

**Refugees as Planners:
Palestinian Refugees in Jordan and UNRWA, 1950-1957**

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SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF URBAN STUDIES AND PLANNING IN
PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE

MASTER IN CITY PLANNING

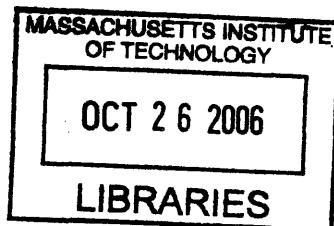
AT THE MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY
JUNE 2006

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By

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Submitted to the Department of Urban Studies and Planning
In May 2006 in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master in City
Planning

ABSTRACT

This research is an institutional ethnography that documents a case for planning from the middle and planning from below. It looks at the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) in Jordan between 1950 and 1957. UNRWA started its operations in 1950 with plans for economic development. By 1957 there had been a clear shift in the agency's mandate to human development. There are many possible reasons for this shift, one of which is the refugees' involvement in the planning process, which was carried out by thousands of refugees working with the agency and performing simultaneously the role of the planner and that of the beneficiary. Refugee staff members included top administration staff as well as street-level bureaucrats. Other refugees participated also in the planning process through spontaneous uprisings, forming local action groups, networking, and building alliances.

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BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Hania Maraqa is an architect and urban planner. She holds a bachelor's degree in architecture from the University of Jordan in Amman (2000), a master's degree in architecture from the University of Arizona in Tucson (2004), and a master's degree in city planning from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in Cambridge, with focus on international development and regional planning (2006). Hania has been researching the lives of Palestinian refugees in Jordan since 2003. Her previous work experiences include an internship with Jamaica Plain Neighborhood Development Corporation (Boston), a position as a research and coordination officer at the Center for the Study of the Built Environment (Amman), a position as a junior architect at S. M. Dudin Architects and Engineers (Amman), and an internship with Ziad Akel and Partners (Beirut).

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This work could not have been possible without the guidance and support from many members in the Department of Urban Studies and Planning community. I thank my professors: Balakrishnan Rajagopal, Diane Davis, Alice Amsden, and Bish Sanyal, and my friends: Kim Alleyne, Nancy Odeh, Ayman Ismail, Amy Deora, and May Tsubouchi. I thank them all for making my residency at MIT a rewarding one.

I also thank the interviewees of Palestinian refugees in Jordan. They took time to meet, talk, and reflect with me about a bitter history that is over 50 years old.

I owe gratitude to the MIT initiatives that supported me financially: The Carroll Wilson Award, The Mellon MIT-Inter University Program on Non-governmental Organizations and Forced Migration, and the Lloyd and Nadine Rodwin Fellowship Fund.

I dedicate this work to my parents. My mother nurtured admiration for knowledge in me, while my father taught me my responsibility towards the less privileged. I owe everything I am to them. I also dedicate this work to Khaldoun, Sawsan, and Aya who are always there in times of crisis and happiness.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABBREVIATIONS	6
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION	7
<i>Organization of the Study</i>	9
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW	11
CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY	16
<i>Research Questions</i>	16
<i>Hypothesis</i>	17
<i>Research Methodology</i>	18
CHAPTER FOUR: HISTORICAL BACKGROUND	21
<i>The United Nations and the Creation of the Palestinian Refugee Problem</i>	21
<i>The EMS Report and the Developmental Discourse</i>	27
CHAPTER FIVE: UNRWA (1950-1957)	36
<i>UNRWA's Constitutional Origins</i>	36
<i>UNRWA's Reintegration Projects</i>	38
<i>UNRWA's Education Program</i>	45
CHAPTER SIX: WHO WERE THE PLANNERS IN UNRWA?	52
a) <i>International Staff Members</i>	52
b) <i>Refugee Planners</i>	55
<i>Possible Prerequisites for Creating Refugee Planners</i>	56
<i>Planning with UNRWA</i>	61
a) Local Staff Members of Refugees	64
b) Community Planners	75
<i>Illustrative Case Study: Resistance to rectification process</i>	82
CHAPTER SEVEN: CONCLUSION	91
APPENDICES	98
a) <i>UNRWA organization: 1950 (Source: Schiff 1995)</i>	98
b) <i>Growth in education: teachers and training places in the four host countries (1950-1960)</i>	99
c) <i>Major contributors to UNRWA: 1950-1969</i>	99
BIBLIOGRAPHY	100

ABBREVIATIONS

AFSC	American Friends Service Committee
ESM	Economic Survey Mission
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
TVA	Tennessee Valley Authority
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNRPR	United Nations Relief for Palestine Refugees
UNRWA	United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Despite the darkness of the Palestinian refugee problem during the 58 years of its existence, this story is a positive and an optimistic one. Not only is it an optimistic narrative for the millions of Palestinian refugees, but also for those who are believed to have limited access to power and limited resources to help them shape their own destiny.

In 1948, an estimated 750,000 Palestinians fled to Gaza, the West Bank, Lebanon, Jordan, and Syria. Upon their arrival to the host countries, refugees were supported by humanitarian organizations. In December, 1949, the United Nations General Assembly created the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). The goal of creating UNRWA was to provide immediate and diminishing relief services that would transform gradually into diminishing development projects. It assumed that the need for the latter would shrink as the refugees were absorbed by the economies of the host governments.

According to the agency, "Palestine refugees are persons whose normal place of residence was Palestine between June, 1946 and May, 1948, who lost both their homes and means of livelihood as a result of the 1948 Arab-Israeli conflict." In 1950, the number of Palestinian refugees was recorded as 0.9 million and, in 2004, it was recorded as 4.2 million. Today, there are 59 Palestinian refugee camps recognized by UNRWA in the Middle East. In Jordan, the country of analysis, there are ten camps that accommodate approximately 280,000 refugees.

As the Palestinian refugees are the largest and longest-suffering group of refugees in the world, they should be looked upon as stakeholders in any Israeli-Palestinian final settlement. Even in Jordan where most Palestinian refugees have been awarded Jordanian

citizenship, a Palestinian identity is still alive and active. In addition, Palestinian refugees belong to a wider international phenomenon of “refugeeness” that is growing at an alarming level. At the start of 2005, the number of people registered with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees increased by 13% to 19.2 million from 17 million the previous year. Of these, 9.2 million are registered as refugees. These are all reasons why the Palestinian refugee issue is significant for negotiators, decision-makers, planners, and researchers.

UNRWA is a unique case study for examination for the sheer scope and scale of its operations. First, UNRWA is a quasi-governmental agency that has been performing daily executive operations of social, educational, and health services for more than five decades. These operations are usually rendered by a nation-state to its citizens. UNRWA is the largest transnational employer in the Middle East with total staff posts that exceed 26,000, almost all of whom are refugees. Second, UNRWA was created to carry out temporary operations and was transformed during its 57 years into a large bureaucracy. Yet it has been able to survive financially and administratively as an autonomous organization from the UN.

This study could not be timelier given the major role that UNRWA might be playing in Gaza after the Israeli withdrawal and in the light of the economic boycott imposed on the Palestinian Authority by the United States and the European Union. Plans for an extension of the UNRWA’s mandate to help a possible Palestinian state had been envisaged since the Oslo Peace Process (al-Husseini, 2000). An understanding of possible scenarios for the role that UNRWA may undertake will fall short of comprehending the reality unless a comprehensible historical perspective on the agency

and the refugees is gained. As important, an understanding of democracy in Palestine requires appreciation for the ways through which Palestinian refugees have tried non-violent ways to determine their own destiny.

Organization of the Study

In the first three chapters I offer a literature review, frame the research question and hypothesis, and discuss the research methodology. I review literature that relates to the Palestinian refugee as well as UNRWA and highlight the gaps in both fields of inquiry. I then pose the research questions: why did the shift in UNRWA's mandate take place between 1950 and 1957, and I offer a hypothesis that highlights the role of the refugees in achieving such a change. My research methodology depends on oral history and textual resources from United Nations documents and the Jordanian press.

In the fourth chapter I provide historical background about the Palestinian refugee problem. I trace the historical involvement of the United Nations in the conflict in Palestine and the transformation of the UN role from that of legislator to mediator during the years 1947-1950. I also analyze the role undertaken by the Economic Survey Mission, the image it created for UNRWA as an apolitical development agency, and the image that it created for its target population.

In the fifth chapter I analyze UNRWA's constitutional origins and mandate. I then survey chronologically the transformation in the mandate from reintegration projects to education between 1950 and 1957.

The sixth chapter is an ethnographic narrative challenging the mythical construct of UNRWA as an insulated, top-down planning agency that acts upon the its passive

subjects. I suggest that the barriers between UNRWA as a planning agency and the refugees, as planned for, were weakened. By this, I propose that the refugees were planners themselves by working inside the agency and by organizing themselves to take certain actions towards the agency. I examine the circumstances for creating refugees as planners and the strategies they adopted in the planning process.

I conclude by reiterating the findings of this positive story: the refugees had a vital role in proposing and implementing the shift in UNRWA's institutional mandate. Many of them were able to do so by performing the dual roles of the developer and the beneficiary. This case should broaden our understanding of how institutional change and development processes should or could be pursued. This is especially true when it comes to multinational institutions hiring local staff members without necessarily appreciating their unique and indirect input in the planning process, which is a two-way street.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

In this chapter I discuss the trends in researching the Palestinian refugees and the UNRWA. I also highlight gaps in researching these two areas of study, many of which I hope to bridge in this research.

Literature on Palestinian Refugees:

There is a huge body of literature on Palestinian refugees. For very legitimate reasons, most of these studies have focused on the refugees' legal and political status and their Right of Return (Aruri 1972, Abu Sitta 2001, Takkenberg 1998). Rarely have studies touched upon the socio-cultural or anthropological aspects of the refugees' life with a few exceptions (Sayigh 1979, Peteet 1996, Farah 2000, Jaber 1998). Many studies relied on narrow quantitative methodologies such as close-ended questionnaires and surveys (FAFO 2002). On the other hand, we find that the lack of studies on the socio-cultural aspects of the refugees reflects a lack of understanding of the refugees as a social force that has an impact on political, legal, and economic definitions and processes, and consequently on the decision-making process.

As argued by researchers from Centre d'Etudes et de Recherches sur le Moyen-Orient Contemporain (CERMOC), there is a general tendency among researchers, aid agencies, and development institutions to marginalize refugees as passive objects of history rather than as actors in their own destiny despite the political and economic hardships imposed on them (CERMOC 2000). Lack of understanding of history and forces that have shaped it tends to keep it solely in the hands of those who are able to write it, and not necessarily those who have participated in shaping it (Khalidi 1997).

In the mid-1960s, the Palestine Research Center and Institute for Palestine Studies were founded in Beirut. Both had a role in bridging the gap in archiving the Palestinian history until the Israeli invasion of Beirut in 1982. Khalidi argues that there has been “a dearth of sound historical scholarship by Palestinians.” Many non-Palestinians have contributed to this scholarship, but most of them lacked the “intimate familiarity with the indigenous sources, the individuals concerned, and the social and cultural context of Palestinian politics” (Khalidi 1997).

There is also a chronological gap. A few studies look in detail into the refugees’ situation in 1950s (Plascov 1981, Schiff 1995, Buehrig 1971). On the other hand, most studies on Palestinian refugees focus on pre-1948 or post-1967, with much emphasis given to the refugees’ conditions during the Oslo Peace Process in the early 1990s (Farah 2000). The emphasis on refugee issues during these times reflects a tendency towards viewing history as a product of political elites and nation-states. The time frame of this study (1950-1957) is rich despite the absence of formal Palestinian political parties at this time. An historical perspective allows for a deeper interpretation of the present and wiser planning for the future.

This study also fills a gap regarding Palestinian refugees in Jordan. A few studies have been done about refugees in Jordan (Farah 2004). Most refugee studies have focused on refugees in the Occupied Territories (Farah 2000) and Lebanon (Sayigh 1979, Peteet 2006). Two major factors have limited research on refugees in Jordan, both quantitatively and qualitatively. Refugees in Jordan were awarded Jordanian passports. As a consequence, their living conditions compare favorably with the extremely poor living conditions of refugees in other countries where refugees were not awarded

citizenship: Lebanon and Syria. In addition, there are many limitations imposed on researching refugee issues in Jordan due to bureaucratic traditions and political concerns.

Equally important, most studies about Palestinian refugees have been conducted by international research institutions, such as CERMOC and FAFO¹, rather than by independent researchers. Having a group of researchers from one institution conduct various studies about the refugees creates a niche and a comparative advantage for the institutions. However, it may also raise questions about the agenda of those conducting the research. Researchers should be given credit for their ability to create a discourse. However, the question poses itself: Whose discourse are they creating and whom are they representing?

Literature on UNRWA

There is a relatively huge body of literature on UNRWA. Most studies about UNRWA have focused on the agency's work in Gaza and the West Bank (Schiff 2000). Much emphasis has been given to the agency's work during the Oslo Peace Process and the second *intifada*. Most studies on UNRWA were conducted within a framework of political theory (Schiff 1995, Buehrig 1971). Few studies have looked at the organizational structure of UNRWA (El-Farhan 1979). Many studies on UNRWA take as a point of departure criticism of UNRWA for its present status as "pro-Palestinian," an "imperialist instrument," or as "an arm of the West." Many parties also accuse UNRWA of creating a dependency syndrome among the refugees through its Relief and Social Services programs (Marx 2004, Machmias 2004, Perlmutter 1971). Many studies touch

¹ An independent Norwegian research foundation.

upon viewing UNRWA as an arm of the West and an organ of the UN, which was involved in the creation of the Palestinian refugee problem (Schiff 1995, Farah 2000). UNRWA also receives the largest percentage of its budget from the United States, the major supporter of Israel through its foreign policy and aid. In many studies, the image of UNRWA has been simplified to an abstract agency without significant history to learn from. These studies fail to contextualize UNRWA and to undertake a more rigorous examination of its dynamics with different stakeholders and the challenges it has experienced.

Focusing on both UNRWA and the Palestinian refugees, I place this research in the stream of studies rethinking the development approach (Ferguson 1994, Rajagopal 2003, Escobar 1995, Apffel Marglin 1990). I analyze development as a discursive discourse. I suggest that despite all the expertise devoted to UNRWA as a development project, the developers might have marginalized the political and social realities on the ground. This case is not unique for UNRWA. Frédérique Apffel-Marglin and Stephen A. Marglin argue that in the development discourse, cultural practices and beliefs have not been recognized in the modernization process as a legitimate asset, despite their efficiency (Apffel-Marglin and Marglin 1996).

Focusing on the role of the clients in an institution, I borrow from works in institutional ethnography and public participation. I borrow from Lipsky who highlights the imperative role of street-level bureaucrats in achieving an incremental change in their institution (Lipsky 1980). In the planning literature, I borrow from John Friedmann in his acknowledgement of social mobilization as a legitimate and credible form of planning (Friedmann 1987).

However, I distinguish this study from others conducted about the bottom-up planning process. I reiterate that this study is not about planning from below as much as planning from the middle. This is a major difference that distinguishes this study from other planning studies that usually give credit to the top-down approach, and occasionally to the bottom-up approach, but rarely to planning from the middle.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

Taking in consideration the gaps that I found in literature about refugees and UNRWA, I choose to study the interaction between the Palestinian refugees and UNRWA in Jordan (1950-1957). I question the mainstream historiography that frequently gives credit for an institutional mandate to the political elites and top administration, especially when researching an international institution (Rajagopal 2003). This research explores the role of the refugees in the planning process, with a special focus on UNRWA's staff member refugees themselves, who were the mediators between the agency and the beneficiaries.

Research Questions

The General Assembly through Resolution 302 (IV) created UNRWA in December, 1949. The goal of establishing UNRWA was as follows:

- (a) To carry out in collaboration with local governments the direct relief and works programmes as recommended by the Economic Survey Mission;*
- (b) To consult with the interested Near Eastern Governments concerning measures to be taken by them preparatory to the time when international assistance for relief and works projects is no longer available.*

However, UNRWA's mandate has not followed the originally envisioned one of temporary, large-scale economic development, but has undergone continuous transformations. Fifty-six years after its creation, UNRWA is a major player in the Middle East. It renders quasi-governmental daily services to 4.2 million Palestinian refugees and is identified as the largest UN agency and the largest transnational employer in the region. Of special importance for this study is the transformation from large economic development projects in 1950 to human development by 1957. What caused

the transformation in UNRWA's mandate between 1950 and 1957? What was the role of the refugees, and especially refugees working with the agency, in this transformation?
And what allowed them to undertake such a role?

Hypothesis

UNRWA stands out as a bold example to deepen our understanding for ways in which people can actively and substantially participate in development projects and institutional mandates that directly affect their lives. The study suggests that UNRWA's mandate was not exclusively shaped by its top administration or political elites, but also by refugees themselves. The study suggests three groups of refugee planners: top-administrative staff members in UNRWA, street level-bureaucrats in UNRWA, and community planners. The dual roles that UNRWA staff members who were refugees played as developers and as beneficiaries is of paramount importance in this case study. The hypothesis suggests broadening the definition of development to accommodate the important role of local staff members as well as the beneficiaries and to allow for synergy between them and the formal institutions. This synergy is usually not acknowledged in the mainstream discourse.

By looking at circumstances under which UNRWA was created and operated in Jordan between 1950 and 1957, the research examines the diversity within the body of the Palestinian refugees and challenges the mythical construct of *Palestinian refugees* as a homogenous body of passive clients.

Research Methodology

I take an institutional ethnographic point of departure by relying on oral history and textual resources.

First, I rely on oral history documented through semi-structured, open-ended interviews conducted in Amman during the summer of 2005 with 35 former UNRWA local staff members and refugee notables who witnessed the formation and transformation of UNRWA between 1950 and 1957². Former UNRWA local staff members among the interviewees included senior administrative staff members as well as street-level bureaucrats. They are in their late 70s or early 80s and retired in the late 1980s or early 1990s. All of these interviewees were identified as Palestinian refugees, according to UNRWA's definition and received UNRWA rations. Eighty percent of the interviewees came from rural areas, and thirty percent were senior staff members in social services or education. The sample is a snowball one and refugees were identified one at a time mainly by other interviewees, by social networks, site visits to the camps, or press releases and literature. The phone book was the tool used to get their contact information. Interviews were conducted at their houses and were open-ended questionnaires depending on the interviewee and his attitude. To obtain honest responses from individuals, I have protected the anonymity of all interviewees.

The sample selection process was a result of many circumstances. First, UNRWA's archives were not accessible to grant me a list of the former staff members and their contact information, while other refugee notables do not have institutional affiliation to

² Names of interviewees have been kept anonymous.

help me identify them. Second, the social landscape has changed. Many UNRWA staff members have passed away or no longer live in Jordan. Third, international staff members could not be located. They were already older at the time of their service and those who have been identified have passed away. Fourth, the sample represents a gender bias, as only one woman was interviewed. However, the sample reflects the limited role that women officially played at UNRWA at the time. Press releases do not mention names for women working on administrative jobs, but only those of nurses and teachers. This does not mean that women were not active, but it means that their role might have been indirect or unrecognized. Many interviewees had their wives sitting in on the interviews, and those wives would usually intervene to remind their husbands of certain events, to add some comments, or to disagree with them.

I interviewed many refugee notables of the time. These refugees were camp dwellers and received rations for a long period of time before becoming self-sufficient. Interviewing these refugees was a hard task due to the bitterness they have about the period of study and the humiliation of which it reminded them. Many refugees refused to talk due to political concerns and did not trust my research or my affiliation.

Second, I analyze the UN documents that relate to the UN involvement in the Palestine problem with a special focus on the Final Report of the United Nations Economic Survey Mission for the Middle East (1949) and on UNRWA's annual reports to the General Assembly between 1950 and 1957.

Third, I rely on the "popular history" gained from the Jordanian daily newspapers *Filastin* and *Al-Difa'* during the period of study. Despite being controlled by the Jordanian government, the press has been of great help in shedding light on the major

issues relating to UNRWA and the way it was portrayed in the public media at the time. The news items also served as a base on which I relied when starting my interviews.

I should admit that due to the uniqueness of both the Palestinian refugees and UNRWA as discussed above, the implications of this study should only be carefully generalized to other cases. The complexity of all the factors playing a role in this case should not be simplified to create recommendations for any development or humanitarian aid agencies. As discussed above, both Palestinian refugees and UNRWA represent a unique case study, and they differ from other refugee groups or development agencies. In addition, and even though I show clear evidence that exhibits the refugees' activism in the development process, I make no claim that this is the only driving factor behind the shift in UNRWA's mandate. Many other factors could be taken into consideration, including the expansion of the educational system in Jordan in 1950s and 1960s and the financial challenges or technical difficulties that UNRWA faced.

Having said that, this study should encourage other international development agencies to take into consideration the important role that their local staff members can play on many levels. This role goes beyond providing local knowledge to bridging a gap with the local community and advocating for interests that may not necessarily seen or appreciated by the international staff members.

CHAPTER FOUR: HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East was established by United Nations General Assembly in 1949. The creation of UNRWA came as a subsequent involvement of the United Nations in the Palestinian question and the consequent refugee problem. The following chapter is divided into two parts. The first part traces the historical involvement of the United Nations in the conflict in Palestine. It exhibits the transformation of the UN role from a legislator to a mediator during the years 1947-1950. The second part analyzes the role undertaken by the Economic Survey Mission, a subsidiary committee that was created by the General Assembly to deal with the refugee problem. It examines the image that the Economic Survey Mission created for UNRWA as an apolitical and development agency, as well as the image that it created for the target population as a collective, imaginary body of refugees in need of development.

The United Nations and the Creation of the Palestinian Refugee Problem

During the early years of the Palestinian refugee problem, the UN had played different roles with different stakeholders. The UN started as a legislature in 1947, when it created the Partition Plan in the hope that Jewish and Arab political parties would adopt it. In the aftermath of the war of 1947, the UN turned into a mediator between nation-states competing over space. Failing in its role, and hoping that an apolitical process of power transfer could solve a complex political problem, the UN turned itself into a stakeholder. It adopted a role towards the refugees similar to the role that a nation-state

would adopt towards its citizens (Buehrig 1971). This section traces this change in the UN mandate between 1947 and 1950.

In 1947, Great Britain announced the end of its mandate in Palestine. It did so after 26 years of committing itself to the Balfour Declaration, in which it had promised to help establish a “National Home for the Jewish People in Palestine” while also secretly promising Palestinian political leaders their own independent statehood. Conflict over the land erupted between Palestinians, who comprised 67% of the population, and Jews, who comprised 33% of the population. The General Assembly tried to contain the conflict. It voted for the partition of Palestine between an Arab state and a Jewish one, while leaving Jerusalem under the sovereignty of a special international regime. The Arab state was envisaged to consist of 725,000 Arabs and 10,000 Jews, while the Jewish state was envisaged to consist of 497,000 Arabs and 498,000 Jews. Jerusalem was put under an international sovereignty with 100,000 Jews and 105,000 Arabs (Buehrig 1971).

The partition did not work as planned, however. The Jewish Agency accepted the proposal. The Arabs rejected the plan, believing that it was unfair in the quality and quantity of land given to them. The UN offered the Jews 55% of a land of which they owned only 6.5%.

Fighting between the Arabs and Jews escalated as soon as the Partition Plan was approved. Britain planned to complete its withdrawal from Palestine on May 15, 1948. Jewish groups organized themselves and announced their statehood one day before the completion of the British withdrawal. The hostilities between Arab and Jewish forces were escalating. The land of historic Palestine was divided into three parts: the new Jewish state, occupying 77% of the land of historical Palestine; the West Bank, annexed

by Jordan; and Gaza, controlled by Egypt (Hajjar and Bein 1988). The promised Palestinian state never materialized as its indigenous Arab population, led by fear of massacres and chaos, fled to the surrounding countries, Gaza, and the West Bank.

Different groups of Palestinians had different escape routes depending on their geographic location within Palestine. Palestinians from the north fled to south Lebanon and Syria, while those from south fled to Gaza, and those from the central Palestine fled to the West Bank and Jordan. Palestinian refugees took their keys and important documents without any other belongings and fled to the closest safe refuge. They were sure that they would return soon (Schiff 1995).

However, a quick return became impossible. Refugees were admitted by the surrounding countries and gathered into large groups depending on the village or town from which they came. The difficulty of the situation became clear. Israel would not allow the refugees back in the near future, while the host governments, poor and newly recognized as independent, lacked the infrastructure to accommodate a huge number of refugees³. The situation was turning into a human disaster and the international community decided to intervene.

³ In 1948, Jordan had a population of 440,000, as did the West Bank. In 1948, 70,000 Palestinians fled to Jordan and 280,000 fled to the West Bank.

Faced with thousands of refugees, the newly independent state faced a challenge in meeting the increasing demands of the refugees. Not only did the refugees demand infrastructure, aid, shelter, schools, and job opportunities, they also demanded political participation and activism that they enjoyed in Palestine for many decades.

The Jordanian government took many measures to accommodate the refugees while preserving their temporary status in front of the Palestinians and the international community. First, the government established the Ministry of Refugee Affairs, which was soon replaced by the Ministry of Development and Reconstruction. The government made clear and precise its duties toward the refugees: aiding in relief work and census operations, transferring refugees, choosing and renting the sites for the camps, providing basic infrastructure for the camp, and covering some medical treatment and expenses (Plascov 1981). Second, the government annexed the West Bank in April, 1950 after the Jericho Conference, in which Palestinian political leaders who opposed the Government of All Palestine showed support to the King of Jordan (Brand, 1995). The annexation allowed refugees in Jordan to enjoy the Jordanian citizenship with all

Private international voluntary organizations stepped in to provide humanitarian services to the refugees. The American Friends Service Committee (AFSC), International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the League of Red Cross Societies (LRCS), and the Pontifical Mission in Palestine provided immediate assistance by supplying food, tents, sanitation, and basic health services. However, the organizations were incapable of handling the problem on such a large scale over a long period of time. Stronger intervention became necessary.

In July, 1948, the League of Arab States appealed to the UN for help with the refugee problem. The UN channeled the issue to the International Refugee Organization (IRO) in Geneva. But the IRO, established as a temporary organization to deal with the WWII refugees, declined to help.

At this point, the UN shifted from being a distant legislator to a close mediator. It appointed Count Folke Bernadotte as mediator in 1948. A committee of the General Assembly composed of representatives of China, France, the USSR, the UK, and the US assigned him three main duties: maintaining the common services necessary to the safety of the community, protecting the holy places, and promoting a peaceful solution.

However, Bernadotte pushed for a more active role of the UN as a stakeholder. He created a 60-day United Nations Disaster Relief Project (UNDRP) to coordinate aid to the refugees through the local governments and nongovernmental organizations. Before

rights and obligations. However, it paralyzed the Palestinians' attempts to create an independent political entity. Palestinian political leaders at the time proved to be fragmented in their visions and strategies. Generally speaking, the government was very careful to show support to and solidarity with the refugees. It feared their anger that might transform into violence in the camps. At the same time, the government did not have a say in meeting their goal in returning to their homes. On more practical and daily issues, the government had more leverage to exert pressure over UNRWA to meet the refugees' demands. "Name and shame" was the strategy that the refugees used to pressure the Jordanian government to exert its pressure on UNRWA.

his assassination in September 1948, Bernadotte recommended the creation of a conciliation commission to the General Assembly to settle the pending issues between Israel and the Arab states, including the refugee problem. He was clear that the UN had a responsibility towards the refugees:

The international community must accept its share of responsibility until a final settlement is achieved.....[T]he choice is between saving the lives of many thousands of people now or permitting them to die....[I]t would be an offense against the principles of elemental justice if these innocent victims of the conflict were denied the right to return to their homes while Jewish immigrants flow into Palestine, and indeed, at least offer the threat of permanent replacement of the Arab refugees who have been rooted in the land for centuries (Progress Report of the UN Mediator to Palestine 1948, VI).

Bernadotte was the first UN official to take steps to get the UN involved as a stakeholder in the refugee problem. He did so through three consequential steps. First, he appealed to UNICEF and states that had important trade relations with Palestine for relief. Second, he institutionalized the refugee problem through the establishment of a headquarters in Beirut, hiring 16 officers from the UN and other agencies, and partnering with institutions including the FAO, WHO, UNESCO, and IRO for technical and financial assistance. Third, he sought to end his temporary role by channeling the responsibility through the General Assembly to another possible organization (Buehrig 1971).

In November, 1948, the General Assembly passed resolution 212, which created the United Nations Relief for Palestine Refugees (UNRPR). The temporary agency was created to operate from December, 1948 until August, 1949 with a budget of \$32 million (Schiff 1995). It had an administrative role of subcontracting relief work to the voluntary organizations including the ICRC in Israel and the West Bank, the AFSC in Gaza and

part of Israel, and the Lebanese Red Cross Society (LRCS) in Lebanon, Syria, and Jordan. The Secretary-General appointed Stanton Griffis, the American ambassador to Egypt, as a director. UNRPR grew to have 50 staff posts and two headquarters, an administrative one in Geneva and an operational one in Beirut.

In December, 1948, the General Assembly passed resolution 194 (III), which emphasized the refugees' right to return or compensation:

Resolves that the refugees wishing to return to their homes and live at peace with their neighbors should be permitted to do so at the earliest practicable date, and that compensation should be paid for the property of those choosing not to return and for loss of or damage to property which, under principles of international law or in equity, should be made good by the Governments or authorities responsible (GA Resolution 194 (III) 1948, para 11).

Under the same resolution, the General Assembly created the Palestine Conciliation Commission (PCC) to reach a settlement between Israel and the Arab states. The committee was formed of representatives from France, Turkey, and the United States. The creation of the commission reflected the fading hopes of return and indicated implicitly the viability of resettlement. It became clear that Israel would not allow the Palestinian refugees back to their properties, especially with the rapid Jewish immigration to Israel that was estimated as 15,000 per month (Schiff 1995). Resolution 194 (III) instructed:

[T]he Conciliation Commission to facilitate the repatriation, resettlement and economic and social rehabilitation of the refugees and the payment of compensation, and to maintain close relations with the Director of the United Nations Relief for Palestine Refugees and, through him, with the appropriate organs and agencies of the United Nations.

The PCC, with guidance from the US Department of State, established the Economic Survey Mission (ESM) in August, 1949. The creation of the ESM was a milestone and an instrumental body that led to the creation of UNRWA.

The EMS Report and the Developmental Discourse

The following section traces the work of the Economic Survey Mission work. It examines the discourse the Mission had created about UNRWA and about the refugees. The analysis challenges the discourse by examining a few social, economic, and political realities on the ground. It also compares this discourse to an international one that was created after the World War II.

The Mission had a body of experts to recommend economic measures to facilitate repatriation or resettlement. Gordon Clapp, the Chairman of the Tennessee Valley Authority, led the commission with the help of American experts in three main technical disciplines that were regarded as keys to solving the refugee problem: agriculture, engineering, and economics.

The governments of the major players— the United States, the host countries, and Israel—supported the Mission. The United States was very keen to find a solution for the refugee problem in order to stabilize the contested Middle East. American officials' hopes were high that resettling the refugees in the host countries would be an opportunity to set up some development projects and revitalize the stagnating economies of the Middle East (Schiff 1995). Arab governments showed interest in cooperation, as they realized that the refugees would probably stay in their lands. These countries, newly declared independent, wanted financial and technical assistance from the West. Israel

also supported the Mission, as it saw a solution only through resettlement rather than repatriation. Allowing the indigenous Palestinians to return to their homes was not on the Israeli horizon, as they were seen as a threat to Israel's economic and political stability.

The Mission had an extremely difficult task. It had to solve a political problem through creating economic stability. The Mission made it clear that "economic development cannot itself make peace where the political will to peace is lacking" (Buehrig 1971). The Mission published its 120-page final report in December, 1949. However, the report did not touch upon the original problem of the displacement of the refugees or their right and desire to go back to their properties:

This final report..... does not deal directly with the problem of the refugees from Palestine. Yet, the obstacles in the way of economic development in the Middle East are much the same as those hampering the rehabilitation of the Arab refugees.

Instead, the report transformed the whole political problem into an economic one from which both the Palestinian refugees and the host countries were suffering. It was a problem of knowledge and capital that the less developed populations, including the Palestinian refugees, suffer from:

The solution of the problem of the poverty and unemployment of the refugees is, therefore, inseparable from a solution of the problem of poverty and hunger as that already affects a large section of the population of the Middle East.

Hunger is a basic disease in many parts of the world. The hand-to-mouth existence of millions is a challenge to the technical and scientific knowledge of, and to the wealth possessed by, those people whose standard of living is a measure of the goal to which the people of the under-developed areas may aspire...

...How simple, therefore, to suppose that could the poorer people and the poorer regions but acquire from those more blessed materially a pro rate share of the world's goods, poverty would be eradicated and a great cause of strife would disappear.....

Technical and scientific knowledge can contribute to increasing material standards of living in under-developed areas. The better use of water and land, the control and eradication of disease and pests, an increased manufacture and flow of goods and the spread of education, require the application of what man knows or can find out about the productive capacity of men and things.

The beginning of productive works recommended in the interim report is assumed as a prelude to the proposals made herein, which, in the opinion of the Mission, if translated into action, can lead the way to a fuller development of the resources of the countries of the Middle East. Such development is essential to stability...(ESM 1949, vii-viii)

A few points are of interest for us in the report.

First, the report looked at the problem as merely an economic one, failing to recognize the interdependence between the economic, social, cultural, and political factors. In his book *The Passing of Traditional Society*, Daniel Lerner argues that economic, political, social, and cultural factors are highly associated with each other (Lerner 1958). It is worth mentioning here that despite the fact that the report assumed no repatriation would take place, it was cautious not to use inflammatory words, such as resettlement, that would attach the refugees to a certain place. Instead, the report made sure to use more generic terms such as “rehabilitation” and “reintegration.”

Secondly, though the report touched upon the idea of who is a Palestinian refugee, it did not define this clearly. Rather than looking at the whole body of refugees as a point of departure, the report focused on the body of refugees in need of relief, not realizing that many of them were in need due to their forced exile and their inability to transfer their assets immediately to the host countries. The report estimated the number of refugees as 774,000 and the number of refugees in need for relief as 652,000.

Thirdly, the report relied on questionable sources of information. It relied on the statistics of the British government in Palestine, which collected data on the whole

mandated area of Palestine in 1922 and 1931. After 1931, British authorities had regular and quarter annual estimates of the population. These were not reliable since they did not capture the major changes that Palestine was going through. While it is beyond the capacity of this research to analyze these changes, it is worth highlighting a few of them. For example, the population increased significantly due to high birth rates and the migration of European Jews into Palestine. In 1946, population growth in Palestine was 75% more than it had been in 1931 (Hagopian and Zahlan 1974). The Palestinian economy also benefited during World War II because of British dependence on Palestine as a center for communications. Both of these factors reflected significantly on the demographics and economies of Palestine during the 17 years in which no census was taken.

Fourthly, by focusing on the illiterate and needy refugees and excluding the human or financial capital of refugees, the report made a broad generalization about the refugees. It portrayed refugees as a homogenous body of uneducated and poor peasants without capturing the cultural, economic, and professional disparities among them. It did not take into consideration the fact that 35% of Palestinians were town dwellers, including upper and middle bourgeois groups.

The report did not capture the economic disparities among the Palestinian society or acknowledge Palestinian economic success before exile. Palestinian refugees did not necessarily lack capital before their exile. They became poor afterward due to the political situation imposed on them. While it is true that Palestine suffered from a worldwide recession in the 1930s, Palestine was one of the most prosperous countries of the Middle East by the end of the World War II. In addition to being the center for the

British communications during the war, its economy benefited from transport, construction, oil refining, and agricultural exports. This prosperity paralleled new forms of entrepreneurial investment and trade that engaged Palestine in the world market. Palestinians invested in shared, government bonds, and commodity stocks. According to the British estimates, Palestinians had a capital ownership of 132.6 million pounds sterling in 1945. Out of this capital, 56% was in the form of rural landholdings that were confiscated by Israel and could not be transferred abroad upon exile.

Palestinians also had other forms of assets. They had foreign liquid assets of more than 39 million pounds sterling, bank deposits in Palestine of 7 million pounds sterling, and deposits in the Ottoman Bank and Barclays Bank of 3 million pounds sterling (of which 2.5 million pounds sterling were released by the end of 1955). Palestinian refugees in Jordan were expected to transfer 10 million pounds sterling to that country (Smith 1986). While statistics show that the average refugee's income was 8.9 pounds sterling in 1951, the average income in Palestine was 41 pounds sterling in 1941. All of these numbers negate the "poverty paradigm" that the report had constructed.

Palestinian bourgeois were not only wealthy, but had their tangible impact on the host countries. They were able to transfer part of their cash savings to the Arab countries. Even before 1948, some businessmen opened branches in Arab capitals like Amman and Beirut. They channeled more money to the Arab countries as the situation became more dangerous in Palestine. After relocating or opening branches in Arab capitals, Palestinians started expanding their businesses. For example, the Tuqan family from Nablus expanded its agricultural operations in Jordan and started new industries. The Shoman family from Jerusalem transferred the headquarters of the Arab Bank in

Jerusalem to Amman, where it became one of the largest banks in the world. It is this network of Palestinian entrepreneurs that controlled a network of corporations in the Middle East by the 1960s (Smith 1986).

Palestinians in the land of historical Palestine did more than farming. Daniel Lerner argues that possibly 50% of the Palestinians had some contact with non-farming occupations (Lerner 1958). Over 25,000 Arab industrial workers had been organized into more than 30 unions.

The report also failed to capture the diversity in educational attainment in Palestine. The educational system in Palestine was controlled by the British administration, which followed a very restrictive policy in school expansion and devoted only 2% of the country's budget for education. However, it went through some expansion after 1943 that made it favorably comparable with other surrounding countries, including Jordan. By the end of the British Mandate, there were 827 schools in Palestine, accommodating 30% of students aged between six 6 and 20 (Abu Lughod 1973). Students composed 11.7% of the total population of Palestine, the second highest percentage in the Arab world after Lebanon. In 1948, every major town had a complete public school preparing students for the general secondary examination. Other towns also had secondary classes, as did many private Muslim and Christian schools in towns and in villages. Palestine had three excellent secondary schools in Cairo, Beirut and London where most teachers got their educations. These were: the Arab College, al-Rashidiya, and Jerusalem Girls' College. In 1944, 78 students received the Arabic matriculation, 35 the English matriculation, 46 the Arab School Certificate, and 25 the English School Certificate. Many other well-educated students sat for the exam but did not receive it. The increase in education from 5.6% in

1931 to 8.7% in 1944, and to 11.7% in 1948, reflected a strong desire that drove the educational system in Palestine, a fact that the report did not capture (Hagopian and Zahlan 1974). It is interesting to remember for later discussion that many students in the classrooms were older than the average age, due to their desire to receive education despite their harsh conditions. This made the students politically aware of what was going on (Badran 1980).

As opposed to the paradigm of poverty and ignorance that the report constructed about the refugees, another paradigm of knowledge and capital was constructed about the developed countries of the West. The report failed to acknowledge the local knowledge and assumed a need for international intervention instead:

The highly developed nations of the world did not make their way by wishing. By work and risk they forced the earth, the soil, the forests and the rivers to yield them riches. They pooled their energy and resourced by taxation and mutual enterprise to discover new ways of doing things. They worked, they invented, they educated and trained their children, and they invested in their national and their private enterprises...

...There is no substitute for the application of work and local enterprise to each country's own resources. Help to those who have the will to help themselves should be the primary policy guiding and restraining the desire of the more developed areas of the world to help the less developed lands (EMS 1949, vii-viii).

The report rejected immediate large projects in Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria due to the lack of capital, skills, research, governmental organization, and administrative experience. However, it recommended another program:

Programme of public works to employ Palestine refugees, start them on the road to rehabilitation and bring an end to their enforced idleness and the demoralizing effect of the dole.....the purpose of the proposed programme of relief and public works is four-fold: it will halt the demoralizing process of pauperization, outcome of a dole, prolonged; the opportunity to work will increase the practical alternatives available to refugees, and thereby encourage a more realistic view of

the kind of future they want and the kind they can achieve; a works programme properly planned will add to the productive economy of the countries where the refugees are located; the chance to earn a living will reduce the need for relief and bring its cost within the ability of the Near Eastern countries to meet without United Nations Assistance (EMS 1949, 17).

For the short term, the report advised shifting the emphasis from relief to work in order to make the refugees self-sufficient. The goal was to launch projects of low cost and high labor, such as forestation and road building. The report hoped that the work program would run from April, 1950 to June, 1951 and would employ 100,000 refugees with 400,000 dependents, all of whom would eventually be removed from the relief rolls. The report predicted the program to cost \$53.7 M—\$19 M for relief and \$34.7 M for work. It recommended that the two elements should be administered by the same agency without help from voluntary organizations. The title the report gave to its program is also interesting: *Work Relief*, which would make it seem easier on the refugees than the word *work* by itself would. The report suggested that the new program would not supply rations to refugees after December, 1950 but would turn over the responsibility to the Arab governments. The report envisioned that “the programme of works relief must take the precedence over that for the direct relief, the latter decreasing as the former growing”:

The amount of relief and the amount of the employment in each family or village group should have a direct relationship. The formula is more work and less relief. Humanitarian considerations should temper administrative decisions, but the success of the works relief programme will inevitably be measured by the speed with which direct relief diminishes, as men and their families begin to earn a living (EMS 1949, 18).

Arturo Escobar argues that after World War II, the international institutional apparatus started inventing the development discourse:

What we now have is a vast landscape of identities, the “illiterate,” the “landless peasants,” women bypassed by development,” “the hungry and malnourished,”

those belonging to the informal sector”, “urban marginals” and so forth, all of them created by the development discourse and catalogues among many abnormalities that development would treat and reform through appropriate “intervention” (Escobar, 1995).

In the light of this, the report suggests two paradigms. First, there is a systematic production of knowledge about many aspects of the target population, including the economic, social, and political. Second, and just as important, is a creation for a large institutional network at all levels:

The depiction of the Third World as “underdeveloped” has been an essential and constitutive element of the globalization of capital in the post-World War II period; perhaps more importantly, a cultural discourse began that not only placed the Third World in a position of inferiority, but that, more clearly and efficiently than ever, subjected it to the “scientific,” normalizing action of Western, cultural-political technologies-in even more devastating ways than its colonial predecessor (Escobar 1995, 66).

In the light of this, the development process implied the destruction of traditional living conditions to normalize them with the western ones, which would cause restructuring of the society (Escobar 1995). The development process was seen as the remedy for a political problem in addition to a developmental one.

To conclude, this section challenges the report presented by the Economic Survey Mission by deconstructing the body of refugees and examining the economic and educational diversity among its members and the assets they could provide. This section compares this report to a larger developmental discourse that emerged after World War II.

CHAPTER FIVE: UNRWA (1950-1957)

The following section analyzes UNRWA's constitutional origins and mandate. It then surveys chronologically the transformation in the mandate from the reintegration projects to the education projects between 1950 and 1957. A full treatment of this aspect is not feasible, since documentation for these projects in the confidential files of UNRWA, the UN, and the Jordanian government is understandably not available. However, UNRWA's annual reports to the General Assembly contain enough on the subject to permit a general review of the projects. At this stage, I make almost no effort to analyze the success or the failure of these projects. Rather, I try to give an overview and lay the ground for the following chapter, which highlights possible un-narrated causes of success or failure for UNRWA's projects.

UNRWA's Constitutional Origins

As recommended by the Economic Survey Mission, the General Assembly without dissent passed Resolution 302, which established United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWAPRNE). The goal of establishing UNRWA was twofold:

- (a) To carry out in collaboration with local governments the direct relief and works programmes as recommended by the Economic Survey Mission;*
- (b) To consult with the interested Near Eastern Governments concerning measures to be taken by them preparatory to the time when international assistance for relief and works projects is no longer available (GA Resolution 302 1949, IV).*

The General Assembly created an Advisory Commission that consisted of representatives from France, the UK, US and Turkey, the latter as a representative for the Middle East. Each member of these countries was accredited with one of the host

countries, in the hope of facilitating negotiations between them and UNRWA. The Advisory Commission expanded to accommodate the governments of Syria and Jordan in 1952, and Egypt, Lebanon, and Belgium in 1953. By bringing these governments as stakeholders, UNRWA had acknowledged the importance of their role. The director acknowledged this in his annual report of 1953:

Another event of great importance, the effects of which have not yet been fully felt but which may be far-reaching, was the enlargement of the Advisory Commission by the inclusion of representatives of three of the four host countries--Syria, Jordan and Egypt. Their familiarity with the points of view of those Governments and with the refugee problem has already assisted in overcoming administrative difficulties, and there is reason to hope that this assistance will increase as time goes on (UNRWA Annual Report 1953, para 8).

UNRWA is a unique agency among other UN agencies in terms of its autonomy and operations. UNRWA enjoys a high level of autonomy from the General Assembly and even from its advisory commission for two main reasons. The first is its constitutional origins under Article 22 of the UN charter, and the second is its funding mechanisms that do not rely on the UN, but on voluntary contributions from governments. At the same time, UNRWA is a highly operational and a quasi-governmental agency performing daily executive operations of providing social and health services usually rendered by a nation-state to its citizens. UNRWA is a non-territorial state in the territory of another state.

The General Assembly founded UNRWA under Article 22 of the UN Charter, which authorizes the Assembly to “establish subsidiary organs as it deems necessary to the performance of its functions.” Article 22 has no legislative power; rather, it constitutes a machinery to reach the UN’s goals. Many subsidiary agencies, including the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the United Nations

Children's Fund (UNICEF), were created through Article 22. However, UNRWA differs substantially from all other UN organs since they are not as operational as UNRWA and do not have as much contact with their beneficiaries. They also do not have a large body of staff members, as UNRWA does. The UN defines an operational agency as one "entrusted with the task of executing programs of relief, rehabilitation, and other forms of assistance by furnishing supplies and services to Governments or directly to the people concerned" (United Nations 1955, Vol I, P 669).

UNRWA's financial independence from the UN emphasizes its autonomy. UNRWA's funds are channeled voluntarily in cash and in kind from contributing governments from all around the world. This way of funding creates leverage for the contributing governments to attach their conditions during the pledging conference at the General Assembly. However, history shows that the contributing governments have rarely done so except for the US and the UK, who exert their power on UNRWA through naming senior staff members of their citizens (Buehrig 1971). On the other hand, UNRWA's director reports to the General Assembly through the president, who channels the report to the Special Political Committee. The General Assembly can raise policy questions but does not propose resolutions that contain specific directions. The Secretary General, in consultation with the Advisory Commission, appoints the director, who decides to appoint and remove staff members.

UNRWA's Reintegration Projects

UNRWA's ultimate goal was to remove as many refugees as possible from the relief rolls by helping them become self-sufficient. In order to accomplish this task,

UNRWA went through four main phases of integration projects: small-scale training and employment projects, large-scale government controlled projects, immigration projects, and large-scale development projects (Schiff 1995).

1. Small-scale training and employment-creating projects

UNRWA issued interest-free loans for the refugees to help them start enterprises such as shoemaking and carpentry. However, the plan did not work as envisaged. The project proved very costly on UNRWA and the economies of scale were low. An UNRWA official observed the following when visiting these small projects in 1951:

Business approach of the refugee is considerably different from the highly developed methods of the West. The Arab businessman to him was very secretive about his business and not willing to share the information with others and so the agency had no criteria of who could be removed from the rations and who could not. In addition, there were only a few agency personnel to handle the issue (Schiff 1995, 32).

In order to accelerate the reintegration process, the agency established the Development Bank of Jordan with a capital of \$1.4 M, of which UNRWA paid \$1.12 M while the Jordanian government contributed the rest. UNRWA financed the bank to make loans to the refugees for small projects in proportion to its contribution to the capital. However, the bank started denying access to loans to refugees who did not have enough assets. Problems between the Jordanian government and UNRWA were on rise.

In 1951, UNRWA's director reported informally that money had to be taken from the budget for the works to be paid for the rations. He mentioned that the increase in prices due to the Korean War and drought made it harder on UNRWA to survive with the limited budget it has for the relief. Also, he admitted that lands where refugees lived were

not good for agriculture, which meant that refugees had to be transferred across the borders to get them resettled through agricultural projects (UNRWA Annual Report 1951, para 44).

2. Medium-sized, government-controlled projects

These included road building and forestation, among many other projects. The goal of the project was to find work opportunities for the refugees while helping in development projects in the host country. These projects faced many economic problems shortly after their launching: high administrative costs, small economies of scale, low labor motivation and efficiency, and low demand in the market. UNRWA claimed that the government tried to push for projects from which it would benefit, without taking the public good of the refugees in consideration. As will be discussed later, there was conflict of interest between the Jordanian government and UNRWA in many cases.

3. Immigration projects

UNRWA provided subsidizations for refugees to resettle in Iraq, Libya, US, or Europe and to start up new businesses. The immigration process also proved to be a failure. Each refugee cost \$294 to travel and resettle, with no guarantee for sustainability. Many were not be able to sustain themselves and returned shortly. Libya and Iraq, the main host countries, were skeptical of the project.

4. The New Program

Later in 1951, UNRWA realized the high expenses of the first three projects. It had an alternative of large scale regional water development projects in the frame of a “New Program.” The agency was ambitious and hoped to raise \$200 M for the projects.

UNRWA's second director, John Blandford, was the architect of the New Program. Blandford was an expert on housing and also the former manager of the Tennessee Valley Authority. Blandford believed that massive agricultural irrigation projects would create employment for the refugees through construction in the short term and agricultural work in the long term. Blandford laid out his plan for his New Program before the General Assembly (Schiff 1995).

In January 1952, the General Assembly passed Resolution 513, in which it endorsed the following:

The programme recommended by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for the relief and reintegration of Palestine refugees, which envisages the expenditure of US\$ 50 million for relief and \$200 million for reintegration over and above such contributions as may be made by local government, to be carried out over a period of approximately three years starting as of 1 July 1951 (GA Resolution 513, 1952).

The goal of the New Program was to help reintegrate 150,000 families—one third through vocational training, grants and housing in urban areas and two thirds through agricultural projects. It was also assumed that the host governments would take the responsibility as soon as possible (Buehrig 1971).

UNRWA's plans borrowed from older ones that the British mandate had prepared in order to fully utilize the resources in the area. For example, in 1939, Jordan's Government Development Director, Michael Iodines, suggested that more people could be settled in the Jordan Valley if water resources were used efficiently. He suggested the diversion of the Yarmuk River before it joined the Jordan River. By this, Yarmuk River could be used to irrigate the east bank of the Jordan River or stored in Lake Tiberius (Schiff 1995). Another study was conducted in 1944 by Walter C. Lowdermilk. It was modeled on the Tennessee Valley Authority and proposed the development of farms

and industry to provide a place for 4 million Jews from Europe in addition to the 1.8 million Arabs and Jews already living in Palestine and Transjordan. In 1951, the Jordanian government consulted American engineers to survey the Jordan and Yarmuk Valleys to locate the best sites for dams and for a network of irrigation canals. Many parties financed the contract, including the United States Operations Mission to Jordan (\$1 M), UNRWA (\$0.3 M), and the Jordanian Development Board (\$0.2 M) (UNRWA Annual Report 1954, para 7).

Jordan had the lion's portion of the funds devoted to the New Program. Out of the \$200 M, UNRWA assigned \$111 M for Syria, Jordan and Egypt, in addition to \$11 M for Jordan to be spent on irrigation projects and vocational training. In March, 1953, UNRWA promised Jordan \$40 M for the Unified Development Plan that will be discussed later (Schiff 1995).⁴

However, the money raised for the New Program was channeled to cover up the rising cost of the relief program. Refugees were not being removed from the rolls as predicted, and it became clear that the New Program was not a success. The shortage of funds was a continuous threat for UNRWA.

5. Unified Development Plan

⁴ By the time UNRWA started operations in 1950, Jordan had not been recognized as a member of the UN yet and it was not until early 1951 that UNRWA reached agreement with the Jordanian government. The agreement was broad and did not go beyond the UN Charter and the Convention on Privileges and Immunities of 1946 (articles 2, 100, 104 and 105). The relation between the Jordanian government and UNRWA was full of tension. The government had always had leverage over UNRWA by its ability to put hurdles over its operations, mobilize the refugees against its operations, restrict the movement of its local staff members, and protect its facilities at times of strikes and protests. On the other hand, UNRWA had leverage over the Jordanian government. The agency had been of great use for the state, proposing and funding development projects from one side and helping in the relief effort by funding and execution from the other. Because UNRWA operated under the patronage of the General Assembly, the agency enjoyed no flexibility in withdrawing its services from the host country if there were problems with the government.

In March, 1953, the Tennessee Valley Authority, financed by the US Department of State and on behalf of UNRWA, hired the Boston-based company Charles T. Main to carry out a six-month long study of the Jordan River and to evaluate the former water development projects that had been designed earlier. Charles T. Main suggested merging the New Program with the Yarmuk River Plan formerly proposed to the Jordanian government by American consultants. The Unified Development Plan focused on mere technical knowledge, leaving politics aside:

Many of the earlier plans were prepared when the present political boundaries did not exist. Partly for this reason, but principally in the interests of sound engineering practice, the Tennessee Valley Authority was invited to disregard political boundaries, and to prepare a report indicating the most efficient method of utilizing the whole of the watershed in the best interests of the area (Unified Development Plan 1953, introductory notes).

The Unified Development Plan was predicted to be a benchmark in the integration process of the refugees. The ultimate goal of the project was providing employment through agriculture for 143,000 refugees, almost one third of the refugee population in Jordan. Refugees would comprise 85% of the labor force and 90% of the people to settle in the area (Schiff 1995). The project was estimated to irrigate 500,000 dunams (126,000 acres) and to produce 167 million kilowatt hours of electric power. Construction of dams and canals was estimated to create work opportunities for 12,000 laborers for several years. It was estimated that a family might become self-supporting by the cultivation of an average of twenty irrigated dunams.

In October, Gordon Clapp, Chairman of the Tennessee Valley Authority, presented the Unified Development Plan to UNRWA. The United Nations was cautious and considered that it was not an UNRWA plan. Arab and Israeli official reactions were not

promising. The United States backed the plan and tried to lobby for it in the General Assembly. President Eisenhower assigned Special Ambassador Eric Johnston to establish Arab-Israeli agreement (*New York Times* [NYC], 15, October, 1953). Johnston went into rounds of negotiations until 1955. The Jordanian Prime Minister objected to the plan, which required cooperation with Israel. He mentioned that Jordan was more prepared for economic hardships rather than with dealing with Israel. Two years of negotiations were a series of frustrations for Johnston and ended up with the Arab states and Israel announcing that unilateral water diversions by the other side would be considered an act of aggression (Schiff 1995). The ambitious economic development plan became paralyzed by the difficult political climate of the Middle East.

In 1956, UNRWA's director mentioned that the Unified Development Plan would not go any further due to the host governments' refusal to accept it. In his annual report, the director mentioned the following:

While the Agency, therefore, is continuing its small-scale programmes and is ready to participate in the Yarmuk-Jordan project when related political problems are resolved, it requests the General Assembly to consider the enlargement of the Agency's mandate so as to permit expenditures, by loans or grants, upon general development programmes, with which the immediate employment or self-support of refugees need not be directly connected, but which will eventually benefit the refugees through increasing the general economic activity of the country (UNRWA Annual Report 1956, para 73).

By mid-1956, the agency had spent \$27.5 M on integration out of the \$200 M original integration fund (Schiff 1995). In 1957, the annual report mentioned that no progress has been made in the Yarmuk. In the subsequent years, the only mention for the Yarmuk project was through the anti-malaria campaign. Not only did the project fail to achieve its promised goal of integrating the refugees in their new countries and vitalizing

the stagnating economies of the host societies, it failed to sustain itself as an infrastructure improvement. Faced with the political realities on the ground, a technical project supported by the US and the UN, with a budget of more than \$200 M was doomed.

UNRWA's Education Program

This section traces the development of UNRWA's educational program, which was not part of the original mandate assigned by the General Assembly. When UNRWA started its operations in 1950, it was planned that UNRWA would not open more schools. However, UNRWA's educational system grew quantitatively and qualitatively to be a driving force for the educational systems in the host countries. UNRWA's schools produced the first generation of gulf teachers as well as the second generation of UNRWA local staff members. So in this sense, UNRWA became like a state that was raising its citizens.

UNRPR made no provisions for education in its budget when it started its operations in 1948. In 1949, UNESCO established 61 schools in the host countries that accommodated 33,631 students. When UNRWA started operations in 1950, it inherited 114 schools with 43,658 students and 846 staff members. At the time, twenty percent of the refugee children in Jordan were receiving education in these schools (UNRWA Annual Report 1951, para 203-204). Schools inherited from UNESCO were "emergency schools" that were set up in large, worn out tents and had few tables, desks, chairs, or stools by the time UNRWA took over.

UNRWA did not have the capacity to handle the educational system by itself. It had to share the work with UNESCO. The former was in charge of administrative issues including finances, purchases and payments, while the latter took care of technical issues including curricula, books, and school situations (UNRWA Annual Report 1951, para 131). UNESCO made available the services of its staff members to act as educational advisors to UNRWA (UNRWA Annual Report 1951, para 130). The syllabus and final examination in the UNRWA-UNESCO schools were the same as the Jordanian ones.

The two agencies also agreed that no more schools would be opened since the life of UNRWA was to end within a year (UNRWA Annual Report 1951, para 132). In 1950, UNRWA allocated \$175,000 from its budget to education, while UNESCO allocated \$53,000. The two agencies raised the salaries of teachers to meet the local standards:

In the former emergency programme, much of the teaching was done either on a voluntary basis, or for such low wages that teachers were less well paid than the cleaners employed in the camps. Classification and proper compensation for these teachers was therefore one of the major responsibilities of the UNESCO representative. Since May 1950, the monthly wage has been raised and is now at a maximum of \$42 for headmasters, and \$37 for teachers, which approaches local standards (UNRWA Annual Report 1951, para 203-204).

The expansion was noticeable in 1951, when UNRWA allocated around \$320,000 to education complemented by approximately \$81,000 from UNESCO. The expansion reached many quantitative and qualitative dimensions of UNRWA's educational system. It included appointing 19 refugee teachers in government schools to allow the government to absorb more than 1,500 refugee students in its schools. At the time there were no universities in Jordan, but the agency allocated \$15,000 to three Lebanese and Syrian universities to educate Palestinian refugees who studied medicine, pharmacy, arts,

science, and engineering. UNRWA also started repairing old tents, building mud walls, laying floors, and even constructing new schools.

In 1952 UNRWA provided summer training courses to 612 of its teachers. UNRWA still had poor premises; two thirds of the classes were being held in tents, many of them overcrowded with more than fifty students in a classroom. Equipment was poor and many classrooms had no boards to write on. UNRWA was not able to meet the refugees' demands, it refused as many refugee students as it could admit and it had no secondary classes. Despite these poor conditions, reports showed that the examination results for the agency's students were at least as good as those of students in other public or private schools in the host countries.

In 1953, the educational system was further expanded. UNRWA provided summer training courses to more than 800 of its teachers. UNRWA admitted more students and transferred more tents into buildings. It reduced the average number of students per class from 50 to 47. It also increased the salaries of teachers to compare favorably with those of the host countries. Finally, it made plans to establish vocational training schools to start operating in the next year. Late in the same year, UNRWA opened a vocational training center in Kalandia on the West Bank. The center provided courses in many skills.

In 1954, many developments took place. All classrooms were transferred into buildings, diversified forms of education were offered to students completing their elementary stage, 200 university scholarships were offered, more secondary classes started, new measures were introduced to improve the efficiency of the teaching staff including increasing the number of inspectors, and more emphasis was placed on teacher summer training programs. Finally, UNRWA offered educational broadcasting for the

benefit of refugees in isolated areas. The programs were made possible in coordination with the Near East Broadcasting Station in Cyprus. Local staff members wrote the programs during their spare time (Buehrig 1971).

In 1955, the agency decided to admit increasing numbers into secondary schools each year, until at least the level existing in Jordan was reached. UNRWA realized that the percentage of students receiving education in Jordan was on rise. UNRWA had to cope with this development so it did not “impose a distinct handicap upon the adolescent refugee population. Refugee young men and women, if not educated up to prevailing local standards, will not be in position to take advantage of opportunities for employment requiring standard educational qualifications.”

The Annual Report highlighted the achievements of the educational apparatus of UNRWA:

It is only fair to point out that when Agency pupils compete in government examinations with the pupils of government or private schools, the pupils of Agency schools almost invariably receive higher marks, pupil for pupil and school for school. It is therefore considered appropriate for the Agency to take this opportunity of commending the teaching staff as a whole, regardless of their professional qualifications, for their enthusiasm, mental alertness and achievements under many difficult conditions (UNRWA Annual Report 1955, para 6)

Conclusion

This chapter was a descriptive analysis for the transformation in UNRWA’s mandate. It shows clearly the failure of UNRWA’s grand development projects. The causes of this failure are rarely addressed in literature. Different stakeholders had their biases when looking at causes of failure:

In a span of technological euphoria, the United States forced economic development plans intended to absorb the refugees into the labor force, but the practical and political knots of the Middle East could not be united. Perhaps worse than the failure of the ambitious water plans, from UNRWA's standpoint, was the sapping of the refugee confidence in the organization caused by the hypocrisy of proclaiming repatriation while planning resettlement... The high hopes ignored the cold political realities, always there.... the water schemes crashed, mass resettlement folded, and a humbled UNRWA turned back to what it did well, helping refugees one by one, drops of aid in a sea of privation (Schiff 1995, 46-47).

A senior government official at the time denied that the refugees or the Jordanian government had anything to do with the failure of the projects:

It was all due to lack of funds. Many states promised to donate money to the development projects, but with time they did not do so.

An UNRWA senior staff member disagrees strongly with this statement. He sees the failure due to technical challenges and lack of human capacity to carry in the situation. He recalls UNRWA's work to find water in the desert in a region that it did not know. He also recalls housing projects that were blown by the winds:

They didn't know how to do the job. They were foreign engineers and did not know the peculiarities of the area.

On the other hand, many refugees insist that they had their role in replacing UNRWA's economic projects with the educational one. Rarely is this point of view adopted by mainstream discourse about UNRWA. Hence, it is worth recollecting some popular memory. The following quotations will help in the transition to the chapter about the refugees' role in reshaping UNRWA's mandate.

- Late in 1950, a newspaper article mentioned that UNRWA has gotten "exhausted from preparing reports and creating imaginative projects", and hence, the agency is considering more realistic projects. A committee of educated youngsters has been formed

to select teachers and open new schools. The committee has received more than 1,000 applications for teaching, while it needed no more than 20 (*Filastin* [Amman], 30, August, 1950).

- A top administrative staff member who worked with UNRWA from its first days recalls his memories:

UNRWA had no education system. They (the young educated men of refugees) contacted me and asked for a tent to establish a school. I told them we can give them a tent, but we have no money to give them salaries. It was fine with them. They sat on the ground, they gathered themselves and we recruited students from all ages. We would contact the parents, people would know about any development so quickly, everybody knew about the availability of education. After that we wanted to guarantee commitment from the volunteering teachers. Even though I have to say, I saw nothing from them but enthusiasm and commitment, we decided to pay them in kind (give them 60 kg bag of flour). By the time UNRWA started paying the teachers, we had 30 teachers in one school.

- In September 1951, a letter to UNRWA appeared in the newspaper. The title of the letter was *The Importance of UNRWA Taking Care of Educating the Refugee Children: We do not want to see our kids in the alleyways and streets but in classrooms:*

*Nobody denies the role of the Social Services Department for which it should be thanked. However, we would like to ask what has the department prepared for the coming academic year...May be one of the main duties of the department is to increase the number of teachers especially that hundreds of youngsters who have applied for jobs. Groups of teachers are leaving the country day after day while our children are gaining no education. UNRWA should be capable of employing those (teachers), not because they need work, but because it is the UNRWA's duty to educate the refugees. It has appointed itself in charge of their housing, food, health and education (*Filastin* [Amman], 20, September, 1951).*

- In 1951, the Annual Report admits the following:

Another unforeseen difficulty was the opposition of the refugees themselves. This hostility to all works undertaken by the Agency was based upon their conviction that to accept employment within the host countries would be tantamount to renouncing the right to return home, and perhaps even the right to compensation. This suspicion was not so widespread in Jordan, where the works programme was in fact the most successful, but for over six months it was very strong in both Syria

and

Lebanon.

Not only was it difficult to recruit sufficient workers, but demonstrations and threats to Agency personnel were made and, even, once on the job, some of the workers displayed, on occasion, an unwilling approach which greatly reduced output. However, in many places this attitude gradually changed; at some sites, requests for employment greatly exceeded the financial possibilities, and when work finally stopped, towards the middle of 1951, there was strong opposition to the closedown (UNRWA Annual Report 1951, para 44).

CHAPTER SIX: WHO WERE THE PLANNERS IN UNRWA?

The multiplicity of practices teaches us that small can be beautiful, terrible, and extremely complex (Schvarzer 1987).

The following chapter examines the role of different planners in UNRWA. It challenges the mythical construct of UNRWA as an insulated, top-down planner who acts upon its passive subjects. It proves that the barriers between UNRWA as a planning agency, and the refugees, as planned for, did not exist robustly. As such, this chapter suggests that the refugees were planners themselves who worked inside the agency or organized themselves to take certain actions towards the agency. The chapter examines circumstances for creating refugees as planners and strategies they adopted in the planning process. The chapter introduces the international staff members, planners from the refugees including local staff members (top administrative staff and street level bureaucrats), and community planners.

a) International Staff Members

Due to the lack of information, this section of the study does not intend to assess the performance of the international staff members. Rather, it aims at placing the international staff members in relation to the organization, the body of refugees, and the international relations. This will help us understand the dynamics between the “agency” and the refugees in the upcoming sections of the chapter.

Benjamin Schiff correctly argues that since its early days, UNRWA has looked like an organization funded by colonial powers and administered by their representatives. Many of UNRWA’s international staff members were affiliated with military forces in

their countries or were experts in rebuilding Europe after World War II by working on the Marshall Plan as well as American public projects (Schiff 1995).

During the period of study, UNRWA had three directors and two deputy directors. The three directors were Howard Kennedy (Canadian, May 1950-June 1951), John B. Blandford (American, July 1951-March 1953), and Henry R. Labouisse (American, June 1954-June 1958). The two deputy directors were James Keen (British, May 1950-Sep 1952) and Leslie J. Carver (British, October 1952-November 1959).

None of the directors or deputy directors was an expert on the Middle East. Blandford was an expert in post-war housing in the United States, worked with President Eisenhower in the Treasury Department, and served as a director for the Tennessee Valley Authority. Henry R. Labouisse was a practicing lawyer in New York and worked for the Marshall Plan. In the 1960s, Labouisse served as the head of the US International Co-operation Administration, US Ambassador to Greece, and Executive Director of UNICEF.

The appointment of the directors, deputy directors, and other international staff members reflected the power that each major donor could exercise over UNRWA. The more a donor country contributed to UNRWA's budget, the more power it would have to employ its citizens in UNRWA. The top international staff members in this period were Americans, Britons, or Canadians, usually with diplomatic background. Out of the twelve commissioner-generals (formerly directors) that the General Assembly has named, six have been Americans. The United States has always been the major donor for UNRWA.

Working with UNRWA offered significant advantages for many international staff members. They had senior posts and gained work experience in a growing region. Most

international staff members were placed in UNRWA's headquarters in Beirut, which was known as the Switzerland of the Arab World. Beirut combined the heritage of the East with the modernity of the West.

Working with UNRWA, however, had financial pitfalls. Despite their high salaries, the conditions of international staff members' employment did not compare favorably with other UN agencies. For example, it was not until 1961 that UNRWA participated in the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund. This situation made it harder to recruit and retain international staff members at times (Buehrig 1971).

International staff members occupied the most senior posts in the agency. Each field office would typically have 5-7 international employees. The headquarters in Beirut would usually have 75-120 international employees. Experts from health and education were drawn from UNESCO and WHO. It was believed that the work of the international staff members was of utmost importance for UNRWA. They were experienced and qualified enough to maintain the integrity of the organization and to set the bar high for management standards. It was also believed that they were the ones who would be able to intervene with the Jordanian government when locals failed to do so.

The history of the international staff members was not hidden from the refugees. The higher the ranking of the international staff member, the better known his personal history was to the refugees. For example, after the nomination of Blandford as a Director, a newspaper article was published entitled: *Who is Blandford, UNRWA's New Director*. The article discussed Blandford's previous work experience. Blandford's experience in public housing and the Tennessee Valley Authority added to the refugees' suspicions about the agency's attempts to resettle them. The hostility towards Blandford continued

through his 20-month term of service. The reasons for Blandford's eventual resignation are unclear to me, as to whether it had anything to do with the hostility of the refugees towards him. A refugee *mukhtar* who had finished his primary education in the 1940s recalls his memories about Blandford:

Unfortunately, UNRWA was very much political and we had clashes with it and we protested it. In 1950s UNRWA had Blandford's projects; Blandford was an American who made housing projects for the refugees to get them resettled. We opposed this and told them that we need to be back home.

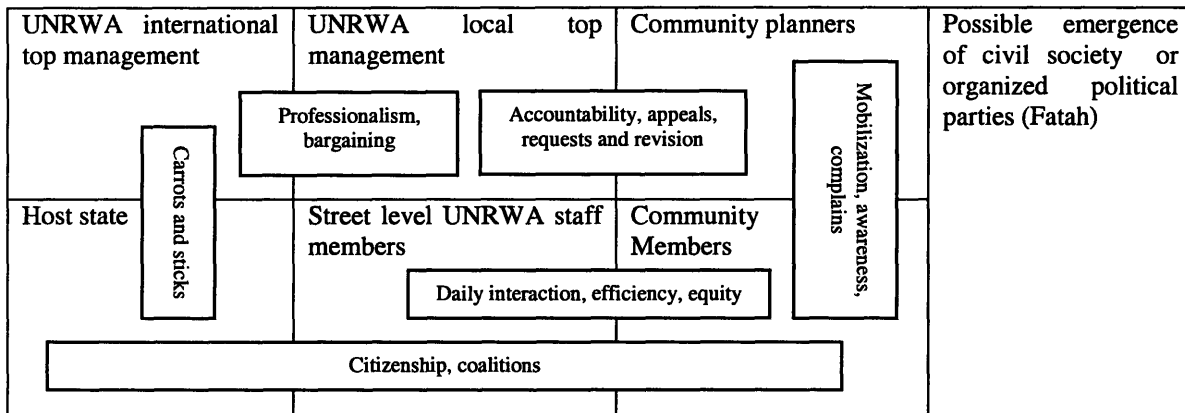
On the other hand, many refugees and senior staff members interviewed showed deep appreciation to both Henry R. Labouisse and John Davis. A refugee notable, after showing suspicion towards Blandford and criticizing his resettlement projects, praised Labouisse:

Mr. Henry Labouisse came as a Director in 1953. He was very good person: helpful for the plight of the Palestinians and appreciative for their hardship. He was affected by the bad situation in which people live. We highly appreciated and liked him. After he returned to the US, he advocated for our cause and published a book about our plight.

As will be argued later, the relationships with the international staff members were a factor that determined the path the refugees would choose to pursue their plans on many levels.

b) Refugee Planners

Our understanding of society and the state has undergone revision in recent years and we have become more aware not only of the 'informal structures' and 'influence versus authority' but also of the 'technologies of power', the 'tactics of resistance', the 'power of negotiation' and the subversion of dominant categories'. The formal arena is now shown to be vague and ambiguous and ill-defined as the private, or perhaps even more so (Shami 1997).



Refugees as planners: Relations between different stakeholders

The next section is a deconstructionist analysis of the “development” or “counter-development” discourse that the refugees created as a response to UNRWA. Why did the refugees resist UNRWA? How did they do it? Did their project go beyond rejectionism to providing alternatives? What knowledge did they have with which to create plans and how did they implement it? How could the refugees transform their relationship with UNRWA from a top-down one to a symbiotic and interactive one? First, I examine conditions for creating refugee planners. Then I analyze the role of the different groups among those planners. I borrow from Friedmann’s concepts about planning as social mobilization.

Possible Prerequisites for Creating Refugee Planners⁵

⁵ I should admit that this research falls short of addressing gender issues in the planning tradition among the refugees. As mentioned in the introduction, this is due to unavailability of female refugees for interviews. However, it should be mentioned that the presence of women, based on newspaper articles or the interviewees’ comments, was minimal if not totally absent. Women may have had other channels for making an impact, such as networking among themselves or influencing their male relatives. During my fieldwork, I came across many women who sat for the interviews with their husbands and intervened often to add a comment, correct some information, or disagree on certain points of view.

Refugee planners interviewed were mainly males: they suffered the humiliation of exile. They varied in their age and levels of education. Many of them were illiterate, while others had finished their Matriculation. The glue that united these refugees was an unjust experience that they lived and that became part of the history that drove their life in exile. "Refugeeness" became a social identity that shaped a clear vision about their future. Refugees did not belong to political parties at the time despite the fact that politics dominated their lives. Refugee planners had no vanguard and no institutional representative. However, they might have four distinctions that helped them to become planners: experience in political participation, human capital with expertise in education, commitment to achieving a unified goal, and local understanding for the social, cultural, and economic landscapes among the refugee communities.

a) Consciousness and Political Participation:

As discussed in the first chapter, refugees had expertise in political resistance and civil disobedience. Community participation in political organization was part of the daily life in Palestine that might have put the refugees on this distinctively participatory path. Refugees had unique knowledge that helped them to understand the particularity of their problem, and to place it in the wider regional and international context. They understood the history and politics of the Middle East, Zionism, and colonialism given that politics was inseparable from the daily life in Palestine. The British Mandate had nurtured this tendency by imposing harsh economic and administrative measures on Palestinians and also through promises for creating a national home for the Jews in Palestine. Khalidi highlights the importance of the peasants' role in resisting land sales to

Zionist groups after 1900. He cites an accident in which peasants molested the Jewish Colonization Association's surveyor when he came to measure the land of sale in 1901 (Khalidi 1997). Khalidi also cites the Sursuq family story. In 1910, the family owned more than 230,000 dunams in Palestine and decided to sell its properties to the Jewish National Fund. The peasants in these lands resisted displacement and dispossession. They showed armed resistance that Khalidi considers to be the grassroots for the Palestinian resistance in 1930s and later in 1960s (Khalidi 1997).

Khalidi argues that there was a strong interaction between Palestinian urban opposition and rural resistance to Zionism. Both groups made a conscious effort to resist Zionism and both shared a sense of destiny. For example, the editors of the anti-Zionist newspaper *Filastin* distributed it to every village in Jaffa, which was a major target for Zionist settlers (Khalidi 1997).

In 1935, 'Iz al-Din al-Qassam, a renowned figure in the rural resistance, was killed in combat with the British forces. Al-Qassam's funeral turned into a public demonstration for both rural and the urban residents. The funeral "electrified" the 1936-39 revolt, which had a fatal impact on the daily life of every Palestinian: the revolt crippled the economy and killed and wounded thousands. Many refugees participated in 1936 and in other revolts. When they left, refugees carried with them this rigorous memory of political activism on many levels to the host societies (Khalidi 1997).

Daniel Lerner, in his book *The Passing of Traditional Society: Modernizing the Middle East* (1958) conducted a study of Jordan. He notes the following:

But if the refugees have not raised economic supply, they have significantly increased political demands. Demands for accountability are growing in a society which hitherto provided no channels for popular participation. A poor, illiterate

farmer- who has learned to listen to international broadcasts-told his interviewer about Jordan's great national problems: We do not have good roads, modern machines for agriculture, doctors, clinics and clean water (Lerner 1958, 307).

Lerner found that on media behavior in Jordan, 65% of the refugees scored high on the Exposure Index, compared to 50% of the non-refugees. The index is based on the frequency of newspaper reading, radio listening, and movie going. He notes that some refugee camps were equipped with loudspeakers for communal listening. Also, he found that 23 of 29 Palestinians interviewed in Jordan read the *New York Times*, *Time Magazine*, *Ladies Home Journal*, *Colliers*, and *Vogue* (Lerner 1958).

These facts about the participation of the peasants and refugees in the political life in Palestine and Jordan challenges the assumption that intensive forms of political participation tend to exclude the less privileged sectors of a society (Fung 2003). This assumption is justified by a lack of the time due to long working hours and a lack of communication skills that would allow them to articulate their points of view in the public or semi-public arenas. Fung debunks this assumption. He argues that while most explanations of participation focus on the supply side of the account, there is a need to look at the demand side. In other words, there is a need to analyze motives that would encourage or discourage individuals from participating in the decision-making process (Fung 2003).

b) Expertise in Education

Expertise in education shaped the infrastructure of teachers and school principals who started the educational system in UNRWA. The qualitative and quantitative

flourishing of education in Palestine before 1948 furnished a way for establishing a good educational system after exile. As discussed in chapter two, the educational system in Palestine expanded after 1943. By the end of the British Mandate, every major town had a complete public school preparing for the General Secondary Examination, while other towns had secondary classes, as did many private Muslim and Christian schools, in towns and in villages. In 1944, 78 students received the Arabic Matriculation, 35 the English Matriculation, 46 the Arab School Certificate, and 25 the English School Certificate. Many other well-educated students took the exam but did not pass.

c) Sharing a Common Goal:

Refugee planners had primary and secondary goals. Their primary and macro goal was the ability to exercise the Right of Return. This was in conflict with UNRWA's integration and economic development projects. Refugee planners' secondary and micro goals related to an efficient, effective, and equitable system that delivered daily life necessities: nutrition and health services equal to international standards, a temporary housing system that protected them from winter storms, and education to carry when they move from the host country. They sought to sustain standards for these daily life necessities while at the same time making sure that UNRWA, rather than the host government, provided these necessities, thus affirming their temporary status as refugees. For example, refugees demanded the right to decent "shelter" inside the camps. On the other hand, they resisted ownership of housing projects outside the camps.

d) Local knowledge and Collective Learning:

Refugee planners understood the socio-cultural dynamics of their community and possible divisions among its members, including regional, religious, or class structures. They also had knowledge about UNRWA's mandate and constitutional origins. Over time, they gained more knowledge by dealing with the agency. Baiocchi highlights the importance of the process of collective learning in establishing bonds between the stakeholders and citizens (Fung and Wright 2003). His study of Porto Alegre shows that participatory governance empowered the civil society and fostered interconnection between its members. He found that "associational density" had almost doubled. The collective learning process allowed for such a change among the refugees. In the camps we could find YMCA, cultural and sport clubs, and women groups.

Planning with UNRWA

In order to achieve their goals, refugee planners adopted an eclectic approach-utopian at times and social anarchist at others⁶. I suggest that refugees were utopians when it related to their Right of Return. They based their argument on the moral values in which they believed. Their goal was inclusive for all refugees, and they viewed it as a public good that refugees should be able to enjoy. It was an all-or-nothing value that they adopted. While they could clearly articulate the first part of the primary goal-the "right" and on the injustice imposed on them-they did not have a clear understanding of the second part" -the "return" and the mechanisms needed to achieve it.

⁶ Utopianism is based on rejecting the current system and suggesting a new system that may question the fundamental values the time and place. (Manuel and Manuel, 1979), while social anarchists base their ideology on the absence of state or central authority.

Refugees were social anarchists at other times, as they sought to minimize the role of institutional intervention in their lives despite being desperately in need of help. I suggest that they rejected the institutional intervention out of a general rejection for centralized power, as well as a rejection of institutions to which they did not belong. These institutions were not Palestinian or British, but Israeli, Jordanian, or international. Refugees did not trust institutions, many of which were products of the colonial power, which had oppressed Palestinians at an earlier stage and helped to displace them at a later one. After exile, there was a strong sense of bitterness and humiliation that made the refugees prone to anger and suspicion toward anything that could have helped their plight during the war or after displacement, including nation-states and the UN. These institutions had no roots in the refugees' culture. A refugee who talked positively about a housing project that a church built for his clan after their exile explains the situation:

Refugee: A church built us houses and resettled us in the West Bank.

Researcher: But this was resettlement, just like UNRWA did?

Refugee: No, it was not. We knew the church and we trusted it. We didn't know UNRWA; neither did we trust it. Actually, UNRWA was a product of the imperial powers to control us.

However, refugee planners learned from experience that these institutions could be of value for their communities and started building alliances with them, seizing on available opportunities to reach their goals. They started appreciating efficiency, effectiveness, and equity when micromanaging public goods. They also started realizing the externalities that each group of refugees could impose on others.

I suggest that the process of collective learning by dealing with UNRWA added to the "collective identity" of the refugees. Melucci defines collective identity as "an

interactive and shared definition produced by several individuals and concerned with the orientations of action and the fields of opportunities and constraints in which the action takes place". He argues that "collective action is submerged in everyday life as a result of a personal commitment. Collective actions form networks that offer alternative frameworks of meaning, each of which challenge the dominant discourse." Melucci also suggests that a movement is a "network of small groups submerged in everyday life which requires a personal involvement in experiencing and practicing cultural innovation" (Melucci 1988).

In this sense, society becomes a place for a planning process. It becomes a product of encounters with the "other" that results, as Escobar argues, in intensifying "awareness of our own culture and makes us realize how we think and feel in some ways rather than others, that is, that we have *a culture*" (Escobar 1992).

The significance of this case comes from its occurrence at a time when planning was only accredited to the professional planners, affiliated with elite institutions, who adopted approaches that were "apolitical", ahistorical, and abstract (Friedmann 1987).

This research acknowledges social mobilization and organization⁷ as essential forms of planning. By doing so, it highlights an access to power that the masses have, a hypothesis that negates the stereotype of passive recipients of services delivered by elite institutions. Refugee planners were able to reach transformative action after criticizing the present conditions imposed on them and proposing other alternatives. This case is one

⁷ Unlike Friedmann, who gave credit to social mobilization, I suggest that the case study should be accurately called social organization. Charles Payne distinguishes between mobilization and organization. Mobilization refers to the process through which inspirational leaders and persuaders get the masses to join in an action. On the other hand, organization refers to sustainable process and deep understanding for the movement's goals and aspirations (Payne, 1995)

in which the momentum for planning comes from within the community itself. A synergy between the socio-political mobilization and institutional intervention was the driving factor. The case study presented in this research took place many years before the literature on social movements and their relation to planning appeared, starting with Grabow and Heskin's article in 1973 (Friedmann 1987).

In the next section I analyze the refugee's role in the planning process. I look at planners among UNRWA's local staff members of top administrative seniors and street-level bureaucrats. I also look at refugees who did not work with UNRWA but have had an critical role in the planning process. I call those refugees *community planners*. Finally, I try to analyze the emergence of a refugee group that refused to go through the planning process.

a) Local Staff Members of Refugees

For work to be an organizing principle of a decent society, it must be meaningful, and for it to be meaningful it must either be embedded in a system of values which give work a final, as distinct from an instrumental, purpose, or the worker's knowledge must be accorded sufficient respect to give the worker the cultural space to create his own meaning out of his labour (Apffel-Marglin 1990).

I suggest that a body of refugees had penetrated the agency's institutional body to the extent that the absolute barriers between UNRWA and the refugees might been extremely weakened. Refugee staff members in UNRWA found a fine line between acting like clients driven by personal and communal needs on one hand and acting like staff members of an international agency with well established rules and regulations on the other. I question the relation between the official and unofficial- the legal and illegal. Local staff members, even though they worked under the supervision of internationals,

had their own informal power that official records did not acknowledge. This informal power was recognized by the refugees as well as by the internationals. It was manifested in their ability to negotiate public goods with the refugees from one side and with the agency from the other. It was also manifested by their ability to negotiate with the agency their own rights as staff members. Locals also enjoyed a wide space for discretion that UNRWA's formal constitution did not recognize.

The UN recognizes professionalism as the sole judge in which the legal and the illegal are two poles with clear dividing lines that could not be crossed by its staff members or refugees. However, interviews showed that the behavior of staff members and refugees was regulated by unofficial criteria that resulted from an interaction and understanding for what is legal. It was through this understanding that the local staff members were able to maintain their positions, help the refugees make rational requests, and help the agency moderate its expectations. In this case, the personal and the professional were not two poles but overlapping spheres. Both the political and the social could be looked at as personal at times and as professional at others.

In 1953, UNRWA's staff posts exceeded 6,000, which made it the largest transnational employer in the Middle East. International staff members occupied fewer than 140 posts, while local employees, mostly refugees, occupied the rest (*Filastin* [Amman], 21, February, 1953). In this respect, UNRWA differed greatly from other operational UN agencies at the time, such as the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA). The latter had more than 24,000 staff posts within three years of its establishment, of which 13,000 were occupied by internationals (Buehrig 1971).

UNRWA local staff members were refugees themselves. Many of them came from Palestinian towns where they had been educated and had work experience with the British Mandate, AFSC, or ICRC. Many were also bi-lingual and had a certain level of administrative skills.

Working with UNRWA was a great financial advantage for local staff members. Like the rest of the refugees, they had been deprived of their belongings and fled into a poor country where they could not find jobs despite their qualifications. Not only did UNRWA offer them jobs, but its salary scale was higher than that of the host government's. One pitfall of working with UNRWA was its temporary character, which was always a threat to job security. However, local staff members knew that if UNRWA ceased to exist, it would mean that their Right of Return had been achieved. The end of UNRWA would be an end to their status of "refugeeness".

Working with UNRWA proved to have advantages that went beyond financial ones. Local staff members acquired administrative skills, were exposed to the western standards of professionalism, and found an avenue to help their community of refugees in the host society. Their people perceived them as holding the hopes for meeting their collective and individual expectations.

A gap between institutional orders and the performance of the staff members was not necessarily due to misunderstanding or miscommunication. Rather it was due to disagreement between the two parties on means and ends. Local staff members did not always share the objectives of their supervisors.

However, UNRWA local staff members went through a process of collective learning to find rational estimations for the role of their agency and the solution for their

problems. They struggled to change the conditions imposed on their people by the agency. It became clear that their abilities might stretch beyond serving a social cause toward serving a national cause through advocating the refugees' Right of Return. They realized that individual behavior, when aggregated, could shape the mandate of an institution and have a great impact on people's lives, especially when their clients came from the most deprived groups of their own society and their coworkers shared the same goals and social background.

1. Top-level Administrative Staff Members of Refugees

Commissioner-generals consulted them, Palestinian communities respected them, younger staff looked at them as mentors. A few of them acquired the sobriquet "uncrowned kings" of UNRWA (Schiff 1995).

Senior local staff members realized the importance of their role in the organization's structure. Through political savvy with both the international staff members and the refugees, senior local staff members were able to fill a huge gap between the two parties.

Senior local staff members had their own views about the internationals that they formulated through direct interaction. Unexpectedly, they did not appreciate their international supervisors necessarily for professional reasons, but for personal, social, and political ones. Both groups interacted with each other extensively at social events. The gatherings of their wives became informal forums for exchanging views (Schiff 1995). Many of the locals appreciated the cultural background of the internationals. They also saw their international supervisors as potential allies for the Palestinians during their stay in Jordan and after they returned to their countries. a local staff member shared his experience:

Most of them would come with an orientalist vision about the Palestinians, not understanding their plight and the injustice imposed on them. But with time, many of them became sympathetic. They would see the human side of the Palestinians and they would see the great injustice they suffer from. Many of them would turn into advocates for the Palestinian refugees in the West. John Davis was a great Director and he tried to publish a book about the subject in the United States. Yet, the book could not find its way to a publisher and he had to go to Europe to find one⁸. However, we were suspicious of a few of the international staff members. We suspected that one of them was working with British intelligence.

Senior local staff members also interacted with the refugees. Not only did they understand the injustice imposed on their clients, but they suffered it as well. All of them had been deprived of all their belongings, forcefully left their homes, and received humanitarian assistance, and many of them lived in the camps. They shared a cultural background with the refugees. They also were believers in the Right of Return and opposed settlement projects.

Senior local staff members were the locals who were really able to see the big picture and to wear the hats of many stakeholders at the same time. They had the dual role of serving their social and national affiliation on one hand and their institutional one on the other. At the same time, they enjoyed some credibility by making it clear to their communities that their institutional power was limited, and to their international supervisors that their social power was limited:

The top level Palestinian employees imbibe the agency's administrative culture, needing to comprehend and apply western notions of professionalism and objectivity to succeed. But theirs is a more complex calculus than the internationals'. They must grasp the internationals' perceptual frameworks and consequent positions, learn to apply the internationals' criteria for making their own decisions, but also gauge their communities' perceptions of UNRWA and host governments' attitudes. They develop independent convictions about what UNRWA

⁸ In 1968 John Davis published the *Evasive Peace*, John Murray, London. The book not only underwent six printings, but was translated into German, Finnish, Polish and Arabic.

actions or positions would be best for the Palestinians and for the agency (Schiff 1995, 148).

Tensions and even clashes between senior locals and internationals were frequent for many reasons. Certain moments proved that what each staff member represented was one of the two poles: the donor western powers or the powerless, needy refugees. Many locals expressed their dissatisfaction about training international staff members, only to let them become supervisors the next day:

We understood the idea of a salary scale, but it was unfair. We would complain about this formally and informally.

Senior local staff members were keen to deliver their complaints to the press and to the refugees. In 1950, the General Committee of the Refugees from Jalil and Jaffa wrote a letter to the Minister of the Refugees and Construction complaining about the high salaries of UNRWA internationals. The letter mentioned that these salaries were paid from funds that were supposed to help the refugees. It pointed out that the internationals' high salaries contrasted sharply with the locals'. The letter also mentioned that an international nurse named Ms. Robertson was paid a base salary of JD180 and a bonus of JD120. The committee suggested replacing Ms. Robertson by a number of local nurses who would be paid much less. By this, better health services could be provided to the needy refugees. The letter immediately found its way to the Jordanian press, and the local staff, supported by the refugees, created a scandal for UNRWA (*Filastin* [Amman], 19, September, 1950).

In 1951, a newspaper article cited a paper that Dorothy Thompson, a renowned journalist from New York, had presented to the General Assembly. Thompson was a freelancer who visited the refugees in the host countries. Thompson considered UNRWA

to be a form of colonialism and strongly criticized the high salaries that UNRWA paid its international staff members. Thompson also mentioned that the refugees showed hatred and hostility towards UNRWA (*Filastin* [Amman], 5, January, 1951).

Another source of tension between the internationals and the locals was politics, about which internationals were very cautious. Internationals either did not fully appreciate the injustice imposed on the refugee, or did not want to show their full belief. On the other hand, locals were very keen to express their dissatisfaction with the political situation. Locals were not supposed to work in politics. This would be in a conflict with the terms of appointment. Yet, the term “politics” was not a well-defined and staff members could go around it depending on their position and courage.

A former senior UNRWA staff member recalls his memories from 1950s. A group of UNRWA local staff members, mostly senior-level and working in education, wanted to show appreciation for their international supervisor by giving him a gift. However, the gift was an honorary shield showing a Palestinian in traditional shawl and a gun. This angered the international supervisor, who rejected the gift because he saw it as politically inflammatory. However, the locals did not dispose of the gift. On the contrary, they circulated it among themselves, and it ended up in an office of a senior local staff member. This is a moderate case where locals neither opposed their international supervisor, nor disposed of their politics.

However, clashes were not moderate all the time. UNRWA’s Director visited a school in Amman in the 1970s, where he saw a painting of a Palestinian man with a gun. The Director asked for the piece to be removed because he saw it as inappropriate for the

UN school. The local senior staff member rejected the stand and insisted that it was a right for Palestinians to express themselves and their national struggle:

UNRWA staff member: *I told him; this is a Palestinian school, you can not omit their feelings. I insisted not to send a letter of warning to the teacher.*

Researcher: Was this allowed? Were not you forbidden from working in politics?

UNRWA staff member: *We had to sign a contract in which we agreed not to work in politics. We were prohibited from talking to journalists. From the refugees' point of view, my feeling towards Palestine is not political, this is personal. The Palestinian who was working with UNRWA is an exiled Palestinian first and UNRWA employee second. I myself can't go to a teacher and ask her not to teach the students what is the land of historical Palestine. Nobody could do this. The political for them was personal for us.*

Researcher: But would not you be scared of the consequences?

UNRWA staff member: *Let UNRWA believe in what it wants to believe. What is UNRWA? It's the local staff. Nobody could prevent me from saying that I was exiled. If you come from the UK or the US and believe that this is politics, this is up to you, why should I care? There were only a few of them. How could they trace what is going on? They could not. Many of them were sympathetic and just ignored what we were doing. Others were not sympathetic but really could not do much. There were only a few of them.*

Researcher: Is it true that you would contact the media about projects that they didn't like?

UNRWA staff member: *Of course this was the situation, why should not they have!*

Despite the fact that the interview took place five decades after this event occurred, the story shows clearly the strong stand that the senior staff member started to take. After a few years of serving in the agency, senior local staff started accumulating power and increasingly started criticizing the agency's political stand without fear:

"You could take all the internationals out of the agency and it would still run-but it wouldn't be an international organization anymore," said one international. Many locals agree (Schiff 1995, 148).

2. Street-Level Bureaucrats

Analyzing street level bureaucrats' role in UNRWA's mandate is of paramount importance. At one level, street level bureaucrats formed the largest body of UNRWA staff members. Their salaries had the lion's share of UNRWA's budget. Street-level bureaucrats also grew drastically in numbers started forming their own unions in 1957. They provided direct public services at times (teachers) and mediated between the agency and its clients at others (census takers).

At a more complex level, street level bureaucrats had a significant role in the agency. Michael Lipsky argues that the decisions of street level bureaucrats and the devices they create to cope with uncertainties and limitations of their work become the public policies of the institutions (Lipsky 1980). Most street level bureaucrats were refugees themselves. They came from villages and lived in refugee camps. They interacted with the refugees on a daily basis as family members, neighbors, and victims of the same injustice. Once they started working with UNRWA, street level bureaucrats lost their UNRWA ration cards that united them with the rest of the refugees. However, they could maintain strong relations with the refugees through wearing two different hats at a time: planner and beneficiary.

Despite the fact that a large portion of UNRWA's mandate was shaped by institutional elites, street level bureaucrats were usually free of supervisors in the field. Street level bureaucrats were the screen through which the refugees encountered UNRWA on a daily basis. While it is true that street level bureaucrats were restricted by UNRWA's rules and regulations, their supervisors' orders, and dynamics inside their group, they were also restrained by their socio-cultural ties, daily life necessities of the

refugees, and their political aims. Many of these complexities were not recognized by UNRWA's mandate. In many cases, street level bureaucrats had to make decisions on the spot. In these instances, refugee clients might have acted like supervisors rather than beneficiaries.

Street level bureaucrats had both redistribution and allocation roles. They had room for discretion in determining the nature and amount of services provided to the beneficiaries. Discretion enabled street level bureaucrats to be key holders to important aspects of the refugees' daily life, which caused a form of social control over their fellow refugees. They had to deal with their clients' personal and immediate reactions.

Interviewees report that at the time of UNRWA's first operations, street level bureaucrats looked at UNRWA as an employer with an upper hand and at themselves as employees with clear orders to implement. They realized that they did not have as much bargaining leverage as other senior staff members of administrators did. Having minimal professional qualifications, they understood well that if they got into a clash with the agency without support from the local administrators, they could be easily replaced. If they tried to hurt UNRWA, their communities would be the first to suffer once the agency ceased to exist. This is one reason why they did not protest the agency's mandate through uncooperative strategies such as striking, aggressive tactics such as stealing or apathetic attitudes towards their work (Lipsky 1980). They did not practice such techniques because they wanted to act in their full capacity and increase UNRWA's ability to deliver services to the refugees. Teachers, nurses, and doctors were working day and night. Many interviewees mentioned that teachers were teaching many classes — sometimes until 2:00 AM—using a lamp they put in the street to gather students. Street-

level bureaucrats regarded the standards of western professionalism as a target to be hit, but this did not last very long.

The passage of time proved to these street level bureaucrats that UNRWA was not the isolated or utopian international, professional, or humanitarian agency they thought it would be. There were only a few international staff members with a limited power of surveillance and control. Internationals were not necessarily the ideal administrators, as they were portrayed to the refugees. Many internationals had good professional reputations, but others were known for corruption or incompetence. Time also showed to street level bureaucrats that UNRWA's main goals were not humanitarian. Rather, they started realizing the political controversy about UNRWA and the agenda that donor countries might be seeking to implement through it. All of these factors made street level bureaucrats realize the need to combine professionalism with advocacy. They realized that they were on the same page with local administrators as well as with the refugees.

A UNRWA staff member recalls his memories about early 1950s in an interview. UNRWA advertised an administrative job related to a housing project that it was planning to undertake. UNRWA needed a customer service representative for the refugees wishing to apply for the program. The refugee mentioned that he took the job. He also made sure that he recorded the names of the applicants to pass to his friend. The friend used his refugee networks to discourage the applicants from applying to the settlement project, sometimes by positive or other times by negative pressure.

Street-level bureaucrats did not interact with the internationals except occasionally. As such, they looked at them as western supervisors representing western powers that had

helped create the refugee problem. Unlike many senior staff members, a school teacher expressed his sentiment saying:

Many of them knew Arabic very well but pretended not to understand us, they disrespected us and our culture, they had the power and money and we had nothing.

b) Community Planners

In order to achieve their goals, community planners had a complex palate of strategies that resembled those Friedmann uses when analyzing social mobilization. These included spontaneous uprisings, forming local action groups, networking, and building alliances (Friedmann 1987).

First, community planners had spontaneous uprisings in the form of mass strikes. Spontaneous uprisings seemed to emerge from each camp on its own, without coordination between different camps. Refugees would participate across lines of gender, age, education, and area of origin. Those who refused to participate in uprisings would suffer from social exclusion. In the early 1950s, strikes asking for the Right of Return, resisting integration projects, and condemning UNRWA's imperialism took place on a larger scale. However, after the collective learning process, refugees became more pragmatic, asking to improve the standards of food, education, housing, and health.

Strikes had a symbolic value for the refugees. First, they assured social cohesion when demanding public goods rather than competition for resources. Second, they empowered the refugees with a sense of ability to bring about a change and to have access to power. In this case, the upper hand was not necessarily the state's or UNRWA's, but possibly the refugees'.

Despite the fact that refugees generally did not adopt violence in their strikes, fear of violence was a driving factor for the elite institutions to meet their demands. Fear of violence was highest where there were huge agglomerations of refugees, mainly in camps. As a senior government official at the time explained, the government feared losing control over the destructive bitterness of crowds of refugees. Neither the government nor UNRWA had a way to meet demands about the Right of Return. The institutions were concerned about restoring order and preventing violence rather than synthesizing the refugees' demands in a wider context.

Strikes were more important at an early stage when bitterness among the refugees was extreme, and the journey of exile was still fresh. Strikes and demonstrations resembled an early stage of the planning process that required spreading awareness and mobilization. They also led to forming local action groups.

Second, refugees had local action groups informally organized to be a nucleus for wider movements. An example was the camp committee. Each camp had its own committee that consisted of *mukhtars* ("elected" village leaders), who represented a group of clans that came from one village. *Mukhtars* enjoyed many skills: a high level of leadership among their communities, first-hand knowledge of the local situation of their camp/clan, strong personal interactions to guarantee commitment from the refugees, high level of rationality when talking to their communities, ability to coordinate with other local action groups in other camps, and flexibility depending on opportunities and constraints. Not all *mukhtars* were trusted by refugees, as some of them were accused of working for their personal interests without taking into consideration the public interest

of the refugees. However, these self-serving *mukhtars* were well-known enough to be avoided by the refugees.

At first, camp committees worked as representatives for the refugees in a flexible fashion depending on demands and needs. However, at a later stage, they became more bureaucratized, and the officially elected camp committees had an important role in representing the refugees during decision-making processes inside UNRWA's meetings. The camp committees stabilized the arrangements politically by operating as watchdogs of public accountability and holding officials responsible for the implementation and development of projects. Confidentially and publicly, camp committees criticized UNRWA for not meeting the refugees' needs in nutrition, health, housing, and education. They continued mobilizing the refugees in their camps and building civic capacity by furthering awareness with group discussions, meetings, and individual conversations.

Another local action group was volunteer teachers and principals. These were young educated Palestinians who valued education as a way to build human capital, which was the only sustainable asset for the refugees. Refugee teachers also recognized the danger of losing refugee children if time was not invested wisely. The gatherings of refugee children in the alleys of the camps, with difficult living conditions, could assure the rise of the crime and juvenile problems. These teachers and principals informally formed classes, contacted parents to recruit refugee children, and divided them among classes. At a later stage, when education was formalized by UNRWA, these teachers had their roles in mobilizing students and educating them about their problem and the utopian solution of the Right of Return. Educational curriculum followed the Jordanian one, yet

the teachers made sure that they taught the refugee children about the uniqueness of their cause.

Third, refugees had their internal and spontaneous networks. These networks were voluntarily established, had easy conditions of entry and exit, demanded minimal level of individual or collective commitment and coordination, and were mostly based on spatial divisions for shelters. The networks acted mainly through sharing stories and news. This strategy was best exemplified by gatherings of men in the coffee shops in the camps where they would exchange news and share stories. Sources of news varied: a radio that would be centralized in the coffee shop where everybody would be listening carefully, the educated youngsters who would have an access to Jordanian newspapers, or refugees working in the city and interacting with non-refugee groups. Among these were bus drivers riding between Amman and the camps and hearing all the stories from the passengers then sharing at the end of the day with their network of refugees in the coffee shops. Coffee shops continued to play an important role during the course of the study.

The coffee shop could be observed as a continuation of the guest house in the village. The major commonality among the two was the flow of information that related to the wider context, especially the political one. However, the guesthouse was an exclusive and hierarchical space dominated by the *mukhtar* and the village elders, while coffee shops were spontaneous, inclusive, and democratic spaces. Rosemary Sayigh in her book *Palestinians: From Peasants to Revolutionaries* notes that the age difference dissolved in the Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon, a condition unique to the Arab society. The new generation saw the old one as defeated and ineffective and held them responsible for the disaster (Sayigh 1978).

Fourth, building coalitions was a common practice among community planners. These coalitions cut across many divisions and rivers: villages of origin in the same camp, national institutions represented by the Jordanian government, and international ones like the UN. Coalition builders were full-time leaders committed to their community but well connected with other external institutions. *Mukhtars* from different camps had periodic meetings and they had a list of contact information for each other to use in cases of emergencies.

Different levels of coalitions achieved different objectives simultaneously. Through coalitions with refugees from other camps, refugees could exert stronger pressure on UNRWA to meet their daily demands, especially when it related to issues that all refugees could be concerned about. Through the Jordanian government, refugee planners could arrange for their daily needs through appeals, complains, delegations, and mobilization to support certain programs or block others. Through the General Assembly they could arrange for their Right of Return.

National coalitions aimed at changing the mandate of the agency and simultaneously serving the daily needs of the refugees. When building national coalitions, the planners were refugees who were well educated, well connected with national institutions even if illiterate, or UNRWA local executive staff members who saw in their jobs an opportunity to channel the agency's mandate. National coalitions created pressure exercised mainly through the Jordanian government or through UNRWA local staff members.

International coalitions were created by educated Palestinians who were well-connected internationally and by the refugees with the help of the former. The emphasis

was on the Right of Return and rejecting resettlement projects without paying much emphasis to daily logistics. International coalitions were also exemplified by letters that the refugees sent to the General Assembly or published in the international press. The target audiences at the international level were international political powers: the UN, the US, and the UK.

This division between the levels of coalitions was not structural; there were no clear boundaries between its different forms. A community planner would operate at many levels depending on the particularity of the situation. Moreover, forms of coalition building were sequential, and many times started at the local and then extended to the international. The ultimate goal that united the three of them was the refugees' desire to return home. However, time proved to them the importance of lobbying for the development projects in their communities as they saw appropriate.

A former senior UNRWA staff member has strong memories about local and international coalitions. He hosted an American senator who visited the refugee camps and witnessed the brutal living conditions from which the refugees suffered. The staff member made sure that the senator met the most articulate of the refugees, an old *mukhtar* who was illiterate, but with very strong communication skills. The staff member moderated the interaction between the senator and the *mukhtar* through translation. Before ending his visit, the senator showed deep sympathies towards the refugees, assured their Right of Return, and promised to help them once he was back in the US. However, the senator didn't keep his promises. The UNRWA staff member knew about a statement that the senator made after his visit to the Middle East, in which he did not show the promised sympathy to the refugees. The UNRWA staff member used his

knowledge for an immediate action. He wrote a letter in Arabic and in English to the senator showing the refugees' disappointment after reading the senator's remarks. Yet, the staff member was not allowed to get engaged in "politics." In order to avoid the trap, and to give legitimacy to his letter, the staff member read it for the refugee and asked him to sign it. A letter from an illiterate refugee was sent to an American senator blaming him for not delivering on his promises.

Interviews clearly show that refugees were not divided along the lines of cooperation or resistance to UNRWA. Rather, they were divided along the lines of collectivity and sharing the group's continuously changing rules, or individuality. Refugees exercised social exclusion of those who didn't adhere to their norms of boycotting UNRWA at times or cooperating with it at others. A *mukhtar* narrates his experience:

Mukhtar: I organized a movement to oppose settlement. We used to have peaceful demonstrations, we wrote on each shelter and each street the names of each village and town we lost in Palestine, we wrote we will not forget you Jaffa, we will not forget you Jerusalem.

Researcher: What about those who did not participate in your activities?

Mukhtar: In 1953, we wrote slogans everyone we will not forget our homeland. One refugee asked not to write on his shelter. We did not. He was boycotted, nobody wanted to deal within him, the bakery, the grocery. Everybody boycotted him, then he came and apologizes. No one asked people to do this. It was all spontaneous.

Researcher: But you ended up in shelters rather than tents within a couple of years!

Mukhtar: They didn't try to make the shelters brick, the tents were not stable there was strong winds that will take the tents away during the night when we were sleeping who would want for his kids to stay with no shelter during the night, we had no option but to replace the tents. Who wants to stay in the abandoned area without a tent? We had the idea of replacing the tents by mud, and Lebanon and UNRWA helped us. The UNRWA helped us by providing wood only, each one did it himself with the help of others, there were builders of the refugees helping for

minimal wage. Each one helped each other by preparing the building materials, people helped each other very much as if in one village.

Social exclusion was also imposed on refugees who benefited from UNRWA housing projects outside the refugee camps. A few refugees mentioned that housing projects stopped due to the low demand. They were viewed as a form of settlement. A refugee in his eighties was sitting in his small convenience store next to one of these housing projects in Amman. When I asked him for directions to the project, anger was obvious on his face. “Those we should never talk to took units in these projects”, he said. However, the higher the ranking of the refugee leader, the more understanding he showed to the people’s urgent need to accept UNRWA’s projects, even those who seem as settlement projects:

We tried to boycott settlement projects. But people were going through hardships. We would understand if someone decided to benefit from UNRWA’s loans or housing projects, even though this was very discouraged.

Indirect social exclusion was also imposed on refugees who chose the absolute resistance to UNRWA. As a matter of fact, refugee leaders who did not benefit from the collective learning projects and insisted on resisting UNRWA could not keep the leadership role for a long time. Leaders of absolute resistance could not meet the refugees’ daily needs. Time had guaranteed that the absolute resistance paradigm between UNRWA and the refugees was not pragmatic.

Illustrative Case Study: Resistance to rectification process

The following case study is an illustrative example for the paramount importance of local knowledge and political support for any planning project. It also exhibits the role of

political coalitions that communities can establish with different stakeholders in lobbying for certain projects or blocking others. Finally, the case portrays the discretion that street level bureaucrats may exercise away from their supervisors.

The number of Palestinian refugees had been a point of dispute between the Arab states, Israel, and UNRWA. While the Arabs estimated the number to be around 900,000 to one million, the Israelis estimated it to be 520,000. The Economic Survey Mission estimated it to be 726,000, a number that was not welcomed nor by the Arabs neither by the Israelis (Morris 1987).

UNRWA and the refugees did not agree on the number; the former was trying to reduce it, while the latter was trying to increase it. UNRWA looked at the number as high, inaccurate, and dubious. UNRWA needed to eliminate as many refugees as possible from its ration rolls. Being able to do so is a measure for its success, since it was supposed to end the relief operations by the end of 1951.

From their side, the refugees wanted to increase the number of ration cards. They found the rations given to them inadequate to meet their nutritional needs and started using fake cards and cards of the deceased. More importantly, the refugees believed that increasing the number of cards would mean political power when in relation to the Right of Return, since there were serious attempts by Israel to debate the accuracy of the number of refugees.

The first step for UNRWA was defining who was a Palestinian refugee. UNRWA defined a refugee as:

A person who, as a result of the Palestine conflict, had lost his home and his means of livelihood. In 1952, UNRWA the definition became more exclusive to become a person whose normal residence had been Palestine for a minimum of two years

preceding the 1948 conflict and who as a result, had lost both his home and his means of livelihood.

The two-year home residency guaranteed removing many refugees from the rolls.

The second step was more operational and involved carrying out a census with the help of the Jordanian government between May, 1950 to June, 1951. The goal of the census was threefold. The first was to distinguish refugees from non-refugees. The second was to distinguish those who should be eligible for rations from those who could support themselves. Third, classify the refugees according to their qualifications and expertise in order to divide them into the different work projects planned (Buehrig 1971). It does not seem that the government offered UNRWA anything more than its approval to carry on the census. UNRWA had to hire more than 100 census takers and to fund the whole operation.

The operation did not go as planned. Immediately after launching the census, refugees started opposing the way it was carried out. In July, 1950 the General Committee for the Bethlehem Refugees sent a letter to UNRWA protesting the operation:

There is no need to say that the system on which the census is built has failed to show the truth and it is unfair for the refugees due to the way it is carried. Your census taker has clear regulations that ask him to count whoever is at the shelter or tent without former notice. If we apply this way in any other country of the world we will see that only one third or half of the family members are in the house. Not to mention that the refugees you are trying to count are coming from a disaster (Filastin [Amman], 1 July, 1950).

The refugees had no doubt that the goal of the census operation was to reduce the number of the refugees for political reasons. UNRWA tried to confirm to the refugees that its intentions were apolitical. It also tried to convince them that the census operation was for their advantage through reducing the number of ration recipients, which would

lead to increasing the size of the rations. UNRWA tried to communicate with the refugees through meetings, conferences, and press releases. It also tried to convince the Jordanian government and the refugees that continuing the census was a process that it had to complete due to its affiliation with the General Assembly and its funding by voluntary contributions from countries that cared about the integrity of the agency's work. However, this line of reasoning did not hold much water for the suspicious refugees.

In January, 1951, a number of refugees who had lost their cards because of the rectification gathered in a coffee shop in a camp near Nablus. Two of the notables attended the meeting, which concluded with a few recommendations: have a peaceful demonstration towards the Government District Office to meet the officer, ask UNRWA to have a representative from the refugees participate in the rectification process, ask UNRWA to quickly look at the pending cases for revisions to recount into the records, and form a delegation to meet the king and ask him to "protect them from the devils of UNRWA."

In mid-1951, most census takers were fired on the premise that they were corrupt. A new crew was hired, and UNRWA put a ceiling of 430,000 on the number of rations beneficiaries. However, reporting newly born refugees was much faster than reporting the deceased or those who became self-supporting.

Upon the request of the refugees, and with the support of the Jordanian government, UNRWA created ad hoc committees to look at complains of refugees whose cards had been cancelled. Each committee had three representatives from UNRWA's headquarters, UNRWA's field office, and the government. The refugees refused the committees as they

were dominated by UNRWA representatives. They asked to have refugee notables, landowners, and businessmen serving on the committees. They believed that there would be a conflict of interest between serving on this committee and being UNRWA staff member. They also believed that the census should be taken with the help of those who knew the community best and were respected among its members. The refugees also protested the fact that UNRWA named the census takers to look at the complaints. "You can not be the judge and the enemy simultaneously," the Arabic proverb goes.

In 1952, a press release entitled: *UNRWA Tries Formally to "Erase" the Refugees*, quoted in a skeptical way parts of the Director's annual report. In the report, unlike his explanations to the refugees, the Director explicitly mentioned the need to remove the refugees from the rolls:

The existence of vast numbers of able-bodied individuals who for four years have looked to the United Nations for the provision of all their basic needs...is a social and economic blight. The presence of refugees in host countries is more than the measurable economic waste of manpower and of economic potential...the need for aggressive steps to be taken to terminate relief operations is not only emphasized by the psychologically debilitating effect of giving relief over long periods of time, with the consequent development of a professional refugee mentality, but also by the crushing economic burden--apart from the cost of the care of the individual, which the presence of the refugees has placed upon the host countries.....They (The United Nations, and in particular the contributing governments) have determined that in the measure in which funds for the new programme are expended, funds for the provision of relief will be reduced. The ultimate constructive task is to remove the need for relief. This is the objective of the new programme on which the Agency has received a fresh mandate (Filastin [Amman], 30, August, 1950).

The refugees made sure that they communicated strongly with the press. Six members of the Jericho Refugee Committee visited the Filastin newspaper headquarters in Amman to express their rejection of the new rectification and to condemn the injustice that the first rectification had caused to the refugees. They also reiterated their doubts about

UNRWA's political aims. They emphasized that the refugees would boycott the rectification and would not allow its takers to enter the camps. They asked the government to support them in their final decision. Other committees brought a list of refugees' signatures to support their demands: *Should the agency insist on doing the census, we would all give up our ration cards, boycott the agency, and announce this to the General Assembly*, the refugees threatened.

In 1953, the government forced the agency to stop the rectification due to the strong resistance of the refugees. The Ministry of Social Services asked its representatives not to attend the investigation committee meetings, and hence UNRWA would not be able to cancel any ration card. The government also liquidated all the entities it had created for this operation, including the investigation committee, appeal committees, and the High Court for Refugees. The government was very cautious not to anger the refugees. As a former government official explains:

Everybody dreaded their action: the government, UNRWA, and everybody else. And I don't blame them. I am talking about the 50s, it (the exile) was fresh and everyone remembered his house, furniture, grove and everything.

In 1954, after all the money and energy spent on the census operation in order to reduce the number of refugees, the agency estimated around 70,000 duplicate cases in Jordan but had no way to distinguish them. In four years, only 4,000 death cases had been reported among the 490,000 refugees in Jordan. In 1955, the Director admitted that "misunderstanding as to the true purposes of verification arose and have not yet been completely overcome" (Buehrig 1971).

However, UNRWA started acting more sensitively. It reached an agreement with the government and the refugees to keep the number of refugees the same, with the

possibility of adding 10,000 rations if needed. The concept was transferring the rations from those who were not in need to those who were. Refugees were required to report the names of eligible children born after 1948 and who were not on the rolls despite their eligibility. The list had to be approved by the *mukhtars*. At the same time, refugees had to report the names of their deceased. It was only when UNRWA was supported from community leaders and when it put the refugees into competition among themselves that the agency was successful in its rectification process.

However, the success was not long lasting. Finally, UNRWA admitted that it did not have the apparatus to carry out the rectification process by itself. The director pointed out in 1957 that “the Agency’s system of control cannot be substantially improved without the full support and technical cooperation of the refugee leaders and the host governments”.

The rectification failed for many reasons, and UNRWA was unable to comprehend its complexity. Reasons included the symbolic value of the card, the distrust towards UNRWA, the insufficiency of the distributed rations, the social implications of carrying out the census, the sympathetic attitude of the census takers towards their fellow refugees, and the corruption among many of them.

UNRWA did not understand the symbolic value that a ration card carried to the refugee, who feared that losing their ration cards would indicate losing their refugee status and consequently, jeopardize their Right of Return. The card was the only documentation the refugees had to show their Palestinian origin:

The refugees have always paid a great deal of attention and attachment to their rations card not for the material value but for the symbolic value according to their Right of Return through 194.

Moreover, it was humiliating for the refugees to have foreigners coming to their shelters counting each family member now and then. As a former official of Palestinian origin in the Jordanian government puts it:

We tried to help and take out the extra cards. But there are limits to how much investigation you can make because this is humiliation. You can't make it every night entering to the room like a secret police to see if one has five or seven kids. This is impossible. It is humiliating. We would have become a police state....

For the older generation, the rectification reminded them of one that the British Mandate did before the WWI, when many Palestinians were recruited into the army. As a refugee puts it:

It was humiliation. They were coming each time and keep counting us. We knew that they wanted to keep us busy faraway from our national cause by being occupied by these small issues. They also reminded us of the British army coming to our homes. Women were reluctant to tell the real number of their sons so they don't lose them to the army.

At first, UNRWA did not put clear lines between the different categories of registration and depended on the discretion of the census takers, who were themselves refugees and often sympathized with their fellow needy refugees. Many census takers believed that the rations given by UNRWA were insufficient. Consequently, they saw in duplicate cards a legitimate way to have some extra food that was highly needed:

I was working on registration rolls. If I found a poor refugee with two rations cards, one real and one duplicate, and realized his need for the food, I would ignore his violation for the law. I had never done this for my family or village members, but for those poor refugees. I had good intentions to serve them and I do not see any problem with this. The rations were very small and could hardly suffice for a few days. They had no other option.

Later, UNRWA adopted a scale for defining self-sufficiency later. The scale was insufficient to determine the situation of many families with different scales of income and family size. Upon the refugees' request, the government intervened later, and UNRWA became unable to take the card of any refugee whose income was between JD7-JD15 without consulting the Ministry of Refugees and Reconstruction.

The failure of the rectification process was one in a chain of events during the turbulent relationship between the UNRWA and its clients.

CHAPTER SEVEN: CONCLUSION

I started this research by posing a few questions: What caused the shift in UNRWA's mandate from economic development to human development? What was the role of the refugees in creating this shift? And how could they pursue such a role? A special focus for me was planning from the middle through refugees working with UNRWA and simultaneously performing the role of the developer and that of the client.

I relied on historical records to show the diversity within the body of refugees, and the assets they already possessed. I also relied on UN records to show that UNRWA was created on the premise of dealing with the refugees as passive clients. The conflict between the socio-political realities on the ground and the development approach was a call for the refugees to get involved with an agency that would directly affect their daily lives.

I suggested that the refugees had a vital role in proposing and implementing the shift in UNRWA's mandate from economic development to human development. I suggested that this was part of their resistance to reintegration projects and insistence on their Right of Return. While economic development was viewed as a form of settlement in the host nation-states, human development was viewed as a sustainable form of development that individuals can carry on regardless of their final destination.

However, I made no claim that this was the only driving factor for the change in UNRWA's mandate. Other factors that I did not explore include the expansion of the educational system in Jordan and the rest of the Arab World during the years of study, UNRWA's inability to get enough funding for economic development projects, and

technical difficulties relating to the implementation of the economic development projects, especially when related to agriculture, infrastructure, paving the way for the new development agency. These are all possible reasons for the change from economic development to human development.

However, I provided empirical evidence that refugees had systematic and active involvement in the decision-making process on many levels to the extent that this involvement had caused a shift in UNRWA's mandate. I also concluded that their involvement was not necessarily a spontaneous one but a planned process that they gained through a political vision. This suggests that UNRWA was not an insulated, top-down planner that acted upon the passive subjects. On the contrary, it suggests that the barriers between UNRWA as a planner, and the refugees, as planned for, diminished with time.

There were many circumstances that facilitated the creation of refugee planners. These included consciousness and political participation, expertise in education, sharing a common goal, local knowledge, and collective learning.

I looked at planners among UNRWA's local staff members of top administrative seniors and street-level bureaucrats. Local staff members had the dual role of serving their social and national affiliation from one hand and their institutional affiliation from the other. They were mediators who were able to help the refugees make reasonable requests and help the agency moderate its expectations. Local staff members realized that individual behavior, when aggregated, can shape the mandate of an institution.

I also looked at refugees who did not work with UNRWA but have had an imperative role in the planning process. I called those refugees *community planners*. In

order to achieve their goals, community planners adopted many strategies, including spontaneous uprisings and strikes, forming local action groups, networking, and building alliances. Community planners saw the symbolic value of strikes and appreciated them at an early stage when bitterness was extreme and the journey of exile was still fresh. They informally organized local action groups as a nucleus for wider movements. Examples included the camp committees, volunteer teachers and principals. They had internal and spontaneous networks that were voluntarily established with easy conditions of entry and exit and minimal levels of individual or collective commitment and coordination. Their networks had an imperative role in creating awareness among the refugees. Finally, refugee planners built coalitions on different levels: local, national, regional, and international. By selecting a case study about the census-taking process, I demonstrate many of these points.

In this research I acknowledge social mobilization as an essential form of planning. By doing so, I highlight an access to power that the masses have. Refugee planners were able to reach transformative actions after criticizing the present conditions imposed on them and proposing alternatives. A synergy between the socio-political mobilization and institutional intervention was the driving factor for the planning process.

As mentioned earlier, there is an important point to emphasize. Both the developer and the client in this case study represent a unique case. The Palestinian refugees were a group of people empowered with human capital, political experience, and clear vision about the future despite the absence of a political or elitist leadership. They differ from other groups of clients or refugees. UNRWA is also a unique development agency due to

its operational and quasi-governmental mandate, sheer scale, institutional origins, and funding resources, among many other peculiarities.

Epilogue:

This research highlights a bright spot in the dark history of the Palestinian refugees' struggle despite all the displacement, destitution, and disappointment that they have been facing. The research highlights a bright spot in the history of UNRWA despite the tense environment in which it operates, which now includes budget cuts, military occupation in the Occupied Territories, and most recently, the possible forced collapse of the Palestinian Authority. I have to admit that the bright side of the story that I bring to light did not last for long. UNRWA's educational facilities now are some of the most overcrowded, least equipped, and most poorly financed. However, this research offers a few insights to broaden our understanding of development.

First, I suggest that the refugees' participation in the planning process should be considered a form of success despite all the difficulties it imposed on UNRWA. UNRWA's institutional mandate does not acknowledge the democratic decision-making process, local knowledge, or the human capital of the refugees. However, findings in this research demonstrate that these elements had their imperative role in reshaping UNRWA's institutional mandate.

Moreover, an agency's success or failure should be broadened to take into consideration the long- and short-term interests of the agency as well as those of the clients. From the original designers' point of view, UNRWA showed many symptoms of failure. The first symptom was UNRWA's "continued existence" and its drastic expansion. As opposed to the original plan, UNRWA did not cease to exist shortly after

its creation. On the contrary, the agency grew drastically to accommodate more than 26,000 staff posts and more than 4 million registered refugees. The second symptom of failure was the fall of the large economic development and works projects that were hoped to facilitate the refugees' integration in the host societies. However, the two symptoms of failure from the original planners' point of view were indicators of success from the refugees' point of view. They both affirmed the refugees' temporary status rather than their inclusion in the host countries.

Second, institutional design plays a vital role in either facilitating participation or blocking it. Had top administrative local staff or street-level bureaucrats not been refugees themselves, the process would have been different. The same could be said if other variables changed, including the number of local staff members, the discretion given to them, and the design of their jobs.

Third, I suggest that special arrangements, such as education, social status, political power, or wealth, are not necessarily essential to allow for a client's participation in the development process. This case study examines participation in one of the most unfavorable conditions in the world: a status of exile, poverty, hunger, and absence of nation-state and political representation. If participation could work under harsh conditions, the model should be applicable to a wider spectrum of situations and audiences, including the less privileged, the exiled, and the illiterate.

Fourth, this case study is an example for the involvement of clients during the design as well as the implementation of the project. Clients' involvement is important for many reasons. It adds the local knowledge of the client rather than solely the distant one of the expert. Cultural practices and beliefs which may not be recognized in the

vocabulary of modernization have been proven as efficient as professional norms. Both of these paradigms should be related in a balanced way rather than in an hierarchical, exclusive either-or fashion (Apffel-Marglin 1990). One duty of the developer is to facilitate the input of the client rather than to exclude it. In addition, involvement of the clients increases the accountability of a development institution.

Fifth, moral values and political stands do not have to be abandoned in order to achieve every day necessities in a challenging situation. Both ends should not be looked upon as mutually exclusive. Rather, they are complimentary. Refugee participation in the development process was based on moral values as well as tangible needs of daily life that varied widely, from a need for food to a need for physical infrastructure.

Finally, UNRWA had unintended planning outcomes. This is best exemplified through its educational system, which trained thousands of well-educated professionals who worked in the Gulf countries, Jordan, and the West.

Future Research:

There are many ideas for follow-up research that come out of this study.

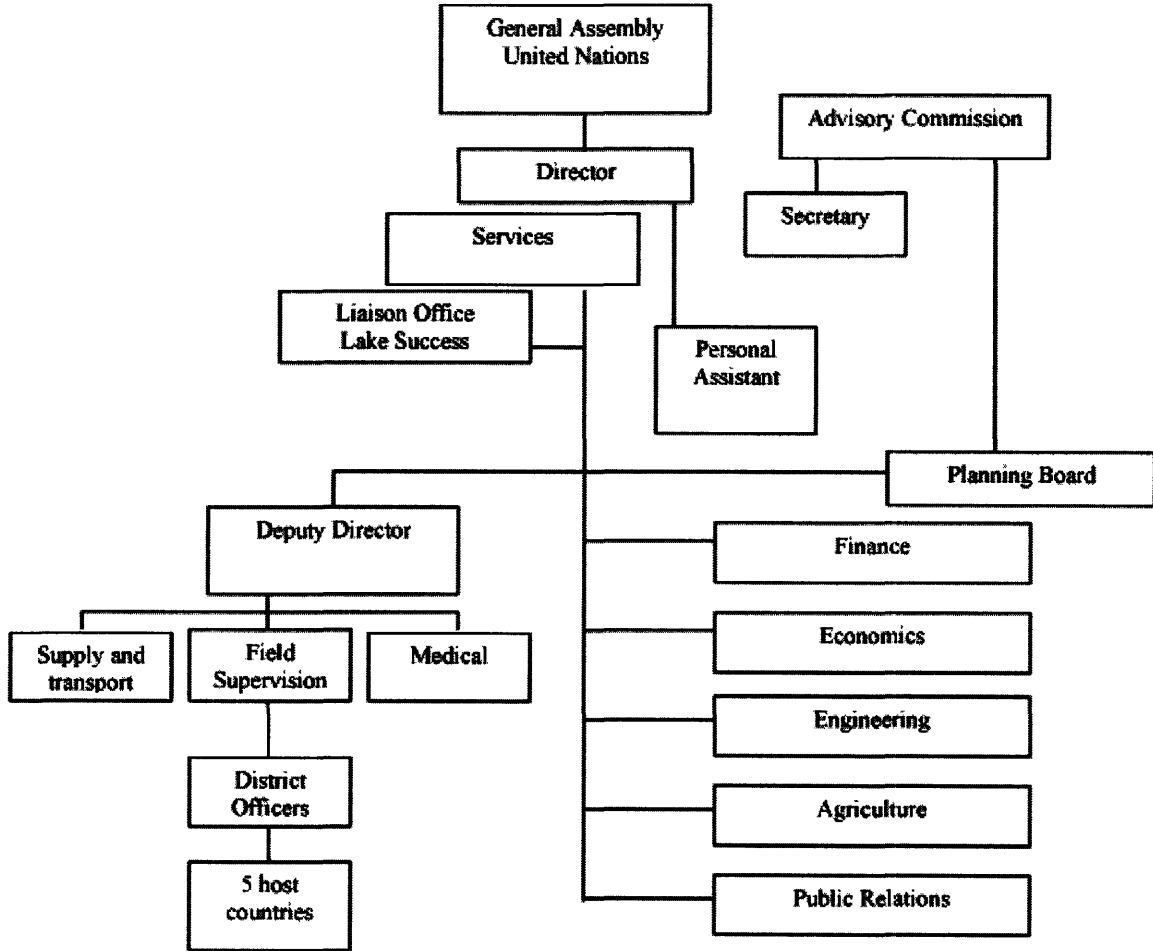
There is a need to examine other variables that might have influenced the refugees' participation, including spatial concentrations, policies adopted by different host countries, political representation, and the emergence of Palestinian political parties. This research has not touched upon the divide between refugees who live in the camps and those who do not. Relating the findings of this study to a certain spatial context will allow us to build a correlation between the level and the form of activism on one side and the spatial concentrations of refugees on the other.

This research has looked upon refugees in Jordan, which is the only host country that awarded the refugees citizenship. Comparing those refugees with others in Lebanon or Syria may help us understand the role of nation-states in encouraging or discouraging activism among the refugees.

By the same token, there is a need to put this research in a wider context by relating refugees' participation to possible long-term consequences such as the emergence of Palestinian political parties (e.g. Fatah) or civil society in Jordan or the preservation of the Palestinian identity distinct from the Jordanian one. This would necessitate extending the time of the research until the 1960s when Fatah, among many other political parties, was formally established and recognized.

APPENDICES

a) UNRWA organization: 1950 (Source: Schiff 1995)



b) Growth in education: teachers and training places in the four host countries⁹
(1950-1960)

Year	Elementary	Preparatory	Schools	Teachers	Vocational Training
1950	41,053	NA	64	800	0
1955	98,427	6,242	264	2,670	303
1960	103,632	19,639	382	3,494	805

Source: Schiff, 1995

c) Major contributors to UNRWA: 1950-1969

Contributor	Contribution	% of total
USA	456	68.10%
UK	110	16.3
Canada	24	3.6
France	16	2.3
Sweden	11	1.7

Source: Schiff, 1995

⁹ Separate data about Jordan are not available.

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