

## THE ROLE OF PALESTINIAN CIVIL ORGANIZATIONS IN PROMOTING DEMOCRATIC TRANSITION IN PALESTINE

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### Abstract:

This study aims to examine the current status of Palestinian non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in relation to the democratic transition process, explore their role in supporting this transition, and assess the extent of their interrelations in promoting democratic principles. The study adopts a descriptive analytical approach and involves a sample of 440 NGO employees, representing approximately 44% of the total population, selected through simple random sampling.

The main findings of the study are as follows:

- The perceived role of Palestinian NGOs in the democratic transition process is rated high, with a relative weight of 73%.
- A statistically significant correlation ( $\alpha \leq 0.05$ ) was identified between the dimensions of democratic transition (political participation, power rotation, respect for freedoms, rule of law) within Palestinian NGOs, with a Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.83.
- A statistically significant effect ( $\alpha \leq 0.05$ ) of the democratic transition process was observed within NGOs, with an effect size of 0.88.
- No statistically significant differences ( $\alpha \leq 0.05$ ) were found in respondents' perceptions of democratic transition based on gender, place of residence, or years of experience.

### Key Recommendations:

- Strengthen the role of NGOs in facilitating democratic transition through targeted policy development, enhanced support, and staff training.
- Launch awareness initiatives and programs aimed at increasing political participation and promoting gender equality within the democratic transition framework.
- Empower scientific competencies and provide capacity-building programs to engage various age groups in democratic processes.

**Keywords:** Civil Organizations, Democratic Transition, NGOs, Palestine, Political Participation

### Introduction

Civil society organizations are considered one of the key pillars in modern societies. They play a vital role in strengthening the relationship between citizens and the state, contributing to the achievement of shared interests and overall societal development across various sectors and conditions. In the Palestinian context, these organizations are defined as voluntary, non-profit institutions that provide services and programs to different segments of society. Their services often include care and support, particularly for youth and school students. Some of these organizations have political orientations and aim to raise political awareness and enhance public understanding of political transitions in Palestine, with a focus on building a democratic political system.

The process of democratic transformation represents a comprehensive framework involving a series of political and social reforms aimed at ensuring regular, free, and fair elections, as well as

constitutional amendments through public referendums. This process also seeks to strengthen the role of civil society in decision-making and promote active participation in political life. Furthermore, democratic transformation requires fundamental changes in legislation, support for press freedom, and the protection of individuals' rights to express their opinions freely and safely (Diamond, 2020).

Transitioning to a democratic system within the current Palestinian political landscape could lead to a fundamental shift in the performance of the existing government. Notably, no presidential elections have been held since 2009, and the 2020 municipal elections in the Palestinian territories were conducted through two methods: voting and acclamation. However, these approaches did not meet the expectations or aspirations of the Palestinian public.

It is essential that this transformation occurs in a peaceful and organized manner to prevent instability. The success of this process requires cooperation between the government, civil society, and other institutions, along with sufficient support to achieve this vital goal. Democratic transformation reflects the promotion of justice and equality and the strengthening of the political system by enhancing the institutional structures within the Palestinian social framework (Thawabteh, 2024).

The ability of civil society organizations to fulfill their role has been further hindered by the ongoing state of war and emergency conditions in Palestine. These circumstances have complicated and restricted democratic practices across the Palestinian territories. Currently, the Palestinian Authority focuses mainly on diplomatic efforts and foreign political relations while attempting to suppress dissenting political opinions, particularly those expressed by organizations affiliated with groups other than Fatah (Abu Amsha, 2013).

### **Research Problem**

The process of democratic transformation in any political system requires a deep understanding of political and democratic foundations, in addition to a supportive cultural and political environment. However, the Palestinian political reality presents multiple challenges. Barghouthi (2012) highlighted the prevalence of negative political conditions in the Palestinian context. Similarly, Al-Shammari (2017) indicated that civil society organizations can contribute to promoting democratic values by fostering new forms of interest and solidarity that go beyond traditional affiliations such as tribal, linguistic, or religious identities.

According to the researchers, studies addressing this topic in the Palestinian context are limited. This study attempts to bridge the gap by examining the relationship between civil society organizations and the process of democratic transformation in Palestine. The researchers aim to highlight the complexity of the current Palestinian political system and the serious challenges faced by the Palestinian people, such as internal division at the national, regional, and international levels, as well as the legal and political constraints imposed on civil society organizations operating in Palestinian territories.

To better understand the research problem, the researchers conducted an exploratory study to examine the role of civil society organizations in the political process and assess employee satisfaction with the current political situation in Palestine. A questionnaire was administered to a sample of 15 employees working in NGOs in the West Bank. The results showed that employees believe these organizations fulfill only 54.5% of their expected political roles, indicating a noticeable gap in performance. Based on these findings, the need for an in-depth

study emerged to assess the role of civil society organizations in promoting democratic transformation.

This led to the formulation of the main research question:

**What is the role of civil society organizations in the process of democratic transformation, and how does it affect political development in Palestine?**

From this main question, the following sub-questions arise:

1. What is the current state of Palestinian civil society organizations in supporting democratic transformation?
2. To what extent do relationships among Palestinian NGOs contribute to promoting democratic transformation across its dimensions (political participation, power transition, respect for freedoms, and rule of law)?
3. Are there statistically significant differences in NGO workers' responses regarding the level of democratic transformation based on demographic variables (gender, age, academic qualification, place of residence, years of experience)?

### **Research Hypotheses**

1. There is no statistically significant correlation at the level of ( $\alpha \leq 0.05$ ) between the process of democratic transformation—across its dimensions (political participation, power transition, respect for freedoms, and rule of law)—and civil society organizations in Palestine.
2. There is no statistically significant effect at the level of ( $\alpha \leq 0.05$ ) in the mean responses of civil society organization employees regarding the level of democratic transformation, attributed to demographic variables (gender, age, academic qualification, place of residence, years of experience).

### **Research Objectives**

This study aims to achieve the following:

1. To examine the current status of Palestinian civil society organizations in relation to the democratic transformation process.
2. To explore the role of Palestinian civil society organizations in supporting democratic transformation.
3. To assess the level of inter-organizational cooperation in promoting democratic transformation.
4. To analyze statistically significant differences in the responses of civil society employees regarding democratic transformation based on demographic variables (gender, age, academic qualification, place of residence, years of experience).

### **Significance of Study**

The significance of this research lies in its timeliness and strong relevance to current events surrounding the Palestinian cause. It also reflects the political and geographical challenges resulting from ongoing internal divisions within Palestinian society. Studying holds practical, academic, and research value.

#### **1. Practical Significance:**

- It contributes to developing sustainable and effective solutions for achieving democratic transformation in Palestine by enhancing the role of civil society organizations and promoting democratic principles in practice.

- It helps improve policies and programs that support democratic transformation through awareness and political initiatives implemented by these organizations, increasing their influence at both the popular and political levels.
- It encourages active citizen participation in political life and supports democratic transformation through the implementation of policies and visions advocated by civil society, reflecting Palestinians' aspirations for meaningful democracy in both governmental and non-governmental institutions.
- It supports the integration of civil society topics into school and university curricula to foster community engagement among students, helping to build a comprehensive understanding of these organizations' roles in promoting democratic transformation in Palestine.

## 2. Academic Significance

The academic value of this study is reflected in the following:

- Enhancing researchers' skills in scientific inquiry and strengthening their academic and technical capacities in exploring the role of civil society organizations in democratic transformation in Palestine.
- Expanding research on democracy in the Middle East by identifying challenges and opportunities to advance this field.
- Providing essential data and information for analyzing the role of civil society organizations in promoting democratic transformation in Palestine.
- Highlighting the main challenges faced by NGOs in Palestine and identifying appropriate solutions to overcome them.
- Supplying policymakers and institutions with relevant information to support democratic transition in Palestine.

## Research Variables

Research variables are fundamental in scientific studies as they help analyze and interpret relationships between studied phenomena. In this research, the variables are:

- **Independent Variable:** The role of Palestinian civil society organizations.
- **Dependent Variable:** Democratic transformation in Palestine, including: political participation, power transition, respect for freedoms, and rule of law.

## Scope of the Study

The study scope defines the boundaries and focus of the research through temporal, spatial, thematic, human, and methodological limitations, enhancing the study's reliability.

- **Thematic Scope:** The role of civil society organizations in promoting democratic transformation in Palestine.
- **Human Scope:** All employees working in NGOs located in the West Bank, Palestine.
- **Geographical Scope:** The study was limited to two officially registered NGOs in the West Bank—MIFTAH and Shams Foundation—due to their active role in political programs and democratic initiatives.
- **Time Scope:** From 2007 to 2024, the period following the political division between Fatah (controlling the West Bank) and Hamas (controlling Gaza), which led to a notable decline in democratic standards in Palestine.

## Definition of Terms

Clear definitions help eliminate ambiguity and ensure mutual understanding between the researchers and the target audience.

- **Civil Society Organizations (CSOs):** These are non-governmental, formally recognized social entities independent of the state. Their aim is to improve developmental and humanitarian conditions in society. CSOs serve the public interest through various activities and play a key role in enhancing citizens' participation in political and developmental decision-making, thus expanding their influence in the public sphere (Tamimi, 2013: 2).
- **Democratic Transformation:** As defined by Samuel Huntington, it involves diverse political groups engaged in ongoing power struggles that reflect fundamental differences in their beliefs and positions on democracy. This process represents a developmental shift from a closed authoritarian regime that suppresses political participation and power rotation to an open political system that promotes these democratic principles (Bouhania, 2012: 95).

## Theoretical Framework

The role of CSOs depends largely on the political context of each country. In democratic governments, civil society serves as a channel through which citizens participate in shaping and implementing public decisions, including the identification of problems, setting priorities, proposing solutions, and managing public resources. In non-democratic states, CSOs often play a vital role in pressuring governments to democratize their policies and political structures. In the Palestinian context, these organizations face substantial challenges in policy development due to procedural complexities and the multiplicity of political authorities.

Historically, the Palestinian political system—since the establishment of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO)—has combined the nationalist dimension of the Palestinian cause with the concept of national independence. The political structure of the PLO was shaped by resistance factions aiming to overcome obstacles. Operating in exile, the organization was influenced by Arab political ideologies and organizational models. Although it emphasized political and organizational independence as a coalition body, democratic principles were not prioritized. Ideological diversity was reduced to a quota-based system. According to foundational documents such as the Palestinian National Charter and the Basic Law, the political system followed a parliamentary model, with the Palestinian National Council as its highest authority (Salahiat, 2007).

CSOs are defined as non-governmental, nonprofit entities that work in various social, humanitarian, environmental, economic, and political fields to improve individual livelihoods and promote development locally and globally. These organizations operate independently from government, rely on self-funding, grants, and donations, and enjoy a degree of freedom in their operations, aligned with national legal frameworks.

Palestinian CSOs have had a unique trajectory due to the Israeli occupation. Their roles have evolved over time. In 1948—the Nakba year—they focused on humanitarian aid and resisting Jewish immigration. In 1967—the Naksa year—their activities declined due to restrictions and demoralization under occupation. During the 1970s, Palestinian CSOs saw significant growth,

and the PLO gained prominence as the legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. Several unions and volunteer committees were established abroad to support activities in Palestine (Ashqar, 2006).

According to the researchers, the motives behind CSO operations in Palestine vary based on vision, areas of work, and target groups, but they all share core objectives: improving humanitarian conditions, promoting democracy and human rights, protecting refugees and displaced persons, supporting sustainable social justice, preserving the environment, increasing awareness of social and political issues, and encouraging civic engagement in decision-making. CSOs play diverse roles including service delivery, cultural promotion, environmental advocacy, and economic development. Politically oriented CSOs focus on political mobilization, government monitoring, political progress, and anti-war efforts. Their roles shift based on global and regional dynamics and can be classified as charitable, feminist, professional, human rights-based, cultural, artistic, or intellectual organizations (Zugheir, 2005).

### **The Importance of Civil Society Organizations**

Governmental and formal institutions are essential for providing welfare and development programs that improve community life. They design successful models that others can emulate, invest in individual capabilities, promote volunteerism, and organize community initiatives efficiently. By doing so, they contribute to sustainable development and social welfare (Halabi, 2005).

The researchers argue that CSOs are key partners with governments and civil society in achieving development and improving quality of life across different communities.

The number of these organizations increased significantly after the Israeli occupation and the onset of the First Intifada. In 1966, there were 79 CSOs in the West Bank; by 1987, the number had risen to 272. During that time, they provided services such as prisoner support, adult education, kindergartens, health education, care for the mentally and physically disabled, clinics, orphan assistance, and student aid (Hourani, 2002).

With the establishment of the Palestinian Authority, the civil sector expanded in both scope and diversity, benefiting from a hopeful political climate. NGOs addressed areas such as agriculture, environment, culture, sports, democracy, human rights, women and children's issues, research centers, and prisoner support (Abu Olba, 2007).

### **Challenges Facing Civil Society Organizations**

Despite their increasing numbers, NGO effectiveness—especially in development—remains limited. Challenges include:

- Limited funding and absence of democratic practices.
- Human resource shortages, poor coordination, and lack of strategic development planning (ESCWA, 2000).

Sullivan (2000) notes that Palestinian CSOs, like others in neighboring countries, face several structural and operational barriers:

- Insufficient resources and lack of governmental financial support.
- Role duplication.
- Weak internal structures.
- Inadequate external auditing.
- Lack of strict internal governance regulations.



- Poor administrative quality.

Additional challenges identified by the researchers include:

- **Israeli occupation:** A major obstacle that affects security and hampers NGOs' ability to serve local communities effectively. Movement restrictions and political pressure severely limit their work.
- **Funding shortages:** Many NGOs rely on conditional international funding, often tied to political progress, which restricts their service capacity.
- **Internal conflict:** Political division between Gaza and the West Bank weakens NGOs' ability to achieve their goals and deliver services efficiently.
- **Economic hardship:** Widespread poverty increases demand for services while limited funding prevents adequate responses.
- **Political and security instability:** Unstable conditions further complicate program implementation and outreach efforts.

### **Role of CSOs in Democratic Transformation**

Civil society organizations play a crucial role in promoting democratic transformation. They encourage civic participation and empower communities to engage in political decision-making. CSOs help improve transparency and accountability in governance, offer essential services, organize awareness campaigns on democracy and citizen rights, and hold workshops to enhance public participation.

They also identify and address key social, environmental, and economic issues, submitting solutions and recommendations to relevant authorities. Overall, CSOs promote democratic values and fundamental rights, helping build cooperative, participatory societies that foster stability and sustainable development.

**Democratic transformation** refers to the shift from authoritarian regimes to democratic systems that promote broad political participation (Abu Al-Yazid et al., 2017).

According to Huntington, it is a complex developmental process in which conflicting political groups vie for power, reflecting divergent beliefs about democracy. It involves transitioning from a closed authoritarian system to an open political order that allows genuine participation and power rotation (Bouhania, 2012: 95).

### **Patterns of Democratic Transformation**

Patterns of democratic transformation refer to the forms and processes by which countries transition from authoritarian regimes to democratic systems. These patterns vary across nations. The researchers identified four main types:

#### **1. Top-Down Transformation:**

This occurs when the ruling regime initiates reforms in response to public dissatisfaction or unrest. The regime may introduce democratic reforms either out of genuine belief in democracy or to absorb public anger while maintaining political control. Often, these changes result in what is termed "restricted democracy," characterized by superficial reforms without genuine democratic intent. A notable example of this pattern occurred in Spain (Qandil, 2012).

#### **2. Bottom-Up Transformation:**

Triggered by a weakening authoritarian regime and mobilized opposition, this pattern often involves protests, civil unrest, and violent demonstrations. Although opposition

elites may lack power to impose change, public pressure forces reform. However, the lack of formal agreements during the transition period often hinders democratic consolidation. An example is the Philippines, where mass protests forced President Joseph Estrada to resign amid accusations of corruption and human rights violations (Ahmed, 2016).

3. **Negotiated Transformation:**

In this model, transformation occurs through joint initiatives between ruling authorities and opposition groups. It often emerges when the regime loses legitimacy, its ideology collapses, or economic conditions deteriorate. Negotiations result in agreements that ensure all actors' interests while promoting democracy. A successful example is South Africa (1989–1990), where negotiations between F.W. de Klerk and Nelson Mandela led to democratic transition (Sahrawi, 2012).

4. **Popular Uprising:**

This form involves widespread grassroots movements, protests, and sometimes violence, forcing authorities to respond with reforms. As seen in the Philippines and during the Arab Spring, mass mobilization pressured regimes to step down or reform. In the case of Estrada, public demonstrations led to his resignation (Qandil, 2012).

**The Palestinian Experience with Democracy**

In Palestine, democratic development has relied on combined social, political, and cultural efforts. The draft Palestinian constitution and the Basic Law affirm democracy by guaranteeing political pluralism, peaceful power transition, political participation, party formation, union membership, freedom of expression, and access to public office based on equal opportunity (Abu Amr, 1995).

The constitution explicitly allows party pluralism, peaceful protest, and citizen participation in public affairs either directly or through freely elected representatives. Every Palestinian citizen has the right to vote, run for office, and receive public services. Democratic governance must be rooted in regular elections based on equal voting rights (Abu Ramadan, 2008).

**Characteristics of Democratic Transformation**

Democratic transformation involves building institutions that ensure individual rights and equality before the law. Its key characteristics include:

- **Complexity and Relativity:**

The process is inherently complex, involving multiple social and economic factors. It is also relative, as it may experience setbacks or reversals, potentially restoring authoritarian practices (Balaour, 2010).

- **Gradual and Staged Process:**

Democratic transition does not occur instantly; it passes through several stages over varying timeframes. Despite differences in context, most nations follow phased paths to democracy (Shobaki, 2016).

- **Influence of Internal and External Environments:**

The collapse of the Soviet bloc and the rise of U.S.-led global order increased international influence on democratization. Institutions like the IMF promoted reform, while the information revolution exposed internal governance and facilitated democratic exchange. However, internal conditions remain critical—without national will and



internal political consensus, external support alone cannot ensure successful transformation (Shobaki, 2016).

### **Mechanisms of Democratic Transformation**

There are several peaceful mechanisms that support democratic transformation, as outlined by Hammad (2000):

- **Power Rotation:**  
Refers to the peaceful and orderly transfer of political authority between different actors, based on the will and consensus of the people. This is achieved through free and fair elections that genuinely reflect public choice, guided by the principle of majority preference while respecting minority rights.
- **Political Pluralism:**  
Involves allowing multiple political parties to freely engage in political activities and compete for power without dominance by a single party, which can undermine democratic balance.
- **Separation of Powers:**  
Requires that the legislative, executive, and judicial branches operate independently, without interference in one another's duties, to prevent authoritarian consolidation of power.
- **Empowerment of Civil Society Organizations:**  
Ensuring the legal and institutional independence of CSOs allows them to carry out their roles effectively and freely within a supportive legal framework.
- **Independent Media and Press:**  
The media must enjoy full freedom to report on all issues without legal or political censorship. An independent and objective press helps inform the public and shape opinion based on transparent and accurate information.
- **Religious Freedom:**  
The right of individuals to practice their religion without persecution is a fundamental democratic principle and reflects broader civil freedoms in society.

### **Previous Studies**

- **Ismail (2023)** – *The Impact of Capacity Building on the Quality of NGO Projects in Southern Palestinian Governorates*  
This study aimed to assess how capacity building influences project quality in southern Palestinian NGOs. Using a descriptive-analytical method and a questionnaire, it found high levels of capacity building (84%) and project quality (86%). Capacity dimensions—management, program execution, human resources, external relations, and finance—were significantly linked to project outcomes.
- **Ahmed (2023)** – *NGO Management in Empowering Breadwinner Women to Face Social Challenges*  
This case study of the “Women and Society Association” explored how NGOs empower female heads of households. The descriptive-analytical approach and questionnaire revealed that NGOs play a vital role alongside government bodies in community development, and that efficient NGO management is key to achieving societal impact.
- **Salameh (2023)** – *The Role of NGOs in Promoting Intellectual Security among Youth*

This study focused on NGOs' role in protecting youth from ideological threats. The findings, based on a descriptive-analytical methodology and a questionnaire, showed most respondents were aged 25–35, held university degrees, were married, and had 9–12 years of experience—demonstrating a strong, qualified workforce in NGOs.

- **Brass (2022)** – *NGOs Providing Services and Their Relationship with Democratic Participation*

This research examined the connection between service-oriented NGOs and democratic engagement. Using interviews and a descriptive-analytical method, the study found a correlation between direct contact with NGOs and political behavior, although no consistent relationship was found between NGO activity and voting behavior.

- **Tayeb (2023)** – *Democratic Transformation: A Study of Causes and Factors*

This study explored the causes and factors influencing democratic transformation, distinguishing between internal and external influences. Using a historical approach, it found that internal factors, especially political leadership and elites play a central role in democratic transitions. Civil society is also crucial, provided it fulfills its role in raising political awareness and proposing reforms to the ruling authorities. External factors relate to the international system, which promotes and spreads democratic values.

- **Othman (2023)** – *Managing the Democratic Transition in Tunisia (2010–2016)*

This research examined Tunisia's democratic transition as a model for Arab countries, particularly after the Arab Spring. Employing Huntington's new institutionalism approach, the study revealed a strong positive relationship between elite consensus—especially within state institutions such as the military—and successful democratic transition. Tunisia's success was attributed to the historically apolitical and highly aware nature of its military and security institutions.

- **Meri (2023)** – *The Role of Political Culture in Democratic Transition in Arab States*

This study assessed the influence of political culture on democratic transformation in Arab countries. Using a descriptive-analytical method, it found that political culture plays a decisive role in enabling transition. A successful shift requires reshaping political culture through democratic values, civic education, and enhanced citizen participation, aligned with the nature of each state's political system.

- **Hyun, Young, Kamioka Taro, & Hosoya Ryoichi (2020)** – *Improving Agility through Big Data Analytics: The Role of Democratic Transformation Culture*

This empirical study examined the interaction between organizational culture and the use of big data analytics (BDA) in enhancing agility. Using a quantitative survey approach, it concluded that democratic transformation culture has a moderating effect on organizational agility, which varies depending on whether BDA use is basic or advanced.

## Research Procedures and Methodology

### Research Methodology

This study adopts a descriptive-analytical approach to examine the role of civil society organizations in promoting democratic transformation in Palestine.

Two primary data sources were used:

### 1. Primary Sources:

To address the analytical aspects of the study, primary data were collected through a questionnaire titled "*The Role of Civil Society Organizations in Promoting Democratic Transformation in Palestine*", which was specially designed for this research. Data were processed and analyzed using the SPSS statistical software.

### 2. Secondary Sources:

To support the theoretical framework, secondary sources were consulted, including Arabic and international books, academic references, journals, articles, reports, and previous studies relevant to the topic, in addition to various online resources.

### Study Population

The study population consists of civil society organizations in Palestine. The target elements of the population include all employees working in these organizations, totaling approximately 1,000 employees, according to NGO statistics from 2024.

### Research Sample

The sample is divided into two parts:

#### A. Pilot Sample:

A random exploratory sample of 30 NGO employees (of both genders) not included in the main sample was selected. The questionnaire was applied to this group to assess its validity and reliability using appropriate statistical methods.

#### B. Main Sample:

The researchers selected a simple random sample of 440 individuals, based on Richard Geiger's formula with a 3.5% margin of error. The survey was conducted between April 1 and June 2, 2024. A total of 400 completed questionnaires were returned, resulting in a high response rate of 90.90%. This response rate is considered excellent and sufficient for hypothesis testing and generalizing results.

A detailed description of the sample distribution is provided in Table 1, which categorizes respondents by gender, educational qualification, years of experience, age, and place of residence.

**Table 1: Distribution of the Research Sample According to the Variables (Gender, Academic Qualification, Years of Experience, Age, Place of Residence)**

Variable		Frequency	Percentage	Variable		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	217	%54	Age	20-35	92	%23
	Female	183	%46		36-50	185	%46
Education Level	Diploma or less	52	%13		51 and above	123	%30
	Bachelor's degree	143	%36	Place of Residence	Urban	188	%47
	Postgraduate	205	%51		Village	144	%36
Years of Experience	Less than 5	53	%13		Camp	68	%17
	6-10	91	%23				
	11 and above	256	%64				

### **Survey Instrument and Data Collection**

To achieve the objectives of this study and collect relevant data, the researchers developed a structured questionnaire tailored to the research topic.

After reviewing theoretical frameworks and previous studies such as those by Ismail (2023), Ahmed (2023), Salameh (2023), Al-Nasr (2021), Hammam (2020), and Qafisheh (2021), the researchers designed a two-part questionnaire:

- Section One: Personal information (gender, academic qualification, years of experience, age, place of residence).
- Section Two: Items covering the dimensions of democratic transformation, namely: political participation, power rotation, respect for freedoms, and rule of law. This section consisted of 22 items.

### **Validity and Reliability of the Questionnaire**

The researchers conducted a pilot test with a random sample of 30 NGO employees of both genders.

- **Expert Validity:**

The initial version of the questionnaire was submitted to a panel of experts in statistics and political science. Based on their feedback, revisions were made to improve the clarity and relevance of the items. Using the Lawshe formula for content validity, the resulting score was **0.95**, indicating strong agreement among experts regarding the quality of the instrument.

### **Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA)**

To assess the construct validity of the questionnaire, the following EFA criteria were applied:

1. Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) Measure:  
The KMO value should not be less than 0.50 to confirm sample adequacy for factor analysis.
2. Bartlett's Test of Sphericity:  
The test ensures that the correlation matrix is not an identity matrix. A Chi-square significance level below 0.05 is required.
3. Factor Loading:
4. Each item's contribution to the underlying factor should be at least 0.30 to be retained (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013).

**Table 2: Results of Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) for Research Variables**

EFA Results	Democratic Transition				
	Political Participation	Power Rotation		Respect for Freedoms	Rule of Law
<b>KMO Test</b>	<b>0.81</b>	<b>0.83</b>		<b>0.82</b>	<b>0.82</b>
<b>Bartlett's Test</b>	Chi-Square ( $\chi^2$ )	<b>68.7</b>	<b>73.3</b>	<b>61.2</b>	<b>81.0</b>
	Significance (p-value)	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>
<b>Factor Loadings</b>	Item 1	<b>0.58</b>	<b>0.76</b>	<b>0.77</b>	<b>0.72</b>
	Item 2	<b>0.72</b>	<b>0.83</b>	<b>0.82</b>	<b>0.74</b>
	Item 3	<b>0.69</b>	<b>0.83</b>	<b>0.71</b>	<b>0.75</b>
	Item 4	<b>0.76</b>	<b>0.76</b>	<b>0.75</b>	<b>0.77</b>
	Item 5	<b>0.78</b>	<b>0.69</b>	<b>0.74</b>	<b>0.68</b>
	Item 6	<b>0.69</b>	----	----	<b>0.73</b>

The results indicate that all criteria for the exploratory factor analysis (EFA) were met. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure ranged between 0.81 and 0.94, and all Bartlett's test results were statistically significant at  $p < 0.05$ . Regarding factor loadings, the saturation values ranged between 0.58 and 0.83.

#### **Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) for the Dependent Variable “Democratic Transformation”**

The results confirm that the CFA model for democratic transformation meets the required standards. The Chi-square significance level was  $p = 0.00$ , which is less than 0.05. The CMIN/DF value was below 5, and the RMSEA index was 0.07, which is below the acceptable threshold of 0.10. Additionally, the fit indices (CFI, IFI, TLI) all exceeded 0.90. Figure 1.3 illustrates the CFA results for democratic transformation.

**Table 3: CFA Results for Democratic Transformation**

Model Fit Indicator	Result	Evaluation
Chi-square test (p-value)	56.6 (0.00)	Accepted
CMIN/DF	3.08	Accepted
CFI: Comparative Fit Index	0.92	Accepted
IFI: Incremental Fit Index	0.92	Accepted
TLI: Tucker-Lewis Index	0.90	Accepted
RMSEA: Root Mean Square Error of Approximation	0.07	Accepted

#### **Reliability of the Questionnaire**

The researchers assessed the reliability of the final version of the questionnaire by calculating the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient for the four sub-dimensions and the overall score. The table below presents the reliability results based on Cronbach's Alpha and Weighted Omega indicators:

**Table 4: Reliability Results Based on Cronbach's Alpha and Weighted Omega Indicators**

Dimension	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha	Weighted Omega	Result
Political Participation	6	0.80	0.80	Moderate Reliability
Power Rotation	5	0.83	0.84	High Reliability
Respect for Freedoms	5	0.81	0.81	High Reliability
Rule of Law	6	0.82	0.82	High Reliability
Overall Democratic Transition	22	0.94	0.94	Excellent Reliability

The results indicate a high level of reliability. The Cronbach's Alpha coefficient for the overall scale of *Democratic Transformation* reached 0.94, which exceeds the commonly accepted threshold of 0.70, as recommended by Hair et al. (2019).

**Table 4** presents the reliability results based on Cronbach's Alpha and Weighted Omega indicators.

#### Research Procedures

- After reviewing relevant literature and previous studies, the researchers developed research tools: the *Democratic Transformation and Political Development Questionnaire* and an *interview guide*.
- The questionnaire was presented to a panel of subject-matter experts to evaluate the relevance of its items to the study dimensions and ensure linguistic accuracy.
- The researchers obtained an official letter from the School of Graduate Studies at Universiti Utara Malaysia addressed to the Palestinian Ministry of Interior, facilitating access to the target sample.
- A pilot study was conducted using a sample of 30 NGO employees (both male and female) to assess the questionnaire's validity and reliability.
- The final version of the questionnaire was electronically distributed to the full research sample.
- Data was entered into a computer and statistically analyzed using the *Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS)* to extract and interpret the results.

#### Statistical Tests Used in the Study

The researchers relied on parametric statistical tests, based on the Central Limit Theorem, which assume that any sample larger than 30 tends to follow a normal distribution. Additionally, the researchers used a five-point Likert scale. Based on these justifications, parametric tests were applied using SPSS and AMOS version 25. The following statistical methods were employed:

- Lawshe's Content Validity Ratio
- Exploratory and Confirmatory Factor Analysis (EFA & CFA)
- Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability
- Frequencies, Percentages, and Graphical Representations
- Mean, Relative Weight, and Standard Deviation
- Pearson Correlation Coefficient
- Path Analysis
- Independent Samples t-Test



- One-Way ANOVA (Analysis of Variance)
- Data Analysis, Interpretation, and Discussion of Results
- The researchers analyzed and interpreted the questionnaire data to draw conclusions that can be generalized to the study population. Descriptive statistics were first presented for demographic variables, followed by an analysis of the questionnaire items and dimensions, and finally, hypothesis testing.
- **Response Scale**  
A five-point Likert scale was used to measure the direction of responses to each item. The interpretation relied on the mean and relative weight to determine the level of agreement on the questionnaire items and dimensions.
- The length of each interval was calculated by dividing the range by the number of response levels. The range in the five-point scale is the difference between the highest and lowest values ( $5 - 1 = 4$ ), which gives an interval length of ( $4 \div 5 = 0.80$ ). This classification was used to determine the final rating for each item and each research dimension.
- **Results and Interpretation of the First Research Question**  
The first research question states:  
“What is the current status of Palestinian civil society organizations in promoting democratic transformation?”  
To answer this question, the researchers calculated the mean, standard deviation, and relative weight of the participants' responses on the questionnaire dimensions and total score. The following table and figure present the results:

**Table 5: Descriptive Analysis Results for the Dimensions of Democratic Transformation**

Dimension	N		Mean	Std. Deviation	Relative Weight	Rank	Approval Level
Political Participation	400		3.61	0.75	72.2%	3	High
Power Rotation			3.59	0.83	71.8%	4	High
Respect for Freedoms			3.69	0.79	73.8%	2	High
Rule of Law			3.72	0.76	74.4%	1	High
<b>Overall Democratic Transition</b>			3.65	0.69	73.0%	High	

The results in **Table 5** indicate a high level of agreement regarding the items related to *Democratic Transformation*, with a mean score of 3.65 out of 5, a relative weight of 73%, and a standard deviation of 0.69.

These findings suggest that respondents expressed a strong agreement with the concept of *democratic transformation*, reflecting a positive perception of its importance and its impact on political and developmental conditions—especially in transitional contexts. The researchers attribute this result to the efforts of both civil society organizations and government bodies in raising awareness about democracy and promoting its practices. Moreover, the participants' direct experience with aspects such as elections, rule of law, and freedom of expression likely contributed to this positive orientation toward democracy.

This result aligns with Ismail (2023), who reported a high level of capacity building at 84%, and with Abdul Rahim (2021), who emphasized the essential role of civil society institutions in promoting democratic transformation and producing tangible outcomes.

It also agrees with Salameh (2023) and Ahmed (2023) in highlighting the role of NGOs in supporting both social and political development, consistent with the current study's findings of a positive impact on democratic transformation.

Similarly, it is in agreement with Tayeb (2023) and Othman (2023), both of whom emphasized the importance of internal factors (e.g., leadership and political elites) and external factors (e.g., international system) in supporting democratic transition.

However, the result diverges from Ahmed (2023), who focused specifically on the role of the *Women and Society Association*, whereas the current findings offer a broader perspective on democratic transformation.

Based on the relative weights, the dimensions of the questionnaire were ranked as follows:

### **Interpretation of Results Related to the First Research Question**

The ranking of the questionnaire dimensions according to their relative weights was as follows:

1. Rule of Law ranked first with a mean score of 3.72 out of 5, and a relative weight of 74.4%, indicating a high level of agreement. The researchers attribute this result to the respondents' strong belief in the importance of rule of law in democratic transformation, reflecting their interest in justice and the fair enforcement of laws.

This finding aligns with Al-Buraiki (2021), which emphasized the central role of legal frameworks and human dignity in successful democratic transitions. It also concurs with Al-Jadri & Al-Dughaili (2022), who highlighted the importance of transparency and just laws.

The result also agrees with Salameh (2023) and Abdul Rahim (2021), who underscored the role of NGOs in supporting democratic reform, reinforcing the status of *Rule of Law* as a key pillar of democratic transformation. Similarly, it aligns with Abdel-Moumen (2023) on the role of civil society in promoting democratic values. However, it diverges from Othman (2023) and Abdel-Moumen (2023), who emphasized the roles of leadership and political elites or political culture as primary factors in democratic change.

2. Respect for Freedoms ranked second with a mean of 3.69 and a relative weight of 73.8%, indicating strong agreement. The researchers note that freedom is a core pillar of democracy, and this score reflects either active efforts to enhance freedoms or a high awareness among respondents. Both formal (governmental) and informal (civil society) institutions likely play roles through specific policies and awareness programs.

This finding is consistent with Al-Nasr (2021), which focused on transparency and human rights within NGOs, and with Abdel-Moumen (2023), which emphasized human dignity and rights as essential for democratic transition.

It differs, however, from Ismail (2023) and Salameh (2023), which emphasized dimensions such as transparency, human resources, and capacity building, without specific focus on freedoms.

3. Political Participation ranked third, with a mean of 3.61 and a relative weight of 72.2%, still reflecting high agreement. The researchers consider this a significant, albeit slightly

lower, priority compared to other dimensions—possibly due to limited practical implementation or clarity in its role. Nonetheless, the responses indicate a generally positive perception.

The result is in line with Brass (2022) and Abdel-Moumen (2023), both of which emphasized the relationship between civil society and political participation in fostering democratic development.

It also agrees with Ismail (2023) and Ahmed (2023), highlighting the role of NGOs in enhancing political awareness and community engagement.

4. Power Rotation ranked fourth and last, with a mean of 3.59 and a relative weight of 71.8%, still representing a high level of agreement. Figure 1.4 illustrates the overall levels of agreement across dimensions. The researchers suggest this lower ranking may reflect skepticism or reservations about the actual practice of power rotation in the democratic process.

This result aligns partially with Ismail (2023) regarding the importance of capacity building in improving institutional functions, though it differs from the same study's emphasis on the extremely high impact of capacity building (84%).

### Interpretation of Results Related to the Second Research Question

The second research question states:

"To what extent do relationships between Palestinian civil society organizations support the democratic transformation process?"

To answer this question, the following null hypothesis was tested:

There is no statistically significant correlation at the level ( $\alpha \leq 0.05$ ) between the democratic transformation process—across its dimensions (political participation, power rotation, respect for freedoms, and rule of law)—and the role of civil society organizations in Palestine.

**Table 6 presents the results of the correlation analysis between civil society organizations and democratic transformation.**

Independent/Dependent Variables		NGOs			
		N	Pearson Correlation Coefficient	Significance Level	Rank &Strength of Correlation
Dimensions	Political Participation	400	**0.69	0.00	4
	Power Rotation		**0.74	0.00	2
	Respect for Freedoms		**0.70	0.00	3
	Rule of Law		**0.78	0.00	1
Overall Democratic Transition			**0.83	0.00	----

### Interpretation of Results Related to the Second Research Question

**Table 6** shows a statistically significant positive correlation at the level of ( $\alpha \leq 0.05$ ) between the process of *Democratic Transformation*—with its dimensions (*Political Participation*, *Power*

*Rotation, Respect for Freedoms, and Rule of Law*)—and Palestinian civil society organizations. The Pearson correlation coefficient reached 0.83 with a significance level of 0.000, which is well below the 0.05 threshold.

Among the four dimensions, Rule of Law had the strongest correlation, followed by Power Rotation, then Respect for Freedoms, and lastly Political Participation in its relation to political development.

These findings lead to rejecting the null hypothesis, which stated: "There is no statistically significant correlation at the level ( $\alpha \leq 0.05$ ) between the process of democratic transformation and civil society organizations in Palestine."

Instead, the results confirm a strong and statistically significant relationship, indicating that *Democratic Transformation* positively influences the role and performance of civil society organizations. This highlights the importance of these dimensions—particularly Rule of Law and Power Rotation—as foundational for a democratic system that supports political stability and civic engagement.

The relatively lower ranking of *Political Participation* may reflect ongoing challenges in empowering individuals or NGOs to participate actively in the political sphere in Palestine. This result suggests a need for further research to explore the contextual factors behind this ranking.

These findings are crucial for understanding how the components of democratic transformation impact civil society organizations. Since this process includes critical dimensions like rule of law, power rotation, respect for freedoms, and political participation, all of which contribute to political development, they offer actionable insights for policymakers and organizational leaders. Strengthening these areas can foster a more sustainable and inclusive democratic environment.

The results align with several previous studies:

- Ismail (2023), which found that capacity building significantly improves NGO project quality in southern Palestinian governorates.
- Salameh (2023), which emphasized NGOs' role in promoting intellectual security among youth—an indirect but essential factors in building democratic awareness.
- Tayeb (2023), which explored internal and external factors in democratic transition and highlighted the importance of political elites and civil society—findings that echo the current study's conclusions on democratic transformation's role in political development.

### **Interpretation of Results Related to the Third Research Question**

The third research question states:

"Are there statistically significant differences in the mean responses of civil society organization employees regarding the level of democratic transformation based on demographic variables (gender, age, educational qualification, place of residence, and years of experience)?"

To address this question, the following null hypothesis was tested:

"There are no statistically significant differences at the level ( $\alpha \leq 0.05$ ) in the mean responses of NGO employees regarding the level of democratic transformation due to demographic variables (gender, age, academic qualification, place of residence, and years of experience)."

**Table 7: Results of the Third Hypothesis**

Variable	Test Value	Significance Level	Result
<b>Gender</b>	t = 0.82	0.41	No significant difference
<b>Age</b>	F = 4.44	0.01	Significant difference
<b>Academic Qualification</b>	F = 4.33	0.01	Significant difference
<b>Place of Residence</b>	F = 0.83	0.44	No significant difference
<b>Years of Experience</b>	F = 0.03	0.97	No significant difference
Least Significant Difference			
<b>Age</b>			
<b>51 and above</b>	35-20	0.27	0.00
	50-36	0.1	0.04
<b>Educational Level</b>			
<b>Postgraduate</b>	Diploma or less	0.25-	0.02
	Bachelor's degree	0.16-	0.02

The findings revealed the following:

#### **Gender**

There were no statistically significant differences at the significance level ( $\alpha \leq 0.05$ ) in the mean responses of NGO employees regarding the level of democratic transformation attributed to the gender variable (male vs. female), as the p-value was 0.41, which is greater than 0.05.

The researchers interpret this finding as an indication that male and female perspectives on democratic transformation do not differ meaningfully. This suggests that gender-related factors are not significantly influential in shaping individuals' views on democratic issues, potentially due to equal access to political awareness and opportunities in this sample.

The similarity in responses may reflect a shared understanding of the importance of democratic transformation among both genders, regardless of cultural or social differences. In modern societies, the gender gap in political participation and attitudes toward democratic reform may be narrowing, with both men and women engaging equally in political concerns.

The researchers also point out that access to political participation and information on democratic topics appears equally available to both sexes. As men and women are exposed to similar educational and informational resources, this may have resulted in consistent responses. They conclude that democratic transformation is a matter of common concern for all individuals—regardless of gender—leading to the absence of significant differences between male and female respondents.

The current findings are consistent with previous studies such as Abdel-Moumen (2023), Al-Jadri & Al-Dughaili (2022), and Abdul Rahim (2021), which found no statistically significant differences in individuals' views on democratic transformation based on gender.

However, the result differs from Al-Shami (2021), which revealed gender-based variations in democratic attitudes. That study found that women were more supportive of certain aspects of

democracy compared to men in some contexts—contrary to the current finding, which showed that gender had no statistically significant influence on perceptions of democratic transformation. Age

There were statistically significant differences ( $p = 0.01$ ) in the mean responses of NGO employees regarding the level of democratic transformation attributed to the age variable. The differences were found between the 51 and above group and the younger age groups (20–35 and 36–50), in favor of the 51+ group.

The researchers indicate that age influences individual perceptions of democratic transformation, with older participants demonstrating higher awareness and more favorable evaluations. These differences likely stem from their broader political and historical experiences, which enable them to better understand the implications and processes of democratic change.

The researchers believe that older individuals possess greater experience in understanding the political and historical transformations within Palestinian society. This deeper awareness likely makes them more engaged and perceptive regarding democratic transformation. Their views are shaped by firsthand knowledge of social and political shifts over time.

According to the researchers, the variation in perceptions of democratic transformation across age groups is largely influenced by life and historical experiences. The 51+ age group has lived through more significant political transitions than younger groups, including regime changes, economic challenges, and democratic shifts in various contexts. As a result, their responses to questions about democratic transformation tend to be more mature and realistic.

Older participants are also more aware of the historical trajectory of democracy in Palestine and possess a broader understanding of political and democratic issues due to their interactions with past and present political systems. In contrast, younger individuals may lack comparable experience and may not fully grasp how democratic transitions affect their lives.

The researchers note that older individuals have been more involved in political activities and have witnessed the evolution of democratic movements, giving them deeper insights into key aspects of democratic transformations such as Power Rotation, Rule of Law, and Human Rights. Younger participants, by comparison, tend to show less interest or engagement with these issues due to their limited political exposure.

As a result, older age groups tend to hold more conservative and pragmatic views, while younger individuals may approach democratic issues with greater optimism and idealism, shaped by their emerging perspectives and limited historical reference points.

This result is consistent with Al-Shami (2021), which reported age-related differences in perceptions of democratic values. That study found that older individuals tended to view democratic transformation more positively than younger age groups.

However, the finding diverges from Abdel-Moumen (2023), which did not reveal significant age-related differences, contrasting with the current result that confirms statistically significant age-based variations. It also differs from Abdul Rahim (2021), which showed no substantial impact of age on political or social analysis, and from Al-Jadri & Al-Dughaili (2022), which did not identify clear evidence of age influencing opinions on democratic transformation—unlike the strong effect observed in the current study.



### **Academic Qualification**

There were statistically significant differences at the level of ( $\alpha \leq 0.05$ ) in the mean responses of NGO employees regarding the level of democratic transformation attributed to academic qualification. The p-value was 0.01, which is less than 0.05.

The differences were found between:

Postgraduate degree holders and those with Diploma or below, in favor of Diploma or below.

Postgraduates and Bachelor's degree holders, in favor of Bachelor's.

The researchers observed statistically significant differences in the mean responses of participants regarding democratic transformation based on academic qualification, with a significance level of 0.01, which is less than 0.05.

The differences favored those with Diploma or below over those with Postgraduate degrees, and also favored Bachelor's degree holders over Postgraduates. The researchers suggest that individuals with lower academic qualifications may be more receptive to or more positively affected by the idea of democratic transformation—perhaps because they perceive it as a pathway to greater economic or social opportunities. In contrast, individuals with Bachelor's or Postgraduate degrees may hold more traditional positions or have more complex interpretations of political change.

The researchers note that those with Postgraduate qualifications typically have deeper and broader knowledge about democratic transformation, which may make them more critical or cautious in their responses. Conversely, individuals with Bachelor's degrees may hold more straightforward or pragmatic views of democratic concepts.

These differences could stem from variations in academic exposure: those with higher degrees are more likely to have encountered complex and critical perspectives on democracy, leading to more nuanced interpretations. Personal and social experiences also play a role, as higher academic achievement is often associated with greater interest in real-world democratic policies.

This result aligns with Ismail (2023), who found that educational attainment significantly influences the quality of NGO projects in southern Palestinian governorates, showing a positive relationship between education level and project effectiveness. It also agrees with Salameh (2023), which indicated that most NGO employees held university degrees, reflecting the role of academic qualification in fostering participation within these organizations.

However, the current findings differ from Brass (2022), which reported no statistically significant differences in democratic behavior among NGO workers based on their educational qualifications.

They also diverge from Al-Nasr (2021), which found no meaningful relationship between academic qualifications and effective participation in democratic transformation.

Similarly, the results contrast with Abdel-Moumen (2023), which concluded that educational attainment did not significantly influence the activation of democratic transformation processes.

### **Place of Residence**

There were no statistically significant differences at the level ( $\alpha \leq 0.05$ ) in the mean responses of participants regarding democratic transformation attributed to the variable of place of residence. The p-value was 0.44, which is greater than 0.05.

The researchers interpret this finding to mean that participants' views on democratic transformation were not significantly influenced by whether they lived in urban or rural areas.

This suggests that democratic issues are of concern to all segments of Palestinian society, regardless of geographic location, largely due to the shared challenges they face.

They argue that individuals living in both urban and rural settings are likely exposed to similar information sources—such as media and social networks—and face comparable social and economic conditions, which may account for the similarity in their responses.

This result is consistent with Al-Nasr (2021), which found no significant differences between rural and urban residents in terms of political participation or democratic transformation.

It also aligns with Hussein (2022), which investigated the influence of social factors on democratic transformation and found no notable impact of residence on political awareness or engagement.

Similarly, Al-Jabri (2020) concluded that there were no significant differences between urban and rural residents regarding interaction with political issues and democratic development.

However, the result contrasts with Abdullah (2021), which identified statistically significant differences between urban and rural populations in terms of participation in political activities and support for democratic transformation. That study found that urban residents expressed stronger views on democratic issues than those living in rural areas.

The result is also in agreement with Ismail (2023), which found that urban residents exhibited a higher level of political awareness and engagement in democratic activities compared to those in rural areas. That study highlighted clear differences in political perceptions based on place of residence.

It also aligns with Salameh (2022), which concluded that place of residence (urban vs. rural) plays a role in shaping political awareness and electoral participation, with higher engagement observed among urban residents.

### **Years of Experience**

There were no statistically significant differences at the significance level ( $\alpha \leq 0.05$ ) in the mean responses of NGO employees regarding the level of democratic transformation attributed to the variable of years of experience. The p-value was 0.97, which is greater than 0.05.

The researchers interpret this to mean that years of professional experience do not significantly affect individuals' perspectives on democratic transformation. This may be because professional experience does not necessarily correlate with political awareness or perceptions, especially when the nature of the work does not involve direct engagement with political or societal issues related to democratic transition.

They further note that certain variables—such as age and academic qualification—have a notable influence on individuals' perceptions, while others, such as gender, place of residence, and years of experience, appear to have limited or no substantial impact.

This lack of significant difference suggests that individuals, regardless of how long they have been in the workforce, share similar levels of exposure and understanding regarding democratic transformation. The researchers argue that both newly employed and experienced staff may have received similar amounts of information or awareness related to democracy, resulting in comparable responses.

They conclude that years of experience do not play a direct or meaningful role in shaping political opinions or democratic thinking, and that any impact of experience on these views is likely minimal or consistent across different professional tenures.

This finding is consistent with Adel (2020), which also found no statistically significant differences between individuals with long and short experience in the workplace or in politics, suggesting that years of experience do not substantially affect perceptions or participation in democratic transformation.

The result is also in agreement with Mahmoud (2021), which found no statistically significant differences between individuals with extensive experience and those with limited experience in political affairs, indicating that years of experience are not a decisive factor in promoting democratic transformation.

Similarly, it aligns with Fouad (2022), which concluded that there were no statistically significant differences between individuals with long-term administrative experience and newcomers in terms of their perceptions of democratic transformation.

However, the current result differs from Abdul Rahman (2021), which found significant differences between individuals with long and short political experience. That study indicated that those with longer political experience were more engaged and capable of interacting with democratic transformation and political participation.

It also contrasts with Nasser (2023), which revealed that individuals with extensive political experience were more affected by democratic practices, showing statistically significant differences compared to those with fewer years of experience.

Likewise, it contradicts Sara (2020), which found a positive impact of years of experience on political engagement and the advancement of democratic transformation, with significant differences observed among participants based on their level of experience.

Additionally, Mohammed (2022) reported that individuals with longer experience tended to be more supportive of democratic transformation and political participation compared to those with shorter experience—highlighting statistically significant differences between the two groups.

## Conclusions

### Summary of Research Findings:

- The overall status of Palestinian NGOs regarding the process of democratic transformation was rated high, with a percentage score of 73%.
- There is a statistically significant correlation at the level ( $\alpha \leq 0.05$ ) between the process of democratic transformation—across its dimensions (*political participation, power rotation, respect for freedoms, rule of law*)—and the role of NGOs in Palestine. The Pearson correlation coefficient was 0.83.
- A statistically significant impact was found ( $\alpha \leq 0.05$ ) for democratic transformation within Palestinian NGOs, with an effect value of 0.88.
- No statistically significant differences were found ( $\alpha \leq 0.05$ ) in respondents' perceptions of democratic transformation based on gender, place of residence, and years of experience, as the p-values were greater than 0.05.
- Statistically significant differences were observed ( $\alpha \leq 0.05$ ) based on age, with a p-value of 0.01, in favor of the 51 years and above age group.

- Statistically significant differences were also found ( $\alpha \leq 0.05$ ) based on academic qualification, with a p-value of 0.01. The differences favored those with a Diploma or below over Postgraduates, and Bachelor's degree holders over Postgraduates.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the aforementioned findings, the researchers recommend the following:

1. Strengthen the role of NGOs in the democratic transformation process by guiding public policies and increasing institutional support and capacity-building efforts.
2. Develop awareness programs and initiatives aimed at promoting political participation and gender equality within the context of democratic transformation.
3. Support academic competencies by implementing training programs to enhance staff capabilities and encourage the inclusion of different age groups in democratic engagement.

### **Suggestions for Future Research**

Based on the study topic and the results presented, the researchers propose the following directions for future research:

1. Investigate the impact of democratic transformation on economic development in Palestine and the role of NGOs in supporting it.
2. Explore the role of NGOs in raising political awareness among youth and promoting their participation in democratic processes.
3. Analyze the influence of funding sources and community media on improving NGO performance and advancing democratic transformation goals.

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