without the help from the NCA:

> The thing is that we can do that, but we need time. In the time being, I think these institutions and organizations really help us in staying as we are, with the success we have in the Palestinian community, offering a lot of services to the students, and to the people here. Maybe it (independence from FBOs) can be done. We're working also on getting independence, as a country and as an institution (Rabadi, interviewee).

Another thing that was brought up during the interviews, was how much the NCA depends on its partner-organizations:

> We're not operational. That means that we don't go to the field and work and operate, and we don't have direct communication with beneficiaries. We depend highly and on and trust our partners to deliver services and to find out what the needs are (Daghash, interviewee).

EAPPI also spoke of their relations with the NCA:

> It's very important. NCA is doing the recruiting, they do the tests, and train the EAs before the get here (Anonymous, interviewee).

Another point that is interesting, is EAPPI's approach to the occupation, which is similar to the NCA's:

> We do have the ultimate goal of ending the occupation (Hanna, interviewee).

Finally, RHR spoke about their relationship with the NCA:

> On a certain level, one could say that it doesn't matter whether the financial support comes from a faith-based organization or not. One could even argue that in this country to get support from non-Jews and outside this country is a thing that can be used to attack us. However, I find it meaningful that with all the things that perhaps divide us, there are still things that unite us (Ascherman, interviewee).

5.1.8 Conclusion

The sub-research question in this sub-chapter is: what sorts of advantages or disadvantages are related to faith-based organizations, Norwegian Church Aid in particular, in the process of nation-building? The NCA are part of networks such as ACT Alliance and WCC, which is conceived as giving the NCA a solid stand when advocating for Palestinian nation-building. Being faith-based is also conceived as making it easier to access churches, and have influence on the civil society. Additionally, the NCA have a longitudinal perspective on their programs (Norwegian Church Aid 2011, p. 9), which might make it easier to work for nation-building. Now and again Muslim FBOs encounter opposition when operating, because their Muslim-basis are associated with Hamas (Daghash, interviewee).

5.2 Nation-building

The NCA writes in their Country Plan for Israel and Palestine that their work is associated with Palestinian nation-building (Norwegian Church Aid 2011, p. 8). Accordingly, the first area of investigation should be about this particular subject. In this connection, it is important to keep in mind the research question: how can strengthening Palestinian churches and faith-based organizations and their institutions contribute towards Palestinian nation-building? The collected interview-data will shed light on the accomplishments of FBOs.

5.2.1 Approaching decision-makers as a means for development

The first interview was with an the NCA-representative Rula Daghash. She spoke of issues when approaching the Palestinian and Israeli government.

> Here in this context it's very hard to say that we are influencing decision-makers like Israel, the State of Israel to change, because they are a strong country with their own agenda. And they don't even give any attempt to listen to the International community (Daghash, interviewee).

This is one of the major issues of being a minor organization in a context where politics is a key to nation-building. So instead of just targeting the Israeli and Palestinian governments, the NCA are targeting other influential actors.

> We work on a grassroot-level in Norway, but we also target EU-members and EU-parliament through our networks with others such as the Network of Church-based Organization for Lobbying and Advocacy (Daghash, interviewee).

There is also a focus on the domestic audience.

> But when we talk about our Norwegian audience, we are talking about ordinary people who's hearing the in the news that there are some problems in Palestine/Israel. However, they do not necessarily know the reality. So we are raising awareness among the Norwegian people that you in a way are supporting the occupation by buying settlements products (Daghash, interviewee).

Approaching decision-makers, and advocating for rights-based approach is not easily feasible. But Daghash says that the NCA's participation in networks could be a means for approaching decision-makers:

> Being part of bigger networks and alliances, I think we can influence on some of the injustice actions by both the Palestinian and Israeli government (Daghash, interviewee).

5.2.2 Strategies for reaching nation-building

The NCA have in its Country Plan pronounced that they will work towards Palestinian nation-building. Accordingly, it is interesting to look at some of their strategies for nation-building. Rula Daghagsh talks about their strategies in the NCA.

> The Palestinian nation-building? Well, this is, to strengthen the civil-society organizations in the country. We see that through working with civil-society organizations, and giving them the power and the skills and the capacity to take decisions and to act, and building the capacities in terms like accountability, transparency, anti-corruption, procedures, code of conduct – all of this leads to development of the civil-society organizations, which will ensure that the civil-society organizations will remain strong, and that they in the future can push for a solution to nation-building (Daghash, interviewee).

Næss-Holm is also emphasizing on the civil society:

> A strong and vivid civil society is the cornerstone of a democratic state. NCA supports the civil society through different means (Næss-Holm, interviewee).

In addition, Næss-Holm mentions the support of institutions as a means for nation-building:

> Supporting civil society org. and Palestinian institutions are our main approaches to Palestinian nation-building. We support institutions like Augusta Victoria hospital, which also secure the Palestinian presence here in Jerusalem. We believe that institutions are an important part of a robust and independent Palestinian nation (Næss-Holm, interviewee).

The NCA is not only working towards other organizations. There is also a belief in the NCA that raising awareness amongst the Palestinian population of their rights should be part of nation-building. Rula spoke of this.

> We also believe that raising awareness among the Palestinians, that they actually have rights they can ask for, is important because we then ensure that they mobilize themselves (Daghash, interviewee).

Economical empowerment is an important part of nation-building. But economical empowerment is also a melting pot for other approaches – it is based on rights-based approach, because it involves the right to work, and it is also highly relevant for peacebuilding, because it removes some of the frustration:

> In Gaza we're supporting life income generating projects. These projects will not make them wealthy, but they will have something to live for. This will reduce violence and frustration in

> the Palestinian community. Because when you cannot support and protect your family, you get frustrated. And we give small projects for women, so that they feel as an important part of the society (Daghash, interviewee).

One of the other interviewees from the NCA emphasized other elements that are part of nation-building:

> I will come back to what we are doing actually here in Jerusalem – trying to build institutions for the nation-buildingal building. So what we do, is we are actually targeting different goals or objectives in East Jerusalem through our work, like through our work with the Augusta Victoria hospital for example (Barakat, interviewee).

The NCA's work involves building institutions:

> We are building institutions in Jerusalem, and we are reserving institutions in Jerusalem as well as in Gaza and the West Bank, where we are contributing to building institutions, and at the same reserving the lands and helping getting institutions to a level that is higher than it is a this point (Barakat, interviewee).

Part of what I found in the interviews, was that the NCA organize workshops for their partner-organizations. These workshops are one element for bringing the organizations closer together, and to coordinate them. Workshops is also a way of strengthening the local institutions:

> One example of where we urge the institutions to reach a higher level is with the hospital. The other example is the local institutions, specifically the national and the faith-based organizations that we are working with. We are working on putting guidelines in a more documented and systematic way, through for example our work with the humanitarian partnership, which is about accountability and how to document the different processes in the organization, to assure accountability and raise up the level and the capacity of the organization (Barakat, interviewee).

Barakat spoke about the importance of the NCA's focus on capacity building:

> We are doing this in a systematic way, through our ACT-partners and non-ACT-partners. We are actually working with different Israeli organizations as well, such as Rabbis for Human

> Rights. They are participating in our workshops, and they are part of this process as well. They participated in the help trainings, and they actually developed their accountability frameworks statement at one of our workshops recently. So this is where we actually raise the local institutions and build the nation or the national institutions inside Palestine (Barakat, interviewee).

The findings indicate that the NCA emphasize workshops as a way of strengthening partner-organizations. Effectiveness is key to development. And one of the things that the interview looked into, was how nation-building strategies could be more effective:

> I think raising the capacity of the national (Palestinian) institutions; it will definitively have an impact on the national level (Barakat, interviewee).

Barakat then gave some examples of what the NCA where doing to raise the capacity of the institutions:

> We are building capacities in for example Augusta Victoria hospital. Through cooperation with Norwegian health institutions, like the Diakonhjemmet nursing school, Bergen Betanien nursing school and Radiumhospital for cancer in Oslo. We are doing this capacity building development and knowledge transfer from these Norwegian institutions to Augusta Victoria hospital and other institutions. This is the way that we see that we are building the capacity for example for health practising – we are transferring knowledge and maximizing the effects of the capacities in Palestine (Barakat, interviewee).

Education is part of the ongoing nation-building:

> This year, through the cancer programme supported by the Norwegian government, we managed with Betanien nursing school to create this curriculum. We have this small academy in the hospital here that is for nurses specifically, to train nurses and physicians for cancer and diabetes and kidney dialysis. And it is all about how to increase the number of those professions, and rise up the professionalism of those professions. So they are trained and actually building the national health system in Palestine (Barakat, interviewee).

Education is one of the NCA's strategic priorities (Norwegian Church Aid 2011, p. 9), and is considered key to nation-building. Their partner-organization, ELCJHL educates children and

youths every year. Education is an asset that can be part of nation-building, and the findings from the interviews showed that the schools of ELCJHL was concerned with nation-building:

> Ok, we have a lot of activities related to nation-building – we have for example a model of the United Nations that we use. Ok, so this model, it is all over. We have groups in all our schools where they participate in getting the ability to understand other cultures and to understand their own culture. We empower their characteristics with important skills as problem solving, negotiation and conflict resolution – important skills for any human being. In addition to understand the other sides point of view and increasing their knowledge about other nations and their own nation (Rabadi, interviewee).

The findings suggest that participation in the school's empowerment program and in discussions is seen as important for the growth of nation-building:

> We have another activity where we meet other schools, in order to discuss topics in the local community. Our students should also participate in volunteering in the community. Maybe it is not new for you, but in Palestine it is not familiar to have such initiative for schools and students to go out in the local community to volunteer and help other institutions (Rabadi, interviewee).

As mentioned in chapter 2.3, part of nation-building is unifying the population, and to have some sort of shared values and history. The ELCJHL's schools focus on the Palestinian history. This focus regards nation-building:

> We need to empower the students with information, and about the Palestinian history, because we have history. And they should know it as, as it has been inherited to us. We need to communicate this history to our students (Rabadi, interviewee).

5.2.3 Strengthening partner-organizations

Part of the NCA's strategy is to cooperate with its partner-organizations. The following extract is collected from an interview with a woman from EAPPI, one of the NCA's partner-organizations. She spoke on EAPPI's approach to both nation-building and peacebuilding:

> Nation-building? I would say EAPPI is partly contributing to, especially the advocacy part of it, contributing to like a peace solution, where Palestinians would have their own country. But

> I don't know how it contributes to building this country, you know. It's (the EAPPI) not a developmental project; it's more like a human rights type. (Anonymous, interviewee).

When the interviewee was questioned if not EAPPI's human rights-approach indirectly could be part of Palestinian nation-building, she answered:

> In a way, like, in a way. To start, to have a country in the first place, because Palestine is still not recognized as one, EAPPI's programme can make it easier for Palestine to be recognized. (Anonymous, interviewee).

Nader Hanna from EAPPI also spoke of the program's understanding of nation-building:

> I mean, perhaps. I think that nation-building is more developmental, and the two main piers on which international organizations are actors put into development aid or humanitarian aid, and we're within the humanitarian sector.

Hanna spoke further about EAPPI's mission in relation to nation-building:

> I wouldn't say that the goal of the program is necessarily to build a Palestinian state, but to end injustice. But injustices include for example settlement expansion and construction, which is a violation of international law. And we are actively advocating against it. So I guess in a sense that by preventing settlement expansion and preventing confiscation of land, that would assist the building of a Palestinian state.

On the matter of two-state solution as a possible outcome, Hanna said:

> We do envision a two-state solution, but I don't think we're actively engaged in this conflict for the sake of building a Palestinian state.

To a certain degree, this position is shared with the NCA:

> NCA support the two-state solution, but only if the two sides want it! (Daghash, interviewee).

Stability and accountability are important factors for development and nation-building (Hippler 2005, p. 4). They are also important in the making of a society of non-violence, and

first and foremost for building peace in the societies. This is an aspect that EAPPI is involved with:

> I think the programme is contributing to peace building in the sense that we're providing means on the ground for Israelis and Palestinians to be able to express themselves non-violently.

The very nation of human rights organizations, which is to strengthen human rights, can be part of nation-building. Strengthening and putting emphasis on human rights in a society, can work as a cornerstone for the creation of a stabile society. This next extract explains how RHR is related to nation-building:

> Yeah, I suppose so. I've never thought about that so much, but of course, you know we have like for example major high court appeal, to return planning and zoning in Palestinian communities in area C to Palestinians hands. That would be nation-building, which would be both in terms of empowering Palestinians, and in terms of allowing development. So, many things that we do in fact would be nation-building in that sense, yes (Ascherman, interviewee).

During the interview with Ascherman, he spoke of empowering the Palestinians as part of an approach to nation-building. Rabbis for Human Rights are also engaged in another area of commitment – equality:

> One of the other things that we work very hard on, and I think that we're doing a fairly good job too, certainly no perfect, is to try to work with Palestinians as equals, and not making them just the props in our play, or this kind of thing. So to the extent that we are working with peoples equals, maybe even as junior partners when we're working in Palestine, and they are going to have to live with the results more than we will. That is empowering, that's part of nation-building (Ascherman, interviewee).

5.2.4 Conclusion

This sub-chapter responds directly to the main research question, which is: how can strengthening Palestinian churches and faith-based organizations and their institutions contribute towards Palestinian nation-building? ELCJHL works with education in Palestine; when the NCA supports ELCJHL, there are arguments for that they also support Palestinian

institutions, which is significant for Palestinian nation-building. The NCA provide grants for Augusta Victoria Hospital, which is an important health institution in Jerusalem.

The NCA are not able to approach decision-makers from any of the Palestinian or Israeli governments. Instead, they approach and strengthen the civil society as a means for nation-building. Additionally the NCA provides capacity building to their partner-organizations, in order to give them the capacity to develop the Palestinian society. Finally, empowering partner-organizations and Palestinians are important for nation-building to prosper.

5.3 Contributions towards peacebuilding

One of the sub-questions in this thesis asks: how does the work of the Norwegian Church Aid contribute towards peacebuilding? And since the NCA in the Middle East is not operational, but rather works through partner-organizations, looking to the NCA alone is not adequate. Consequently, assessing the NCA's peacebuilding work involves an assessment of the NCA's partner-organizations. The selection of partner-organizations in the interviews is believed to be representative, and their work corresponds to the NCA's strategic goals[12].

5.3.1 NCA and peacebuilding

The findings suggest that the NCA is a rather small organization in this context. It is also a fact that large actors are having difficulties achieving peace:

> Even the EU, the biggest donor failed to achieve peace in the area. What do you think about the NCA (Daghash, interviewee)?

This was also repeated by Næss-Holm:

> Our independent goal is to end the occupation and achieve just peace. We have a program in our country plan called faith-communities and peace building. This is the program where we are working with conflict resolution. However, we are a small organization, and cannot influence much on neither the Palestinian nor the Israeli government. So being part of a larger network, gives us the opportunity to change the attitude of global decision-makers (Næss-Holm, interviewee).

[12] According to NCA's own country plan for Israel and Palestine, their strategic goals involves among others nation building and rights-based approach (Norwegian Church Aid, 2010).

Næss-Holm speaks of the NCA's relation with third part responsibility:

> We have to remind the international community about their commitments to peacebuilding. We do this through our global networks and advocacy (Næss-Holm, interviewee).

One of the things that I found in exploring the sub-research question about peacebuilding, was that the organizations differed in their perspectives on peacebuilding. And their approach to building peace differed accordingly:

> You know, we are not going to be directly involved in peace talks. But we empower the Palestinian peace makers so that the average Palestinian in the street rather than say "what, make peace with them, that's impossible. Them, no way" to say "we can see it can be possible". So, to the extent we are helping to foster the possibility of talks, even if we are not necessarily going to be the people doing it. I also think that to the extent that we can inform our own leaders about what is going on in the ground (Ascherman, interviewee).

The interviewee from the NCA acknowledges that there are many obstacles, but the peacebuilding work by the NCA and its partner-organizations are still relevant:

> The conflict is not ending. But I think our work in NCA is very important to actually help Palestinians and some of the Israeli organizations that works for Palestinians. Our target group in NCA are mostly Palestinians beneficiaries. We are helping them to cope with the situation, and survive throughout the conflict (Barakat, interviewee).

The NCA has identified two organizations as their main peacebuilding partners:

> It is definitely EAPPI and it is Rabbis for Human Rights, the way I see it (Næss-Holm, interviewee).

5.3.2 Peacebuilding and faith-based organizations

On the other hand, RHR does not understand itself as an organization explicitly working for peacebuilding. Although they see that there are some connections between their work and peacebuilding:

> We are a human rights organization, we are not a peace organization. Although presumably there should be some connection between them, and I think there is (Ascherman, interviewee).

RHR tries to break down the stereotypes of both Israelis and Palestinians. This is identified as a way of starting peacebuilding:

> Our third mandate, particularly these are the Palestinians is to break down stereotypes and restore hope. And that's how we contribute to peace. Because only I as an Israeli and particularly as a religious Israeli, because the deepest held stereotypes Palestinians have of Israelis are about religious Israelis, only I can break down does stereotypes that so many Palestinians have about Israelis. Thereby empowering Palestinian peacemakers to be heard by their own people (Ascherman, interviewee).

The combination of being faith-based and striving for peace is one interesting topic. Part of what I found in one of the interviews, was that religion and religious people is not necessarily something that can be ignored in this context. The following extract points to faith-based organizations as an actor in peacebuilding work:

> I was actually a number of years ago invited to a conference in Oslo, that was cosponsored by the Norwegian Foreign Ministry and local Oslo peace organizations. And the premise was, they brought religious leaders, people from three or four conflict areas around the world, because in the diplomatic community, particularly in civil society, the basic assumption have always been that if you want to solve a conflict, you got to keep religion out of it. Religion is so intractable, so illogical and so unreasonable that you have to do and run around it if you are going to solve any problem (Ascherman, interviewee).

However, Ascherman believes that religion could be part of peacebuilding work:

> But they where coming to the conclusion and an understanding that, like it or not religion isn't disappearing. And if you can't go around it, you better learn how to work with it. But of course, when you are coming from a position of faith yourself, it's not something that you can turn on and off like a light switch. This is important to keep in mind in a context like this, where religion is such a powerful force. We simply cannot abandon the field – we have to struggle from within (Ascherman, interviewee).

Religion can be used in a way that promotes peace:

> If you look at the religion of history, you will see that for the most part, we've been part of the problem. When we look at all the blood that's been shed, name of nationality and religion. But as I said, it would not help to simply abandon the field, and therefore particularly for those of us, for this is just who we are, what remains is to struggle for the soul of religion (Ascherman, interviewee).

It became clear during the interviews that the NCA highly valuate its partner-organizations, and that working with civil society organizations from both the Israeli and Palestinian side is important to achieve peace:

> What we're doing, is that we're strengthening civil society organizations from both sides, that promotes peace so that they can push their government (Daghash, interviewee).

The key of ELCJHLs work is to bring the students to an understanding of the other side. At such Palestinian schools, the other side would be the Israelis:

> We need to get our students ready for these meetings. In order to do that, we have sessions with professionals in order to understand the others point of view. This way, they understand how the other would think, so they are more sensitive to how they address latent issues.

The findings show that empowerment and knowledge is another key to understanding the other side, which is part of peacebuilding:

> The evangelical Lutheran church philosophy is non-discrimination. So we need to understand every person. In order to do that, we need to empower our student with information, and give them knowledge about religion, the different places and the conflict.

Rabadi speaks of the restrictions that comes with the Israeli security policy, and that these limitations delays Palestinian daily life:

> Sometimes you need to change your schedule, change your plans in order to fit with this, these procedures that we have daily. Everyone would think internationally that there is a war in Gaza, but the problem is it is not only that war; we have cold war where we have restrictions passing through a lot of places (Rabadi, interviewee).

EAPPI is also partly involved with peacebuilding:

> We try to enhance the level of protection of communities and individuals through protective presence and advocacy (Hanna, interviewee).

Monitoring and reporting on violence and abuse is an important part of what EAPPI do:

> We don't put ourselves at the risk of being attacked. It's our protective presence that provides protection. But when violence does come about, all we can do is document and report on it. In this setting, advocacy is our best way of engaging (Hanna, interviewee).

Stability is important for peacebuilding to nourish. Hanna speaks about how their contributions help stabilizing the situation, and creates a standard of accountability:

> Our advocacy is largely aimed at the international audience. Aimed at decision makers, at the media and the private sector. What we're trying to do is also fuse advocacy in a way which we can create transparency and accountability. Because unless there's international awareness and international action, there will not be accountability, and when there is not accountability, there will never be peace (Hanna, interviewee).

He then says:

> On a level, we're not so much involved in peacebuilding, in terms of negotiation or anything in that matter. What we do is that we work with the communities and try to prevent violence, and record what we couldn't prevent (Hanna, interviewee).

5.3.3 Normalization

According to the data from interviews, faith-based organizations is conceived as being able to make contributions to the field of peacebuilding. And in this context, peacebuilding happens between Israel and Palestine. But trying to provoke peacebuilding between the conflicting sides of Israel and Palestine is not just an advantage. One of the things that was brought up the interviewees independent of each other, was the fear of normalization:

> We have a lot of conferences where our students participate. They go abroad to part in solving issues such as the Israeli/Palestinian conflict. But in this period we are now, it has become more difficult in meeting and having mutual activities with Israelis. We used to do this a lot before, like two or three years ago. But now the conflict has even increased among the youth. And the families are afraid of normalization, and they are afraid of letting their children participate in such activities between Israelis and Palestinians. The recurring problem is the face of politics, which interferes in everything and has become a huge challenge for us (Rabadi, interviewee).

The issue of normalization was brought up on a couple occasions during the interviews. This emphasis on the term proves the importance of the sociological interactions that are involved between the cultural groups of Israelis and Palestinians:

> We really don't interact much with the other side. If there would be an opportunity, and we do have a lot of opportunities, we really, we would rather want to be safe in our community; we don't want to be accused of normalization (Rabadi, interviewee).

Another of the interviewees from the NCA confirmed that peacebuilding work is a latent issue:

> NCA has all the time tried to be conflict sensitive during designing the programmes, the interventions and what kind of partners we work with. Because otherwise we will be accused of biased or normalization, which will hinder our work and cooperation with partner-organizations (Daghash, interviewee).

Normalization was brought up on a couple of occasions by different interviewees. Evidently, this is a latent issue, and it can slow down the peacebuilding process:

> Being accused of normalization will stop you from operating. Especially in the Palestinian side where you will be accused of dealing with the other side, and that you're trying to normalize the settler situation (Daghash, interviewee).

Næss-Holm elaborates:

> Some say that working for normalized relationship between Palestinians and Israelis whilst the settlers continue their occupation, is a way of legitimizing the occupation (Næss-Holm, interviewee).

5.3.4 Political solution, participation by FBOs

The NCA and their work, is the main topic of this thesis. Consequently, looking into their relation with peacebuilding was one of the main priorities during the interviews. One of the NCA-interviewees said that peacebuilding is all-embracing in the organization, and that it is part of every branch in the NCA Middle East office:

> The concept of raising awareness on solving the conflict is part of our work through the organization that we work with. So despite if it's health, livelihood or another thematic areas that we work with, we work with the concept of raising the awareness of the importance of peacebuilding among our beneficiaries (Barakat, interviewee).

At the same time, it is difficult to work with peacebuilding when there is political disorder in Gaza:

> With the situation that is happening politically, it's very difficult to work on peacebuilding issues when there is a war going on in Gaza, and with plenty of human losses (Barkat, interviewee).

And with the recent war on Gaza, it has become increasingly difficult to get the people on Gaza to acknowledge peacebuilding:

> The most critical issues that has been created in the last war, is that we cannot go to Gaza and say: "we want to have peace with Israel" (Barkat, interviewee).

In the same paragraph, Barakat spoke of the issues with the reconstruction of Gaza, and how nothing has happened. During the interview, it became clear that the political disorder in Gaza has become an obstacle for peacebuilding:

> There is plenty of obstacles that has been preventing the reconstruction of Gaza. It's political issues, it's political issues between PA and Hamas, between Israel and Palestinians, it's

> political issues between Israel and countries in Europe and the US in addition to other donors. So clearly there are issues that prevent peacebuilding (Barakat, interviewee).

Barakat emphasize the current asymmetry between the political situation and peacebuilding, and how this is a major obstacle for peacebuilding:

> It's very important that with the political situation and what is happening in terms of killing on both sides, then it's very difficult to work on peacebuilding (Barakat, interviewee).

Daghash from the NCA spoke of how the Palestinian people are reluctant to the term peacebuilding:

> Anyone who holds the theme of peace as an entry point to these communities will fail. Because many things have already failed this people: the UN-resolutions, the Oslo-agreement. So, we have to find an entry point that might not hold the peace word, but entails it (Daghash, interviewee).

Then the interviewee brought up entry points that can be used as a means for peacebuilding:

> If you want peace, you have to support education. Because education will teach the next generation that peaceful coexistence is important. Another entry point is economic empowerment (Daghash, interviewee).

This interviewee from the NCA spoke on a possible solution to the conflict, and how the NCA as a FBO is a rather small organization in a complex context:

> On the political side, on ending the conflict, I don't think NCA as an organization will have a big influence with that. But I think with the different organizations together, we can have an influence. But we will not be able to do that as a NGO. I think governmental pressure can do that. And that economic sanctions and other things that governments can do, can create peacebuilding (Barakat, interviewee).

Facilitating meetings between organizations is also on the agenda:

> We try to facilitate meetings between civil society organizations from both sides, and to see if they have the same values, mission and understanding of the conflict (Daghash, interviewee).

This common platform can be helpful in the future:

> We are linking Palestinian and Israeli organizations together so that they can complement each other. If the Palestinians wants their right to be protected, they need someone inside Israel lobbying for their rights (Daghash, interviewee).

Another of the NCA interviewees emphasizes the political issues:

> We believe that the solution to the conflict has to come from politics (Næss-Holm, interviewee).

Finding a solution to the conflict is difficult without political involvement. So I asked if NCA has contact with any of the Israeli/Palestinian governments:

> You know, direct contact with both governments, it's not available (Barakat, interviewee).

In stead, the NCA are using another approach:

> So what we actually are doing, is advocacy and lobbying through our networks. We come together in the ACT Alliance and advocate. I think we are aiming for change of policy, and change the current situation, and maybe find a way to reduce the facts that found the conflict (Barakat, interviewee).

And as another interviewee from the NCA said during the interviews – they are working with economical empowerment as a means for peacebuilding:

> Economic empowerment is the key word. If you want to achieve peace, go for economic empowerment and link this to peace. Because when there is hope for the future, the aggression will decrease (Daghash, interviewee).

This line of argumentation was confirmed by Næss-Holm:

> We see that when people are able to feed their families, and when they make their own money, there is less chance of radicalization and violence among the youth (Næss-Holm, interviewee).

5.3.5 Conclusion

The sub-research question for this sub-chapter is: how does the work of the NCA contribute towards peacebuilding? Advocacy and empowerment of Palestinians is the NCA's main approach to peacebuilding. Additionally, the NCA depend on their partner-organizations and their contributions to peacebuilding. There are some obstacles for peacebuilding – normalization and restrictive Israeli and Palestinian politicians. And according to Daghash – the NCA is a rather small organization with limited influence on political apparatus.

5.4 Rights-based approach (RBA) and nation-building

As mentioned earlier, rights-based approach is one of the NCA's strategies to development and nation-building. It was with this prerequisite that the following sub-question was formulated: in what way can the rights-based approach formulated by the Norwegian Church Aid work as a means for nation-building?

5.4.1 NCA and rights-based approach

To understand how rights-based approach can work as a means for development, it is important to learn how the NCA understand rights-based approach. During the interviews, I was told how the NCA understands rights-based approach:

> We believe that people, every human being has the rights, according to international conventions and human rights laws. So we believe that every human being has the right, the dignity and specific rights that is the government, state and international communities responsibility to make sure it's fulfilled (Daghash, interviewee).

Næss-Holm says that RBA is a thread that is implemented in each of their programs:

> RBA run as a thread through all our programs. With our strategy, we formulate the rights-deficits, and the projects that we formulate are supposed to close the gaps in human rights. One of the programs is the right to health, where we cooperate with hospitals and give the people their right to health. Another is the right to freedom of movement. And we also work with right to education – livelihood and trade-program.

He then speaks specifically on two of their partners:

> And then there is the RHR and EAPPI, which are all about protecting the rights of the Palestinian people. So the recurring issue is lack of human rights, and that we through our programmes try to provide the Palestinian people with rights (Næss-Holm).

5.4.2 Implementation of rights-based approach in the society

Rabbis for Human Rights is an organization especially dedicated to human rights:

> We are the only rabbinic organization in Israel explicitly dedicated to human rights (Ascherman, interviewee).

They combine the Jewish tradition with human rights:

> Well, it's interesting. We have kind of two Torah's as a Jewish human rights organization, where we are obligated to the Jewish tradition of human rights, and as we understand it we advocate for our understanding of the Jewish tradition. And then as a human rights organization, we have some kind of allegiance to international human rights law (Ascherman, interviewee).

What is interesting is that RHR combines their faith-basis and religious maxim with universal human rights. To a certain degree, this combination of religious maxims and universal human rights proves that RHR is a faith-based organization. In the following, Ascherman spoke about the combination of rights and religious texts:

> Generally those things go together. Sometimes there is a little bit of dissidence between them. But we (RHR) certainly do talk in the language of rights (Ascherman, interviewee).

Building a nation involves having civil society organizations that operates in the community. NCA combines these organizations with the implementation of rights-based approach:

> We're trying to strengthen civil society organizations to be rights-based. Developing their skills and capacities means that they can do interventions in the future. We believe that building a strong civil society will lead to a viable state. That's why we invest in capacity building for partners (Daghash, interviewee).

She says:

> Integration of rights-based approach, and building the civil society organizations' capacities, can lead to that they are strong enough to play a bigger role in building a state (Daghash, interviewee).

The NCA has contextualized rights-based approach in their work. Part of what the NCA does, is to advocate for the Palestinians right to health service:

> We are trying to get the people out of Gaza, for example for treatment as the right to health, we are also having people from the West Bank to Jerusalem as right for health, etc. So we manage to do that, and I think on that level, we are very effective in getting results of the advocacy work that we are doing (Barakat, interviewee).

Part of what I found, which is part of the sub-question about RBA and nation-building, was that the NCA validate advocacy as one of their primer assets to rights-based approach:

> We are trying to work with other international organizations and national organizations to influence decision makers. The thing is that there is plenty of obstacles, the only influence that we actually manage, is to work on specific targeted issues through advocacy. One of the targeted issues is access. Access is one of the most important things for people through Gaza, West Bank and East Jerusalem and towards the green light of Israel. We have managed to change procedures that have eased the access for Palestinians (Barakat, interviewee).

The co-worker of Barakat confirmed that advocacy is an important asset:

> Working with the duty bearers; it's advocacy. And sometimes, if there's a willingness and interest; cooperation. But most of the time, it's advocacy. Because here there is an occupying duty bearer, so it is more about influencing and putting pressure rather than negotiating (Daghash, interviewee).

The country plan of the NCA is about to be revised. So I asked the interviewee what would be the main priorities for the NCA in the following years:

> Advocacy and influencing on both nations so that there is peace. The other part is that there is rights for people. We need to ensure that people have their rights, and the rights are not violated by any of the authorities – neither the Palestinian nor the Israeli (Barakat, interviewee).

Giving the Palestinian people economical rights is important both for RBA, nation-building and sustainability:

> NCA should contribute to economic development for people that are in need of income. It is more sustainable to give opportunities and the skills for people to be able to work, and generate income. It's also in compliance with NORAD, the approach towards focus on education and economic development as a rights-based approach (Barakat, interviewee).

5.4.3 The importance of rights in the society

The NCA have implemented UN's definition of human rights in their program:

> We are trying to give the most needy people the services and basic rights according to the UN definition of rights (Barakat, interviewee).

Their work for rights involves different things:

> We think that right to health services is important for people. But the main reason why for example are supporting cancer program in East Jerusalem, is the right to access for the Palestinian people. We are reserving the rights for people to access Jerusalem, which is part of the UN resolution 242 from 1967, which says that East Jerusalem is part of the Palestinian territories (Barakat, interviewee).

So the NCA does not only help Palestinians with health rights, but they are also indirectly working with the right to access Jerusalem through giving people health rights. The NCA understands RBA in the following way:

> It is matter of giving the people a minimum standard of rights. We help with right to health, children rights, protection and gender issues among other things. What we do, is that we are trying to integrate all these rights together (Barakat, interviewee).

The NCA meets some difficulties when trying to give the Palestinian people its rights:

> We don't have full control and authority on areas, boarders and decisions (Barakat, interviewee).

Albeit the NCA is based in Jerusalem, they are not involved in Israelis rights in the same way as with Palestinians:

> On the Palestinian side, we know that people are more in need, and the government are not able to provide such services. So this is where we come in and provide such services, with rights and different things. On the Israeli side, there is a quite developed health system and other systems, so there is no need for the NCA to work on those issues (Barakat, interviewee).

Rights-based approach as a means for nation-building is not only implemented within the NCA, some of their partner-organizations also validate human rights. And the ELCJHL schools give their students an understanding of human rights in different ways:

> First, we have student councils, where the students can express their feelings, and where we give them a lot of lectures about human rights. And second we have part of the curriculum talking about human rights. These are the main two ways of presenting human rights to our children (Rabadi, interviewee).

EAPPI implements human rights in their approach, which involves protective presence and protective advocacy:

> We're trying to empower the rights-holder through the protective presence of our EA's. And the protective presence seeks to accompany farmers and herders to their land. At the same time, the EA's meet the duty bearers through advocacy and reports on violations, asking them to end the occupation (anonymous, interviewee).

Hanna, the advocacy officer in EAPPI says:

> Our whole mandate is based on international human rights law. So rights-based approach is mainstreamed in all we do. It's all based on; is this a violation on someone's rights, if it is, then we act (Hanna, interviewee).

Empowering the Israelis and Palestinians, and helping them express themselves non-violently is providing them with human rights:

> We're providing means on the ground for Israelis and Palestinians, to be able to express themselves non-violently (Hanna, interviewee).

Right to freedom of movement is highly valuated in the NCA. But also EAPPI works for this right:

> Our EA's monitor children's access to education from within the seam zone, and we monitor the checkpoints to see if there are any problems in terms of restricted access (Hanna, interviewee).

EAPPI works with two sorts of accompaniment, :

> There's two components of accompaniment: protective presence and protective advocacy. And when we can't prevent human rights violations, we report on them, so that our partner-organizations can see these files, and act accordingly (Hanna, interviewee).

Finally, when asked about difficulties with working with people from both sides of the conflict, Hanna said:

> I know a lot of Palestinians might see Israeli organizations as trying to create what they call normalization. Which means trying to white-wash the situation, and making it seem much better than it is, by showing cooperation between Israelis and Palestinians. That is not what we try to do. We work with Israeli and Palestinian organizations that acknowledge that there is injustice going on (Hanna, interviewee).

5.4.4 Conclusion

The sub-question in this sub-chapter is: in what way can the rights-based approach formulated by the Norwegian Church Aid work as a means for nation-building? Rights-based approach is implemented in everything the NCA does. The findings provide clear evidence that the NCA struggle to provide Palestinians with some of their basic needs. And when the NCA works for sustaining institutions such as hospitals and schools, they are not only providing Palestinians

with right to education and health, but also sustaining institutions, which is an important part of nation-building. In addition to the NCA's own achievements, the NCA's partner-organizations have all implemented rights-based approach in their work. Advocacy and empowerment of Palestinians are important means to gain rights.

6.0 Analysis

The aim of the study was to find out how the NCA's focus on strengthening Palestinian churches and faith-based organizations and their institutions contribute towards Palestinian nation-building. This question has driven this thesis, and given me insight into the work of the NCA. The data from the interviews gave me useful insights – rights-based approach is permeated in the NCA's entire programs. Their country plan is based on rights-based approach, and their work is concerned with overcoming rights-deficits. Human rights are an important part of a stable and just society, and thereby also a part of nation-building. That is why rights-based approach to development has to be part of the subsequent analysis. But there are other aspects that have to be analyzed. The sub-questions try to discover the importance of being faith-based in the Israeli Palestinian context. This theme will accordingly be analyzed in subsequent paragraphs. Another theme for discussion is how the NCA contributes towards peacebuilding.

6.1 Nation-building

The unit of measurement decides to what degree nation-building is evident in the Palestinian society – whether it is a focus on institutional building, a self-governed society or achievement of Human Rights. So to give an answer to the nation-building work of the NCA, the theoretical work of this thesis has to evaluate how the NCA Country Plan corresponds with the interviews, and what the NCA emphasizes as their main nation-building achievements.

Human Rights are one of the key factors to nation-building. Human Rights will help stabilizing turbulent societies, and preferably create an atmosphere of equal respect for different ethnicities, and for people with different religious background. But rights-based approach on its own is not able to achieve successful nation-building. There has to be a focus on institutions and stable leadership as well. The NCA acknowledges this fact. But working in a context where interaction between governmental leaders seldom appears, does not make it an easy task to influence any of the involved governments.

Palestinian nation-building depends on Israeli initiative to a large degree. However, the Palestinian nation-building also depends on the Palestinian government to be stable in its

work. So the approach for nation-building is also a question of if the organizations are able to make an impact on the Israeli or Palestinian governments.

6.1.1 Economical empowerment

An essential part of nation-building is about developing a stable and profitable fiscal system. Without a profitable fiscal system, the Palestinian government ends up being dependent on foreign aid and substitutes. Besides, independent economical budgets will also make way for political stabilization (Brynen 2007, p. 208), which is highly relevant, within both peacebuilding and nation-building. Successful nation-building is difficult if not impossible to achieve without a final peace agreement with Israel, an agreement that would end all conflicts and create stability in the region (Brynen 2007, p. 206). It is beyond all doubt that an improvement in the Palestinian financial situation and welfare system is necessary for the political stability in Palestine. It can also be argued that such an increase improves Palestinian livelihood, but it can also appear as a stabilizing factor in a peace process with Israel. However, faith-based organizations do not have direct impact on any of the two governments economical policies. Their approach has to be a combination of advocacy, working at the grassroot level and an institutionalization of health services and education. These are the approaches that FBOs have to use in the ongoing nation-building. According to a scholar named Arthur Lewis, the ascetic values of religion hinders the society from economical growth (Deneulin and Bano 2009, p. 31). This would imply that faith-based organizations such as the NCA would make relatively insignificant contributions to economical growth, if any. NCA is concerned with economical empowerment in Gaza, and they are involved in income generating projects:

> In Gaza we're supporting life income generating projects. These projects will not make them wealthy, but they will have something to live for. This will reduce violence and frustration in the Palestinian community. Because when you cannot support and protect your family, you get frustrated. And we give small projects for women, so that they feel as an important part of the society (Daghash, interviewee).

The extract does not identify explicit counterarguments to Lewis, due to the projects not making the participants wealthy. But it does display the importance of integrating communities into the society, which in turn is important for development and nation-building. These economical empowerment projects are extremely important in an area with conflicts.

Just as Daghash from NCA recognizes, economical empowerment can contribute towards peacebuilding because it removes some frustration, which is a catalyst for violence. NCA's work is colored by RBA in all its work. In this extract RBA is identified as giving people the right to work (Haas 2014, p. 144). Finally, economical empowerment is a project recognized as a catalyst for nation-building, because like Daghash puts it – it makes the people feel that they are an important part of the society.

6.1.2 The relation between nation-building and peacebuilding

Part of what NCA tries to do in Palestine is to contribute to peacebuilding. Peacebuilding and nation-building are two different approaches that have things in common. They are not dependent on each other, but there is a possibility that with peace in the Palestinian society comes a better chance of building a nation. But what seems more reliable is that nation-building can speed up the process of peacebuilding. This is because a stable Palestinian nation-building could be less complex and more stable than the current situation. Successful nation-building can stabilize the society and reduce the potential for violence in fragile and fragmented societies (Hippler 2005, p. 183). Evidently, there is coherence between nation-building and peacebuilding, whereas successful nation-building relies on certain aspects from peacebuilding such as stability and peace. To a certain degree, peacebuilding relies on nation-building; it is arguably easier to promote peace when the Palestinians are gathered as one society. But in the end, nation-building will only be influential on peacebuilding when there is interdependence between the states involved (van Edig 2005, p. 153). Nation-building itself cannot bring about a peace solution, whereas peacebuilding depends on both Israel and Palestine to cooperate, and not just a stabilized Palestine.

Hippler's argumentation is that imperial nation-building – nation-building done by foreigners is destructive for the process. This can of course be correct, and should be a concern for every foreign organization working with nation-building abroad. It is important to be aware of the consequences when working with nation-building. However, the position of the NCA seems to be in line with the political goals of the Palestinians:

> Norwegian Church Aid position is they support the two-state solution. But this is only if the two sides want it. Because maybe two-state solution is not the solution. And this is the good thing about NCA – we will support what the people want (Daghash, interviewee).

The NCA's modest approach to nation-building is appropriate – nation-building is not likely to prosper if it does not consider the local varieties. Reapplying former models of nation-building to the Palestinian society can turn out wrong (Hippler 2005, p. 184). Instead, it is better to connect nation-building with the local varieties. The NCA are concerned with strengthening the local civil society organizations.

For Palestine to be considered an independent nation by international standards, it would have to separate from Israel, and we would have a two-state solution. This solution is part of the current political agenda for Israel and Palestine. The NCA has explicitly said that they do not want to strive for a two-state solution if the Palestinians do not want this solution. But it is difficult to see a Palestinian nation prosper without being independent from Israel. So to a certain level, there is a symbiotic relationship between nation-building and the two-state solution. The findings provide clear evidence that the two-state solution is an element of uncertainty within the Palestinian society. This could be an issue for the NCA, inasmuch as they take into consideration the solution the Palestinian people want:

> It was possible, but now the Palestinian people I think they're leaning towards: "Ok, it's our land. No two-state solution. We don't have money, we don't have a state, we're killed anyway. So all the land, no two-state solution" (Daghash, interviewee).

What this extract shows, is that working towards a two-state solution is difficult, because the political climate in Palestine and Israel is inconstant.

6.1.3 Approaching decision-makers as a means for development

Part of what nation-building involves, is a stable and just government. And being able as a citizen to influence on the government is important for a democracy. However, this is not easy in either Palestine, or Israel. The two governments seems almost impossible to communicate with, and even less possible to influence:

> Here in this context it's very hard to say that we are influencing decision-makers like Israel, because they are a strong state with their own agenda (Daghash, interviewee).

Another employee at the NCA gave almost the same answer, but added that the NCA is indirectly an influential force through its partner-organizations. Like Næss-Holm said, they

are primarily focused on the civil society, and the grass-root level. This is clearly a bottom-up approach, and is a part of the NCA strategy to strengthen the civil society. Næss-Holm stated in the interview, that a solution to the conflict is a matter for politics. A political solution can provide stability to the context, which will help the nation-building. There are limitations to being a rather small organization in a complex context. And a faith-based organization by itself cannot complete nation-building. Being part of networks and alliances such as the ACT Alliance can make it easier to communicate with Israeli and Palestinian politicians. But the findings showed that there is little use trying to influence the governments with the networks the NCA are part of. This is an issue. Because the efficiency of the NCA's nation-building work is to some extent affected by political restrictions. A solution would be to create a solid mandate for the networks to influence the Israeli and Palestinian governments, preferably through EU-networks.

6.1.4 Socio-political development

Nation-building as a process of socio-political development is one way to describe the current situation in Palestine. Protecting the Palestinians' right to health and the freedom of movement are two things. The NCA is a Christian faith-based organization with much of their work connected to other Christian organizations in the area. But the work of the NCA is not only focused on Christian communities – according to the interviewees, their work is non-discriminatory, which means that they help Palestinians in general and thereby provide help to people from all religions. This is seen not only through their connections with Muslim or Jewish organizations, but also their Christian partner-organizations' work with Muslims and Jews. This link between different religious communities within Palestine is in line with the socio-political development that is part of nation-building. This is because of the non-discriminatory approach by the NCA and its partner-organizations' that allows loosely linked communities to become a common society with a nation-state corresponding to it (Hippler 2005, 6). Additionally, the NCA has explicitly stated in their Country Plan that they want to work for Palestinian nation-building (Norwegian Church Aid 2010, p. 8).

Interviewees from the Norwegian Church Aid speak about the lack of unity among the different denominations in Palestine. This is an issue that may counteract the socio-political development, because development and nation-building depends on unity amongst the nation-building-actors.

6.1.5 Capacity building, civil society and strengthening institutions

Once more, the main research question for this thesis is: How can strengthening Palestinian churches and faith-based organizations and their institutions contribute towards Palestinian nation-building? From what I found in the interviews with Barakat from the NCA, the NCA is strengthening its partner-organizations through capacity building and funding. The capacity building is in line with the NCA's main structure – teaching the organizations about transparency, accountability and rights-basis. Transparency and accountability are important aspects of faith-based organizations, because they lead to overt operations, which in turn can reduce the frequency of disputes between communities (Marie-Barbeau 1999, p. 91). They teach this in seminars held by the NCA. These seminars gather the different partner-organizations of the NCA together, and they get to share experiences with each other. Additionally, the seminar is a context where connections are made, and the organizations get to know each other. But above all, it is a setting where the NCA gets to strengthen the capacities of their partner-organizations:

> We have this capacity building-program where we share our gaps, and we say, "Ok, maybe you need this kind of capacity building." So we are like companions; if the partners need our support in certain issues, we do this (Daghash, interviewee).

Institutions are a cornerstone of any international society. The Palestinian society is arguably in the initial phase of becoming an independent nation. It is a society challenged by Israel – politically, economically and restrictions in terms of access have led to challenges with the health care system and infrastructure, inasmuch as Palestinians from time to time are restricted from receiving health care due to regulations for Palestinians living outside of Jerusalem. It is in the NCA's experience that restrictions in terms of access are a major issue for Palestinians. Hence, part of their strategy for nation-building is to strengthen the Palestinian institutions. One of these institutions is the Augusta Victoria Hospital at the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem. This is a hospital specialized on cancer treatment and diabetes. People from Gaza and West Bank are being treated at this hospital. The hospital is one of the major Palestinian institutions in East Jerusalem. The NCA strengthens this institution through funds. Additionally, they facilitate exchange programs with Norwegian institutions such as Radiumhospital and Betanien Nursing School Bergen. These exchange programs educate students in Palestine, and the nurses and doctors get further training from Norwegian doctors:

> We are building capacities in for example Augusta Victoria Hospital, through cooperation with Norwegian health institutions like Bergen Betanien Nursing School and Radiumhospital. This way we are transferring knowledge and capacities to Palestinian institutions (Barakat, interviewee).

Augusta Victoria Hospital is not only a matter of providing Palestinians the right to health. The hospital is situated in East Jerusalem, which is the Palestinian part of the city. A city that has gradually been taken over by the Israelis through Palestinian house demolitions and mistreatment of Palestinians living in East Jerusalem (Cheshin, Hutman and Melamed 1999, pp. 250-251), therefore it is also a way of preserving Palestinian presence in Jerusalem.

The aim of the study was to see if strengthening Palestinian churches and faith-based organizations and their institutions can lead to Palestinian nation-building. The findings from the interviews point at different approaches that the NCA use. Capacity building and strengthening the civil society organizations are the most evident ways that the NCA strengthens the Palestinian faith-based organizations. This is an important approach, because it entails development in the structure of these organizations. One of the interviewees from the NCA said that they where dealing with capacity building in a way that increased different aspects of the organizations:

> We see that through working with partnership with civil society organizations, and giving them the power, skills and the capacity to take decisions and to act, and building the capacities in terms like accountability, transparency, anti-corruption, procedures, code of conduct, all of this leads to the development of the civil society (Daghash, interviewee).

Næss-Holm from the NCA says that the civil society is the cornerstone in the Palestinian society:

> Supporting civil society org. and Palestinian institutions are our main approaches to Palestinian nation-building. We support institutions like Augusta Victoria hospital, which also secure the Palestinian presence here in Jerusalem. We believe that institutions are an important part of a robust and independent Palestinian nation (Næss-Holm, interviewee).

The NCA identifies the civil society as a major actor in the Palestinian nation-building (Norwegian Church Aid 2010, p. 8). As embellished in chapter 2.3, this is an important

identification, because the civil society challenges the authorities whenever human rights-violations occur, press for democratic reform, and in situations with inequality and injustice they represent the minority (Deneulin and Bano 2009, p. 87 and Banik 2006, p. 263), though the findings indicate that at the time being FBOs and civil society organizations in Palestine are having a difficult time influencing on the authorities.

The objection to the NCA's capacity as a participant in nation-building, is that the NCA is a rather small organization that cooperate with only a number of Palestinian faith-based organizations, and thereby cannot support all educational and health institutions in Palestine. So in a way, one could argue that the NCA's approach to nation-building has an impact on geographical parts of the Palestinian society. Nevertheless, the NCA supports another major institution in the Palestinian society: the educational system. The NCA are partners with ELCJHL, which explicitly works with education. There are several aspects relevant for nation-building, but the NCA's approach to education is also influenced by rights-based approach – it is a matter of giving Palestinians the right to education. In one of the interviews, Næss-Holm spoke on the importance of having a strong civil society. van Edig also emphasizes the relevance of a strong civil society (van Edig 2005, p. 159). But van Edig's experience of the civil society is not only positive. A civil society that is too strong can undermine the state's structures. This becomes and issue, because the civil society can only be complementary to the state, it cannot replace it (van Edig 2005, p. 159). Hence, the NCA's nation-building approach has to involve more than the civil society. Næss-Holm also speaks about the NCA's main approaches to nation-building, where he mentions the importance of institutions such as schools in the society. As mentioned, the ELCJHL schools are one of the Palestinian institutions. In addition to being part of nation-building by the schools very nature, they have empowerment programs that the students participate in:

> Ok, we have a lot of activities related to nation-building – we have for example a model of the United Nations that we use. We empower their characteristics with important skills as problem solving, negotiation and conflict resolution – important skills for any human being. In addition to understand the other sides point of view and increasing their knowledge about other nations and their own nation (Rabadi, interviewee).

Additionally, ELCJHL is also sending their students out in the local communities to do volunteer work. This is an example of taking part in the civil society. One issue that arises

when partaking in nation-building and institutions is the importance of leaving the control of the institutions with the government (Schade 2005, p. 130). This is important for the institution and the nation to progress. Nevertheless, one of the objections to schools funded by faith-based organizations is that it leads to intolerance and social divisiveness in the society (Deneulin and Bano 2009, p. 115). The reason is that faith-based schools are directed to students from the same religious background. But as the interview with Rabadi proves, the ELCJHL schools include students with both Christian and Muslim background. This will in turn falsify the theorem that faith-based schools are intolerant and divisive.

In the Israeli/Palestinian context, it is impossible to distinguish when the Palestinian government is capable of sustaining the institutions adequately. This is something the NCA have to take into consideration, because the objective with the NCA's engagement is to develop sustainable institutions that can progress independently of the NCA. And the ultimate objective for both the NCA and its partner-organizations is to hand over the institutions to the Palestinian authorities – only then have the NCA accomplished its objective of nation-building. The interviewee stated this when asked about being independent of the NCA funds:

> The thing is, we can do that but we need time. At the time being these institutions and organizations really help us in staying as we are. Maybe it can be done after maybe 10 or 20 years (Rabadi, interviewee).

This is an indication for the current situation, where NCA and their funds are still needed.

6.1.6 Unifying the communities as part of nation-building

The sociologist Lewis Coser stated that conflict could be a catalyst for integration and unification. It was believed that conflict unifies and integrates different groups within the same society, because it gathers different communities in the pursuit of a common goal (Coser 1978, p. 250-252). This is also what nation-building seeks to render (Hippler 2005, p. 6). Nation-building seeks to unify the different communities within the society, and to create a stable government. However, and as Coser also states, integration between groups on the basis of conflict is not always likely to occur. And it is quite the opposite of what the NCA tries to achieve, which is nation-building and unification of different communities. Coser's thoughts on conflict and integration are interesting, and they illuminate difficult aspects within the Palestinian society – Palestine is a society with different political and social

factions working against one another.[13] Of course, it is beyond the NCA's mandate and ability as a rather small organization, but to make a significant difference, the NCA should issue programs that explicitly seek to unify Palestinian factions. Such approaches would be an important part of nation-building (Hippler 2005, p. 6), as well as peacebuilding. Another way of supporting nation-building is to support religious institutions in Palestine. The NCA's support of ELCJHL is a matter of supporting religious and educational institutions; additionally the NCA supports the Middle East Council of Churches. According to the theory on social integration by Durkheim, religious rituals are important for social integration, which holds the society together. So when the NCA supports Palestinian churches and FBOs, the NCA are thereby also arranging social integration, which is vital for nation-building (Aldridge 2013, p. 148). Since the Christians are a minority in Palestine, and the NCA's main recipients in Palestine are Christian organizations (Norwegian Church Aid 2010, p. 8), the NCA's direct support to religious nation-building is not significant. Nevertheless, the NCA supports Palestinian churches, and they lay the ground for rituals and symbols in the society, which are important for unifying Palestinian communities. And unifying the society is important for nation-building.

6.1.7 Conclusion

How can strengthening Palestinian churches and faith-based organizations and their institutions contribute towards Palestinian nation-building? This research question cannot be given a thorough answer to without including the following sub-chapters. However, thus far from looking at the interviewees' answers and the NCA's Country Plan in light of our theories, one can draw the conclusion that the NCA and its partner-organizations is contributing to building institutions, education and empowering the Palestinian people, which contributes to nation-building. The most significant effect on nation-building comes from the NCA's empowerment of the civil society. The civil society is the key to nation-building, because it is a watchdog against governmental abuse, the civil society can press for democratic development and represent the interests of the minorities, just as the findings in the interviews indicate (Banik 2006, pp. 263-265).

6.2 Faith-based dimension

[13] Hamas and Fatah are political parties in Gaza and the West Bank. Disputes have made it difficult for the two to cooperate (Tuastad 2013, p. 84).

The faith-based dimensions are an important part of my research question. The main research question asks if strengthening faith-based organizations can contribute towards nation-building. This question is of the assumption that faith-based organizations can be an important part of nation-building, and that faith-based organizations are influential in the Israeli Palestinian context. In addition to the main research question, I have also formulated a sub-question. The sub-question responds directly to the main research question: what sorts of advantages or disadvantages are related to faith-based organizations, the NCA in particular, in the process of nation-building? The following paragraphs answer this sub-question.

6.2.1 Advantage of being faith-based

Part of what I found in the interviews, was that the NCA's relationship with other FBOs is productive because of the religious context they operate in:

> We support other faith-based organizations because they are important actors for change in this context – more so than in the European context. Additionally, we have much of the same interests for the situation and for change, which makes it easy to cooperate (Næss-Holm, interviewee).

The success of faith-based organizations depends on that their religious basis is constructive (Fretheim 2012, p. 88). In that case, religion can certainly play a part in development projects. The religious basis of the organizations was also a matter of subject during the interviews. There is of course a possibility that the interviewees painted a nicer picture than what was the reality, but a fair amount of the interviewees talked about their own and the NCA's faith-based approach as an asset. The key is to acknowledge that religion not always has the solution to a developmental issue, and to understand when religion might bring something constructive to the issues at hand (Fretheim 2012, p. 88). Religion can in some contexts be misused as a destructive force that restricts the freedom of the recipients. It is therefore important to acknowledge this fact, to prevent misuse of power from happening. Misuse of religion can legitimize conflicts and violent outbursts, and that is one of the risks with religion (Haynes 2007, p. 78). However, religion in its purest form can also aspire reconciliation and peacebuilding (Fretheim 2012, p. 94). Religion is seen as an added value of FBOs, and thereby also as an advantage for faith-based organizations. Bano has identified additional advantages of religious organizations. One of them is their capability of constructing large

networks that ties the society together. Another is the FBO's ability of creating an atmosphere of trust in the society (Deneulin and Bano 2009, p. 47):

> The advantages? This is about the added value in NCA as a faith-based organization in the country. Another advantage is that we are church-based, but also cover everybody, and that we provide services for everybody, so we have this trust among the community. And we are welcomed by anyone (Daghash, interviewee).

Faith-based organizations working in Israel and Palestine are in a setting where they are not outnumbered. Several different faith-based organizations from different denominations are working with the purpose of creating peace. A prerequisite for working in a context with different religions, is being unbiased. Israel and Palestine are areas with religious connotations, and there are close relations between religion and state in both countries. The religious framework is fundamental to both Jews and Muslims in the area (Landau 2003, p. 11). This does not necessarily imply that the conflict itself is one of religious grounds. Politics and human aggression are responsible more so than religion. Nevertheless, religion stands out as one of the key factors when trying to explain the different dimensions of the two different conflicting sides of Israel and Palestine. Intermingling nationalism, politics and religion adds fuel to the fire of conflict (Landau 2003, p. 11). On basically the same grounds, religiously based peacemakers can establish an atmosphere of calmness and firmness that separates them from peacemakers that glorify secularization. There is a risk of bias with religious involvement. But the contribution of religiously based peacemakers gives a chance of persuading the antagonists of a peaceful resolution (Landau 2003, p. 11). In terms of nation-building, Barakat emphasized the NCA's faith-basis as an advantage:

> Because they (FBOs) have more access than other organizations to reach more people. I think that FBOs are the ones that direct the dialogue between the three religions, and have better outreach because they know how to get into dialogue in a way that is more acceptable for religious people. Besides, FBOs have a good reputation in their communities, and they are trusted (Barakat, interviewee).

Barakat draws the line between FBOs and dialogue, and proclaims that FBOs can play a role as an organizer for peaceful dialogue between different religions. The theorist Clarke also mentions this advantage, and according to Clarke, FBOs can play an important role in the

dialogue between religious groups (Clarke 2008, p. 32). And another advantage of being faith-based in Palestine and Israel, is the access to other church-communities:

> Being an FBO makes it easier to get in touch with other FBOs here in the context. There is also the global ACT Alliance, which gives us the advantage of being stronger together. Additionally, the faith-based identity gives us the opportunity of having a clear voice in the society, and it gives us the opportunity of entering and cooperating with other FBOs (Næss-Holm, interviewee).

Being part of a larger alliance and having a clear voice in the society can also be a means for nation-building, because they are making contributions to stabilizing and strengthening the civil society, much in line with Haynes' theory on FBOs (Haynes 2007, p. 48). Shared values with other FBOs are also an advantage for cooperation, according to Hanna. Another of the interviewees, Ascherman, gave another example on the advantage of being faith-based:

> There are advantages and there are disadvantages, here for two very important reasons. First of all, if you are a religious leader you are automatically put on a pedestal and given credit. Religion is also really a thing that drives people and guide what they do from the moment they get up in the morning. So religion is very important (Ascherman, interviewee).

What this extract indicates, is that being faith-based can improve the seriousness of the organization, and thereby increase their effectiveness. Secularization theory depicted by Durkheim claims that religion, thereby also faith-based organizations, is not relevant for the public domain (Deneulin and Bano 2009, p. 15). The theory says that religion is a force only relevant for the private sphere. If this were the case in Palestine and Israel, faith-based organizations would be insignificant. However, as the interviewee from Rabbis for Human Rights, Rabbi Arik Ascherman claims, religion is an important part of the Palestinian and Israeli society:

> The basic assumptions have always been that if you want to solve a conflict, you better keep religion out of it. Religion is so intractable, so illogical and so unreasonable that you have to go around it to solve any problem. (…) But they where coming to the conclusion that, like it or not religion is not disappearing. And if you can't go around it, you better learn how to work with it.

This gives an extra dimension to the question of whether religion is part of the problem or part of the solution. Surely, it can be both. But it is intriguing to notice that organizations working in the Israeli/Palestinian context emphasize that religion can be partially part of the solution. There are still some obstacles for religious involvement in the conflict resolution. One concern with involving religion as a catalyst for peace, is that this may also acknowledge the conflict as a Holy War that can only be dealt with in religious terms. This concern might also make it harder to achieve a peaceful resolution, especially since a Holy War can bring about obstinate fronts on both sides of the conflict. Understood this way, the conflict is best solved through political interventions. However, recognizing religious aspects of the conflict legitimize religious implication, which opens up for the religious dimensions of faith-based organizations.

According to Torry, faith-based organizations have to be part of developing the civil society, because they create social trust in the society (Torry 2005, p. 117). One of the interviews with a representative from the NCA acknowledges that FBOs can be a catalyst for trust in the society:

> The Christian organizations have played a role in teaching how people with different religious background can live together (Barakat, interviewee).

Faith-based organizations have the advantage of being an important part of the civil society, which is emphasized also by Haynes (Haynes 2007, p. 48). The findings provide clear evidence that NCA and its partner-organizations are trying to strengthen the civil society, which confirms Haynes' theory. But there are other aspects of Haynes' theory on FBOs that are not plausible. He says that FBOs can play an important role in non-violent resolutions to conflicts (Haynes 2007, p. 48). The findings indicate that NCA are involved in non-violent resolutions to the conflict, but find it hard to be a small organization in the conflict:

> Our independent goal is to end the occupation and achieve just peace. However, we are a small organization and cannot influence much on neither the Palestinian nor the Israeli government (Næss-Holm, interviewee).

The thematic analysis of this extract suggests that not all FBOs can contribute to peacebuilding. Even though the very nature of FBOs are non-violent resolutions to conflicts,

the organization has to be of a respectable size in order to make peacebuilding contributions in Palestine and Israel.

6.2.2 Possible disadvantages of being faith-based, and obstacles for the NCA

In light of being faith-based, Norwegian Church Aid as an organization is not operational in Palestine and Israel. Instead, they work through partner-organizations, and with the partner-organizations own projects out in the field. The advantages with this approach, is that the NCA can choose whichever organization is the best in their view. Working like this can secure the symmetry between the NCA's strategies, and their work. However, there are also disadvantages of not being operational. Firstly, the NCA are dependent on the reports from its partner-organizations. These reports have to be based on facts, but they should also be nuanced, so that the NCA gets the right impressions of the current situation. In one of the interviews with a representative from the NCA, it was repeated that the NCA are depending on the partner-organizations to:

> Deliver services and to find out what the needs are (Daghash, interviewee).

Again, having people operating in the field on a frequent basis can provide updated information to the donor organization. This can be beneficial for the NCA, especially since they have several different partner-organizations, which can provide the NCA with various and reliable information. But the partner-organizations are not only a source of information. They are also funded because they provide services that the NCA highly values. These are services that are combined with rights-based approach and the programs from the NCA Country Plan. And the partner-organizations deliver their project propositions to the NCA, in hope of being funded. This can be problematic because there is always a chance that the strategies formulated in the NCA country plan are inadequate, and it can become an issue because the partner-organizations may adapt the project proposition to the strategies in the Country Plan, and not to what may be most efficient in the field. So to summarize: if the Country Plan is inadequate, this can have extended effects on the efficiency on the ground. Needless to say, it is important to make thorough preparations for the programs to be both efficient and sustainable.

A great challenge of working within Gaza is the limitations to organizational work. Not only is it so that gaining admittance in Gaza is at Hamas' mercy, but they are also restricting what

the organizations are allowed to do (Daghash, interviewee). The International community has a latent relationship with Hamas, which is designated as a terrorist organization by among others the United States (state.gov 3.13.2015). This has made it complicated for Muslim FBOs to operate in Palestine, and they have to hide their Muslim identity because there is a chance of being accused of supporting Hamas:

> They started to hide their identity, because they where targeted by Israel and Fatah. They have to defend themselves, and say that we are Muslims, not Hamas. If one is accused of being part of Hamas, you might end up in jail (Daghash, interviewee)

This is not only relevant for Muslim organizations – Christian faith-based organizations such as the NCA can be accused of missionary work. Some claim that faith-based organizations implement holism to its procedures. Holism accentuates involvement of concurrent aspects of Christianity and developmental aspects, such as the spiritual, human, cultural and material dimensions of life (Taylor 1995, p. 25). Part of what I found in the interviews, was that the NCA and their partner-organizations do not accentuate their religious basis in a way that alienates them from the society, and certainly do not act as missionaries in the field, as the theory of holism suggests. However, the NCA could be clearer in that they are in fact a Christian faith-based organization, as they state in their Country Plan.

As chapter 2.1 indicates, paternalism is another possible disadvantage for FBOs (Taylor 1995, p. 78). Paternalism happens when local organizations loose their self-determination, and rely heavily on their donor (Taylor 1995, p. 78). Paternalism involves a top-down approach, and excludes the local organizations from controlling strategies and programs. Additionally, paternalism is considered to be imperialistic. To prevent this from happening, the FBO – the NCA – have to empower their partner-organizations and integrate them into the decision-making, only then is it certain that paternalism flourishes (Taylor 1995, p. 82). The NCA use partner-organizations in their work, and as an answer to Taylor's theory on paternalism, the NCA stress that they are partners and not donors:

> We depend highly on and trust our partners to deliver services and to find out what the needs are (Daghash, interviewee).

Religion can play a negative role in relation to development when it excludes others (Haynes 2007, p. 62). The findings provide clear evidence that the NCA is not excluding other denominations or religions. They are partners with Jewish organizations, and support the ELCJHL schools, which have a considerable amount of Muslim students. Being that NCA is a Christian organization, there is a possibility of being biased. But as Daghash from the NCA emphasized, the NCA is non-discriminatory.

NCA's country plan explains how they are partly funded by NORAD (Norwegian Church Aid 2010, p. 13). It can be problematic to be funded by a government organization, such as NORAD. The funding can restrict the independence of the faith-based organization, and the core values might be devalued on the expense of the greater governmental organization (Tønnessen 2007, p. 107). As embellished in chapter 2.1, Torry sees this kind of situation as a possible disadvantage for FBOs, and calls it isomorphism (Torry 2005, p. 31). Organizations like NORAD may have other project priorities, which in turn can restrict the work of the NCA. However, the cooperation with a government organization opens up for a whole new scale of resources, contacts and stability in the Palestinian development work.

6.2.3 Dependency and unification

Dependency theory speaks about the relationship between the donor and the recipient (Banik 2006, p. 234). And the theory sees this as a dependent relationship, where the recipient gets dependent on the funds from the donor. Aid is often based on asymmetric relationships between recipient and donor (Le More 2008, p. 19). Part of what the NCA tries to do, is to strengthen the capacities of their partner-organizations through funds and transfer of knowledge. Part of this capacity building seeks to strengthen the accountability of the partner-organizations. Strengthening the capacities and empowering the partner-organizations is a way of stopping dependency to happen (Taylor 1995, p. 82). So, the NCA is not that much affected by the dependency theory, because they are not operational. Since they are working with partner-organizations, it is rather the partner-organizations that may get dependent on the NCA-funding. One of the interviewees spoke on their relationship with the NCA. As the extract in the previous chapter indicates, this particular partner-organization is not concerned with the School of Dependency (Banik 2006, pp. 234-235), but with other concerns:

> One could say, financial support doesn't matter if it's coming from a faith-based organization or not. One could even argue, getting support from a non-Jewish organization could be used to attack us (Ascherman, interviewee).

This extract indicates that the context of Israel and Palestine is religiously and politically latent, ever since working with Palestinians as an Israeli organization can be used to attack the organization, thus making it more difficult to cooperate and fund Israeli organizations. It could thereby be argued that it would be more efficient for the Israeli FBOs to rather be funded and supported by other Jewish organizations. This could prevent reactions from happening in the Jewish society. However, as Ascherman emphasizes, with all the things that divide the different religious groups in Palestine and Israel, he finds it meaningful that there also are things that unite them. And cooperation between different FBOs is a unifying aspect. The NCA's support of faith-based organizations from the Palestinian and the Israeli side is important. At its best, the cooperation between Israeli and Palestinian organizations can be the key for dialogue and removal of stereotypes. After all, false stereotypes are one of the aspects that inspire the conflict between the two societies (Lederach 1997, p. 23). Rabbis for Human Rights work explicitly with Palestinian human rights, and one of the things that they emphasize, is to break down the Palestinian stereotypes of the Israelis. As chapter 2.5 embellish, implementing human rights in the society is part of peacebuilding (Kalnes, Austvik and Sørlie Røhr 2011, p. 198). So supporting Rabbis for Human Rights is an adequate part of the NCA's strategy for peacebuilding.

6.2.4 Conclusion

The sub-question is: What sorts of advantages or disadvantages are related to faith-based organizations, the Norwegian Church Aid in particular, in the process of nation-building? From what I have found in the interviews and in light of the theories, there are several advantages of being faith-based in Israel and Palestine. The first thing is that being faith-based sometimes makes it easier to access communities and organizations in the society. It is easier to create and develop strong and influential networks such as the ACT Alliance and WCC. And FBOs are an important part of the civil society, which is highly relevant for nation-building, because the civil society work as watchdogs against government abuse (Banik 2006, p. 263). Possible disadvantages are paternalism and being Muslim faith-based in Palestine. But there are other disadvantages in the light of being an organization – it is difficult to

influence any of the Israeli or Palestinian governments, because they are to small to make significant impact (Daghash, interviewee).

6.3 Contributions towards peacebuilding

Nation-building and peacebuilding in the Palestinian context are related. A stable society that comes from nation-building will be a catalyst for peacebuilding. And peacebuilding can function as a unifying force for the Palestinian society, because peace between Israel and Palestine depends on a congregated Palestinian society. The sub-question on peacebulding is: How does the work of the Norwegian Church Aid contribute towards peacebuilding? The following paragraphs will give an answer to this question.

6.3.1 Egalitarian perception

As mentioned in chapter 2.4, egalitarian perceptions sees FBOs as relevant in peacebuilding, because they have the abilities, knowledge and finances (Haugerudbraaten 1998) to influence and promote peacebuilding in the Palestinian society. But from what I found in the interviews, the NCA is only partly active in peacebuilding:

> What we actually are doing, is advocacy and lobbying through our networks. I think we are aiming for change of policy, change of the current situation, and maybe find a way to reduce the facts that found the conflict (Barakat, interviewee).

6.3.2 Peacebuilding-achievements depend on a political solution

One important point that should be made about instability in the Middle East, is that there is a lack of a unified stabilizing force. Looking to Europe and the EU, and even Africa and the African Union, it becomes clear that a unified force equivalent to these unions could cause stability in the Middle East region (van Edig 2005, p. 152). Another upside is that a regional union makes it possible to sit down and discuss issues concerning regional stability and trade, with an increase in economical development as a possible outcome. NCA is a insignificant organization in global politics, which they acknowledge:

> Even the EU, the biggest donor failed to achieve peace in the area. What do you think about the NCA (Daghash, interviewee)?

Consequently, the NCA speaks about conflict sensitivity in their Country Plan for Israel and Palestine (Daghash, interviewee). And to answer the sub-question of how the NCA contributes to peacebuilding, it becomes clear that their main approach lies in the cooperation with partner-organizations. The NCA works on the grassroots, with capacity building and fulfilling a rights-based approach to remove rights-deficits for the Palestinian people. But as Næss-Holm acknowledges, a peace solution has to come from the political level:

> We believe that the solution to the conflict has to come from politics (Næss-Holm, interviewee).

On this basis, the NCA are not likely to contribute towards peacebuilding. But the NCA's response to politics comes from their third part responsibility and advocacy:

> We have to remind the international community about their commitments to peacebuilding. We do this through our global networks and advocacy (Næss-Holm, interviewee).

ACT Alliance and the World Council of Churches are one of these networks. But then again, how influential are these networks in a context where not even EU or US Aid has made much contribution to peacebuilding? Nader Hanna from EAPPI, a program of World Council of Churches, and according to Næss-Holm one of the most important partners related to peacebuilding, says that EAPPI is not directly involved in peacebuilding:

> On a level, we're not so much involved in peacebuilding, in terms of negotiation or anything in that matter. What we do is that we work with the communities and try to prevent violence, and record what we couldn't prevent (Hanna, interviewee).

Evidently, the peacebuilding contributions from the NCA both independently and through its partner-organizations, is primarily advocacy, giving Palestinians its rights through RBA, and building the capacities of the civil society:

> What we're doing, is that we're strengthening civil society organizations from both sides, that promotes peace so that they can push their governments (Daghash, interviewee)

According to Lederach, the civil society can facilitate contact between the authorities and the grassroots (Lederach 1997, p. 42-44), and can thereby be vital for peacebuilding because they

can influence the authorities. To sum it all up, the NCA's approach to peacebuilding is about empowering Palestinians and the Palestinian society, through the means of peacebuilding, nation-building and rights-based approach. The NCA's rights-based approach is relevant for peacebuilding. According to Kvale and Austvik and their peacebuilding-pallet, building institutions and implementing human rights in the society is important for peacebuilding (Kalnes, Austvik and Sørlie Røhr 2011, p. 198). The NCA's implementation of human rights in their peacebuilding-approach is a necessity in peacebuilding because it gives the people its freedom from oppression, which, according to Daghash decreases the level of frustration in the Palestinian society (Daghash, interviewee). The combination of nation-building and peacebuilding can be relevant for peacebuilding, due to nation-building's ability to create a stable society (van Edig 2005, p. 157).

As seen in chapter 2.5 Kvale and Austvik use a peacebuilding-pallet in order to identify the elements that have to be accomplished before peace sustains in the Palestinian and Israeli societies. According to Kvale and Austvik safety does not concern organizations like the NCA, rather, this element are part of the mandate of the UN and NATO (Kalnes, Austvik and Sørlie Røhr 2011, pp. 198-199). The political framing and socio-economic basis are both relevant for the NCA and their approach to peacebuilding. One of the interviewees, Barakat from the NCA, said that they are supporting institutions such as schools and hospitals. In Barakat's view, this is an approach to nation-building. However, Kvale and Austvik see that health and education are important part of the socio-economical basis that creates and sustain peace (Kalnes, Austvik and Sørlie Røhr 2011, p. 198). But the socio-economical basis is not and adequate approach to peacebuilding – the security issues and political disagreements between Israel and Palestine has to be maintained in order for peacebuilding to be adequate (Næss-Holm, interviewee).

Making of democracy in the Palestinian society can be a means for peacebuilding. Galtung, an influential scholar on peacebuilding explains that democracy is fruitful for the society. It is a way of making peace and development sustainable (Galtung 2013, p. 113). The NCA's position on Palestinian democracy is rather vague. From what I found in the interviews, they have little or no influence on the Palestinian government. This is an area where the NCA together with their networks[14] could make greater impact on Palestinian peace- and nation-

[14] ACT Alliance and World Council of Churches

building. The reason for democracy-arguments is that the cornerstone of democracy is dialogue and non-violence, which are important aspects of peace- and nation-building (Galtung 2013, p. 115).

6.3.3 Normalization

One of the things that were brought up by several of the interviewees was the fear of normalization in the Palestinian society. The term is used to describe a situation where someone, in this context a FBO, tries to normalize the relationship between Israelis and Palestinians on the West Bank on the basis of the present state of affairs. Trying to normalize the relationship between Israelis and Palestinians is understood as a way of legitimizing the occupation, according to the interview with Næss-Holm. This makes it complicated to work with peacebuilding, because there will not be any peace-talks until the Israelis have withdrawn their settlers from the West Bank. Hence, normalization is an issue for all organizations working with peacebuilding in Palestine. And at worst the fear of normalization keeps the Palestinians and Israelis from conversing, which makes it difficult for FBOs to contribute towards peacebuilding. And to answer the sub-question of how the NCA contributes towards peacebuilding; working with peacebuilding is difficult, because the organization has to be conflict sensitive (Daghash, interviewee). At worst, the NCA and its partner-organizations get incapable of acting due to the fear of being accused of normalization:

> Being accused of normalization will stop you from operating. Especially in the Palestinian side where you will be accused of dealing with the other side, and that you're trying to normalize the settler situation (Daghash, interviewee).

Normalization is mentioned, but according to Daghash FBOs working with peacebuilding should also take precautions because they can be accused of being biased. In other words: it seems difficult for the NCA and their partner-organizations to make significant contributions towards peacebuilding.

Lederach's theory on conflict says that conflict is characterized by hostility, fear and stereotyping (Lederach 1997, p. 23). Part of what peacebuilding have to accomplish, is to break down hostility and stereotypes, and remove fear in society. From what I found in the interview with Ascherman, part of what they do is to change the stereotypes the Palestinians

have on Israelis (Ascherman, interviewee). Hanna from EAPPI stated that their work is about protective advocacy and protective presence. These means is conceived to be accountable for restoring trust in the Palestinian community, which according to Lederach is essential for peacebuilding. Additionally, EAPPI's presence on the West Bank prevents violence (Hanna, interviewee), which is important to prevent animosity (Lederach 1997, p. 23). Lederach develops the idea of peacebuilding, and calls for reconciliation as a central part of peacebuilding (Lederach 1997, p. 24). From what I was told by Daghash from the NCA, they are not involved in reconciliation, because of the issues with normalization that prevents Israelis and Palestinians to negotiate on the West Bank, and because they believe that reconciliation comes first after conflict has ended (Daghash, interviewee). Normalization has to be taken seriously, and the NCA is right when calling for withdrawing of Israeli settlements on the West Bank. However, with reconciliation comes the opportunity to restore relationships between conflicting parties, and thereby making reconciliation part of peacebuilding (Lederach 1997, p. 24).

6.3.4 Conclusion

From what I have found in the interviews, the NCA and its partner-organizations are not working directly with peace-resolution. Their approach to peacebuilding is carried out by non-violent means such as advocacy and empowerment of Palestinians. The Palestinians' fear of normalization makes it difficult to create peace between the two conflicting sides of Israel and Palestine. As Næss-Holm said, the solution to the conflict has to come from politics, but organizations such as the NCA can facilitate the transition through strengthening institutions and the civil society.

6.4 Rights-based approach

In the sub-question I asked if the rights-based approach formulated by the Norwegian Church Aid work as a means for nation-building. The answer to this question is complex. We know that universal human rights are rights given to every human being. It gives people the freedom to choose, the freedom of movement, right to health, education and work, among other things. One of the questions that I asked the representatives for the different organization was about a rights-based approach to development. The implication is that there is someone in the Israeli and Palestinian society that is the rights-holder. On the contrary case there are the ones that are obligated to give the rights-holders their rights. Those are called duty-bearers, and are

primarily the Israeli authorities, but additionally the Palestinian authorities are also held accountable for giving the Palestinian people their rights. The way rights-based approach is understood in this thesis, and in the work of the NCA, is that RBA is the cornerstone of all of the NCA's programs and strategies. Hence, RBA is the basis for the NCA's contributions towards Palestinian nation-building and peacebuilding. This is expressed in the NCA's work for Palestinians rights of education, health and access as a means for nation-building.

6.4.1 NCA and rights-based approach

The NCA has implemented rights-based approach in all of their strategies and programs. Rights-based approach is thereby part of all they do:

> RBA run as a thread through all our programs. With our strategy, we formulate the rights-deficits, and the projects that we formulate are supposed to close the gaps in human rights. One of the programs is the right to health, where we cooperate with hospitals and give the people their right to health. Another is the right to freedom of movement. And we also work with right to education – livelihood and trade-program (Næss-Holm, interviewee).

What makes rights-based approach possible is that the NCA identifies the rights-deficits in the Palestinian society, and then try to compensate for the deficits. As mentioned in the previous chapter, they cooperate with partner-organizations in order to compensate for the deficits:

> And then there is the RHR and EAPPI, which are all about protecting the rights of the Palestinian people. So the recurring issue is lack of human rights, and that we through our programmes try to provide the Palestinian people with rights (Næss-Holm).

Their rights-based approach is a melting pot of different rights – one right overlaps with another. For instance when the NCA works with the right to health, contextualized through the Augusta Victoria Hospital, it is also a matter of right to access. Most Palestinians have trouble getting to Jerusalem and the Augusta Victoria Hospital due to restrictions. So when they to get from the West Bank to Augusta Victoria, it is a matter of right to health and to access, according to the interviewee from the NCA, Barakat. And the right to health, contextualized through Augusta Victoria, is also a part of strengthening the Palestinian institutions, which is essential for Palestinian nation-building. One of the things that Barakat

from the NCA identified as a main approaches for the NCA in the future, was economic rights as a means for nation-building:

> NCA should contribute to economic development for people that are in need of income. It is more sustainable to give opportunities and the skills for people to be able to work, and generate income. It's also in compliance with NORAD, the approach towards focus on education and economic development as a rights-based approach (Barakat, interviewee).

The right to work and education contribute to nation-building. And especially right to work should be an area of commitment in the NCA's revised Country Plan, which will be published at the end of this year. The right to work can create economical stability, which can reduce frustration in the Palestinian society and lead to peace. Additionally, economic empowerment is essential for nation-building, because is stabilizes the society (Hippler 2005, p. 6).

6.4.2 Identifying duty-bearers and rights-holders

What makes the rights-based approach formulated by the NCA a means for nation-building is that they indicate who the rights-holders and duty bearers are. This can make it easier to approach the duty-bearers, and help the rights-holders. As a result of helping the rights-holders, the civil society will be strengthened. And as mentioned above, a strong civil society is important for nation-building (Deneulin and Bano 2009, p. 28). Approaching the rights-holders is a great part of what the NCA does in their work in Israel and Palestine. And the NCA Country Plan for the Middle East focuses on the distinction between empowering rights-holders and challenging duty-bearers. The country plan indicate different duty bearers:

> Rights Based Approach (RBA) will continue to be central to programming. This implies empowering rights-holders in the oPt and challenging duty-bearers in Israel, oPt and international actors (Norwegian Church Aid, 2010).

This extract shows that there are other possible duty-bearers than Israel. This is important, because although Israel is the major duty-bearer, acknowledging the Palestinian authorities in the West Bank alongside the de facto government in the Gaza Strip as possible duty-bearers equal to Israel, is part of acknowledging Palestine as an independent state. Which is part of NCA's strategy for Palestinian nation-building – the recognition of Palestine as an independent nation. The reason for this argumentation is that nations in the international

community are supposed to provide their inhabitants with basic rights. Dedicating human rights deficits to the Palestinian authorities can be difficult, because they are not operating as one government. This way, it becomes easier for the duty-bearer to disclaim liability. Rights-based approach to development in the Palestinian context is not a simple task, because it involves giving more responsibility to the Palestinian and Israeli government (Fretheim 2012, p. 87). This can be problematic for governments that at the moment do not emphasize the rights of Palestinians, and so it can disrupt rights-based approach in Palestine.

The theory of rights-based approach tells a story that not only targets the general society, but also targets specific vulnerable groups within the society. This is among the core elements of rights-based approach, and concurrent with the NCA's own statutes. There are some challenges that might occur for FBO's relations with rights-based approach. One of these challenges is analyzing why the services to the rights-holders was not given in the first place, and trying to commend a strategy to the government and duty-bearers that decreases government reliance on development aid (Gneiting 2009, p. 19). Being that the Israeli government is restricting the Palestinian government access to the International market, withholding taxes payment and to a large degree dictates the Palestinian society, the Israelis are commonly known as the duty-bearers whereas the Palestinians are known as rights holders. This distinction is important to acknowledge in a setting where FBO's are striving for human rights for all. Knowing where to put pressure is important in the understanding of the conflict but also in the development work and the institutionalization of Palestine.

Even though the Israeli government is responsible for giving the Palestinians their needs, the Palestinian government can also in some contexts be defined as duty bearers in their approach to the Palestinian society. Turning Israel in to the only responsible is not entirely right. To some degree the Palestinian government suffers from lack of efficiency when dealing with human rights violations on its own people. But it is not only the Israeli State and the Palestinian Authority led by President Mahmoud Abbas that is acknowledged duty-bearers. Hamas is de facto government in the Gaza strip, and has to be acknowledged as duty-bearers accordingly (Norwegian Church Aid, 2010). Approaching these governments is difficult. Like with peacebuilding and nation-building, what the NCA and their partner-organizations really can do, is to advocate for human rights:

> Advocacy and influencing on both nations so that there is peace. The other part is that there is rights for people. We need to ensure that people have their rights, and the rights are not violated by any of the authorities – neither the Palestinian nor the Israeli (Barakat, interviewee).

But as the interviews indicated, it is difficult if not impossible to influence any of the governments. Advocacy can only be relevant if the NCA advocate through their networks such as the ACT Alliance and World Council of Churches. But even then is it difficult to proclaim that they really have much influence on the governments.

Working in a context with frequent outburst of conflict and violence is a difficult task. Being a foreign faith-based organization does not make it easier to connect with the weakest groups of the Palestinian society. Having local employees can surely make it easier to have an impact on the local Palestinian society. However, it is challenging to connect with the marginalized of the Palestinian society. This is in contrast to what I have found in theory on civil society from chapter 2.3, which explained that civil society organizations can play a vital part as a represent for the marginalized in the society (Banik 2006, p. 263). In the interview with the Program Coordinator from the NCA working with Livelihood and Trade, Faith-community Centre and Peacebuilding Programmes, it became clear that accessing the population in Gaza is limited.

> But of course, if you want to operate in Gaza, you need to have this communication with the government (Hamas). And so, if you want to help the people that are in dire need, to give them your support you have to do this kind of dialogue.

This means that the NCA have to establish contact with what for some could be known as a terrorist organization (state.gov 3.13.2015). And that can make it more difficult to create sustainable rights-based programs in Gaza.

6.4.3 Strengthening the rights-holders as a means for nation-building

One of the main goals of rights-based approach is to strengthen the rights-holders. In a situation such as the Palestinian/Israeli one, this is a rather difficult task, due to factors such as discrimination and exclusion – which seems to be an everyday occurrence. Preventing discrimination and exclusion have to be part of an International and local political agenda to

be stopped. This is in all likelihood not something that faith-based organizations alone can deal with. But faith-based organizations such as the NCA play a crucial role in advocating for the rights holders. Another partner-organization, Rabbis for Human Rights, is essential in the NCA's rights-based approach. RHR combines faith-basis with rights-based approach, and advocate especially for the rights of Palestinians. The combination of being an FBO and working with a RBA was discussed above, and what that analysis found, was that being a Jewish organization getting support from a non-Jewish organization can be used to attack RHR (Ascherman, interviewee). RHR educates Israeli students in human rights. But the most relevant for NCA's strategies, is RHR's empowerment of Palestinians and the nation-building that comes from empowering Palestinians:

> You know we have like for example major high court appeal, to return planning and zoning in Palestinian communities in area C to Palestinians hands. That would be nation-building, which would be both in terms of empowering Palestinians, and in terms of allowing development (Ascherman, interviewee).

RHR's contributions to Palestinian communities provides them with human rights, and can also be a way of preventing further human rights-violations of Palestinian communities. This is because RHR have a clearer voice in the Israeli society to stop human rights-violations. For instance, they are lobbying the Knesset and as the extract indicates – they support Palestinians that have lost land and homes in court. This is an important part of recognizing the rights of Palestinians. But as Ascherman says in the interview: RHR only go where the Palestinians welcome them. This implies that RHR cannot reach the whole Palestinian society. So in a way, one can say that RHR's contributions only have local effects. However, their contributions give hope to the Palestinian society that there are organizations working for their rights. Additionally, RHR can influence the Israeli society to stop human rights-violations. Their use of advocacy as a means for changing the current situation is also an essential approach for NCA and EAPPI. Using the same approach to fight for human rights is important, because when several organizations advocate on the same grounds, the effect on the authorities gets stronger. Finally, the extract above indicates the link between rights-based approach and nation-building that comes from strengthening the Palestinian civil society.

The NCA's partner-organizations ELCJHL and EAPPI have both implemented RBA in their program. ELCJHL have implemented human rights in the curriculum, so that the students

learn about the position of rights in the society. EAPPI works with protective presence as a way of empowering the rights-holders. This is one of the most active partner-organizations working in the field, so their achievements are very important for the success of the NCA's rights-based approach.

> We're trying to empower the rights-holder through the protective presence of our EA's. And the protective presence seeks to accompany farmers and herders to their land. At the same time, the EA's meet the duty bearers through advocacy and reports on violations, asking them to end the occupation (anonymous, interviewee).

The presence of the EAs provides means on the ground for Israelis and Palestinians to express themselves non-violently, according to Hanna from EAPPI. This is essential for the process of peacebuilding. Additionally, EAPPI monitors children's access to education and if there are any problems in terms of restricted access. Schools are an important institution for nation-building, and making sure that the children can access the school is important part of the rights-based philosophy. In cases with rights-deficits in terms of restricted access and other human rights-violations, the EAs can only provide protective presence and protective advocacy, they cannot put themselves at the risk of being injured or arrested. What this reveals, is that EAPPI have restricted opportunity to stop ongoing human rights-violations, and can only report on them. EAPPI's restricted authority in the Palestinian community limits the possibility of implementing rights-based approach in the society. But what Hanna point out, their reports indicate that when there are EAs present, human rights-violations are less likely to occur.

6.4.4 Rights-based approach and nation-building

As mentioned above, one of the sub-questions asks about the relation between rights-based approach and nation-building. And from what I have found in the interviews, implementing rights-based approach in the civil society contributes towards nation-building:

> Integration of rights-based approach, and building the civil society organizations' capacities, can lead to that they are strong enough to play a bigger role in building a state (Daghash, interviewee).

One of the arguments against rights-based approach is that a high focus on rights produces unnecessary legal conflict, and that it is hard to distinguish which right has priority over another (Haas 2014, p. 516). So instead of a society based on human rights, the opponents against RBA want an approach that will lead to consensus and takes cultural, economic and political perspectives into account (Haas 2014, p. 516). But the very nature of human rights is to solve conflicts. So NCA and their partner-organizations internalization of human rights not only lead to legal conflicts, but it can also solve them (Haas 2014, p. 516). And this is another key for nation-building; rights-based approach is supposed to resolve conflict, which is important for a just and unified society. And as a paragraph below will show – cultural aspects are taken into consideration despite of internalizing rights-based approach in the society.

Humanitarian and development aid are about trying to gain better livelihood for the recipients (Fretheim 2012, p. 85). Using human rights-based approach as an asset to achieve this is an important entry point. Freedom is at its best when the people experience freedom of education, travel, health services, speech, democratic values, non-discrimination and non-violation. But the combination of rights and development is not an indisputable matter, especially because the focus on rights depends on an influential government approach (Fretheim 2012, p. 87). Taking responsibility for fulfilling these rights is perhaps the hardest struggle in the quest of a human rights-based approach. Especially because the somewhat fragile Palestinian government is at Israel's mercy in terms of giving the Palestinian people its rights. Human rights are depending on determent governments that uphold these rights, not only normatively, but also descriptively.

Amartya Sen sees the freedom that derives from rights-based approach as essential for development (Sen 1999, p. 3). Sen's view is that when giving people their freedom, they become able to participate in the society, which is essential for nation-building. He gives two reasons for why freedom is essential for development. The evaluative reason is much in line with the rights-based goals of the NCA – development is determined by the amount of freedom in the society. This implication has extended effects on the NCA's human rights-work, and it means with freedom comes development. From what I have found in the interviews Israeli authorities restrict much of the daily-life for Palestinians living in East Jerusalem, the West Bank and Gaza (Barakat, interviewee). Increased freedom for Palestinians in East Jerusalem, the West Bank and Gaza would be a catalyst for development.

Nader Hanna from EAPPI stated that their EAs witnessed Israeli restrictions on Palestinians, if Israeli restrictions do not hinder Palestinian development, the very least it hinders the freedom for Palestinians.

The other reason why freedom is important for development is the effectiveness reason (Sen 1999, p. 4), which says that development depends on the free agency of the people. The findings indicate that the NCA and its partner-organizations are involved with rights-based approach. And much in line with Sen's arguments, the NCA provides Palestinians the right to education and health, which is part of development towards a stable nation. However, freedom by itself does not promote development. There have to be means on the ground for development to occur. At the moment the NCA and its partner-organizations human rights-approach is not adequate for the free agency of people. For instance, Hanna from EAPPI said whenever human rights-violations do come about all they can do is report on it. They are not in the position to intervene. From this comes the deduction that the NCA and its partner-organizations have not adequately implemented rights-based approach in the Palestinian society, because they cannot intervene when human-rights-violations occur – only advocate against it.

Chapter 2.5 brought up concerns with the implementation of universal human rights in nation-building. A critique of the implementation of universal human rights comes from cultural relativism. Cultural relativism says that there are no universal moral applicable for all cultures (Bergem and Ekeløve-Slydal 2009, p. 194). However, the findings indicate that the NCA is not dictating human rights in the Palestinian society. According to the NCA's Country Plan, their rights-based approach is rather concerned with empowering the rights-holders and challenging the duty-bearers (Norwegian Church Aid 2010, p. 10). Additionally, Nader Hanna from EAPPI stated that their rights-based approach is not a matter of influence Westernization, but of protecting Palestinians from human rights-violations:

> Our whole mandate is based on international human rights law. It's all based on; is this a violation on someone's rights? If it is, then we act (Hanna, interviewee).

As chapter 2.5 identified, human rights are accused of being undemocratic, because they emphasize universal norms and values, and not those norms and values originating from democratic procedures in the Palestinian society (Bergem and Ekeløve-Slydal 2009, pp. 196-

197). So that way, implementing rights-based approach to nation-building can in fact defeat its own end, because implementing human rights in the society can hinder democratic procedures. However, Barakat from the NCA claims that their approach to human rights is:

> A matter of giving the Palestinian people a minimum standard of rights, we help with the right to health, protection and gender issues among other things (Barakat, interviewee).

6.4.5 Religion and rights-based approach

The connection between a religious and rights-based approach is not something that is appreciated by all scholar. Some scholars write about religion and the rights-based approach as if they are on collision course (Deneulin and Bano 2009, p. 41). The challenge they meet is particularly on subjects involving health, education and equal status between genders (Fretheim 2012, p. 88). Of course, the religious statutes that the NCA builds on is in all likelihood not incompatible with the human rights they are preserving. But it is a matter they have to be aware of, especially when dealing with and selecting local faith-based organizations. As mentioned earlier, another of the partner-organizations has combined religion and rights-based approach:

> Well, it's interesting. We have kind of two Torah's as a Jewish human rights organization, where we are obligated to the Jewish tradition of human rights, and as we understand it we advocate for our understanding of the Jewish tradition. And then as a human rights organization, we have some kind of allegiance to international human rights law (Ascherman, interviewee).

6.4.6 Problems concerning rights-based approach

Regardless of the achievements in rights-based approach, all humanitarian organizations working with development scratch the surface of rights-based approach. Their work is inevitably attached to human rights. This makes it interesting to look into possible problems with a rights-based approach. The theory chapter mentioned that there are other duty bearers than just governments. This is not valid for the Palestinian society, because it is the Israeli and Palestinian governments that are the human rights-violators. But there is another point to make. State sovereignty is important for the world order, and is also relevant for Israel and Palestine. The state sovereignty makes it difficult to approach the governments (Haas 2014, p. 515), which the interviewee Daghash spoke about in the interview. And when the NCA or any

of its partner-organizations advocate for human rights, but are met with governments that are deaf to all arguments, one can ask just how relevant rights-based approach is for nation-building. Especially because nation-building depends on the governments' willingness in order to be achieved. There is also another side of rights-based approach that should be discussed; most people do not know what their rights are, so when the rights-deficits are removed only the ones that know what rights they are entitled to, will benefit (Haas 2014, p. 517). This is less relevant for NCA or their partner-organizations' work, because they focus on strengthening the civil society:

> We're trying to strengthen civil society organizations to be rights-based. Developing their skills and capacities means that they can do interventions in the future. We believe that building a strong civil society will lead to a viable state. That's why we invest in capacity building for partners (Daghash, interviewee).

A strong civil society built on human rights is the key to making sure everyone benefits from human rights (Haas 2014, p. 517). However, with a rights-based approach the organizations are bound to guarantee all the rights in the Declaration. Bano sees that RBA struggles to solve situations where different rights collide (Deneulin and Bano 2009, p. 41), for instance when the right to liberty collides with cultural rights. NCA's country plan for the Middle East takes hold of this issue – Palestinian tradition provides women with fewer rights than men (Norwegian Church Aid 2010, p. 5).

Finally, it is important to acknowledge that there is injustice going on in the West Bank, in order to work with the Palestinians:

> I know a lot of Palestinians might see Israeli organizations as trying to create what they call normalization. Which means trying to white-wash the situation, and making it seem much better than it is, by showing cooperation between Israelis and Palestinians. That is not what we try to do. We work with Israeli and Palestinian organizations that acknowledge that there is injustice going on (Hanna, interviewee).

So working with rights-based approach means that the organization has to acknowledge the unjust situation, otherwise EAPPI may be accused of normalization. This is an issue for all

organizations working in the West Bank, and can stop organizations from operating. But it can be dealt with by acknowledging the injustice.

6.4.7 Conclusion

In what way can the rights-based approach formulated by the Norwegian Church Aid work as a means for nation-building? By empowering the Palestinian people, giving them the right to live a normal life with institutions such as education and health. These are institutions but they are also rights. So when NCA help Palestinians with better opportunities to obtain their rights, they also strengthen their institutions, which is an essential aspect of nation-building. Finally, rights-based approach is implemented in all of NCA's work, so when they work with nation-building, they are also working with providing Palestinians their rights.

7.0 Concluding remarks

The structure of the thesis is based on the sub-questions and main research question. The sub-questions are used because they can provide in-depth and supplementary answers to the main research question. In that sense, the sub-questions build a solid momentum that answers to the main research question. The following sub-chapters will give answers to the sub-questions respectively. The sub-chapters will lead to an answer of the main research question. The final sub-chapter on nation-building answers the main research question.

7.1 Faith-based organization

The first sub-question is: what advantages or disadvantages are related to faith-based organizations, Norwegian Church Aid in particular, in the process of nation-building? Through this research it has been demonstrated that faith-based organizations are relevant for Palestinian nation-building. Daghash from the NCA said that their contributions empower Palestinians and the civil society.

A key finding of this research for Haynes' theory on faith-based organizations is that faith-based organizations have the advantage of being longitudinal and make use of a bottom-up approach. As the analysis indicate, bottom-up approach is relevant for empowering the Palestinians, which in turn have implications for a strong civil society. The NCA identifies the longitudinal aspect in the Country Plan, and they see this as a comparative advantage (Norwegian Church Aid 2010, p. 7).

The Israeli/Palestinian context is, according to Daghash of the NCA, disordered. Solid and influential networks are thereby highly relevant to make an impact on the society.

7.2 Contributions towards peacebuilding

The second sub-question asks: how does the work of the Norwegian Church Aid contribute to peacebuilding? From what I found from interviewing the NCA and its partner-organizations, the NCA work with non-violent means for peacebuilding. According to Næss-Holm, the NCA are not directly involved in peace-negotiation. Instead, they are strengthening the civil society organizations on both sides, Israeli and Palestinian, so that they can advocate for peace and influence their governments in a direction of peace.

According to SIPRI, nation-building can contribute to peacebuilding and vice versa, because the nature of nation-building is a stable state, which is important to create peace. However, from what I was told by the interviewees from EAPPI, RHR and the NCA they are not directly involved in peace-talks or negotiation. From what I have found from analyzing the interviews in the light of theories on peacebuilding – the best thing the NCA and its partner-organizations can do is to create a foundation for peacebuilding within the Palestinian society, through strengthening, empowering and building the capacities in the civil society. Additionally, the NCA and its partners should continue to advocate for peace towards the Palestinian and Israeli governments and the international community, just as Næss-Holm said in the interview.

According to the NCA's Country Plan they have implemented a non-violent approach to peacebuilding. The NCA's approach to peacebuilding is to strengthen the Palestinian civil society, and not through conflict resolution and peace-negotiation – they are simply too small to have an effect on the conflict resolution.

7.3 Rights-based approach

The third sub-question is: in what way can the rights-based approach formulated by the Norwegian Church Aid work as a means for nation-building? From what I found from the Country Plan and the interviews, rights-based approach is implemented in all of the NCA's actions. Barakat from the NCA said that the NCA want to cover the rights-deficits in the Palestinian community by strengthening, empowering and building the capacities of institutions and the civil society. And when they cover the rights-deficits in the country, they are also supporting institutions such as schools and hospitals, which in light of Hippler's nation-building-theory, is important for nation-building. Daghash from the NCA said that they are raising the human rights-awareness among the Palestinians, so that they in time are able to mobilize themselves, and demand their rights as human beings in the Palestinian society.

7.4 Nation-building and overall conclusion

How can strengthening Palestinian churches and faith-based organizations and their institutions contribute towards Palestinian nation-building? According to the NCA's Country Plan, they are working towards the civil society, with empowering and building the capacities in the Palestinian society. From what I found in the interviews in light of the nation-building-

theory in chapter 2.4, strengthening the civil society is important for nation-building, because the civil society-organizations is the connection between the grassroots and the Palestinian government. Barakat from the NCA stresses that the NCA's participation in larger networks such as ACT Alliance and WCC is important for their nation-building approach, because they have the knowledge, capacities and access to be involved in Palestinian nation-building.

A relevant question to ask after the analysis is of the effectiveness of the NCA's approach to nation-building. The NCA is a rather small organization, and according to the Country Plan, their nation-building-approach focus on institutions and civil society. Although these are important aspects of nation-building, they are not satisfactory alone. The NCA are only supporting some hospitals and schools. Their outreach in the Palestinian society is thereby questionable. However, Palestinian church and faith-based organizations and their institutions still have access to the Palestinian community. The findings indicate that the access makes these FBOs and churches a reliable source in the community, and a promoter of long-term development, which according to Deneulin and Bano is an important aspect of FBOs. Deneulin and Bano's theory on FBOs, says that FBOs foster trust in the society, which is important for their work with nation-building.

The NCA write in the Country Plan that strengthening Palestinian church and FBOs and their institutions is important, because they are likely to become pillars in the future Palestinian state. Religious rituals are important for social integration and hold the society together. This is essential for a unified nation. So when the NCA supports Palestinian churches, they support nation-building. In addition, hospitals and schools are essential for nation-building. So promoting FBOs that supports schools and hospitals, promotes nation-building. But as mentioned in chapter 6.1, nation-building is only concluded when all institutions are able to sustain without foreign aid.

Nation-building is not only about strengthening the institutions and civil society, it is according to Hippler's theory also about unifying the different communities to a society.
But when all is said and done, faith-based organizations cannot fulfill all nation-building-acquirements alone. There are aspects of nation-building where political decisions and involvement is required. The NCA's focus on peacebuilding is essential for nation-building to be concluded.

The overall conclusion is that nation-building by FBOs alone is not adequate, but it can be accomplished in a symbiosis with the Palestinian authorities and with less restrictions by the Israeli government. From what I found in the interviews, rights-based approach is a guide in all of the NCA's work. This means that it is involved both in peacebuilding and nation-building. Rights-based approach to nation-building is essential, because it focuses on the grassroots of the nation, and on giving the Palestinians their rights. The civil society is a part of enabling Palestinian nation-building. The overall conclusion is that the NCA and its partner-organizations is contributing to Palestinian nation-building through strengthening the civil society and supporting Palestinian institutions. But nation-building is only adequate when it happens in a symbiosis with the Palestinian and Israeli governments.

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Appendix I : Interview-guide

Questions for the Norwegian Church Aid in Jerusalem

- The conflict between Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories has been going on for decades. In what ways does the work of the NCA contribute to conflict resolution between Israel and the Occupied Palestinian territories, in your experience?

- How important is your faith based identity, particularly when meeting organizations of which the NCA are partners with?
Why is it important?
Why is it not that important?
How explicit is this Christian identity when meeting other faith-communities?

- What degree of influence would you say that the NCA's has in its cooperation with partner-organizations? If so, how explicit is this influence when it comes to guidance and decision-making by the NCA?
Is this influence legitimate?

- Can the NCA through its presence and cooperation with partners, influence on either the Palestinian or the Israeli government/authorities?
- If so, in what way? Do you believe this is important?

- In your experience, what are the advantages of the NCA being a faith-based organization in order to achieve their goals in the Occupied Palestinian Territories and Israel?

- NCA speaks of a rights-based approach to development in its Country Plan for the oPt. There are two stakeholder groups in rights-based development—the rights-holders (who do not experience full rights) and the duty-bearers (the institutions obligated to fulfil the holders' rights). Rights-based approaches aim at strengthening the capacity of duty-bearers and empower the rights-holders.
In what concrete ways is the organizational work of the NCA rights-based?

- How does the organization achieve a rights-based approach when working with people from both side of the conflict? Is this a dilemma?

- What are the NCA's main strategies for contributing to nation building in the oPt?

- How could these strategies be even more effective, in your view?

- Which partners do you see as the most relevant in the peace building-work?

- What do the NCA see as their area of commitment in the future work in the oPt and Israel?

- The Country Plan formulated by the NCA for the Occupied Palestinian Territories is quite comprehensive. To what degree does NCA in Jerusalem comply with this Country Plan, as you see it?

- To what extent can this organization help with the reconciliation between the conflicting sides of Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories?

Questions for Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel

- Could you tell me a bit of the daily work in this programme?

- In a confrontation with violence and verbal abuse, how are you supposed to react?

- Are physical and verbal abuses of the Palestinians or Israelis common?

- How do you report incidents happening in the field?

- EAPPI is a programme of the World Council of Churches. What advantages do you see, being part of such a large organization? On the counterpart – what disadvantages do you see?

- How is being a faith-based organization affect this programme's standing when meeting other organizations and people with a different background?

- The faith-based identity of the organization

- Do you see this programme's work as part of the ongoing nation building in the oPt?

- How is this programme contributing to peace building?

- How could the peace building be even more effective?

- There are two stakeholder groups in rights-based development—the rights-holders (who do not experience full rights) and the duty-bearers (the institutions obligated to fulfil the holders' rights). Rights-based approaches aim at strengthening the capacity of duty-bearers and empower the rights-holders.
    In what way is the organizational work rights-based?

- How does the organization pursue a rights-based approach when working with people from both side of the conflict?

- How does the EAPPI-programme make sure of that the Human Rights are fulfilled?

- In what ways is the cooperation with the NCA relevant/important for the EAPPI?

- Could the work you are doing be done without the help from faith-based organizations?
    - Elaborate

- To what extent can this organization help with the reconciliation between the conflicting sides of Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories?

Questions for ELCJHL's schools in Jerusalem

- This school is funded among others by the faith-based organization NCA. How is being funded by a faith-based organization affecting your work?

- In what way is this school contributing towards peace building?

- Does this school have any affect on (your) future prospects?
    - In what way?

- What is your relation to the ongoing conflict between Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories?

- Could the work you're doing be done without the help from faith-based organizations?

- How does this line of education provide the participants with basic human rights?
    - Through employment and strengthening of their basic rights etc.

- Do you see this programme's work as part of the ongoing nation building in the oPt?

Questions for Rabbis for Human Rights

- In what way does RHR contribute towards peace building?

- In what way is the funding by faith-based organizations such as the Norwegian Church Aid helping with the peace building?

- RHR is striving for Human Rights. In what way is giving people their rights contributing to nation building?

- In general, does faith-based organizations have greater advantages when advocating for peace building than other organizations?

- Could the work you're doing be done without the help from faith-based organizations?

- Do you see this programme's work as part of the ongoing nation building in the oPt?

- To what extent can this organization help with the reconciliation between the conflicting sides of Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories?

- There are two stakeholder groups in rights-based development—the rights-holders (who do not experience full rights) and the duty-bearers (the institutions obligated to fulfil the holders' rights). Rights-based approaches aim at strengthening the capacity of duty-bearers and empower the rights-holders.
    In what way is the organizational work rights-based?