

**The Challenges and Successes of Non-Governmental Organizations in
Palestinian Refugee Camps in Lebanon from 1967 to 1982;
The Case of the American Near East Refugee Aid (ANERA)**

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Abstract

This thesis studies a by-product of the continuing and complex Arab-Israeli conflict: the Palestinian refugee diaspora in Lebanon, and the efforts of Western charitable organizations with this population. The rise of the non-governmental organization (NGO) movement embroiled the Western world in the Middle East as a new form of intervention, with the aim of providing emergency relief in the short term and plans for development in the long term. This research studies how Palestinians came to live in their host countries with the help of NGOs, and to determine what the challenges and successes of these organizations were. For this study, the American Near East Refugee Aid (ANERA) organization is used as a case study by looking at its history of interaction with Palestinians between the War of 1967 and the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982, a decade and a half marked by war and exodus. Using ANERA's annual reports, newsletters, board meeting reports, and interviews with individual Palestinians who were raised in Lebanon, the research looks at the history and ethical complications of the international NGO movement. Furthermore, this thesis analyses the logistical challenges and achievements of ANERA in their programming in Lebanon and the way that Palestinians were portrayed by ANERA back to their American public. Finally, the Palestinian perspective is taken into account to understand the impact of Western NGOs on their own community. Ultimately, this study seeks to determine how what has been ANERA's historical experience with Palestinian refugees in Lebanon.

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Table of Contents

Introduction	1
Historical Context	1
Research Questions	8
Historiography	12
Primary Sources	13
Organization.....	15
Chapter 1: The History and Ethics of Nongovernmental Organizations	17
Nongovernmental organizations in the Middle East until 1948	18
The Birth of the UN and the rise of the 'development sector' between 1948 and 1967	23
NGOS & civil society in the Middle East from 1967 to 1982	26
The Ethics of NGOs	30
Funding NGOS	37
Conclusion	38
Chapter 2: Logistical Challenges and Successes facing ANERA in Lebanon.....	40
Palestinian refugees in Lebanon.....	41
ANERA in Lebanon: Fundraising and Programming	44
Funding	54
NGOs and the Oil Industry	58
Relationship with U.S. and Israeli Governments	62
Conclusion	66
Chapter 3: The Portrayal of Palestinian Refugees by NGOS to the American Public	67
Theories and Case Studies	68
Methodology	75
Photos and Images	77
Cultural Demonstrations	86
Palestinian Quotes.....	89
Conclusion	92
Chapter 4: From the Palestinian Perspective	94
Importance of Oral History	95
Methodology	97
Results.....	101
Analysis.....	112
Conclusion	117
Conclusion	119
Bibliography.....	125
Archival Primary Sources	125
Printed Primary Sources.....	125
Web Secondary Sources.....	125
Printed Secondary Sources.....	126
Appendix A.....	131
Appendix B.....	132

INTRODUCTION

Today, the Palestinian-Israeli conflict continues its unfortunate relevance in international politics and humanitarianism, and the consequential presence of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon is long-lasting. Prior to the Second World War, imperialist powers traded most of their colonial holdings in the Middle East and Northern Africa between each other, denying the indigenous populations their right to sovereignty. Movements of nationalism, pan-Arabism and decolonization emerged in the wake of 1945. These movements have changed the course of modern Middle Eastern society and are of utmost importance in understanding how identity, nationality and political consciousness are interpreted in the region today. The case of Palestine remains distinctive: despite several attempts and support from neighbouring countries, these movements did not secure its independence and its population remains scattered and stateless.¹

Historical Context

The Zionist movement and the subsequent creation of the state of Israel disrupted Palestinian attempts at forming their own independent nation-state. The concepts of modern Zionism developed in Europe in the late nineteenth century around the integral premise that Palestine would be the Jewish homeland. Zionism gained strength throughout the Jewish community due to their shared history of oppression and persecution and the idea that anti-Semitism would never disappear: a Jewish nation-state would need to be created instead. Over the course of the following century, Palestinians experienced the consequences of this decision and

¹ For further information on themes of nationalism, pan-Arabism, decolonization and identity, see Ilan Pappé, *A History of Modern Palestine* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

have had to continuously fight for their own legitimacy as a people deserving to stay on their land.² On May 14th, 1948, Israel declared its independence, which was followed soon after with defacto support from the United States. War broke out almost immediately, and over the next decades; war would repeat itself, violence and tension continued to rise, and more Arab countries involved themselves.

Palestine, as such, has never celebrated sovereignty. The Arab-Israeli wars resulted in heavy losses on both sides and prompted approximately 700,000 Palestinians to flee into neighboring countries.³ Lebanon inherited many of these displaced peoples and has granted them a temporary home since 1948. Palestinian, Israeli and Lebanese histories cannot be studied in silos in the context of this thesis. Rather, their histories are intricately interwoven, and context is required to untangle them. While this thesis investigates the situation of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon in depth, it cannot be understood without a review of long-standing conflict over Palestine, Lebanon's involvement, and the complicated and important actions of Western actors in this history. Additionally, the very definition of the Palestinian refugee must be studied. This thesis defines "Palestinian refugees" as people, and the generations that follow them, that have lost their livelihoods, access to rights, or their homes as a result of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict debuting in 1948. While the number of surviving Palestinians from 1948 are dwindling, their

² The concept of Zionism traces its roots back to the origins of Judaism, and a return to the Promised Land is a prominent theme in Jewish history. Theodor Herzl is heralded as having popularized and further developed a Zionist "plan" starting in 1897, which outlined a Jewish state to escape anti-Semitism and to abandon the pressure of assimilation. This gained momentum and spurred waves of Jewish immigration to Palestine throughout the first half of the twentieth century. Following the Second World War and the Holocaust, a renewed sense of urgency on the basis of safety and settlement for survivors prompted an increase in immigration and lobbying for a Jewish state while Palestine was still under a British Mandate. For further information, see Mark Tessler, "Jewish History and the Emergence of Modern Political Zionism," in *A History of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict*, (Bloomington, Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1994); Arthur Hertzberg, *The Zionist Idea: A Historical Analysis and Reader* (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 1997); and Simha Flapan, *Zionism and the Palestinians*, (London: Croom Helm Ltd, 1979).

³ Reported numbers vary between 400,000 and 900,000. These numbers drawn from United Nations Relief Works Agency, "Palestinian Refugees." Accessed April 10, 2018. [<https://www.unrwa.org/palestine-refugees>].

children and grandchildren that were born and raised in this particular situation continue to grow, and they continue to be impacted by the decisions and happenings in the years preceding their birth. Anthropologist Ilana Feldman studied the impacts and the evolution of the various definitions of Palestinians over the years. In her article “The Challenges of Categories: UNRWA and the Definition of the ‘Palestinian Refugee,’” she wrote that Palestinians themselves “associate being a refugee both with the absence of rights (of citizenship, to homeland) and with access to rights (to relief, of recognition).”⁴ This principle is the guiding thought behind the definition of a refugee in this thesis. With this information, the unique political and global position of American NGOs embroiled in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict will be illuminated.

Leading up to the war of 1967, the relationships between the states of the Middle East were reaching a pivotal level of tension. Politically, relations between Arab states and Israel were worsening, and war was forthcoming. At the center of the burgeoning conflict, were the Palestinian refugees. The three main Arab actors in the War of 1967 had vested interests in the outcome of the Palestinian refugee crisis: Egypt, Syria and Jordan had land occupied by Palestinian refugees, placing strain on their national economies, infrastructures and the Palestinians themselves were still without an independent state.

Israel, for its part, had been trying for almost the entire 20 years of its existence to have the population of Israeli Arabs emigrate.⁵ Desiring the additional land that the West Bank offered, the country prepared itself for an aggression. Encroaching upon previously contested Straits of Tiran in Egypt, Israel began to make itself known and suspicions between the two countries endangered

⁴ Ilana Feldman, “The Challenge of Categories: UNRWA and the Definition of the ‘Palestinian Refugee,’” *Journal of Refugee Studies* 25, no. 3 (2012): 389.

⁵ Tom Segev, “The June 1967 War and the Palestinian Refugee Problem,” *Journal of Palestine Studies* 36, no. 3 (2007): 6-7.

the status quo.⁶ The situation was further complicated by the USSR's role in the conflict in playing their close connection to Nasser: leading up until the attack, the Soviets had been feeding Egypt intelligence that Israel was preparing itself for war.⁷ Despite Western influence on Israeli affairs, on June 6th, 1967, Israel attacked Egypt under the pretense of pre-emptive defense. Egyptians and Jordanian armies were caught completely by surprise and were quashed in a matter of days. The brief conflict, also known as the 1967 June War or the Six Day War, is still hotly debated on the principle of fault: Lebanon did not enter war, but still bore the consequences of it. It received another mass influx of Palestinian refugees through its borders, further destabilizing an already critical situation.⁸

Notably, the other powers of the world were completely against this war. The United States, Great Britain, France, and the Soviet Union all disapproved of any disruption to the Middle East. In particular, the United States and Great Britain were keen to have the refugee crisis resolved, as they were the biggest contributors to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), the regulatory body providing emergency relief to Palestinians.⁹ A conflict that deepened the refugee crisis was not in their favour. All involved international actors, including the USSR, were now eager to solve the conflict.¹⁰

While the Israeli independence in May 1948 is referred to by the Palestinians as al-Nakbah (the catastrophe), the 1967 war is referred to as al-Naksah, or, the setback. These nicknames summarize two of the most influential moments in the Arab-Israeli conflict. While 1948 caused the complete disruption of a state that would have been Palestine and resulted in a refugee crisis

⁶ Pappé, *A History of Modern Palestine*, 184.

⁷ Avi Raz, *The Bride and the Dowry: Israel, Jordan, and the Palestinians in the Aftermath of the June 1967 War* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012), 13.

⁸ Pappé, *A History of Modern Palestine*, 188.

⁹ Arieh J. Kochavi, "The US, Britain and the Palestinian Refugee Question after the Six Day War," *Middle Eastern Studies* 48, no. 4 (2012): 537, doi: 10.1080/00263206.2012.682575.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 545.

on global scale, the events of 1967 cemented the deepening scars between the Middle Eastern states and resulted in a second wave of refugees fleeing from violence, furthering Palestinians from possibly achieving independence. In 1967, for the first time, the effects of Israel's occupation touched other nations beyond Palestine directly. The overwhelming defeat extended to the Arab actors involved, and also had an effect in the beginning of the Lebanese Civil War. The Civil War that erupted in 1975 and waged until 1990 was largely due to issues with the political, social and economic systems, changing demography, foreign involvement, and the Arab-Israeli conflict.¹¹ Continued conflict and war peppers the time between 1967 and 1982. It is in this context and this timeframe that this thesis bases itself. This study concludes at the time of the Israeli invasion of Southern Lebanon in 1982, a situation that shattered any remaining stability in refugee camps for some time afterwards, due to the violence perpetrated against them by the Israelis and Lebanese citizens.¹² At this time, the context in Lebanon changed dramatically: the attitude towards refugees turned from tense to hostile, greatly impacting their ability to integrate and live in their host country.

The temporary solution of housing refugees in neighbouring countries has lengthened into a decades-long situation, as the right to return to Palestine and Israel has still not been given to the exiled Palestinians. Currently, approximately ten percent of the Lebanese population is made up of Palestinian refugees, dispersed in twelve refugee camps around the country.¹³ This type of statelessness has had immeasurable effects on the social fabric, political life and mindset of both Palestinians and their host countries.¹⁴

¹¹ James R. Stocker, *Spheres of Intervention US Foreign Policy and the Collapse of Lebanon, 1967-1976* (Cornell University Press, 2016), 9.

¹² Pappé, *A History of Modern Palestine*, 221.

¹³ United Nations Relief Works Agency, "Where We Work: Lebanon." Accessed February 23, 2018. [<https://www.unrwa.org/where-we-work/lebanon>].

¹⁴ See William E. Conklin, "Consequences of Statelessness" in *Statelessness: The Enigma of an International Community* (Hart Publishing, 2014). Individuals forced into a "stateless" identity often face economic, social and

In response to the number of Palestinian refugees, the number of international organizations in the Middle East grew, and they have made their mark in Palestinian refugee camps. Most notably, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), a body established in 1949 and specifically designated to support Palestinian refugees. The UNRWA is the only United Nations' agency completely dedicated to one community, and it was only meant to exist a few years at most.¹⁵ A provision in its mandate dictates that it may only be dissolved when Palestinians have a secure future, and the crisis be resolved.¹⁶ As such, the UNRWA continues to operate today, some 69 years later. Other NGOs, previously known as "private voluntary organizations," have supported the UNRWA and their own projects in Lebanese refugee camps.

The UNRWA has had a problematic history with the definition of Palestinian refugees. In short, the UNRWA struggled with establishing a definition of refugee to be able to register all the Palestinians affected by the establishment of Israel and the subsequent wars. In 1952, UNRWA settled on defining a refugee as someone who has lived in Palestine between June 1, 1946 to May 15, 1948 and lost both their home and their livelihood. Critics of this definition have argued that this definition does not accurately represent the true number of Palestinians displaced or impacted by the conflict; for example, it does not account for those Palestinians who may not have lost their homes, but live in unbearable conditions and are impacted by the conflict.¹⁷ Additionally, this definition makes distinctions over gender. For example, women who marry non-refugees, and their

psychological consequences, as they can be discriminated against in terms of employment, housing and ownership of property. Additionally, social insecurity instigated by a lack of access to medical care and education leads to ostracization and trauma.

¹⁵ Benjamin N. Schiff, *Refugees unto the Third Generation: UN Aid to Palestinians* (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1995), 4.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ For a condensed history about this definition and the debate surrounding it, see Riccardo Bocco, "UNRWA and the Palestinian Refugees: A History within History," *Refugee Survey Quarterly* 28, no. 2-3 (2010): 237-244. doi: 10.1093/rsq/hdq001.

subsequent children, lose their entitlement to UNRWA services, a loophole in the definition that continues to cause controversy. Contrasted with the definition used in this essay, the UNRWA definition does not adequately describe a definition that would be able to fully capture all the Palestinians negatively affected by this situation, and who require either assistance or political recognition. As described by Feldman:

The category of a Palestinian refugee has always been an incomplete one. Because the definition was developed to implement the UNRWA relief mandate, rather than to account for Palestinian loss and displacement (as relevant to UN resolutions and Palestinian political claims), it did not ever include the whole of the population that had claims to property, to return, and to national self-determination.¹⁸

As such, the definition of the “Palestinian Refugee”, and its impact to receiving and perceiving foreign aid, is noteworthy in this thesis.

Palestinians in refugee camps face a completely unique set of problems. Their prolonged displacement has separated them from the rest of Lebanese society – they have been barred from certain jobs, levels of education and any voting capabilities.¹⁹ They have effectively been placed in political and social limbo. Few opportunities have resulted in generations of Palestinians facing serious difficulties in ameliorating their own situation, or in gaining a political voice in the Arab-Israeli conflict that has marooned them from their homeland.

Charitable organizations have been active in the Middle East for centuries. While the first instances were in the form of religious missionary work, the Western charitable presence is not new in the region. Following the end of the Second World War and the establishment of the United Nations, the “nongovernmental organization” became a recognized term.²⁰ However, some notable

¹⁸ Feldman, “The Challenge of Categories,” 392.

¹⁹ Rosemary Sayigh, *Too Many Enemies: The Palestinian Experience in Lebanon* (London: Zed Books, 1994), 23-26.

²⁰ David Lewis, *Nongovernmental Organizations, Definition and History* (2010), 1056.

organizations, even outside of the immediate religious sphere, acted as NGOs before this. For example, Save the Children Fund was initially established in 1919.²¹ Overtime, the number of organizations grew. A small portion of these NGOs were present in Lebanon in 1967, involving themselves in the future of Palestinian refugees.

Research Questions

This thesis studies a by-product of this continued conflict: the Palestinian refugee diaspora in Lebanon, and the efforts of Western charitable organizations with this population. Over the 20th century, Palestinians continued to flee, to move, and to live in transient and temporary spaces. Ultimately, many made their way to Lebanon, settling in refugee camps or living in the cities, if they could afford it. While the Palestinian-Israeli conflict drags on by decades, questions surrounding settlement and the right to return to a homeland persist.

In light of the unique situation of Palestinians in Lebanon, I sought to study how non-governmental organizations have operated in order to help refugees, and what were the challenges and successes they faced. More specifically, I study the history of NGOs in Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon after the 1967 war with Israel. For example, the Shatila camp currently hosts close to 9,842 refugees and was built in 1949.²² It currently functions similarly to a town in the south of Beirut, with two schools and a health center, although it is only one square kilometer in size and has hosted generations of Palestinians. This is only one camp out of many in Lebanon. The UNRWA currently counts 450,000 registered Palestinian refugees, many living in the 12

²¹ “Our History; Follow the Path of Save the Children,” Accessed October 6, 2018. Retrieved at <https://www.savethechildren.org/us/about-us/why-save-the-children/history> .

²² United Nations Relief Works Agency, “Shatila Camp.” Accessed April 25, 2018. Retrieved at [<https://www.unrwa.org/where-we-work/lebanon/shatila-camp>].

official refugee camps.²³ However, a 2017 report counted at least 55% of Palestinian refugees living outside of the confines of these official camps in unofficial settlements, also known as “gatherings”.²⁴ As one of the countries hosting the most Palestinian refugees, the pressures Lebanon has faced in handling this situation makes an invaluable case study in studying the settlement of long-term displaced peoples. Lebanon has faced countless economic, social and political issues in response to the intake of so many Palestinian refugees. Taking a socio-cultural approach, I analyze the failures and successes of attempts to support refugees between 1967 and 1982. I aim to introduce the historical impact of Western non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in this process.

For this thesis, I took the American Near East Refugee Aid (ANERA) organization as a case study by looking at their history of interaction with Palestinians between the war of 1967 and the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982, a decade and a half marked by war and exodus. My research seeks to determine who helped the Palestinians in their precarious and lengthy situation: historically, what has been their experience, and what has been ANERA’s involvement? To understand how this situation came to be, I go back to ANERA’s past, and the history of Palestinians in Lebanon between 1967 and 1982.

However, I recognize that even presently, the Lebanese and the Palestinian refugee communities have not yet reconciled and are still not joined in one society without certain legal and social barriers. Keeping the present state in mind, I analyse how non-governmental

²³ United Nations Relief Works Agency, “Where We Work.” Accessed April 25, 2018. Retrieved at [\[https://www.unrwa.org/where-we-work/lebanon\]](https://www.unrwa.org/where-we-work/lebanon).

²⁴ United Nations. “Assessing Vulnerabilities in Palestinian Gatherings in Lebanon – Results of UNDP 2017 Household Survey.” Published 03/12/2018. Accessed June 4, 2019. Retrieved at [\[http://www.lb.undp.org/content/lebanon/en/home/library/crisis_prevention_and_recovery/ASSESSING-VULNERABILITIES-IN-PALESTINIAN-GATHERINGS-IN-LEBANON-Results-of-the-2017-Household-Survey1.html\]](http://www.lb.undp.org/content/lebanon/en/home/library/crisis_prevention_and_recovery/ASSESSING-VULNERABILITIES-IN-PALESTINIAN-GATHERINGS-IN-LEBANON-Results-of-the-2017-Household-Survey1.html).

organizations (NGOs) operated in order to help refugees, and what were the challenges and successes they faced.

I would like to specify that while the UNRWA is a vital agency in the Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon, it will not be a primary focus of study. Significant research has already been conducted on the UNRWA's impact and existence in Lebanon.²⁵ Furthermore, the UNRWA operates vastly differently from an NGO and as it is a transnational organization, I classify it in a completely separate category from regular smaller-scale NGOs. For these reasons, mentions of the UNRWA will instead aim to view them in the scope of their relationship with other American NGOs, namely ANERA.

Another question that I address in my work is the dynamics of Western NGOs with displaced people. This is of interest considering the tumultuous past history with Western intervention in the region. There has been significant scholarship on the influence of NGOs on local communities.²⁶ Some NGOs, like Amnesty International, have made themselves known worldwide for their efforts around the globe. Other organizations operate on a much smaller level and target a specific problem, often community-based, like building schools or providing support for widows. In the case of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, many Western NGOs play a vital part in supporting the community, in terms of maintaining infrastructure, providing economic backing,

²⁵ For more information, see Anthony Parsons, "The United Nations and the Palestine Refugees with Special Reference to Lebanon," *Journal of Refugee Studies* 10, no. 3. (1997), 228-242; Julie Peteet, *Landscape of Horror and Despair: Palestinian Refugee Camps* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005); Benjamin N. Schiff, *Refugees unto the Third Generation*; and Ghassan Shabaneh, "Refugees, International Organizations, and National Identity: The Case of Palestine," *New Political Science* 32, no. 2. (2010), 215-236.

²⁶ The NGO as we know it today began to develop after the creation of the League of Nations. Since then, its rise and power has been documented in the colonial and postcolonial world, including its emerging importance in peacekeeping and the policy building sphere. Their successes and failures in terms of perpetuating dependent relations between states and maintaining standards of international human rights are documented in Henry F. Carey, *Privatizing the Democratic Peace: Policy Dilemmas of NGO Peacebuilding* (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012); Ankie M. Hoogvelt, *Globalization and the Postcolonial World: The New Political Economy of Development* (Baltimore, Maryland: The John Hopkins University Press, 2001); and Claude Emerson Welch, *NGOs and Human Rights: Promise and Performance* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001).

health care and education. However, has their help had the effect of correcting past foreign failures in the region, or does it continue to foster a dependent relationship with the people they serve? Large foreign institutions, like the United Nations and the European Union, have been frequently criticized as a continued colonial power under the guise of ‘peace-keeping’.²⁷ I attempt to uncover if this is accurate in the case of Palestinians in Lebanon. Do NGOs like ANERA propagate a culture of codependency and reliance? In researching this question, I aim to analyze how this affected Palestinians in Lebanon, who cannot return to Palestine for support, nor rely on their host country’s government.

The NGO I chose for my research, the American Near East Refugee Aid (ANERA), was founded in 1968. It has helped provide social and medical services to Palestinians in Lebanon and the remaining occupied Palestinian territory. An American organization founded by an American couple, ANERA took action following the 1967 war. Initially providing funding for various crisis management and relief projects, they grew to be an essential player in the survival of refugees. The organization has been involved in most of the complicated history of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, making it an invaluable piece of the historical puzzle, as very few other organizations have been active in the region for this length of time. Additionally, ANERA’s archives (annual reports, newsletters, audit reports and board books) are accessible and locally available in the United States office, making them an ideal choice for this study.

²⁷ Peo Hansen and Stefan Jonsson, “Another Colonialism: African in the History of European Integration.” *Journal of Historical Sociology* 27, no. 3 (2014): 442-461. doi: 10.1111/johs.12055.

Historiography

The subjects of the Palestinian refugee question, Lebanese history and the impacts of non-governmental organizations have been studied proficiently, but separately. To date, there have been no studies on ANERA's impact in Lebanon, or elsewhere. The organization's sources, the archives that they have held since 1968, remain untapped. Studies have either focused on refugees' experiences or on larger aid institutions like the UNRWA.

On organizations, studies include Asaf Romirowsky and Alexander H. Joffe's *Religion, Politics, and the Origins of Palestine Refugee Relief* and Benjamin N. Schiff's *Refugees unto the Third Generation: UN Aid to Palestinians*. Romirowsky and Joffe trace an interesting early history of Western intervention in the Palestinian refugee crisis, by trailing the involvement of the American organization American Friends Service Committee (ASFC) alongside the United Nations Disaster Relief Program (UNDRP) and the United Nations Relief for Palestine Refugees (UNRPR) from 1948 until the work was transitioned to the UNRWA. They provide an interesting case study of early American NGOs involved with Palestinians that acts as a prelude to ANERA's creation in 1968. Schiff's study takes a closer look at the UNRWA throughout the years, critically analyses their successes and failures, while also examining their difficult and contradictory standing as an attempt to remain an apolitical organization with a deeply political mandate. On top of these main comprehensive overviews of NGOs and the UN, other academics, such as Ankie M. Hoogvelt, Henry F. Carey, Ann Marie Clark, Thomas Richard Davies, Michael Edwards and David Hulme and more, will be used to situate ANERA's progress and development in the Middle East.

A strong body of historical literature has also been published on the state of affairs of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon. For this, I primarily reference Rosemary Sayigh and Julie Peteet's

studies.²⁸ Sayigh, namely in her work *Too Many Enemies: The Palestinian Experience in Lebanon*, writes a comprehensive study of the background, development and impacts of one of the most researched refugee camps in Lebanon; the Shatila camp. Through years of doing interviews and visiting Shatila, she outlines the escalating relationship between Lebanese society and the Palestinians. Her study brings a deep understanding of the complex relationship between the refugees and their host country, of the growing resentment between them and the devastating consequences it had. Peteet's research in *Landscape of Horror and Despair; Palestinian Refugee Camps* brings a more anthropological and social perspective to this study. She brings concepts of identity and agency into the conversation, which is pivotal to fully developing my study of intersecting actors in this conflict. While Peteet and Sayigh have written the most comprehensive and relevant materials for the purpose of this thesis, I will also frequently reference studies by Simon Haddad, Ilan Pappé, Ghassan Shabaneh and more.

Many have studied and problematized the global influence of NGOs throughout the decades of their inception. I hope to contribute to this historiography by filling the gap in the intersection between topics of NGO work in Lebanon and the lives of Palestinian refugees.

Primary Sources

Most of the research and analysis of this thesis derives from detailed studies of ANERA's newsletters and board books. With these documents, I can draw a mostly complete picture of the progression of ANERA from 1969 until the Israeli invasion of Lebanon of 1982. The newsletters are available online with the first edition published in 1969, and digital copies of the board books were given to me while I visited ANERA'S HQ in Washington, DC in July 2018. Altogether, the

²⁸ Examples include Sayigh, *Too Many Enemies*, and Peteet, *Landscape of Horror and Despair*.

analysis is based on five hundred pages of documents. The board books contain detailed agendas of the annual board meetings, the changes of staff, executive committee and board members, and detailed budgets and expenditure reports. Additionally, each package from the year contains a presidential report, highlighting ANERA's greatest successes and challenges of that year, making it highly valuable for this thesis. However, I only have board books between 1977 and 1983, with the year 1979 inexplicably lost. Thus, the newsletters come to play an important part as well by filling in the gaps of history and provide excellent insight on the early years of charitable aid in Lebanon. Additionally, the newsletters provide a more public perspective of the organization and demonstrate ANERA's priorities through what they thought was most important to communicate to Americans, and how they would garner the public's attention. The fundraising value of the newsletters is also noteworthy.

The research is supplemented by oral history. In cases like the Palestinian struggle – oral tradition is a frequently relied-upon source base.²⁹ Interviewing Palestinians who either lived in, or still live in, the Lebanese refugee camps, and who personally benefited from ANERA or other Western NGOs from 1967 to 1982 provides a good indication on the impact of international organizations in refugee aid in Lebanon. I interviewed six Palestinians, five of whom I connected with through the ANERA office in Beirut. I interviewed one former Palestinian refugee in Canada, connecting through an academic contact. The interviewees act as an illustration of the work that Western organizations performed during this time and provide a true Palestinian opinion on their relevance and importance, and their impact on their own experience outside of Palestine.

²⁹ Ellen L. Fleischmann, "Crossing the Boundaries of History: Exploring Oral History in Researching Palestinian Women in the Mandate Period," *Women's History Review* 5, no. 3. (1996): 354, doi:10.1080/09612029600200118.

Organization

Over the course of this thesis, I attempt to demonstrate all the necessary perspectives to determine the challenges and successes of NGOs in the assistance of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon. While the introduction briefly explains the context of the history of the Arab-Israeli conflict and the importance of Western involvement in the region, the first chapter drills deeper into the history of the non-governmental organization movement, and how ANERA came to exist. It examines the rise of the development sector, and ANERA's growth throughout the years since their creation until the 1982 Israeli invasion of Lebanon. Most importantly, it studies the ethical dilemmas of the modern NGO, to set the scene for the study of ANERA's work in such a morally and politically fraught conflict. The second chapter details ANERA's involvement in the Middle East, and more specifically Lebanon. It examines ANERA's projects and priorities in relation to Palestinian refugee settlement and aid in host countries. It looks at their income and expenses, geographic areas of focus, their responses to crises and their relationship with other NGOs, both Western and Arab organizations. The third chapter looks at ANERA's portrayals of refugees to the American public: how they discussed refugees was critical to the political and domestic context in the United States at the time, and imperative to how they would continue to secure funding for their programs. The final chapter provides an overview of the ANERA from the Palestinian perspective. Here, I used oral testimony to determine how the Arab and refugee communities experienced NGOs between the years of 1967 and 1982. In this chapter, I analyse the participants' responses in regard to questions about their lives growing up in Lebanon and the support they received through Western NGOs. The final chapter also attempts to understand the experience of foreign aid in Lebanon, by studying the Palestinian perspective and allowing the voice of Palestinian refugees to be heard.

The history of the Palestinian refugee diaspora is a persistently important study. One cannot skim through a newspaper in the present day without falling on stories of more disruptions, violence and uncertainty in the Middle East; recent flare ups in activism and tension in the wake of the United States' decision to move their embassy to Jerusalem prods the very questions of Western intervention and the fate of Palestinians that I attempt to answer. The deadly resurgence of conflict on the Gaza-Israeli border in March 2018 and again in May 2019, is yet another example of the continuity of instability that Palestinians continue to live. While this thesis focuses on the past, it is tempting to draw parallels or direct connections with current events. It is difficult to make sense of a complicated history of asylum, war and resettlement when these topics are ongoing and ever present. NGOs continue to grow in influence and importance, albeit drastically different than the original NGO created in the wake of the Second World War. ANERA too, continues to work in the Middle East. They have expanded and now operate their own projects directly in the Occupied Territories and Lebanon, while also including Syrian refugees in their mission statement. The pressure on the host countries remains the same. The Palestinian demand for their right to return is still repeated. While this thesis looks at a short period of time to determine what the challenges and successes of Western NGOs are in the Lebanon, it is critical to understand how to equip organizations, host countries and people with the necessary tools to support Palestinians.

CHAPTER 1: THE HISTORY AND ETHICS OF NONGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

“This is our tenth anniversary at ANERA. But we’re not going to have a big celebration.”³⁰

These words were published in the American Near East Refugee Aid’s (ANERA) 1979 newsletter, pointing to an ironic dilemma. The Arab-Israeli conflict raged on and created a requisite for support to Palestinian refugees, thus perpetuating the need for NGO existence – but with their success and necessity resulting directly as an outcome of a damaging conflict. Established in 1968, ANERA became a central component of humanitarian and relief work in Lebanon in response to the 1967 War.³¹ ANERA isn’t the first to encounter this dilemma: nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) have a long and important history in the development of civil society in the Middle East, with civil society defined as a space or community linked by associations or common activities. However, the NGO as we know it today has shifted and evolved since its original conception – a history that spans from the 17th century. This chapter will outline the historical path of the modern NGO, tracing its roots back to its religious beginnings and following it to its “final” form as a neoliberal institution that operates in the hundreds of thousands across the world today, effectively forming civil society as we know it. I will also briefly examine the history and impact of the United Nations as a hybrid form of NGO and transnational institution. Additionally, I will introduce ANERA’s history and analyze where it falls within this roadmap of civil society, along with the numerous other NGOs that were active between 1967 and 1982. Finally, I will analyse in depth the recurrent themes of proselytization, colonization and political conversions throughout this history. With

³⁰*American Near East Refugee Aid Newsletter* 46 (January/March 1979): 1. Accessed October 01, 2018. <https://www.anera.org/resources/newsletters/>.

³¹John Richardson, *How ANERA came to be*, 6. Accessed October 01, 2018. <https://www.anera.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/PreHistoryFinal.pdf>

these concepts in mind, I will examine the various ethical dilemmas that NGOs face in the development sector.

Nongovernmental organizations in the Middle East until 1948

The principles of early NGOs in the Middle East were originally espoused by religious groups, namely Jewish, Islamic and Christian units.³² These groups, often coming from Europe and North America³³, were organized with the intention of religious goodwill, charity and conversion – and even in some cases with the goals of exchanging trade, arts and sciences.³⁴ Notably, religious groups also came with imperial and political intentions as well, as will be investigated further in this section. While many of these groups were “transnational” in theory, they were often existing and operating in a time before concrete national boundaries were established in the Middle East.³⁵ The exact number of NGOs operating in the Middle East before 1948 is unknown.³⁶

The very existence of religious charitable groups granted them the unique position of having the ability to connect with various communities before the creation of a civil society.³⁷ Eventually towards the 17th and 18th centuries, religious groups began to grow in number and expand beyond missionary activity as a primary purpose. At this time, anti-slavery groups became more prominent, and the first musings about human rights began to circulate. One such organization, the Religious Society of Friends, would eventually evolve into one of the first NGOs

³² Thomas Richard Davies, *NGOs: A New History of Transnational Society* (New York, Oxford University Press, 2014), 21.

³³ The history of local NGOs is outside the scope of this thesis, and only international NGOs will be examined in detail.

³⁴ Davies, *NGOs*, 21.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Due to the limited amount of studies on NGOs in the Middle East prior to 1945, I was not able to find specific numbers on how many Western groups operated in the region.

³⁷ Ibid., 2.

in the Middle East involved with the Palestinian plight, a few hundreds of years later. Throughout the 19th century, organizations continued in the vein of religious intention, while their actions began to more effectively focus on “improving moral welfare among lower classes.”³⁸

These missionary practices were the most common form of early NGOs in the Middle East. The American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM) began to send members to the Ottoman Empire in the early 19th century.³⁹ Religious organizations have always been attracted to the Middle East as it is the original “Holy Land.”⁴⁰ In modern-day Syria and Lebanon, missionaries’ religious conversions were only moderately successful, however, their presence and persistence affected communities in other ways. Some have linked Western religious presence in the region as a mechanism for modernization and the introduction of nationalist ideals, while others insist they have acted as agents of colonialism and imperialism.⁴¹ They used science and medicinal knowledge to attract followers to their theology, sometimes quite controversially.⁴² The first American missionaries arrived in Jerusalem in 1819, but then moved to Beirut due to suspicions amongst local communities. They attempted “indirect” conversions through providing education and schooling.⁴³ This was also an attempt to “enlighten” the locals.⁴⁴ While the ABCFM at home tried to have missionaries focus on direct religious conversions, the agents in the field found greater cooperation amongst the locals through the institutions they founded. Some colleges, medical and technical schools found great success in Syria and Lebanon, although they still tried to instruct

³⁸ Linda Milbourne, *Voluntary Sector in Transition: Hard Times or New Opportunities?* (Bristol: Policy Press, 2013), 27.

³⁹ Marwa Elshakry, “The Gospel of Science and American Evangelism in Late Ottoman Beirut,” In *American Missionaries and the Middle East: Foundational Encounters*, Ed. Mehmet Ali Dogan and Heather J. Sharkey, (Salt Lake City, The University of Utah Press, 2011), 172.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 171.

⁴¹ Elshakry, “The Gospel of Science,” 168.

⁴² Ibid., 170.

⁴³ Ibid., 172.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 173.

students both in faith and morality.⁴⁵ Whatever their intentions, in reality they converted few people.⁴⁶ Their original purposes changed overtime, and eventually became the roots to “various international institutions, from liberal arts universities to NGOs, and contributing to the shaping of American foreign policy in the region.”⁴⁷

In Palestine, the Religious Society of Friends, also known as Quakers, were a religious group primarily focused on pacifism and peace.⁴⁸ While they were founded in the 17th century, their group grew over the years, and in 1917, the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) was created as a Quaker group to aid the war effort. Eventually, the group moved to tackle social, political and economic issues plaguing African Americans in the U.S., and European refugees.⁴⁹ Although they acted as missionaries, they became involved in the origins of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict by situating themselves as opponents to Zionism, due to the risk Zionism posed to Christians in the area.⁵⁰ They were not unfamiliar faces in the area; Quakers had been running missionary efforts in Palestine as early as 1650.⁵¹ Because their presence was known and familiar, Quakers began to take on an informal diplomatic role for the United States.⁵² They became involved in aid services as their experience in the region granted them an advantage over other organizations like the Red Cross.⁵³

In the wake of the First World War, there was a noticeable rise in the activity and diversity of NGOs, as the first concrete ideas of universal human rights, the concepts of welfare state and

⁴⁵ Ibid., 181-82.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 168.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 169.

⁴⁸ Asaf Romirowsky and Alexander H. Joffe, *Religion, Politics, and the Origins of Palestine Refugee Relief* (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 20.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 19-23.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 25.

⁵¹ Ibid., 23.

⁵² Ibid., 24.

⁵³ Ibid., 56.

civil society begin to develop. In Europe, the war itself damaged many NGOs, including the ‘transnational’ organizations that operated in the Middle East, due to the instability of the continent, as well as the difficulty in cooperating with international partners. In fact, in the first years of the conflict, European NGO numbers dwindled and some organizations did not survive the war.⁵⁴ However, outside of Europe, concern for humanitarian need as a result of the war continued to grow, in particular in the United States.⁵⁵ The novelty of a peace movement took on a different form, leading into new NGOs and eventually, the League of Nations.⁵⁶

The League of Nations was conceived in 1920 as a transnational body with the goal of promoting and securing peace. Although not quite a nongovernmental organization as we know it today, the League of Nations laid the foundations for the United Nations, a pivotal organism that set the standards for NGOs. Woodrow Wilson was glorified for having “saved humanity” with his think piece the League of Nations, although the United Kingdom is largely credited with having organized the actual logistics and structure of the League.⁵⁷ The League of Nations was compared to the British Empire by the Prime Minister David Lloyd George – ironic, seeing as it was an organization meant to reinvent the previous misbalance of world powers in order to avoid a situation like the First World War. Indeed, the League of Nations was based on a hierarchy of nations that maintained an unbalanced and unequal relationship with one another.⁵⁸ It was intended as a tool to stabilize the world powers within a liberal rights framework, but not to fix the cracks in the world’s system – inevitably, the League’s goal ultimately failed with the break out of the Second World War.⁵⁹ Despite its failure as an organization, the League of Nations was in part

⁵⁴ Davies, *NGO*, 78.

⁵⁵ Davies, *NGOs*, 79.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 80.

⁵⁷ Mark Mazower, *Governing the World: The History of an Idea* (New York: The Penguin Press, 2012), 118-119.

⁵⁸ Roger Normand and Sarah Zaidi, *Human Rights at the UN: The Political History of Universal Justice* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008), 54.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 62.

successful “by way of influence,” and by laying down the groundwork for what would be the United Nations.⁶⁰

While the League of Nations was undoubtedly important as a baseline for the modern NGO, the interwar years proved to be deeply informative by way of foreign diplomacy and the growing importance of education, and provided the playground for organizations to develop and transform into the global and development institutions we know today. While at first, it was said that:

the First World War’s initially detrimental consequences for much of transnational civil society, it eventually helped facilitate the development of a new generation of INGOs that aimed to address a wide range of issues, including those arising from the conflict and its aftermath.⁶¹

The interwar years produced organizations that now had more learned experience in international affairs than their pre-war predecessors and benefited from more members and more financial resources. Another important development of NGOs that occurred at this time was their increased involvement in academic and intellectual matters: more organizations were created with the intention of collaboration and international unity on matters of the sciences and humanities.⁶² Overall, NGOs began to distinguish themselves by being more worldly and pillars of knowledge and expertise. Notably, these improvements on NGOs opened the gateway for their involvement in the international politics of their home governments.⁶³ It is in the years following the First World War that some of the most influential and longest standing NGOs were created, including the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies⁶⁴, which was closely involved

⁶⁰ Ibid., 153.

⁶¹ Davies, *NGOs*, 77.

⁶² Ibid., 86.

⁶³ Ibid., 85.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

in the subsequent conflicts in the Middle East in the mid-twentieth century, including in the aid of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon.

The Birth of the UN and the rise of the 'development sector' between 1948 and 1967

The United Nations, a term imagined by President Franklin Roosevelt, was officially established as an operating supranational body on October 24, 1945.⁶⁵ The organization was comprised of fifty founding members, and then grew to include over 190 countries.⁶⁶ However, at the time of its formation, Roosevelt had imagined it as a wartime alliance, as opposed to a peace association.⁶⁷ It absorbed the last remaining functioning aspects of the League of Nations, and immediately began to work to separate itself from the League's legacy.⁶⁸ Breaking itself up into several governing bodies with different purposes, the UN extended itself globally and committed itself to preservation of peace and humanitarian aid.

With the Second World War bringing some of the most devastating humanitarian catastrophes that the world had seen to date, the UN was positioned to absorb and regulate the subsequent crisis of refugees and displaced peoples. After the Israeli independence in May 1948, a large exodus of Palestinian refugees scattered into nearby countries, and their desperation and upsetting upheaval made global waves, inciting the need for the United Nations to create a branch entitled the United Nations Refugee Works Agency (UNRWA). It was established as a temporary relief agency in the wake of the Palestinian refugee crisis of 1948. It was supposed to be just that – temporary. In its original mandate, the UNRWA states that it would provide relief and support

⁶⁵ Mazower, *Governing the World*, 197.

⁶⁶ "History of the United Nations," Accessed November 11th, 2018. <http://www.un.org/en/sections/history/history-united-nations/>.

⁶⁷ Mazower, *Governing the World*, 197.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 211.

for Palestinians until their precarious situation be resolved.⁶⁹ The UNRWA is still in Palestine, seventy years later.

Originally entitled the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWAPRNE), the agency progressed from providing the initial emergency relief, to setting up more long-term survival necessities; schools, medical centres, and the infamous refugee camps. Additionally, it progressed to a slightly shorter, and easier to pronounce, name. The first headquarters was located in Beirut, but it operated in five different areas: Lebanon, Jordan, Syria, Israel and Gaza.⁷⁰ The UNRWA's mandate was to take over the relief efforts from the International Committees of the Red Cross, the League of Red Cross Societies, and the AFSC and to eventually focus on the "economic reintegration" of Palestinians – it is the only UN body that is solely dedicated to one specific people.⁷¹ All other refugees are provided for by the United Nations High Commissioner of Refugees (UNHCR). In its first year, the UNRWA operated with a budget of 40.8 million.⁷² Between the years 1950 and 1969, 68.1% of this budget was funded by the United States. The second highest contributor was the United Kingdom, donating about an average of 16.3% of the UNRWA's budget in the first two decades of its existence.⁷³ The UNRWA staff were present and deeply involved in daily life at the camps, but they acted solely as aid providers with the hopes of reintegrating Palestinians into a local economy.⁷⁴ Their mandate has been challenged and faced with difficulties and bureaucratic ambiguities. This has made the UNRWA a hotly debated subject, between high-ranking academics, politicians, and Palestinians themselves.

⁶⁹ Benjamin N. Schiff, *Refugees unto the Third Generation*, 4.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 6.

⁷¹ Riccardo Bocco, "UNRWA and the Palestinian Refugees: A History within History," *Refugee Survey Quarterly* 28, no. 2-3 (2010): 230. doi: 10.1093/rsq/hdq001.

⁷² Schiff, *Refugees unto the Third Generation*, 113.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 115.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 21.

In his widely acclaimed study of the UNRWA in Palestinian refugee camps, Benjamin Schiff described the UNRWA as "unavoidably colonial in nature."⁷⁵ Its first employees were former colonial service employees, and there was an obvious disparity in the wealth and power of the organization compared to the Palestinians surrounding them. As Schiff stated: "The agency is a UN organization and not a colonial country, but to the refugees it looks like an arm of the West."⁷⁶ While requiring their assistance, Palestinian refugees were also hesitant and even suspicious of the organization.⁷⁷ Furthermore, the UNRWA was initially viewed by Palestinians and other NGOs in the region in a rather negative light: "Concern for the refugee is at a minimum and most concern seems to be for the type of car you drive and to hold on to your job. In short, the whole program lacks guts, integrity and administrative good-sense."⁷⁸ These harsh critiques towards the UN agency will be explored further in this chapter.

The UN, although uniting over fifty nations, has an overwhelming European and Western presence that bleeds into its moral values. Other transnational bodies, like the European Union, have also struggled with their colonial history and attempt to distinguish their current actions and decisions from their imperialist tendencies. In the situation where colonialism has been incredibly impactful and integrated in European culture, the colonial tendency tends to bleed into future plans and interactions.⁷⁹ NGOs and other agents of civil society can also fall trap to their own history.

After the creation of the state of Israel in May 1948, and the resultant large influx of Palestinian refugees into neighbouring countries, the ASFC, the League of Red Cross Societies and the International Committee of the Red Cross were all assigned approximately 200,000

⁷⁵ Schiff, *Refugees unto the Third Generation*, 139.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 140.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 8.

⁷⁸ Romirowsky and Joffe, *Religion, Politics, and the Origins of Palestine Refugee Relief*, 136.

⁷⁹ Peo Hansen and Stefan Jonsson, "Another Colonialism: African in the History of European Integration," *Journal of Historical Sociology* 27, no. 3 (2014): 445, doi: 10.1111/johs.12055.

refugees to their care. They were grossly outnumbered as refugees continued to arrive, and grossly underfunded, as the UN only had a budget to support approximately 500,000 refugees, while there were 963,000 registered refugees by January 1949.⁸⁰ UN and NGO staff were beginning to notice that their official definition of the “Palestinian refugee” did not capture the Palestinians who still had homes but were, in other ways, significantly worse off than the Palestinians in refugee camps.⁸¹

Although the ASFC was ready to leave Palestine after the introduction of the UNRWA, it was apparent that the UNRWA was not prepared to handle this number of refugees on its own. As such, the ASFC continued as a contractor for the UNRWA. In the eyes of Palestinians, the ASFC was certainly viewed in a more positive light, as it engaged many local staff and had a good reputation amongst them, while the UNRWA struggled for power and replaced Palestinians with their own staff.⁸²

Overall, the United Nations and NGOs began to flourish in the post-WWII world, and took the role as agents of ‘development’ and emergency assistance in the Middle East. While this certainly has its merits and helped numerous people, the ethical predicaments and questionable practices that many NGOs encounter also need to be examined, in particular in Lebanon, with organizations like ANERA.

NGOS & civil society in the Middle East from 1967 to 1982

The growth of academic specialization has been accompanied by the even more explosive growth of local and international NGOs, many of which are supported by the United Nations system and by European governments as extensions of their foreign policy, addressing issues such as democracy promotion, humans rights, and development.⁸³

⁸⁰ Romirowsky and Joffe, *Religion, Politics, and the Origins of Palestine Refugee Relief*, 58-60.

⁸¹ Ibid., 130-31.

⁸² Romirowsky and Joffe, *Religion, Politics, and the Origins of Palestine Refugee Relief*, 136-7.

⁸³ Ibid., 16.

This quote, captured in Asaf Romirowsky and Alexander Hoffe's book *Religion, Politics, and the Origins of Palestine Refugee Relief*, foreshadows the development of NGO operations in the Middle East. After the establishment of the UN and all of its bodies, the number of charitable and humanitarian groups began to grow, and civil society blossomed.⁸⁴ These groups are known under several different names: private voluntary organizations, voluntary sector organizations, the "third sector", NGOs, nonprofits, and more.⁸⁵ Civil society has been extensively studied and its connection to democratization has been hotly debated. Some historians, such as Sarah Henderson, argue that civil society is necessary for a democracy, while others – in particular Michael Edwards – argue that democracy is required for a civil society to function.⁸⁶ NGOs are placed in a position where they are the 'go-to' service provider and promote civil society and democracy as a consequence.⁸⁷

After the 1967 War, NGOs became essential to the survival of Palestinian refugees amongst unsympathetic host countries.⁸⁸ While initially the state governments may have been able to provide the services to accommodate refugees, between the 1950s and 1980s they lost the ability to do so, which prompted a further increase in the number of NGOs in the Middle East.⁸⁹ Notably, the UNRWA continued to renew their functions in the region as a result, as the conflict incurred their presence to remain until their mandate be completed.

⁸⁴ Michael Edwards and David Hulme, "NGO Performance and Accountability in the Post-Cold War World," *Journal of International Development* 7, no. 6 (1995): 850, doi: 10.1002/jid.3380070604.

⁸⁵ Milbourne, *Voluntary Sector in Transition*, 5.

⁸⁶ See Henderson, Sarah L. "Selling Civil Society: Western Aid and the Nongovernmental Organization Sector in Russia." *Sage Journals* 35, no. 2 (2002): 139-167. doi:10.1177/0010414002035002001; Gubser, Peter. "The Impact of NGOs on State and Non-State Relations in the Middle East." *Middle East Policy* 9, no. 1 (2002): 139-148. doi: 10.1111/1475-4967.00047; and Edwards, Michael and David Hulme. "NGO Performance and Accountability in the Post-Cold War World." *Journal of International Development* 7, no. 6 (1995): 849-856. doi: 10.1002/jid.3380070604.

⁸⁷ Edwards and David Hulme, "NGO performance and accountability," 849.

⁸⁸ Peter Gubser, "The Impact of NGOs on State and Non-State Relations in the Middle East," In *Middle East Policy*. Vol. 9, No. 1. (2002), 143.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 144.

ANERA's existence was made possible by funding from the Near East Emergency Donations Inc.⁹⁰ This would be the first indication of the intricate web of American NGOs in the Middle East: over the course of ANERA's history, it would regularly support, and receive support from, other NGOs with similar mandates. Several different organizations pledged to contribute to ANERA and established themselves as "Founding Members": these groups included the American Friends of the Middle East, American Middle East Rehabilitation, Arab Emergency Relief Committee, Arab Refugee Relief Agency, Islamic Foundation, United States Organization For Medical and Educational Needs (U.S. Omen) and the United Arab-American Appeal.⁹¹ As demonstrated over the course of their newsletters from 1969 to 1982, ANERA frequently fundraised in cooperation with its fellow founding member groups, and created a sort of network of partnering organization in the United States. The American Middle East Rehabilitation (AMER) was eventually absorbed by ANERA and operated under its wing in 1970.⁹²

The first President of ANERA was John Davis, the former Commissioner-General of the UNRWA.⁹³ This link is not unique, and not coincidental, as ANERA and the UNRWA worked extremely closely together in the 1960s to the 1980s. Originally, ANERA functioned as a fundraising body, and UNRWA performed the actual logistics of relief. ANERA's initial goals followed two main streams: to educate and brew awareness amongst Americans of the Palestinian refugee crisis, and to provide relief to said refugees. The first projects included raising funds through mail campaigns for the UNRWA's emergency relief efforts. The campaigns showed images of camps, asked Americans to sponsor children and requested donations for clothing.

⁹⁰ *American Near East Refugee Aid Newsletter* 8 (August/September 1970): 1. Accessed October 01, 2018. <https://www.anera.org/resources/newsletters/>.

⁹¹ John Richardson, *How ANERA came to be*, 8. Accessed October 01, 2018. <https://www.anera.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/PreHistoryFinal.pdf>

⁹² "Our History", American Near East Refugee Aid. Accessed October 01, 2018. <https://www.anera.org/who-we-are/history/>.

⁹³ Richardson, *How ANERA came to be*, 10.

Overtime, ANERA's efforts changed and began to focus on more long-term integration practices, as it became clear that the conflict was not reaching a quick resolution. Achieving the funding and resources to provide educations, vocational schools and training began to be the primary focus. Furthermore, over time, as the organization grew, ANERA began to be more 'hands on' in the region and focused less on delivering through the UNRWA. While originally operating solely out of Washington D.C., it began to interact and develop roots in the region more directly, culminating with sending staff over to the territories and host countries, and eventually opening offices in the Middle East.

One of the original problems that the organization faced was the question of political neutrality.⁹⁴ As previously mentioned, it is difficult to aid Palestinian refugees without claiming any political leaning in the matter. Ultimately, the board members decided that ANERA would remain non-political and humanitarian in nature, so as not to force the hand of the other non-political NGOs that they partnered with.⁹⁵ The board meeting books and newsletters alert when there were major changes on the executive committee or board. Over the years, the board has included scholars, donors, foreign policy experts, diplomats, and strangely (or rather, understandably), oil industry professionals. In fact, large oil companies, like Esso, were some of their largest corporate donors and contributors, which is a facet that will be explored further in detail in the next chapter.⁹⁶ Without a doubt their biggest donor was the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). Otherwise, ANERA raised support from individual donors through mail campaigns and events.

⁹⁴ Richardson, *How ANERA came to be*, 6-7.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ American Near East Refugee Aid Board Book. Washington. D.C. 1977, 48-49.

The Ethics of NGOs

The ethics of the UNRWA and other UN institutions have been studied and extensively questioned. Although the UN remains uniquely separated from regular NGOs, their experience and critiques are similar, and merit examination. Both small scale NGOs and large transnational bodies like the UN do not escape scholarly scrutiny unscathed. The questionable ethics of reciprocity and the act of “gift giving”, along with the colonial histories of these organizations, make it impossible to emerge with a clean reputation. The following section will examine this debate.

Studying the UNRWA comes with its own unique set of challenges. Due to the political nature of the conflict it is involved in, many of the academic studies on the agency are equally as politicized.⁹⁷ Discerning authentic and non-politicized critiques of the UNRWA is sometimes difficult. Furthermore, the UN tends to strictly monitor its level of transparency in its internal happenings and decisions, limiting and controlling the documentation that scholars have access to.⁹⁸ The obscurity, while frustrating, can also lead way to assumptions and misinformed critiques or praise for the organization.

Critics of the UNRWA will argue that its history and tactics make it imperialist, patronizing and encourage dependency and passivity on the part of Palestinians, forcing them in an eternal situation of complacency.⁹⁹ The politics of the UNRWA are constantly placed in question: whose side are they really on? Some critics say that because the UNRWA was responsible for the education of Palestinians, their agenda and curriculum were political, producing generations of nationalistic refugees, less likely to accept integration in another host country.¹⁰⁰ In some ways –

⁹⁷ Romirowsky and Joffe, *Religion, Politics, and the Origins of Palestine Refugee Relief*, 7.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 8.

⁹⁹ Schiff, *Refugees unto the Third Generation*, 10.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 10-11.

nothing the UNRWA completes in reference to Palestinian refugees will appease all implicated parties.

On the other side of the spectrum, historians, and fellow NGOs, have argued that the UNRWA, despite certain ethical grey areas, are the only real means to survival in the bleakness of the continuing conflict. The UNRWA's supporters applaud it for its efforts in education, health, emergency relief and economic development. Historian Ghassan Shabaneh, described such a phenomenon in his article "Refugees, International Organizations, and National Identity: The Case of Palestine." Shabaneh argued that the UNRWA was a pivotal actor in the establishment and crystallization of Palestinian identity – purely by accident.¹⁰¹ Through the agency's bureaucracy and various programs, Shabaneh proposed what most studies on Palestinian identity have not. However, he is one positive voice out of many questioning scholars.

Due to the massive pressure of mounting numbers of Palestinian refugees, and the difficulties of defining a refugee in the first place, the UNRWA was challenged from its very creation.¹⁰² Additionally, it has been used and manipulated by almost every actor involved in the conflict.¹⁰³ As this thesis will show, the American Near East Refugee Aid (ANERA) has consistently and passionately supported the existence and work of the UN in Palestine. Through their newsletters and campaigns, ANERA has always urged the public to support the efforts of the UNRWA.

While NGOs may operate under the best of intentions, they can be met with a plethora of ethical dilemmas. Because the history of NGOs is so tightly intertwined with missionary and colonial history, it is difficult to study it without viewing their actions through this lens. Additionally, being able to work neutral to political influence and funding, avoiding power

¹⁰¹ Ghassan Shabaneh, "Refugees, International Organizations, and National Identity: The Case of Palestine," *New Political Science* 32, no. 2 (2010): 215, doi: 10.1080/07393141003722057

¹⁰² Romirowsky and Joffe, *Religion, Politics, and the Origins of Palestine Refugee Relief*, 11.

¹⁰³ Schiff, *Refugees unto the Third Generation*, 8.

structures created by the act of giving a gift, and supporting sustainability for the local community as well as themselves as an organization – is almost impossible for an organization.

The mandate of NGOs may be sowed with the desire to help and empower. However, they often must distinguish themselves from their colonial history, or be made aware of and see how it impacts their relations with the communities they aid. For example, the historical links that NGOs have to missionary culture helped normalized international intervention: since religious groups and peoples had been involving themselves in other communities for centuries (invited or not) NGOs intrusions were accepted in the same vein.¹⁰⁴ In some situations, namely in former African colonies, voluntary organizations were so present alongside missionary culture that they worked together to control and subdue the indigenous population through an “ideological war.”¹⁰⁵

The programmes of care they delivered did not seek to redress the social circumstances that caused impoverishment, but instead concerned themselves with the apparent failings of Africans themselves. The problem was not injustice, but being 'uncivilized' and suffering from the 'native' condition. And charitable welfare was the sweetener that made the colonial condition more palatable.¹⁰⁶

When states achieved an independent status, NGOs suddenly had to reframe their rhetoric to ensure their own survival; they hired local staff and changed their racist discourse to language supporting ‘development’ – although that did not necessarily fix the core issues of the organization.¹⁰⁷

The strengths of NGOs are numerous, including bringing the importance of human rights to a transnational level and using that to apply pressure on governments who do not provide adequate

¹⁰⁴ R. L. Stirrat, and Heiko Henkel, “The Development Gift: The Problem of Reciprocity in the NGO World,” *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 554 (1997): 68-70, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1049567>.

¹⁰⁵ Firoze Manji and Carl O’Coill, “The Missionary Position: NGOs and Development in Africa,” *International Affairs* 78, no. 3 (2002): 570, doi: 10.1111/1468-2346.00267.

¹⁰⁶ Manji and O’Coill, “The Missionary Position,” 571.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 572.

protection to said rights.¹⁰⁸ However, the manner in which they provide aid and services can be problematic. For example, religious NGOs can proselytize, which mars their initial good intention.¹⁰⁹ This phenomenon is indicative of the larger issue in charitable gift giving. NGOs' main functions often revolve around a gift: be it of time, money, services, advice, labour or more.¹¹⁰ However, the act of giving this charitable gift often comes with insidious strings attached. Donations can create and reinforce a structure of imbalance: rich versus poor, strong versus weak (the rich and strong being the NGO, and the poor and weak being the community they are aiding.)¹¹¹ With Western NGOs, this is further supported by the "core/periphery" model, a developmental theory demonstrating that Western agents (the core) keep a marginalized, weaker and undeveloped periphery at bay and dependent on them.¹¹²

R.L Stirrat and Heiko Henkel studied the issues surrounding gifts and determined that gifts seldom come without a condition, an agreement or an expectation by the gift giver.¹¹³ As they explain: "... the act of receiving is hedged with conditionality at best, while at worst the gift may become a form of patronage and a means of control."¹¹⁴ The thin line between creating empowerment and partnership as opposed to creating dependency is an area that NGOs must pay heed to.

NGOs have also attempted to make their gift last in the region or community they are helping. This is the concept of aiding sustainably – often, the relief and development work are sometimes

¹⁰⁸ Ann Marie Clark, "Non-Governmental Organizations and their Influence on International Society," *Journal of International Affairs* 48, no. 2 (1995): 508, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/24357601>.

¹⁰⁹ Henry F. Carey, *Privatizing the Democratic Peace: Policy Dilemmas of NGO Peacebuilding* (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 167.

¹¹⁰ Stirrat and Henkel, "The Development Gift," 73.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 69.

¹¹² V Ferraro, "Dependency Theory: An Introduction," *The Development Economics Reader* (London and New York: Routledge, 2008), 58-66.

¹¹³ Stirrat and Henkel, "The Development Gift," 66.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 72.

at odds with one another, because relief is provided in the short term, while development typically has intentions that last in the long term.¹¹⁵ Henry F. Carey explored this phenomenon in his book *Privatizing the Democratic Peace: Policy Dilemmas of NGO Peacebuilding*. This NGO dilemma is present everywhere; international organizations tend to miss the mark when setting up a sustainable practice. Often, their efforts stop short at hiring local staff. In trying to both establish humanitarian relief and economic development at the same time, NGOs find themselves in an ethical paradox: “Foreign additions to commodity supply can displace domestic producers and/or commodity price reduction. Preventing starvation creates the humanitarian space needed for peacebuilding, but producers/farmers also need assistance.”¹¹⁶ The dilemma that Carey presents is not hopeless, however; he advises that these issues may be avoided by splitting up the work into phases, instead of attempting to successfully integrate relief and development at the same time.

In any emergency, humanitarian needs must take priority first, even if that creates short-term dependency. To become self-sustaining, recipient states must develop on their own after the initial infusion of aid. How to do that in reality is difficult. To reduce dependency, NGOs can help attract foreign and domestic investors as well as indigenous entrepreneurs, while available to assist in any recurring humanitarian emergencies.¹¹⁷

Indeed, a dependent relationship on the NGO can be avoided if NGOs focus on partnership and empowerment. However, the power in the act of gift giving may also be seen from a different perspective: that of the receiver. Palestinians can also exert a certain agency and power in the giver/receiver relationship. Beata Paragi subtly described the phenomenon as the power deriving from “the weakness itself – the combination of helplessness and injustice – which can be understood as ‘power’ even if not as ‘power over’ the donor but at least ‘power to’ secure foreign

¹¹⁵ Carey, *Privatizing the Democratic Peace*, 160.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 161.

aid.”¹¹⁸ Paragi’s study used coded data analysis to reveal the connections and patterns between interview transcripts to determine how Palestinians viewed the power dynamics between themselves and NGOs. It was determined that while Palestinians viewed NGOs with some degree of sympathy (they were “sincere in their desire to do good...”¹¹⁹), they recognized the use of their own position of instability and political weakness to achieve and pressure aid.¹²⁰

Additionally, other murky ethical practices present themselves as NGOs may become political toys. NGOs can either inadvertently, or on purpose, fall in the hands of a political group that can manipulate and use them to its own advantage, and against the greater good of the people the NGO should be helping.¹²¹ NGOs may also fall prey to manipulation by political groups by having to surrender or compromise on their original mission to please the governing or donation party.¹²² Additionally, this may hurt their efforts of maintaining political neutrality. Political neutrality may be an unrealistic goal for some international NGOs, as some of their core mandates tackle a political issue.¹²³ In ANERA’s case, and with other NGOs helping Palestinian refugees political neutrality has been almost impossible to maintain, as the crisis itself is so political: extending aid to Palestinians can be seen as choosing a “side”.

Alternatively, NGOs may also be in positions to exert a certain amount of sway or influence over the state policy.¹²⁴ Undoubtedly, NGOs have grown in strength and numbers. However, international NGOs also have the unique capability to be totally connected to, and have easy lines of communication with, the world at large. This gives them the power to apply pressure to

¹¹⁸ Beata Paragi, “Hegemonic Solidarity? NGO Perceptions on Power, Solidarity, and Cooperation with their Donors,” *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political* 41, no. 2 (2016): 98, doi: 10.1177/0304375416684855.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 105.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, 105-7.

¹²¹ Carey, *Privatizing the Democratic Peace*, 165-6.

¹²² Romirowsky and Joffe, *Religion, Politics, and the Origins of Palestine Refugee Relief*, 157.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, 165.

¹²⁴ Gubser, “The Impact of NGOs on State and Non-State Relations,” 145.

governments when needed. More positively, it also encourages transnational connection between their benefactor community and the rest of the world. For example, NGOs from different countries in the Middle East were able to connect transnationally by holding meetings and conferences together about shared concerns over the environment.¹²⁵

This also introduces the concept of moral hazard. As described in their study of early Palestinian relief, Asaf Romirowsky and Alexander H. Joffe defined moral hazard as “the situation where a party that is insulated from risk behaves differently than if it lacked that protection.”¹²⁶ This creates an environment where NGOs can engage in risky behavior, but not be personally affected or face consequences if the risk goes awry and negatively affects the benefactors of the NGO. While not all NGOs can operate with moral hazard, some organizations, including UN agencies, certainly can. A major critique of the UN and of international NGOs is that they can enter a community or country, waste resources, run inefficiently, abuse or misuse their funds, and fail their mandate – without ever facing penalties.¹²⁷ Meanwhile, the local community that they have been tasked to help can suffer tremendously under such conditions.

This situation is not unique to Palestine. Sarah Henderson studied a similar case study in Russia, directly after the fall of the Soviet Union. Locals initially distrusted NGOs due to the mental link they created with the ineffective organizations in Soviet times. Furthermore, NGOs lacked funding. They became dependent on Western funding, which, as we have seen, often comes with provisional political conditions: NGOs were to concentrate their efforts on the establishment of a democratized society. This resulted in NGOs following Western desires, as opposed to the

¹²⁵ Ibid., 146-7.

¹²⁶ Romirowsky and Joffe, *Religion, Politics, and the Origins of Palestine Refugee Relief*, 171.

¹²⁷ Ibid., 172.

realistic needs of the Russian communities.¹²⁸ Henderson noted that unequal relationships emerged through these practices. This created a unique new “NGO elite” class that was totally disconnected from regular society and thus could not accomplish their goals to aid society.¹²⁹ In fact, the NGOs that set out to establish a functioning civil society in Russia actually had the opposite effect, which damaged their sustainability and usefulness in the long run.¹³⁰ Additionally, many NGO workers had “exit strategies” and frequently left to work from one organization to another.¹³¹ Instead of focusing on the long term goals of the organization, difficulties with staff retention reduced the goals to more short term bases.¹³²

Funding NGOS

The morality of gift giving is not unidirectional. NGOs themselves can be victims of exploitation via gift, due to the complications and conditions of securing funding. Organizations may find themselves in a position of following a specific “agenda” set by their main funders.¹³³ Humanitarian NGOs also tend to depend first on government funding and second on private donors.¹³⁴

Desperation for funding can also alter or warp an organization’s original mandate. The UNRWA has faced a situation of chronic underfunding, with increasing needs.¹³⁵ This creates a culture of pressure and underperformance. Too much money can also distract the NGO from its core purpose. Inevitably, funding also has the disadvantage of coming with political strings

¹²⁸ Sarah L. Henderson, “Selling Civil Society: Western Aid and the Nongovernmental Organization Sector in Russia,” *Sage Journals* 35, no. 2 (2002): 155. doi:10.1177/0010414002035002001

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, 142.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, 140.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, 153.

¹³² *Ibid.*

¹³³ Stirrat and Henkel, “The Development Gift,” 76.

¹³⁴ Carey, *Privatizing the Democratic Peace*, 157.

¹³⁵ Schiff, *Refugees unto the Third Generation*, 111.

attached. Ensuring continuous funding may result in distorting initial goals and moving away from prioritizing the benefactors. Michael Edwards and David Hulme discussed this issue, saying:

There are justifiable fears that a combination of official funding, organizational growth, and an overconcentration on service provision, will damage the traditional strengths of NGOs (such as flexibility, innovation and beneficiary participation), distort their accountability (by emphasizing links to donors rather than to beneficiaries), and weaken their legitimacy as independent actors in civil society able and willing to speak out in defence of particular groups, causes and values.¹³⁶

The Russian case study showed that after the fall of the Soviet Union, the difficulties of securing funding for NGOs created a culture that valued short-term goals instead of long-term development that would actually benefit the communities, because it was not in the donors' interest.¹³⁷ Local NGOs strove to please Americans to ensure continued funding, regardless with how much their grant proposal shifted from their original intentions and the needs of the locals.¹³⁸

Critiques of NGOs also show that no matter how well-intentioned, NGOs are businesses and must be run with financial transparency.¹³⁹ The incentives and interests that accompany it can damage the integrity of the organization. As will be demonstrated in the next chapter, funding was of constant concern to ANERA. Securing funding from the U.S. government, running fundraising campaigns aimed towards the American people and having their grant money approved for use by the state of Israel were just some of the organization's money troubles.

Conclusion

This chapter examined and analysed the history and ethics of nongovernmental organizations in the Middle East, as well as in particular case studies in colonial Africa and in

¹³⁶ Edwards and Hulme, "NGO Performance and Accountability in the Post-Cold War World," 850.

¹³⁷ Henderson, "Selling Civil Society," 144.

¹³⁸ Ibid., 151.

¹³⁹ Carey, *Privatizing the Democratic Peace*, 164.

Russia. While the ethical dilemmas may seem abstract, this thesis will explore the challenges and successes of ANERA in these moral situations and will place their experience in the global history of NGOs. Beginning with the missionary and religious groups of several hundred years ago, NGOs have developed the diversity of their goals and exploded in numbers. NGOs have been at the forefront of civil societies, the establishment of universal human rights and have expanded humanitarian aid globally. I have examined the potential influences that donors and funding can impose on an organization, as well as the political gray areas, potential for manipulation, and disconnect between long term, sustainable goals and emergency relief. With this in mind, I have introduced both the UNRWA and ANERA into this study and will continue to analyze how NGOs have experienced working with Palestinian refugees in Lebanon.

CHAPTER 2: LOGISTICAL CHALLENGES AND SUCCESSES FACING ANERA IN LEBANON

After the War of 1967, there were some 161,000 registered refugees in Lebanon.¹⁴⁰ Following a tour in the region, John H. Davis, the president of ANERA in 1970, described an abysmal situation: “Adding to the discomfort and misery of refugees in general are the tensions and harassment that accompanies the almost constant hostilities which now surround and at times engulf refugee camps.”¹⁴¹ During these difficult and uncertain times, nongovernmental organizations were instrumental in the lives of Palestinians living in Lebanon. Between 1967 and 1982, Palestinians were barred by several legal, social and economic restrictions. Consequently, Palestinians living in refugee camps have had to depend on aid and financial services provided by local and international NGOs, in addition to the services provided by the UNRWA. In response to their needs in the region, American NGOs shifted their mandates overtime according to the immediate and long-term assistance needs of refugees. The following chapter will introduce the challenges that Palestinian refugees faced in Lebanon after the War of 1967 until the Israeli invasion in 1982 and how NGOs strove to meet their needs. Drawing on the American Near East Refugee Aid’s newsletters and board books, I will demonstrate the shifting priorities of Western NGOs operating in the region and the logistical, political and monetary challenges they faced along the way. While NGOs grappled with an ever-changing political situation, they also faced challenges in consistently funding their programs and maintaining working relationships with the governments of Israel and the United States.

¹⁴⁰ *American Near East Refugee Aid Newsletter* 7 (June/July 1970): 5. Accessed October 01, 2018. <https://www.anera.org/resources/newsletters/>.

¹⁴¹ *American Near East Refugee Aid Newsletter* 5 (February/March 1970): 1. Accessed October 01, 2018. <https://www.anera.org/resources/newsletters/>.

Palestinian refugees in Lebanon

After the creation of the state of Israel in 1948, 750,000 Palestinian refugees fled and went to live primarily in Jordan, Syria, and Lebanon. By 1950, the number of refugees under their care grew to 950,000.¹⁴² In Syria, there were more than 82,000 refugees, while 506,200 people fled to Jordan, and an additional 198,200 were in Gaza and 45,800 in Israel.¹⁴³ The UNRWA regulated twelve official camps after more than 127,600 refugees fled into Lebanese borders, with numbers continuing to mount as the years went on.¹⁴⁴

Each host country regulated the influx of refugees differently; Jordan offered more freedom of employment and of movement¹⁴⁵ and presented Palestinians with offers of citizenship.¹⁴⁶ Syria established policies protecting upper classes rather than working classes,¹⁴⁷ but also presented them with the right to employment.¹⁴⁸ Lebanon, on the other hand, put in place policies of “oppression and exclusion,” in terms of the professional, educational and social restrictions placed on Palestinians.¹⁴⁹ The Lebanese government worried about the destabilizing effects of resettling refugees, which informed their treatment of Palestinians.¹⁵⁰

After the first wave of refugees in 1948, Lebanon was accepting and supportive for the most part; refugees received support from friends, family, churches, the Red Cross and the government.¹⁵¹ However, leading into the War of 1967, tensions about permanently resettling

¹⁴² Schiff, *Refugees unto the Third Generation*, 7.

¹⁴³ Ibid.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

¹⁴⁵ Pappé, *A History of Modern Palestine*, 143-5.

¹⁴⁶ Peteet, *Landscape of Horror and Despair*, 55.

¹⁴⁷ Pappé, *A History of Modern Palestine*, 143-5.

¹⁴⁸ Peteet, *Landscape of Horror and Despair*, 55.

¹⁴⁹ Pappé, *A History of Modern Palestine*, 144.

¹⁵⁰ Simon Haddad, *The Palestinian Impasse in Lebanon: The Politics of Refugee Integration* (Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 2003), 41.

¹⁵¹ Peteet, *Landscape of Horror and Despair*, 55.

Palestinians in the country began to divide the country's political scene.¹⁵² The 1969 Cairo Accords granted refugees the right to employment and to form their own "municipal-like" government.¹⁵³ From 1969 onwards, the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) began to govern the refugee camps, and this autonomy continued until 1982, at the time of the Israeli invasion into Lebanon.¹⁵⁴ Heavy nationalistic views began to arise in refugee camps, and Palestinians began to exert an increasingly political voice.¹⁵⁵

In building the refugee camps, Lebanese policy was created and directed in a way to encourage the transitory nature of the situation: for instance, in the early 1950s, Palestinians were not allowed to use cement to build homes outside of the tents provided for the refugees.¹⁵⁶ In Shatila, water supply was solely provided by UNRWA lorries, as the Beirut Water Company was prohibited from supplying the camps, and building sewage systems was banned, creating unsanitary living situations.¹⁵⁷ In addition to their homes and living conditions, Palestinians in Lebanon were restricted in a few major ways: for one, the law regarded Palestinians as foreigners, which meant that refugees had to secure work permits in order to seek employment, which came in limited numbers.¹⁵⁸ Furthermore, the number of work permits were directly correlated with the Lebanese economic need for cheap labor that year, meaning that the number of available permits fluctuated yearly.¹⁵⁹ Up until the 1980s, even after obtaining permits, they were barred from more

¹⁵² Haddad, *The Palestinian Impasse in Lebanon*, 41.

¹⁵³ Peteet, *Landscape of Horror and Despair*, 7.

¹⁵⁴ Haddad, *The Palestinian Impasse in Lebanon*, 27.

¹⁵⁵ Pappé, *A History of Modern Palestine*, 147.

¹⁵⁶ Sayigh, *Too Many Enemies*, 39-40.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., 24-25.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., 25.

than forty occupations.¹⁶⁰ On top of professional limitations, Palestinians also faced mobility and travel restrictions as well as limitations accessing higher education.¹⁶¹

Most importantly, Lebanon has a confessional government system that is regulated by sect and class; this had a direct impact on the inclusion and governance of Palestinians. They too were immediately split into sect and class, as Christian middle class Palestinians faced considerably less restrictions and bars from integration into Lebanese society.¹⁶² Meanwhile, lower class Muslims were kept segregated and faced significant challenges in joining Lebanese society.¹⁶³ Even the physical location and placement of the refugee camps was made with the thought of sect in mind – keeping the majority Muslim population of refugees grouped closely to other Muslim communities in Lebanon.¹⁶⁴ A strong consideration was that the number of Palestinian Muslims swayed the current power structure in Lebanon from a Maronite dominant government to a Muslim majority. All together with the increased pressures on infrastructures, the government decided that:

[...] out of conviction that granting Palestinians civil rights would be one step toward their permanent resettlement in the country - has initiated a series of restrictive policies and regulations aimed at encouraging as many Palestinians to leave the country as possible.¹⁶⁵

The circumstances of the Palestinian presence in Lebanon, in terms of their high-need population and international political controversy they incited, offered challenges to their inclusion into Lebanese society. Due to the restrictions they faced, after 1945 until the present day, NGOs and the UNRWA became instrumental to their survival.

¹⁶⁰ Pappé, *A History of Modern Palestine*, 144.

¹⁶¹ Haddad, *The Palestinian Impasse in Lebanon*, 41.

¹⁶² Sayigh, *Too Many Enemies*, 23.

¹⁶³ Ibid., 23.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., 24.

¹⁶⁵ Haddad, *The Palestinian Impasse in Lebanon*, 41.

ANERA in Lebanon: Fundraising and Programming

ANERA began organizing aid for Palestinian refugees in Lebanon in 1969. Through newsletters and board books, we can draw a mostly complete picture of the progression of ANERA from 1969 until the Israeli invasion into Lebanon of 1982. Some of the pieces are incomplete or missing; a newsletter from 1972 is unavailable online, and only the board books from 1977 to 1983 were granted for the writing of this thesis (with the exception of 1979, as it is currently lost.) Despite these missing sources, there were still over five hundred pages of documents accessible for analysis. Within the board books, there are agendas of the annual board meetings, changes in the executive and financial reports. Additionally, the presidential report details the biggest successes and challenges of that year. However, since the available board books are only for a small selection of time in this thesis' scope, the newsletters came to play an important part as well by filling in the gaps of history and provide excellent insight on the early years of charitable aid in Lebanon. The board books described the purpose of the newsletters as the dispersion of information, as well as for fundraising.¹⁶⁶ The annual reports, also available online after the year 1973, will also be used occasionally, although they offer a more condensed summary of the information that is already available in the newsletters and board books.

This section will outline the projects of ANERA inclusively from 1969 to 1982, analysing the priorities in a chronological fashion so as to understand the pattern of shifting concerns and aims. Overall, the sources show that ANERA moved from providing exclusively emergency relief funding from afar, to involving themselves directly in the Middle East and becoming an active participant in the long-term 'development' of refugee communities across the region. Despite achieving overall success in their projects and endeavors, ANERA faced challenges in maintaining

¹⁶⁶ *American Near East Refugee Aid Board Book*. Washington D.C. 1977, 49.

the stability of its long-term programs due to monetary restraints, cooperation with involved governments, and was beholden to constant spurts of violence and instability in the region. Furthermore, in the first few years of the organization, from 1969 to the late 1970s, its position was exclusive as a funding body to other organizations, as ANERA did not have the logistical infrastructure to implement their own projects in the Middle East, thus lacked the freedom to create and oversee programs to their desire. ANERA's initial lack of physical presence in the Middle East meant that their funding and priorities were restricted to the programs that other organizations could carry out.

The first newsletters were created, published, and distributed in 1969. Even upon first glance, it is clear that at this time ANERA was in its nascent stages as an organization and was still maturing and growing into a professional and effective organization. In 1969, its mandate was almost exclusively to raise funds for other NGOs who carried out programs and projects for Palestinian refugees. In its second newsletter, published in June 1969, ANERA outlined its priorities for their monetary grants: it dedicated its resources towards educational and rehabilitation projects, child welfare programs, and medical care projects.¹⁶⁷ The various organizations it was supporting included other Western NGOs (the YMCA, the UNRWA), as well as local organizations and institutions (hospitals, universities, Arab Women's Union, for example).¹⁶⁸ Above all, in the early newsletters, ANERA clearly found importance in raising awareness for the work that the UNRWA was accomplishing, as well as the UNRWA's imperative need for funding. In almost every newsletter the UNRWA's lack of resources is mentioned and emphasized, prompting readers to mail in donations to support its programs. As the main group on

¹⁶⁷ *American Near East Refugee Aid Newsletter* 2 (June 1969): 2. Accessed October 01, 2018. <https://www.anera.org/resources/newsletters/>.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid.

the ground in Lebanon organizing and distributing aid to refugees, the UNRWA was ANERA's primary concern.

Continuing into the early 1970s, the newsletters contained frequent mention, applause and support for the UNRWA's vocational and training programs. Even in the early years of the organization, ANERA acknowledged a need for long-term solutions for refugees. ANERA executive and later President, John Davis, stated in his book *The Evasive Peace* (re-published in the 1970 newsletter) that the solution to the Palestinian refugee problem was "the presence of jobs, mostly urban, and the provision of appropriate training for the young people. These factors, together, hold the key to making the Palestine refugees both employable and employed."¹⁶⁹ Thus, ANERA members were aware and appreciative that to provide a solution to the refugee crisis, sustainable programs that teach and employ Palestinians were mandatory. However, in the first years of the organization, it was not equipped to offer such programs itself. Instead, it focused on financially supporting other organizations that were working on equivalent projects.

Despite their initial struggles to provide programs themselves, ANERA focused on what it could control: fundraising and awareness building in the United States. It did so by facilitating a series of projects in its early years, intended for the benefit of both Palestinians and Americans. In 1970, ANERA collaborated with the Middle East Exhibitions and Training Inc. (MEET) to create a mobile exhibit showing Palestinian crafts and vocational training.¹⁷⁰ ANERA intended to use this exhibit to "reinforce what they [the staff] say in lectures and discussions about the need for vocational training."¹⁷¹ Additionally, it engaged in projects like compiling an Arabic cookbook¹⁷²,

¹⁶⁹ *American Near East Refugee Aid Newsletter* 9 (October/November 1970): 5. Accessed October 01, 2018. <https://www.amera.org/resources/newsletters/>.

¹⁷⁰ *American Near East Refugee Aid Newsletter* 6 (April/May 1970): 2. Accessed October 01, 2018. <https://www.amera.org/resources/newsletters/>.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁷² *Ibid.*, 3.

selling Arabic, French and English Christmas cards (produced by the Friends of Jerusalem Society)¹⁷³, selling Palestinian handmade crafts¹⁷⁴, urging for donations of books, clothes, cash, and advertising for refugee sponsorship programs¹⁷⁵. Admittedly, however, ANERA saw its impacts up until this point as “indirect”:

ANERA’s greatest contributions have been in less tangible areas such as bringing refugee organizations together, supporting greater assistance to UNRWA, and in broadening American understanding of the refugee problem. There is a continuing role for a professional organization like ANERA in soliciting funds and gifts in kind for the Palestinian refugees – but the extent of such activity is limited by the intractability of the political situation. The most constructive use of funds in the Middle East is to maintain training and rehabilitation programs at existing levels and to expand those for which funds are available.¹⁷⁶

ANERA was increasingly seeing itself as a “bridge” between Palestinians and the average American living hundreds of miles away.¹⁷⁷ This statement is fairly indicative of ANERA’s experience in its early years.

However, starting in 1972, ANERA began to grow in numbers and strength, and thus, capacity. It began to plan for increasing their action plans; namely, the organization wanted to expand its responsibilities and mandate to including building more reference material about refugees to increase public knowledge, increase their political influence, build stronger liaisons with other NGOs, and increase awareness about said NGOs in their newsletters.¹⁷⁸

¹⁷³ *American Near East Refugee Aid Newsletter* 8 (August/September 1970): 3. Accessed October 01, 2018. <https://www.amera.org/resources/newsletters/>.

¹⁷⁴ *American Near East Refugee Aid Newsletter* 10 (December/January 1971): 3. Accessed October 01, 2018. <https://www.amera.org/resources/newsletters/>.

¹⁷⁵ *American Near East Refugee Aid Newsletter* 7 (June/July 1971): 3. Accessed October 01, 2018. <https://www.amera.org/resources/newsletters/>.

¹⁷⁶ *American Near East Refugee Aid Newsletter* 10 (December/January 1971): 4. Accessed October 01, 2018. <https://www.amera.org/resources/newsletters/>.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁸ *American Near East Refugee Aid Newsletter* 19 (September/October 1972): 2. Accessed October 01, 2018. <https://www.amera.org/resources/newsletters/>.

Throughout 1969 and until 1982, there was one constant in ANERA's history: the organization was in a constant state of responsivity. As the Palestinian refugee crisis and the Arab-Israeli conflict continued, ANERA needed to respond and react to every new development. Waves of tensions, spurts of conflict and violence (some extremely severe) would continuously force ANERA to adapt its action-plan and change the priorities of resources to where it was needed most. ANERA was created as a response to the refugee crisis of 1967 – and this type of responsiveness would continue throughout its existence. An example of this would be the Israeli retaliation of violence onto Palestinians in Lebanon after there were assumed to be Black Septemberists in camps, a group which massacred Israeli Olympic athletes in Munich in 1973.¹⁷⁹ Israeli responses to Palestinian resistance in Lebanese camps was a trigger for increasing tensions with Lebanese society.¹⁸⁰ This violent outburst in 1973 also kick-started violence between Palestinians and the Lebanese army, starting a cycle of destitution that would leave the refugees in a further state of disadvantage.¹⁸¹ Caught between the Lebanese government and army, Palestinian resistance, Palestinian civilians, and Israeli strikes, ANERA and other NGOs found themselves in an extremely dangerous and complex situation. The death toll of close to 200 Palestinians prompted the June 1973 newsletter to be a longer issue, about eight pages compared to the usual four, that went into detail about the aftermath of this conflict, and how ANERA and partnering organizations were responding.

1973 marked a pivotal shift in ANERA's operations. The Yom Kippur War, or the Ramadan War, broke out in 1973 between Egypt, Syria and Israel in the Golan Heights and near

¹⁷⁹ *American Near East Refugee Aid Newsletter* 22 (March/April 1973): 3. Accessed October 01, 2018. <https://www.anera.org/resources/newsletters/>.

¹⁸⁰ Sayigh, *Too Many Enemies*, 97.

¹⁸¹ *American Near East Refugee Aid Newsletter* 23 (June 1973): 1. Accessed October 01, 2018. <https://www.anera.org/resources/newsletters/>.

the Suez Canal, which persisted until a ceasefire was called two weeks later. The renewed tensions after the war brought about a new sense of urgency and responsibility for NGOs in the Middle East. It is at this time that ANERA began to operate more directly in the region, and also began to grow in influence in the United States. Following the war, ANERA became more visible in the news, with board members and representatives being asked to do interviews.¹⁸² Additionally, it began to experiment with new programs, like radio campaigns, to increase its voice in the media.¹⁸³ Despite ANERA's increased visibility, the situation in the Middle East continued to deteriorate for Palestinian refugees. In 1974, the UNRWA recorded 197,111 registered refugees in Lebanon; this is a conservative number of the actual number of refugees at that time, as only a portion were registered with the UN.¹⁸⁴

In April 1975, the Lebanese Civil War erupted, a conflict that would wage well until 1990. While the conflict was partially incited due to rising pressures of hosting refugees and the Arab-Israeli conflict at large, there were also issues with the political, social and economic systems in Lebanon, a changing demography, and conflicts over foreign involvement.¹⁸⁵ While a food crisis ensued due to the civil war and tensions mounted, ANERA continued to fund and operate in Lebanon. That year, 83% of ANERA's expenses went toward "war relief & refuge programs," while 2% went to public information, 4% to fundraising and 11% to administrative costs.¹⁸⁶ The realities of the war are reflected in the breakdown of the financial priorities: 16% went to

¹⁸² *American Near East Refugee Aid Newsletter* 25 (December/January 1974): 3. Accessed October 01, 2018. <https://www.amera.org/resources/newsletters/>.

¹⁸³ *American Near East Refugee Aid Newsletter* 28 (July/August 1974): 3. Accessed October 01, 2018. <https://www.amera.org/resources/newsletters/>.

¹⁸⁴ *American Near East Refugee Aid Newsletter* 29 (September/October 1974): 1. Accessed October 01, 2018. <https://www.amera.org/resources/newsletters/>.

¹⁸⁵ James R. Stocker, *Spheres of Intervention US Foreign Policy and the Collapse of Lebanon, 1967-1976* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2016), 9.

¹⁸⁶ *American Near East Refugee Aid Newsletter* 34 (July/August 1975): 2. Accessed October 01, 2018. <https://www.amera.org/resources/newsletters/>.

vocational programs, 13% to university scholarships, 15% to elementary and secondary schools, 15% to community development projects, and 41% to medical aid.¹⁸⁷ The large amount in medical services indicates a high need, although it is clear that ANERA attempted to continue their regular programs as well.

In a December newsletter of that year, ANERA played to Americans religious sensibilities: “This year, the message of that first Christmas perhaps most needs repeating in the Holy Land itself. Bethlehem is under military occupation. Hundreds of thousands of the Holy Land’s people are scattered and exiled.”¹⁸⁸ Content like this increased the pressure on the Western public, in the hopes of subsequently increasing donations for ANERA supported programs. The difficulties in Lebanon presented a serious issue for ANERA to overcome in order to continue emergency aid and regularly scheduled projects:

ANERA-assisted projects in Lebanon have been virtually unreachable during the past few months so information is sketchy on their status. ANERA hopes to provide emergency assistance to help insure the continued operation of these projects. ANERA-assisted programs in Lebanon include medical, educational, and community development projects among the Palestinian refugees and people of southern Lebanon.¹⁸⁹

Continuing into 1976, ANERA’s problems persisted: “Until a meaningful ceasefire is declared and reliable information can be obtained, it is difficult to assess the damage and begin reconstruction of ANERA-assisted programs in Lebanon.”¹⁹⁰ Eighteen months into the war in Lebanon, ANERA published an issue dedicated to the situation. Reports of the dismal state of Palestinian refugee camps followed messages and pleas for support in the reconstruction

¹⁸⁷ *American Near East Refugee Aid Newsletter* 34 (July/August 1975): 2. Accessed October 01, 2018. <https://www.amera.org/resources/newsletters/>.

¹⁸⁸ *American Near East Refugee Aid Newsletter* 36 (November/December 1975): 1. Accessed October 01, 2018. <https://www.amera.org/resources/newsletters/>.

¹⁸⁹ *American Near East Refugee Aid Newsletter* 37 (January/March 1976): 5. Accessed October 01, 2018. <https://www.amera.org/resources/newsletters/>.

¹⁹⁰ *American Near East Refugee Aid Newsletter* 39 (July/September 1976): 1. Accessed October 01, 2018. <https://www.amera.org/resources/newsletters/>.

process.¹⁹¹ ANERA estimated 320,000 Palestinian refugees in Lebanon in 1975, a number much higher than the U.N.'s predicted 198,637 – due to the UNRWA definition of “refugee,” not all displaced Palestinians fell in their count.¹⁹² ANERA pleaded for continued help to the organizations and institutions it partnered with, namely the American University of Beirut, the Association for the Resurgence of Palestinian Camps, Beirut University College, La Jeunesse du Marjayoun, the Marjayoun National College, the National Alliance of YMCA's, the A.U.B Medical Students' Society, the Lebanese Red Cross, and the Palestinian Red Crescent.¹⁹³ At this time in the mid-70s, ANERA began to make a visible shift away from primarily supporting the UNRWA, and instead began to support other affiliated NGOs and institutions. While always a common topic in their newsletters, it began to draw more and more attention to the works of other grassroots and international organizations helping Palestinian refugees. The final newsletter of 1976 concluded with the following words: “Hope for Lebanon”.¹⁹⁴

Despite the situation in Lebanon, we see ANERA began to make difficult decisions about its financial and resource priorities for Palestinian refugees. The NGO began to focus more of its attention towards programs in the Occupied Territories, as there was the largest concentration of Palestinians living in the West Bank and Gaza. Additionally, this was the intended location where the ‘solution’ for all refugees would take place in the future.¹⁹⁵ More energy was focused there due to the difficulties that every NGO, including ANERA, was encountering with the military government of Israel, in sending and approving aid in the occupied regions.¹⁹⁶

¹⁹¹ *American Near East Refugee Aid Newsletter* 40 (October/December 1976): 1-2. Accessed October 01, 2018. <https://www.anera.org/resources/newsletters/>.

¹⁹² *Ibid.*, 2.

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*, 3.

¹⁹⁴ *American Near East Refugee Aid Newsletter* 40 (October/December 1976): 4. Accessed October 01, 2018. <https://www.anera.org/resources/newsletters/>.

¹⁹⁵ *American Near East Refugee Aid Newsletter* 46 (January/March 1979): 3. Accessed October 01, 2018. <https://www.anera.org/resources/newsletters/>.

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

The mid-1970s were a period of both difficulty and success for ANERA. While its influence and significance grew, the political instability consistently presented new challenges to overcome in the administration of programs and projects. Furthermore, its attention and resources were almost always drawn to where the conflict or political escalation was the worst, meaning that resources would be centralized to the Occupied Territories instead of to host countries where many refugees were located. Unfortunately, these dilemmas continued for ANERA until the 1980s, at which time other NGOs, like the Palestine Red Crescent Society, were also reporting difficulty administering services in Lebanon due to increased violence.¹⁹⁷

Despite the difficulties, the NGOs persisted in other efforts. The Lebanese Red Cross stepped in to provide emergency relief after another serious Israeli invasion in 1982.¹⁹⁸ The severity of the violence left 600,000 homeless and 40,000 dead, and ANERA focused on providing medical support to Lebanon, including supplies and tents as emergency relief.¹⁹⁹ As the circumstances felt eerily similar to those which prompted ANERA to first involve itself after the War of 1967, ANERA began to review its mandate and vision as an organization. Constantly in a position of response to the next development of the conflict, ANERA began to situate itself in the larger concept of international development:

ANERA's philosophical and organizational changes since its creation in 1968 reflect many of the changes in the development world as a whole. Started as a relief program to answer immediate needs of Palestinians made homeless or impoverished by war, ANERA gradually expanded into a development agency to help Palestinian institutions establish and rejuvenate health, education, agricultural and municipal services.²⁰⁰

¹⁹⁷ *American Near East Refugee Aid Newsletter* 49 (December/February 1980): 3. Accessed October 01, 2018. <https://www.nera.org/resources/newsletters/>.

¹⁹⁸ *American Near East Refugee Aid Newsletter* 58 (April/June 1982): 4-5. Accessed October 01, 2018. <https://www.nera.org/resources/newsletters/>.

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 4.

²⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 2.

The Israeli invasion of 1982, which marks the end of my timeline for this thesis, left Lebanon, and the refugee camps within its borders, in a state of immense destruction. Despite this, Peter Gubser, the President of ANERA during this time, reported a fervent energy for reconstruction.²⁰¹ In light of ANERA's new position in terms of support for international development, it detailed two programs that they would fund to encourage rebuilding and long-term development. The first was a program to award low-interest loans to local institutions in order to support artisans and shopkeepers, and reinvigorate local indigenous business. The second was to re-establish vocational schools to enable them to restart their programs as soon as possible.²⁰² ANERA provided an additional \$250,000 worth of antibiotics to the American University of Beirut Hospital, and supported the UNRWA in obtaining electric generators.²⁰³

Despite hurdles in communication and access during times of violence, which interrupted ANERA from completing some of its project priorities, the organization still successfully grew its programs and expanded its influence in the Middle East. In the aftermath of the 1982 invasion, ANERA's Presidential Report documented the expansion of its programs, including loans for businesses, training, and more:

ANERA has traditionally conducted a modest series of projects in Lebanon which are focused on poor Lebanese especially in the south and the Palestinian refugees living in the country. As a consequence of the war, we were able to increase greatly the amount we raise in cash and kind and, subsequently, the size of our program in the damaged country. Aside from the pharmaceuticals to aid the wounded during the fighting, we concentrated on physical rehabilitation, revolving loan funds for small artisans and business, and vocational training projects. Due to the contributing need, we will attempt to sustain a significant program in Lebanon, especially for the people in the south as well as refugees, wherever they may be.²⁰⁴

²⁰¹ *American Near East Refugee Aid Newsletter* 60 (October/December 1982): 1. Accessed October 01, 2018. <https://www.anera.org/resources/newsletters/>.

²⁰² *Ibid.*, 2.

²⁰³ *Ibid.*,

²⁰⁴ *American Near East Refugee Aid Board Book*. Washington D.C. 1983, 14.

Regardless of the continued constraints, ANERA was able to shift from its initial position in 1968 as a primarily fundraising and awareness raising organization, solely capable of amassing support for emergency relief as required, to an organization focused on long-term economic and social growth. Despite the unfortunate circumstances of the conflict, it was able to leverage the difficulties that ensued to raise additional funds and better situate their organization to provide aid. Between 1967 and 1982, ANERA grew to a financially stable position that allowed it to provide solutions and programs to a refugee crisis that did not show any sign of slowing.

Funding

The success of ANERA and its partnering organizations was largely beholden to money. Without financial resources, basic life necessities like food, shelter and medication would not be accessible – let alone any plans of building programs to encourage self-subsistence. Throughout virtually every single newsletter and board book, financial worries and constraints were mentioned as a top priority. The following section will explore the financial challenges and successes that faced ANERA and its partnering institutions and organizations between 1967 and 1982, and how this affected the growth of the NGO.

From the early 1970s, ANERA was already facing challenges in fundraising. An excerpt in a 1971 newsletter by John Richardson (President of ANERA in the early 70s) explained that fundraising potential was decreasing, as peak potential often followed an active crisis: "Another reality is that the initial impetus for assisting refugees peaked just following the crisis of 1967 and faded rather quickly, as people channelled their energies into other activities."²⁰⁵ This was

²⁰⁵ *American Near East Refugee Aid* 10 (December/January 1971): 4. Accessed October 01, 2018. <https://www.anera.org/resources/newsletters/>.

compounded by the fact that UNRWA, the principal agent in the field that provided access to emergency relief and support programs, was nearly bankrupt and could not keep up with the influx of refugees.²⁰⁶ Importantly, one of the main reasons that the newsletters were being published and disseminated was its promise as a fundraising source. They are worded and published in a specific way – with the end goal of raising more money. Thus, it is difficult to ascertain how much financial hardship was being emphasized or exaggerated with this goal in mind.

Common complaints in newsletters also centered on the mass amount of funding provided by the US government to Israel, compared to the significantly lower amount awarded to support the UNRWA. For instance, more than twenty-three times more support was going to Israel in 1971, and similar numbers were distributed in 1973.²⁰⁷ For the first few years of ANERA's existence, the UNRWA continued to be chronically underfunded. This meant that in the first editions, ANERA's newsletters contained multitudes of praises for UNRWA's programs, while marking the decline of and pressures on such services. For example, in 1971, a special highlights section was given to emphasize the financial pressures that UNRWA faced; it detailed a predicted deficit of 5.5 to 6 million dollars, leading to a threat of closure.²⁰⁸ Another article in the same newsletter documented the difficulties receiving approval to increase funding to the UNRWA through the Senate.²⁰⁹ This remained a common theme throughout the early issues: a constant monetary threat jeopardized the critical operations of the UN in the region, and ANERA did not shy away from applying pressure on the US government to address this issue, through mail campaigns to raise

²⁰⁶ Ibid., 1.

²⁰⁷ In 1971, Israel was awarded \$500,000,000 while the UNRWA was given \$22,200,000. In 1973, the UNRWA received \$23,500,000 while Israel received \$474,500,000. *American Near East Refugee Aid* 10 (December/January 1971): 1. Accessed October 01, 2018. <https://www.anera.org/resources/newsletters/>.

²⁰⁸ Ibid.

²⁰⁹ Ibid., 3.

awareness in the public, sections in their newsletters on the latest political developments, and features of prominent Senators making an impact.

Leading into 1972, the funding shortages continued to be felt by both the UNRWA and ANERA, leading the NGO to a position where it had to decide and prioritize which projects were more deserving of funding.²¹⁰ Fundraising projects in the US were frequently advertised in the newsletters, prompting American communities to contribute through attending events like art exhibitions, concerts or buying crafts and cards. Often, mail campaign donations were advertised in newsletters, asking citizens to mail in a few dollars to support a specific cause that often changed with each issue. Mail campaigns also prompted their readers to become members, with annual memberships costing between \$10 to \$1,000 per year, and lifetime memberships costing between \$5,000 to \$10,000.²¹¹

From 1973 to 1974, ANERA donated a total of \$2,234,082.40 for projects for refugees.²¹² However, it reported that the grants in Syria and Lebanon were not comparable to those in the Occupied Territories due to financial constraints.²¹³ That year, grants of varying amounts, typically between \$2,500 and \$9,000, were given to local organizations or institutions in Lebanon.

The board books from the end of the decade provide more information about ANERA's financial situation. Through these books, we see ANERA's financial growth as well as the organization's increased confidence in programming. In 1978, there was an increase in 14% of cash collections for projects, from \$554,515 in 1977 to \$898,880.²¹⁴ ANERA attributed such a

²¹⁰ *American Near East Refugee Aid Newsletter* 16 (January/February 1972): 2. Accessed October 01, 2018. <https://www.anera.org/resources/newsletters/>.

²¹¹ *American Near East Refugee Aid Newsletter* 10 (December/January 1971): 4. Accessed October 01, 2018. <https://www.anera.org/resources/newsletters/>.

²¹² *American Near East Refugee Aid Newsletter* 28 (July/August 1974): 2. Accessed October 01, 2018. <https://www.anera.org/resources/newsletters/>.

²¹³ *American Near East Refugee Aid Newsletter* 29 (September/October 1974): 3. Accessed October 01, 2018. <https://www.anera.org/resources/newsletters/>.

²¹⁴ *American Near East Refugee Aid Board Book*. Washington D.C. 1978, 14.

success to “a growing American interest in the human rights of Palestinians and ANERA’s growing expertise in fundraising.”²¹⁵ 1978 seemed to have been a particularly good year for fundraising, as it also raised about \$140,450 from corporate donations.²¹⁶

By the early 1980s, the peaking violence in the Middle East had both negative and positive effects on fundraising. In 1980, complications arose due to instability and violence in the Occupied Territories that put unexpected strain on the budget, alongside inflation in the United States that year.²¹⁷ These two issues compounded to make the programs ANERAS was supporting unexpectedly more expensive. However, the difficulties in the region also meant that it had increased leverage to raise the amount of money it normally fundraised from its donors; that same year, ANERA reported having increased pressure on Congress to raise their annual contribution for the AID program from three million to seven million dollars.²¹⁸ Additionally, ANERA increased its cash and kind grants by 12.6% from 1979.²¹⁹ However, less funding was allocated to Lebanon in 1980, as the money was prioritized in areas of greater conflict. This rapidly changed as the situation in Lebanon escalated within the next years. In 1981, as the situation worsened, ANERA awarded a total of \$1,023,168 to Palestinians in Lebanon.²²⁰

Later, after the worst of the violence in 1982 had subsided, we see that conflict indeed increases the odds of successful fundraising. A 1983 board book displayed the aftermath of the conflict: an impressive campaign brought over \$1,622,301 in cash and in-kind grants, a 44.6% increase from the year prior.²²¹ The last newsletter of 1982 was an issue dedicated to Lebanon and

²¹⁵ Ibid.

²¹⁶ Ibid.

²¹⁷ *American Near East Refugee Aid Board Book*. Washington D.C. 1980, 8.

²¹⁸ Ibid.

²¹⁹ Ibid.

²²⁰ *American Near East Refugee Aid Newsletter* 55 (July/September 1981): 2. Accessed October 01, 2018. <https://www.anera.org/resources/newsletters/>.

²²¹ *American Near East Refugee Aid Board Book*. Washington D.C. 1983, 5.

detailed the ongoing reconstruction projects, prompting readers to donate a “special gift for ANERA’s Projects in Lebanon.”²²² This appeal seemed to work, as the board book from 1983 showed the direct mail campaign being hugely successful. Their private donations increased to almost double of what was received in 1982.²²³

A great help to ANERA’s operations was that all its non-program related costs remained consistently low, and the board books document an approved letter of audit by an outside company in every package. This indicates a positive relationship to ANERA’s fundraised money: on the surface, no discrepancies seem to exist and ANERA continued to operate only on an average of 14 to 17% of their budget.²²⁴ This means that the majority of money they fundraised and received through donations and grants continued to go directly to Palestinian refugees in the diasporas, and to affiliated organizations and institutions that assist them.

NGOs and the Oil Industry

In the mid-1970s, ANERA began to ramp up its fundraising efforts, particularly with corporate and private donors. While USAID was still its largest donor by far, ANERA’s other sources of revenue started to bear fruits. In 1974, the organization received a 2.2 million dollar donation from the Gulf Oil Corporation, with a statement from its President, James E. Lee (and new ANERA board member), saying that the Corporation was “deeply concerned about civilian casualties and physical destruction which have resulted from current fighting in the Middle East.”²²⁵ Two million dollars of that money was dedicated to the Popular Committee to Aid victims

²²² *American Near East Refugee Aid Newsletter* 60 (October/December 1982): 3. Accessed October 01, 2018. <https://www.nera.org/resources/newsletters/>.

²²³ *American Near East Refugee Aid Board Book*. Washington D.C. 1983, 18.

²²⁴ *American Near East Refugee Aid Board Book*. Washington D.C. 1977, 1978, 1980, 1981, 1982.

²²⁵ *American Near East Refugee Aid Newsletter* 25 (December/January 1974): 1. Accessed October 01, 2018. <https://www.nera.org/resources/newsletters/>.

of the War “for supervised distribution in Lebanon.”²²⁶ In 1976, 41% of ANERA’s income came from corporations, 39% came from individuals and groups, 18% from pharmaceutical corporations and 2% from various other income (for example, interest and dividends).²²⁷

Throughout the newsletters and board books, donations and involvement by representatives in major oil corporations are frequently mentioned. This corporations’ interest is certainly economic and political, and ANERA tended to benefit from it. In the 59th newsletter, an unknown author wrote in the margins:

Peter: If you can convince: ARAMCO, Exxon, Conoco, Mobil Texaco, Fluor, Parsons, Bechtel, Whittaker, Raymond, Standard Oil, etc... to mail this leaflet to their employees and their mailing list (without comment), you will get excellent results.²²⁸

Assuming this message was intended for Peter Gubser, the President of ANERA at the time, it seems ANERA was keenly aware of which parties would be interested in donating to their assistance – and this was mainly oil and construction companies, and even the individuals that worked for them.

Corporate donors are an interesting agent in this study, as their incentive for involvement and participation in the Palestinian refugee crisis is voiced as genuine humanitarian concern, yet the nature of their businesses often alludes to ulterior motives. For major oil companies, assuring a relationship and easy access to oil-producing countries in the Middle East is a business decision. Oil and petroleum policy has been a central component of American foreign policy, and a critical factor in the U.S.’ dealings in the Middle East since the partition of Palestine.²²⁹ Washington has sought to secure steady access to oil, and to guarantee resources even in a time of political

²²⁶ Ibid.

²²⁷ *American Near East Refugee Aid Newsletter* 34 (July/August 1974): 2. Accessed October 01, 2018. <https://www.anera.org/resources/newsletters/>.

²²⁸ *American Near East Refugee Aid Newsletter* 59 (July/September 1982): 4. Accessed October 01, 2018. <https://www.anera.org/resources/newsletters/>.

²²⁹ Irene L. Gendzier, *Dying to Forget: Oil, Power, Palestine, and the Foundations of U.S. Policy in the Middle East* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015), 3-4.

instability or war.²³⁰ In 1948, protecting American oil-interests and the move to support Israel had seemed to be opposing policies that would negatively impact the former.²³¹ However, the Truman government's decision to endorse the state of Israel did not have the predicted impact.²³² In fact, the American oil industry in the Middle East began to flourish post-1948: "Once perceived as a liability in the context of U.S. regional interests, after independence Israel emerged as an asset."²³³ Other corporate donors were construction companies, as well as an unnamed company dealing with metals, chemicals and materials development.²³⁴

As demonstrated in Chapter 1, the ethical dilemmas that arise between donors and recipients are numerous and complex. Political and economic gain may be assumed in the act of gift giving, particularly when it involves a vulnerable community that may not be able to return the favour. As analyzed by the historian Beata Paragi: "Foreign aid to Palestine has been provided in the form of financially unreciprocated, but not necessarily unconditional grants."²³⁵ For example, when the Gulf Oil Corporation gifted the sum of \$2.2 million towards the war relief programs in 1974, they were responding to plea for aid made by ANERA.²³⁶ However, the Gulf Oil Corporation's influence was not limited to this gift – they also exerted a heavy presence in ANERA's board. ANERA's board of directors from 1977 to 1978 included employees of the Gulf Oil Corporation, Standard Oil of California, Mobil Oil Corporation and Esso Middle East.

Such an oil-heavy presence on the board of a non-governmental organization can indicate two things: first, their presence could benefit the NGO by having links to powerful organizations

²³⁰ Ibid., 7.

²³¹ Ibid., 293.

²³² Ibid.

²³³ Ibid., 301.

²³⁴ *American Near East Refugee Aid Board Book*. Washington D.C. 1977, 48.

²³⁵ Paragi, "Hegemonic Solidarity?" 107.

²³⁶ *American Near East Refugee Aid Annual Report* 1973, 5. Accessed October 01, 2018. <https://www.anera.org/annual-report-archive/>.

with a lot of money, and thus have increased pressure power to ensure high donation amounts. Second, their presence could influence the path of the organization in the favour of these major corporations, as they have vested interests in the locations in which the NGO operates. With ANERA, it is difficult to establish the exact sway of influence that the oil corporations had, as there is no record of what each individual board member prioritized, and we do not have access to the board meeting minutes. However, their very presence is notable; since the partition of Israel and Palestine, American interest in oil in the Middle East was a common political concern.

Interestingly, a newsletter supplement in 1973 written by John Richardson drew attention to this very topic. In it, he explained the growing importance of Arab oil to American interests: “[...] by 1985 it is estimated that the United States will have to rely on imported, primarily Middle Eastern and Arab, oil for fully 50% of its daily requirements.”²³⁷ Richardson implored the readers to think about the benefits of the charity they were providing beyond short-term profits: “Once having met the basic needs of their peoples for food, take a new perspective for viewing America’s commercial role in the Middle East.”²³⁸ He stated the growing frustration amongst Arab communities about the American support for Israel, and cited that common oil interests could mediate this frustration, with charitable organizations the “invisible bridges” bringing them together.²³⁹

America desperately needs the positive interest of the Middle East today. We need the fuel supplies which power our industrial base; we need to be able to compete equally in the rapidly expanding markets in the area; we need the communication channels which the Middle East provides. We still need the “invisible bridges” that were slowly and surely built through generations of service by Americans in response to the needs and aspirations of the Middle East.²⁴⁰

²³⁷ *American Near East Refugee Aid Newsletter* 23 (June 1973): 5. Accessed October 01, 2018. <https://www.anera.org/resources/newsletters/>.

²³⁸ *Ibid.*, 5.

²³⁹ *Ibid.*, 5-6.

²⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 8.

The connections between the oil industry, the American government, and the charitable sectors are numerous. ANERA successfully positioned themselves in the midst of a global economic and political debate by attracting major corporate donors and including them in their board membership. By creating links with big oil companies, ANERA was able to better navigate both the private economic sectors and the American foreign policy arena.

Relationship with U.S. and Israeli Governments

While ANERA could boast successful fundraising techniques and growth as an organization, its programs and the projects of fellow NGOs that it supported would have been effectively handicapped without a working relationship with the US and Israeli governments. ANERA's peak growth and professionalization years came at a critical time in American politics; foreign policy in the 1970s and 1980s began to take a more noticeably pro-Israeli stance, meaning more focus and attention was going towards supporting Israel thrive, instead of spending time and money solving the Palestinians' dilemma. Additionally, after the War of 1967, Israel now gained control over the last two remaining Palestinian concentrations: the West Bank and Gaza. The Israeli government, a state with already several decades of experience in dealing with hostility from its neighbouring countries, was now in position to exert power over who helped the Palestinians, and how.

Therefore, organizations were in a position of having to nurture, or pressure, a productive relationship with these governments in order to ensure the success of their programming. In several newsletters, ANERA published political pieces pleading the US government to change their stance on their policy in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and to help the Palestinian refugees. In 1972, a newsletter reported the public opinion in the Middle East: "[...] Arabs conclude that American

policy is now one of supporting the *status quo* in the Middle East, manifestly detrimental to the Arabs.”²⁴¹ ANERA used the newsletters to prompt its American readers to email their government officials to apply pressure. In another newsletter, a piece by Senator Mark Hatfield was published with the following message: “Our policy toward the Middle East has been self-defeating and detrimental to all of the parties to the conflict.”²⁴² Here, he implied that the U.S. policy in regards to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict had insufficiently managed the conflict from the beginning, and would continue to negatively affect the region without a conclusion. As such, the newsletters were frequently used as critiques to political plans, or as a mobilization method against such policies.

The board books always contained specific sections to discuss political endeavors. In 1977, a proposed board resolution was to commend the Carter administration for their peace settlement strategies and recommended them how to proceed with such a strategy (for example, ANERA urged them to include Palestinians in the negotiations).²⁴³ It is also evident through the board books that ANERA attempted to exert political influence wherever it could in order to increase funding from USAID. In 1980, ANERA’s goal was to increase congressional funding by an additional four million dollars.²⁴⁴ The next year, it reported having raised almost two million more from the USAID, therefore having achieved half of the goal.²⁴⁵

The board books illuminate the issues between the Israeli government and ANERA in greater detail: almost every document between 1977 and 1982 made a special mention of the difficulties in delegating funding to the appropriate projects in the Occupied Territories. Often, their money would be tied up for months, and board members would complain about their suffering

²⁴¹ *American Near East Refugee Aid Newsletter* 18 (May/June 1972): 1. Accessed October 01, 2018. <https://www.amera.org/resources/newsletters/>.

²⁴² *American Near East Refugee Aid Newsletter* 11 (February/March 1971): 2. Accessed October 01, 2018. <https://www.amera.org/resources/newsletters/>.

²⁴³ *American Near East Refugee Aid Board Book*. Washington D.C., 1977, 28.

²⁴⁴ *American Near East Refugee Aid Board Book*. Washington D.C. 1980, 8.

²⁴⁵ *American Near East Refugee Aid Board Book*. Washington D.C. 1981, 13.

projects and the need to apply greater pressure and diplomacy upon Israeli representatives to get approval. ANERA's Presidential report of 1978 documented:

As the Chairman of the Board in his policy statement last year indicated, ANERA would endeavor to maintain essentially correct relations with GOI. Maintaining correct relations with a military occupation force when one is attempting to manage a bilateral development program with the occupied people, is not the easiest of tasks to say the least. Despite considerable intransigence and obstructionism on the part of the GOI, ANERA has been able, albeit not without extensive and intensive effort, to attain the acquiescence of GOI for ANERA to execute the bulk of its grants program in FY 79. ANERA staff is optimistic that GOI acquiescence for the balance of the program will be secured in the coming months. Henry Selz is to be complimented not only for the development of an outstanding grants program, but also for his ability to obtain its acceptance by the occupying authorities.²⁴⁶

Critical to their success with Israel was the opening of ANERA's Jerusalem office in 1976. This was ANERA's first office located in the Middle East, and also marked a pivotal moment for the organization. It would no longer solely operate from Washington with only occasional visits to the Middle East from board members. The opening of the Jerusalem office was critical to its relationship with Israel (here dubbed by ANERA the "occupying authority") as it would improve the communication and negotiation with the government. The Jerusalem office also simultaneously offered ANERA better and quicker contact with its regional operations in Lebanon and Jordan.

In the 1980s, Israel implemented an "Iron Fist" policy due to the killings of Jewish military students.²⁴⁷ Voluntary organizations were impacted by proxy, creating additional struggles to have grants approved to be implemented in Gaza and the West Bank. While the issues with achieving grant approvals were not new, a new challenge presented itself when Israel began to halt the regular

²⁴⁶ *American Near East Refugee Aid Board Book*. Washington D.C. 1978, 27.

²⁴⁷ *American Near East Refugee Aid Board Book*. Washington D.C. 1981, 16.

programs that were already established in the region.²⁴⁸ Additionally, ANERA and other NGOs were viewed critically and on occasion “attacked” in Israeli media.²⁴⁹

While ANERA saw and documented difficulties with aid passing through Israel into the Occupied Territories, Israel’s involvement had less of an impact to operations in Lebanon. ANERA and other organizations did not need to seek approval from Israel to distribute aid and continue projects in Lebanese refugee camps. However, it did impact the Lebanese operations in the sense that the difficulties involving Israeli relations and ANERA took up most of the time, effort and concerns of the organization in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Each board book from later years document the issues with Israel as being of top priority and concern to the board. In 1982, with the relationship with the Israeli government continuously strained, the Presidential report detailed that “has the effect of raising our management and general (including fundraising) costs as a percentage of total expenditures.”²⁵⁰ Thus, more money needed to be allocated to the programs delayed in the Occupied Territories, and ANERA would need to focus most of its resources towards them as they were in greater need than other host countries. Additionally, the report goes on: “And on a direct human level, our cooperative expert was arrested, along with thirty others, held for eighteen days (the maximum period one may be held with no charges), and released with the others.”²⁵¹ On top of money, staff was also being held up due to the complications with Israel – all important resources that could have been allocated or used more productively.

While their diplomatic relationships were contentious and sometimes difficult to maintain, ANERA needed to communicate and work with both the American and Israeli governments to ensure the success of its programs and funding. The relationships it developed demonstrate how

²⁴⁸ Ibid., 15.

²⁴⁹ *American Near East Refugee Aid Board Book*. Washington D.C. 1980, 9.

²⁵⁰ *American Near East Refugee Aid Board Book*. Washington D.C. 1982, 15.

²⁵¹ Ibid.

ANERA learned to expertly navigate the political sphere and manage domestic and international interests in order to achieve its goals.

Conclusion

ANERA is a prime example of an American NGO involved in Palestinian affairs in Lebanon. From 1968 to 1982, its journey into international aid developed considerably as the organization responded to various challenges along the way. Of primary concern was the administration of its programs in times of evolving conflict; this influenced where ANERA would focus its resources. Additionally, due to the lengthening conflict and the realization that Palestinian refugees would continue to require aid beyond the typical immediate emergency services, ANERA began to adapt from fundraising and awareness building, to seeking more long-term solutions for Palestinians in Lebanon. This came in the form of training, schooling, agricultural and economic programs, as well as a focus on infrastructure. Another challenge that ANERA face was that of consistently raising money for these endeavors, and to support other NGOs and organizations that were operating on the ground in Lebanon, directly assisting refugees. While ANERA faced difficulties in acquiring donations and grants consistently, it became an expert in navigating the political, corporate and public domain to better their fundraising practices. Its expertise also included the relationships it developed with corporate donors like major oil companies, involving them in its executive board and amassing millions of dollars in donations from them. Finally, ANERA faced one of its career's largest logistical challenges: navigating complicated relationships with the American and Israeli governments to be able to ensure the adequate use of their funding for programming. Despite tensions and pressures, ANERA was successfully able to continue funding and supporting programs for Palestinians in Lebanon.

CHAPTER 3: THE PORTRAYAL OF PALESTINIAN REFUGEES BY NGOS TO THE AMERICAN PUBLIC

The different roles that NGOs symbolically embody (as international policy advisors, politicians, business managers, economic experts, and as humanitarian advocates) all impact and contribute to the representation of the beneficiaries of the NGO, both locally and internationally. This chapter looks at the issues and benefits of this depiction. In the mid-20th century, international NGOs gave Palestinians representation in the Western world, an opportunity not normally available to them in the seclusion of the refugee camps. This representation was also critical to the NGO's success: carefully selected words and images could guarantee continued funding, a sympathetic ear, and legitimacy in the public and political arena. However – such representations also come with certain repercussions. I examine the particular manner that ANERA portrayed Palestinian refugees to the American public. As a core principle of the organization's original purpose, the mission to educate the American people of the refugee crisis in the Middle East had rippling effects to ANERA and to Palestinians themselves. As examined in Chapter 1, the NGO movement grew from a history of colonial and missionary backgrounds, influencing how it developed and operated. While charitable and third sector society has grown to be an important factor in the survival of Palestinian refugees over the years, I argue that it has not been able to distinguish itself from the colonial and religious roots. In the 1960s through the 1980s, the manner in which Palestinian refugees were presented to the public was laced with patronizing religious and colonial connotations in order to appeal to the American public back home. Additionally, the portrayal of Palestinians was framed in a way to guarantee the success of ANERA's operations and continued funding. I use photography, quotes and cultural demonstrations from the years 1967 to 1982 to determine how ANERA viewed and understood Palestinians and how that translated to

the way it communicated about refugees to its American counterparts. I look at the history of “othering” the “Third world”, of shock tactics, and the manipulation of gender coupled with suffering. Furthermore, I analyse how the NGO chose to include the “Palestinian voice” into its materials, and what the selection implies.

Theories and Case Studies

This chapter studies and analyses the Palestinian representation in newsletters by looking at the concept of “othering” and engages with the theory of orientalism. These theories permit the reader to distinguish the colonial, patriarchal and religious rhetoric and imagery that is presented throughout. While in depth surveys of each of these concepts is outside of the scope of this thesis, I will briefly explain their significance in the context of ANERA’s newsletters.

The term “orientalism” was famously coined by Edward Said, describing the phenomenon of Western artists, academics and intellectuals romanticizing and manipulating representations of the Middle East to produce an image of an exotic “other”. In his own words, orientalism is

...the corporate institution for dealing with the Orient – dealing with it by making statements about it, authorising views of it, describing it, by teaching it, settling it, ruling over it: in short, orientalism as a Western style for domination, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient.²⁵²

Essentially, the Western assumptions and stereotypes helped build an image of the Middle East and other colonized places that was completely separate and distinct from the Western world. It also fed into liberalized ideas of what ‘civilized communities’ were and how they should be regulated.²⁵³ Scholars have used Said’s theory of orientalism to understand American intervention and involvement with the Middle East. Notably, Said’s *Orientalism* did not go into depth on gender

²⁵² Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York, NY: Random House, 1979), 3.

²⁵³ Maryam Khalid, "Gender, Orientalism and Representations of the 'Other' in the War on Terror," *Global Change, Peace & Security* 23, no. 1 (2011), 17.

analysis, although its theories and links to power have still been interpreted and utilized by feminist postcolonial studies. Leila Ahmed, in her book *Women and Gender in Islam: Historical Roots of a Modern Debate*, found the link between colonial and imperialist rhetoric imposing ‘liberation’ unto women from their supposed misogynist indigenous culture, implying that the Western culture had the only correct, civilized way of life and feminism.²⁵⁴ Ahmed studied this orientalist imposition onto Middle Eastern women through her study of the question of the veil, debating whether or not women were being repressed by the garment.

Even when the era of decolonization swept the world in the 1950s and 1960s, the habits and traditions of the colonizers lived on in Western mentality.²⁵⁵ In addition to the overlapping religious saviour mentality that motivated the first NGOs²⁵⁶, misconstrued realities of the Orient informed American interactions with the Middle East. These misconceptions lived on in the manner that NGOs represented their “Third World” communities (also known as “Majority World”) to their “First World” audience.²⁵⁷ The NGO world became increasingly geared towards international development in the mid-70s, as was reflected in ANERA’s progression of mandate and priorities.²⁵⁸ The term “development” began being used to justify and explain all the different tactics employed by NGOs to accomplish their goals, and this was also reflected in their advertisements and imagery of the communities they were helping. In advertisements, all of the countries composing the Majority World are frequently lumped together, defined by their problems

²⁵⁴ Leila Ahmed, *Women and Gender in Islam: Historical Roots of a Modern Debate* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 129.

²⁵⁵ For more information, please refer to Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York, NY: Random House, 1979).

²⁵⁶ Refer to Chapter 2: The History and Ethics of Nongovernmental Organizations.

²⁵⁷ The term “Third World” has been problematized for its derogatory connotations. For a brief history on this term, see Solarz, Marcin Wojciech. ““Third World”: The 60th Anniversary of a Concept That Changed History.” *Third World Quarterly* 33, no. 9 (2012): 1561–73. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01436597.2012.720828>.

²⁵⁸ Refer to Chapter 3: Logistical Challenges and Successes facing ANERA in Lebanon between 1967 and 1982.

and contrasted to the West.²⁵⁹ As scholar Nandita Dogra documented, “INGO’s message project many colonial discourses even as they ironically erase this period of our connected history and its legacies which continue to shape existing global economic structures.”²⁶⁰ This “us versus them” mentality, otherwise known as “othering”, is preserved in the images that are communicated to the American public. In her research on representations of the Majority World in NGO advertising, Lisa Rideout states:

It is in the visual medium, rather than simply text or audio in which the stereotypical definitive terms of the Third World flourishes. The images in both advertisements can be viewed as connected to the historical employment of visuals in order to justify colonialism, or in this instance, development assistance.²⁶¹

This type of representation from NGOs who sought to advertise and display their work to a Western public draws immediate ire for a few main issues. First, in the 20th century, modern media and communication methods have oversaturated the average person, and more is required to get them to notice it, let alone stir a reaction from them.²⁶² Thus “shock tactics” are regularly employed to get the attention of the reader. The peak of this practice occurred in the 1970s, and images in the ads of NGOs began to pose ethical questions.²⁶³ In his 1981 article “Merchants of Misery”, Dutch aid worker Jorgen Lissner infamously criticized the images of starving African children as “pornographic”: their vulnerable bodies had been exploited for increased profitability.²⁶⁴ This decade highlighted a critical issue at the time: images were being used to

²⁵⁹ Lisa Rideout, “Representations of the 'Third World' in NGO Advertising: Practicalities, Colonial Discourse and Western Understandings of Development,” *Journal of African Media Studies* 3, no. 1 (March 2011): 32. doi: 10.1386/jams.3.1.25_1.

²⁶⁰ Nandita Dogra, *Representations of Global Poverty; Aid, Development and International NGOs* (New York: I.B. Tauris & Co Ltd., 2012), 3.

²⁶¹ Rideout, “Representations of the 'Third World,’” 35.

²⁶² *Ibid.*, 28.

²⁶³ Mirjam Vossen, Baldwin Gorp, Lau Schulpen, “In Search of the Pitiful Victim: A Frame Analysis of Dutch, Flemish and British Newspapers and NGO-Advertisements,” *Journal of International Development* 30, no. 4 (May 2018): 644. doi: 10.1002/jid.3235.

²⁶⁴ Jorgen Lissner, “Merchants of Misery,” *New Internationalist*, (1981), accessed April 04, 2019, <https://newint.org/features/1981/06/01/merchants-of-misery>.

repeat colonial discourse and stereotypes and feed it to mass media outlets as a way of ensuring attention.

There are two main trains of thought when it comes to the use of such provocative images. Firstly, it is debated that the images depicted are in fact the reality, and while the reality might be upsetting, the shock value is useful in terms of mobilizing fundraising and raising awareness of this uncomfortable reality. The other camp argues that displaying such images to the privileged is dehumanizing and serves to “rob people of their dignity,” which enforces the Western superiority complex.²⁶⁵ This camp is composed of academics and professionals who are concerned about the overtly negative impression media and images give of the Third World.²⁶⁶

This phenomenon has been selectively studied in various countries, although a comprehensive analysis of international NGO representations of their beneficiary communities has not yet been done. Several Western NGOs and media outlets (specifically European) have been studied, however, little to no studies of American NGOs exist.

According to Mirjam Vossen, Baldwin Gorp and Lau Schulpen, this phenomenon creates three problematic representations of the people: victimization, pain, and helplessness.²⁶⁷ Vossen’s group of scholars used books, articles, NGO campaigns and political party programmes to compare the difference in representations across British, Dutch and Flemish NGO advertisements and journalism. They enlisted coders to analyse the images and frames to come to conclusions about their messages. Importantly, they remarked that the purpose of NGOs must be taken in consideration: ultimately, NGOs are looking to raise money. Their research assumption was thus that NGOs would disseminate more problematic representations than media outlets with the goal

²⁶⁵ Vossen et. al., “In Search of the Pitiful Victim,” 644.

²⁶⁶ Ibid.

²⁶⁷ Ibid., 645.

of raising the most amount of funds.²⁶⁸ The results of this study were varied, and extremely interesting. The analysis found that Dutch and Flemish sources most often portrayed their subjects through a developmental lens, while British outlets used more problematizing representations by almost double and routinely employed a “victim” narrative.²⁶⁹ The times of publication were found to be important, as “pitiful” images were most used in times of disaster as a way to maximize emergency relief fundraising.²⁷⁰ Additionally, very little percentages of all three countries’ advertisements “demonstrated the initiative of the local population (UK 4%; the Netherlands 13%, Flanders 17%).”²⁷¹ Thus, while the misery of the community as well as the effectiveness of the NGO to develop said community are demonstrated, the agency of the locals is visibly missing in representation. The representation of dependency on the West is continued.²⁷²

In another academic study, academic Erin Michelle Kamler interviewed NGO employees working with human trafficking victims in Thailand. Kamler specifically looked at the *narration* that the NGO workers employed, and how that narration represented the trafficking victims to the external world. Importantly, Kamler identified the self-awareness of NGOs as “information brokers” and detailed how they used this position in making this world understandable to the West, which solidified their own position in the international arena.²⁷³ In this study, Kamler found several narratives that were continually disseminated by the NGO staff:

They included a Civilizing narrative (“Thailand is backwards”), a Moralizing narrative (“Thailand is unethical”), a Savior narrative (“They should be grateful”), an Othering narrative (“Thailand is illegible to the West”), and a Victim narrative (“Sex workers lack agency”). Together, these narratives reinforced cultural assumptions about modernization in a particular development

²⁶⁸ Ibid., 648.

²⁶⁹ Ibid., 651-6.

²⁷⁰ Ibid., 654.

²⁷¹ Ibid., 655.

²⁷² Ibid., 657.

²⁷³ Erin Michelle Kamler, “Negotiating Narratives of Human Trafficking: NGOs, Communication and the Power of Culture,” *Journal of Intercultural Communication Research* 42, no. 1 (March 2013): 74. doi: 10.1080/17475759.2012.728147.

sequence—the idea that humans “progress” along a linear cultural trajectory as industrialization and economic development occur—as well as a “self-versus-other” binary based on ideas about the Orient and the West.²⁷⁴

Similar to their depiction in advertisements and images, the narration of Third World communities follows a colonial and orientalist pattern. Additionally, from the interviews with NGO staff, it was clear to Kamler that the NGOs executed this narration with the goal of acquiring more funding and receiving a more legitimate status than the “government-sponsored international efforts.”²⁷⁵ The lessons learned from this article are used when analysing the chosen quotes of ANERA staff members regarding Palestinians later in this chapter.

Other studies have been completed on Western development NGOs concerned with the Majority World. The tactics they employ seem to repeat themselves. In a 1995 study of the Spanish NGO Manos Unidas, the researcher also commented that NGOs need to show, by way of image, photograph and video, the “harsh reality” of the Third World in order to keep up with funding difficulties.”²⁷⁶

In another study by Nandita Dogra, again of UK-based NGOs, an alarming theme was found throughout most NGO advertisements: a reliance and emphasis on gender and women as representatives of the Third World.

Women are ubiquitous across all representational sites of disaster, development and advocacy. Their dominance is especially noticeable in the fundraising messages, particularly emergency appeals, which show either images of starving infants, children and their mothers in food crises, or crying children in the case of natural disasters.²⁷⁷

²⁷⁴ Ibid.

²⁷⁵ Ibid., 78.

²⁷⁶ Estrella Martínez-Rodrigo and Rafael Marfil-Carmona, “The Audiovisual Representation of Poverty in the Advertising of the NGDO Manos Unidas,” *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences* 237 (February 2017): 1558. doi: 10.1016/j.sbspro.2017.02.245.

²⁷⁷ Nandita Dogra, “The Mixed Metaphor of ‘Third World Woman’: Gendered Representations by International Development NGOs,” *Third World Quarterly* 32, no. 2 (March 2011): 335. doi: 10.1080/01436597.2011.560472.

According to Dogra, women appear in advertisements under the guise of several tropes. They appear as mothers and nurturers, representing goodness, nature, tradition, neediness, and finally, deservingness.²⁷⁸ Agency and perspectives of women beyond these capacities is not frequently demonstrated. Interestingly, Dogra also found that men were almost completely removed from all narratives in advertisements. Here, the gendering of development and NGO work is evoked. “Good women” are pitted against “bad men” in ads.²⁷⁹ Women become the tools of the development world:

The rare appearance of MW [Majority World] women in non-traditional roles is usually found in their attempts at livelihood through activities such as farming or small-scale trading. It takes the form of the small-scale trade success story of women who become self-sufficient, proving such help to be a good ‘investment’. Such messages project a neoliberal logic of good economic sense where the woman is shown as an instrument of development.²⁸⁰

Here, even the economic programs they bring women into for 'development' actually reinforces western ideals.²⁸¹

I will use the findings of these past studies on other Western spheres to guide my research on ANERA’s developmental practices and the history it chose to portray in its images and words. By analysing themes of orientalism, othering, victimizations and shock tactics, I will place ANERA’s newsletters into the historical framework and to answer several questions. Was ANERA successful in portraying Palestinian refugees? Was it able to distinguish itself from a long colonial history, or do its representations continue the orientalist theme?

²⁷⁸ Dogra, “The Mixed Metaphor,” 335-8.

²⁷⁹ Ibid., 346.

²⁸⁰ Ibid., 349-50.

²⁸¹ Ibid., 341.

Methodology

In this chapter, I use both quantitative and qualitative methods to analyse my data. Using the ANERA newsletters from 1969 to 1982, I examine three major components: images and their descriptions; socio-cultural artifacts and presentations (like books, music concerts, and advertised Christmas cards, for example); and quotes by Americans and Palestinians published in print. Most of my arguments come from qualitatively analysing phrases and images, while I also record statistics for some. I used previous studies of the ads and images of NGOs to guide my questions and critical analysis.²⁸² I used basic statistical methods to outline these patterns. When looking at the images, quotes and artifacts/presentations, I looked to uncover who was being represented, what were the emotions displayed, and what sort of reaction was expected from the viewer. I also sought to answer the questions: is the Palestinian voice heard through this representation? What does a viewer learn about the Palestinian refugee through this representation?

I counted and evaluated the number of references and images relating to the following categories: women and children, men, programs for development, camps and cities. I then analysed the following questions: how many references portrayed suffering and pain? How many references portrayed happiness? How many images depicted members of ANERA and their involvement in political situations? To improve my analysis of images as historical sources, I referenced Peter Burke's book *Eyewitnessing: the uses of images as historical evidence*. Burke explains how to analyse images as stereotypes of the "other," as well as interpreting the gaze of the viewer onto the picture, whether it be the "western gaze [...]" the scientific gaze, the colonial gaze, the tourist

²⁸² See Vossen; Gorp and Schulpen, "In Search of the Pitiful Victim"; Rideout, "Representations of the 'Third World' in NGO advertising"; Estrella Martínez-Rodrigo, Rafael Marfil-Carmona, "The Audiovisual Representation of Poverty in the Advertising of the NGDO Manos Unidas." *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences* 237 (2017): 1557-1563. doi: 10.1016/j.sbspro.2017.02.245.

gaze or the male gaze. The gaze often expresses attitudes of which the viewer may not be conscious, whether they are hates, fears or desires projected on to the other.”²⁸³ With this in mind, I must consider my own gaze onto these images and be careful with the meanings I might project onto the images. Additionally, Burke reasserts that images can be analysed through the lens of orientalism.²⁸⁴

While recognizing that there might be overlap in these questions and categories, I sought to determine the overall trends. I particularly looked at the difference in imagery at the beginning of the period in question, from 1969 to about 1974, and compared it to the later years of the organization, between 1975 and 1982, when the organization began to ramp up funding and switch gears to a more developmental oriented vision. Comparing the references from the early newsletters to the later years of the organization, I was able to understand how ANERA was growing and how its shifting priorities were reflected in its portrayal of Palestinians to the U.S.

Aside from the patterns in imagery across all the sources, I also descriptively analysed several key images and their descriptions, as well the selected published quotes by Americans and Palestinians that were determined to be of value in the editing of the newsletters. With quotations, I paid particular attention to the intention and use of them in print: how did they help the newsletters’ purpose? What did the selection of quotes imply?

I also noted the mentions of the socio-cultural artifacts and presentations, which I dub cultural demonstrations. I qualify an item as a “cultural demonstration,” if it presented an opportunity for Americans to engage (visually, audibly or sensory) with Arab or Middle Eastern

²⁸³ Peter Burke, *Eyewitnessing: The Uses of Images as Historical Evidence* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2001), 125-6.

²⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 127.

elements of culture. While they were less frequent mentions of such representations, they are important in terms of how Palestinian culture was displayed to Americans.

Photos and Images

The selection of newsletters from June 1969 to December 1982, about 60 in total, is rich with images. The purpose of ANERA's newsletters is clear: to inform on the current situation of Palestinian refugees in the Middle East. Furthermore, the newsletters take a very specific financial focus: they document exactly how monetary donations are being used, which programs are being supported and which financial cutbacks are hurting communities the most. The goals are important when considering the purpose of the story they tell: what type of story would ANERA try to portray and sell for its purposes?

In addition to the story that ANERA tells and sells, the international political context of the time is crucial to understand the intended message and its potential impact on the American audience. Studies of American news outlets between the 1940s and 1980s show discouraging bias and negative stereotypes in the information communicated to Americans relating to the Middle East. In the early 20th century, a study of the *New York Times* showed that information regarding the Middle East was communicated in a military, political and economic standpoint solely, and was "mostly conflict-oriented and unfavorable to the Arabs."²⁸⁵ Between the 1950s and 1970s, the *New York Times* was again studied and determined to be a large influencer in public opinion surrounding the creation of Israel, and continued to garner support for their cause.²⁸⁶ In times of conflict, Israel was "revered" by the American press, while their Arab counterparts were

²⁸⁵ Dina Ibrahim, "The Middle East in American Media; A 20th-Century Overview," *The International Communication Gazette* 71, no. 6 (2009): 512. doi: 10.1177/1748048509339793.

²⁸⁶ Ibid.

represented unfairly, as “backwards” and “aggressors.”²⁸⁷ Americans naturally found themselves more compelled to understand and sympathize with Israel in the media, as they were a more relatable Western-style country, similar in both majority racial identity and culture.²⁸⁸ Additionally, due to Israeli censorship and a weak Arab information system, Western media were challenged in writing about the Arab perspective of events.²⁸⁹ After the 1973, the media began to balance out in favor of Arabs, with particular interest on the subjects of the PLO and Anwar Sadat in Egypt. One study demonstrated that the bias in coverage would be increasingly positive in situations where the Middle East would strength its diplomatic relationship with Israel, however, “[...] Arab unity, the struggle for occupied lands and opposition to Israeli policies are frowned upon both by the White House and Congress, thus consequently the American media.”²⁹⁰ The 1980s showed a more mixed coverage of Israel, as the 1982 invasion into Lebanon was seen as aggressive, although media outlets still justified Israeli actions.²⁹¹ The Palestinian refugee problem specifically has been reported as “complex” – however, due to this complexity, it has been underrepresented and inadequately analysed in media, and to this day, the refugee crisis remains incomprehensible and vague to much of the American public.²⁹²

In addition to informing of the refugee crisis and the financial details of the organization, the newsletters also document the time to celebrate upcoming conferences, new additions to the board of directors, deaths of members and new books published by ANERA members. These type of more ‘everyday’ musings and activities of the organization displayed how ANERA was growing

²⁸⁷ Ibid., 513.

²⁸⁸ Ibid., 520.

²⁸⁹ Ibid.

²⁹⁰ Ibid., 514.

²⁹¹ Ibid., 520.

²⁹² Marda Dunskey, *Pens and Swords: How the American Mainstream Media Report the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2008), 69.

and establishing itself, academically, socially and politically. They did not shy from engaging the debate on the right to return for Palestinian refugees. These types of accounts are interesting examples of a step away from support for the state of Israel that was the most commonly accepted narrative at the time. While mentions of funding and political involvement is clearly important, ANERA sought to establish a place for itself in international politics, as well as to secure funding for its programs in the Middle East.

There were a few things that made an impression right away: first, that ANERA staff members were extremely frequent faces in the newsletters. Additions of new board members, the travels of the presidents, and photographs of ANERA members at political events were often included amongst the pages. To get a better sense of the Palestinian imagery, I classified the images a second time, without ANERA's presence. I evaluated the numbers of photos of men versus women and children. While this number initially seemed comparable, the majority of images comprising men are ANERA board members and political figureheads. When removing them from the equation, the difference then became more noticeable. Without ANERA's presence, photos of men were outnumbered compared to women and children: only 35 photos depicted men, while there were 36 images of women and 50 of children. Without the faces of ANERA board members, the presence of men amongst the pages decreased. A second thing I noticed was that women were most frequently photographed with children, and in the most harrowing photos of the newsletters, it was always depictions of women and children suffering. While the numbers alone were not enough to paint me a complete picture, I began to see trends of gendering and victimization of the Palestinian refugee crisis.

Figure 4.1: Breakdown of images including ANERA members, 1969 - 1982

1969 – 1982 (including images of ANERA members)						
Type	Men	Women	Children	Urban sceneries (Cities, and camps)	Items/Objects/Artifacts	Total
#	88	52	50	26	5	221

Figure 4.2 Breakdown of images not including ANERA members, 1969 - 1982

1969 – 1982 (Without ANERA members)						
Type	Men	Women	Children	Urban sceneries (Cities, and camps)	Items/Objects/Artifacts	Total
#	35	36	50	26	5	152

Children also frequently appear in all the images. They are shown to exemplify simultaneously the successes of the NGO, as well as to demonstrate the disaster of the conflict: children are shown playing on school grounds, eating together in orphanages, or clinging to their mothers. They are also shown crying or receiving medical treatments. In one alarming newsletter, a young child is shown as a victim of the 1973 October War in Egypt: a particularly graphic photo shows the bloody extent of injuries on the child.²⁹³

Evidently, Arab children and women, seen as the image of “goodness” and the true victims of the conflict, are most commonly displayed in the imagery of ANERA’s newsletters.

²⁹³ *American Near East Refugee Aid Newsletter* 25 (December/January 1973 - 1974): 2. Accessed October 01, 2018. <https://www.anera.org/resources/newsletters/>.

Seen in terms of their popularity, children truly are the ‘development’ candy of INGOs messages. [...] Children’s images, however, work in complex and divergent ways as metaphors to symbolise childhood and MW [Majority World] across axes of ‘need,’ vulnerability, universal appeal, ‘hope’ and, above all, infantilisation.²⁹⁴

Images of buildings in total disrepair are also used to highlight desperate situations and financial instabilities. Many of ANERA’s earlier newsletters focused highly on the frightening state of UNRWA’s financial affairs. Images like the one below (Image 4.1), with a gaping hole in the wall of a school, prompt readers to donate money to the cause. A school room with rocks where children should be sitting, evokes an emotion of concern: something is not right.

Image 4.1. Newsletter No. 10, 1971.



UNRWA’s financial situation is aggravated by the necessity of repairing many schools, like this one in New Amman Camp, which were destroyed during the fighting last fall.

An example from ANERA’s early years shows an image of desperation. Here (Image 4.2), a nameless Palestinian woman holds her two children, while her “hungry little refugee child” shares her food while wiping tears from her eyes. This image was undoubtedly used to tug at the heartstrings of the middle-class American couple ostensibly reading this newsletter. Furthermore,

²⁹⁴ Dogra, *Representations of Global Poverty*, 33.

the Palestinian woman, with a head covering and downcast eyes, mimics a biblical representation of Mary Magdalene, inciting a call to the Christian savior complex that presents itself in many Western aid movements. This type of imagery is consistent with Dogra's study of gender in representation of the Third World in the United Kingdom. It is reminiscent of World Vision pamphlets that also showed similar body positions, facial expressions and actions – both mimicking and invoking an imagery of Madonna and Child.²⁹⁵ This type of religious parallel also closely resembles the sympathetic images that colonial missionaries would use in the past to justify their missions abroad. Seeing as this newsletter is written in 1969, which falls directly in a period of decolonization on an international scale, this image exemplifies the movement of Western politics that was disengaging from their colonial past on the surface, although the Western mentality was not so quick to separate itself.

Image 4.2. American Near East Refugee Aid. Newsletter. No. 3. October 1969.



A hungry little refugee shares her bit of bread with her baby brother. Your sponsorship of a child through Project Ryaiat will assure that the child will grow up to lead a useful, productive life.

²⁹⁵ Dogra, "The Mixed Metaphor," 335.

The following image (Image 4.3), from a newsletter supplement in 1970, portrayed a similar view into the lives of Palestinian refugees. We see three generations of refugees. Again nameless, the description identifies them as three people having been made refugees after the 1967 war. The image displays an intense array of emotions: the crying, upset face of a young child in the arms of a young woman, looking stoically ahead, eyebrows furrowed in concentration. In the background, an elderly woman looks away, worried and confused. They are the face of those affected by this crisis: women, children and the elderly. Such an image shows the chaos of emotion and again places the representation of displacement on women.

Image 4.3: American Near East Refugee Aid. Newsletter Supplement. No. 2 Part 2. 1970.



These people are 3 of 200,000 Palestinians who became new refugees after the June, 1967 war. As in 1948, only a fraction of those who have left have been allowed to return to their homes.

Later newsletters show similar situations as well. In one (Image 4.4), a woman sits among rubble after her home is destroyed. The next two (Image 4.5 and 4.6) also portray desperate, sad situations: hunger and destruction.

Image 4.4 American Near East Refugee Aid. Newsletter. No. 33. May-June 1975.



NABATIEH REFUGEE CAMP, SOUTH LEBANON (UNRWA photo by Jack Madvo)—Fatmeh Diab Mohammed, now 55, left Khalsa, Palestine in 1948 where she and her husband had farmed their own land. After losing everything, they came to Lebanon with their three children and settled first in Tibeh, then in Mazra'et Haboush. Eventually they moved to Nabatieh Camp where they opened a small shop. Two more children were born. With the little money they earned, they were able to send one of their sons to medical school. On May 16, 1974, Fatmeh's husband was killed during an Israeli raid on the camp; her home was completely destroyed and her youngest son injured.

Image 4.5 American Near East Refugee Aid. Newsletter. No. 32. March-April 1975.



BAQA'A REFUGEE CAMP, JORDAN—This Palestinian woman comes once a month to collect the UNRWA rations for her family. The monthly basic dry ration is normally composed of roughly 4.5 pounds of flour, 21 ounces of pulses (or equivalent in flour or rice), 21 ounces of sugar, 18 ounces of rice, and 13 ounces of cooking oil. This ration provides approximately 1,500 calories per day throughout seven months. In winter, November through March, a supplement of flour is normally issued to increase its value to about 1,600 calories per day. Other supplies distributed by UNRWA include roughly 1 to 1.5 quarts of kerosene in the winter and one piece of soap (about 5.3 ounces). (UNRWA photo by George Nehmeh)

Image 4.6 American Near East Refugee Aid. Newsletter. No. 49. October 1980.



RASHIDIEH REFUGEE CAMP, South Lebanon—This Palestinian woman, sifting through the debris in what was once her kitchen, has become a classic expression of the disruption of life arising from the complicated war in Lebanon. (The UNRWA photo was taken after an Israeli sea strike on refugee camps in May, 1974). ANERA has sent over \$400,000 in cash and gifts-in-kind (primarily pharmaceutical supplies and food for civilian casualties) to Lebanon with most of that sent in response to the ongoing crisis. ANERA continues to accept donations for civilian relief in Lebanon.

However, the Arab voice is noticeably missing from these sources in the first half of the study between 1969 to 1974. While the newsletters discuss upcoming conferences, detailed lists of what programs are using their funding, and accounts from the ANERA president himself, the very subject of their organization is absent. Despite depicting and describing the horrible living situations and the despair of the Palestinian refugee, the closest participation of the Arab voice in the newsletters is through the sales of Arab cookbooks as a fundraising campaign, or a children's art exhibit. Otherwise, the images and photographs published in the newsletters, or the stories told by their American counterparts is the only 'presence' accorded to Palestinians in the documents.

By placing such an importance on the victimization of Palestinian refugees without allowing them a voice, a specific "Western aid" dynamic is created, whereby the West is here to help and save, while at the same time keeping the recipients of their help at an arm's length

distance, which effectively perpetuates a phenomenon of ‘othering’ the Arab. The difference between the average American and the Palestinian refugee is exceptionally clear.

Furthermore, even with a goal to ‘inform people’, a degree of shock value is clearly instrumentalized in the images, as well as a play for guilt. As Vossen, Gorp, Schulpen and Dogra have argued, most charitable organizations need to use these types of tactics to garner financial support and motivation for their cause. The Palestinian as a victim, and what they say about the refugee camps is not necessarily exaggerated – for example, they frequently include images depicting the refugee camps themselves, and what ANERA is doing to improve them. For most Americans reading these newsletters, this type of reality is undoubtedly totally foreign to them. Images help situate the words in the documents.

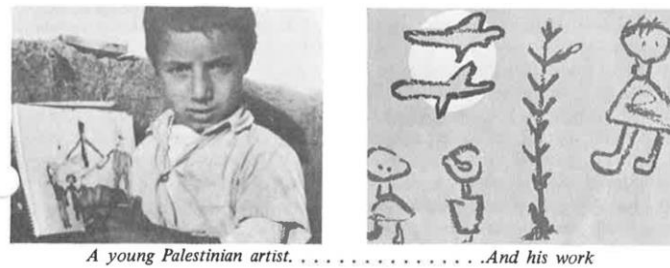
Cultural Demonstrations

A unique inclusion of the Palestinian voice presented itself in many newsletters as displays of culture: ANERA would frequently advertise, or the organization itself would organize, music concerts by famous Arab singers, art exhibitions, portable crafts exhibits, Christmas cards, drawings and tradition dress wear shows. The newsletters, sent to donors and Americans signed up to ANERA’s mailing list, showed this form of culture as a way to humanize Palestinians to the American public and to make them relatable to the average working-class citizen, unaware or ignorant of the Middle East, maybe even the world outside of the U.S.

Despite the introduction of Palestinian culture across the U.S. and the creative movement to explore and humanize the Palestinian refugee problem, the sources provide a conflicting situation. In the first few years of ANERA’s existence, there are many of these cultural experiences. However, until 1973, these elements are the *only* inclusion of the Palestinian voice in

the discussion of the very conflict that they are part of. In all the text of the sources, the artifacts, cookbooks and Christmas cards are the only addition of a Palestinian outlook. Art shows provided the most salient manner of including a Palestinian perspective of the conflict.

Image 4.7 American Near East Refugee Aid. Newsletter. No. 9. October – November, 1970.



In the Image 4.7, a young boy is pictured with his artwork. This image is an example of the portable art exhibition of children’s artwork that toured around the United States. His artwork shows a scenery of people, plants and planes flying overhead. The art show provides a key look into the minds of Arab youth amidst the refugee crisis. Having the art show tour around the United States provided Americans the opportunity to gaze into, and interpret, the lives of young Palestinians. Notably, this art show toured the country for several years, increasing its opportunity for exposure across American society. The art show is frequently mentioned across the years in the sources, maintaining its relevance.

Another example of a cultural demonstration is the advertised concert in 1971. The artist, Fayrouz and La Troupe Populaire Libanaise, was “Lebanon’s most famous singer,” and the concert was simultaneously to “provide America with a glimpse of the best in Arab culture,” as well as a fundraiser for Palestinian refugees. A *New York Times* article described the concert and Fayrouz’

performance positively, however noting the limitations of a cultural representation like this: “Her interpretations seemed highly charged emotionally, but for one who knows no Arabic, it was impossible to appreciate fully the extent of her art.”²⁹⁶ So although a concert provided a live cultural demonstration, there were still connectivity issues with the American audience.

Until the inclusion of interviews with Palestinians or the publishing of books and poems amongst the pages of the newsletters, these silent displays of culture are the only evidence of Palestinians. Without the inclusion of a voice, of a true Palestinian presence, static artifacts had an orientalist effect: where the intention may have been to educate of culture and relatability, the outcome views as another form of “othering”. In the early years, some of the exhibits are again purposed specifically for ANERA’s needs. One such exhibit, organized by partnering organization Middle East Exhibitions and Training, Inc. (MEET), was set up to tour and display the crafts and vocational programming Palestinians were engaged with. ANERA would be able to use this exhibit to demonstrate and prove the effectiveness of their programming and funding, to then acquire more.²⁹⁷ Table runners, candles, jewelry, needlework and more were included in this portable exhibit, providing silent demonstrations of Palestinians at work, thanks to American funding and support.

Until published quotes by the Palestinians were included in the newsletters, the documents demonstrated culture to Americans that was curated by ANERA were the only ways the American people could associate themselves with Palestinians, beyond the static, black and white photography.

²⁹⁶ Allen Hughes, “Fayrouz Highlights Arab Music Event,” *The New York Times*, October 1, 1971, accessed April 09, 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/1971/10/01/archives/fayrouz-highlights-arab-music-event.html>.

²⁹⁷ *American Near East Refugee Aid Newsletter* 6 (April/May 1970): 2. Accessed October 01, 2018. <https://www.anera.org/resources/newsletters/>.

Palestinian Quotes

The words selected to be published in print within the pages of the newsletters were also very telling. In the first half of the study, between 1969 and 1974, quotes by Palestinians or other Arabs are not included. Most newsletters and interviews include the voices of ANERA executive or board members. ANERA's presidents are largely the only people whose direct quotes (and thus, their "voices") are regularly published. ANERA's top executives are the only ones who travel to the Middle East in the first few years of the organization. As such, they become a critical link between Palestinians and their American readers.

In 1971, ANERA president John Davis and ANERA director James F. Sams were interviewed following a three-week trip to the Middle East. Their responses, the interviewer assured, were informed after spending time with Palestinians, Lebanese citizens, UNRWA officials, as well as other relief, government and school officials.²⁹⁸ Davis and Sams were asked the following questions:

What is life like for the Arab refugee? [...] How do people in the Middle East assess the prospects for the Jarring peace initiative? [...] What did they feel was wrong? [...] How do the Palestinian Arabs feel about the future? [...] How do the Palestinians view the present peace efforts?²⁹⁹

They provide diplomatic and informed responses for each of these questions, but the reader is struck immediately with the question, why not just ask Palestinians themselves? Having ANERA staff as middle men make them the official representatives (in American eyes) to the Palestinian plight. Yet, the best people to speak to how Palestinians "feel" about certain events are the Palestinians themselves.

²⁹⁸ *American Near East Refugee Aid Newsletter* 12 (April/May 1971): 1. Accessed October 01, 2018. <https://www.anera.org/resources/newsletters/>.

²⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 1, 3.

The earliest interview of a Palestinian appears in 1973, in an excerpt entitled “Misery in Gaza”. The excerpt begins with: “At the bottom end of the ladder of human misery in Gaza lives a woman we will call Samira.”³⁰⁰ The excerpt continues to tell Samira’s story, an unfortunate tale of exile and violence, originating with the original exodus from Jaffa in 1948. Although Samira’s tale is being told and published in the newsletter, it is still being told by proxy. Samira’s voice is not directly included, and her words are retold by the author, John K. Cooley.

In 1974, the first direct quote from a Palestinian is published. Four Arabs were interviewed and about their experiences following the War of 1973. The accounts, originally published in *The Daily Star* in Beirut, illustrate the degree of destruction and chaos placed on their lives. Following this story, more and more accounts appear in the newsletters. Notably, when direct quotes start appearing, another issue presents itself: the quotes are undoubtedly translations from Arabic. Translations bring up a whole slew of problems; the intention of the translator, their personal bias, and the creative liberties they take can all influence the message and the connotation of the quote. When reading direct quotes by Arabs in the sources, although they are representations of the Palestinian voice, they are always an interpretation of the original.

In 1975, an entire issue is dedicated to Palestinian women. A full page includes quotes from different women, about the challenges they overcame and the challenges they continued to face. However, almost none of the quotes have names attributed to them. The quotes, we read at the bottom of the article, are all collected through other news journals and books, like *The New York Times*, *The Daily Star* (Beirut) and *The Palestinians: A Portrait in 1975*. They are simply a collection of various sources, and not a product of ANERA efforts to interview women themselves.

³⁰⁰ *American Near East Refugee Aid Newsletter* 21 (January/February 1973): 1. Accessed October 01, 2018. <https://www.anera.org/resources/newsletters/>.

In ANERA's later years, quotes became regular, and major, additions to the newsletters. In several numbers, new "Thank You" sections were started, as a way of collecting feedback from their Palestinian beneficiaries. Entire pages were dedicated to the pleas and words of gratitude toward ANERA. For example:

From the deepest of my heart, I thank you... for all you did to help and assist our school... I can tell you that without your precious help we could not go on keeping our school active... I renew my sentiments of profound gratitude, wishing you all the best...³⁰¹

The quote, being extremely heartfelt and emotional, works well in the newsletters as a means to acquire funding. By specifying that "without 'ANERA's help", their school would close, ANERA proves its legitimacy and importance: THEY are the reason this school is surviving – and this is where funding for ANERA is attributed to. The validity and strength of these quotes requires one critical component: quotes, while including true words (we assume, and that's a fairly big assumption, since none of the speakers are named here as well) by Palestinians, are also framed and used as a sales tactic for their readers back home.

Interestingly, there are also sections that include quotes that are highly political and even contrast with some of the previous content of the newsletters. For example: "We pray that you will have peace and the Christian communities in America will remember Bethlehem, not remember it in various Christmas cards, but to remember it in fact and deed."³⁰² This is particularly curious because throughout the newsletters, every year there were massive ANERA campaigns to sell Palestinian made Christmas cards as a way of fundraising. In the previous section, I attributed this

³⁰¹ *American Near East Refugee Aid Newsletter* 39 (July/September 1976): 3. Accessed October 01, 2018. <https://www.anera.org/resources/newsletters/>.

³⁰² *American Near East Refugee Aid Newsletter* 36 (November/December 1975): 2. Accessed October 01, 2018. <https://www.anera.org/resources/newsletters/>.

as a cultural demonstration – here, the speaker themselves is imploring the American reader to think beyond that cultural artifact, and to start engaging more with the politics of the situation.

Additionally, the religious rhetoric shows itself in several of the quotes from Palestinians. The appeals to Christians are likely published with the aim of striking a relatable cord in the hearts of Americans. Another quote from 1975 states: “I want the West to understand, especially the Christians. Can you understand? It is not only the buildings, and the relics, and the historical places, but it is the people who live here.”³⁰³ This quote, simultaneously religious and political, challenges the reader to question themselves. It is a call to Christians in America to remember Palestine as not just the birth place of Christianity, a faraway mythical land, but instead a very real and very endangered place. By including these quotes, ANERA shows signs of developing its campaigns and awareness raising and complicating the political norms and accepted public opinions prominent in American media at the time. The quotes selected play a very specific role in getting the reader’s attention through a play for religion while emphasizing ANERA’s political and fundraising goals.

Conclusion

As ANERA grew, so did its sophistication in producing Palestinian representations for its specific audience. Through imagery and photography, the NGO expertly told a tale of devastation and loss – and consequently, dependency. Through cultural artifacts, ANERA attempted to include the Palestinian voice in a different manner – although the reliance of the cultural demonstrations in the early years of the organizations proved insufficient to adequately assign a Palestinian voice. Finally, direct quotes were probably the most effective in terms of adding a true Palestinian

³⁰³ *American Near East Refugee Aid Newsletter* 36 (November/December 1975): 2. Accessed October 01, 2018. <https://www.anera.org/resources/newsletters/>.

perspective to be heard by the American readers; however, the highly selective nature of the quotes implies that perhaps the organization was still specifically manicuring a portrayal of Palestinian refugees that met their needs. Overall, between 1969 and 1982, ANERA introduced more humanized versions of Palestinians, at a time when their plight was highly politicized and distanced from the average North American. Despite this, ANERA's demonstrations of the faces of Palestinian refugee crisis was often problematic, with strong colonial, orientalist, and gendering themes woven through the pages of the newsletters. In the next chapter, I contrast this with actual Palestinian voices, and use the interviews I recorded to see how their thoughts of aid differed from or resembled how they were represented in newsletters.

CHAPTER 4: FROM THE PALESTINIAN PERSPECTIVE

The history of the NGOs aiding Palestinians in Lebanon cannot be told without including the Palestinian perspective. This is in part because their history is continuing: it is embedded in their memories, their legacies, and their camps. In passing the security checkpoint to arrive in Ein El Hilweh and walking through its narrow streets, the evidence is everywhere. In such a highly politicized situation, the lived experiences of Palestinians are often forgotten. The following chapter analyses the responses of five interviews taken in Beirut and in Ottawa in 2019. Over the course of this thesis, I have sought to determine the impact of Western NGOs in Lebanon after the 1967 war. While this thesis has analyzed the ethics, the dilemmas, the priorities, the portrayal to Western publics, it has yet to have inquired about the Palestinian opinion of these organizations in their lives. While the participants were asked about their relations with ANERA, the questions focused more on their experiences with NGOs in general as they were growing up in Lebanon, and their experiences with integration. A few other notable historians, like Ellen Fleischmann and Rosemary Sayigh, have interviewed Palestinians extensively to reconstruct their history, and I use their research as a guiding inspiration in this chapter.

Depending on which actor you ask, whether it be a Palestinian refugee, an American NGO employee, an Israeli authority or a Beirut resident, “integration” holds a very different meaning. Therefore, the success of a community’s integration will also be subjective to the interviewee. Integration is a term that is defined differently by every state, organization or person. It is a vague term that remains up to interpretation and is malleable to a specific situation. Integration can be defined on a case to case basis. A Palestinian born into a refugee camp, and whose children are born in a refugee camp, “integration” goes beyond earning a livelihood and having a safe home: integration includes their right to maintain their history, heritage, and be accepted despite it.

International organizations face a dilemma between their goals for development and settlement of refugee communities, and the refugees' highly politicized fight for the right to return. Palestinian refugees, in principle, cannot cooperate fully with attempts at integration, as the very definition of integration clashes with their political identity. This chapter seeks to ask a select few Palestinians how this phenomenon impacts them.

Importance of Oral History

The importance of recording oral history is paramount, and in cases like the Palestinian struggle – oral tradition is often one of the only source bases.³⁰⁴ The nostalgia that seeps through oral history telling can sometimes be used as an advantage in understanding how an event is memorialized, and how that may differ from someone else's memory or an alternative historical narrative. To disregard oral history would be to disregard the Palestinian perspective, which is largely missing from the academic narrative on the subject of the Arab-Israeli conflict. In the book *The Palestinian Refugees, 1948-1998: An Oral History*, the author Adel Yahya aptly synthesized: "The stories of the defeated are often left out of the chronicles of history. This is especially true in the case of the Palestinian refugees, who, despite the high level of literacy amongst them, have left no archives to testify to their experience."³⁰⁵ Indeed, the study of Palestine is rendered incredibly difficult due to the lack of written source bases available to the general public: what once was of Palestine has mostly been lost, destroyed or simply not recorded due to its tumultuous history. It is this turbulent history that makes the Palestinian narrative imperative: it has been disputed by Israeli narrative, has been disrupted by the exodus of 1948, and the trauma of Nakba and the

³⁰⁴ Fleischmann, "Crossing the Boundaries of History," 354.

³⁰⁵ Adel Yahya, *The Palestinian Refugees, 1948-1998: An Oral History* (Ramallah: Palestinian Association for Cultural Exchange, 1999), 8.

ensuing years of violence have “constituted forces that both silenced Palestinians and incited them to speak.”³⁰⁶ Generations of dispossession and silencing through occupation has bred an incredible motivation for Palestinians to record their voices and to “speak back.”³⁰⁷

In her research on the role of Palestinian women during the Mandate period, Ellen Fleischmann discovered that oral history, although largely disregarded by traditional history departments, offered the richest way to connect to the history of a subaltern group that were not represented otherwise on paper or in archives.³⁰⁸ In her article “Crossing the Boundaries of History: Exploring Oral History in Researching Palestinian Women in the Mandate period,” Fleishmann discussed the difficulties of engaging and taking oral history when it involved a group rarely studied in the first place, using a technique infrequently employed, and with little academic guidance on the matter. However, despite the difficulties, she concluded that through interviewing people who lived through the Mandate, she was able to assemble the most intricate image of its history than she could ever put together through the paper trail.

As such, interviewing camp members would give one of the best indications on the impacts of Western organizations on refugee integration in Lebanon. Up until this point, the paper documents that I had access to only showed one side of the story: that of the organization, and that of the Western experience in Lebanon. By interviewing Palestinians who experienced NGO programs, their aid and their support directly, this thesis can fill the gap on understanding how NGOs impacted refugees living in Lebanon from 1967 to 1982, and answer whether these organizations were successful or unsuccessful in their mandate.

³⁰⁶ Rosemary Sayigh, “Oral History, Colonialist Dispossession, and the State: The Palestinian Case,” *Settler Colonial Studies* 5, no. 3. (2015): 194, doi: 10.1080/2201473X.2014.955945.

³⁰⁷ Ibid., 201.

³⁰⁸ Ibid.

Methodology

The act of interviewing is complex and delicate. While performing oral interviews, I practiced a few specific tools and habits to encourage a good and responsive relationship with the participant. Although this was my first instance of holding interviews for the purpose of academic research, I looked to a few key historians and academics to guide me. I researched Ellen L. Fleischmann and Rosemary Sayigh's works in depth, as they have both written extensively about Palestinian refugees' experiences in every stage of their history by using oral history.³⁰⁹ Their works were largely an inspiration and a guide to this thesis. Furthermore, I studied and learned the logistics of interviewing by using Donald A. Ritchie's *Doing Oral History: A Practical Guide* and *Oxford Handbook of Oral History*. I also used Alistair Thomson and Robert Perks *The Oral History Reader* to ensure I had a well-rounded understanding of how to see my interviews through properly and how to interpret the results into succinct analysis.

Before embarking on my trip to Lebanon to perform the interviews, I sought clearance from the university's Research Ethics Board (REB). I compiled a series of interview questions that had low potential for trauma and were specifically centered on NGOs, ANERA and their experience and memories with international organizations.³¹⁰ After several months of waiting and a few rounds of revisions, my questions were accepted and my application was approved. This ethics application then became the blueprint for my study and interviews both in Lebanon and Canada.

To have my application approved, I needed to prepare extensively for the practicalities and logistics of interviewing. Using Valerie Yow's, "Interviewing Techniques and Strategies," I studied how to practice a few specific tools and habits to encourage a good and responsive relationship with the participant when performing oral interviews. I was to accommodate the

³⁰⁹ See Fleischmann, "Crossing the Boundaries of History" and Sayigh, *Too Many Enemies*.

³¹⁰ See Appendix A.

interviewee as much as possible, to make them feel comfortable in the environment we were meeting in. I was to practice prompting more of a response without negatively probing into the life of the participant.³¹¹ Reading Mary Kay Quinlan's "The Dynamics of Interviewing," I noted that the physical environment of the interview and the location was powerful: location could bring up memories or contribute to their silence. In addition, the presence of other individuals in the interview could impact the way a participant answered.³¹² Importantly, Quinlan mentions the significance of recording equipment in the room. She wrote that sometimes the recorder acts as an "eavesdropper", making participants nervous and potentially altering the interview.³¹³

The practiced methodology of the interviews was even more significant due to their cross-cultural nature. My ultimate goal was to cultivate trust between the interviewee, the interpreter and I through active listening and empathy.³¹⁴ I recorded the interviews after giving the participants consent forms and the option to remain anonymous in my research. No one asked to remain anonymous, but I refrain from using their last names in this chapter regardless, to respect their privacy. In the practice of cross-cultural interviews, the interviewer needs to be mindful of the potential to misinterpret their interviewee due to lack of context, lack of knowledge of idioms and misunderstood silence.³¹⁵ Interpreting the response was important, even lack of responses: not every interviewee would give me a descriptive setting, nor would they always explain their expressions. Sometimes, their silences were almost as important as their words. The absence of words could tell a story in itself – sometimes, a silent pause could mean a lack of understanding

³¹¹ Valerie Yow, "Interviewing Techniques and Strategies," *The Oral History Reader*, Robert Perks, Alistair Thomson (New York: Routledge, 2016), 154-165.

³¹² Mary Kay Quinlan, "The Dynamics of Interviewing," *The Oxford Handbook of Oral History*, Donald A. Ritchie (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 28, doi: 10.1093/oxfordhb/9780195339550.013.0002.

³¹³ *Ibid.*, 29.

³¹⁴ Yow, "Interviewing Techniques and Strategies," 154-165.

³¹⁵ William Schneider, "Interviewing in Cross-Cultural Settings," in *The Oxford Handbook of Oral History*, Donald A. Ritchie (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 52, doi: 10.1093/oxfordhb/9780195339550.013.0004.

of the question, or a lack of desire to answer it at all. Sometimes, it could be a pensive, long pause, for the participant to gather their thoughts and compose an answer. In almost any silent situation, I learned to wait, and then to rephrase or prompt an answer in a different way.

Most importantly, a cross-cultural interview requires dedicated collaboration from both interviewer and interviewee. Despite my minimal handle on the language, I needed to be transparent and honest with my intentions. Furthermore, if (and how) they responded to me differently as a “Western intervention” is telling on its own. One of the potential issues I foresaw encountering in my research was my own personal bias as a Western presence. I am a white woman from Canada, with minimal Arabic knowledge and privileged in my education and upbringing. I have not been shaped by the long-held Palestinian-Israeli conflict, nor have I encountered the pressures and stresses of safeguarding hundreds of thousands of refugees as a result of this conflict. My own role as a foreign influence in this field of research must be acknowledged and incorporated, in the effort to discontinue the purported Western dominance in the academia of this refugee crisis. One of the main difficulties of this project was to distinguish the difference between the interviewee telling a story to an interpreter or to a friend, and how they told a story to me. Most important was the impact of the relationship with the interpreter. In this case, the interpreter was friendly and immediately established a rapport with the interviewees.

Logistically speaking, I recruited participants through the help of ANERA’s office in Beirut. I emailed them ahead of time and introduced the premise of my research. They agreed to help me in finding people I could interview: however, they acknowledged that it might be difficult to find participants that remembered ANERA in the timeframe between 1967 and 1982, especially as I had limited time in Lebanon. Additionally, I was warned that not everyone would be open to speaking to a Canadian about Western NGOs: some people harboured feelings of doubt and

distrustfulness against Westerners – a reality I had expected. Despite potential difficulties with the study right from the beginning, we agreed to proceed to find willing participants. My priority was meeting people who had experience and memories of Western aid in general, as any of their memories held the potential to illuminate something in my thesis that I could not gain from the literary and academic archives, nor my secondary research. I arrived in Beirut and walked to ANERA's office the next day, where I met several staff members and my interpreter. I interviewed seven people at three different refugee camps: Ein El Hilweh, Shatila, and Bourj el-Barajneh, all camps in or near Beirut. I decided to only use five out of the seven interviews for the purpose of this research, on account of the first two interviewees being too young and outside the scope of my time period. I was able to interview a single participant in Canada: through incredibly chance connections, I met a man who had grown up in Burj al-Bourjaneh during the time period in question and left to come to North America after the Israeli invasion in 1982.

Despite the research I completed to build a proper methodology to my interviews and to my thesis, Fleischmann has drawn attention to a notable obstacle in oral history: the practice has not been traditionally supported by academic institutions, leaving its study and methodology lacking and with a contested legitimacy. She wrote:

One of the major problems that affected my work was the field's adherence to artificial and rigid intellectual distinctions that supposedly define a specific academic 'discipline'. This resulted in my not being trained in methodologies perceived as lying outside the realm of my academic concentration.³¹⁶

The difficulty was not just at her institution, but rather “oral history is simply not yet part of the intellectual inventory or vocabulary in training historians of Middle East history.”³¹⁷ Although there is still significant work to be done in order to develop oral history as a respected and accepted

³¹⁶ Fleischmann, “Crossing the Boundaries,” 352.

³¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 365.

practice in History, it has been used in other studies of the subaltern, anthropology, and more. Despite these institutional deficiencies in the practice of oral history, my research indicated that Lebanon was an ideal place to collect and access this type of history. Lebanon, due to its “less authoritarian” nature and increased ease of access to camps compared to its neighbours in Israel, Jordan, and Syria, encouraged research into oral history as early as 1948.³¹⁸ Interestingly, the primary collections of oral history in Lebanon were assembled by both academics, and non-governmental organizations active in the regions. In the 1970s and notably after 1982, NGOs and universities became more centralized, capable of amassing and organizing huge oral history collection programs.³¹⁹ My goal is to feed back into this collection and fill the historiographical gap about the impact of NGOs on Palestinian refugees by recording their voices and their memories.

Results

In Lebanon, I interviewed five participants of varying ages. Of them, most had some sort of connection to ANERA, through work or personal connections. The first few also worked for various NGOs in the camps themselves and were thus in a particular position in terms of their relationship with ANERA: many of them either received funding from ANERA or partnered with them for various programs in the camps. Back in Canada, I also interviewed a Palestinian man who had grown up in the refugee camps in Lebanon but had since relocated to Canada.

In both groups, the experience was interesting and engaging. Everyone was friendly, open and not hesitant in speaking to me. In Lebanon, people filtered in and out of the rooms, interrupting

³¹⁸ Sayigh, “Oral History,” 194-195.

³¹⁹ Ibid., 197-198.

the interview to chat quickly. The atmosphere lacked the “officialism” that I anticipated, but the casual nature made it more comfortable to share information over coffee and food. However, while the books I studied about oral history attempted to prepare me for a clean and easy interview, the reality was fraught with challenges.

While I tried to stay to the methodology and practices I had researched and outlined, there were situations completely out of our control that made the interviews difficult. Practically, Quinlan’s article was most helpful in my interviews, as I encountered all the challenges she outlined.³²⁰ For example, a neutral, quiet environment would have been most preferred, in order to avoid all interruptions. This, however turned out to be more difficult than I anticipated. I agreed to travel to the camps to interview the participants in the location of their choice, to maximize their comfort level and avoid inconveniencing them. Therefore, accompanied by the interpreter, I made my way through Ein El Hilweh, Shatila and Bourj el-Bourajneh camps. In all of my interviews, it was common to have friends or colleagues filter in and out of the interview, give us food and coffee, cut in to ask questions, thereby shattering the “quiet” and interruption-free environment I had been anticipating. Even the “eavesdropper” microphone posed an interesting issue: when I drew out my recording device and the consent forms, the dynamic of the interview subtly changed. When I had been introduced, I was introduced as a trusted source. However, the consent forms and the recorder professionalized the interviews, making it clear that the interviewees were active participants in a study, as opposed to just having coffee and chatting with a friend of a friend.

Another unexpected difficulty was the weather: Beirut in January is typically extremely rainy. The narrow streets of the refugee camps were flooded quickly, and in one interview, the power was continuously cutting out. In my recordings, one can hear the background sounds of thunder

³²⁰ See Mary Kay Quinlan, “The Dynamics of Interviewing,” *The Oxford Handbook of Oral History*, Donald A. Ritchie (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 23-35, doi: 10.1093/oxfordhb/9780195339550.013.0002.

and the splashes of cars and motorbikes in the streets. During that interview, I had to scribble my notes by the light of a flashlight.

Additionally, the connection between interpreter, interviewee and myself was more problematic than I had anticipated. The interpreter, while engaging the participants and surely making them feel more at ease, was referred to me by ANERA's head office, making the connection possibly impactful on the responses, as many of the participants worked with them or benefited from ANERA services. Cognisant of this, I tried to mitigate the risk of influenced answers by instead focusing the majority of the interview on Western NGOs in general, and not prompting or probing too heavily into their connections with ANERA.

The initial questions were simple and pointed, to begin to understand the overall influence of external aid, and how it was interpreted in everyday life. Four out of five participants expressed the frequency that they thought about external aid was regular. The first participant, Al Mazza, a woman working for the Woman's Program Association (WPA), indicated that she thought about external aid on a daily basis, as the size of her camp, Ein El Hilweh, was large³²¹ and there was a lot of poverty.³²² The second participant, Walid, a man who was the director of his own after-school help NGO, also spoke to the poverty of the community. He connected his willingness to help, and the frequency of his thoughts on external aid, to the Quran, and the concept of helping and receiving the support of God in return.³²³ Fatmeh related her willingness and regularity of thinking of external aid to her maternal instincts: she loves to help others, and this only increased when she became a mom. Similarly, her opinion of external aid mimicked a parallel between

³²¹ The UNRWA currently records 54,116 registered refugees living in Ein El Hilweh. Ein El Hilweh Camp, United Nations Relief and Works Agency, Accessed May 20, 2019. <https://www.unrwa.org/where-we-work/lebanon/ein-el-hilweh-camp>.

³²² Interview with Al Mazza, January 15, 2019. Beirut, Lebanon.

³²³ Interview with Walid, January 15, 2019. Beirut, Lebanon.

motherly obligation and love.³²⁴ For most interviewees, their thoughts on external aid were also directly influenced by the aid they themselves provided as being functions or staff of NGOs. Four out of the six people interviewed directly spoke of their own organization's work, and how much they personally were able to help their community in the camps outside of the influence of external, or international, aid.

Mariam, a manager at the WPA, corrected me when I asked my first questions: she preferred the word "support" rather than "help".³²⁵ This small comment made an important distinction and called to my own bias of privilege. It illuminated a challenge I had not anticipated: in the quiet isolation of my academic bubble back in Canada, I composed the list of questions I would ask my interviewees by making a series of assumptions that were not always accurate. I assumed that everyone I would interview would *be* a receiver of aid. For many of the people I interviewed, they had progressed to a place where they were active agents in their own community. "Support" implied the receivers have agency and were not completely handicapped by their situation.

Only one participant was not at a management-level position in an NGO in the Beirut interviews. Rada, a 53-year-old woman from the Burj al- Bourajneh camp, was clear in how often she thought about external aid: while she personally tried to help her community as much as she could, she thought about external aid daily, and was not opposed to it, due to her difficult reality in the refugee camp. Having lived there for 36 years, the hard conditions lead her to think about NGO work often, the interpreter roughly describing it as "if she can get help and give help at the same time, that would be good for her."³²⁶

³²⁴ Interview with Fatmeh, January 15, 2019. Beirut, Lebanon.

³²⁵ Interview with Mariam, January 15, 2019. Beirut, Lebanon.

³²⁶ Interview with Rada, January 15, 2019. Beirut, Lebanon.

My only interviewee in Canada remembered thinking about external aid frequently as he grew up in Bourj el-Barajneh, but he expressed a different perspective: external aid was simply everywhere and unavoidable. Ibrahim referenced the UN in particular, citing their presence in distributing monthly aid in the form of flour, oil, rice, lentils and more. He told me amusing stories of the conflicting opinions at the time of this type of aid: some people, unhappy with the quality of nutritional support, would line up in the queues, and would then subsequently sell their provisions. For Ramadan, he remembered that the UN distributed lamb to families – but the lamb was frozen, not fresh, much to many peoples' disdain. For Ibrahim, having grown up being fed with UN food, educated under a UN school and treated at UN clinics, aid was something he thought about frequently.³²⁷

When asked about ANERA specifically, most of the participants only had recent memories of the organization, if any at all. While growing up in the camps, no one had any memory of anything specifically provided by ANERA. However, many of the interviewees, specifically the ones who were in upper management at their own respective NGOs, spoke about ANERA's history and involvement more clearly. Only one participant, Al Mazza, my first interview, remembered ANERA's historical input in the refugee camp Ein El Hilweh, although she did not mention years. She spoke to how ANERA was one of the first NGOs to work in the camp. They started primarily by helping with transportation issues, although they have grown much since then. She remembered that ANERA used to give them social and life skills courses, would provide hygiene kits and taught them how to use them. She remarked that it was the small details that were not important to other NGOs, that ANERA would concern themselves with: ANERA recognized the basic needs and they continued to come to Ein al-Hilweh for the years going forward. There was something else –

³²⁷ Interview with Ibrahim, January 15, 2019. Beirut, Lebanon.

they taught girls how to swim. Al Mazza explained the relevance of this to us, that “if you want to change the way girls think, teach them swimming.”³²⁸ She recalled that being able to swim made young girls feel equal for the first time: the NGO empowered the young women of the camp through activities. This revelation taught me something about ANERA that the newsletters and the board books did not: that the organization was involved in more than the refugees’ survival but was also helpful in their long-term psychological wellbeing and their progression as equals in society.

The other participants were either not able to remember ANERA, only had very recent memories of the organization, or were only able to differentiate it from other NGOs due to the specific work or programs that their own NGOs were developing and were being supported by ANERA. Walid explained their support in his after-school program that helped youth with Arabic, math, graphic design and mobile maintenance.³²⁹ Fatmeh differentiated ANERA because she’s worked with several NGOs in the past, but ANERA provided her with the most flexibility and they provided them with many trainings to fill the gaps in her staff. She also commented that ANERA was part of the community as well; indeed, the local staff working with ANERA, including my interpreter, were familiar and very welcomed in every camp we went to.³³⁰ Neither Rada nor Ibrahim knew about ANERA, and Mariam didn’t differentiate from any NGO: they were all there to help. No one was very familiar with ANERA’s history or origin story. Only Mariam had learned some facts details about ANERA’s history, on a recent trip to the United States’, courtesy of ANERA themselves.

³²⁸ Al Mazza, interview.

³²⁹ Walid, interview.

³³⁰ Fatmeh, interview.

Up until this point, the participants had all expressed that they thought about external aid frequently. One of the next questions in the interview focused on how they felt about *receiving* aid, whether it be financial aid, medical care or social services. Their responses were mixed: Al Mazza and Fatmeh both clarified immediately that they were no longer receiving aid, and they were not in a position that they needed it anymore.³³¹ This brought back my earlier realization that I had made a dangerous assumption that everyone I would speak to were still receivers of aid, while Al Mazza and Fatmeh explained that they were now in positions that they were the ones distributing aid in their communities. Subsequently, Al Mazza explained that she originally felt that receiving help was of importance: the organizations that provided services like medicine and sewing classes made her realize the importance of helping others in her community: clearly, she now feeds back into the community through her position at the WPA.³³² Fatmeh also identified similarly, explaining that while she no longer needed aid herself, she could see that others still require support. She still felt positively about external aid, as she identified that any support to the community could be given to those in need to continue life and to permit people to “live decently”.³³³ She tied this back to the example of the WPA: they did not give at random, but rather they provided support to people who were deserving of it.

Both Walid and Rada felt very positively about receiving help, Walid stating that it was “amazing” that someone outside of their community would come in to help their society and helping people who had little.³³⁴ Rada also expressed that she felt happy in receiving aid, as it allowed her to live more comfortably in an uncomfortable situation.³³⁵

³³¹ Al Mazza, interview; Fatmeh, interview.

³³² Al Mazza, interview.

³³³ Fatmeh, interview.

³³⁴ Walid, interview.

³³⁵ Rada, interview.

To this question, Mariam and the Canadian participant, Ibrahim, both expressed more nuanced views. Mariam indicated that in the camps, there is always a need for aid, but sometimes it needed to be more organized, essentially arguing that throwing money at a problem would not always solve it. She took for example medical supplies: sometimes, they need medical supplies specifically, but instead receive money – but with no logistical means to acquire the medical supplies they need, the money is useless. Also, she indicated hesitation and forewarned that aid, as great as receiving it may be, is not always granted to the “right” people, often ending up in the wrong hands.³³⁶ Ibrahim, on the other hand, responded neutrally: “Look, we knew we are refugees. We know any help was helping.”³³⁷ He indicated that receiving aid was a necessity, they knew they needed it, whether they liked it or not.³³⁸ It was just their reality, regardless of how they felt about it.

The following question probed how the participants felt about ANERA’s American origins, or about the Western origins of other NGOs that operate in Lebanon. For the most part, the participants were not impacted nor swayed by NGOs’ countries of origins. Al Mazza said that she’s always identified and separated the people from their country or their leader, that there are “bad people” in every community – but to her, she looks at everyone as the same.³³⁹ Nationality is irrelevant when someone is trying to help. Walid’s response was similar, stating: “you know, if anybody helps our society, we appreciate that,” and continuing that he tries not to politicize their help.³⁴⁰ As long as someone is helping, he would continue to welcome them. Fatmeh and Rada both never thought about it and didn’t care about the American origins.³⁴¹ Only Ibrahim and

³³⁶ Mariam, interview.

³³⁷ Ibrahim, interview.

³³⁸ Ibrahim, interview.

³³⁹ Al Mazza, interview.

³⁴⁰ Walid, interview.

³⁴¹ Fatmeh, interview; Rada, interview.

Mariam expressed some doubt about Western origins: Ibrahim did not remember any Americans helping, but instead remembered Europeans: many Norwegian and Danish NGO workers came to help them. He recalled that the community looked at them distrustfully, thinking they were spies.³⁴² They grew bitter of their presence.³⁴³ Mariam indicated that she previously did not have the “best ideas” about American involvement through aid – but this changed when she started working with American NGOs more directly.³⁴⁴ After working with ANERA, and consequently even travelling to the United States with ANERA and making American friends, she changed her mind about their American origins and now has a more positive outlook.³⁴⁵

Growing up, all the participants most dominantly remembered the UN being part of their lives, but they did not remember many other Western NGOs. While Ibrahim remembered European individuals coming to help in the camps, only Mariam remembered other NGOs operating in the region. She remembered two NGOs in specific: Assumoud and Al Inaash, two local NGOs that opened kindergartens and focused on education.³⁴⁶

After speaking about NGOs in specific, the interviews turned to examine the concept of “integration” more in depth: what did integration mean to the participants? How would they define integration in Lebanese society? And finally, did they consider themselves integrated after the War of 1967? For Al Mazza, integration only came after 1995. The interpreter translated her response to: “Before ‘95, it [integration] meant nothing to her. After, it meant a lot.”³⁴⁷ There was a time that she saw the need for inclusion and improvement in the community – this coincided with the time that she started working for the WPA. Her involvement with NGOs led her to think and feel

³⁴² Ibrahim, interview.

³⁴³ Ibid.

³⁴⁴ Mariam, interview.

³⁴⁵ Ibid.

³⁴⁶ Mariam, interview.

³⁴⁷ Al Mazza, interview.

more deeply to the importance of integration.³⁴⁸ Walid felt that integration involved being granted all the same rights of the citizens, and while there was a time they did not have this (he referenced that Palestinians once couldn't practice 99% of professions in Lebanon), the situation was much improved now.³⁴⁹ As an example, Walid now lives outside of the camp in his own apartment in Beirut. Fatmeh also felt a part of the Lebanese community: after all, she was born here. She received helps from Lebanon, and although all their rights were not being "promoted", no matter what, they lived here.³⁵⁰

Rada, Mariam and Ibrahim had more mixed opinions about their integration. Rada felt she was part of the community, although only by name. This integration was shallow otherwise, as she did not feel she was getting equal access to rights like Lebanese citizens. She didn't feel as though even her kids now had the right to learn, to work, and to live. She felt uncomfortable being Palestinian in Lebanon, and only felt part of the community because she lived there.³⁵¹ Mariam too felt as though she was part of the Lebanese community, although only to a certain extent. She felt isolated. However, when travelling outside of the country, she felt she was Lebanese, due to her accent. But she still felt separated and as though there was something blocking her from *really* being part of the community. She acknowledged to having Lebanese friends, to going out with them and sharing ideas with them, and not differentiating them from her Palestinian friends – however, she still felt social isolation on behalf of her Palestinian identity.³⁵²

Ibrahim explained that before 1975, he felt somewhat integrated, but they lived in the camp, and they were always under the watchful eyes of the Lebanese police, making it difficult to feel

³⁴⁸ Ibid.

³⁴⁹ Walid, interview.

³⁵⁰ Fatmeh, interview.

³⁵¹ Rada, interview.

³⁵² Mariam, interview.

really part of the society.³⁵³ When the PLO arrived in the camps, there was more freedom for the Palestinians, but a shift of balance in power in the camps then began to change the dynamic between Lebanese and Palestinians: there was growing fear from the Lebanese citizens of their Palestinian counterparts. However, they still worked and did business with Lebanese neighbours: they worked in orchards, as farmers, but there was still up to 80 professions that Ibrahim remembered that they could not work. Once the Civil War had started, it became very difficult to move from town to town, which limited trade, another aspect of livelihood that promoted the feeling of integration and self-sufficiency. The refugees stayed squarely within the confines of their camps. Ibrahim remembered feeling discriminated against at checkpoints, having been recognized immediately by his Palestinian accent.³⁵⁴ So he never truly felt “integrated” in Lebanon, and as a result of the 1982 massacres in refugee camps and the Israeli invasion, he left to go to Abu Dhabi, where his uncle worked. There, it was a little better: there were many more foreigners there, but people were still unhappy, and so he deemed Abu Dhabi to just be a “passage” to his final destination in Canada. Finally, while never feeling completely integrated in Lebanon, he feels happy and fully integrated in Canada after 32 years.³⁵⁵

Over the course of the six interviews, spread across months and continents, I learned invaluable lessons about integration and charitable work at the hands of the UN and other non-governmental organizations across Lebanon. In the next section, the patterns and irregularities of the interviews are broken down further.

³⁵³ Ibrahim, interview.

³⁵⁴ Ibid.

³⁵⁵ Ibrahim, interview.

Analysis

Over the course of the interviews, a few notable trends appeared in regard to their opinions of Western NGOs. Of course, when reading the results of these interviews and the patterns that emerge, it is to be noted that the sample of interviewees used in this study is small, and there are many other possible views beyond what is being presented here. Further studies and interviews would be beneficial in this field of study to continue to grow the analysis.

Firstly, due to many of the participants' personal or professional involvements with NGOs (be they Western or local), their opinions of external aid were exceedingly high. They spoke highly of their work and the need for NGOs, even in the form of external aid, in the everyday lives of the camps. Importantly, while they also spoke overwhelmingly positively of ANERA and explained how ANERA helped them on a daily basis, there were some evident biases: Al Mazza, Walid, Fatmeh and Miriam were all in upper management level positions of their own respective NGOs; the women all worked for the Women's Program Association (WPA), and Walid had his after-school program that he ran. These organizations all benefit in some way from ANERA: either by direct funding, or by supporting their programs. Evidently, the interviewees may have been swayed to speak in ANERA's benefit to avoid risking their organisations' standing. Also important to note, was that it was ANERA staff in the Beirut office that made my initial connection to the interviewees: I did not have any of my own connections in Lebanon to guarantee me the type of interviews I needed in the refugee camps. This also may have been a factor in the positive words from the interviewees: they were specifically selected to speak to me, by the organization in question in the interviews. This was an unfortunate inevitable outcome of my own lack of connections and time in Lebanon. However, this is not to disvalue or completely discount the good words they stated in reference to ANERA's support in their communities and their success as an

NGO. I simply mention it to be cognisant of the context in which their words are stated in: many of the interviewees may have been positively influenced by their professional connections with ANERA.

Another interesting trend that emerged, however, was the different attitudes of the participants, also based on their professional positions. For one, those that worked for NGOs in their respective refugee camps, were all incredibly forward looking in their words and tone. Meanwhile, the two participants who had no professional connections to NGOs, focused most of their answers on the past: they devoted more time in their interview to talk about their personal experiences, their life growing up in Lebanon. Rada talked about growing up in the Civil War, hiding, leaving her home, and watching her city get bombed.³⁵⁶ Ibrahim talked about the Israeli invasion in 1982, his fears and his path from Beirut to Ottawa.³⁵⁷ Meanwhile, the other four participants spoke more about the future than the past: they all wanted to talk about the programs their organizations offered, what they were doing for their communities, what they wanted to achieve. Walid insisted on bringing almost every question back to how it helps him in his programs now: talking about differentiating ANERA from other NGOs brought back the question of what his organization was doing, talking about ANERA's history illuminated a conversation about how it connected with his organization's history.³⁵⁸ The three women that worked for the WPA also spoke of their intentions and what their organizations were achieving. Al Mazza, the director of the WPA in Ein El Hilweh, proudly gave me a tour of their facilities afterwards, showing me their classrooms where young girls were learning how to crochet.³⁵⁹ In Bourj el-Barajneh, Fatmeh and Miriam showed me their rooftop gardens where they grew their own vegetables and the kitchen

³⁵⁶ Rada, interview.

³⁵⁷ Ibrahim, interview.

³⁵⁸ Walid, interview.

³⁵⁹ Al Mazza, interview.

where they employed women.³⁶⁰ Al Mazza was only 3 years old at the time of the 1967 war. However, recounting her life experience after that moment, she noted the importance of the organizations in her life. In 1995, her husband fell ill, and she was worried for her future. She turned to the UNRWA who pointed her in the direction of the WPA, changing her life forever: she never thought that she would be more than a wife and a mother. Instead, she started taking classes which led her to take a job at the WPA. Because of her experience, she now understood the importance of learning life skills, and giving back to their community: with the right tools, the right courses, and the right support, their community could continue to develop and grow.³⁶¹ While Ibrahim and Rada were still positive in their overall communications, they spoke more about the past and their memories of difficult upbringings, while Al Mazza, Walid, Fatmeh and Miriam focused more on making their memories relevant to the future: what they learnt, and how were they going to use this for the betterment of the camps.

Important to note was that the position of those that worked for NGOs or worked directly with ANERA was starkly different for many reasons, and it showed through their answers. There were certain obvious benefits: for example, although growing up in the camp, Walid now lived in his own apartment in Beirut. Mariam was able to travel due to her connection with ANERA. Al Mazza and Fatmeh clearly identified that they were no longer in need of external aid. Their level of involvement with NGOs provided them with increased mobility, flexibility, and financial stability, including social respect in their communities. Meanwhile, Ibrahim had to move to Canada, away from the camps, to achieve those same level of mobility and freedom that the NGOs offered. Rada, my only participant not in a high-level position in any organization and still living

³⁶⁰ Fatmeh, interview; Mariam, interview.

³⁶¹ Al Mazza, interview.

in the camp, expressed strongly that she did not feel fully integrated in society, nor did she feel she had those same freedoms and rights that the others indicated.³⁶² Her position still stifled her.

In reference to the Western aspect of the aid, for the most part, none of the participants believed the background to be significant or remarkable. Although I was warned prior to my interviews that some people would be suspicious and would express themselves angrily at the Western nature of aid – I did not personally encounter that in the few short interviews. The participants all had a clear sense and ability to identify and isolate the actions of individuals from the actions of a country. Julie Peteet, another scholar who interviewed Palestinians extensively for her book *Landscape of Horror and Despair; Palestinian Refugee Camps*, aptly stated that: "Palestinians have a keen sense of who is an enemy and who is a friend and thus don't easily buy into the "foreigner as enemy" syndrome."³⁶³ In a conflict that has extended for so long, with so many actors involved and political meddling on a global scale, Palestinians have adapted to be able to identify friend from foe. Although the small portion of Palestinians I interviewed do not represent the voice of Palestinians everywhere, their answers were demonstrative of this ability to compartmentalize aid: there are big political powers, big organizations that follow, but there is also goodwill on the side of the citizens.

On their life in Lebanon and integrating, the responses were also fairly mixed. There was some confusion about the term "integration," which, granted, can be complicated and as previously mentioned, have varying definitions. After some back and forth with the first few participants, we were able to clarify the definition of the term. The participants also added to the definition themselves: Cooperation with and being accepted in Lebanese society, although not necessarily assimilation.

³⁶² Rada, interview.

³⁶³ Peteet, *Landscape of Horror and Despair*, xii.

Despite considering themselves integrated with Lebanon for the most part, every participant still strongly identified with their Palestinian past: everyone I interviewed in the camps in Lebanon started with their name, and their village or city their family came from in Palestine. There was still an evident longing for Palestine: friendly with Lebanon or not, they wanted to return. Walid spoke to wanting to go back to his country and remembering Palestine as beautiful – although he had never physically been there, having been born in Balbaack camp in Lebanon. He spoke so fondly of Palestine and expressed that he wanted to show the world these positive and beautiful images of his country.³⁶⁴

One faction of external aid that every single participant remembered vividly was the UN. They all recalled seeing the UNRWA while growing up in the camps, and many indicated that their presence was almost unavoidable. The academic Adel Yahya interviewed other Palestinians to write his book *The Palestinian refugees, 1948-1998: An oral history*, and there is a section specifically dedicated to participant responses regarding their experiences with the UN. Yahya indicated that most Palestinians interviewed did say that they received assistance of some kind, with older generations remembering the Red Cross, and younger generations mainly remembering the UN.³⁶⁵ When asking about the UN, the responses illuminated a different perspective about receiving aid that I did not personally hear in my interviews:

Most refugees claimed that they had no choice but to ask for help from others. However, they always despised this aid because it was a constant reminder of their loss and misery. Such assistance seems to have also sustained their memories of their original homes and towns where they lived in dignity.³⁶⁶

While the people that I interviewed did not object so vividly to the UN, Yahya's book and his sample of interviews showed the other perspective:

³⁶⁴ Walid, interview.

³⁶⁵ Yahya, *The Palestinian refugees*, 73.

³⁶⁶ Ibid.

As shown by the interviews, it seems that refugee dissatisfaction with UNRWA, is nothing new. Most in fact, have been dissatisfied with such assistance from the beginning, while some were just unhappy with the very idea of assistance.³⁶⁷

Some quotes captured in his book showed a very different and very strong opinion in regard to the UNRWA's involvement in their life. A 63-year-old man stated: "It [UNRWA] robbed us of our pride. [...] UNRWA robbed our people of all their rights."³⁶⁸ The interviewees felt that they were reduced to dependency – indeed, as Ibrahim had expressed in his interview, they were dependent: the UN distributed food, provided them with medical services, and were in charge of their education.³⁶⁹ Every major aspect of a healthy and successful life was completely in their hands. Interestingly, despite the strength of words and opinions in Yahya's book against the UNRWA, he noted that 61.9% of interviewees were still opposed to UNRWA services moving from their care to the Palestinian Authority.³⁷⁰

Conclusion

Over the course of this chapter, I interviewed several people to uncover how Western NGOs succeeded or struggled in the integration of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon. I heard the stories of several people, born at different times between the 1960s and 1980s, who described their life and their interactions with NGOs, illuminating several aspects of this thesis that could not be determined solely through a paper trail. Firstly, the interviews revealed that closer access to NGOs gave benefits beyond those that I had originally imagined (I envisioned they would receive solely service-based benefits: receiving medical aid and trainings for example). In fact, the closer the access to an NGO, the more social and professional mobility it offered, as well as improving the

³⁶⁷ Ibid., 75.

³⁶⁸ Ibid.

³⁶⁹ Ibrahim, interview.

³⁷⁰ Yahya, *The Palestinian refugees*, 76.

chance of a healthier and positive outlook towards the future. Due to their close connection with Western NGOs, the participants had overwhelmingly positive attitudes towards their Western origins, or simply did not care for their origins. This positive access to NGOs also permitted better chances of feeling integrated in Lebanese society. Those who had grown and incorporated NGOs into their life now had better financial freedom and access to Lebanese society. However, historically speaking, no one had felt really integrated anywhere in Lebanon between 1967 to 1982, nor did they remember many NGOs involved in their lives until later on, beyond the ever-present UNRWA, which there were some mixed feelings about. Overall, this chapter learned that the presence of Western NGOs, including ANERA, in the lives of the participants growing up in the refugee camps of Lebanon was a largely positive and helpful experience in their eventual integration into society, for those that did feel integrated.

CONCLUSION

In 1970, the president of the American Near East Refugee Aid, John Richardson, described a dismal situation in the Middle East: “From a physical standpoint the status of the Palestinian refugees today is about the worst it has been at any time since 1948 – the beginning of the refugee problem.”³⁷¹ Over the course of the next few decades, ANERA would continue to report on the situation of the Palestinian refugee crisis in the Middle East, and would publish testimonials by ANERA staff in their newsletters back home. This thesis sought to explore this complicated issue and understand ANERA’s impact on the very situation Richardson described. Ultimately, the aim of this study was to fill a gap in the historiography of the historical effects of NGOs in the Middle East working with Palestinian refugees.

While this thesis studied ANERA specifically as a case study, I do not assume that it is a representative of all NGOs that operate in the region. However, the organization’s easily accessible archives made it an understandable and easy selection. For example, the newsletters from 1969 to 1982 show insight on the different initiatives and programs that were operational in the time between 1969 and 1982. Additionally, these documents showed what message and information were deemed important and valuable to communicate back to the American public. The board books, meanwhile, provided insight on the inner workings of the organization. They illuminated what issues were of primary importance to ANERA executives, as well as provided details on their financials: how much money ANERA was receiving and from whom, and where the money was allocated. The final source, interviews with Palestinians having lived in Lebanon between 1967 and 1982, showed another missing perspective: that of the refugees that benefitted from ANERA

³⁷¹ *American Near East Refugee Aid Newsletter* 5 (February/March 1970): 1. Accessed October 01, 2018. <https://www.anera.org/resources/newsletters/>.

and other NGO funding and programming. Knowing how Palestinians interpreted Western charitable support and how they perceived their own experience in Lebanon was key to forming my conclusions.

Over the course of four chapters, the study included additional research on the history of the UNRWA. Almost unavoidably, I found out more about their history while studying ANERA's history, as the two organizations' operations were closely intertwined. While the interviewed participants had mostly only some memories of Western NGOs while they were growing up, they certainly remembered the UNRWA's presence. Even when studying the other paper sources, the history of the UN's involvement in the Middle East was diligently recorded. Its precarious financial status, the pressures of providing aid to a growing number of refugees and the efforts of integrative and developmental programming in camps were all documented, showing an interesting perspective of the UNRWA's tumultuous operations, through the eyes of a supporting organization.

In reflection of ANERA's impact during this time period, the relationship between three elements need to be addressed: ANERA itself, ANERA in Lebanon, and other NGOS and the UNRWA in Lebanon. These relationships are deeply entangled. Throughout this research, I found that ANERA, and other NGOs, could not have operated in Lebanon without the presence of the UNRWA during the time period I studied, from 1967 to 1982. The UNRWA was the basis for all Western charitable aid for Palestinians during these years – and because of their supranational body and global influence, the UN had access, connections, security and the capability to establish the foundations of refugee camps, schools and medical centers in Lebanon at this time. Many regular U.S. citizens, like the founders of ANERA, would not have been able to enjoy this same access and capability, in the first few decades of the conflict. Indeed, to be

able to support Palestinians, ANERA and other NGOs acted mostly as support vessels in those first years. As such, ANERA's success in Lebanon was largely dependent on the UNRWA's success as well. While they worked independently from one another, with independent governance and funding, NGOs and the UNRWA were co-dependent, to a certain degree: the UNRWA needed additional support and funding that NGOs could provide, while NGOs required the access and global recognition that the UNRWA had.

The experience between NGOs and UNRWA in Lebanon is unique, and does not resemble the experience of other countries with high numbers of Palestinian refugees. Due to Lebanon's political system and early relationship with Palestinians, NGOs and the UNRWA could, for the most part in the early years, operate in Lebanon without issue. However, once the Civil War broke out in 1975, conflicts between Lebanese and Palestinians rose as well, changing the relationship. NGOs and UNRWA experienced great difficulty working and supporting refugees and were in an almost constant state of damage control.

This thesis found that while looking at the historical ethical dilemmas of NGOs, when entering the sphere of institutional 'development', it is difficult for Western organizations to provide unbiased support to refugees. Political, financial and moralistic issues often penetrate the intentions of organizations, making it notoriously difficult to provide support without a real or perceived ulterior motive. Additionally, the modern-day institution of the NGO is a derivation of a religious-colonial history. This study found traces of this history in subsequent chapters, namely through the manner that refugees were portrayed in media.

Based on the archival sources, we can also conclude that between 1967 and 1982, ANERA's financial and program priorities shifted to be more developmental and more involved to have a larger impact on integration in the long term. However, it still exercised highly selective funding

and programming – the involvement of other actors and situations often dictated where the organization would concentrate their attention on. For example, roadblocks by the Israeli government made access to funding more difficult in Gaza and the West Bank. General instability and conflict in a given area drew more attention there for emergency relief. Most importantly, ANERA remained active and adaptable to the everchanging situation, eventually growing from being a distant support to a more hands-on operator across the Middle East.

Understanding the history of NGOs, the ethics involved and ANERA's move to more developmental programming was integral when studying how Palestinians were represented back to an American public. Through studying ANERA's newsletters, I was able to analyse images, quotes and cultural demonstrations to view how refugees were represented abroad. ANERA was able to expertly tailor their newsletters to attract the attention of the American audience through a gendered and "shocking" lens, stripping Palestinians of agency or voice through the images. With cultural artifacts, Palestinians were represented in a unique manner, through cook books and art shows. While more accessible to American publics, the Palestinian voice was still mostly muted. However, the evolution of interviews and quotations throughout ANERA's newsletters was most effective in demonstrating Palestinians. As their programming grew more directly involved and 'developmental,' the content of the sources followed suite, although the selected quotes still showed a manicured portrayal to appeal to the public back home.

The final chapter sought to understand the Palestinian experience with Western NGOs, and what their opinions were on their own integration, or lack thereof. The results were mixed. Understandably, it was difficult to find participants who had vivid memories of ANERA specifically between the years 1967 and 1982. Regardless, the interviews found interesting and somewhat unexpected conclusions. For one, the Western nature of NGOs was not really of concern

to any of the interviewees; while two expressed some past reservation, the other four indicated that they were adept in being able to separate the actions of a state from that of the people. The overwhelming trend was that the participants' experiences with NGOs was overall positive: indeed, for some of the participants, access to NGOs stimulated more excited outlooks for the future and better financial and social mobility. Generally, however, the common consensus was that there was no integration in Lebanon from 1967 to 1982, despite efforts otherwise to build lives and livelihoods, by themselves, other NGOs and the UNRWA. Even in the present day, some of the participants still living in the country expressed reservations to declare themselves fully integrated in Lebanon at present.

Through the course of this thesis, one can reasonably conclude that the experience of Western NGOs supporting Palestinians in the host country of Lebanon has been fraught with both ethical and logistical challenges. While the organizations showed improvement and progression in their mandates to properly serve Palestinians, they experienced issues in providing unbiased, decolonized support, faced constant challenge with continued tension and violence, and were in constant demand for more resources for more and more refugees. However, NGOs achieved great things in other regards. For example, ANERA succeeded in consistently fundraising amounts to match the growing needs of refugees, kept their operational expenses low, and built the base for long-term programming and developmental practices.

Today, ANERA is continuing to operate in the Middle East, now expanding their mandate to aid Syrian refugees as well. They have offices in Gaza, the West Bank, Beirut and Amman. When I went to retrieve archives in Washington in the summer of 2018, they were preparing to celebrate the fifty-year anniversary – an impressive milestone. While my studies focused on the history of ANERA, their reality today is, understandably, much advanced. When I spoke to interviewees

about ANERA today, they only had positive words to say. Indeed, the overwhelming impression I received from the interviews was that ANERA was working very successfully with Palestinian refugees. While they may face a whole new set of challenges, the issues I highlight in their history throughout this thesis are not the same today. Presently, they have locally engaged Lebanese staff that works very closely with their impacted communities, implementing initiatives such as recycling programs.

Ultimately, the conclusions of this thesis raise historical questions that merit additional study. Notably, I have studied here the impact of Western NGOs in Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon, but I purposefully left out the study of local NGOs. Across my study, there was plenty of historical research on the birth of the UNRWA and early American and European work in the Middle East. However, until an interviewee recalled growing up with the support of a few local NGOs, I had not encountered many, if any at all, works on the local initiatives and NGOs that support integration in host countries. This is an area of study that remains untapped. While the influence of Western NGOs may have been large, the influence of grassroots organizations may be even larger. The conclusions of this study also raise questions of the future of NGO and development work: how can organizations continue to contribute and support a community without being burdened by their history? Or, alternatively, how can they work with their history to produce more ethical solutions to settlement? This thesis is just a small part of the study that can potentially influence the growth and improvement of the global aid movement.

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APPENDIX A

Questions for the Research and Ethics Board

Questions for Palestinian receivers of aid

1. Where and what year were you born?
2. How long have you lived in this camp?
3. How has ANERA supported you and your community between 1967 and 1982?
4. How involved was ANERA in your life on a daily basis during this time period?
5. Did you notice their contributions?
6. How frequently did you think about external aid?
7. Did you differentiate ANERA from other NGOs in the area?
8. How familiar are you with ANERA's history?
9. Did ANERA's American origins impact the way you think of them? How so?
10. How do you feel about receiving help, whether it be financial aid, medical care or social services?
11. What does integration mean to you?
12. After the 1967 war, did you see yourself as integrating in Lebanon?

APPENDIX B

Recruitment Text: Palestinian Refugees with Experience with NGOs from 1967 to 1982

This project is intended to review the history of non-governmental organizations in the process of integrating Palestinian refugees in Lebanon from 1967 to 1982. The American Near East Refugee Aid organization (ANERA) will be used as a case study. Participants will specifically be asked questions about their interactions with the organization and their experiences with attempts at integration.

I am recruiting three sets of participants. The first are Palestinian refugees that lived in Lebanon from 1967 to 1982, and still currently live in Lebanon, near Beirut. I am also looking for Palestinians who lived in Lebanon between 1967 to 1982, but now live in Canada, near Ottawa. The third set of participants are senior employees of ANERA. Their criteria for inclusion is that they also worked for ANERA during this time period.

Participants will be asked a series of questions in the language of their choice (English, French, Arabic) for a period of approximately 60-90 minutes. They will only be asked to answer the questions once. If the participant lives in Lebanon, the interviews will be held at the ANERA office in Beirut (Forest Building, 3rd Floor Badaro-Alam Street, Beirut, Lebanon) or at a location convenient for the participant. If the participant lives in Canada, the interviews will be held at the University of Ottawa campus (55 Laurier Ave E, Ottawa, ON, K1N 6N5) at a room reserved and communicated to the participant ahead of time, or at a location convenient for the participant. Participation is completely VOLUNTARY and you can choose to withdraw at any moment.

Research participants can ask the researcher any question about any part of the research being conducted. Research participants have the right to remain anonymous or use their real identity.

Individuals may benefit from participating in this research by learning more about the resources that the non-governmental organizations may offer them.

The information collected for this project will be used for university research only. The goal of this project is to understand the challenges and successes of Western NGOs aiding Palestinians in Lebanon from 1967 to 1982. This research will be available online following the passing of my master's thesis.

Please do not hesitate to contact me for any more information or questions relating to my project.

Thank you in advance,

Nicole Minkova
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University of Ottawa