THE STATE (AND NON-STATE) OF EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT IN THE WEST BANK

BA Thesis

Alyssa L. Bivins

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Abstract

This research follows the development of the Palestinian education system in the West Bank from the creation of the national Ministry of Education in the 1993 Oslo Accords. Since its creation, the Ministry of Education has cooperated and competed with the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) and non-governmental organizations to provide education to the territory. The interaction between those two types of education providers—state and non-state—is an issue that ranges beyond Palestine. The advantages and disadvantages of having an internally divided education system in the West Bank are discussed in this research. The main advantages of non-state entities are their political and financial neutrality in the face of political instability. The main disadvantages of non-state entities are their potential to undermine the state through funding diversion, representation of foreign instead of nationalistic interests, and their creation of unequal school performance across the sector. The findings are then put into the context of the controversy of long-term humanitarian intervention. The ultimate conclusion argued is that non-state entities have a lot to offer to Palestine and other developing countries, though their existence is problematic and would do well to take into account local desires.
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## Abbreviation Key

ICA ................................................. Israeli Civil Administration
MOE ................................................... Ministry of Education
OPT .................................................. Occupied Palestinian Territories
PD ..................................................... Professional Development
PLO ................................................... Palestinian Liberation Organization
PNA (also PA) ...................................... Palestinian National Authority
UNRWA .......................................... United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine
I. Introduction

In 1993, representatives from Israel, the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO), the United States of America, and the Russian Federation met in Oslo, Norway to discuss possible solutions to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. After a series of meetings, this discussion was codified into what is now colloquially known as the “Oslo Peace Accords”. The stated aim of the Accords was “to establish a Palestinian Interim Self-Government Authority” for the people of Palestine.¹ Powers over the Palestinian people which were previously exercised by the Israeli military government and its Civil Administration (ICA) were to be transferred to this new government, called the Palestinian National Authority (PNA). The new government, despite the transfer of powers, was inherently transitional—projected to govern for “a period not exceeding five years”.² After that five year period, further negotiations were scheduled to occur which would deal with the remaining issues in the conflict: “Jerusalem, refugees, settlements, security arrangements, borders, relations and cooperation with other neighbors,” and any other issues that might arise.³ For a number of reasons outside the scope of this paper, the finalization of the peace accords was never realized, and the institutions authorized by the Oslo accords became permanent by default.

Now, over twenty years after the Oslo Accords, the PNA is still ruling the Palestinian people upon the short-term Oslo declaration in a pseudo-state fashion.⁴ One particular institution created

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² Ibid.
³ Ibid. Annex, Article V.
⁴ While the PNA is still the internationally recognized governing body of the Palestinian people, in 2007 its control of the Gaza Strip was lost to the extremist political group, Hamas. Since then, the PNA has tried to retain nominal control of Gaza, unsuccessfully. In March of 2014, Hamas and the PNA (governed by the ruling party, Fatah) reunited to form a Palestinian unity government, a decision which spelled the end to 7 years of separation. However, given that Gaza has been under the governance of an unrecognized governing organization for 7 years, any study of the development of Palestinian government institutions must account for the fact that the institutions only have real
through the transfer of powers\textsuperscript{5} to the PNA in 1993 was the Palestinian Ministry of Education (MOE).\textsuperscript{6} Originally the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE), in 1996, just three years after its creation, MEHE divided into the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Higher Education. The former focused on elementary and preparatory education while the latter focused on vocational and university training and secondary school. The Ministry of Education is responsible for providing Basic Education and Secondary School education to the children of Palestine. Basic education corresponds to 1\textsuperscript{st} through 10\textsuperscript{th} grade in the United States, reaching children from the ages of about 6 to 16 years of age, while secondary education, 11\textsuperscript{th} and 12\textsuperscript{th} grades, prepare the student for college or vocational work.

The MOE is not the only one providing basic educational services in the West Bank, though. The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) also delivers education to Palestinian refugees living in the West Bank from grade 1 to grade 9. Created in 1948, the UNRWA was originally entitled the United Nations Relief for Palestinian Refugees (UNRPR). Like the PNA, it was originally intended to exist as a temporary entity. The UNRWA was designed with the goal of preventing conditions of starvation and distress and fostering conditions of peace and stability.\textsuperscript{7} This was the UNRWA’s original mandate, one that could not have foreseen that over 60 years later the Israeli-Palestinian conflict would still be unresolved.

\textsuperscript{5} Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements, Annex: Article VI.
\textsuperscript{6} Through its history, the MOE has changed its name from the Ministry of Education and Higher Education, to the Ministry of Education, to the Ministry of Higher Education, to the Ministry of Education. This paper will maintain the phrase Ministry of Education and the acronym MOE for simplicity sake.
Sixty-seven years later, the UNRWA still exists. During this time, its purview has grown to become an all-encompassing agenda. It now includes “education, health care, relief and social services, camp infrastructure and improvement, microfinance and emergency assistance, including in times of armed conflict.” In 1993, the General Assembly even added a resolution to the UNRWA charter which required it to work in cooperation with “relevant agencies” in Palestine in order to contribute to the social stability of the region.\(^8\) The responsibilities of the UNRWA have thus come to resemble almost all of the responsibilities of a fully functioning state structure. The question that arises then is not just how the UNRWA interacts with the Palestinian Authority, but what the goals are in general of long term humanitarian organizations and how those goals end up affecting the states in which they exist. Both questions will be tackled in this paper.

In addition to the MOE and UNRWA, a number of private schools and NGOs (non-governmental organizations) also offer basic education programs. The network of NGOs providing education programs in Palestine is extensive. Prior to Oslo, Palestine was in dire need of services due to the under-developed institutions of provisional government and their consequent lack of capacity to provide services. When the absence of a state rendered service provision difficult, NGOs rose to fill the gaps.\(^9\) The NGO system in Palestine thus predates its state structure. At times, NGOs are a reflection of grassroots sentiment. They can be created and managed by passionate Palestinians who see a need in their society and desire to fill it. Some authors, like Rachel Christina, argue that NGOs “localize” development activities in a way that is


beneficial to the populace. Others believe that NGOs are beholden to their foreign patrons, reflecting external rather than internal values. When the PNA appeared, NGOs did not disappear. Instead, the state and the non-state actors have had to find a way to coexist. In the case of education, NGOs are non-state entities working to provide similar services to the ones provided by the MOE.

The UNRWA, private educational institutions, and NGOs, though all supervised by the MOE, are not an extension of the Palestinian government structure. Their budgets, hiring processes, and other bureaucratic structures are separate from the government. The UNRWA is subject to the rulings of the United Nations, private and NGO schools are managed by independent organizations not affiliated with the Palestinian state. Meanwhile, the Ministry of Education is definitively controlled by the Palestinian National Authority.

Although both the UNRWA and independent education providers are well-intentioned extensions of humanitarian aid, a worry that arises from recent literature is that their activities are actually deterring the developmental potential of the state-run education entity, the MOE. Furthermore, their presence may serve to undermine the development of an autonomous state. To assess the validity of this concern, one must research a number of disparate factors—from those affecting the governmental structures to those affecting classroom performances.

In order to account for the most pressing changes in the West Bank education system, I ask how long term humanitarian intervention in Palestine’s education system affects the development of the state’s education apparatus. The factors involved include foreign funding,

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12 Using the word “state” to refer to the entity of Palestine is a controversial choice. In the Oslo Accords, Palestine is not referred to as a state but instead only referred to by its representative body, the Palestinian Liberation...
teacher qualification training, access to international expertise, school performance, and adaptation to the many trials associated with the Israeli Occupation. Foreign funding changes show how volatile monetary support for education in conflict areas affects the education quality. Teacher qualification standards correlate with the quality of students’ classroom experiences and are often tied to which schools can afford to train their teachers most. Curriculum changes indicate the internal and external influence on content creation and are also insights into what is important to the Palestinian identity. School performance considers a variety of metrics, including student test scores, dropout rates, graduation rates, and extracurricular opportunities. Finally, adaptation to the conditions of the Israeli Occupation serves as an indication of which education institutionss have been able to sustainably educate their students despite the intrusions of the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF).

By reviewing how each education institution has performed in these measures between the period of 1993 and 2014, I will argue that in the 20 year period since Oslo, non-state education institutions (UNRWA and independently run schools) have actually helped the West Bank by pooling economic resources, providing international expertise, and using their political neutrality to buoy the state through violent crises. However, these features of non-state education can be a double-edged sword. For example, political neutrality in a time of heavy nationalism hurts the perception of non-state entities. Similarly, the diversion of direct financial and education resources that would have possibly gone solely to the MOE problematizes the relationship between state and non-state education actors in the long run. Thus, I will ultimately

Organizations (PLO). However, in the education world Palestine is, for all intents and purposes, a state entity. While Palestine has been awaiting admission to the United Nations Security Council, UNESCO already admitted Palestine as a member state in 2011. Since the focus of this paper will be in the realm of education, UNESCO’s treatment of Palestine as a state will be respected. See: United Nations, General Assembly. Report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, Supplement No. 35. A/67/35 (October 2012), available from http://unispal.un.org/UNISPAL.NSF/0/D7BC5B9DF2A099E585257A920056C1DD.
show the non-state humanitarian education aid regime comes with a clear set of advantages and disadvantages in Palestine in the wake of the creation of the state.

**II. The Preexisting Literature**

In studying education development in the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT) there are three main categories of literature that predominate. The first category centers on the efficacy or inefficacy of the NGO regime in the OPT. These texts usually take one or two NGOs as case studies and then generalize about the theoretical importance of NGOs from the research and interviews taken from each study. One example of such a work is *Tend the Olive, Water the Vine: Globalization and the Negotiation of Early Childhood in Palestine* by Rachel Christina. There is still little consensus on the question of efficacy. Those who laud the NGO community focus on their perceived higher teacher quality, their pioneering practices compared to the seemingly stagnant bureaucracy of the MOE, and their economic flexibility in the face of dynamic international donor politics. However, these authors overlook or underestimate the unsustainability of NGOs in the long run, the patchwork net of benefits they create, and the problematic redirection of resources from the state itself. While they have faith in the ability of non-state actors to “take education into their own hands” when the Ministry is unreliable, they fail to consider the economic and qualitative effect that these organizations have upon the Ministry of Education.

On the other side of this debate over NGO efficacy are authors, like Lori Allen and Rema Hammami, who take a more pragmatic approach to the NGO world. They incorporate into their

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analyses the opinions on NGOs held by many Palestinians. The disadvantages of NGO based education organizations becomes apparent through authors’ discussions of the negative connotations associated with NGO workers. By incorporating the feedback of Palestinians who are affiliated with NGOs, in addition to the opinions of Palestinian not affiliated with NGOs, the authors who critique the NGO world create a more comprehensive picture of this particular form of education development in the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT). However, these authors don’t give enough credit to the role NGOs play in stabilizing the volatile political environment, where non-state entities are less likely to receive the ire of fallen political fortune. So while one main focus of Palestinian educational development is non-state education organizations, there is far from consensus on their efficacy. My paper, unlike the literature, will give a full review of the advantages and disadvantages of both types of educational institutions.

The second category of OPT education development literature meticulously picks apart the perceived acceptability or unacceptability of the Palestinian curriculum. Scholars focus on the way that the curriculum has developed since the 1996 creation of the Centre for the Development of Palestinian Curricula, usually with a specific focus on the textbooks most widely used by the state. This particular type of literature began as a major critique of Palestinian-run education. Research organizations under the patronage of Israel lambasted the entire system as racist, anti-Semitic, and anti-Israeli.

Slowly, responses trickled out against these initial reports. These responses in defense of Palestinian education showed that these Israeli backed studies based their findings on Egyptian and Jordanian textbooks from 1967 (a year in which Israel was actively at war with Egypt and

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19 Major organizations like Palwatch, Institute for Monitoring Peace and cultural Tolerance in School Education (IMPACT-SE), and Middle East Media Research Institute (MEMRI) are the main Israeli institutions charging Palestinians with using incendiary media for children.
Jordan) which were no longer actually in use in the OPT. Since the initial attack and consequent defense, each year sees a new report ‘debunking’ the factuality of the last. Each author attacks the very base of their opponent’s argument by claiming that they are not reviewing the most up-to-date textbooks, are missing a racist picture on one page, are using flawed methodology, or fail to account for the equally problematic materials on the Israeli side. This particular category of literature is the most limited in scope, while it provides a detailed study of new Ministry of Education textbooks, it fails to place these findings in the context of the larger education development situation in the way that this paper will. While I will discuss curriculum briefly in the context of who developed it (state, non-state, or collaboration), evaluating lesson plans for bias is not the purpose of this work.

The third category of research undertaken by those interested in studying Palestinian education recounts the destructive impact Israel has had on the quality of Palestinian education. These texts are not necessarily argumentative—instead, they play the role of testimonial literature. By compiling comprehensive lists of Israeli crimes against Palestinian education, this literature reminds the world how closely tied educational success is to resistance of occupation in the minds of Palestinian children. These authors strongly remind the reader that the Palestinian education system does not exist in a vacuum. On the contrary, it is extremely susceptible to conflicts with Israel and disagreements with the international community. Due to this

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21 There are many people covering this topic but since it is only tangentially related to mine I have chosen not to follow this literature in-depth. Instead of focusing on the larger education picture it nit-picks and extrapolates widely from the textbook material. Ultimately it downplays what every teacher already knows: the textbook is a small part in the whole education equation.


susceptibility, all literature dealing with Palestinian education needs to incorporate the effect of external forces in order to create an accurate picture of the system. My paper will use this witness-style literature to show how educational institutions in the West Bank react to physical manifestations of the occupation. By highlighting how each type of institution adapts to the conflict, this paper will argue that non-state institutions are inherently better at maintaining quality education through political volatility in Palestine, because they are able to maintain the perception of political neutrality and thus financial neutrality.

Taken together, these three categories of literature dealing with Palestinian education have the misfortune of being internally thorough but narrowly useful. Because each approach to the topic limits its scope to one particular facet of the education system, larger conclusions about Palestinian education or international education development as a whole cannot be drawn. In my own work, I use the first category of literature to assess not just the world of NGOs in Palestine, but the interaction between the NGOs, the Ministry of Education (MOE) and the UNRWA schools. The strategy of tracking aid and NGO worker qualifications that is used by the authors of this literature is useful in my own analysis of competition within the education sector. The second category’s emphasis on thorough review of textbooks also informs my research method, but I move beyond just the textbooks and look at the effect of the curriculum on classroom performance and school perception. Finally, I also build upon the framework of the third category of Palestinian education development literature by discussing how the education institutions in the OPT adjust to Israeli occupational obstructions over time, not just recounting the many Israeli transgressions.

My attempt to demonstrate how foreign aid and non-state education entities affect the development of the Palestinian education system thus incorporates and ultimately transcends the
existing literature on the topic of Palestinian education. Each category of dominant research on Palestinian education draws important conclusions about its respective facet of the topic, allowing me to incorporate these specific conclusions into my analysis to create a more detailed account of the West Bank’s education system.

Ultimately, the findings of this paper have implications relevant beyond the Palestinian case. State educational institutions across the world are currently facing a dilemma similar to that in Palestine: deciding the role of non-state actors within the broader education system. In the United States, this issue translates into the debate between public schools and charter schools. Like state vs. non-state education institutions in Palestine, both charter schools and public schools in the US have a set of advantages and disadvantages which makes prescribing a clear cut optimal relationship. In other developing countries, the state education system competes with the private sector to provide educational services—often creating an education environment that marginalizes and excludes.24 Through an analysis of the successes and failures of the Palestinian education sector, this paper hopes to contribute to a wider dialogue regarding structural challenges and improvements to national education sectors globally.

III. The Advantages of Non-State Actors in Education

Financial Neutrality, Political Neutrality and Teacher Development: Collective Benefits

Immediately after Oslo, financial troubles plagued the PNA, and thus its department subsidiaries like the MOE suffered as well. On top of that, Israel exploited its power of closing its borders with the West Bank, stunting the Palestinian economy and triggering terrorist attacks.25 Between 1994 and 1996, suicide bombings were the norm. Yasser Arafat, leader of the

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PLO and President of the PNA struggled to contain the bombings, and at times used them for his own political gain. By the year 2000, the Camp David peace talks were met an impasse around the issues regarding Palestinian refugees and the city of Jerusalem. Palestinian violence reached a high point that year, and the second intifada erupted.\textsuperscript{26} The second intifada, which translates from Arabic into ‘uprising’ or ‘shaking-off’, lasted until around 2004, and ended with the death of around 4,000 Palestinians and 1,000 Israelis.\textsuperscript{27} After the second intifada, a war between Israel and Hamas further destroyed relations between the two populations. To this day, nearly biannual wars between the two continue to disrupt the region. In these times of turmoil, political and financial instability abounded.

The state-based education system is directly affected by these issues, particularly in the way that the international community responds to them. Since the finances of the Palestinian state are dependent on the whims of foreign donors, finding funding for education, from teachers’ salaries to school houses, has been a recurring crisis. Due to the volatility of the political arrangement in Palestine, non-state educational actors like UNRWA and private NGO schools have been at an advantage over the MOE. Unlike their state counterpart, their finances are not as closely tied to the political success of the state apparatus. The neutrality of non-state sponsored education allows their budgets to remain apolitical at the national level, ensuring more dependable funding. With the more dependable funding, non-state organizations have the advantage of being able to continue providing services during times of political crisis because they can more reliably pay for the fixed costs associated with education services.

\textsuperscript{26} Causes of the second intifada, also known as the al-Aqsa Intifada, are heavily debated but are out of the scope of this paper. For information on the causes and the controversy surrounding the causes, please see Jeremy Pressman. “The Second Intifada: Background and Causes of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict.” The Journal of Conflict Studies 23 (2003) 2. http://journals.hil.unb.ca/index.php/jcs/article/view/220/378
At times, their neutrality gives them advantages in the political realm as well. Due to this neutrality, they are sometimes able to extract recompense for injustices inflicted upon their structures by IDF and adapt more flexibly to symptoms of the Israeli occupation.

While the neutrality of non-state education entities benefits Palestinians, the extra services for teacher training provided by the organizations have also been beneficial. In this three-part section I will show how non-state institutions have buoyed the Palestinian education system in times of political instability, benefitting the people of the state as a whole.

**Financial Neutrality**

First, let us consider the financial context into which the Ministry of Education was birthed. The PLO returned from signing the Oslo Accords strapped for funds. To attempt to show support for the fledgling state, 35 countries pledged $3.2 billion USD to the state’s new budget. However, only a portion of this money actually materialized. Donors were wary that funds might not be used for its promised purpose, as corruption was a prominent criticism of the PLO.²⁸

The tension between foreign investors’ desire to help the Palestinian government and fear that the money would not be spent in ways that they deemed appropriate is a hallmark of post-Oslo funding arrangements. Non-state education institutions have the benefit of being funded separately the Ministry of Education, which is closely tied to the politics of the PNA. With budgets that are perceived as apolitical and less vulnerable to corruption, these institutions are free from sudden funding withdrawals, the likes of which frequently occur after unexpected political events in the Palestinian territories.

For example, until the Oslo Accords in 1993, USAID was only willing to channel funds through NGOs and private US volunteer organizations, as they were mistrustful of the PNA,

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particularly members who were potentially affiliated with the political party Hamas, a quasi-terrorist organization and political group. While USAID supported the PNA at the outset, once Hamas rose in 2006, US funds quickly became less reliable. In February of that year USAID cut funding to many state run youth volunteer organizations and the Ministry of Education itself entirely due to the fact that the Minister of Palestinian Education at that time was himself a professed member of the Hamas party. Meanwhile, the UNRWA, which operates on a politically neutral budget, and smaller organizations without political ties or private donors were able to maintain the same level of services.

Once funding resumed in July 2006, the U.S. State Department submitted a revised spending plan which gave more funds to non-governmental humanitarian projects, private sector initiatives, and “democracy/civil society programs” and consequently less funds to the Ministry of Education. The Palestinian Authority found itself floundering for cash due to the withdrawal of funds and subsequent rechanneling of funding through non-governmental organizations. Meanwhile, the UNRWA and NGOs were relatively unscathed. This highlights the benefit of non-state education’s nationally neutral budget.

Another crucial source of funding which is subject to the whims of external bodies is Palestinian tax revenues. Tax collection is carried out by the Israeli government, as stipulated during the Oslo Accords. For example, if there are customs duties on imports entering Israeli ports, but the imports go to Palestinian areas, Israel is required to give the money from those

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duties to the PNA. In 2006, tax transfers from Israel amounted to about $50 million USD per month, enough to cover half of the PNA’s operating expenses. When political disagreements arise, Israel thus has the power to withhold the tax revenue collected from the Palestinian citizens. This money, since it goes to the PNA’s operational cost, is directly connected the state funding for education. Hamas’ rise in 2006 therefore did not just affect the flow of foreign funding into the state’s coffers, but it also stymied access to internal tax revenues and thus payment for education activities. The Ministry of Education’s funding is dependent on the financial and political stability of the state. However, given the close relationship between funding and political solvency in Palestine, stability is lacking.

The Palestinian Authority’s very existence as a state-like non-state entity makes the situation of funding for education particularly vulnerable. As a non-member of the United Nations, the West Bank is ineligible to borrow from the World Bank in the way that other developing nations are able. To counter this difficulty, a special fund called the Holst Fund was established in 1993. Partially financed via the World Bank and partially supported by the Kingdom of Norway, it is meant to provide low interest soft loans to meet the recurrent costs of the PNA. This is a small help in the PNA’s struggle to maintain consistent levels of services, but is not sufficient to drive innovation in sectors like education.

Private and UNRWA budgets on the other hand are less subject to the political backflips accompanying the status of “occupied territory”. While Palestinian leadership is forced to focus

33 Ibid.
35 Zaghah, Foreign Aid and Development in Palestine, p.17.
36 Ibid.
37 Ibid., p.14, 17
on appeasing its population, promoting the peace process, and catering to the demands of international donors, it loses energy and expertise to focus on a comprehensive development plan for education alone. Thus, non-state education’s neutral budgets allow them to continue their educationally duties unobstructed through the many political crises facing Palestine.

In the educational realm more specifically, more dependable financial backing has meant a better relationship between teachers and non-state education institutions. Conversely, on the state-education side, teachers’ salaries and teachers’ pensions have been a recurring issue since the MOE’s inception. When the PNA was first created, it raised public sector salaries immediately, including the salaries of teachers, by 20%.\(^{38}\) Despite the political popularity generated by such an act, inflation quickly negated the effects of this generous measure.

The first Palestinian teachers’ strike, just a little over three years after Oslo in 1997, lasted over two weeks.\(^{39}\) Demands included salary increases, from the USD $400 per month Ministry of Education teachers made on average to over USD $800 per month.\(^{40}\) In a private meeting with the teachers’ strike coalition, President Yasser Arafat denounced the teachers. He disparaged them for abandoning the children of Palestine, asking him for money that he simply could not allocate toward education, and taking his attention away from the more major problems “like the Jewish settlements”\(^{41}\). According to the newspapers at the time, the teachers made no gains, and indeed the strike culminated in the arrest and imprisonment of the 35 teacher leaders.\(^{42}\)


\(^{40}\) Assad, “Palestinian Teachers”, 1997.


1997 was not an anomaly for teacher-state relations. In 2000, another teachers’ strike in the provinces of Hebron and Bethlehem was ignited by the announcement that their retirement packages were to be cut by 10%. The striking teachers called for the resignation of the education minister at the time, showing their disillusionment with the state education apparatus. Noteworthy is the fact that the articles which mention the 2000 teachers’ strike still place the average Palestinian teacher salary at USD $400/month. This means that after three years of discontent, seven years after the Ministry of Education’s creation, still no progressive changes had been made by the state to improve teacher pay. It isn’t until articles from 2006 that a change in the average salary of Palestinian teachers per month rose to USD $500, demonstrating the PNA’s challenge in providing for its teachers on account of its precarious financial situation.

Recently, in both 2013 and 2014, more Ministry of Education teacher strikes have taken place. In order to achieve demands, the head of the teacher’s union (Ahmad Suheil as of 2013) must meet with President Mahmoud Abbas himself. Generally those meetings are unfruitful. Due to frequent non-fulfillment of promised donor funding and the sporadic withholding of taes by the Israeli government, funding from the PNA to education is chronically unstable. A review of the non-state organizations show that, in terms of financial stability, they fare markedly better.

Though their funding is piecemeal, as it originates from a conglomeration of international organizations and individual countries, NGOs and UNRWA have been able to stay afloat through the political issues. For teachers, working for the UNRWA in particular is made alluring by its pension measure. All UNRWA employees receive a lump-sum pension at the conclusion

of their service.\textsuperscript{46} A “provident fund” specifically set aside by the UN for the purpose of teacher pensions covers the lump sum. By providing its employees with pensions, the UNRWA offers a stark contrast to the instability of Ministry of Education’s payment regime. It sets itself apart economically from the rest of the territory by offering a benefit that would be seen as a luxury by other professions.

The benefits of a stable pension fund are indicative of a more general financial advantage that non-state entities offer to their host country. An example of this general trend was seen in 1995 when the market in the West Bank and Gaza took a sharp decline. Then, the Gaza Strip was said to have weathered the economic downturn better than the West Bank in a large part due to the high level of donor funds within Gaza at that time.\textsuperscript{47} By attributing Gaza’s ability to withstand the decline to its possession of a cushion of donor funds, it becomes clear that the existence of non-state education entities can provide temporary stability to people in volatile political and economic climates.\textsuperscript{48} This stabilization directly affects the efficacy and continuity of education for children in the state as a whole.

Of course, the UNRWA and other education providers are not without their teacher disputes. In early 2014, the UNRWA faced a full staff strike in which teachers and other UNRWA employees alike requested the improvement of the “conditions of service” of the staff.\textsuperscript{49} Through the negotiation process, while President Abbas formally requested the conclusion of the strike, the negotiations actually took place between the UNRWA Director of Operations, Felipe Sanchez, and the West Bank Area Staff Union representative, Shaker

\textsuperscript{46} Diwan and Sha’bān, \textit{Development under Adversity}, p.118.
\textsuperscript{47} Ibid., p.21.
\textsuperscript{48} This piece was taken originally from my History Colloquium paper. It is not verbatim, but the ideas are the same.
Risheg. The strike ended with mutual agreement to implement measures for the improvement of conditions for the service staff and to improve the quality of refugee services. Negotiation with a UNRWA Director of Operations is markedly less political than arguing with the head of state himself (Arafat or Abbas) as the Ministry of Education teachers were forced to do time after time. So while non-state educational programs have their staff strikes, the bargaining process is much smoother than the politically fraught negotiations of MOE teachers.

The political stability and resulting financial stability afforded to non-state actors in Palestine cannot be highlighted enough. By providing continuous education services to the population and paying Palestinian teachers in a timely manner with benefits greater than those of the state system, the UNRWA and NGOs are able to briefly sustain the state through hardship.

**Reaction to Occupation**

In addition to maintaining an apolitical budget structure, non-state education actors in the West Bank are also able to chastise both Israeli and Palestinian actors for any infractions and demand recompense for their troubles. Such neutrality is important in Palestine, where schools are often the targets of attack.

During the second intifada, attacks against Palestinian educational infrastructure by the IDF reached their peak. Children were unable to access schools due to closures and curfews enforced by the Israeli army. Even when schools were open, students felt unsafe. As an NGO

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50 UNRWA, “UNRWA Staff Union Strike in the West Bank Ends”, 2014.
51 Ibid.
worker in Hebron recounted, “Soldiers actually come into the schools here, elementary schools too, especially the boys’ schools. And they can come into the classrooms and harass children”.\(^{54}\)

However, in certain situations non-state institutions were able to overcome the fray. For example, attacks by Israel in the West Bank in 2001 damaged UNRWA schools, training centers, and health facilities.\(^{55}\) During the attacks, UNRWA facilities were sometimes even commandeered by the IDF for the purpose of interrogating Palestinian detainees.\(^{56}\) The UNRWA, unlike the Ministry of Education, was able to rebuke Israel for its misconduct towards a neutral actor on the international stage. In December 2001, the UN followed up on that reprimand, urging the Israeli government to compensate the UNRWA for damages to its property linked to actions by the Israeli army.\(^{57}\) The Ministry of Education could not request reparations for damages done to its property, as its relationship with Israeli is inherently adversarial. The existence of neutral, non-state educational bodies is therefore conducive to the continuous provision of education in the West Bank in the face of the conflict because non-state actors are able to seek reparations, unlike their state counterparts.

In many cases, however, even humanitarian aid cannot rise above the reality of the conflict. During the second intifada for example, the IDF stormed the UNRWA ʿAskar refugee girl school in the Nablus province.\(^{58}\) The soldiers proceeded to use the space as a detention and interrogation center, despite harsh rebukes by the United Nations. Although in this case the UNRWA was unable to stop the IDF from commandeering its resources, it was still able to chastise it for violations of internationally recognized standards of humanitarian rights, including

\(^{54}\) Akesson, “School as a Place of Violence and Hope,” 2014.
\(^{57}\) Tofan, *The United Nations and the Question of Palestine*, p. 151, 152.
the right to neutrality. The organization cited the 1946 UN Convention on Privileges and Immunities and an individual agreement between the UNRWA and the Government of Israel in 1967. While the UNRWA cannot always gain compensation from Israel, its political neutrality gives it a credible position from which to criticize the occupying regime.

Two symptoms of the occupation that the MOE, the UNRWA and NGOs have been unable to successfully overcome are the presence of the Israeli Separation Wall and the related division of the West Bank into Areas A, B, and C. The Oslo Accords set the stage for this divided Palestinian territory scheme. Areas A and B make up around 38% of the West Bank territory and include major Palestinian territories and rural Palestinian communities. The other 62% of the territory is Area C, an area which the state of Israel retains law enforcement and building construction control over, despite the fact that Palestinians still live in the space. The Israeli separation wall carves chunks out of Area C, making it difficult for Palestinians to travel freely from one place to another in their own neighborhoods [See Map 1: Areas A, B, C and the Wall]


The affects that the wall and the division of Palestine into multiple areas have on education do not just affect one education provider. UNRWA, MOE, and NGO teachers and

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60 Ibid.
62 Ibid.
students all struggle with access to school buildings in the face of these obstructions.\textsuperscript{64} Further issues arise when organizations attempt to build new schools to compensate for the rising Palestinian population. Between 1996 and 1999, only 79 building permits were granted to Palestinians.\textsuperscript{65} The trend of denying construction permits despite the expansive creation of settlements for Israeli citizens only continued through the second intifada [See Figure 1].

The inability to acquire the required authorization for construction prevented many Palestinian communities from upgrading or developing their school infrastructure during that time. Often, students would just attempt to adjust the route they took to their original school, in order to bypass checkpoints and the separation wall. This increased the average time it took to get to school, but was the most popular method for evading the separation wall [See Table 1].

More recently, between January 2010 to August 2010, Palestinian agencies attempted to repair twenty-six schools in Area C that were need of structural repairs.\textsuperscript{66} The schools lacked facilities for adequate hygiene and drinking water.\textsuperscript{67} Though requests were put in for repairing all 26 schools, only one of them was actually permitted by the Israeli government, while another school received demolition order from the government instead.\textsuperscript{68} Despite the provision of education through non-state actors, these aspects of the occupation have been inescapable. While the United Nations’ organizations injured by the Israeli state may be in the legal and moral right, that translates into little else than righteous satisfaction on the ground. So while at times the non-state neutrality offers potential for reimbursement, it is often not enough to stop the full brunt of the Palestinian Israeli conflict from affecting the education sector.

\textsuperscript{64} Stop the Wall, “Education Under Occupation,” p.12
\textsuperscript{65} Ibid., p.11.
\textsuperscript{67} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{68} Ibid.
Professional Development Resources

The commonly accepted perception of teachers in the OPT is underpaid and underqualified. Since Oslo, this attitude has changed little, despite the wage strikes, new professional development institutions, and new curricula. On the Ministry of Education side, requirements for a Palestinian teacher to enter the teaching force have been slowly raised over the years. In 1998, the Ministry attempted to standardized teacher qualifications in order to legitimize the profession. They set a baccalaureate degree as the minimum qualification for a teacher entering the force. However, enforcing minimum standards turned out to be more difficult to implement than anticipated. Demand for certain types of teachers, specifically ones proficient in STEM, was higher than the supply during that time. In response, teachers with math and science experience were often hired without any teaching background at all. So early on, standards were set, but due to the high need for certain types of teachers, concessions were often made regardless of the institution type.

The trade-off between subject-expertise and teaching experience was not solely relegated to the fields of math and science. Rudimentary teaching strategies, as defined and identified by UNESCO, still characterize most classrooms in Palestine. These strategies include “teacher-centered” approaches, consisting of rote-learning, lecturing, and dictation. The reason for this lack of teacher experience stems from the fact that pre-service teacher training has lacked centralized administration from Oslo until present day. Even in-service teacher training for the Ministry of Education has stayed steady at only 4.5% of the overall education budget.

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69 Nicolai, Fragmented Foundations, p.99.
70 Ibid.
In the case of the UNRWA, teacher quality is also tied to the way that teachers interact with the refugee community. The UNRWA’s teachers hail from the same community as the students they teach (meaning that they are likely refugees themselves who have gone through the UNRWA system). This is perceived as adding a level of cohesion to the education process that is difficult to measure or replicate in comparison to the MOE schools.

Given the above distinction between the UNRWA and the MOE teachers, it seems logical that satisfaction with UNRWA teachers and private school teachers is notably higher than satisfaction with teachers in public schools. According to a Palestinian Bureau of Statistics Survey in 2008, 72.7% of Palestinians were satisfied with the competency of the UNRWA’s teachers and 85.6% were satisfied with the competency of private school teachers. In comparison, only 69% were satisfied with the competency of their government school teachers. In Table 2, two other measures of teacher satisfaction are included. Both show a similar trend favoring private and UNRWA schools over public schools.

Given how the non-state education institutions have a higher rate of satisfaction, one would initially think that they create an inherently unequal educational environment within the country. In this environment, it seems that state education is a last resort. It gets the worst prepared teachers and has the lowest teacher satisfaction. Indeed, the presence of non-state education institutions has had an interesting effect on teacher preparation, but inequality is not necessarily inherent.

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Both the Ministry of Education and non-state schools have a demand for better qualified, better prepared teachers. The main way institutions try to satiate this demand is through the creation of teacher professional development (PD) programs. PD programs take two forms: pre-service and in-service training. The type of training offered affects the way that non-state organizations compare to the state’s overall education apparatus in terms of equity. When pre-service training is supported, teachers across the territory are able to benefit, thus improving the Palestinian education system as a whole. However, when in-service training dominates, inequality between MOE, the UNRWA, and private schools is allowed to grow, as funding is separated by governing body.

In the early years of Oslo, pre-service training was the dominant type of preparation. Pre-service refers to any type of teacher training that works with teachers prior to their taking a formal teaching position—usually while they are in university or between graduation from university and accepting a job. In-service teacher training refers to teachers who are already in the classroom trying to adjust their teaching methods concurrently with their work. With pre-service preparation, teachers are reached before they are divided into non-state and state institutions. This implies that training occurring at this level has the potential to benefit either MOE schools or schools run by the UNRWA, NGOs, and private organizations.

However, one issue with pre-service education for teachers remained in the mid-2000s. Donors were concerned that their funding was not going into a well-organized professional development plan. The “lack of a coherent plan around teacher training,” as noted by a UNESCO representative, has dampened investor’s fervor since the early 2000s. Back in 1963, while the Israeli Civil Administration (ICA) controlled West Bank schools, UNESCO, the UNRWA, and the Swiss Government attempted to address the pressing problem of lackluster training programs.

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76Nicolai, Fragmented Foundations, p.102.
by creating an Institute of Education.\textsuperscript{77} Though over 30,000 teachers were trained, the problem has obviously continued into the 21\textsuperscript{st} century. Though the MOE set the bachelor degree minimum back in 1998, in 2007 there was still a lack of set standards for the higher education institutes actually engaged in providing the teacher training courses for those bachelors.\textsuperscript{78}

Few tertiary education institutions offering teacher certification provide an in-classroom component, instead focusing mostly on discipline knowledge.\textsuperscript{79} Even a discussion of issues that may crop up in the classroom is still lacking in the training system. In pre-service training programs provided by the UNRWA faculty of education science (which, despite the name, is not reserved for UNRWA teachers only) and by al-Quds university, lessons relating to pedagogy, assessment techniques, and classroom management were glossed over or even omitted.\textsuperscript{80} With pre-service training lacking in cohesion and quality, swathes of unqualified teachers were and are entering the Palestinian workforce.

Efforts to address pre-service training inefficiencies have taken two forms: an attempt to improve the pre-service opportunities and a shift to funding in-service training endeavors instead. Pre-service training initiatives have the benefit of not discriminating against teachers in either state or non-state education institutions. Instead, they offer the possibility of training the entire pool of Palestinian teachers to the benefit of the country as a whole. Around 2007, after UNESCO claimed that donors were expressing skepticism about the extant teacher training programs, a number of initiatives targeting pre-service PD were rolled out. For instance, the Quality Systems for Quality Teachers (QSQT) funded by the EU and run by UNESCO was

\textsuperscript{78} Nicolai, \textit{Fragmented Foundations}, p. 100.
created in 2009 to improve the coherence of pre-service teacher training. A similar 2013 initiative started by AMIDEAST, funded by USAID, and launched by the Ministry of Education started the Leadership and Teacher Development Program. Pre-service training programs like these are beneficial to the entirety of the West Bank because they do not divide funding between non-state and state teachers. They have also become necessary, as the MOE has said that it will no longer hire “unqualified” teachers as of the 2014/2015 school year.

Still, as is clear from the few examples of existing pre-service PD initiatives, cohesion is lacking. UNESCO, USAID, the EU and the World Bank are all funding small separate initiatives instead of focusing on a centralized program. Recently, in 2013, the Ministry of Education finally teamed up with the UNRWA to try to standardize teacher development. With the help of UNESCO, the state and non-state institutions met at the Palestinian International Quality Teachers for Quality Education Conference to discuss teaching theory and teacher training for Palestinians. Combining the expertise and desires of the two largest providers of education in Palestine promised to improve the quality of the most recent pool of teachers. Even the Deputy Minister for Planning and Development in Palestine hailed it as proof that teacher development is finally being taken as a serious step necessary to preparing for the future. This conference marked a significant step towards a long awaited streamlining of pre-service teacher training.

The 2013 Palestinian International Quality Teachers for Quality Education Conference also highlights an important point concerning humanitarian work in teacher education. International donors are interested in assisting the education development of countries in conflict, and specifically in helping teachers, as shown in the Palestinian case and conflicts across the world. However, when the infrastructure is not in place for this to be done reliably, donors are left to choose between untrustworthy state infrastructure, financially unsustainable and small NGOs, or large scale INGO organizations. In the case of Palestine, pre-service teacher education provides an opportunity for investors to reach a large number of teachers while not discriminating against teachers based on chosen education organization. By targeting a mixed pool of teachers, prior to their self-imposed division into state and non-state sectors, the humanitarian assistance has the potential to benefit Palestinians across the board. When setting standards for entry into the teaching force that are consistent across the country, like the bachelor degree requirement instituted by the Ministry of Education (and the in-tandem standardization of the teacher’s bachelor programs as in the QSQT example), and investment in teacher development is promoted through the whole West Bank, then non-state education institutions actually help the state as a whole. This is because donors are theoretically encouraged by the cohesiveness and standardization of the pre-service plan and the fact that they are both supporting the state and non-state apparatus simultaneously.

Compared to pre-service teacher training, in-service PD is tied to increasing inequality between state and non-state education organizations. In-service refers to professional development programs targeting teachers who are already in the classroom. A level of PD
throughout a teacher’s career is highly recommended by the education literature.\textsuperscript{86} However, by training teachers in state or non-state education institutions in Palestine exclusively, there is a risk of greatly improving one over the other, creating an unequal system within the country. Around the time of the second Intifada in the early 2000s, in-service training was indeed selective and fragmented. Each institution tried to deliver quality PD to its teachers exclusively, leading to patchy efforts and equally patchy results.\textsuperscript{87} One example of an in-service initiative undertaken by the MOE was its unfurling of the new curriculum. The MOE trained a small cohort of teachers during the summer, and then sent that cluster of teachers out to individual schools to teach the curriculum to the other teachers.\textsuperscript{88} However, as one teacher complained, 2-5 days was not an adequate amount of time to learn a completely new curriculum. The issue with many in-service pieces is similar to this one: the limited budget restricting training capacity and the difficulty finding time to incorporate teaching-teachers into a program.

Efforts were made in the 2010s onwards to expand in-service PD to cross institutional boundaries. For example, the Teacher Education Improvement Project (2010-2014) funded by the World Bank was intended to improve the skills of Grade 1-4\textsuperscript{89} classroom teachers in MOE schools and other education institutions.\textsuperscript{90} This intervention was critical, as the Ministry is giving “unqualified” teachers in the force until 2019 to get the necessary qualifications in order to continue their practice.\textsuperscript{91} While this project also had a pre-service component, the takeaway is that the focus is on improving Palestinian teachers as a whole, not just ones from specific

\textsuperscript{86} National Education Association, “Professional Development Benefits Students,” Organized Staff Union Labor: National Education Association (2010), \url{http://www.nea.org/assets/docs/120701-ProfessionalDevelopmentBenefitsStudents.pdf}.
\textsuperscript{87} Nicolai, Fragmented Foundations, p.100.
\textsuperscript{88} Nicolai, Fragmented Foundations, p.101.
\textsuperscript{89} These grades were targeted because of the Commission for Development the Teaching Profession’s 2010 set standards for teachers in those grades. Based on those new standards, only \~7,919 out of the 12,108 (65\%) teachers for grades 1 to 4 in the entire West bank were qualified.
\textsuperscript{90} Hashweh, “Palestinian Ministry of Education and Higher Education,” p.20.
\textsuperscript{91} Hashweh, “Palestinian Ministry of Education and Higher Education,” p.54.
institution types. Inequality between teachers in each institution is already reflected in the governance survey reference back in Table 2. Another level of inequality is reflected in the way that the UNRWA schools have a better established system for continuous professional development for teachers and administration.\textsuperscript{92} The UNRWA’s schools were not always lauded for their in-school teacher-advancement program. It was not until 2009 that the UNRWA updated its program—an initiative which improved the UNRWA teacher trajectory.\textsuperscript{93} At the same time, the MOE tried to update its teacher advancement path as well, but with more varied results in efficacy.\textsuperscript{94} This suggests that, despite both institutions’ attempts to develop their respective paths for teacher advancement, the results of their efforts were not comparable. This is likely due to the disparity in resources, difference in size, and difference in benefits offered to teachers.

Teacher qualification in Palestine is a topic relevant to both state and non-state actors. The MOE, the UNRWA, and private organizations have all tried to address the issue with a mixture of pre-service and in-service professional development initiatives. In the early years of the MOE’s creation, institutions were attempting fragmented pre-service training for teachers. As 21\textsuperscript{st} century wore on, in-service training programs began. These programs, divided as they were by state and non-state education institutions, contributed to inequality between education providers in the country. So while non-state institutions do not inherently make the teacher market imbalanced in their favor, the types of PD undertaken contribute to a divide. Thus in terms of teacher quality, non-state institutions have a mixed effect on teacher quality in the OPT as a whole.

The neutrality offered by the UNRWA and NGOs through times of political turmoil has been shown to provide helpful stability to the West Bank. The extra teaching programs that arise from the conglomeration of international attention and resources can also be beneficial to the sector. In the following section, I will problematize some of the benefits that the non-state actors provide. This will demonstrate that the benefits of education interventions are not so easily evaluated.

IV. Disadvantages of State Actors in Education

“It is important to bear in mind, however, that international programmes can only support – and not substitute for – committed, vigorous and concerted national action.”

– Foreword to the UNESCO’s Plan of Action: World Programme for Human Rights Education written by Louise Arbour, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and Koichiro Matsuura, Director-General of UNESCO.

The many advantages mentioned in the previous section actually come with hidden disadvantages. The ‘double-edged’ sword of humanitarian intervention in Palestinian education has manifested itself in three main areas. First, the existence of non-state actors may inherently divert attention and funds from the developing actors. While the financial neutrality of the UNRWA and NGOs in the last section could be seen as beneficial to the continuity of the state in the short term, in the long term it may be harming the institutional development of the MOE. The political neutrality of non-state actors has had a similar two-edged effect. In the case of Palestine and other places where nationalist pride is particularly strong, non-state organizations may be perceived as a fifth column within the state.

Finally, while we looked at the positive effects of pooled teacher training resources in the previous section, this section will problematize the in classroom school differences that actually result from the non-state vs. state dichotomy. By analyzing the negative effects that non-state actors have unintentionally had on the development of the Palestinian state, I will be following a
similar vein to the one established by Lori Allen in her book, *The Rise and Fall of Human Rights: Cynicism and Politics in Occupied Palestine*. However, I will be problematizing, not negating the benefits that non-state actors provide. Ultimately, I broaden my analysis to the level of international education intervention outside of Palestine and make the claim that taking a purely ‘cynical’ approach does not capture the benefits that non-state actors actually bring.

**Foreign Funding Diversion**

The Palestinian economy is and has been sustained by foreign funding. The education sector is no exception to this, however, while in the earlier section discussing financial neutrality it was clear that non-state actors used their funds to provide stability to the West Bank, in this section I will show how competition for funding is an unfortunate reality that goes along with that benefit.

The United States, one of the largest providers for aid to the UNRWA, has an interesting pattern of funding when it comes to the Ministry of Education. In Figure 2, using information provided by the Congressional Research Service, I plotted the change in the amount of aid given over time to both the UNRWA and the MOE. What the evidence suggests is that the US is indeed more likely to maintain continuous, stable funding for the UNRWA than it is for the Ministry of Education. It also suggests that the US is not afraid to withhold funding from the PNA entirely, a willingness which may not be so readily expressed were an alternative like the UNRWA not in existence.

Fortunately, the US is not the only source of funding for the Palestinian government. Most of it is drawn from the EU and the Arab League, a full account of which is given in Figure 3. One cannot make the direct causal argument that had the UNRWA not existed, the US would

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96 Zanotti, "US Foreign Aid to the Paesstinians," p.7.
have been more likely to fund the MOE. However, Figure 3 does show that when funding for the UNRWA goes up, funding for the MOE goes up as well. This suggests that were there only one organization, the money to fully fund it is available in the coffers, and it is only because there are multiple organizations that this money is being split.

Immediately post-Oslo, a funding diversion occurred that benefited the state education apparatus. Originally, in the early 1990s, $140 to $220 million USD per annum was going to Palestinian NGOs. The money was coming from foreign donors interested in the success of the Palestinians in the territories. Once the PNA was created, money was funneled away from the NGOs and into the Palestinian National Authority coffers instead. Donors reduced their contributions to the NGOs to $90 million USD in 1994, and then $60 million USD in 1996. This rechanneling of funds was logical, as the NGOs had just been trying to cover the lack of services that stemmed from the lack of a government. However, it also shows a very obvious principle: donor funding is finite. As such, giving to one education entity, whether it is state or non-state, will always draw funds away from the other. When funds are diverted away from the Ministry of Education and into the UNRWA or NGO budget, the PNA’s state is inhibited from fully developing.

Funding diversion highlights the problematic relationship between competing education entities. While financial neutrality allowed the UNRWA and NGOs to buoy the Palestinian state through political upheaval (as described in the earlier section on Financial Neutrality), it may also be hindering the full development of the state by depriving it of direly needed funding. So despite the benefit that non-state programs may bring, there is a hidden long term cost.

97 Christina, Tend the Olive, Water the Vine, p.7.
98 Ibid.
The Dangers of Neutrality

As mentioned in the last section, the Ministry of Education has gained a great deal of financial and advisory assistance from the international community. In the development of curriculum, in the career progression of teachers, and in payment of bills, organizations like UNICEF, Save the Children, and UNESCO have all lent a helping hand. The UNRWA and NGOs are also recipients of foreign aid. NGOs are eligible for USAID funding, and the UNRWA, as a branch of the United Nations, also has access to international expertise. However, as mentioned in the earlier section on Financial Neutrality, the apolitical nature of the non-state education system lends it a leg up when it comes to foreign expertise contributions.

For example, UNRWA and UNESCO have had a special partnership since the agreement they signed in 1951. The contract allows UNESCO to provide UNRWA with technical assistance (TA) with managerial staff on a “non-reimbursable loan basis”\(^9\). In addition to UNESCO, UNRWA solidified a number of partners throughout the 50 plus years of its existence. From large INGOs like the UNDP, UNICEFO, and the WHO, to regional partners like the League of Arab States, to local NGO actors, UNRWA has a well-defined Partnership Policy which it uses to create relationships with diverse organizations\(^1\).

While one might think that the international expertise provided by these broad-ranging partnerships gives non-state education organizations an overt advantage, it has actually proven to be a double-edged sword over time. In tandem with non-state educations’ relative political neutrality, as discussed in the section on Financial Neutrality, its close ties to foreign interests, or more accurately, non-state interests, often leaves it suspect by the Palestinian people. Organizations too friendly with the international community are suspected as collaborates (with

Israel) or agents of foreign governments.\textsuperscript{101} So although the UNRWA, NGOs, and often the Palestinians they serve, benefit from the former’s neutrality on an international arena, it is that same neutrality which drives the Agency apart from integration into the West Bank culture.

For instance, the UNRWA is able to receive building permits where national Palestinian institutions cannot, the UNRWA will turn over employees suspected of association with Palestinian terrorist groups, the UNRWA is mandated to promote stability in times of chaos, and the UNRWA is always beholden to foreign purses. By addressing the ways in which non-state education’s neutrality serves to alienate it from the rest of the population, an understanding of how humanitarian organizations are received by the rest of the population, even over a long period of time, can be reached.

Education is a part of society in which Palestinians take deep nationalistic pride. On the first day of school in 1994, after the creation of the PA, students began the day with the national anthem and the Palestinian flag, both of which were prohibited by Israeli authorities when they held control of the education.\textsuperscript{102} By just attending school, by just attempting to improve the human capital of the country, education has become part of the resistance against the Israeli occupation.\textsuperscript{103}

If education is closely tied to the success and pride of the state itself, attending a non-state run school can be seen as a loss to the nation. The refugee camps and the children in them are not expected to do better than the nation itself on test scores, but they often do.\textsuperscript{104} Also, as in developing countries, privately run education institutions often out perform their public

\textsuperscript{101} Christina, \textit{“Tend the Olive, Water the Vine,”} p.9.
\textsuperscript{102} Hovsepian, \textit{Palestinian State Formation}, p.92.
\textsuperscript{103} Stop the Wall, \textit{“Education Under Occupation,”} p.4.
\textsuperscript{104} UNRWA, \textit{“UNRWA Teacher Policy 2013,”} p.6. For more on UNRWA test scores: World Bank, \textit{“Palestinian Refugee Students Attending UN Schools Achieve Above Average Results on International Assessments,”} 2014.
counterparts. Improvements in the refugee camps in particular, like the educational success of UNRWA schools, seem to lend permanence to entities which, due to the nature of the conflict, have a vested interest in remaining temporary. The refugee camps sanctify a Palestinian’s right of return, so they walk a fine line between wanting improved conditions and using poor conditions to call for a return to their homeland. With this controversial existence, educational improvement led by the UNRWA may be considered non-nationalistic by default.

In addition to the controversial nature of strong refugee performance in the West Bank, both the UNRWA and NGOs are suspect by the native community due to the fact that their policies and budgets are not a part of the national fabric of the territory. Private NGOs have long struggled with the PNA to protect their right to exist. In 1994, when the PNA came into power, it attempted to reign in what it saw as unfettered, unchecked NGO growth since 1948. And indeed, compared to neighboring countries, the Palestinian territories pre-PNA creation were very welcoming to NGOs due to their unrestricted NGO laws. Despite the PNA’s efforts to create an NGO law based on the existing one in Egypt in 1994, the NGO community swiftly organized against such measures. In 2000, the PNA created an official law regarding NGOs, one that was deemed to be one of the least restrictive measures in the Middle East.

While NGOs won a victory against the PNA in 2000, Palestinian perception of NGOs and NGO workers has turned sour over time. Employees are at times ostracized, despite the fact that many come from within Palestine. The staff members are categorized as “NGO elite” who are said to enjoy a lifestyle replete with international travel, company cars, and other perks.

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107 Ibid.
108 Allen, The Rise and Fall of Human Rights, p.68.
Although in reality NGO (and UNRWA) salaries do not provide nearly enough income to support this fictional life of luxury, the real issue is that their mere existence hints at “soft colonialism” led by foreign donors and tied to non-internal political goals.¹⁰⁹

While the employees themselves might be Palestinian, the interests they represent by working for a human rights system are foreign. The worry becomes that UNRWA and NGOs have begun to exist in a self-perpetuating manner—too invested in their own success in the country to focus on solving the overarching refugee problem. As Lori Allen puts it in her critical work _The Rise and Fall of Human Rights_, the NGO system in Palestine created employees who are nothing more than “comfortable cogs in a self-perpetual human rights system.”¹¹⁰ By associating non-state education with its foreign backing and vilifying the staff, the West Bank has shown that non-state entities are far from becoming an accepted part of the state. In this way, the UNRWA and NGO’s international neutrality serves to separate them from the very people they seek to assist. So while international backing and support comes with a set of perks, from technical assistance to pledged funding, it also can backfire. In Palestine, education is a key part of state-building. This means that non-state education institutions can be seen as a potential fifth column within the country, as representative of international goals instead of state ones.

**Inequality as expressed in school performance**

The one factor researchers of Palestinian education want to point to in order to definitively say which school system is better ‘quality’ is school performance. School performance in education literature is measured in a number of ways. Popular measures include graduation rates, test scores, international assessments, teacher-student ratios, and enrollment

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¹⁰⁹ Ibid., p.68.
¹¹⁰ Ibid., p.69.
numbers.\textsuperscript{111} Unfortunately, in terms of data availability, access to disaggregated Palestinian test scores is publically unavailable. However, by looking at reports on international test scores, teacher qualification data, and teacher-student ratios across MOE, NGO and UNRWA schools, one can compare the performance of each school type.

In 1995, the first year of the MOE’s operation, the qualifications of its teachers were above or on par with the private NGO sector [See Figure 4]. According to the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, the MOE and Palestinian private schools had almost the same percentage of their teaching force qualified with a bachelor’s degree (36\% and 32\% respectively).\textsuperscript{112} While private schools had a slightly higher percentage of teachers with a degree higher than a bachelors (4\% of the total number of private NGO teachers), it was not much higher than MOE and UNRWA schools which both had 3\%.\textsuperscript{113} This suggests that at the outset, there was a level of school teacher qualification parity between NGO and MOE schools, while the UNRWA schools were lagging behind.

UNRWA schools, in addition to struggling to maintain a highly qualified teaching population also struggle the most with school over-crowding. Plotting the change in students per school building from 1995 to 2006 using Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics data, it is clear that the UNRWA has struggled to maintain uncrowded classrooms [See Figure 5]. Comparatively, the level of crowdedness in MOE West Bank schools has remained relatively consistent. This highlights division that has occurred within the country. The study of school

\textsuperscript{113} Ibid.
crowdedness shows that by creating a divided education system, classroom quality varies widely in the West Bank.

Although over-crowding is believed to diminish the quality of teaching, it is not the only variable that comes has come into play overtime.\textsuperscript{114} As briefly mentioned in the previous section, since 2010 reports have been coming in that say UNRWA schools perform much better on international standardized tests than their Ministry of Education counterparts. On the TIMSS (Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study) and the PISA (Program for International Student Assessment), UNRWA students achieve higher results than their public counterparts.\textsuperscript{115} The reasons for this high achievement are unclear. However, the overall lesson that can be drawn from the gap is that the existence of a disjointed education system creates disjointed achievement levels within the state.

Sometimes the neutrality offered by the non-state actors in the West Bank can help the Palestinian state as a whole. However as the past sections have shown, there are disadvantages associated with having too many players in the education field. Funding diversion, perception as a representative of foreign interests, and the division of the achievement of Palestinian children in the West Bank are all issues that have affected the state education system’s development. The existence of a non-state system in Palestine has thus at times hindered the development of the Ministry Of Education.

\textbf{V. Beyond Palestine}

\textbf{Humanitarian Education Intervention Theory}

\textsuperscript{114} Yetunde Ijaiy, “Effects of Overcrowded Classrooms on Teacher Student Interactions,” Department of Educational Management, University of Ilorin (1999).
\textsuperscript{115} World Bank, “Regional Study: Palestinian Refugee Students Attending UN Schools Achieve Above-Average Results on International Assessments,” 2014.
The education situation in Palestine is reflective of a larger trend in education development across the world. With governments suspect, the international community has taken to including education initiatives in its aid packages—initiatives which, like the UNRWA, fulfill roles that are typically delegated to the state itself. The question emerges, from the charter schools of the US to the private schools of Egypt back to the UNRWA refugee classrooms of Palestine, “do non-state education institutions hurt state education organization development over time?” If the answer is yes, then should humanitarian efforts continue to focus on creating parallel education institutions or should they work on strengthening pre-existing infrastructure? The main issues exposed through the study of the Palestinian education situation are the goals of long term humanitarian aid and the role of the state in providing services in today’s world.

Humanitarian effort has not existed in a vacuum. According to historian and political scientist Michael Barnett, humanitarianism is a conglomeration of geopolitics, capitalism, and ethics interacting on a global scale. The two main types of humanitarianism that Barnett identifies are ‘emergency’ humanitarian action and ‘alchemical’ humanitarian intervention. Emergency humanitarian action operates under the basic concept of providing relief to people whose lives are in immediate danger. Emergency humanitarians try to separate relief from the politics, not focusing on long term goals but instead on short term mitigation. Alchemical humanitarianism attempts to address the root cause of suffering. This often requires engaging with the politics of the region to remove the causes of the problems. In Palestine, there has been a mix of both types of humanitarian action. In 1948 when the UNRWA was first created, few believed that it would still be around over 60 years later. It was conceived with emergency

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117 Ibid. p.37.  
118 Ibid.  
119 Ibid. p.40
humanitarian principles in mind. However, as time progressed, the alchemical nature of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict has been revealed, and the humanitarian efforts have become more comprehensive and ‘alchemical’.

While alchemical humanitarian action, rooted in an attempt to address first causes, may initially seem like the most effective type of humanitarian aid, there is a dimension to it that has caused humanitarians to rethink its use. As Barnett himself cautions, alchemical humanitarian action is markedly paternalistic.\footnote{Ibid. p.41} International organizations attempt to alleviate the suffering of local people by intervening, assuming that the “childlike populations” need “adults to civilize them”.\footnote{Ibid.} This is not to discount all international aid as inherently patronizing. However some argue that international aid organizations need to stop representing foreign interests only, stop “using the monolithic Western language and models of development,” and instead incorporate and respect local contexts and cultures in order to make aid more successful.\footnote{Colin Brock and Nafsika Alexiadou, Education Around the World: A Comparative Introduction, (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), p.107.}

Another issue that confronts the humanitarian aid regime in Palestine and elsewhere is the fact that the type of aid being given is not necessarily the type of aid that the people want. The United Nations has one conception of what people need and the people themselves have another. For example, during the Bosnian genocide in the 1990s, Bosnian leaders explicitly asked the international community for military assistance instead of humanitarian assistance in order to give them a chance to survive.\footnote{Barnett, Empire of Humanity, p.176} To stay depoliticized, UN troops were allowed to use force to protect the aid supply, but not the people themselves.\footnote{Ibid. p.177} In India in the 1830s, the British also tried to address an issue by its symptoms rather than its causes. A famine hit northern India

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{120} Ibid. p.41  
\textsuperscript{121} Ibid.  
\textsuperscript{123} Barnett, Empire of Humanity, p.176  
\textsuperscript{124} Ibid. p.177}
in 1837. The British wanted to provide for the starving Indians, but they refused to address the cause of the issue and the conditions that made the famine so inevitable.\footnote{Ibid. p.64.} The Palestinian people are in a similar conundrum. Non-state organizations influenced by foreign desires bring great resources to the country. But these are not always the resources that the Palestinians need for long term success.

The reason for humanitarian organizations’ reluctance to address underlying issues of humanitarian struggles is that it puts them in conflict with the very state structures under whose auspices they are supposed to be working. Where human rights activists are comfortable pushing states to respect the rule of international law, humanitarian organizations are afraid that doing so will jeopardize their ability to help at all.

If we give the international community the benefit of the doubt and assume that non-state education aid is what the Palestinian state needs, even then we run into the issue of what educational philosophy ought to be implemented. The way education is approached by big donors, like the World Bank or the OECD, is driven by a particular western, economic view of the world.\footnote{Brock, Education Around the World. p.47.} The role of the state in the education realm is understood by international agencies using “neo-liberal assumptions about the economy.”\footnote{Ibid.} Those values are then transferred to states receiving aid.\footnote{Ibid.} This discourse encourages states to reduce their own roles in the education field and allow new public and private actors into the field. The hope is that the new actors will bring accountability and innovation to education.\footnote{Ibid. p.48.}

The global education discourse is not limited to Palestine. There is talk of “African education in crisis” as well, with international agencies offering the same remedies no matter the

\begin{footnotes}
\item[\footnotemark] Ibid. p.64.
\item[\footnotemark] Brock, Education Around the World. p.47.
\item[\footnotemark] Ibid.
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\item[\footnotemark] Ibid. p.48.
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context or continent.\textsuperscript{130} The traveling wisdom international organizations typically prescribe are the following therapies: a reduction of the involvement of central governments in education provision, the expansion of non-state schooling, decentralization, and in-service over pre-service teacher education.\textsuperscript{131} The issue with touting western ideals as global truths is that the education systems they create are not necessarily reflective of the local people’s education traditions. It can also become a patronizing exercise. For example, in a UNESCO report about Palestinian education that I quoted earlier in the paper, the author says that many teacher programs in Palestine are unsuccessful at training recruits because Palestinian schools are still characterized by “teacher-centered approaches, …lecturing, dictation, note-taking, rote memorization and exam-based assessment.”\textsuperscript{132} All of those teaching methods the author describes are not inherently bad practices. However they are labeled as inferior because current western pedagogical literature has moved away from those modes of instruction.

So does humanitarian aid have a place in the world of long term education development at the state level? While the advantages listed in the The Advantages of Non-State Actors in Education of this paper still stand, one last advantage not restricted to the education sector is worth mentioning. The directors of Médecines Sans Frontiéres (MSF) put it clearly when discussing the role of MSF during the second intifada. They said that the Palestinian health system had adequate health infrastructure to address the effects of the intifada on the psychosocial health of the public.\textsuperscript{133} So the question arose: why was MSF there? Their response: “This is field testimony, factual, fed by daily contact between doctors, psychologists and

\textsuperscript{130} Ibid. p.49.
\textsuperscript{131} Ibid. p.107.
families… Our task is simply to recount what we witness in the Palestinian territories.”\textsuperscript{134} To bear witness to the suffering of the Palestinians, to intervene as a way to recognize that something inhumane is occurring in the OPT, that is the advantage of the international agency. The UNRWA and neutral NGOs can separate themselves from the state and use their very existence to remind the international community that Palestine still suffers. So while the humanitarian ethos undergoes a barrage of criticism for its western bent, it still has the potential to be advantageous to the Palestinian state and other states developing through conflict.

VI. Conclusion

“Education has become a vital element of our resistance. It offers us pride and self-confidence in the face of oppression and continuous harassment; it helps us to continuously develop our identity, struggle and vision for a free Palestine.”

– Preface to \textit{Education Under Occupation}, written by Mohammad Othman, Youth Coordinator of Palestinian Grassroots Anti-Apartheid Wall Campaign.\textsuperscript{135}

When the Ministry of Education was created in the early 1990s, it inherited a patchwork education system. Run by the UN, local NGOs, and the Israeli Civil Administration, the education system pre-MOE was underwhelming. Overtime, the MOE has learned to coexist with its non-state counterparts. The West Bank as a whole benefits from the financial and political neutrality that the non-state organizations bring to the education field. The teachers in the system also benefit from the increased influx of foreign expertise and array of teacher training programs. However, the benefits have not come without a price. Palestinian education is closely tied to resistance, so non-national education providers have been at a distinct disadvantage due to their perceived neutrality. Additionally, non-state actors may be jeopardizing state development unintentionally by siphoning aid from limited international funding. The relationship between INGOs, NGOs, and the state they are trying to help succeed is thus problematic.

\textsuperscript{134} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{135} Stop the Wall, “Education Under Occupation,” p.4.
The case of a divided education system is not relegated to Palestine. International education interventions in other developing regions, from South East Asia to central Africa, are characteristic of modern humanitarian action. However, non-state organizations with foreign support raise issues of neo-colonialism, paternalism, and the role of the state in a globalized world. Palestine is at the crossroads of these challenges—a state filled with humanitarian actors that have stayed in the territory much longer than initially anticipated. Yet, to completely disregard humanitarian agents like the UNRWA or like Palestinian grassroots NGOs is to deny that they have been helpful. The reality is that in Palestine and other places where the conditions are marked by political and financial volatility, non-state organizations provide a modicum of stability. The long-run paints a more difficult picture as to the role that non-state entities should play in Palestine. However in the short-run, the MOE and the Palestinian people have benefitted from the existence of the UNRWA and NGOs in the West Bank education sector.
VII. Appendix

Map 1: Areas A, B, C and the Wall

Figure 1: Israeli Civil Administration Construction Decisions, Permits, and Demolitions in Area C


Table 1: Education Coping Strategies

This particular outlier may be attributed to the earlier note about how UNRWA teachers are generally drawn from the same population as the students they teach, leading to a greater degree of familiarity and thus a lower degree of authoritative respect.

Table 2: Satisfaction with Aspects of Teaching


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>West Bank Palestinian satisfaction with aspects of teaching</th>
<th>Governing Authority of the School</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Government</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teacher Competency</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>69.0%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teaching methods &amp; curriculum</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>54.8%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Students respect for teachers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>76.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 2: U.S. Funding to the UNRWA and the MOE


![US Funding for the UNRWA and the MOE 2007-2014](https://fas.org/sgp/crs/mideast/RS22967.pdf)
Figure 3: International Budget Support for the Palestinian Authority, 2007-2014


Figure 4: Qualified Teachers by Governing Authority

Figure 5: Students per School (by Governing Authority)

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