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A Targeted Approach? A Study of NGO Roles and Practices in Promoting Economic Development

Emma Shoaf
Western Kentucky University, emma.shoaf730@topper.wku.edu

A TARGETED APPROACH? A STUDY OF NGO ROLES AND PRACTICES IN PROMOTING ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

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By:

Emma Caroline Shoaf

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CE/T Committee:

Professor Soleiman Kiasatpour, Advisor

Professor Inmaculada Pertusa

Professor Dana Bradley

Approved By

_____
Advisor
Department of Political Science

ABSTRACT

In recent years, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) have become key actors promoting economic development. Despite their rapid rise, there are still significant gaps in the development sphere regarding what NGOs do in specific contexts. This research evaluates how NGOs promote economic development among Palestinian refugees in Lebanon to give context to general trends within development literature. Through an in-depth case study of the NGO *Cives Mundi* and their recent development project *Tatreez*–focused on promoting economic empowerment among Palestinian refugee women through the formation of a weaving co-op–this study seeks to evaluate key advantages and disadvantages to NGO work in specific contexts to explain the variation in NGO strategies for promoting economic development. Through analyzing the reaction and adaptation of the NGO *Cives Mundi* to the changing environment within their areas of intervention, this research will analyze how NGOs react to their environment and how their experience fits in with generalizations made within existing development frameworks.

Keywords: Economic Development, NGOs, International Relations, Foreign Aid, Empowerment, Participation

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VITA

December 15, 1993 .....Born, Lexington, Kentucky

2012..... Paul Laurence Dunbar High School, Lexington, Kentucky

2014.....KIIS Study Abroad Program, Segovia, Spain

2015..... Project Intern with NGO *Cives Mundi*, Soria, Spain

2016.....CIS Study Abroad Program, Buenos Aires, Argentina

FIELDS OF STUDY

Major Fields: International Affairs & Spanish

Minor Field: International Business

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

NGO	Non-governmental organization
NNGO	Northern non-governmental organization
SNGO	Southern non-governmental organization
PLO	Palestinian liberation organization
PRL	Palestinian refugees from Lebanon
PRS	Palestinian refugees from Syria
UN	The United Nations
UNDP	The United Nations Development Program
UNRWA	The United Nations Relief and Works Agency Agency for Palestinian Refugees in the Near East

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In what is largely seen as a new era of bottom up growth, many analysts characterize NGOs as the "magic bullets," or rather the most effective and efficient actors, for solving development issues.[1] In response to these shifts in development priorities, NGOs are leading what is termed a "quiet revolution" in international development.[2] This revolution—revealed through their rapid growth in number, size, and scope—points to the importance of their role in international development;[3] what lacks clarity is the nature of these roles and how they function in practice. This study seeks to contextualize and evaluate general trends in the development sphere regarding the roles of NGOs in promoting economic development in order to assess how NGOs promote economic development in particular contexts. Through an analysis of key advantages and barriers to NGO functions in these roles, this study will investigate why NGOs pursue particular strategies and explore how these strategies change in response to shifting

[1] Michael Edwards & David Hulme. *Beyond the Magic Bullet: NGO Performance and Accountability in the Post Cold-War World* (London: Earthscan and West Hartford: Kumarian Press, 1995), 3.

[2] Eric Werker & Faisal Z. Ahmed. "What Do Nongovernmental Organizations Do?" *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 22, no. 2 (Spring 2008): 74; Lester M. Salamon. "The Global Associational Revolution: The Rise of Third Sector on the World Scene." *Institute for Policy Study, Johns Hopkins University* (Baltimore, 1993), 1, quoted in William F. Fisher. "Doing Good? The Politics and Antipolitics of NGO Practices." *Annual Review of Anthropology* 26 (1997): 440.

[3] David Lewis & Nazneen Kanji, *NGOs and Development* (New York and Abington: Routledge, 2009). 14.

environments. This study will take an in-depth look at the NGO sector in Lebanon, specifically focusing on the operations of the NGO *Cives Mundi* and their initiatives to promote economic development among Palestinian refugees. More specifically, this research will evaluate their response to the changing contexts within their areas of intervention as they work within Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon. Through a detailed analysis of this case and a comparison with the general findings regarding development initiatives within Lebanon, this study will give insight into how NGOs promote economic development in practice and why they employ the strategies they do.

NGOs themselves are an extremely diverse group of organizations. They vary in function, size, structure, and goals, and operate in diverse contexts. For this study, NGOs are defined as: "private organizations that are self-governing and not-for-profit that pursue humanitarian rather than commercial objectives" whose activities claim to "relieve suffering, promote the interests of the poor, protect the environment, provide basic social services, or undertake community development." Within this definition, NGOs can be segmented further based upon geography: Northern vs. Southern NGOs, where Northern NGOs originate from developed countries and Southern NGOs from developing countries, and also by function[4]: advocacy vs. service provision (note: many NGOs engage in both). This study will focus on Northern NGOs operating in Global South, specifically to promote economic development through both advocacy and service provision.

[4] Werker & Ahmed, "What Do Nongovernmental Organizations Do?" 74; The World Bank, "Working with NGOs: A Practical Guide to Operational Collaboration Between the World Bank and Non-governmental Organizations," *Operations Policy Department, Washington D.C.,* 1995.

What constitutes "economic development" also varies broadly in definition and is commonly, albeit inaccurately, used synonymously with economic growth. This study differentiates between economic growth, measured as an increase in aggregate economic output, and economic development, defined as "activities that expand capacities to realize the potential of individuals, firms or communities who contribute to the advancement of society through the responsible production of goods and services."[5] Based upon this definition, economic development should result in greater prosperity and higher quality of life for individuals.[6] In his international work, Amartya Sen identifies economic development as the support of freedom and autonomy, which allows for increased economic participation and social mobility to permit individuals to develop the capacities to engage, contribute, and benefit from the economy.[7] These outcomes require effective institutions "grounded in norms of openness, tolerance for risk, appreciation for diversity, and confidence in the realization of mutual gain for the public and the private sector."[8] This study will focus on evaluating the roles of NGOs in promoting this definition of economic development. Existing development analysis recognizes the diversity of NGO roles in economic development as they shift within different contexts.[9]

In the following section, I provide a literature review analyzing the what was been said in development literature regarding NGOs and their roles in economic development. Following the literature review, I will apply the conventional wisdom regarding NGOs

[5] Maryann Feldman, Theodora Hadjimichael, Tom Kemeny & Lauren Lanahan. "Economic Development: A Definition and Model for Investment." *Environment and Planning C: Government and Policy* (2014): 20.

[6] Ibid., 21.

[7] Amartya Sen. *Commodities and Capabilities* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), quoted in Ibid., 4-5.

[8] Ibid., 12.

[9] Ibid., 2.

and economic development to a secondary study where I evaluate NGOs working to promote economic development among Palestinian refugees living in Lebanon. I will utilize my more general findings from this secondary analysis to do an in-depth case study of the NGO *Cives Mundi* and their development project *Tatreez*—which aims to economically empower Palestinian refugee women living within refugee camps in Lebanon. This study will identify and evaluate advantages and disadvantages to NGO work in this context and analyze the reaction and adaptation of the NGO *Cives Mundi* to their environment.

While the following literature review analyses the conventional wisdom regarding NGOs and their roles in promoting economic development, this wisdom also asserts that generalizing about the NGO sector is inherently problematic. Development analysts argue that it is necessary to consider the "changing local, regional, national, and international processes and connections which both potentially support or suppress NGO work."[10] The following literature review does evaluate generalizations regarding NGOs and their roles in economic development, however these theoretical limitations must be taken into consideration.

[10] Fisher, "Doing Good? The Politics and Antipolitics of NGO Practices," 449.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Within development studies, there is a distinct divide between critics regarding the roles of NGOs in promoting economic development. Mohan and Stokke identify these viewpoints as being the 'new left' and the 'new right' or 'revisionist neo-liberalism' and 'post-Marxism.'[11] Arturo Escobar makes the same distinction between critics, but categorizes the two groups as supporters of 'alternative development' and 'alternatives to development.'[12] As I continue to discuss these two viewpoints, I will categorize these two sets of critics as supporters of 'alternative development' and 'alternatives to development.'

[11] Giles Mohan & Kristian Stokke. "Participatory Development and Empowerment: The Dangers of Localism," *Third World Quarterly* 21, no. 2 (Apr., 2000): 247.

[12] Arturo Escobar. *Encountering development: The making and unmaking of the Third World*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), quoted in Diana Mitlin, Sam Hickey & Anthony Bebbington. "Reclaiming development? NGOs and the challenge of alternatives." *Global Poverty Research Group.* (2006): 8.

Table 2.1: SUMMARY OF DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORKS

	"Little A" Alternative Development	**Neoliberal Development**	**New Policy Agenda**	**Alternatives to Development**
NGO role in economic development	Fill the gaps between the market and the state through promoting "good governance" and the democratization of civil society	Fill the gaps between the market and the state through promoting neoliberal economic policy	Fill the gaps between the market and the state by combining 'alternative development' and 'neoliberal development	NGOs offer alternatives to traditional development and serve as a means for progressive change
Objectives	To promote entrepreneurs-hip and strengthen social capital to encourage groups to find solutions to their own livelihood needs	To transfer training and skills to help communities compete in markets	To create domestic demand for goods and services, improve productivity, and mobilize the community and the market	To challenge current state and market interests through bottom-up mobilization
Strategies	People-centered approach: participation and empowerment within existing power structure	Market-based solutions: strong property rights, free markets, entrepreneurial freedom	Marketization and privatization Democratization of civil society	People-centered approach: participation and empowerment to challenge current state and market interests
Relations with the state	Cooperate with the state	Cooperate with the state	Cooperate with the state	Oppose the state / seek to reform it

NOTE: While I list 'little A alternative development,' 'neoliberal development,' and the 'new policy agenda' as three separate development frameworks, all three fall within the larger 'alternative development.' When I discuss 'alternative development' vs. 'alternatives to development,' I am discussing all three of these development frameworks simultaneously. In order to prevent confusion, I will refer to the specific 'alternative development' framework as 'little A alternative development' and the larger—which encompasses all three of the development frameworks—simply as 'alternative development.'

ALTERNATIVE DEVELOPMENT

The 'little A alternative development' framework with the larger ‘asserts that NGOs should work within existing development channels and serve to fill gaps between the market and the state by promoting democratization and the growth of a robust civil society.[13] This set of analysts identify NGOs as “critical safety nets” which mitigate the weaknesses in the development process.[14] NGOs should seek to provide alternative routes to development primarily through the contribution of new ideas and programs, which make services more relevant to the poor and more subject to democratic influences.[15] NGOs are key actors in promoting the “progressive development agenda” by bringing ideas about participation, empowerment, gender, and environment to economic development, allowing NGOs to dually promote economic value creation alongside social welfare.[16] In this way, NGOs can pursue objectives the government has previously ignored or is unable to fill and be a viable alternative in development assistance provision.[17] These NGO alternatives primarily exist to target those who do not benefit from traditional development or are marginalized by the existing system.

More specifically, supporters of 'little A alternative development' view NGOs as providing an attractive “people-centered” approach to development. They assert that NGOs hold a comparative advantage in fostering local participation as they have better

[13] Fisher, “Doing Good? The Politics and Antipolitics of NGO Practices,” 444.

[14] Hildy Teegen, Jonathan P. Doh & Sushil Vachani. “The Importance of Nongovernmental Organizations (NGOs) in Global Governance and Value Creation: An International Business Research Agenda.” *The Journal of International Business Studies* 35, no. 6 (Nov. 2004): 468.

[15] John Clark. “Democratizing Development: NGOs and the State,” *Development in Practice* 2, no., 3 (Oct., 1992): 152.

[16] Lewis & Kanji, *NGOs and Development, 17.*

[17] Hedayat Allah Nikkhah & Ma’rof Bin Redzuan. “The Role of NGOs in Promoting Empowerment for Sustainable Community Development.” *Journal of Human Ecology* 30, no. 2 (2010): 85.

connections and presence at the grassroots level.[18] This 'people-centered development', or rather 'participatory development' views people themselves as being experts on their problems and that they should be actively involved in forming solutions.[19] Active involvement within the ‘alternative development’ sphere is largely achieved through the promotion of entrepreneurship and the strengthening of social capital among vulnerable groups to encourage them to find their own solutions to their livelihood needs.[20]

NEOLIBERAL DEVELOPMENT POLICY

Within the larger 'alternative development’, 'neoliberal development policy’ is a variant which places NGOs within the context of neoliberal growth—a development context of shrinking states and expanding markets.[21] As countries develop, strides in economic growth are met with widening gaps between the market and the state, which neoliberals see as leaving a larger space for NGO intervention. Within neoliberal development, NGOs are identified as being “everything governments are not.”[22] Their role is to fill these widening gaps in development by promoting privatization and democratic governance reform.[23]

Neoliberals view NGOs as the ideal actors for solving policy issues through market-based solutions.[24] As identified by 'alternative development' critics, neoliberals also see NGOs as ideal actors for promoting economic development alongside social

[18] Werker & Ahmed, *NGOs and Development*, 80.
[19] Lewis & Kanji, *NGOs and Development*, 40.
[20] Sangeeta Kamat. “The Privatization of Public Interest: Theorizing NGO Discourse in a Neoliberal Era.” *Review of International Political Economy* 11, no.1 (Feb, 2004): 169.
[21] Ibid., 156.
[22] Fisher, “Doing Good? The Politics and Antipolitics of NGO Practices,” 444.
[23] Lewis & Kanji, *NGOs and Development*, 41.
[24] Ibid., 5.

justice. Neoliberals assert that NGOs can advance human well-being through enforcing strong property rights, free markets, and free trade and liberating entrepreneurial freedom and skills.[25] NGOs do this through the transfer of training and skills to help communities and individuals compete in markets, the provision of welfare services by those marginalized by the market, and the democratization and growth of civil society.[26] In practice, NGOs may promote micro-level income-generating activities such as microcredit programs or vocational training to promote small business development, as a means of providing services where the market and state cannot.[27]

Similar to 'little A alternative development,' 'neoliberal development' also employs 'participatory development.' However, Mohan & Stokke clarify that this revised neoliberal position represents a 'top-down' strategy where empowerment can be pursued within the "existing social order [and] without any significant negative effects upon the power of the powerful." Working within the existing power structure is a general trend within these "neoliberal" development initiatives, as they are pursued through collaboration of NGOs and state agencies.[28]

NEW POLICY AGENDA

The 'New Policy Agenda' combines 'little A alternative development' and 'neoliberal frameworks.'[29] This framework takes the "good governance" aspect of 'little A alternative development'—primarily ideas about participation and empowerment—and

[25] Ibid.
[26] Fisher, "Doing Good? The Politics and Antipolitics of NGO Practices," 444.
[27] John Cameron. "Development Economics, the New Institutional Economics and NGOs." *Third World Quarterly* 21, no. 4, NGO Futures Beyond Aid (Aug., 2000): 627.
[28] Mohan & Stokke, "Participatory Development and Empowerment: The Dangers of Localism," 248.
[29] Lewis & Kanji, *NGOs and Development*, 41.

combines them with neoliberal economic policy prescriptions. The New Policy Agenda is comprised of two principal strategies: the marketization and privatization influenced by neoliberal ideals, and the democratization of civil society influenced by the 'little A alternative development' paradigm.[30]

The first strategy—targeting economic markets and the private sector—places NGOs in the role of "efficient and cost-effective service providers" particularly of social welfare.[31] Supporters of the New Policy Agenda see NGOs as the most efficient actors for "achieving economic growth, producing goods, and providing services for the poor."[32] The second strategy—the promotion of "good governance"—places NGOs in an advocacy role, which aims to support civil society and promote communication and participation among beneficiaries. Through encouraging good governance, NGOs are simultaneously promoting democracy, which many argue is a prerequisite for a healthy economy.[33]

As with both 'little A alternative development' and neoliberal discourses, gaps in development are a driving force in the rise of NGOs within the New Policy Agenda. Within environments where the state and the public sector are unable or unwilling to deliver adequate development, NGOs are ideal actors to step in and fill the void.[34] In these contexts, NGO intervention should ideally complement government strategies—specifically in regards to poverty alleviation and economic development initiatives

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[30] Kamat, "The Privatization of Public Interest: Theorizing NGO Discourse in a Neoliberal Era," 170.

[31] Michael Edwards & David Hulme. "Too Close for Comfort? The Impact of Official Aid on Nongovernmental Organizations*." World Development 24*, no. 6 (1996): 1.

[32] Ibid.

[33] Ibid.

[34] S. Akbar Zaidi. "NGO Failure and the Need to Bring Back the State." *Journal of International Development* 11, no. 2 (Mar/Apr., 1999):261.

among the poor. Intervention should aim to create domestic demand for goods and services, improve productivity, and mobilize the community and the market.[35] As NGOs shoulder greater responsibilities of sustainable development, particularly among the most vulnerable and hard to reach within developing countries, they become more crucial actors in state operations.

While NGOs may be ideal actors to pursue these agendas, their close alignment with the state and the market has the potential to be problematic. Stephen Commins hypothesizes that NGOs are in danger of cloaking government inactions or indifference to human suffering or that they simply may not possess the capacity to fill these increasing gaps in development.[36] Similarly, Edwards and Hulme reject the idea that NGOs are the "panacea for the ills that afflict underdeveloped countries," asserting that this places "high and unfair expectations" on the NGO sector.[37] These critiques present two troubling issues: First is that NGOs may simply lack the capacity to fill growing gaps in development within particular countries, or their solutions may not be sustainable in the long-term. The fragmentation of the NGO sector, NGO dependence on outside funding, and their vulnerability to changing contexts, all hinder the sustainability of large-scale service provision.[38] Second, even if NGOs can fill development gaps, their ability to do so may result in the inaction of traditional development actors. Especially in countries where the gaps in development are exceptionally wide—whether that be

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[35] GOM. "Policy Framework for Poverty Alleviation Program," *Longwe PAP Coordinating Unit, Ministry of Economic Planning and Development* (1995), quoted in, Fletcher Tembo. "The Multi-Image Development NGO: An Agent of the New Imperialism?" *Development in Practice* 13, no. 5 (Nov., 2003): 530.

[36] Stephen Commins. "NGOs: ladles in the global soup kitchen?" *Development in Practice* 9, no. 5 (Nov., 1999): 620.

[37] Edwards & Hulme, *Beyond the Magic Bullet: NGO Performance and Accountability in the Post Cold-War World*, 3.

[38] Edwards & Hulme, "Too Close for Comfort? The Impact of Official Aid on Nongovernmental Organizations*,"* 4.

through state inaction or inability to intervene—traditional development actors may become increasingly dependent upon the NGO sector and become even less active in development promotion.

ALTERNATIVES TO DEVELOPMENT

Critics of 'alternative development,' and with it 'little A alternative development,' 'neoliberal development' and the 'New Policy Agenda,' view the current development paradigm as "fundamentally flawed" in that it creates a space "in which only certain things [can] be said."[39] These radical critics claim that empowerment "requires a structural transformation of economic and political relations towards a radically democratized society," and therefore seek alternatives to existing development paradigms.[40] They are skeptical of democratization and see neoliberal top-down approaches as propping up existing power structures. These critics reject development and fear that NGOs are at risk of becoming "attachments to the machine of development.[41] Supporters of 'alternatives to development' also argue that the closeness of NGOs to the mainstream undermines their comparative advantage as development agents.[42] These critics support NGO expansion based upon their ability to offer a different institutional form than the state.[43] Therefore, instead of filling the gap between the market and the state, NGOs should serve as "vehicles for progressive change."[44]

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[39] Fisher, "Doing Good? The Politics and Antipolitics of NGO Practices," 445.
[40] Ibid.
[41] Ibid., 446.
[42] Edwards & Hulme, "Too Close for Comfort? The Impact of Official Aid on Nongovernmental Organizations," 3.
[43] Zaidi, "NGO Failure and the Need to Bring Back the State," 263.
[44] Lewis & Kanji, *NGOs and Development,* 3.

Similar to supporters of 'alternative development,' those advocating 'alternatives to development' also stress the role of NGOs in promoting 'participation' and 'empowerment,' but with very different agendas. [45] Mohan & Stokke emphasize that this form of empowerment and participation seeks to challenge current state and market interests through bottom-up mobilization.[46] Unlike the objectives of the three 'alternative development' frameworks, supporters of 'alternatives to development' view NGOs as being capable of constructing a civil society able to transform existing power relationships and challenging the state and society.[47] So while both of these discourses look to "civil society, participation, and ordinary people for their development vision," their definitions of what constitutes true economic development differ widely.[48]

WHY NGOS MATTER

NGO ADVANTAGES AND FUNCTIONS

NGOs hold distinct advantages in promoting economic development. Streeten identifies the advantages of NGOs as: their ability to reach and mobilize the poor, to empower people to improve their quality of life and strengthen local institutions, to carry out projects at lower costs and more efficiently than government, and to promote

[45] Ibid.

[46] Mohan & Stokke, "Participatory Development and Empowerment: The Dangers of Localism," 249.

[47] Fisher, "Doing Good? The Politics and Antipolitics of NGO Practices," 445.

[48] R. Peets & M. Watts. "Liberation ecology: development, sustainability, and environment in an age of market triumphalism." *Liberation Ecologies: Environment, Development and Social Movements* (London: Routledge, 1996): 1-45, quoted in Mohan & Stokke, "Participatory Development and Empowerment: The Dangers of Localism," 247.

sustainable development.[49] The World Bank identifies similar NGO advantages, in that NGOs strengths lie in their ability to reach poor communities and remotes areas, promote local participation, operate at low cost, identify local needs, build on local resources, and introduce new technologies.[50]

All of these advantages display how NGOs are operationally situated to reach the most vulnerable in society—those excluded from mainstream economic development. Through employing participatory development strategies at the local level, NGOs are ideal actors for targeting those which existing services cannot. In this way, NGOs possess a comparative advantage in addressing the needs of the poor and vulnerable in society over governments.[51] As efficient and cost-effective service providers, NGOs are well situated to create programs for the poor, especially the formation of entrepreneurial civil societies to promote sustainable development.[52]

Advantages in targeting the most vulnerable in society hold true when considering NGOs as both 'alternatives to development' and 'alternative development.' Within 'alternative development,' as countries continually shift towards market economies, NGOs can focus on reaching the segments of society that might not be profitable for firms and private investors.[53] Especially when working with marginalized groups: women, refugees, and minorities, NGOs can provide economic opportunities to groups investors find unprofitable. These advantages are increasingly driving NGOs to enter into

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[49] P. Streeten. "Non-governmental Organizations and Development." *Annals of the America Academy of Political and Social Science,* 554 (1997): 193-210.

[50] World Bank, *Key Issues and Themes / NGO Capacity Building of Southern NGOs – The Experience of the World Bank* (1998), quoted in Kamat, "The Privatization of the Public Interest," 169.

[51] Zaidi, "NGO Failure and the Need to Bring Back the State," 262.

[52] Kamat, "The Privatization of the Public Interest," 164.

[53] Ibid.

profit-oriented businesses such as printing, garments, private universities, and consultancy services.[54] NGOs promoting 'alternatives to development' support marginalized segments of society by providing alternatives outside the market. These critics see NGOs as being witnesses to the "devastation wrought by privatization and marketization" and seek to provide alternatives for those on the losing end of economic development.[55]

The adaptability of the NGO sector also gives them the advantage in working with a variety of international actors. Many development analysts identify NGOs as existing within a web of relationships.[56] Their flexible nature has helped them to forge innovative and complex relationships with one another, government agencies, social movements, international development agencies, and transnational issue networks.[57] Cameron describes NGOs as moving "in the triangular space between civil society, the state, and markets.[58] Similarly, Fisher views NGOs as connected with local, regional, national, and international levels.[59] These webs of relationships place NGOs in an intermediary role for both funding and the transfer of ideas.

Recognizing that NGOs provide an alternative and more flexible funding channel, funding is increasingly being directed through NGOs.[60] The idea that NGOs work in

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[54] Jude L. Fernando & Alan W. Heston. "NGOs between States, Markets, and Civil Society." *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 554, The Role of NGOs: Charity and Empowerment (Nov., 1007): 14.

[55] Kamat, "The Privatization of the Public Interest," 167.

[56] Fisher, "Doing Good? The Politics and Antipolitics of NGO Practices," 450.

[57] Ibid., 441.

[58] Cameron, "Development Economics, the New Institutional Economics and NGOs," 632.

[59] Fisher, "Doing Good? The Politics and Antipolitics of NGO Practices," 450.

[60] Lewis & Kanji, *NGOs and Development*, 16; Hildy Teegen, Jonathan P. Doh and Sushil Vachani. "The Importance of Nongovernmental Organizations (NGOs) in Global Governance and Value Creation: An International Business Research Agenda." *The Journal of International Business Studies* 35, no. 6 (Nov. 2004): 469.

conjunction with the state and the market is supported more by the 'alternative development' approach, especially because a significant amount of these funds come from state governments and private corporations. However, NGOs existing as 'alternatives to development' are closely linked with civil society and existing social movements.

Connections and links to funding also result in partnerships. In his paper on the changing relationships between development NGOs and development policy, David Lewis discusses the shifts from NGOs implementing their own development projects to a partnership approach. He specifically analyzes NNGOs (Northern NGOs) as they form linkages with SNGOs to fund and work alongside them. These shifts place NNGOs in an intermediary position acting as the go-between between industrialized countries, communities, and NGOs in the south. This emerging power structure within development policy characterizes SNGOs as needing "nurturing and support," which NNGOs provide through training and funding.[61] This partnership is an NGO strategy occurring within both categories of development frameworks—'alternatives to development' and 'alternative development,'—as these linkages are based upon mutual goals of northern and southern NGOs.

CHALLENGES

The increasing importance of NGOs in development—largely a symptom of the recognition of their development advantages—does not come without challenges. Fisher claims that heavy praise of the NGO sector is placing unrealistic expectations on NGOs,

[61] David Lewis. "Development Policy and Development NGOs: The Changing Relationship." *Social Policy and Administration* 32, no. 5 (Dec., 1998): 1-4.

which they very well may be unable to meet.[62] The idea that NGOs are "magic bullets" that will "mysteriously but effectively find their target" may be too idealistic as it fails to account for the multitude of factors affecting NGO operations.[63]

A key factor this idealistic viewpoint fails to account for is that NGOs are victims of context. While NGOs possess distinct advantages in operating at the local level, this study argues that they are not immune to the social, economic, and political forces at the national and international levels. These forces can pose conflicting power relations and social inequalities, and pose significant barriers to NGO operations.[64]

NGOS AND THE STATE

The viewpoint that NGOs operate separately from the state is especially problematic. While many NGOs do not work directly with the state, the perceived separation of NGOs from government fails to consider that NGOs must exist within the national policy environment. The relationship the NGO sector develops with a state will vary significantly country to country and differ based upon the objectives the NGO is pursuing and the laws and regulations that accompany their work.[65] So as victims of their context, NGOs must choose how best to react to the environment created by the state government.

In his analysis of NGOs and their relationship with the state, John Clark wrote:

> "NGOs can oppose the state, complement it, or reform it—but they cannot ignore it."[66]

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[62] Fisher, "Doing Good? The Politics and Antipolitics of NGO Practices," 443.
[63] Ibid.
[64] Mohan & Stokke, "Participatory Development and Empowerment: The Dangers of Localism," 249.
[65] Fernando & Heston, "NGOs between States, Markets, and Civil Society," 11.
[66] Clark, "Democratizing Development: NGOs and the State," 152.

Supporters of the larger 'alternative development' argue that NGOs should complement the state by filling the gaps in government services.[67] They claim that collaborating with the state to align their objectives with those of the government can help advance NGO intervention and give NGOs a greater chance of achieving impact.[68] In these roles, NGOs rise out of gaps in development: either the failure of state-led approaches or the unwillingness of the state to address underdevelopment.[69]

Within this field of thought, cooperation with the state exists on two distinct levels: First is the idea that NGOs should seek to improve government services. Whaites argues that NGOs should include state capacity building as a key component of their projects.[70] Because NGOs possess direct connections to beneficiaries, they are the ideal actors to make government services more relevant to the vulnerable portions of society.[71]

The second level of cooperation is more of a tolerance between the state and NGOs rather than a collaboration. Clark identifies this as a "friendly coexistence" between NGOs and governments when NGOs solely require the freedom to pursue their development operations and are not seeking to influence wider areas of development planning.[72] Because these projects do not pose a challenge to state operations, the state will not pose additional barriers to these NGOs.[73] Even if these initiatives do not openly complement state operations, the mere fact that the NGO is not working counter to the

[67] Ibid.

[68] Edwards & Hulme. "Scaling up NGO Impact on Development: Learning from Experience." *Development in Practice* 2, no. 2 (Jun., 1992): 79.

[69] Lewis, "Development Policy and Development NGOs: The Changing Relationship," 8.

[70] W. Whaites. "NGOs, Civil Society and the State." *Development in Practice* 8, no. 3 (1998): 343-353.

[71] Clark, "Democratising Development: NGOs and the State," 152.

[72] Ibid, 151.

[73] Ibid.

government will leave the NGO untouched from government barriers.[74] While this hands-off relationship can function under particular circumstances, the inaction of government can also pose issues in areas with poor infrastructure and few resources.[75]

Tensions arise between the state and NGO sector when the development theory of an NGO is different from that of the government, which is often the case with NGOs stressing people's participation, empowerment, and democracy.[76] While supporters of NGOs as 'alternatives to development' view NGO-led state opposition as a key role of NGO initiatives—as they argue that the advantages of NGOs lie in their ability to offer a different institutional form than the state—the barriers presented when pursuing these objectives is pushing many NGOs to change their strategies for relating to the state.[77]

NGOs are increasingly pursuing interventions that do not actively oppose the state. These development initiatives often promote participation and empowerment within existing state power structures and seek to promote economic development to take pressure off of existing state services. Projects of this nature seek to improve the standard of living for the most vulnerable in society—many times groups which existing services do not reach. While many argue that the inability to restructure existing power systems is a core weakness of NGO operations, Clark argues that it displays their capacity for political analysis, self-awareness, and persuasiveness.[78] Based upon this argument, NGOs

[74] Ibid.
[75] Edwards & Hulme, "Scaling up NGO Impact on Development: Learning from Experience," 78.
[76] Clark, "Democratising Development: NGOs and the State," 151.
[77] Ibid., 152.
[78] Ibid.

are aware of their inability to provide solutions to national problems, and seek to work where they have the advantage.[79]

In the following chapters, I will apply Clark and Whaites' generalizations regarding NGOs and their relationship with the state to test their relevance in practice. Through both my secondary analysis of NGOs working with Palestinian refugees in Lebanon and my case study of *Cives Mundi* and their experience working with the Lebanese central government throughout their intervention I will examine the validity of Clark and Whaites' arguments and address their shortcomings.

DONOR PRESSURE

Both 'alternative development' and 'alternatives to development' recognize that NGOs adapt to donor pressure. Very few NGOs are self-funded and therefore cannot pursue their projects without outside support.[80] The dependence upon donor money and the desire of NGOs to satisfy donors' demands results in NGO expansion that many view as almost entirely "donor-driven."[81]

Donor power is rooted within a sector environment where money is scarce and NGOs are plentiful. These conditions create rising competition amongst NGOs for funding resources—not only against one another, but against private-sector development firms as well.[82] The increased competition for resources gives donors the power to choose which types of projects they want to support. On the one hand, donor power can be positive. Through funding allocation, donors can ensure the most competitive projects get

[79] Ibid.
[80] Zaidi, "NGO Failure and the Need to Bring Back the State," 263.
[81] Ibid.
[82] Werker & Ahmed, "What Do Nongovernmental Organizations Do?" 80.

the money.[83] Their funding calls can specify particular added-value elements such as replicability, scaling-up, gender benchmarks, and environmental requirements to be included within development projects. Donor control can also increase the transparency of NGO projects, as they can set the standards for audits and external investigations. On the other hand, donor power can be a tool for funders to pursue their own objectives. The close collaboration between NGOs and governments becomes particularly contentious when considering that national governments are often the largest financial contributor to NGOs, deepening their influence over NGO intervention.[84]

With Northern NGOs, particularly, national governments from the North are channeling money through NNGOs to provide development aid in the south. In these situations, NNGOs find themselves caught between "one country's concern and the problems of people in another."[85] Critics of 'alternative development' argue that this relationship forces NNGOs to pursue the agenda of the state and market rather than that of the poor. NNGOs, then, are simply "operating in the shadows of the neo-liberal agenda" motivated by the influx of money to fill the gap where the state is absent.[86] This radical viewpoint sees NNGOs as slowly converting into public service contractors as they become increasingly professionalized and depoliticized.[87]

The argument that NGOs are becoming increasingly depoliticized is well supported within development literature. The core rationale behind this shift is that NGOs are less willing to pursue objectives conflicting with their funders and home governments

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[83] Ibid.
[84] Ibid., 78.
[85] Lewis, "Development Policy and Development NGOs: The Changing Relationship" 8.
[86] Tembo, "The Multi-Image Development NGO: An Agent of the New Imperialism?" 527.
[87] Edwards & Hulme, "Scaling up NGO Impact on Development: Learning from Experience," 87.

(though they are frequently one and the same).[88] Their vulnerability as beneficiaries of outside funding and support is a key driver pushing NGOs to change their goals.[89] The result is an NGO sector that is shying away from social mobilization towards the provision of services and development initiatives.[90]

ADDRESSING ROOT CAUSES OF PROBLEMS

The trend that NGOs are shifting their objectives to align with states and donors is supported by the claim that NGOs do not address the root causes of problems.[91] Within these environments, NGOs actively campaigning for political change and the strengthened rights of beneficiaries may threaten their established interests and risk losing their financial and political support.[92] For this reason, NGOs are as likely to maintain the status quo as to change it, causing them to address symptoms of underdevelopment rather than root causes.[93] This is a key critique from radicals or the 'alternatives to development' perspective,' who see NGOs promoting 'alternative development' as supporting an existing power structure that is keeping marginalized populations from being independent.[94]

Another key factor disabling NGOs from addressing the root causes of underdevelopment is simply their capacity. The majority of NGOs are small, and the NGOs sector is incredibly fragmented; while these traits provide many advantages to

[88] John Clark. "NGOs and Politics in the Developing World." *International Development* 20 (Swansea, Wales: Center for Development Studies, 1996), quoted in Fisher, "Doing Good? The Politics and Antipolitics of NGO Practices," 454.

[89] Zaidi, "NGO Failure and the Need to Bring Back the State," 264.

[90] Fisher, "Doing Good? The Politics and Antipolitics of NGO Practices," 454.

[91] Teegen, Doh & Vachani, "The Importance of Nongovernmental Organizations (NGOs) in Global Governance and Value Creation: An International Business Research Agenda," 472.

[92] Lewis & Kanji, *NGOs and Development*, 30.

[93] Fisher, "Doing Good? The Politics and Antipolitics of NGO Practices," 453.

[94] Kamat, "The Privatization of the Public Interest," 168.

local development initiatives, they also result in micro-successes that can rarely be scaled-up enough to affect the macro-level or be powerful enough to completely restructure oppressive power systems. For example, an NGO project providing professional training to 100 vulnerable individuals may impact the economy surrounding community, but will most likely have no affect on a macro-economic scale. Therefore, while NGOs may successfully promote economic development within a community, they are rarely able to restructure larger power systems and resource allocation methods which may be hindering development within a state or for a particular group.[95]

NEED FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Despite being the "favored child of official development agencies," NGOs may not be the "new panacea to cure all the ills that have befallen the development process" as previously thought.[96] As the challenges facing the NGO sector continue to weigh against its distinct advantages, it is becoming clearer that the operational impact of NGOs in promoting economic development may be less than previously claimed.[97]

However, these assertions do not hold true for all NGOs. The roles of the NGO sector are constantly redefined as contexts and objectives continue to shift.[98] The fragmentation of the NGO sector, displayed through the wide differentiation of organizational structure, strategies, objectives, and areas of intervention, make generalizations regarding NGO roles in development inherently problematic. While the

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[95] Warren Nyamugasira. "NGOs and Advocacy: how well are the poor represented?" *Development and Advocacy* (OXFAM, 2002): 7.

[96] Edwards & Hulme, "Too Close for Comfort? The Impact of Official Aid on Nongovernmental Organizations*,"* 3.

[97] Commins. "NGOs: ladles in the global soup kitchen?" 620.

[98] Lewis, "Development Policy and Development NGOs: The Changing Relationship" 7.

preceding analysis of the conventional wisdom regarding these roles and their outcomes can provide key insights regarding general trends in the NGO sector, these observations do not hold true across the board to all development NGOs.[99] In order to assess how NGOs promote economic development in practice, analyzing what is happening within specific organizations and places is imperative and is what I aim to do in the remaining sections of this study.[100]

Current empirical studies regarding the NGO sector are typically placed within the 'development studies' research agenda, which is an interdisciplinary field employing a wide range of research methodologies.[101] Quantitative studies, such as Salamon and Anheier's "Study of the Third Sector," aim to measure the "relative size and scope of the sector" to draw conclusions regarding the nature of NGOs and the implications of their intervention.[102] The findings of these studies further reveal the claimed diversity of the NGO sector and the implications of the varying roles NGOs play in development.[103] The weaknesses of these studies—the fact that they do not provide insight into how NGO diversity functions in practice and within particular organizations and environments—is supplemented by smaller, qualitative studies. These qualitative studies largely utilize ethnographic work or case study research to contextualize theoretical arguments through detailed descriptions.[104] For example, Maxine Wesgrau's ethnography of NGOs in northern India aims to understand the NGO sector within a specific time and place.[105]

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[99] Tembo, "The Multi-Image Development NGO: An Agent of the New Imperialism?" 532).

[100] Fisher, "Doing Good? The Politics and Antipolitics of NGO Practices," 441.

[101] Lewis & Kanji, *NGOs and Development,* 3.

[102] Ibid.

[103] Ibid.

[104] Ibid.

[105] Maxine Weisgrau. *Interpreting Development: Local Histories, Local Strategies*. (New

The contextual nature of these studies does not aid in the generalizability of the NGO sector, but rather exposes the oversimplification of universal theories regarding NGOs as previously discussed. [106]

William Fisher claims that development literature is "based more on faith than fact," and that detailed studies of what is happening within specific organizations and places which "unpack literature" will provide key insights into the practical functions of the NGO sector. [107] Similarly, Edwards and Hulme claim that sharing ideas and experiences from practical experience is much more useful than reaching artificial agreements. [108] Based upon the objective of utilizing this research for the practical benefit of the NGO sector, my study of NGOs promoting economic development among Palestinian refugees living in Lebanon will provide a better understanding of the practical functions of NGOs within specific places at specific times. This study looks to link generalizations with practical experiences in order to critically examine the viability of development literature as I apply them to NGOs promoting economic development among Palestinians refugees in Lebanon. I will investigate how a lack of understanding of how NGOs operate in specific contexts causes international development to miss the target and places NGOs in development roles they ate unable to fill. Through my practical application of development literature, I will provide evidence to the core argument of this study: that NGOs are unable to fill development gaps when contexts of intervention are not conducive to their operations.

York: University Press, 1997), quoted in, Ibid.

[106] Fisher, "Doing Good? The Politics and Antipolotics of NGO Practices," 449.

[107] Ibid., 441.

[108] Edwards & Hulme, "Scaling up NGO Impact on Development: Learning from Experience," 78.

CHAPTER 3:

METHODOLOGY AND LIMITATIONS

Existing development frameworks do not provide adequate analyses regarding how NGOs promote economic development in practice. In order to analyze how NGOs promote economic development within specific contexts, and how these contexts impact the NGO strategies, this study investigates NGO operations promoting economic development among Palestinian refugees in Lebanon.

In this study, the context of intervention—the geographical environment, donor context, and relations with the state—serves as the independent variable. I argue that the interplay of these factors directly impacts NGO intervention—the dependent variable. This study will analyze how a specific context of intervention impacts NGO development projects and results in distinct advantages and challenges.

In this study, I will apply the generalizations I analyze throughout the preceding literature review to a descriptive, exploratory case study of the development NGO *Cives Mundi* and their intervention aimed towards promoting economic independence among Palestinian refugees within Lebanese refugee camps. I will be analyzing *Cives Mundi's* most recent development project *Tatreez*— focused on promoting economic empowerment among Palestinian refugee women through the formation of a weaving co-op—to evaluate the experience of *Cives Mundi* throughout their intervention.

In order to avoid shortcomings of single case study methodology—most commonly that one case is not enough to draw sound empirical findings—I will also evaluate secondary data regarding NGOs promoting economic development among Palestinian refugees in Lebanon. This will reduce response bias both from interviewees, *Cives Mundi's* reports, and my own observations.[109] This chapter will assess the NGO sector in Lebanon to evaluate the existing information regarding NGOs promoting economic development among Palestinian refugees in Lebanon and how this environment is conducive or harmful to NGO development initiatives. In this section, I will identify the key advantages of and barriers to NGO projects targeting Palestinian refugees in Lebanon and analyze how these environments impact NGO strategies.

I will apply my findings from the secondary analysis to an exploratory case study of the development NGO *Cives Mundi* and their project *Tatreez.* Conducting a practical analysis of a specific project and area of implementation will provide practical insights to NGO functions in reaction to their environment.

I am using single case study methodology because this research surrounds an extreme, unique case, which I think has something special to reveal regarding how NGOs choose to respond to their environment. Studies of this nature are useful for investigating dynamic, experiential and complex processes and areas—especially to examine how organizations adapt to fast-changing and fluid environments.[110] Through evaluating the experience of *Cives Mundi* and their responses to their shifting environment, this study

[109] Tiia Vissak, "Recommendations for Using Case Study Method in International Business Research," *The Qualitative Report* 15, no. 2 (March 2010): 380.

[110] Vissak, "Recommendations for Using Case Study Method in International Business Research," 372.

will provide insight as to why NGOs function and strategize in particular ways.[111] I will draw these conclusions by identifying key advantages and barriers *Cives Mundi* experiences throughout their intervention and examining how the organization adapts their strategies in response to the changing environment. The study will combine holistic case study methodology—examining the case as one unit by focusing on issues of *Cives Mundi's* organizational culture and strategy, and an embedded case study design—exploring individual sub units such as: roles, locations, and meetings within the context of the development project *Tatreez.*

In her article *Using Case Studies in Research*, featured in *Management Research News,* Jennifer Rowley of Manchester Metropolitan University claims that these methodologies allow researchers to paint an overall organizational picture, which is what I aim to do through my case study.[112] Combining these two case study methodologies will ensure that my study is not taking a superficial view of the case. Delving deeper into a single case will also allow the study to develop a high level of "conceptual validity," which Alexander George and Andrew Bennett identify as a key strength of case study research. In their book, *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences*, George & Bennett support one of the primary claims of my study: that conclusions from one country may be completely different from conclusions from another, so direct comparisons may be of little use. Single case study research, however, is advantageous in making "contextualized comparisons" by searching for similarities and discrepancies across contexts. In other words, case study research can evaluate a phenomenon in its

[111] See note 113.

[112] Jennifer Rowley, "Using Case Studies in Research," *Management Research News* 25, no. 1 (2002): 22.

context and expand on existing frameworks by combining generalizations with practical insights.[113] As I am evaluating my case study within the context of my secondary analysis and my broad literature review, this research will add to existing development frameworks and critically test their validity in the context of Lebanon. Through this methodology, my study aims to develop a "higher level of validity over a smaller number of cases" in order to address the important role contextual factors play in NGO intervention.[114] Because this case is so unique, using multiple case study methodology to directly compare experiences would also pose challenges in terms of data availability and hinder the depth of the case study.

The case study of *Cives Mundi* and *Tatreez* will use multiple data sources: interviews with *Cives Mundi's* project manager and the project technician for the Lebanon section, internal narrative reports, strategies and proposals, a documentary detailing the project and its outcomes, external evaluation recommendations from the EU, and direct observations from working within *Cives Mundi's* headquarter office.

The final section will place the case study in the context of existing literature. This section will use the preceding development frameworks as a template to compare the results of the case study in order to contextualize the trends I reveal throughout my primary observations.[115]

As a whole, this study is limited in terms of both generalizability and replicability. However, this research does not seek to better understand these development frameworks

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[113] Robert Yin, *Case Study Research Design and Methods* (London: Sage, 1994) quoted in Vissak, "Recommendations for Using the Case Study Methods in International Business Research," 371; Rowley, "Using Case Studies in Research," 18.

[114] Alexander L George & Andrew Bennett, *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences* (MIT Press, 2005), 19.

[115] Ibid., 20.

by artificially replicating previous studies to add to existing generalizations; this study seeks to evaluate these frameworks in a particular context to analyze how *Cives Mundi* is promoting economic development and why they are employing their particular strategies. This methodology is also appropriate as this study evaluates an extreme, unique case that will critically test existing development frameworks.[116]

In terms of future research, this study can also serve as a preliminary or pilot to multiple case studies, or as a foundation for future statistical studies. As Palestinian refugees continue to reside in Lebanon, additional research regarding NGO intervention could give more insight in regards to effective strategies for NGO adaptation.

[116] Ibid.

CHAPTER 4:

SECONDARY ANALYSIS: NGOS PROMOTING ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AMONG PALESTINIAN REFUGEES IN LEBANON

INTRODUCTION

In order to develop a reference point to validate the results of my single case study methodology, this section will evaluate secondary data regarding NGOs promoting economic development among Palestinian refugees in Lebanon. In this chapter, I will cover a brief historical overview of the economic state of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, assess the roles of NGOs promoting economic development among these groups. I will use this foundation to evaluate how this environment is conducive or harmful to NGO development initiatives by identifying key advantages and barriers to NGO projects targeting Palestinian refugees.

Table 4.1: TIMELINE OF PALESTINIAN REFUGEES IN LEBANON

1943	– Lebanon is recognized as an independent state with close ties to the west[117]
1948	– State of Israel is established – Est. 750,00 Palestinians are displaced from their homes & est. 100,000 flee to Lebanon[118]
1949	– UN establishes the *United Nations Relief and Works Agency* (UNRWA) to advocate and provide services to Palestinian refugees in Arab host countries[119]
1957-1958	– Rising unrest within Lebanon due to religious and political tension – First civil war breaks out[120]
1967	– The Six-Day Arab-Israeli War[121] – PLO (*Palestinian Liberation Organization*) establishes bases in Lebanon[122]
1969	– The *Cairo Declaration* between PLO leadership and the Lebanese army—puts an end to the fighting and "regulates" Palestinians' presence in Lebanon[123]
1970	– PLO transfers leadership from Jordan to Lebanon, further intensifying the conflict[124]
1973	– Israel kills three Palestinian leaders with prominent positions in the PLO – Lebanese government resigns[125]
1975	– Christian gunman attacks bus in Beirut killing 27—mostly Palestinian—passengers – Clashes lead to the outbreak of the second Lebanese civil war[126]
1978	– South Lebanon conflict—victory by Israel and PLO expelled from Southern Lebanon
1982	– Israeli military victory / Syrian de facto occupation of Lebanon[127]

[117] "Timeline of Lebanon's History," *Al Arabiya News*, (October 18, 2007). http://www.alarabiya.net/articles/2007/10/18/40501.html.

[118] Dawn Chatty, "No Refuge: Palestinians in Lebanon – Introduction," *Oxford University Refugee Studies Center*, working paper series no. 64 (June 2010): 3.

[119] Ibid.

[120] "Timeline of Lebanon's History," *Al Arabiya News*, (October 18, 2007).

[121] Ibid.

[122] Al Jazeera and Agencies, "Did the PLO die in Lebanon," *Al Jazeera Media Network*, (July 28, 2009). http://www.aljazeera.com/programmes/plohistoryofrevolution/2009/07/200972855032594820.html.

[123] International Crisis Group, "Nurturing Instability: Lebanon's Palestinian Refugee Camps," 4.

[124] Ibid., 5.

[125] See note 120.

[126] "Lebanon Profile – Timeline," *BBC*, (April 29, 2015). http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-14649284.

	– PLO "expulsion" from Lebanon—remains active in Lebanon, but is severely weakened[128] – Shrinking PLO services, rising role of NGOs[129]
1989-1990	– The Taif Accords end the Lebanese civil war[130]
1991	– The Lebanese army defeats the PLO[131]
1991-present	– Oslo Accords between the PLO and Israeli government – The Lebanese state excludes Palestinian refugee camps from postwar rebuilding strategies – The Weakened state of the PLO in Lebanon creates results in the rising role of NGOs to supplement UNRWA service provision[132]

PALESTINIAN REFUGEES IN LEBANON:

ONGOING TENSION AND RESTRICTIVE POLICY

The long-term presence of the Palestinian refugee population, the role of the PLO in the Lebanese civil war, and the view that these refugee groups place a "burden" on the Lebanese state and the economy has resulted in exclusive, restrictive policies vis-à-vis Palestinian refugees in Lebanon.

The Lebanese state views Palestinian refugees as "temporary guests" who are the responsibility of the international community. This impermanent status grants Palestinian refugees the right to reside temporarily in Lebanon, but no other economic, social, or legal rights.[133]

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[127] Rongxing Guo, *Territorial Disputes and Conflict Management: The Art of Avoiding War* (Routledge, August 17, 2011), 71.

[128] Al Jazeera and Agencies, "Timeline: Palestinians Since 1915," *Al Jazeera Media Network*, (February 1, 2009). http://www.aljazeera.com/focus/arabunity/2008/02/20085251908164329.html.

[129] Aziza Khalidi, "Managing Adversity: Palestinian Refugee Women in Lebanon," *Association Najdeh* (July 18, 2011): 14.

[130] "Lebanon Profile – Timeline," *BBC.*

[131] Ibid.

[132] See note 129.

[133] Chatty, "No Refuge: Palestinians in Lebanon – Introduction," 4-5.

On an international policy level, Lebanon has not ratified the Geneva Convention of 1951 nor the 1967 Protocol related to the Status of Refugees.[134] At the national level, Palestinian refugees within Lebanon do not have the right to own or inherit property, the right to primary or secondary education, or the right to utilize public health or social security services.[135] This "restrictive and exclusive" approach towards the Palestinian refugee population denies them access to the legal, economic, and social system.[136]

From an economic standpoint, Lebanese restrictions on Palestinian refugees hinder their opportunities for economic development. First, Lebanese policy severely limits Palestinian participation in the labor force. While Palestinian refugees in Jordan and Syria have the right to work, Palestinian refugees in Lebanon only recently gained the right to work in restricted careers and are excluded completely from professions such as law and medicine.[137]

In the past, Lebanese labor law was based on the principles of reciprocity and the requirement to obtain a work permit. The principle of reciprocity—which stated that Lebanon would treat foreign workers with the same benefits Lebanese citizens received in their country of origin—did not account for the statelessness of Palestinians. This principle denied work permits or social security benefits to Palestinians, because they lacked a state, which could provide those rights to foreign Lebanese workers.[138]

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[134] Delphine Torres Tailfer, "Women and Economic Power in Lebanon: The Legal framework and challenges to women's economic empowerment," *Collective for Research and Training Development* (Seminar, National Knowledge-Sharing Seminar, Beirut, 2010): 25.

[135] ANERA Report 3

[136] Suleiman Jaber, "Marginalised Community: The Case of Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon," *Development Research Center on Migration, Globalisation, and Poverty,* April 2006: 3.

[137] Nada Al-Nashif & Samir El-Khoury, "Palestinian Employment in Lebanon: Facts and Challenges," 21; Khalili, "A Landscape of uncertainty: Palestiniana in Lebanon," 34.

[138] Al-Nashif & El-Khoury, "Palestinian Employment in Lebanon: Facts and Challenges," 21.

In 2005, the Lebanese government issued a memorandum allowing Palestinian refugees born in Lebanon who register with the Lebanese Ministry of Labor to participate in 70 administrative and commercial professions.[139] While this legislation created new opportunities for many Palestinians in Lebanon, it maintained the ban on medicine and law, and required Palestinians already working within these sectors informally to pay for a work permit.[140] In 2010, the Lebanese Parliament passed legislation which waived work permit fees for Palestinian refugees born in Lebanon, and repealed the reciprocity of treatment policy.[141] While these amendments were regarded as a step in the right direction, they maintained the ban on a list of 30 restricted professions, which are primarily white collar positions.[142]

Because Lebanese policy makes it extremely difficult to find employment within the formal economy, Palestinian refugees in Lebanon most commonly work in sectors which do not require work permits—only about 2% of Palestinian refugees have a work permit—and engage in agriculture, construction, sanitation, electrical, and textile fields.[143] They are employed on a productivity basis—daily or weekly for private organizations—and work primarily in the informal economy, which leaves them vulnerable to labor rights violations.[144] Most work without a written contract, do not

[139] Ibid., 22.
[140] Ibid.
[141] Ibid.
[142] Ibid., 23; ANERA, Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon," *ANERA's on-the-ground series,* 5.
[143] Al-Nashif & El-Khoury, "Palestinian Employment in Lebanon: Facts and Challenges," 17; Jaber, "Marginalised Community: The Case of Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon," 17; ANERA, Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon," *ANERA's on-the-ground series,* 5.
[144] ANERA, Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon," *ANERA's on-the-ground series,* 5; Al-Nashif & El-Khoury, "Palestinian Employment in Lebanon: Facts and Challenges," 16.

receive health coverage or sick leave, and are not entitled to a pension.[145] Even skilled Palestinians (engineers, technicians, physicians) commonly work illegally for low wages in the private sector, and therefore do not qualify for social security provisions.[146] The "vulnerable and insecure working status" of Palestinian refugees is one of high unemployment—particularly among youth, women, and those with higher education—and low wages, where the average monthly income is far below minimum wage.[147]

The economic situation within Palestinian refugee camps is particularly dire. The Palestinian refugee population living within refugee camps face overcrowded, sub-standard living conditions, where they must deal with heightened "discrimination, isolation and social exclusion."[148] The Lebanese government limits the expansion and reconstruction of the camps, and places tight restrictions on movement through checkpoints.[149] The restriction of movement and poor infrastructure within the camps further hinders trade and commerce.[150] Most Palestinians are unable to find jobs or start businesses outside the camps, so many have small shops to provide goods and services within the camps.[151]

The International Labour Organization & the Committee for the Employment of Palestinian Refugees assert that:

> "the development conditions of Palestinian refugees are very much linked to their employment status, [and that] the lack of access to fair

[145] Al-Nashif & El-Khoury, "Palestinian Employment in Lebanon: Facts and Challenges," 17.
[146] Jaber, "Marginalised Community: The Case of Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon," 17.
[147] Al-Nashif & El-Khoury, "Palestinian Employment in Lebanon: Facts and Challenges," 17.
[148] ANERA, Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon," *ANERA's on-the-ground series,* 4; "Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon," *ANERA's on-the-ground series,* volume 3 (June 2012): 2.
[149] Chatty, "No Refuge: Palestinians in Lebanon – Introduction," 5; ANERA, Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon," *ANERA's on-the-ground series,* 3.
[150] ANERA, Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon," *ANERA's on-the-ground series,* 3.
[151] Khalili, "A Landscape of uncertainty: Palestiniana in Lebanon," 34.

> job opportunities and decent work is exacerbating the vicious cycle of impoverishment and precarious conditions that Palestinians endure."[152]

In their collaborative work detailing the employment challenges facing Palestinians in Lebanon, the ILO and the Committee for the Employment of Palestinian Refugees argue that granting economic rights to Palestinian refugees will improve their socio-economic conditions and enable them to become less dependent on aid. They advocate integrating Palestinian refugees into the Lebanese labor market in order to improve the economic well-being of Palestinians as well as stability within Lebanon.[153]

The discrimination aimed towards Palestinian refugees—specifically restrictions in the labor market—results in high unemployment and dependence upon the aid structure.[154] Lebanese policy vis-à-vis Palestinian employment is largely based on the view that Palestinian refugees place a burden on the Lebanese economy and the idea that granting Palestinians the right to work will limit job opportunities for Lebanese citizens.[155] The harsh reality is that excluding Palestinians from the labor force is forcing their dependence on outside aid. [156]

THE NGO SECTOR IN LEBANON:
KEY ACTORS – UNRWA & PLO

In 1950, two years after the displacement of the Palestinian people, the UN established the *United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees in the*

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[152] Al-Nashif & El-Khoury, "Palestinian Employment in Lebanon: Facts and Challenges," 16.
[153] Ibid., 23.
[154] ANERA, Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon," *ANERA's on-the-ground series,* 2.
[155] Al-Nashif & El-Khoury, "Palestinian Employment in Lebanon: Facts and Challenges," 54.
[156] Ibid.

Near East (UNRWA) to advocate and provide services to Palestinian refugees in Arab host countries.[157] At this point, the UNRWA was the sole service provider for Palestinians living in Lebanon, because the Lebanese government banned other organizations from operating within the refugee camps.[158] The UNRWA became responsible for providing services such as: healthcare, education, food, and shelter for Palestinian refugees living in Lebanon, and relieved the Lebanese state of the social and economic responsibilities concerning Palestinian refugees.[159] The UNRWA also worked in coordination with the Lebanese government to create 15 camps for Palestinian refugees living within Lebanon, however UNRWA was responsible for all service provision within the camps and the Lebanese state became responsible only for security provision.[160]

The UNRWA is criticized not only for being chronically underfunded, but also for being limited in their coverage—both in terms of the services they provide and to the number of people they reach. The dependence of the Palestinian people on the UNRWA leaves significant portions of the population with limited or no access to services.[161] Also, while the majority of Palestinian refugees are "registered" refugees by the UNRWA and the Lebanese authorities, "non-registered" and "non-identified" refugees fall outside the UNRWA mandate and have limited access to UNRWA services.[162]

The PLO (*Palestinian Liberation Organization*) in Lebanon has historically attempted to fill the gap in UNRWA services. During the height of their presence in

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[157] Ibid.
[158] Ajial Center, "Palestinian Non-Government Organizations in Lebanon."
[159] Chatty, "No Refuge: Palestinians in Lebanon – Introduction," 4.
[160] Ibid.
[161] See note 158.
[162] Danish Refugee Council, "Survey Report on the Situation of Non-Id Palestinian Refugees – Lebanon," (Beirut, September 2007).

Lebanon, the PLO led movements to establish organizations to improve living conditions within Palestinian refugee camps.[163] Specifically following the *Cairo Declaration* in 1969, Lebanon began to allow other organizations to provide services to Palestinian refugees. The PLO led the movement to establish such organizations and formed committees and institutions within the camps.[164] In this way, the PLO served as an "umbrella structure" to connect social and health institutions, which improved living conditions within the camps.[165]

While the presence of the PLO largely improved the living conditions and access to services for Palestinian refugees, the presence of the PLO was largely seen as exacerbating the 1975-1990 civil war.[166] The role of the PLO in promoting armed conflict led to their official evacuation from Lebanon in 1982, leaving the Palestinian refugee population dependent once again on the UNRWA as PLO-created organizations crumpled.[167]

THE RISE OF NGOS IN LEBANON: ROLES AND FUNCTIONS

The shirking of responsibility on the part of the Lebanese state, the consistent restrictions of the civil and economic rights of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, and the dearth of UNRWA and PLO resources leaves growing space for NGO intervention to fill

[163] Ajial Center, "Palestinian Non-Government Organizations in Lebanon."
[164] Ibid.
[165] Aziza Khalidi, "Managing Adversity: Palestinian Refugee Women in Lebanon," *Association Najdeh* (July 18, 2011): 14.
[166] International Crisis Group, "Nurturing Instability: Lebanon's Palestinian Refugee Camps," *Middle East Report* no. 84 (19 February 2009): i.
[167] Ajial Center, "Palestinian Non-Government Organizations in Lebanon."

development gaps.[168] In 2001, the *Ajial Center*, the Statistic and Documentation Office based in Beirut, Lebanon, reported that there were 46 Arab and 20 foreign NGOs providing assistance to Palestinian refugees in Lebanon.[169] These NGOs "play a dual role of service provision in addition to advocacy," largely to complement UNRWA intervention.[170]

Within Lebanon, there are two main types of NGOs licensed to work with the Palestinian community: First, are local NGOs "licensed by mean of attestation and declaration granted by ministry of the interior." Due to their close geographical and cultural proximity, these local Arab and Islamic NGOs (SNGOs) are more involved in the actual provision of services.[171] At the same time, these NGOs are considered Palestinian, as their administrative bodies are made up of primarily Palestinians. This "ambiguous" status makes these organizations subject to heightened legal restrictions.[172] Second, are foreign NGOs—which must get a license by presidential decree to operate in Lebanon.[173] The role of the foreign NGOs (NNGOs) is primarily one of funding, with the exception of a few who are involved directly with refugees.[174]

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[168] Aziza Khalidi, "Managing Adversity: Palestinian Refugee Women in Lebanon," *Association Najdeh* (July 18, 2011): 14.

[169] Ajial Center, "Palestinian Non-Government Organizations in Lebanon."

[170] Aziza Khalidi & Samar El-Yassir, "Rights of the Palestinian Child in Lebanon," *Coordination Forum of NGOs Working Among the Palestinian Community in Lebanon – Third Supplementary Report* (2005): 5.

[171] Ibid.

[172] Jaber, "Marginalised Community: The Case of Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon," 20.

[173] Ibid.

[174] Ajial Center, "Palestinian Non-Government Organizations in Lebanon."

Table 4.2: LOCAL VS. FOREIGN NGO ROLES

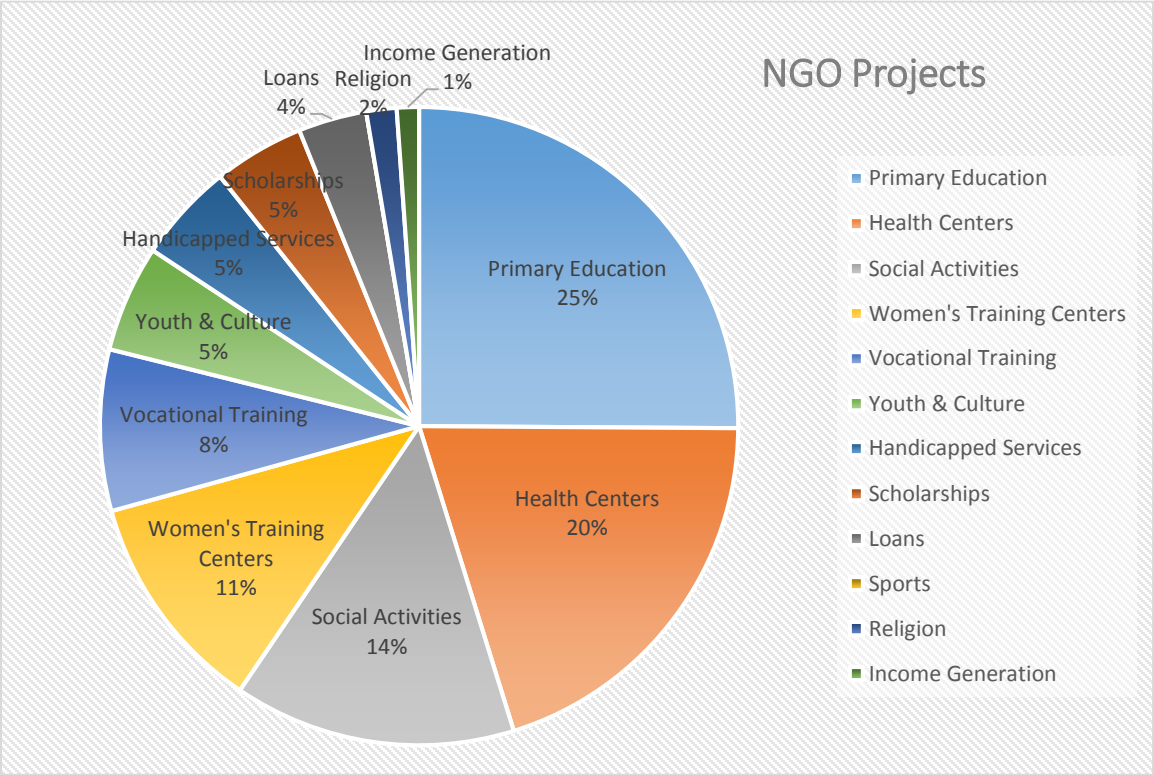
Local NGOs (SNGOs)	Foreign NGOs (NNGOs)
Service provision: Implement development projects—mostly in health and primary education sectors—with significant funding from foreign NGOs.	**Combination of funding and/or service provision:** Fund local NGOs and their projects / implement their own development projects

In their 2001 study, the *Ajial Center* sampled 20 foreign NGOs and detailed the nature of their activities within Palestinian refugee camps. From this sample, 12 out of the 20 foreign NGOs identified "financial support" as a primary activity; Of these 12 funding NGOs, 7 were also involved in service provision—mostly in health and primary education sectors.[175] Of these 7 "active" foreign NGOs, 4 identified economic development (vocational training or loans) as a key part of their activities.[176]

Local NGOs hold a similar pattern. The following chart shows an overview of local NGO projects—largely funded by foreign NGOs—targeted towards Palestinian refugees living in Lebanese refugee camps:

[175] Ibid.
[176] Ibid.

Chart 4.3: NGO SERVICES IN LEBANESE REFUGEE CAMPS[177]



The above graph, adapted from the *Ajial Center's* 2001 study, shows the wide range of NGO services within Lebanese refugee camps, but also a limited focus on economic development projects. From *Ajial's* sample—roughly 265 NGO projects—the categories: income generation, loans, vocational training, and women's training centers only combine to about 24%.[178]

While the gap in PLO and UNRWA services has been partially filled by local and foreign NGOs, their assistance still leaves significant portions of the population without access to services, especially economic development services.[179] Because the restrictions placed upon the Palestinian refugee community leave them almost completely dependent

[177] Ibid.
[178] Ibid.
[179] Khalili, "A Landscape of uncertainty: Palestiniana in Lebanon," 34; Aziza Khalidi, "Managing Adversity: Palestinian Refugee Women in Lebanon," *Association Najdeh* (July 18, 2011): 14.

on the aid structure–for everything from humanitarian assistance to schools and employment—access to these basic services is imperative.[180]

FILLING DEVELOPMENT GAPS

The role of NGOs in development within Lebanon has primarily been to fill the gaps between the state and the market. Throughout the entirety of the civil war (1975-1990), when societal needs were not being met, market and government failures created a wide gap for NGOs.[181] During this time period, NGOs—development NGOs in particular—made up for deficiencies in existing services by complementing state development initiatives.[182]

However, in the case of Palestinian refugees—where the state is largely absent—the PLO and the UNRWA fill a quasi-state role in regards to service provision and development among Palestinian refugees. Following the exile of the PLO from Lebanon, the UNRWA became the primary service provider for Palestinian refugees.[183] Within this unique context, NGOs promoting "alternative development" seek to fill the gaps in UNRWA services, not those of the state or the formal market (as Palestinians are largely excluded from both). NGOs function similarly to government organizations, as they

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[180] ANERA, Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon," *ANERA's on-the-ground series,* 3.

[181] Abouassi, "Hands in the Pockets of Mercurial Donors: How Three Theories Explain Ngo Responses to Shifting Funding Priorities," 63; Dana Masad, "Moving Towards Self-Reliance: Living Conditions of Refugee Camps in Lebanon and Opportunities for Development," (Masters Thesis, California Polytechnic State University, August 2009): 59.

[182] Conciliation Resources, "Reconciliation, Reform and Resilience: Positive Peace for Lebanon," *Accord,* no. 24 (June 2012): 20.

[183] Al Jazeera and Agencies, "Did the PLO die in Lebanon," *Al Jazeera Media Network,* (July 28, 2009). http://www.aljazeera.com/programmes/plohistoryofrevolution/2009/07/200972855032594820.html.

promote projects the national or local government cannot or will not.[184] As the Lebanese state continues to take a hands-off approach vis-à-vis Palestinian refugees, the central government is becoming increasingly dependent upon NGO intervention to respond "quickly, flexibly and effectively" to solve development issues.[185]

ADVANTAGES

As stated above, NGOs are thought to hold a comparative advantage in: reaching and mobilizing the poor, empowering people to improve their quality of life, identifying local needs, building on local resources, and introducing new technologies.[186] Essentially, NGOs are operationally situated to reach the most vulnerable in society and to target those which existing services cannot (or will not).[187] In the case of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, NGOs are capable of reaching those without access to UNRWA services or the opportunities to achieve economic self-sufficiency.

FUNCTIONS: A LINK TO FUNDING

Within Lebanon, international funding is the largest source of NGO revenues.[188] UN agencies and bilateral donors such as: the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), the Department for International Development (DFID), the European

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[184] Nahla Abdo, "Imperialism, the State, and NGOs: Middle Eastern Contexts and Contestations," *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa, and the Middle East* 30, no. 2 (2010): 239.

[185] United Nations, "United Nations Development Assistance Framework: Lebanon 2010-14," (May 2009): 11.

[186] P. Streeten, "Non-governmental Organizations and Development," 193-210; World Bank, *Key Issues and Themes / NGO Capacity Building of Southern NGOs – The Experience of the World Bank* (1998), quoted in Kamat, "The Privatization of the Public Interest," 169.

[187] Zaidi, "NGO Failure and the Need to Bring Back the State," 262.

[188] Masri 2008, Abouassi, "Hands in the Pockets of Mercurial Donors: How Three Theories Explain Ngo Responses to Shifting Funding Priorities," 70.

Union (EU), and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) all have a significant presence in Lebanon.[189]

Generally, northern NGOs provide a link to funding, while southern NGOs (local, Palestinian NGOs) are more active in service provision.[190] Northern NGOs may provide direct or indirect support to local organizations. In this role, northern NGOs finance projects, programs and services, or provide direct services to refugees through their own projects.[191] As I identify within the literature review, the flexible nature of NGOs helps them to forge connections at local, national, and international levels and to exist within a complex web of relationships.[192] These relationships place NNGOs in a position where they serve as a funding link between donors in the north and NGOs and beneficiaries in the south. As David Lewis points out, this trend placing NNGOs in an intermediary position results in increased partnership between NNGOs and SNGOs.[193]

CHALLENGES FOR THE NGO SECTOR

NGOS & THE LEBANESE STATE

I maintain throughout this study that the relationship the NGO sector develops with a state will differ country to country and vary widely based upon the nature of NGO intervention.[194] I argue that the restrictive Lebanese policies in regards to Palestinian

[189] Abouassi, "Hands in the Pockets of Mercurial Donors: How Three Theories Explain Ngo Responses to Shifting Funding Priorities," 69.

[190] Ajial Center, "Palestinian Non-Government Organizations in Lebanon."

[191] Ibid.

[192] Fisher, "Doing Good? The Politics and Antipolitics of NGO Practices," 450.

[193] David Lewis. "Development Policy and Development NGOs: the Changing Relationship." *Social Policy and Administration* 32, no. 5 (Dec., 1998): 1-4.

[194] Fernando & Heston, "NGOs between States, Markets, and Civil Society," 11.

refugees are further projected onto NGOs working with these groups, resulting in a challenging environment for NGO intervention.

While supporters of 'alternative development' argue that NGOs should complement the state by filling the gaps between the state and the market, this is difficult when an NGO is targeting a group essentially excluded from both.[195] Within the literature review, I discuss Whaites' idea that NGO cooperation with the state exists on two levels: One, where NGOs seek to improve government services and make them more relevant to the vulnerable portions of society, and two, where NGOs and the state coexist, but do not actively collaborate.[196] When considering NGOs targeting Palestinian refugees, the relationship an NGO develops with the Lebanese state will most likely be the latter. While promoting economic development among Palestinian refugees generally does not actively challenge state operations, and therefore will not be opposed by the Lebanese government, the hands-off approach of the central government is a barrier of its own.[197]

The primary barrier the Lebanese state places on the NGO sector is not government action, but rather inaction. In regards to Palestinian refugees, the Lebanese state handles personal identification, mobility, personal status law, and access to work.[198] While Lebanese policy—particularly vis-à-vis employment—largely excludes Palestinian refugees from Lebanese society and economic life, it is the voluntary inaction of the Lebanese government that has historically allowed the PLO and the UNRWA to assume quasi-state roles in Lebanon.[199]

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[195] Ibid.
[196] Clark, "Democratising Development: NGOs and the State," 151-152.
[197] Ibid.
[198] Aziza Khalidi, "Managing Adversity: Palestinian Refugee Women in Lebanon," *Association Najdeh* (July 18, 2011): 14.
[199] Ibid.

Association Najdeh, an NGO based in Lebanon focusing on women's empowerment, identifies the PLO as the politically representative body of the Palestinian people, and the UNRWA is the primary service provider.[200] By assuming the responsibilities that are typically assumed by the state, the PLO and the UNRWA should theoretically fill the gap left by the Lebanese central government. However, the exile of the PLO, the chronic underfunding of the UNRWA, and the exclusive, restrictive policies placed upon Palestinian refugees by the Lebanese state result in an environment where lack of coordination and slow bureaucratic processes affect the efficiency and effectiveness of NGO development projects.

The relationship between the NGO sector and the Lebanese government is described as both "unclear and unstable" and is characterized by "limited dialogue, considerable distrust, diversion of perspectives, suspicion over intentions, and lack of collaboration."[201] On an implementation level, the NGO sector tends to operate separately from the central government when they work with Palestinian refugees and are subject to few barriers when NGO objectives align with that of the Lebanese state—when NGOs promote 'alternative development' rather than 'alternatives to development.' The Lebanese state largely views NGOs aiming to fill the development gaps within the existing power structure as relieving the "burden" of the refugee community, and allows these NGOs to work freely in Lebanon—partially due to their ability to attract foreign aid dollars. While foreign governments may hesitate to send aid directly through the

[200] Ibid.

[201] AbouAssi, "Lebanese Civil Society: A Long History of Achievements, Facing Decisive Challenges Ahead of an Uncertain Future," *Johannesburg: CIVICUS* (2006) cited in Abouassi, "Hands in the Pockets of Mercurial Donors: How Three Theories Explain Ngo Responses to Shifting Funding Priorities," 75; Ziad Abdel Samad, "NGO Interaction, Coordination, and Networking," *Internal Governance for NGOs in Lebanon, Lebanon: IEC Unit, Ministry of Social Affairs,* (2004).

Lebanese central government, there is less hesitation to funnel aid dollars through the NGO sector. This ability of NGOs to secure funding from various sources with little interference from the central government is a distinctive feature of the NGO sector in Lebanon.[202]

While the state may not pose any direct barriers to NGO intervention, the lack of coordination and dialogue between actors results in slow, inefficient bureaucratic processes that are not conducive to effective intervention. The hands-off approach of the government becomes especially problematic when considering that the central authorities control the NGO registration process, which is a key complaint from the NGO sector within Lebanon.[203] Though most NGOs in Lebanon are registered, they also report challenges throughout the registration process. For example, the process for and NGO to change their mission can take years, which prevents NGOs from adapting their missions as the nature of their projects change.[204]

The UNDP also reports that these bureaucratic barriers are particularly evident among NGOs with significant numbers of Palestinian members, who communicate experiencing increased challenges to registration.[205] While the central government mostly turns a blind eye to these Palestinian organizations, they are not legally permitted to form their own associations in Lebanon.[206] This may not directly impact the registration of Northern NGOs in Lebanon, but as partnership approaches become more common, the

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[202] Abouassi, "Hands in the Pockets of Mercurial Donors: How Three Theories Explain Ngo Responses to Shifting Funding Priorities," 3.

[203] Ibid., 75.

[204] Ibid., 116.

[205] United Nations Development Program (UNDP) "Assessment of Capacity Building Needs of NGOs in Lebanon," (Beirut, Lebanon March 2009): 5.

[206] Muhammad Ali Khalidi, "Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon," *Middle East Report,* no. 197 (1995): 29.

lack of coordination between stakeholders due to slow, discriminatory bureaucratic procedures hinders the cooperation of the NGO sector.[207]

GEOGRAPHIC CONTEXT: SECURITY AND MOVEMENT

The relationship of the NGO sector with local municipalities is particularly important, but also incredibly complex within Lebanese refugee camps. The political and security situation within the camps poses barriers to NGO development initiatives, and are particularly problematic when considering the interplay between poor infrastructure, population growth, and violent conflict.[208]

Under Lebanese policy, Palestinian refugee camps are not allowed to expand beyond their set borders. As the population within the camps continues to grow, the living situation becomes more crowded and the population becomes more diverse. In terms of infrastructure, this internal expansion—due to population growth within a confined area—hinders movement within the camps.[209] Because the camps are isolated from national infrastructure systems, they are largely dependent on foreign aid for development of infrastructure—primarily NGOs.[210] The increasing population density within the camps paired with the inadequate infrastructure not only increases the need for

[207] United Nations Development Program (UNDP) "Assessment of Capacity Building Needs of NGOs in Lebanon," (Beirut, Lebanon March 2009): 6.

[208] Bassam Al-Kantar "The Failure of Civil Society," *Al-Akhbar* (2009) cited in Abouassi, "Hands in the Pockets of Mercurial Donors: How Three Theories Explain Ngo Responses to Shifting Funding Priorities," 78.

[209] Dana Masad, "Moving Towards Self-Reliance: Living Conditions of Refugee Camps in Lebanon and Opportunities for Development," (Masters Thesis, California Polytechnic State University, August 2009): 66.

[210] Ibid., 74.

NGO-led infrastructure development but also makes it all the more difficult to meet the increasing demand for basic services.[211]

In addition to infrastructure issues, the increasing diversity and growth of the population within the camps is also conducive to conflict. In camps where there are several military/political players, the security situation makes it difficult for NGOs to carry out successful development projects. Especially with the rise of groups such as Hamas, Fatah, and Hezbollah, NGOs struggle to enter the camps at all, let alone promote long-term development. [212] In reaction to conflict, NGOs often shift towards emergency aid and relief, and shy away from development projects. [213]

COORDINATION

Political fragmentation, poor infrastructure and heightened security risks make effective coordination among the NGO sector imperative to promoting successful economic development. However, networking among NGOs in Lebanon is reportedly weak. [214] The Ajial Center, the Statistics and Documentation Office, reports that the poor communication among stakeholders leads to the duplication of work—an oversupply of particular services and the neglect of others—in their study of the NGO sector in

[211] Danish Immigration Service, "Stateless Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon," (Beirut, Lebanon June 2014): 28.

[212] Ibid., 21.

[213] Bassam Al-Kantar "The Failure of Civil Society," *Al-Akhbar* (2009) cited in Abouassi, "Hands in the Pockets of Mercurial Donors: How Three Theories Explain Ngo Responses to Shifting Funding Priorities," 78.

[214] Abouassi, "Hands in the Pockets of Mercurial Donors: How Three Theories Explain Ngo Responses to Shifting Funding Priorities," 75.

Lebanon. This lack of coordination "undermines the proper utilization of resources" which are already in short supply.[215]

DONOR PRESSURE

The shortage of services and foreign aid dollars, paired with the growing number of NGOs operating within Lebanon, is resulting in more competition for funding between NGOs. As I discuss within the literature review, this donor power can be positive—in that funding is only given to the most competitive, well-developed projects—but is problematic in that it gives donors the ability to choose which types of projects they want to support. [216]

As I describe earlier in the chapter, a primary function of NNGOs in Lebanon is to serve as a link to funding. Generally, NNGOs channel money from northern governments or organization to SNGOs who lack access to foreign aid dollars—in this case Palestinian NGOs. While these relationships increase the likelihood that Palestinian NGOs will be indirectly funded, these projects will be less radical in nature. Within the context of NGOs working with Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, this means that projects may provide services to Palestinians, or promote economic empowerment and employment opportunities, but shy away from social mobilization and political critique.[217]

During the Coordination Forum of NGOs Working Among the Palestinian Community in Lebanon, participating organizations identified NGO-donor relations to be

[215] Ajial Center, "Palestinian Non-Government Organizations in Lebanon."
[216] Ibid.
[217] Fisher, "Doing Good? The Politics and Antipolitics of NGO Practices," 454.

a central problem surrounding NGO intervention.[218] As most NGOs rely on international funding, they are susceptible to the conditionality accompanying foreign aid dollars. They argue that donor conditionality surrounding funding frequently leads to NGO projects promoting the interest of donors rather than that of the ultimate beneficiaries, resulting in projects do not always meet local needs.[219]

The degree of this donor power is dependent upon the type of grants which the UNDP divides into: easy funding—where there is open access to funding and no required managerial structure, but also low accountability—and difficult funding—which requires a detailed project proposal, monitoring and reporting, and a set managerial structure.[220] Difficult funding is typically funding granted by donors in the north and is accompanied with specific conditions and expectations.[221] This type of funding is common within Lebanon, as the majority of the budget for NGOs comes from external donors, primarily the U.S. and the EU. [222]

Aid dollars of this nature are accompanied by a higher degree of conditionality, which the donor outlines in exchange for funding. In their Assessment of the Capacity Building Needs of NGOs in Lebanon, the Canadian Fund for Social Development found that NGOs with international funding tend to implement projects which satisfy donor

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[218] Khalidi & El-Yassir, "Rights of the Palestinian Child in Lebanon," 5

[219] AbouAssi, "International Development Management Through a Southern Lens," *Public Administration and Development* 30 no, 2 (2010) cited in AbouAssi, "Hands in the Pockets of Mercurial Donors: How Three Theories Explain Ngo Responses to Shifting Funding Priorities," 116.

[220] United Nations Development Program (UNDP) "Assessment of Capacity Building Needs of NGOs in Lebanon." (Beirut, Lebanon March 2009): 22.

[221] "Assessment of Capacity Building Needs of NGOs in Lebanon." *The Canadian Fund for Social Development* (March 2009): 22; Abouassi, "Hands in the Pockets of Mercurial Donors: How Three Theories Explain Ngo Responses to Shifting Funding Priorities," 72.

[222] Karin Gerster & Helga Baumgarten, "Palestinian NGOs and their cultural, economic and political impact in Palestinian society," *Rosa Luxemburg Foundation in Palestine,* December 30, 2011. 1.

needs. They assert that funding sources are a key factor determining what projects an NGO implements.[223] For example, NGOs are increasingly adopting free-market models in order to attract funding from donors in the north, specifically international financial institutions such as the IMF or World Bank.[224]

A symptom of this trend is that NGOs are constantly adapting their intervention strategies in order to get funding from particular donors, hindering their abilities to develop consistent strategies within Lebanon. The BADIL Center, the Resource Center for Palestinian Residency and Refugee Rights, writes:

> "All Palestinian refugee organizations and NGOs suffer from budget insecurity and dependence on donor agencies whose policies are not fully understood, and which exert a disproportionate influence because of the scarcity of alternative sources. Given this framework, it is difficult for them to create an overall development strategy, expand their programs, re-target their services or democratize their structures."[225]

The result is that NGO interventions tend to be short-term and project-oriented, and lack a clear, sustainable strategy to solve development issues among Palestinian refugees. [226]

GETTING TO THE ROOTS OF DEVELOPMENT ISSUES

The inability to develop consistent, long-term strategies free from donor pressure is directly related to the critique that NGOs do not address the root causes of

[223] "Assessment of Capacity Building Needs of NGOs in Lebanon." *The Canadian Fund for Social Development* (March 2009): 25.

[224] Abdo, "Imperialism, the State, and NGOs: Middle Eastern Contexts and Contestations," 239.

[225] BADIL Center, "Empowering Palestinian Refugee Initiatives and NGOs," *Palestinian Refugees: Reclaiming the Right to Return,* no. 1 (1999).

[226] Conciliation Resources, "Reconciliation, Reform and Resilience: Positive Peace for Lebanon," *Accord,* no. 24 (June 2012): 22.

underdevelopment.[227] Within Lebanon, the NGO sector is shying away from social mobilization, advocacy, and political critique in order to maintain funding.[228] Fisher argues that NGOs are as likely to maintain the status quo as to change it, causing them to address symptoms rather than the root causes of underdevelopment, and NGOs within Lebanon do not appear to be an exception.[229]

In regards to Palestinian refugees, the preceding overview of this group's legal status within Lebanon points to restrictive policies, which exclude them from traditional development and services, leaving them dependent upon an insufficient aid structure. Despite this, the NGO sector working with these groups is shying away from intervention which seeks to transform the existing power structure in order to maintain their established interests. So when considering initiatives stressing empowerment and participation, NGO intervention may help in the short-term, but may not result in full economic self-sufficiency.[230]

CONCLUSIONS

The preceding chapter sought to evaluate the NGO sector promoting economic development among Palestinian in Lebanon to serve as a foundation to discuss a particular project in the next chapter. This section aimed to analyze the key advantages of and barriers to NGO projects targeting Palestinian refugees in Lebanon and to analyze how these environments impact NGO strategies. I attempted to paint a complete picture

[227] Teegen, Doh & Vachani, "The Importance of Nongovernmental Organizations (NGOs) in Global Governance and Value Creation: An International Business Research Agenda," 472.

[228] Lewis & Kanji, *NGOs and Development,* 30.

[229] Fisher, "Doing Good? The Politics and Antipolitics of NGO Practices," 453.

[230] Ibid., 248.

of the history and current Lebanese policy vis-à-vis Palestinian refugees, and how the dearth of services and opportunities to enter the labor market, create space for NGO intervention. This sections served as the groundwork for the following case study in order to assess how NGOs promote economic development in practice.

Based upon the overview I laid out in this chapter, I argue that the NGO sector in Lebanon is not capable of filling the gaps in UNRWA and PLO services. This parallels William Fisher's claim that NGOs may not be capable of reaching the unrealistic expectations the international community is placing upon them.[231] While it is clear that the UNRWA should not and cannot be the sole service provider for Palestinian refugees, the NGO sector is also not capable of filling these gaps in development. As Mohan & Stokke stress throughout their work, NGOs are victims of context and are affected by the social, economic, and political forces surrounding them at the local, national, and international levels. [232] Working with Palestinian refugees within Lebanon poses legal, geographic, social, and economic barriers that make long-term successes extremely difficult to achieve.

The NGO sector within Lebanon does possess distinct advantages in reaching the most vulnerable in society and targeting those which existing services do not.[233] The Lebanese state largely views this intervention as relieving the "burden" of Palestinian refugees and therefore to not pose direct barriers to NGO projects so long as they do not seek radical change. This nature of agreement between the state and the NGO sector, donor pressure—particularly "difficult funding" accompanied with a higher degree of

[231] Fisher, "Doing Good? The Politics and Antipolitics of NGO Practices," 443.
[232] Mohan & Stokke, "Participatory Development and Empowerment: The Dangers of Localism," 249.
[233] Zaidi, "NGO Failure and the Need to Bring Back the State," 262.

conditionality—results in intervention which is less radical by nature and which fails to address the root causes of underdevelopment among Palestinian refugees.

At the start of this chapter, I detailed the restrictive Lebanese policies regarding Palestinian refugees and the Lebanese economy. I particularly addressed the general trend that Palestinians tend to work within the informal economy, as their Lebanese labor legislation largely excludes them from participation within the formal economy. Therefore, NGO intervention which is truly seeking to promote economic development among Palestinian refugees within Lebanon will need to address the restrictive labor policies hindering the economic participation of Palestinian refugees. At the same time, promoting radical action—seeking to change Lebanese policy—could threaten NGO funding. The result is that the NGO sector within Lebanon is largely promoting development initiatives that promote economic independence to a point but are not going to change the status of Palestinian refugees in the long run.

The next chapter will test these claims through a detailed case study of an NGO seeking to promote economic development among one of the most vulnerable groups of Palestinian refugees: women.

CHAPTER 5:

CASE STUDY: CIVES MUNDI AND TATREEZ

AN EXPERIENCE PROMOTING ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT AMONG PALESTINIAN REFUGEE WOMEN

The following case study will narrow my general overview of the NGO sector working with Palestinian refugees in Lebanon and focus on NGO intervention targeting women—one of the most economically vulnerable groups among Palestinian refugees. While NGOs promoting 'alternative development' and 'alternatives to development' differ widely in their strategies and objectives, both stress that NGOs hold an advantage when working with the most vulnerable, hard to reach populations—those typically excluded from traditional economic development who lack access to the labor market and/or basic services. This next chapter seeks to evaluate the strategies, advantages, and challenges to NGO work targeting the most vulnerable Palestinian women living within refuge camps in Lebanon. This section will consist primarily of a case study analyzing the international development NGO *Cives Mundi* and their most recent initiative in Lebanon—*Tatreez*—which aims to promote economic development among Palestinian women living within three refugee camps. This study aims to investigate the strategies and rationale behind the development intervention of this particular organization, and how their surrounding environment of intervention impacts their approaches and practices.

NGOS & ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT AMONG PALESTINIAN WOMEN: PALESTINIAN WOMEN AND EMPLOYMENT

Palestinian refugee women living in Lebanon face a combination of refugee, gender, and socio-economic discrimination.[234] While the entire Palestinian refugee population faces restrictive discrimination in terms of economic development, women are subject to multidimensional barriers to economic participation and independence, resulting in a higher degree of dependence on family members, UNRWA, and NGO aid.[235] According to a UNWRA survey completed in 2011, only 13% of Palestinian women refugees were working as opposed to 67% of Palestinian men.[236] This is partially a result of traditional gender roles, where women are encouraged to work within the home, as well as the unsafe economic conditions within the refugee camps, which keep many women home full time.[237]

Women who do work are typically employed in education, health, or craftwork, or may work with civil society or international organizations as technicians or sales and service workers.[238] These women are paid less than their male counterparts—on average, women earn approximately 3/4 of men's income. [239] These low wage rates leave 90% of working Palestinian women below the minimum wage (around 100 USD/month) and

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[234] Ibid., 25-26.

[235] Ibid.

[236] UNRWA, *UNRWA Figures*, (2012), http://www.unrwa.org/etemplate.php?id=65, cited in Cives Mundi, *Tatreez Project Proposal*, (Soria, Spain 2012).

[237] Al-Nashif & El-Khoury, "Palestinian Employment in Lebanon: Facts and Challenges," 48; Danish Immigration Service, "Stateless Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon," (Beirut, Lebanon June 2014): 37.

[238] Al-Nashif & El-Khoury, "Palestinian Employment in Lebanon: Facts and Challenges," 16.

[239] Ibid.

partially or fully dependent upon family members or the aid structure within the camps.[240] In addition to insufficient pay, these women are also vulnerable to violence and discrimination in the workplace, as many of them find employment in the unregulated, informal economy.[241] Though they are earning income, the International Labour Office suggests that women in the informal economy face:

> "a precarious employment status, low, irregular or no remuneration, little or no access to social security or protection, and limited ability to organize to ensure the enforcement of international labour standards and human rights."[242]

This economic status places heightened barriers on the economic development of Palestinian refugee women which creates space and need for NGO intervention.

NGOS AND WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

This study defines "economic development" as:

> "activities that expand capacities to realize the potential of individuals, firms or communities who contribute to the advancement of society through the responsible production of goods and services."[243]

According to Amartya Sen, the Nobel Prize-winning economist, economic development promotes economic participation and social mobility among individuals to allow them to "engage, contribute, and benefit from the economy."[244] These initiatives commonly

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[240] UNRWA, *UNRWA Statistics*, Coordination and Support Unit Program (November 2011) http://www.unrwa.org/userfiles/20120317152850.pdf, cited in Cives Mundi, *Tatreez Project Proposal*, (Soria, Spain 2012).

[241] Ibid.

[242] Sylvia Chant & Carolyn Pedwell, "Women, gender and the informal economy: An assessment of ILO research and suggested ways forward," *International Labour Office* (Geneva: ILO, 2008): 1.

[243] Maryann Feldman, Theodora Hadjimichael, Tom Kemeny & Lauren Lanahan. "Economic Development: A Definition and Model for Investment." *Environment and Planning C: Government and Policy* (2014): 20.

[244] Amartya Sen. *Commodities and Capabilities* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), quoted in Ibid., 4-5.

utilize empowerment and participation strategies in order to involve people in formulating their own development strategies and policies.[245]

Gita Sen argues that the "face of poverty is disproportionally female," and that women tend to be "disempowered in terms of their control over external resources.[246] Women are at the bottom of the labor market, and are often completely excluded from mainstream economic development. So even when they do make significant economic contributions, they are "undervalued and unrecognized."[247] As I discuss previously, Palestinian refugee women in Lebanon face multidimensional barriers due to both their refugee and gender status, leaving them with limited access to entry into the labor market and dependent upon insufficient services.[248] So when considering women's economic development among Palestinian refugees, participation and empowerment which stress both the control over extrinsic recourses as well as greater decision-making autonomy is imperative to achieving long-term economic development.[249]

NGOs—valued for their innovative, flexible intervention—are well-placed to promote these empowerment objectives. Within Lebanon, NGOs hold advantages in working directly with Palestinian women, and literature suggests that NGO interventions have a positive impact on their economic empowerment. [250] While measuring the degree of this impact is difficult, studies show that through: socio-economic programs and vocational training, NGOs can have a "moderate" impact on the "empowerment and

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[245] Sen, "Empowerment as an Approach to Poverty," 5.
[246] Ibid., 8.
[247] Sen, "Empowerment as an Approach to Poverty," 8.
[248] Ibid., 25-26.
[249] Gita Sen, "Empowerment as an Approach to Poverty," Background paper to the *Human Development Report* (1997): 5.
[250] Sen, "Empowerment as an Approach to Poverty," 9.

development" of the women beneficiaries."[251] Within Lebanon, NGO empowerment initiatives have implemented tailored programs for livelihood and direct financial assistance of Palestinian women, set quotas for the participation of women in all relevant programs, revised education, work, and female empowerment training or awareness raising material to make it more relevant to the local culture, and implemented advocacy efforts in order to correct discriminatory practices and ensure protection of women's rights.[252]

CASE STUDY: CIVES MUNDI IN LEBANON

In order to analyze these claims in practice, the following case study will discuss the development NGO *Cives Mundi's* and their most recent development initiative in Lebanon, *Tatreez,* which aims to economically empower Palestinian refugee women in Lebanon to become active in the labor force, gain equal control of economic resources, and achieve economic self-sufficiency to decrease their dependence on UNRWA and NGO aid. Evaluating this particular development project will serve as a way to assess how NGO strategies of this nature play out in practice within Lebanon, and what advantages and/or challenges accompany their intervention. The study will combine holistic case study methodology and an embedded case study design to paint an overall organizational picture.[253] Ultimately, this study will allow me to investigate how the

[251] N. Kala & Sheela Margaret, "Study on Impact of NGO Interventions on the Empowerment of Women," *Journal of Business Management & Social Sciences Research* 2, no, 3 (March 2013): 1.

[252] Tatwir Center for Policy Studies, *From Exclusion to Empowerment: Divorced and Widowed Women in Palestinian Refugee Camps*, 36.

[253] Jennifer Rowley, "Using Case Studies in Research," *Management Research News* 25, no. 1 (2002): 22.

development frameworks and practical claims I find throughout my literature review play out within particular contexts of intervention.

CIVES MUNDI: ORGANIZATIONAL BACKGROUND & STRATEGIES

Cives Mundi—a northern development NGO headquartered in Soria, Spain—is prime example of an NGO promoting this nature of development intervention. Their work includes projects in 16 different countries within Latin America, Maghreb, the Middle East, sub-Saharan Africa and Asia. Since their establishment in 1987, *Cives Mundi* has conducted more than 100 actions for international cooperation in sectors such as: food security, environmental protection, basic humanitarian assistance, economic development, and the defense of the human rights of the most vulnerable populations.[254] Through their aid projects, *Cives Mundi* promotes "cooperation and solidarity through participation and empowerment strategies in order to achieve long-term development in their areas of intervention."[255]

Cives Mundi recognizes diverse needs within different areas and among different groups of people, and therefore employs a different strategy in Lebanon than in other countries of intervention.[256] Within Lebanon, *Cives Mundi* focuses more on economic recuperation and less on emergency aid. Their intervention utilizes empowerment initiatives at different levels—most recently the economic independence of women—who they see as being one of the most vulnerable groups among the Palestinian refugee

[254] Cives Mundi, *Strategy for Sector Priorities* (Soria, Spain) 1-2.
[255] Cives Mundi, accessed 2015, http://www.civesmundi.es/esp/presentacion.php.
[256] Ana Gómez (Cives Mundi Project Director for East Africa and the Middle East), interview by author. Tape recording. Soria, Spain, July 2015.

population.[257] *Cives Mundi's* current director states that "the role of NGOs in Lebanon is to work with the most marginalized and excluded portions of the population, and in sectors where the Lebanese state does not. This makes [NGOs] fundamental actors promoting gender equality, conflict resolution and peace" among Palestinian refugee communities.[258]

In terms of Gender, *Cives Mundi* takes a basic human rights approach—as their initiatives aim to promote the civil, cultural, political and social rights of women.[259] Within Lebanon, *Cives Mundi* combines strategies from their "gender and development" sector with their economic development strategies in order to promote the economic participation and empowerment of Palestinian refugee women.[260] Within their *Strategy for Gender and Development, Cives Mundi* recognizes that gender inequalities pose economic barriers to women in terms of: access, management, and control of economic resources which hinder their development.[261] Throughout their reports, *Cives Mundi* stresses their belief in "people-centered development, where gender equality is a non-negotiable requirement for justice, equity, and efficiency," and their idea that economic empowerment is an effective mechanism to overcome inequality of this nature.[262]

The primary role of *Cives Mundi* is to serve as an intermediary between international donors and local NGOs in Lebanon. While *Cives Mundi* does have expats in the field who monitor and are involved in projects, local NGOs play a huge role in the the

[257] Ibid.
[258] Joaquín Alcalde (Cives Mundi Managing Director), interview by author, September 2015.
[259] Cives Mundi, *Strategy for Gender and Development*, (Soria, Spain) 3.
[260] Ibid., 4.
[261] Ibid., 2.
[262] Ibid., 2.

actual implementation of development projects.[263] In this way, *Cives Mundi* acts as a link to funding that aims to help local NGOs who do not have the resources to implement these projects on their own.[264] The following case study will analyze *Cives Mundi's* most recent development project in Lebanon which utilizes this partnership strategy to promote economic development among Palestinian women living within refugee camps in Lebanon.

TATREEZ: "EMBROIDERING FOR A BETTER FUTURE"

In 2012, *Cives Mundi* launched the development project *Tatreez* within three of the largest refugee camps in Lebanon (Rashidieh, Ein El Helwe and Beddawi).[265] This project aims to promote socio-economic empowerment of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon by enhancing the "equal access and control of economic resources among Palestinian refugee women" through the formation of a weaving co-op.[266] *Cives Mundi's* strategy is to address the economic dependence of Palestinian refugee women by providing training in traditional Palestinian embroidery (Tatreez), marketing techniques, and developing an operating business co-op with an online shop to support the economic participation of women within camp economies.[267]

Funded by the EU, *Cives Mundi* implemented *Tatreez* in collaboration with the Lebanese *Association Najdeh*, AMIDEAST, ANAT—a Syrian organization that focused on the technical aspects of the product, *Fundesarte*—a Spanish organization that focused

[263] Gómez, July 2015.
[264] Ibid.
[265] Cives Mundi, *Tatreez Project Proposal,* (2012): 1.
[266] Ibid.
[267] Ibid., 8.

on product design and marketing, and the GUPW—the *General Union of Palestinian Women*—which focused on enhancing the capabilities and engagement of Palestinian women in political and public life.[268]

Tatreez specifically targeted 120 divorced and widowed Palestinian women—groups they view as being the most vulnerable among an already disadvantaged group. [269] In addition to increasing the income of these women, *Tatreez* also stresses the importance of control and management of income.[270] According to *Cives Mundi's* project director for the Middle East, Ana Gómez, the objective of *Tatreez* is to promote economic self-sufficiency among refugee groups to decrease their dependency on the aid structure in Lebanon in order to free up resources to allow for national economic recuperation.[271] Essentially, *Cives Mundi* aims to create a system in which women were adding to the economic growth of the camps while also improving the quality of life for themselves and their families.[272]

Table 5.1: TATREEZ PROJECT SUMMARY

Actions:	Description:
1. 6 month training program on traditional Palestinian embroidery (Tatreez) for 120 Palestinian craftswomen and 15 trainers.[273]	Three experts from Syria and Spain provided 8 workshops on design creation and embroidery techniques.[274]
2. Training programs for 120 Palestinian craftswomen in	Courses in: marketing strategies, optimization of available resources, production processes, and product

[268] Cives Mundi, *Tatreez: Embroidering for a better future*, Documentary. 2015.
[269] Cives Mundi, *Interim Narrative Report - Tatreez*, (Beirut, Lebanon, August 2014): 1.
[270] Gómez, July 2015.
[271] Ibid.
[272] Cives Mundi, *Tatreez Project Proposal*, (2012): 4
[273] Cives Mundi, *Interim Narrative Report - Tatreez*, (Beirut, Lebanon, August 2014): 2.
[274] Cives Mundi, *Interim Narrative Report - Tatreez*, (Beirut, Lebanon, August 2014): 4.

	designing and marketing of *Tatreez* products.[275]	line selection.[276]
3.	Entrepreneurship and employability courses for 120 Palestinian women.[277]	Courses outlining how to start a business within Palestinian camps utilizing acquired skills. [278] Training in management.[279]
4.	The creation of a co-operative of Palestinian refugee women with three headquarters, one in each camp (Rashidie, Ein El Helwe and Beddawi).[280]	The legal registration and creation of a co-operative.[281] The development of sales plans and a uniform collection within the 3 co-operative locations.[282] The instalment of equipment and lighting within the 3 common spaces.[283]
5.	The formation of a steering committee to advise on the marketing strategies, creative design, and business plans. [284]	Composed of 4 NGOs working with the implementation of *Tatreez*, 3 representatives from each camp, and 2 *Tatreez* designers. [285]

ANALYSIS: NGO ADVANTAGES & CHALLENGES

ADVANTAGES:
RELATIONSHIPS WITH BENEFICIARIES

Because *Tatreez* utilizes empowerment and participation strategies to promote the economic dependence of Palestinian refugee women, forming positive relationships with the project beneficiaries is extremely important. Throughout their reports and narratives, *Cives Mundi* stresses the importance of the beneficiaries playing an active role throughout the project and developing the ability to make decisions independent from

[275] Cives Mundi, *Tatreez Quarterly Narrative Report,* (February 2015): 4.
[276] Ibid.
[277] Ibid., 6.
[278] Ibid.
[279] Ibid.
[280] Cives Mundi, *Interim Narrative Report - Tatreez*, (Beirut, Lebanon, August 2014): 5.
[281] Ibid., 6.
[282] Cives Mundi, *Tatreez Quarterly Narrative Report,* (February 2015): 2.
[283] Ibid., 7.
[284] Cives Mundi, *Interim Narrative Report - Tatreez*, (Beirut, Lebanon, August 2014): 6.
[285] Ibid.,

Cives Mundi and their local partners.[286] In order to achieve this objective, *Cives Mundi* stresses the importance of maintaining direct contact with beneficiaries so that there is always an open dialogue.[287] This is not extremely common for NNGOs in an intermediary position. Many NGOs which act as links to funding have little to no direct relations with beneficiaries and correspond with their partner organizations. By having an expat on the ground and ensuring that they have a direct presence in the areas of intervention, *Cives Mundi* is able to build up a degree of trust with the beneficiaries of the project.

PARTICIPATION AND EMPOWERMENT

The ability of *Cives Mundi* to form direct relationships with beneficiaries makes their empowerment and participation strategies more effective. *Cives Mundi's* development strategies emphasize involving these women as "empowered subjects" as opposed to "passive recipients," which is all too common when it comes to international aid.[288] By treating these women as active participants in all aspects of the project, the beneficiaries are able to develop a deeper understanding of the objective of the project and the role they play in its development.

Throughout the project, *Cives Mundi* reports that these women are achieving incredible growth and that they continue to want to work.[289] At the start of the project, *Cives Mundi's* project director stated that the women did not understand the nature of the training, particularly why they were developing skills in marketing and management. But

[286] Gómez, July 2015.
[287] Cives Mundi, *Good Practices Guide,* (2015): 7.
[288] Cives Mundi, *Tatreez: Embroidering for a better future,* Documentary. 2015.
[289] Gómez, July 2015.

later, when they started to produce clothing and began going to stores to sell, they developed a more complete understanding of what they were doing and showed an extraordinary commitment to the training courses. In their narrative reports, *Cives Mundi* writes that the women constantly ask for supplementary trainings.[290]

By the end of the project, 100% of the administrative and management decisions within the co-ops were being made by Palestinian refugee women.[291] Because *Tatreez* involved beneficiaries in all aspects of the project, the likelihood that the co-op will be sustainable is more likely. Sumaia Siddek, an embroidery trainer now working in all three refugee camps, described a "fund for continuity" that the women created on their own. This fund, which each women adds to from their excess profits, will be used to keep the co-op running after funding form the project is complete.[292] In my interview with her, Ana Gómez shared with me that this was not part of the project, it was developed by the women themselves.[293]

SOCIAL CAPITAL

The coordination among these women would not have been possible without the development of a social network through *Tatreez.* Especially considering that *Tatreez* targeted divorced/widowed women, the project was dealing with groups limited in the kinds of relations they can have. In general, lack of social capital, specifically the access

[290] Cives Mundi, *Interim Narrative Report - Tatreez*, (Beirut, Lebanon, August 2014): 3.
[291] Ibid., 18.
[292] Cives Mundi, *Tatreez: Embroidering for a better future*, Documentary. 2015.
[293] See note 284.

to information and influence through social networks, decreases opportunities for economic participation.[294]

In their study *From Exclusion to Empowerment: Divorced and Widowed Women in Palestinian Refugee* Camps—which they conducted on behalf of *Cives Mundi—Tatwir* Center for Policy Studies claims that divorced/widowed women have a triple disadvantage in regards to social capital:

> "as Palestinian refugees they are restricted to camps and discriminated against by Lebanese; as women, their social interaction is limited for cultural reasons; finally, as 'socially exceptional' cases, they may be shunned by society and hidden from the public eye."[295]

Within the same study, *Tatwir* found that the majority of these women relied on family networks to find employment.[296] While this can be a beneficial source of social capital, it can be problematic when local communities disapprove of women in the workforce.[297]

Tatreez provides a larger social capital network by connecting women throughout each refugee camps, and also promoting collaboration between the three camps. Within their report detailing the outcomes of *Tatreez* business training, the local partner organization AMIDEAST discussed how the increased collaboration between the women beneficiaries—both the weavers and the trainers—was bringing about positive changes to their methods of work. They report that the women began to work collectively, despite belonging to different organizations and that the sessions were interactive and

[294] OECD, "OECD Insights: Human Capital," (February 20, 2007): 104.
[295] Tatwir Center for Policy Studies, *From Exclusion to Empowerment: Divorced and Widowed Women in Palestinian Refugee Camps*, 19.
[296] Ibid., 23.
[297] Ibid.

emphasized group communication and participation.[298] The success of this 'collective entrepreneurship" is largely a result of the availability of a common space for working and forming connections with other beneficiaries. Having daily contact with each other improved their team work, knowledge exchange, and organizational skills.[299]

PARTNERSHIP

As *Cives Mundi's* primary role is to serve as an intermediary between international donors and local partners in Lebanon, effective partnership is imperative to the implementation of *Cives Mundi's* projects. In an interview, *Cives Mundi's* managing director, Joaquín Alcalde states that "*Cives Mundi* is an organization that seeks to empower local NGOs."[300] Ana Gómez—*Cives Mundi's* Project Director for the Middle East, agrees with Alcalde by saying that these local NGOs are in a learning process and that *Cives Mundi* can add expertise and objectivity to their projects. She states that these local NGOs are often not prepared to implement these projects on their own, especially considering that they lack access to funding.[301]

At the same time, Ana Gómez—*Cives Mundi's* Project Director for the Middle East, stresses that local NGOs know the beneficiaries and what will work in different contexts.[302] So in order for partnership of this nature to be effective, both parties must utilize the strengths of the other. Alcalde went on to say that *Tatreez* has been an example

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[298] AMIDEAST, *Starting a Business Training for Palestinian Women for Cives Mundi*, (September 14, 2014): 2.

[299] Cives Mundi, *Interim Narrative Report - Tatreez*, (Beirut, Lebanon, August 2014): 2; Cives Mundi, *Tatreez Quarterly Narrative Report*, (February 2015): 7-8.

[300] Alcalde, September 2015.

[301] Gómez, July 2015.

[302] Ibid.

of good coordination and institutional collaboration, especially taking into account the complications that accompany development within refugee camps.[303]

RELATIONSHIPS WITH LOCAL MUNICIPALITIES

I stress within my secondary analysis of the NGO sector in Lebanon that the relationship NGOs develop with the local authorities within the camps is extremely important, as the central government is largely absent within the camps. *Cives Mundi's* narrative reports reveal that their relationship with the local authorities in the three camps is very positive. They meet on a quarterly basis with the Popular Committees from the three camps, all of which offered their support to the project. These positive relations allow *Cives Mundi* to access refugee communities without increased barriers. Gómez states that many of these areas are run by militias or religious factions and NGOs have to talk with them and let them know the nature of their projects so that they can help and do not pose additional challenges.[304] Within the context of *Tatreez,* Gómez states that *Cives Mundi's* local partners serve as a connection to local authorities as well as beneficiaries. At the same time, even though the local authorities fully support *Tatreez*, they lack the capacity to provide additional financial support to the project.[305]

CHALLENGES:

CHANGING CONTEXTS

[303] Alcalde, September 2015.
[304] Gómez, July 2015.
[305] Cives Mundi, *Interim Narrative Report - Tatreez*, (Beirut, Lebanon, August 2014): 26.

NGOs are victims of context; so while *Cives Mundi* possesses distinct advantages in terms of forming close, mutually-beneficial partnerships and the local level, they exist within a larger national and international system which is constantly changing.[306] When *Cives Mundi* began working in Lebanon, they solely worked with refugees within the camps.[307] However, as need continues to grow and there are more problems, the strategy has become more open to change. One of the most impactful changes to impact the implementation of *Tatreez* has been the escalation of the Syria crisis.

Table 5.2: IMPACT OF THE SYRIAN CRISIS ON NGO INTERVENTION TARGETED TOWARDS PALESTINIAN REFUGEES

The influx of more than 1.3 million Syrian and PRS (Palestinian refugees from Syria) into Lebanon from 2011 to 2015.[308] - The refugee population grows to comprise more than 25% of the entire population within Lebanon.[309] - As early as 2013 (just as the refugee population was reaching 1 million) The International Crisis Group released a report stating that the Lebanese state "does not possess adequate resources to address refugee needs."[310]
The diversion of funds from Palestinian Refugees from Lebanon (PRL) to Syrian refugees and Palestinian Refugees from Syria - The crisis in Syria begins to "dominate" the international aid causing NGOs to redirect funding formerly earmarked for PRL to refugees from Syria.[311] - NGOs are funding projects specifically aimed towards PRS which leaves less funding for PRL (Palestinian refugees from Lebanon).
Shortage of UNRWA and NGO resources - The UNRWA is still providing the same services to Palestinians as before the conflict, but these services now have to meet the needs of a growing refugee population.

[306] Mohan & Stokke, "Participatory Development and Empowerment: The Dangers of Localism," 249.

[307] See note 299.

[308] UNHCR, 2015 UNHCR Country Operations Profile – Lebanon, 2016, http://www.unhcr.org/pages/49e486676.html.

[309] "The Timeline of Lebanon's Refugee Crisis," The Daily Star (Lebanon, March 14, 2015).

[310] Ibid.

[311] Danish Immigration Service, "Stateless Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon," (Beirut, Lebanon June 2014): 38.

Worsening economic conditions - Camps become increasingly overcrowded, prices and house rents rise in the poorest areas and wages are pushed down because of the fierce competition for the jobs available.[312]
Deteriorating Security Situation - Heightened security measures and restrictions to movement make NGO intervention and coordination increasingly difficult.[313]

At the time when *Cives Mundi* drafted *Tatreez*, the crisis in Syria was not an immediate concern within Lebanon, and therefore was not taken into consideration. As the crisis escalated and over a million refugees fled to Lebanon, the situation within Palestinian refugee camps changed drastically.[314] As I outline in the above table, a key impact of the Syria crisis on Palestinian refugees is the reorientation of international development funds towards Syrian refugees. This places increasing pressure on local Palestinian NGOs, but simultaneously cuts down their capacities and funding.[315] As the resources of their local partners severely diminished, *Cives Mundi* reacted by adding 2 additional Palestinian NGOs to the project—the Women Programming Center and NAVTSS—which provided the training venues as well as a permanent locations for the co-ops.[316]

SECURITY AND MOVEMENT

While *Cives Mundi* was able to adapt and re-strategize in some ways, the deteriorating security situation within the camps posed unavoidable issues with project

[312] Ibid., 29.
[313] See note 304.
[314] Cives Mundi, *Interim Narrative Report - Tatreez*, (Beirut, Lebanon, August 2014): 16.
[315] Ibid.
[316] Ibid.

implementation. Within their narrative reports, *Cives Mundi* consistently identifies security issues as a core obstacle to their activities.[317]

The security situation within the camps posed significant barriers in terms of selecting beneficiaries to participate in *Tatreez*—as the selection of widowed/divorced research required extensive needs assessments and primary data collection—as well as the selection of locations for training.[318] In an attempt to keep on track with the project timeline, *Cives Mundi* hired an employee from their partner organization *Najdeh* to follow up on logistic and operational issues and decided to change locations for training.[319] While the original proposal planned to hold training outside the camps, the deteriorating security situation forced *Cives Mundi* to re-strategize by finding locations within the camps.[320] They also increased the training locations from 3 to 6 (2 in each camp) so that the beneficiaries would not have to make long trips and would be less likely to encounter road blocks.[321] For the women still unable to make it to the co-op, *Tatreez* allowed them to work from home and bring their products to the co-op when they could.[322]

Cives Mundi also stated that they were trying to mitigate these security challenges by meeting consistently with security platforms within the camps as well as the Spanish embassy, but still had to postpone project activities which required foreigners to enter into the camps.[323] So while *Cives Mundi* was able to adapt and re-strategize to a degree,

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[317] Cives Mundi, *Tatreez Quarterly Narrative Report,* (February 2015): 16.
[318] Ibid.
[319] Ibid.
[320] AMIDEAST, *Starting a Business Training for Palestinian Women for Cives Mundi,* (September 14, 2014): 3.
[321] Cives Mundi, *Tatreez Quarterly Narrative Report,* (February 2015): 16.
[322] Cives Mundi, *Tatreez: Embroidering for a better future,* Documentary. 2015.
[323] See note 316.

their intervention was still heavily impacted by the deterioration of the areas surrounding their intervention.

COORDINATION AMONG STAKEHOLDERS

Cives Mundi displays strong advantages in forming partnerships through *Tatreez*, but collaborating with multiple organizations also brought about challenges. As *Tatreez* is a historical Palestinian tradition, there were disagreements among partners regarding the "cultural legacy" of *Tatreez*. *Cives Mundi* reports that these differing viewpoints made it difficult to get the network of associations together.[324] There were also issues with local partners who felt that the *Tatreez* co-operative would taking away their workers.[325] After several months of refusing to meet with the other partners and to provide a list of potential beneficiaries, *Cives Mundi* had to proceed with the partner organizations that were committed to the project and include the beneficiaries provided by these NGOs.[326] However, even among these beneficiaries, some of the trainees with their own *Tatreez* shops began to contract the best students to form their own staff.[327] From this, *Cives Mundi* discovered the importance of the separation of NGO service provision with direct employment.[328] Especially considering that local NGOs take a leading role in project implementation, assuring that partners' interests do not conflict with the objectives of the project is imperative.

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[324] Cives Mundi, *Interim Narrative Report - Tatreez*, (Beirut, Lebanon, August 2014): 10.
[325] Ibid., 16.
[326] Natalia Sancha (Cives Mundi head of mission), *Assessment of recommendations provided by EU external evaluator, and provision of challenges faced and solutions provided,* (Beirut, Lebanon, January 27, 2014)*:* 5.
[327] Cives Mundi, *Tatreez Quarterly Narrative Report,* (February 2015): 4.
[328] Cives Mundi, *Good Practices Guide,* (2015): 7.

RELATIONS WITH THE LEBANESE STATE

As I outline throughout this thesis, the relationship an NGO develops with the state is incredibly important, as the NGO must exist within the national policy environment. Within my secondary analysis, I discuss that NGO cooperation with the Lebanese state is one of coexistence, but generally not active collaboration.[329] I also argue that NGOs promoting economic development among Palestinian refugees who do not actively challenge state operations will not experience interference from the Lebanese government. At the same time, I claim that the hands-off approach of the Lebanese government is a barrier of its own. *Tatreez* is a prime example of development intervention which received little opposition from the central government, but where state inaction severely hindered the efficiency and effectiveness of the project.

In an in-depth interview, Gómez identifies the Lebanese government as an important stakeholder in terms of working with Palestinian refugees, as there are barriers in terms of their right to work.[330] However, she goes on to say that even though they are an important stakeholder, they do not actively participate.[331] She states that they create legal obstructions, but that it is inaccessible for NGOs to enter into national politics because their projects will not get funded.[332]

Within the context of *Tatreez,* Gómez outlines that the government did not interfere with the project because it sought to empower Palestinian refugees without seeking to change the existing political system. She states that:

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[329] Clark, "Democratising Development: NGOs and the State," 151-152.
[330] Gómez, July 2015.
[331] Ibid.
[332] See note 325.

> "we are implementing projects within the refugee camps for Palestinians who will continue living there. The Lebanese government is not going to give us money to do it, but they are also not going to interfere."[333]

Their rationale behind this, she claims, is that the Lebanese government views the project as benefiting Lebanese institutions. If these women increase their income, they will be less dependent on aid and eventually—if the project continues to grow—buy material from Lebanese businesses and improve the Lebanese economy.[334] Still, while the state may not pose any direct barriers to *Tatreez*, the legal issues accompanying the status of Palestinian refugees did pose significant barriers to the implementation of the project.

ADMINISTRATIVE AND LEGAL BARRIERS

Gómez states that in the case of economic independence, the sociocultural context poses challenges to *Tatreez*. She says that working with women posed barriers culturally, but also that working with Palestinians puts them at a huge disadvantage in terms of empowerment.[335]

For example, one of the actions of *Tatreez* was to form a legally registered co-op, but the administrative and legal barriers made it impossible. First, the bans on Palestinian labor and association restrict *Tatreez* beneficiaries from managing formal businesses. Second, the camps are not considered to be Lebanese soil, but rather under UN jurisdiction, making it impossible to form shops legally registered under Lebanese law.[336] Therefore, the *Tatreez* co-op is always going to be art of the informal economy because it

[333] Ibid.
[334] Ibid.
[335] Gómez, July 2015.
[336] Cives Mundi, *Interim Narrative Report - Tatreez*, (Beirut, Lebanon, August 2014): 17.

"cannot be any other way."[337] This is especially problematic in terms of the development of the online shop. As of now, the *Tatreez* online shop is running without an account number associated with a business. This essentially means that the shop has to export their products as individuals and cannot complete transactions online. Instead, customers have to call the number on the website, ask for what they want, and *Tatreez* sends it.[338] While this system is functioning right now, it will become increasingly problematic if *Tatreez* continues to grow.[339]

Gómez states that *Cives Mundi* hired a lawyer to provide legal alternatives to a formal co-operative and to asses its yearly costs in order to evaluate the best option for the beneficiaries and for the NGOs committed to the project. *Cives Mundi* is also considering replacing the co-operative with an existing association of Tatreez embroidery so they do not have to register a new organization.[340] Even with these possible alternatives, Gómez states that *Tatreez* will most likely remain part of the informal economy. [341]

DONOR PRESSURE

As I address when I discuss *Cives Mundi's* relations to the Lebanese state, *Tatreez* does not seek to bring about political change. While *Cives Mundi's* choice of strategies have a variety of contributing factors, Gómez claims that the apolitical nature of their intervention is largely donor driven. She asserts that if a project presents a political

[337] See note 330.
[338] Ibid.
[339] Ibid.
[340] Cives Mundi, *Interim Narrative Report - Tatreez*, (Beirut, Lebanon, August 2014): 14.
[341] Gómez, July 2015.

component, it will not get funded.[342] Because *Tatreez* is funded by the EU, the project cannot include critique of the Lebanese government, as the EU fears that placing pressure on the Lebanese state could spark conflict and harm international relations.[343]

As *Cives Mundi's* primary role is to serve as a link to foreign aid dollars, they must present proposals capable of competing for funding. While *Cives Mundi* does have an advantage in that they have a strong team in their headquarter office as well as on the ground in Lebanon, the calls for proposals are becoming increasingly competitive as funds are reduced and reoriented towards Syrian refugees.[344] In order to receive funding, *Cives Mundi* recognizes the importance of presenting a project that properly embodies the brand of the donor.[345] As their primary donor is the EU—which must consider the importance of maintaining positive state relations—*Tatreez* cannot seek to restructure the political system hindering economic development among Palestinian refugee women.

ADDRESSING THE ROOT CAUSES OF UNDERDEVELOPMENT

The ultimate goal of *Tatreez* is to the promote the economic development of Palestinian women in order to increase their economic self-sufficiency and to decrease their dependence on the aid structure.[346] Despite the success of *Tatreez* in meeting its outlined objectives, Gómez admits that without an opportunity to restructure the system, these women are always going to need help.[347] Even though these women are generating

[342] Ibid.
[343] Ibid.
[344] Alcalde, September 2015.
[345] Gómez, July 2015.
[346] Tatwir Center for Policy Studies, *From Exclusion to Empowerment: Divorced and Widowed Women in Palestinian Refugee Camps*, 5.
[347] See note 340.

income independently (which is the primary objective of the project), as Palestinians in Lebanon, they are going to remain part of the informal economy.[348]

Cives Mundi recognizes these limitations as early as the proposal drafting stage of the project. Within the *Tatreez* proposal, *Cives Mundi* writes that they do not have the authority to intervene directly in the political situation and improve the Lebanese legal system currently excluding Palestinian refugees.[349] They do, however, focus on there leverage in producing economic change. They strategically include the GUPW as a partner organization.[350] While including the GUPW was a strategic step towards supporting political change, the goal of empowering the GUPW to pressure for amendments to the legal system without getting directly involved, made the odds of bringing about policy change incredibly slim.[351] Within their *Good Practices Guide*, *Cives Mundi* stresses that the challenges facing divorced and widowed Palestinian refugee women are "multi-faceted" and are a result of the "political, economic, and legal structures that govern the refugee camps."[352] They urge that complexity of these challenges will require "multi-stakeholder, action-based alliances that will allow for exchange of information and experience, referrals, and the formation and implementation of integrated solutions."[353] However, *Tatreez* includes no actions which directly seek to restructure these systems.

In their report *From Exclusion to Empowerment: Divorced and Widowed Women in Palestinian Refugee Camps, Tatwir* Center for Policy Studies writes that the exclusion

[348] Ibid.
[349] Cives Mundi, *Tatreez Project Proposal,* (2012): 3
[350] Ibid.
[351] Ibid.
[352] Cives Mundi, *Good Practices Guide,* (2015): 9.
[353] Ibid.

of Palestinian women is "not just about poverty and exclusion from economic participation, but is a structural problem," largely the policy barriers hindering their entry into the labor market.[354] These barriers force these women to remain part of the informal economy, which is precisely what occurred with *Tatreez.*[355] While these women are generating their own income and are more economically self-sufficient, *Tatreez* was only able to promote economic development among these women to a point.

[354] Tatwir Center for Policy Studies, *From Exclusion to Empowerment: Divorced and Widowed Women in Palestinian Refugee Camps*, 3, 6.

[355] Gómez, July 2015.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSIONS & ANALYSIS OF RESULTS IN CONTEXT

DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORKS

Within the context of existing development frameworks, NGOs serve either to offer a development system separate from mainstream development—supported by the 'alternatives to development' framework, or to fill the gaps in development—supported by the 'alternative development' framework, and with it 'neoliberal development policy' and the 'New Policy Agenda." I argue that *Cives Mundi* utilizes the latter, more specifically the 'New Policy Agenda,' which combines 'alternative development' with 'neoliberal development policy."

Table 6.1 NGOS WORKING WITH PALESTINIAN REFUGEES IN LEBANON IN THE CONTEXT OF DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORKS

	'New Policy Agenda' ('Alternative Development' & 'Neoliberal Development')	**Alternatives to Development**
NGO role in economic development	Fill the development gaps in UNRWA and PLO services and the informal market	To promote the economic rights of PRL
Objectives	To promote economic independence among Palestinian refugees to lessen the "burden" on the aid structure	To promote the economic inclusion of Palestinian refugees within Lebanon's formal economy
Strategies	Participation and empowerment within the existing power structure	Advocacy for policy change; radical participation and empowerment
Relations with the state	Cooperative with the state and	Seek to reform Lebanese policy vis-à-vis Palestinian refugees

As I outline in the literature review, the 'alternative development' framework asserts that NGOs should fill gaps between the market and the state—or in this case the gaps in UNRWA and PLO services and the informal economy—by pursuing objectives the government has previously ignored or is unable to fill.[356] While this framework may function within a context where the state is active in service provision or development initiatives, the Lebanese state is almost completely absent when it comes to Palestinian refugees. Therefore, NGOs pursuing 'alternative development' through their intervention targeted towards Palestinian refugees are not filling the gaps in state services, but rather the services of the UNRWA, the PLO, and other NGOs. As I point out in my secondary study, this is problematic both in terms of NGO capacity—NGOs may not be able to fill these extremely wide development gaps—and coordination—the NGO sector struggles to effectively coordinate their development intervention.[357]

Within 'alternative development,' 'neoliberal development policy,' goes further to as to suggest that NGOs should utilize market-based solutions to solve development issues. Again, this is problematic when applied to Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, as they are largely excluded from the labor market. So even though *Tatreez* included neoliberal strategies—specifically the transfer of training and skills to help Palestinian women compete in the international market—the beneficiaries of the project are still excluded from the formal economy.

The 'New Policy Agenda' combines 'alternative development' with 'neoliberal development policy' by dually targeting economic markets—"achieving economic

[356] Fisher, "Doing Good? The Politics and Antipolitics of NGO Practices," 444; Hedayat Allah Nikkhah & Ma'rof Bin Redzuan. "The Role of NGOs in Promoting Empowerment for Sustainable Community Development." *Journal of Human Ecology* 30, no. 2 (2010): 85.

[357] Ajial Center, "Palestinian Non-Government Organizations in Lebanon."

growth, producing goods, and providing services for the poor," while also promoting "good governance."[358] This is the development framework which I argue *Cives Mundi* promotes. This development framework places NGOs as the safety nets which fill the void where the state and market is unable or unwilling to do so.[359] Theoretically, NGOs complement government strategies; however, in the context of *Tatreez,* NGOs simply seek to coexist with the Lebanese state.[360] So while the 'New Policy Agenda' suggests that NGO intervention should create domestic demand for goods and services, improve productivity, and mobilize the community and the market, these objectives are largely pursued within the informal economy.[361]

In the case of *Tatreez,* the macro-objective of of the project was to promote economic development within Palestinian refugee camps in order to decrease their dependence on the aid structure and to decrease the "burden" on Lebanese infrastructure.[362] I identify the potential problems of this strategy to align with the argument of Stephen Commins: that NGOs risk "cloaking government inaction," or simply that NGOs may lack the capacity to fill development gaps.[363] When evaluating *Tatreez,* I would say *Cives Mundi* suffered from both. In fact, it was largely the inaction of the Lebanese state—including the issues accompanying their slow administrative processes and refusal to waver in allowing the legal formation of the *Tatreez* co-operative—which posed a barrier to *Cives Mundi's* intervention. At the same time, *Cives Mundi* lacks the capacity and the authority to bring about true change to Lebanese policy.

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[358] Ibid.
[359] Zaidi, "NGO Failure and the Need to Bring Back the State," 261.
[360] Clark, "Democratising Development: NGOs and the State," 151-152.
[361] GOM, "Policy Framework for Poverty Alleviation Program," quoted in, Tembo, "The Multi-Image Development NGO: An Agent of the New Imperialism?" 530.
[362] Gómez, July 2015.
[363] Commins, "NGOs: ladles in the global soup kitchen?" 620.

Not only that, but in doing so, they would risk losing the funding to complete the project in the first place.

Edwards & Hulme, who largely base their work on practical experience, claim that the fragmentation of the NGO sector, NGO dependence on outside funding, and their vulnerability to changing contexts, all hinder the sustainability of their intervention.[364] These are precisely the challenges which I discovered throughout my secondary study of the NGO sector within Lebanon, as well as my case study of *Cives Mundi* and *Tatreez.* They go further to claim that in countries where the gaps in development are exceptionally wide—whether that be through state inaction or inability to intervene—traditional development actors may become increasingly dependent upon the NGO sector and become even less active in development promotion.[365] This has been the case within Lebanon since the establishment of the UNRWA.

Critics of these development frameworks claim that economic development within certain countries and among certain groups will "require a structural transformation of economic and political relations."[366] Therefore, instead of filling the gap between the market and the state, NGOs should serve as "vehicles for progressive change."[367] While this framework appears to account for all of the weaknesses of the 'New Policy Agenda,' it raises the question of whether or not NGOs possess the capacity to bring about effective policy change within Lebanon. When considering the case of *Tatreez* and *Cives Mundi,* I would say that they do not. *Cives Mundi* is simply too small of an organization and lacks the resources to serve as drivers for progressive change. It is

[364] Edwards & Hulme, "Too Close for Comfort? The Impact of Official Aid on Nongovernmental Organizations*,"* 4.
[365] Ibid.
[366] Zaidi, "NGO Failure and the Need to Bring Back the State," 263.
[367] Lewis & Kanji, *NGOs and Development,* 3.

for this reason that *Cives Mundi*—and other organizations like it—aim to work where they have the advantage. As I identify at the start of the chapter, this advantage is working with the most vulnerable populations who are excluded from traditional economic development by serving as a funding intermediary.[368] Therefore, if the only way for NGOs to utilize their advantages successfully is to write a project they know will get funded and to coexist with the national government, then it is in their best interest to do so. The takeaway, though, is that the international community needs to be aware that these projects will be less radical in nature, as these NGOs will adapt accordingly to state and donor pressure. In practice, these conclusions should not undermine the value of current NGO interventions, but seek to inform development actors that the NGO sector might not be well-placed to target development issues at their source—particularly when they require a policy change. It is because of these disadvantages—primarily susceptibility to donor pressure, national governments, and geographic context—that I argue NGOs may not be able to fill the roles development frameworks suggest they can.

CONCLUSIONS

> At the start of this thesis, I choose to define economic development as:
>
> "activities that expand capacities to realize the potential of individuals, firms or communities who contribute to the advancement of society through the responsible production of goods and services."[369]

While I do not mean to communicate that one is not possible without the other, I do argue that sustainable, effective economic development initiatives will need to promote

[368] World Bank, *Key Issues and Themes / NGO Capacity Building of Southern NGOs – The Experience of the World Bank* (1998), quoted in Kamat, "The Privatization of the Public Interest," 169.

[369] Feldman, Hadjimichael, Kemeny & Lanahan, "Economic Development: A Definition and Model for Investment." 20.

individual economic development within the formal economy. This particular definition of economic development stresses that the economic development of individuals, firms, and communities is directly connected to the economic development of society—which is not possible when a community is almost entirely excluded from mainstream economic development. Despite the fact that *Tatreez* successfully increased the economic independence of these Palestinian refugee women, the project did little in the way of changing the policies restricting the economic participation of Palestinian refugees within Lebanon.

This nature of intervention is not only limited in terms of its ability to promote economic development at the individual level, but also in terms of lifting the refugee "burden" off of the aid structure. Even though the beneficiaries of this project achieved a degree of economic independence, the contexts in which their development is occurring—the geographical limitations within the camps as well as the restrictive policy environment within Lebanon—will prevent them from achieving complete self-sufficiency free from outside aid.

This being said, *Cives Mundi* does possess distinct advantages in terms of adaptability—which they display through their ability to re-strategize in response to the crisis in Syria: the reorientation of funds, heightened security risks and restrictions to movement, and the increasing refugee population—and their ability to form close relationships with stakeholders—NGO partners, local municipalities, and beneficiaries. Both of these advantages aid *Cives Mundi* in their ability to successfully utilize empowerment and participation strategies within contexts which are not conducive to female economic participation nor economic development in general.

At the same time, the challenges facing *Cives Mundi's*—primarily the lack of involvement/cooperation of the Lebanese state and their susceptibility to donor pressure—severely hinder their ability to address the source of underdevelopment among Palestinian refugees—as they fear harming their established interests.

The International Labour Organization & the Committee for the Employment of Palestinian Refugees assert that:

> "the development conditions of Palestinian refugees are very much linked to their employment status, [and that] the lack of access to fair job opportunities and decent work is exacerbating the vicious cycle of impoverishment and precarious conditions that Palestinians endure."[370]

These findings support my conclusion in order to improve the socio-economic rights of Palestinian refugees and to decrease their dependence on aid in the long-term, development intervention needs to focus on gaining entry into the formal economy through advocating for their economic rights within Lebanon. By integrating Palestinian refugees into the Lebanese labor market, intervention of this nature will improve the economic well-being of Palestinians as well as stability within Lebanon.[371]

I begin this thesis by describing the view that NGOs can serve as "magic bullets" for solving development issues.[372] Through my survey of development literature, I find that the development community recognizes NGOs as being well-placed to reach those excluded from mainstream economic development. Within Lebanon, NNGOs such as *Cives Mundi* primarily act as funding intermediaries to connect local NGOs (SNGOs) with foreign aid dollars. This role, though advantageous in terms of funneling aid directly

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[370] Al-Nashif & El-Khoury, "Palestinian Employment in Lebanon: Facts and Challenges," 16.

[371] Ibid., 23.

[372] Edwards & Hulme, *Beyond the Magic Bullet: NGO Performance and Accountability in the Post Cold-War World,* 3.

to Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, can lead to the de-politicization of NGO strategies and prevent them from targeting underdevelopment at its source—in the case of Lebanon, promoting radical change to Lebanon's policy towards Palestinian refugees.

This is not to say that NGOs need to change their strategies and forgo foreign aid dollars in order to critique the Lebanese government. In actuality that would be counterproductive—as a key advantage of NGOs is their ability to access a variety of funding. Instead, this thesis seeks to inform those who maintain that NGOs are the "panacea for the ills that afflict underdeveloped countries" that NGOs may only be able to promote economic development to a point.[373] Especially when funded by political states or IGOs, the NGO sector may not be well-placed to solve development issues where state policy is a primary barrier to economic development among a particular group. Achieving an international awareness that NGOs do possess distinct advantages, but may not be a cure-all to economic underdevelopment, will allow the NGO sector to promote development within their functional capacity without placing unreachable expectations on their interventions.

The roles of the NGO sector are constantly redefined as contexts and objectives continue to shift, therefore these assertions do not hold true for all NGOs.[374] The fragmentation of the NGO sector, displayed through the wide differentiation of organizational structure, strategies, objectives, and areas of intervention, make generalizations regarding NGO roles in development inherently problematic.

This study attempted to analyze the conventional wisdom regarding NGO roles and to critically test general trends in the NGO sector in order to evaluate how they play

[373] Ibid.
[374] Lewis, "Development Policy and Development NGOs: The Changing Relationship" 7.

out in Lebanon.[375] While this study provided a better understanding of the functions of NGOs working with Palestinian refugees within Lebanon, other studies detailing NGO intervention in specific places at specific times will be imperative to critically test existing development frameworks.[376] I stated in my methodology that this thesis can also serve as a preliminary or pilot to multiple case studies. Therefore, I suggest that additional research which critically analyzes NGO intervention in particular contexts will be imperative to evaluating current development frameworks, as well as gaining insight into effective NGO strategies.

[375] Tembo, "The Multi-Image Development NGO: An Agent of the New Imperialism?" 532).

[376] Ibid

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